COMMENTARY ON CORINTHIANS VOLUME 2

by John Calvin

Calvin's commentary on 2 Corinthians, in which Paul defends his apostolic ministry, expounds the new covenant, and calls for generous giving and genuine Christian character.

63 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Commentary On Corinthians Volume 2
1. 1 Corinthians 15:1-10
2. 1 Corinthians 15:11-19
3. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
4. 1 Corinthians 15:29-34
5. 1 Corinthians 15:35-50
6. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58
7. 1 Corinthians 16:1-7
8. 1 Corinthians 16:8-12
9. 1 Corinthians 16:13-24
10. COMMENTARIES
11. TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.
12. THE AUTHOR'S DEDICATORY EPISTLE.
13. THE ARGUMENT
14. 2 Corinthians 1:1-5
15. 2 Corinthians 1:6-11
16. 2 Corinthians 1:12-14
17. 2 Corinthians 1:15-20
18. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22
19. 2 Corinthians 1:23-24
20. 2 Corinthians 2:1-2
21. 2 Corinthians 2:3-5
22. 2 Corinthians 2:6-11
23. 2 Corinthians 2:12-17
24. 2 Corinthians 3:1-3
25. 2 Corinthians 3:4-11
26. 2 Corinthians 3:12-18
27. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6
28. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12
29. 2 Corinthians 4:13-18
30. 2 Corinthians 5:1-8
31. 2 Corinthians 5:9-12
32. 2 Corinthians 5:13-17
33. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
34. 2 Corinthians 6:1-10
35. 2 Corinthians 6:11-18
36. 2 Corinthians 7:1
37. 2 Corinthians 7:2-7
38. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

39. 2 Corinthians 7:11-16
40. 2 Corinthians 8:1-7
41. 2 Corinthians 8:8-12
42. 2 Corinthians 8:13-17
43. 2 Corinthians 8:18-24
44. 2 Corinthians 9:1-5
45. 2 Corinthians 9:6-9
46. 2 Corinthians 9:10-15
47. 2 Corinthians 10:1-6
48. 2 Corinthians 10:7-11
49. 2 Corinthians 10:12-18
50. 2 Corinthians 11:1-6
51. 2 Corinthians 11:7-12
52. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
53. 2 Corinthians 11:16-21
54. 2 Corinthians 11:22-29
55. 2 Corinthians 11:30-33
56. 2 Corinthians 12:1-5
57. 2 Corinthians 12:6-10
58. 2 Corinthians 12:11-15
59. 2 Corinthians 12:16-21
60. 2 Corinthians 13:1-4
61. 2 Corinthians 13:5-9
62. 2 Corinthians 13:10-14

Chapter 0

Commentary On Corinthians Volume 2

Chapter 1

1 Corinthians 15:1-10

1. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;1. Notum autem vobis facio, fratres, evangelium quod evangelizavi vobis, quod et recepistis, in quo etiam stetistis.2. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain:2. Per quod etiam salutem habetis: quo pacto annuntiarim vobis, si tenetis, nisi frustra credidistis.3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;3. Tradidi enim vobis imprimis quod et acceperam, quod Christus mortuus fuerit, pro peccatis nostris secundum Scripturas,4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:4. Et quod sepultus sit, et quod resurrexit tertio die, secundum Scripturas.5. And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:5. Et quod visus fait Cephae, deinde ipsis duodecim:6. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.6. Postea visus fait plus quam qaingentis fratribus simul, ex quibus plures manent [1] adhuc ad hunc usque diem: qaidam autem obdormierunt.7. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.7. Deinde visus fait Iacobo: post apostolis omnibus:8. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.8. Postremo vero onmium, velut abortivo, visus fait et mihi.9. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.9. Ego enim sum minimus apostolorum, qui non sum idoneus ut dicar apostolus: quandoquidem persequutus sum ecclesiam Dei.10. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.10. Sed gratia Dei sum id quod sum: et gratia ejus, quae mihi collata est, non fuit inanis, sed copiosius quam illi omnes laboravi: non ego tamen, sed gratia Dei quae mihi aderat.1. Now I make known to you. He now enters on another subject -- the resurrection -- the belief of which among the Corinthians had been shaken by some wicked persons. It is uncertain, however, whether they doubted merely as to the ultimate resurrection of the body, or as to the immortality of the soul also. It is abundantly well known, that there were a variety of errors as to this point. Some philosophers contended that souls are immortal. As to the resurrection of the body, it never entered into the mind of any one of them. The Sadducees, however, had grosser views; for they thought of nothing but the present life; nay more, they thought that the soul of man was a breath of wind without substance. It is not, therefore, altogether certain (as I have already said) whether the Corinthians had at this time gone to such a height of madness, as to cast off all expectation of a future life, or whether they merely denied the resurrection of the body; for the arguments which Paul makes use of seem to imply, that they were altogether bewitched with the mad dream of the Sadducees.For example, when he says,Of what advantage is it to be baptized for the dead? (1 Corinthians 15:29.)Were it not better to eat and to drink? (1 Corinthians 15:32.)Why are we in peril every hour? (1 Corinthians 15:30,)and the like, it might very readily be replied, in accordance with the views of the philosophers, "Because after death the soul survives the body." Hence some apply the whole of Paul's reasoning contained in this chapter to the immortality of the soul. For my part, while I leave undetermined what the error of

the Corinthians was, yet I cannot bring myself to view Paul's words as referring to anything else than the resurrection of the body. Let it, therefore be regarded as a settled point, that it is of this exclusively that he treats in this chapter. And what if the impiety of Hymeneus and Philetus had extended thus far, [2] who said that the resurrection was already past, (2 Timothy 2:18,) and that there would be nothing more of it? Similar to these, there are at the present day some madmen, or rather devils, [3] who call themselves Libertines. [4] To me, however, the following conjecture appears more probable -- that they were carried away by some delusion, [5] which took away from them the hope of a future resurrection, just as those in the present day, by imagining an allegorical resurrection, [6] take away from us the true resurrection that is promised to us.However this may be, it is truly a dreadful case, and next to a prodigy, that those who had been instructed by so distinguished a master, should have been capable of falling so quickly [7] into errors of so gross a nature. But what is there that is surprising in this, when in the Israelitish Church the Sadducees had the audacity to declare openly that man differs nothing from a brute, in so far as concerns the essence of the soul, and has no enjoyment but what is common to him with the beasts? Let us observe, however, that blindness of this kind is a just judgment from God, so that those who do not rest satisfied with the truth of God, are tossed hither and thither by the delusions of Satan. It is asked, however, why it is that he has left off or deferred to the close of the Epistle, what should properly have had the precedence of everything else? Some reply, that this was done for the purpose of impressing it more deeply upon the memory. I am rather of opinion that Paul did not wish to introduce a subject of such importance, until he had asserted his authority, which had been considerably lessened among the Corinthians, and until he had, by repressing their pride, prepared them for listening to him with docility.I make known to you. To make known here does not mean to teach what was previously unknown to them, but to recall to their recollection what they had heard previously. "Call to your recollection, along with me, that gospel which you had learned, before you were led aside from the right course." He calls the doctrine of the resurrection the gospel, that they may not imagine that any one is at liberty to form any opinion that he chooses on this point, as on other questions, which bring with them no injury to salvation.When he adds, which I preached to you, he amplifies what he had said: "If you acknowledge me as an apostle, I have assuredly taught you so." There is another amplification in the words -- which also ye have received, for if they now allow themselves to be persuaded of the contrary, they will be chargeable with fickleness. A third amplification is to this effect, that they had hitherto continued in that belief with a firm and steady resolution, which is somewhat more than that they had once believed. But the most important thing of all is, that he declares that their salvation is involved in this, for it follows from this, that, if the resurrection is taken away, they have no religion left them, no assurance of faith, and in short, have no faith remaining. Others understand in another sense the word stand, as meaning that they are upheld; but the interpretation that I have given is a more correct one. [8]2. If you keep in memory -- unless in vain [9] These two expressions are very cutting. In the first, he reproves their carelessness or fickleness, because such a sudden fall was an evidence that they had never understood what had been delivered to them, or that their knowledge of it had been loose and floating, inasmuch as it had so quickly vanished. By the second, he warns them that they had needlessly and uselessly professed allegiance to Christ, if they did not hold fast this main doctrine. [10]3. For I delivered to you first of all He now confirms what he had previously stated, by explaining that the resurrection had been preached by him, and that too as a fundamental doctrine of the gospel. First of all, says he, as it is wont to be with a

foundation in the erecting of a house. At the same time he adds to the authority of his preaching, when he subjoins, that he delivered nothing but what he had received, for he does not simply mean that he related what he had from the report of others, but that it was what had been enjoined upon him by the Lord. [11] For the word [12] must be explained in accordance with the connection of the passage. Now it is the duty of an apostle to bring forward nothing but what he has received from the Lord, so as from hand to hand [13] (as they say) to administer to the Church the pure word of God.That Christ died, etc. See now more clearly whence he received it, for he quotes the Scriptures in proof. In the first place, he makes mention of the death of Christ, nay also of his burial, that we may infer, that, as he was like us in these things, he is so also in his resurrection. He has, therefore, died with us that we may rise with him. In his burial, too, the reality of the death in which he has taken part with us, is made more clearly apparent. Now there are many passages of Scripture in which Christ's death and resurrection are predicted, but nowhere more plainly [14] than in Isaiah 53, in Daniel 9:26, and in Psalm 22For our sins That is, that by taking our curse upon him he might redeem us from it. For what else was Christ's death, but a sacrifice for expiating our sins -- what but a satisfactory penalty, by which we might be reconciled to God -- what but the condemnation of one, for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness for us? He speaks also in the same manner in Romans 4:25, but in that passage, on the other hand, he ascribes it also to the resurrection as its effect -- that it confers righteousness upon us; for as sin was done away through the death of Christ, so righteousness is procured through his resurrection. This distinction must be carefully observed, that we may know what we must look for from the death of Christ, and what from his resurrection. When, however, the Scripture in other places makes mention only of his death, let us understand that in those cases his resurrection is included in his death, but when they are mentioned separately, the commencement of our salvation is (as we see) in the one, and the consummation of it in the other.5. That he was seen by Cephas He now brings forward eye witnesses, (autoptas) as they are called by Luke, (Luke 1:2,) who saw the accomplishment of what the Scriptures had foretold would take place. He does not, however, adduce them all, for he makes no mention of women. When, therefore, he says that he appeared first to Peter, you are to understand by this that he is put before all the men, so that there is nothing inconsistent with this in the statement of Mark (Mark 16:9) that he appeared to Mary. But how is it that he says, that he appeared to the twelve, when, after the death of Judas, there were only eleven remaining? Chrysostom is of opinion that this took place after Matthias had been chosen in his room. Others have chosen rather to correct the expression, looking upon it as a mistake [15] But as we know, that there were twelve in number that were set apart by Christ's appointment, though one of them had been expunged from the roll, there is no absurdity in supposing that the name was retained. On this principle, there was a body of men at Rome that were called Centumviri, [16] while they were in number 102. [17] By the twelve, therefore, you are simply to understand the chosen Apostles.It does not quite appear when it was that this appearing to more than five hundred took place. Only it is possible that this large multitude assembled at Jerusalem, when he manifested himself to them. For Luke (Luke 24:33) makes mention in a general way of the disciples who had assembled with the eleven; but how many there were he does not say. Chrysostom refers it to the ascension, and explains the word epano to mean, from on high. [18] Unquestionably, as to what he says in reference to his having appeared to James apart, this may have been subsequently to the ascension.By all the Apostles I understand not merely the twelve, but also those disciples to whom Christ had assigned the office of preaching the gospel. [19] In proportion as our Lord was

desirous that there should be many witnesses of his resurrection, and that it should be frequently testified of, let us know that it should be so much the more surely believed among us. (Luke 1:1.) Farther, inasmuch as the Apostle proves the resurrection of Christ from the fact that he appeared to many, he intimates by this, that it was not figurative but true and natural, for the eyes of the body cannot be witnesses of a spiritual resurrection.8. Last of all to me, as to one born prematurely, He now introduces himself along with the others, for Christ had manifested himself to him as alive, and invested with glory. [20] As it was no deceptive vision, it was calculated to be of use [21] for establishing a belief in the resurrection, as he also makes use of this argument in Acts 26:8. But as it was of no small importance that his authority should have the greatest weight and influence among the Corinthians, he introduces, by the way, a commendation of himself personally, but at the same time qualified in such a manner that, while he claims much for himself, he is at the same time exceedingly modest. Lest any one, therefore, should meet him with the objection: "Who art thou that we should give credit to thee?" he, of his own accord, confesses his unworthiness, and, in the first place, indeed he compares himself to one that is born prematurely, and that, in my opinion, with reference to his sudden conversion. For as infants do not come forth from the womb, until they have been there formed and matured during a regular course of time, so the Lord observed a regular period of time in creating, nourishing, and forming his Apostles. Paul, on the other hand, had been cast forth from the womb when he had scarcely received the vital spark. [22] There are some that understand the term rendered abortive as employed to mean posthumous; [23] but the former term is much more suitable, inasmuch as he was in one moment begotten, and born, and a man of full age. Now this premature birth renders the grace of God more illustrious in Paul than if he had by little and little, and by successive steps, grown up to maturity in Christ.9. For I am the least It is not certain whether his enemies threw out this for the purpose of detracting from his credit, or whether it was entirely of his own accord, that he made the acknowledgment. For my part, while I have no doubt that, he was at all times voluntarily, and even cheerfully, disposed to abase himself, that he might magnify the grace of God, yet I suspect that in this instance he wished to obviate calumnies. For that there were some at Corinth that made it their aim to detract from his dignity by malicious slander, may be inferred not only from many foregoing passages, but also from his adding a little afterwards a comparison, which he would assuredly never have touched upon, if he had not been constrained to it by the wickedness of some, "Detract from me as much as you please -- I shall suffer myself to be cast down below the ground -- I shall suffer myself to be of no account whatever, [24] that the goodness of God towards me may shine forth the more. Let me, therefore, be reckoned the least of the Apostles: nay more, I acknowledge myself to be unworthy of this distinction. For by what merits could I have attained to that honor? When I persecuted the Church of God, what did I merit? But there is no reason why you should judge of me according to my own worth, [25] for the Lord did not look to what I was, but made me by his grace quite another man." The sum is this, that Paul does not refuse to be the most worthless of all, and next to nothing, provided this contempt does not impede him in any degree in his ministry, and does not at all detract from his doctrine. He is contented that, as to himself, he shall be reckoned unworthy of any honor, provided only he commends his apostleship in respect of the grace conferred upon him. And assuredly God had not adorned him with such distinguished endowments in order that his grace might lie buried or neglected, but he had designed thereby to render his apostleship illustrious and distinguished. 10. And his grace was not vain. Those that set free-will in opposition to the grace of God, that whatever good we do may not be ascribed wholly to

Him, wrest these words to suit their own interpretation -- as if Paul boasted, that he had by his own industry taken care that God's grace toward him had not been misdirected. Hence they infer, that God, indeed, offers his grace, but that the right use of it is in man's own power, and that it is in his own power to prevent its being ineffectual. I maintain, however, that these words of Paul give no support to their error, for he does not here claim anything as his own, as if he had himself, independently of God, done anything praiseworthy. What then? That he might not seem to glory to no purpose in mere words, while devoid of reality, he says, that he affirms nothing that is not openly apparent. Farther, even admitting that these words intimate, that Paul did not abuse the grace of God, and did not render it ineffectual by his negligence, I maintain, nevertheless, that there is no reason on that account, why we should divide between him and God the praise, that ought to be ascribed wholly to God, inasmuch as he confers upon us not merely the power of doing well, but also the inclination and the accomplishment.But more abundantly Some refer this to vain-glorious boasters, [26] who, by detracting from Paul, endeavored to set off themselves and their goods to advantage, as, in their opinion at least, it is not likely that he wished to enter upon a contest with the Apostles. When he compares himself, however, with the Apostles, he does so merely for the sake of those wicked persons, who were accustomed to bring them forward for the purpose of detracting from his reputation, as we see in the Epistle to the Galatians (Galatians 1:11.) Hence the probability is, that it is of the Apostles that he speaks, when he represents his own labors as superior to theirs, and it is quite true, that he was superior to others, not merely in respect of his enduring many hardships, encountering many dangers, abstaining from things lawful, and perseveringly despising all perils; (2 Corinthians 11:26;) but also because the Lord gave to his labors a much larger measure of success. [27] For I take labor here to mean the fruit of his labor that appeared.Not I, but the grace The old translator, by leaving out the article, has given occasion of mistake to those that are not acquainted with the Greek language, for in consequence of his having rendered the words thus -- not I, but the grace of God with me, [28] they thought that only the half of the praise is ascribed to God, and that the other half is reserved for man. They, accordingly, understand the meaning to be that Paul labored not alone, inasmuch as he could do nothing without co-operating grace, [29] but at the same time it was under the influence of his own free-will, and by means of his own strength. His words, however, have quite a different meaning, for what he had said was his own, he afterwards, correcting himself, ascribes wholly to the grace of God -- wholly, I say, not in part, for whatever he might have seemed to do, was wholly, he declares, the work of grace. A remarkable passage certainly, both for laying low the pride of man, and for magnifying the operation of Divine grace in us. For Paul, as though he had improperly made himself the author of anything good, corrects what he had said, and declares the grace of God to have been the efficient cause of the whole. Let us not think that there is here a mere pretense of humility [30] It is in good earnest that he speaks thus, and from knowing that it is so in truth. Let us learn, therefore, that we have nothing that is good, but what the Lord has graciously given us, that we do nothing good but what he worketh in us, (Philippians 2:13) -- not that we do nothing ourselves, but that we do nothing without being influenced -- that is, under the guidance and impulse of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:11-19

11. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. 11. Sire ego igitur, sive illi, ita praedicamus, et ita credidistis. 12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 12. Si autem Christus praedicatur excitatus a mortuis, quomodo dicunt quidam, mortuorum resurrectionem non esse? 13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 13. Si autem mortuorum resur-rectionon est, neque Christus resurrexit. 14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 14. Quodsi Christus non resurrexit, inanis igitur est praedicatio nostra, inanis et fides vestra. 15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 15. Invenimur etiam falsi testes Dei, quia testati sumus a Deo, quod suscitaverit Christum; quem non suscitavit, siquidem mortui non resurgunt. 16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 16. Si enim mortui non resurgunt, neque Christus resurrexit.17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.17. Si autem Christus non resurrexit, vana est fides vestra: adhuc estis in peccatis vestris.18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.18. Ergo et qui obdormierunt in Christo perierunt.19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.19. Quodsi in hac vita solum speramus in Christo, miserrimi sumus omnium hominum.11. Whether I or they Having compared himself with the other Apostles, he now associates himself with them, and them with him, in agreement as to their preaching. "I do not now speak of myself, but we have all taught so with one mouth, and still continue to teach so." For the verb kerussomen (we preach) is in the present tense -- intimating a continued act, or perseverance in teaching. [31] "If, then, it is otherwise, our apostleship is void: nay more -- so ye believed: your religion, therefore, goes for nothing."12. But of Christ. He now begins to prove the resurrection of all of us from that of Christ. For a mutual and reciprocal inference holds good on the one side and on the other, both affirmatively and negatively -- from Christ to us in this way: If Christ is risen, then we will rise -- If Christ is not risen, then we will not rise -- from us to Christ on the other hand: If we rise, then Christ is risen -- If we do not rise, then neither is Christ risen. The ground-work of the argument to be drawn from Christ to us in the former inference is this: "Christ did not die, or rise again for himself, but for us: hence his resurrection is the foundation. [32] of ours, and what was accomplished in him, must be fulfilled in us also." In the negative form, on the other hand, it is thus: "Otherwise he would have risen again needlessly and to no purpose, because the fruit of it is to be sought, not in his own person, but in his members."Observe the ground-work, on the other hand, of the former inference to be deduced from us to him; for the resurrection is not from nature, and comes from no other quarter than from Christ alone. For in Adam we die, and we recover life only in Christ; hence it follows that his resurrection is the foundation of ours, so that if that is taken away, it cannot stand [33] The ground-work of the negative inference has been already stated; for as he could not have risen again but on our account, his resurrection would be null and void, [34] if it were of no advantage to us.14. Then is our preaching vain -- not simply as having some mixture of falsehood, but as being altogether an empty fallacy. For what remains if Christ has been swallowed up by death -- if he has become extinct -- if he has been overwhelmed by the curse of

sin -- if, in fine, he has been overcome by Satan? In short, if that fundamental article is subverted, all that remains will be of no moment. For the same reason he adds, that their faith will be vain, for what solidity of faith will there be, where no hope of life is to be seen? But in the death of Christ, considered in itself, [35] there is seen nothing but ground of despair, for he cannot be the author of salvation to others, who has been altogether vanquished by death. Let us therefore bear in mind, that the entire gospel consists mainly in the death and resurrection of Christ, so that we must direct our chief attention to this, if we would desire, in a right and orderly manner, to make progress in the gospel -- nay more, if we would not remain barren and unfruitful. (2 Peter 1:8.)15. We are also found to be false witnesses. The other disadvantages, it is true, which he has just now recounted, were more serious, as regards us -- that faith was made vain -- that the whole doctrine of the gospel was useless and worthless, and that we were bereft of all hope of salvation. Yet this also was no trivial absurdity -- that the Apostles, who were ordained by God to be the heralds of his eternal truth, were detected as persons who had deceived the world with falsehoods; for this tends to God's highest dishonor.The expression, false witnesses of God, we may understand in two ways -- either that by lying they used the name of God under a false pretext, or that they were detected as liars, in testifying what they had received from God. The second of these I rather prefer, because it involves a crime that is much more heinous, and he had spoken previously as to men. [36] Now, therefore, he teaches that, if the resurrection of Christ is denied, God is made guilty of falsehood in the witnesses that have been brought forward and hired by him. [37] The reason, too, that is added, corresponds well -- because they had declared what was false, not as from themselves, but from God.I am at the same time well aware that there are some that give another rendering to the particle kata The old interpreter renders it against. [38] Erasmus, on the other hand -- concerning. [39] But, as it has also among the Greeks the force of apo, (from,) this signification appeared to me to be more in accordance with the Apostle's design. For he is not speaking here of the reputation of men, (as I have already stated, [40]) but he declares that God will be exposed to the charge of falsehood, inasmuch as what they publish has come forth from him. 17. Ye are yet in your sins For although Christ by his death atoned for our sins, that they might no more be imputed to us in the judgment of God, and hascrucified our old man, that its lusts might no longer reign in us, (Romans 6:6, 12;)and, in fine, hasby death destroyed the power of death, and the devil himself, (Hebrews 2:14;)yet there would have been none of all these things, if he had not, by rising again, come off victorious. Hence, if the resurrection is overthrown, the dominion of sin is set up anew.18. Then they who are fallen asleep. Having it in view to prove, that if the resurrection of Christ is taken away, faith is useless, and Christianity [41] is a mere deception, he had said that the living remain in their sins; but as there is a clearer illustration of this matter to be seen in the dead, he adduces them as an example. "Of what advantage were it to the dead that they once were Christians? Hence our brethren who are now dead, did to no purpose live in the faith of Christ." But if it is granted that the essence of the soul is immortal, this argument appears, at first sight, conclusive; for it will very readily be replied, that the dead have not perished, inasmuch as their souls live in a state of separation from their bodies. Hence some fanatics conclude that there is no life in the period intermediate between death and the resurrection; but this frenzy is easily refuted. [42] For although the souls of the dead are now living, and enjoy quiet repose, yet the whole of their felicity and consolation depends exclusively on the resurrection; because it is well with them on this account, and no other, that they wait for that day, on which they shall be called to the possession of the kingdom of God. Hence as to the hope of the dead, all is

over, unless that day shall sooner or later arrive.19. But if in this life Here is another absurdity -- that we do not merely by believing lose our time and pains, inasmuch as the fruit of it perishes at our death, but it were better for us not to believe; for the condition of unbelievers were preferable, and more to be desired. To believe in this life means here to limit the fruit of our faith to this life, so that our faith looks no farther, and does not extend beyond the confines of the present life. This statement shows more clearly that the Corinthians had been imposed upon by some mistaken fancy of a figurative resurrection, such as Hymeneus and Philetus, as though the last fruit of our faith were set before us in this life. (2 Timothy 2:17, 18.) For as the resurrection is the completion of our salvation, and as to all blessings is, as it were, the farthest goal, [43] the man who says that our resurrection is already past, leaves us nothing better to hope for after death. However this may be, this passage gives at all events no countenance to the frenzy of those who imagine that the soul sleeps as well as the body, until the day of the resurrection. [44] They bring forward, it is true, this objection -- that if the soul continued to live when separated from the body, Paul would not have said that, if the resurrection were taken away, we would have hope only in this life, inasmuch as there would still be some felicity remaining for the soul. To this, however, I reply, that Paul did not dream of Elysian fields, [45] and foolish fables of that sort, but takes it for granted, that the entire hope of Christians looks forward to the final day of judgment -- that pious souls do even at this day rest in the same expectation, and that, consequently, we are bereft of everything, if a confidence of this nature deceives us.But why does he say that we would be the most miserable of all men, as if the lot of the Christian were worse than that of the wicked? For all things, says Solomon, happen alike to the good and to the bad. (Ecclesiastes 9:2.) I answer, that all men, it is true, whether good or bad, are liable to distresses in common, and they feel in common the same inconveniences, and the same miseries; but there are two reasons why Christians have in all ages fared worse, in addition to which, there was one that was peculiar to the times of Paul. The first is, that while the Lord frequently chastises the wicked, too, with his lashes, and begins to inflict his judgments upon them, he at the same time peculiarly afflicts his own in various ways; -- in the first place, because he chastises those whom he loves, (Hebrews 12:6;) and secondly, in order that he may train them to patience, that he may try their obedience, and that he may gradually prepare them by the cross for a true renovation. However it may be as to this, that statement always holds good in the case of believers It is time, that judgment should begin at the house of God. (Jeremiah 25:29; 1 Peter 4:17 [46]) Again,we are reckoned as sheep appointed for slaughter.

(Psalm 44:22.)Again,ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:3.)Meanwhile, the condition of the wicked is for the most part the more desirable, because the Lord feeds them up, as hogs for the day of slaughter. The second reason is, that believers, even though they should abound in riches and in blessings of every kind, they nevertheless do not go to excess, and do not gormandize at their ease; in fine, they do not enjoy the world, as unbelievers do, but go forward with anxiety, constantly groaning, (2 Corinthians 5:2,) partly from a consciousness of their weakness, and partly from an eager longing for the future life. Unbelievers, on the other hand, are wholly intent on intoxicating themselves with present delights. [47]The third reason, which was peculiar, as I have said, to the age of the Apostle, is -- that at that time the name of Christians was so odious and abominable, that no one could then take upon himself the name of Christ without exposing his life to imminent peril. It is, therefore, not without good reason that he says that Christians would be the most miserable of all men, if their confidence were confined to this world.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 20. Nunc autem Christus resurrexit a mortuis, primitiae eorum qui domierunt, fuit. 21. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 21. Quandoquidem enim per hominem mors, etiam per hominem resurrectio mortuorum. 22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 22. Quemadmodum enim in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur. 23. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 23. Unusquisque autem in proprio ordine. Primitiae Christus, deinde, qui Christi erunt in adventu ipsius. 24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 24. Postea finis, quum tradiderit regnum Deo et Patri, quum aboleverit omnem principatum, et omnem potestatem, et virtutem. 25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 25. Oportet enim ipsum regnare, donec posuerit omnes inimicos sub pedes suos.26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.26. Novissimus destruetur hostis mors.27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.27. Omnia enim subjecit sub pedes eius: quum omnia dixerit, clarum est, quod omnia sunt subjecta praeter eum, qui omnia illi subjecit.28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.28. Quum autem subjecerit illi omnia, tunc et ipse Filius subjicietur ei, qui omnia illi subjecit, ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus.20. But now hath Christ risen. Having shown what dreadful confusion as to everything would follow, if we were to deny that the dead rise again, he now again assumes as certain, what he had sufficiently established previously -- that Christ has risen; and he adds that he is the first-fruits, [48] by a similitude taken, as it appears, from the ancient ritual of the law. For as in the first-fruits the produce of the entire year was consecrated, so the power of Christ's resurrection is extended to all of us -- unless you prefer to take it in a more simple way -- that in him the first fruit of the resurrection was gathered. I rather prefer, however, to understand the statement in this sense -- that the rest of the dead will follow him, as the entire harvest does the first-fruits; [49] and this is confirmed by the succeeding statement.21. Since by man came death The point to be proved is, that Christ is the first-fruits, and that it was not merely as an individual that he was raised up from the dead. He proves it from contraries, because death is not from nature, but from man's sin. As, therefore, Adam did not die for himself alone, but for us all, it follows, that Christ in like manner, who is the antitype, [50] did not rise for himself alone; for he came, that he might restore everything that had been ruined in Adam.We must observe, however, the force of the argument; for he does not contend by similitude, or by example, but has recourse to opposite causes for the purpose of proving opposite effects. The cause of death is Adam, and we die in him: hence Christ, whose office it is to restore to us what we lost in Adam, is the cause of life to us; and his resurrection is the ground-work and pledge of ours. And as the former was the beginning of death, so the latter is of life. In the fifth chapter of the Romans (Romans 5) he follows out the same comparison; but there is this difference, that in that passage he reasons respecting a spiritual life and death, while he treats

here of the resurrection of the body, which is the fruit of spiritual life.23. Every one in his own order. Here we have an anticipation of a question that might be proposed: "If Christ's life," some one might say, "draws ours along with it, why does not this appear? Instead of this, while Christ has risen from the grave, we lie rotting there." Paul's answer is, that God has appointed another order of things. Let us therefore reckon it enough, that we now have in Christ the first-fruits, [51] and that his coming [52] will be the time of our resurrection. For our life must still be hid with him, because he has not yet appeared. (Colossians 3:3, 4.) It would therefore be preposterous to wish to anticipate that day of the revelation of Christ.24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered. He put a bridle upon the impatience of men, when he forewarned them, that the fit time for the new life [53] would not be before Christ's coming. But as this world is like a stormy sea, in which we are continually tossed, and our condition is so uncertain, or rather is so full of troubles, and there are in all things such sudden changes, this might be apt to trouble weak minds. Hence he now leads them forward to that day, saying that all things will be set in order. Then, therefore, shall come the end -- that is, the goal of our course -- a quiet harbour -- a condition that will no longer be exposed to changes; and he at the same time admonishes us, that that end must be waited for, because it is not befitting that we should be crowned in the middle of the course. In what respect Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, will be explained in a little. When he says, God and the Father, this may be taken in two senses -- either that God the Father is called the God and Father of Christ, or that the name of Father is added by way of explanation. The conjunction et (and) will in the latter case mean namely. As to the former signification, there is nothing either absurd, or unusual, in the saying, that Christ is inferior to God, in respect of his human nature.When he shall have abolished all rule. Some understand this as referring to the powers that are opposed to Christ himself; for they have an eye to what immediately follows, until he shall have put all his enemies, etc. This clause, however, corresponds with what goes before, when he said, that Christ would not sooner deliver up the kingdom Hence there is no reason why we should restrict in such a manner the statement before us. I explain it, accordingly, in a general way, and understand by it -- all powers that are lawful and ordained by God. (Romans 13:1.) In the first place, what we find in the Prophets (Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7) as to the darkening of the sun and moon, that God alone may shine forth, while it has begun to be fulfilled under the reign of Christ, will, nevertheless, not be fully accomplished until the last day; but then every height shall be brought low, (Luke 3:5,) that the glory of God may alone shine forth. Farther, we know that all earthly principalities and honors are connected exclusively with the keeping up of the present life, and, consequently, are a part of the world. Hence it follows that they are temporary. Hence as the world will have an end, so also will government, and magistracy, and laws, and distinctions of ranks, and different orders of dignities, and everything of that nature. There will be no more any distinction between servant and master, between king and peasant, between magistrate and private citizen. Nay more, there will be then an end put to angelic principalities in heaven, and to ministries and superiorities in the Church, that God may exercise his power and dominion by himself alone, and not by the hands of men or angels. The angels, it is true, will continue to exist, and they will also retain their distinction. The righteous, too, will shine forth, every one according to the measure of his grace; but the angels will have to resign the dominion, which they now exercise in the name and by the commandment of God. Bishops, teachers, and Prophets will cease to hold these distinctions, and will resign the office which they now discharge. Rule, and authority, and power have much the same meaning in this passage; but these three terms are conjoined to bring

out the meaning more fully.25. For he must reign He proves that the time is not yet come when Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, with the view of showing at the same time that the end has not yet come, when all things will be put into a right and tranquil state, because Christ has not yet subdued all his enemies. Now that must be brought about, because the Father has placed him at his right hand with this understanding, that he is not to resign the authority that he has received, until they have been subdued under his power. And this is said for the consolation of the pious, that they may not be impatient on account of the long delay of the resurrection. This statement occurs in Psalm 110:1Paul, however, may seem to refine upon the word until beyond what the simple and natural meaning of the word requires; for the Spirit does not in that passage give intimation of what shall be afterwards, but simply of what must be previously. I answer, that Paul does not conclude that Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, on the ground of its having been so predicted in the Psalm, but he has made use of this quotation from the Psalm, for the purpose of proving that the day of delivering up the kingdom had not yet arrived, because Christ has still to do with his enemies. Paul, however, explains in passing what is meant by Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father, when in place of that figurative expression he makes use of the simple word reign.The last enemy -- death We see that there are still many enemies that resist Christ, and obstinately oppose his reign. But death will be the last enemy [54] that will be destroyed. Hence Christ must still be the administrator of his Father's kingdom. Let believers, therefore, be of good courage, and not give up hope, until everything that must precede the resurrection be accomplished. It is asked, however, in what sense he affirms that death shall be the last enemy [55] that will be destroyed, when it has been already destroyed by Christ's death, or at least, by his resurrection, which is the victory over death, and the attainment of life? I answer, that it was destroyed in such a way as to be no longer deadly to believers, but not in such a way as to occasion them no uneasiness. The Spirit of God, it is true, dwelling in us is life; but we still carry about with us a mortal body. (1 Peter 1:24.) The substance of death in us will one day be drained off, but it has not been so as yet. We are born again of incorruptible seed, (1 Peter 1:23,) but we have not yet arrived at perfection. Or to sum up the matter briefly in a similitude, the sword of death which could penetrate into our very hearts has been blunted. It wounds nevertheless still, but without any danger; [56] for we die, but by dying we enter into life. In fine, as Paul teaches elsewhere as to sin, (Romans 6:12,) such must be our view as to death -- that it dwells indeed in us, but it does not reign27. He hath put all things under his feet Some think that this quotation is taken from Psalm 8:6, and I have no objection to this, though there would be nothing out of place in reckoning this statement to be an inference that is drawn by Paul from the nature of Christ's kingdom. Let us follow, however, the more generally received opinion. Paul shows from that Psalm, that God the Father has conferred upon Christ the power of all things, because it is said, Thou hast put all things under his feet The words are in themselves plain, were it not that there are two difficulties that present themselves -- first, that the Prophet speaks here not of Christ alone, but of the whole human race; and secondly, that by all things he means only those things that have to do with the convenience of the life of the body, as we find in Genesis 2:19. The solution of the former difficulty is easy; for as Christ is the first-born of every creature, (Colossians 1:15,) and the heir of all things, (Hebrews 1:2,) God, the Father, has not conferred upon the human race the use of all creatures in such a way as to hinder that in the mean time the chief power, and, so to speak, the rightful dominion, remain in Christ's hands. Farther, we know, that Adam lost the right that had been conferred upon him, so that we can no longer call anything our own. For the earth

was cursed, (Genesis 3:17,) and everything that it contains; and it is through Christ alone that we recover what has been taken from us. [57] It is with propriety, therefore, that this commendation belongs to Christ personally -- that the Father has put all things under his feet, inasmuch as we rightfully possess nothing except in him. For how shall we become heirs of God, if we are not his sons, and by whom are we made his sons but by Christ. The solution of the second difficulty is as follows -- that the Prophet, it is true, especially mentions fowls of heaven, fishes of the sea, and beasts of the field, because this kind of dominion is visible, and is more apparent to the eye; but at the same time the general statement reaches much farther -- to the heavens and the earth, and everything that they contain. Now the subjection must have a corrrespondence with the character of him who rules -- that is, it has a suitableness to his condition, so as to correspond with it. Now Christ does not need animals for food, or other creatures for any necessity. He rules, therefore, that all things may be subservient to his glory, inasmuch as he adopts us as participants in his dominion. The fruit of this openly appears in visible creatures; but believers feel in their consciences an inward fruit, which, as I have said, extends farther.All things put under him, except him who put all things under him. He insists upon two things -- first, that all things must be brought under subjection to Christ before he restores to the Father the dominion of the world, and secondly, that the Father has given all things into the hands of his Son in such a way as to retain the principal right in his own hands. From the former of these it follows, that the hour of the last judgment is not yet come -- from the second, that Christ is now the medium between us and the Father in such a way as to bring us at length to him. Hence he immediately infers as follows: After he shall have subjected all things to him, then shall the Son subject himself to the Father. "Let us wait patiently until Christ shall vanquish all his enemies, and shall bring us, along with himself, under the dominion of God, that the kingdom of God may in every respect be accomplished in us."This statement, however, is at first view at variance with what we read in various passages of Scripture respecting the eternity of Christ's kingdom. For how will these things correspond -- Of his kingdom there will be no end, (Daniel 7:14, 27; Luke 1:33; 2 Peter 1:11,) and He himself shall be subjected? The solution of this question will open up Paul's meaning more clearly. In the first place, it must be observed, that all power was delivered over to Christ, inasmuch as he was manifested in the flesh. It is true that such distinguished majesty would not correspond with a mere man, but, notwithstanding, the Father has exalted him in the same nature in which he was abased, and hasgiven, him a name, before which every knee must bow, etc. (Philippians 2:9, 10.)Farther, it must be observed, that he has been appointed Lord and highest King, so as to be as it were the Father's Vicegerent in the government of the world -- not that he is employed and the Father unemployed (for how could that be, inasmuch as he is the wisdom and counsel of the Father, is of one essence with him, and is therefore himself God?) But the reason why the Scripture testifies, that Christ now holds dominion over the heaven and the earth in the room of the Father is -- that we may not think that there is any other governor, lord, protector, or judge of the dead and living, but may fix our contemplation on him alone. [58] We acknowledge, it is true, God as the ruler, but it is in the face of the man Christ. But Christ will then restore the kingdom which he has received, that we may cleave wholly to God. [59] Nor will he in this way resign the kingdom, but will transfer it in a manner from his humanity to his glorious divinity, because a way of approach will then be opened up, from which our infirmity now keeps us back. Thus then Christ will be subjected to the Father, because the vail being then removed, we shall openly behold God reigning in his majesty, [60] and Christ's humanity will then no longer be interposed to keep us back from a closer view of

God. [61]28. That God may be all in all Will it be so in the Devil and wicked men also? By no means -- unless perhaps we choose to take the verb to be as meaning, to be known, and openly beheld. In that case the meaning will be: "For the present, as the Devil resists God, as wicked men confound and disturb the order which he has established, and as endless occasions of offense present themselves to our view, it does not distinctly appear that God is all in all; but when Christ will have executed the judgment which has been committed to him by the Father, and will have cast down Satan and all the wicked, the glory of God will be conspicuous in their destruction. The same thing may be said also respecting powers that are sacred and lawful in their kind, for they in a manner hinder God's being seen aright by us in himself. Then, on the other hand, God, holding the government of the heaven and the earth by himself, and without any medium, will in that respect be all, and will consequently at last be so, not only in all persons, but also in all creatures."This is a pious interpretation, [62] and, as it corresponds sufficiently well with the Apostle's design, I willingly embrace it. There would, however, be nothing out of place in understanding it as referring exclusively to believers, in whom God has now begun his kingdom, and will then perfect it, and in such a way that they shall cleave to him wholly. Both meanings sufficiently refute of themselves the wicked frenzies of some who bring forward this passage in proof of them. Some imagine, that God will be all in all in this respect, that all things will vanish and dissolve into nothing. Paul's words, however, mean nothing but this, that all things will be brought back to God, as their alone beginning and end, that they may be closely bound to him. Others infer from this that the Devil and all the wicked will be saved -- as if God would not altogether be better known in the Devil's destruction, than if he were to associate the Devil with himself, and make him one with himself. We see then, how impudently madmen of this sort wrest this statement of Paul for maintaining their blasphemies.

1 Corinthians 15:29-34

29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? 29. Quid alioqui facient qui baptizantur pro mortuis, si omnino mortui non resurgunt? quid etiam baptizantur pro mortuis? 30. And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? 30. Quid etiam nos periclitamur omni hora? 31. I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 31. Quotidie morior per nostram gloriam, fratres, quam habeo in Christo Iesu Domino nostro. 32. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. 32. Si secundum hominem pugnavi ad bestias Ephesi, quid mihi prodest? edamus et bibamus: eras enim moriemur. 33. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 33. Ne erretis: Mores honestos corrumpunt mala colloquia. 34. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. 34. Evigilate juste, et ne peccetis: ignorantiam enim Dei quidam habent: ad pudorem vobis incutiendum dico.29. Else what shall they do He resumes his enumeration of the absurdities, which follow from the error under which the Corinthians labored. He had set himself in the outset to do this, but he introduced instruction and consolation, by means of which he interrupted in some degree the thread of his discourse. To this he now returns. In the first place he brings forward this objection -- that the baptism which those received who are already regarded as dead, will be of no avail if there is no resurrection. Before expounding this passage, it is of importance to set aside the common exposition, which rests upon the authority of the ancients, and is received with almost universal consent. Chrysostom, therefore, and Ambrose, who are followed by others, are of opinion [63] that the Corinthians were accustomed, when any one had been deprived of baptism by sudden death, to substitute some living person in the place of the deceased -- to be baptized at his grave. They at the same time do not deny that this custom was corrupt, and full of superstition, but they say that Paul, for the purpose of confuting the Corinthians, was contented with this single fact, [64] that while they denied that there was a resurrection, they in the mean time declared in this way that they believed in it. For my part, however, I cannot by any means be persuaded to believe this, [65] for it is not to be credited, that those who denied that there was a resurrection had, along with others, made use of a custom of this sort. Paul then would have had immediately this reply made to him: "Why do you trouble us with that old wives' superstition, which you do not yourself approve of?" Farther, if they had made use of it, they might very readily have replied: "If this has been hitherto practiced by us through mistake, rather let the mistake be corrected, than that it should have weight attached to it for proving a point of such importance."Granting, however, that the argument was conclusive, can we suppose that, if such a corruption as this had prevailed among the Corinthians, the Apostle, after reproving almost all their faults, would have been silent as to this one? He has censured above some practices that are not of so great moment. He has not scrupled to give directions as to women's having the head covered, and other things of that nature. Their corrupt administration of the Supper he has not merely reproved, but has inveighed against it with the greatest keenness. Would he in the meantime have uttered not a single word in reference to such a base profanation of baptism, which was a much more grievous fault? He has inveighed

with great vehemence against those who, by frequenting the banquets of the Gentiles, silently countenanced their superstitions. Would he have suffered this horrible superstition of the Gentiles to be openly carried on in the Church itself under the name of sacred baptism? But granting that he might have been silent, what shall we say when he expressly makes mention of it? Is it, I pray you, a likely thing that the Apostle would bring forward in the shape of an argument a sacrilege [66] by which baptism was polluted, and converted into a mere magical abuse, and yet not say even one word in condemnation of the fault? When he is treating of matters that are not of the highest importance, he introduces nevertheless this parenthesis, that he speaks as a man. (Romans 3:5; Romans 6:19; Galatians 3:15.) Would not this have been a more befitting and suitable place for such a parenthesis? Now from his making mention of such a thing without any word of reproof, who would not understand it to be a thing that was allowed? For my part, I assuredly understand him to speak here of the right use of baptism, and not of an abuse of it of that nature.Let us now inquire as to the meaning. At one time I was of opinion, that Paul here pointed out the universal design of baptism, for the advantage of baptism is not confined to this life; but on considering the words afterwards with greater care, I perceived that Paul here points out something peculiar. For he does not speak of all when he says, What shall they do, who are baptized? etc. Besides, I am not fond of interpretations, that are more ingenious than solid. What then? I say, that those are baptized for dead, who are looked upon as already dead, and who have altogether despaired of life; and in this way the particle huper will have the force of the Latin pro, as when we say, habere pro derelicto; -- to reckon as abandoned [67] This signification is not a forced one. Or if you would prefer another signification, to be baptized for the dead will mean -- to be baptized so as to profit the dead -- not the living, [68] Now it is well known, that from the very commencement of the Church, those who had, while yet catechumens, [69] fallen into disease, [70] if their life was manifestly in danger, were accustomed to ask baptism, that they might not leave this world before they had made a profession of Christianity; and this, in order that they might carry with them the seal of their salvation. It appears from the writings of the Fathers, that as to this matter, also, there crept in afterwards a superstition, for they inveigh against those who delayed baptism till the time of their death, that, being once for all purged from all their sins, they might in this state meet the judgment of God. [71] A gross error truly, which proceeded partly from great ignorance, and partly from hypocrisy! Paul, however, here simply mentions a custom that was sacred, and in accordance with the Divine institution -- that if a catechumen, who had already in his heart embraced the Christian faith, [72] saw that death was impending over him, he asked baptism, partly for his own consolation, and partly with a view to the edification of his brethren. For it is no small consolation to carry the token of his salvation sealed in his body. There is also an edification, not to be lost sight of -- that of making a confession of his faith. They were, then, baptized for the dead, inasmuch as it could not be of any service to them in this world, and the very occasion of their asking baptism was that they despaired of life. We now see that it is not without good reason that Paul asks, what they would do if there remained no hope after death? [73] This passage shows us, too, that those impostors who had disturbed the faith of the Corinthians, had contrived a figurative resurrection, making the farthest goal of believers to be in this world, His repeating it a second time, Why are they also baptized for the dead? gives it greater emphasis: "Not only are those baptized who think that they are to live longer, but those too who have death before their eyes; and that, in order that they may in death reap the fruit of their baptism."30. Why are we also? "If our resurrection and ultimate felicity are in this world, why do we

of our own accord abandon it, and voluntarily encounter death?" The argument might also be unfolded in this manner: "To no purpose would we stand in peril every hour, if we did not look for a better life, after death has been passed through." He speaks, however, of voluntary dangers, to which believers expose their lives for the purpose of confessing Christ. "This magnanimity of soul, I say, in despising death, would be ascribed to rashness rather than firmness, if the saints perished at death, for it is a diabolical madness to purchase by death an immortal fame.^" [74]31. I die daily Such a contempt of death he declares to be in himself, that he may not seem to talk bravely when beyond the reach of danger. "I am every day," says he, "incessantly beset with death. What madness were it in me to undergo so much misery, if there were no reward in reserve for me in heaven? Nay more, if my glory and bliss lie in this world, why do I not rather enjoy them, than of my own accord resign them?" He says that he dies daily, because he was constantly beset with dangers so formidable and so imminent, that death in a manner was impending over him. A similar expression occurs in Psalm 44:22, and we shall, also, find one of the same kind occurring in the second Epistle. (2 Corinthians 11:23.)By our glory. The old translation reads propter, (because of,) [75] but it has manifestly arisen from the ignorance of transcribers; for in the Greek particle [76] there is no ambiguity. It is then an oath, by which he wished to arouse the Corinthians, to be more attentive in listening to him, when reasoning as to the matter in hand. [77] "Brethren, I am not some philosopher prattling in the shade. [78] As I expose myself every day to death, it is necessary that I should think in good earnest of the heavenly life. Believe, therefore, a man who is thoroughly experienced."It is also a form of oath that is not common, but is suited to the subject in hand. Corresponding to this was that celebrated oath of Demosthenes, which is quoted by Fabius, [79] when he swore by the Shades of those who had met death in the field of Marathon, while his object was to exhort them to defend the Republic. [80] So in like manner Paul here swears by the glory which Christians have in Christ. Now that glory is in heaven. He shows, then, that what they called in question was a matter of which he was so well assured, that he was prepared to make use of a sacred oath -- a display of skill which must be carefully noticed.32. If according to the manner of men He brings forward a notable instance of death, from which it might be clearly seen that he would have been worse than a fool, if there were not a better life in reserve for us beyond death; for it was an ignominious kind of death to which he was exposed. "To what purpose were it," says he, "for me to incur infamy in connection with a most cruel death, if all my hopes were confined to this world?" According to the manner of men, means in this passage, in respect of human life, so that we obtain a reward in this world.Now by those that fought with beasts, are meant, not those that were thrown to wild beasts, as Erasmus mistakingly imagined, but those that were condemned to be set to fight with wild beasts -- to furnish an amusement to the people. There were, then, two kinds of punishment, that were totally different -- to be thrown to wild beasts, and to fight with wild beasts. For those that were thrown to wild beasts were straightway torn in pieces; but those that fought with wild beasts went forth armed into the arena, that if they were endued with strength, courage, and agility, they might effect their escape by dispatching the wild beasts. Nay more, there was a game in which those who fought with wild beasts were trained, like the gladiators [81] Usually, however, very few escaped, because the man who had dispatched one wild beast, was required to fight with a second, [82] until the cruelty of the spectators was satiated, or rather was melted into pity; and yet there were found men so abandoned and desperate, as to hire themselves out for this! [83] And this, I may remark by the way, is that kind of hunting that is punished so severely by the ancient canons, as even civil laws brand it with a mark of infamy. [84]

I return to Paul. [85] We see what an extremity God allowed his servant to come to, and how wonderfully, too, he rescued him. Luke, [86] however, makes no mention of this fight. Hence we may infer that he endured many things that have not been committed to writing.Let us eat and drink This is a saying of the Epicureans, who reckon man's highest good as consisting in present enjoyment. Isaiah also testifies that it is a saying made use of by profligate persons, (Isaiah 22:13,) who, when the Prophets of God threaten them with ruin, [87] with the view of calling them to repentance, making sport of those threatenings, encourage themselves in wantonness and unbridled mirth, and in order to show more openly their obstinacy, say, "Since die we must, let us meanwhile enjoy the time, and not torment ourselves before the time with empty fears." As to what a certain General said to his army, [88] "My fellowsoldiers, let us dine heartily, for we shall sup to-day in the regions below," [89] that was an exhortation to meet death with intrepidity, and has nothing to do with this subject. I am of opinion, that Paul made use of a jest in common use among abandoned and desperately wicked persons, or (to express it shortly) a common proverb among the Epicureans to the following purpose: "If death is the end of man, there is nothing better than that he should indulge in pleasure, free from care, so long as life lasts." Sentiments of this kind are to be met with frequently in Horace. [90]33. Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners As nothing is easier than to glide into profane speculation, under the pretext of inquiring, [91] he meets this danger, by warning them that evil communications have more effect than we might suppose, in polluting our minds and corrupting our morals. [92] To show this, he makes use of a quotation from the poet Menander, [93] as we are at liberty to borrow from every quarter everything that has come forth from God. And as all truth is from God, there is no doubt that the Lord has put into the mouth of the wicked themselves, whatever contains true and salutary doctrine. I prefer, however, that, for the handling of this subject, recourse should be had to Basil's Oration to the Young. Paul, then, being aware that this proverb was in common use among the Greeks, chose rather to make use of it, that it might make its way into their minds more readily, than to express the same thing in his own words. For they would more readily receive what they had been accustomed to -- as we have experience of in proverbs with which we are familiar.Now it is a sentiment that is particularly worthy of attention, for Satan, when he cannot make a direct assault upon us, [94] deludes us under this pretext, that there is nothing wrong in our raising any kind of disputation with a view to the investigation of truth. Here, therefore, Paul in opposition to this, warns us that we must guard against evil communications, as we would against the most deadly poison, because, insinuating themselves secretly into our minds, they straightway corrupt our whole life. Let us, then, take notice, that nothing is more pestilential than corrupt doctrine and profane disputations, which draw us off, even in the smallest degree, from a right and simple faith; [95] for it is not without good reason that Paul exhorts us not to be deceived. [96]34. Awake righteously As he saw that the Corinthians were in a manner intoxicated, [97] through excessive carelessness, he arouses them from their torpor. By adding, however, the adverb righteously, he intimates in what way he would have them wake up For they were sufficiently attentive and clear-sighted as to their own affairs: nay more, there can be no doubt that they congratulated themselves on their acuteness; but in the mean time they were drowsy, where they ought most of all to have been on the watch. He says accordingly, awake righteously -- that is, "Direct your mind and aim to things that are good and holy."He adds at the same time the reason, -- For some, says he, among you are in ignorance of God This required to be stated: otherwise they might have thought that the admonition was unnecessary; for they looked upon themselves as marvellously

wise. Now he convicts them of ignorance of God, that they may know that the main thing was wanting in them. A useful admonition to those who lay out all their agility in flying through the air, while in the mean time they do not see what is before their feet, and are stupid where they ought, most of all, to have been clear-sighted.To your shame Just as fathers, when reproving their children for their faults, put them to shame, in order that they may by that shame cover their shame. When, however, he declared previously that he did not wish to shame them, (1 Corinthians 4:14,) his meaning was that he did not wish to hold them up to disgrace, by bringing forward their faults to public view in a spirit of enmity and hatred. [98] In the mean time, however, it was of advantage for them to be sharply reproved, as they were still indulging themselves in evils of such magnitude. Now Paul in reproaching them with ignorance of God, strips them entirely of all honor.

Chapter 5

1 Corinthians 15:35-50

35. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? 35. Sed dicet quispiam: Quomodo suscitabuntur mortui? quali nutem corpore venient? 36. Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 36. Demens, tu quod seminas, non vivificatur nisi mortuum fuerit. 37. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: 37. Et quod seminas, non corpus quod nascentur, seminas, sed nudum granum: exempli gratis, tritici, nut alterius cujusvis generis: 38. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. 38. Deus autem illi dat corpus, quemadmodum voluerit, et unicuique seminum proprium corpus. 39. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 39. Non omnis caro, eadem caro: sed alia caro hominum, alia vero cato pecudum, alia volucrum, alia piscium. 40. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 40. Sunt et corpora coelestia, sunt corpora terrestria: quin etiam alia coelestium gloria, alia terrestrium.41. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.41. Alia gloria solis, alia gloria lunae, alia gloria stellarum: stella a stella differt in gloria:42. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:42. Sic et resurrectio mortuorum. Seminatur in corruptione, re surgit in incorruptione: [99]43. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:43. Seminatur in ignominia, resurgit in gloria: seminatur in infirmitate, resurgit in potentia:44. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.44. Seminatur corpus animale, resurgit corpus spirituale: est corpus animale, est et corpus spirituale.45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.45. Quemadmodum et scriptum eat, (Genesis 2:7,) Factus est primus homo Adam in animam viventem, ultimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem.46. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.46. Sed non primum quod spirituale est: sed animale, deinde spirituale.47. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.47. Primus homo ex terra terrenus, secundus homo, Dominus e coelo.48. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.48. Qualis terrenus, tales et terreni, et qualis coelestis, tales et coelestes.49. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.49. Et quemadmodum portavimus imaginem terreni, portabimus et imaginem coelestis.50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.50. Hoc autem dico, fratres, quod cato et sanguis regnum Dei hereditate possidere non possunt, neque corruptio incorruptionem hereditate possidebit.35. How will they be raised up? There is nothing that is more at variance with human reason than this article of faith. For who but God alone could persuade us that bodies, which are now liable to corruption, will, after having rotted away, or after they have been consumed by fire, or torn in pieces by wild beasts, will not merely be restored entire, but in a greatly better condition. Do not all our apprehensions of things straightway reject this as a thing

fabulous, nay, most absurd? [100] Paul, with the view of removing entirely this appearance of absurdity, makes use of an anhypophora, [101] that is, he brings forward by way of objection, in the person of another, what appears at first view to be at variance with the doctrine of a resurrection. For this question is not that of one who inquires doubtingly as to the mode, but of one who argues from impossibility -- that is, what is said as to the resurrection is a thing incredible. Hence in his reply he repels such an objection with severity. Let us observe, then, that the persons who are here introduced as speaking, are those who endeavor to disparage, in a way of scoffing, a belief in the resurrection, on the ground of its being a thing that is impossible.36. Thou fool, that which thou sowest The Apostle might have replied, that the mode, which is to us incomprehensible, is nevertheless easy with God. Hence, we must not here form our judgment according to our own understanding, but must assign to the stupendous and secret power of God the honor of believing, that it will accomplish what we cannot comprehend. He goes to work, however, in another way. For he shows, that the resurrection is so far from being against nature, that we have every day a clear illustration of it in the course of nature itself -- in the growth of the fruits of the earth. For from what but from rottenness spring the fruits that we gather out of the earth? For when the seed has been sown, unless the grains die, there will be no increase. Corruption, then, being the commencement and cause of production, we have in this a sort of picture of the resurrection. Hence it follows, that we are beyond measure spiteful and ungrateful in estimating the power of God, if we take from him what is already manifest before our eyes.37. Thou sowest not that body that will spring up. This comparison consists of two parts -- first, that it is not to be wondered that bodies rise from rottenness, inasmuch as the same thing takes place as to seed; and secondly, that it is not at variance with reason, that our bodies should be restored in another condition, since, from bare grain, God brings forth so many ears of corn, clothed with admirable contrivance, and stored with grains of superior quality. As, however, he might seem to intimate, by speaking in this way, that many bodies will therefore rise out of one, he modifies his discourse in another way, by saying that God forms the body as it pleases him, meaning that in that also there is a difference in respect of quality. He adds, to every seed its own body By this clause he restricts what he had said respecting another body; for he says that, while the body is different, it is in such a way as to retain, nevertheless, its particular kind.39. All flesh is not, etc. Here we have another comparison leading to the same conclusion, though there are some that explain it otherwise. For when he says, that under the name of flesh is comprehended the body of a man as well as of a beast, and yet the flesh in those two cases is different, he means by this that the substance indeed is the same, but there is a difference as to quality. The sum is this -- that whatever diversity we see in any particular kind is a sort of prelude of the resurrection, because God clearly shows, that it is no difficult thing with him to renew our bodies by changing the present condition of things. [102]41. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon Not only is there a difference between heavenly bodies and earthly, but even the heavenly bodies have not all the same glory; for the sun surpasses the moon, and the other stars differ from each other. This dissimilarity, accordingly, appears [103] in the resurrection of the dead. A mistake, however, is commonly fallen into in the application; [104] for it is supposed that Paul meant to say, that, after the resurrection, the saints will have different degrees of honor and glory. This, indeed, is perfectly true, and is proved by other declarations of Scripture; but it has nothing to do with Paul's object. For he is not arguing as to what difference of condition there will be among the saints after the resurrection, but in what respect our bodies at present differ from those that we will one day

receive. [105]He removes, then, every idea of absurdity, by instituting this comparison: The substance of the sun and moon is the same, but there is a great difference between them in point of dignity and excellence. Is it to be wondered, then, if our body puts on a more excellent quality? [106] "I do not teach that anything will take place at the resurrection but what is already presented before the eyes of all." That such is the meaning of the words is clear from the context. For whence and for what purpose would Paul make such a transition, were he now comparing them with one another in respect of the difference of their condition, while up to this point he has been comparing the present condition of all with their future condition, and immediately proceeds with that comparison?43. It is sown in corruption That there may be no doubt remaining, Paul explains himself, by unfolding the difference between their present condition, and that which will be after the resurrection. What connection, then, would there be in his discourse, if he had intended in the first instance [107] to distinguish between the different degrees of future glory among the saints? There can, therefore, be no doubt, that he has been, up to this point, following out one subject. He now returns to the first similitude that he had made use of, but applies it more closely to his design. Or, if you prefer it, keeping up that similitude, he figuratively compares the time of the present life to the seed-time, and the resurrection to the harvest; and he says, that our body is now, indeed, subject to mortality and ignominy, but will then be glorious and incorruptible. He says the same thing in other words in Philippians 3:21Christ will change our vile body,

that he may make it like to his own glorious body.44. It is sown an animal body. As he could not express each particular by enumerating one by one, he sums up all comprehensively in one word, by saying that the body is now animal, [108] but it will then be spiritual. Now that is called animal which is quickened by (anima) the soul: that is spiritual which is quickened by the Spirit. [109] Now it is the soul that quickens the body, so as to keep it from being a dead carcase. Hence it takes its title very properly from it. After the resurrection, on the other hand, that quickening influence, which it will receive from the Spirit, will be more excellent. [110] Let us, however, always bear in mind, what we have seen previously -- that the substance of the body is the same, [111] and that it is the quality only that is here treated of. Let the present quality of the body be called, for the sake of greater plainness, animation; [112] let the future receive the name of inspiration. For as to the soul's now quickening the body, that is effected through the intervention of many helps; for we stand in need of drink, food, clothing, sleep, and other things of a similar nature. Hence the weakness of animation is clearly manifested. The energy of the Spirit, on the other hand, for quickening, will be much more complete, and, consequently, exempted from necessities of that nature. This is the simple and genuine meaning of the Apostle; that no one may, by philosophizing farther, indulge in airy speculations, as those do, who suppose that the substance of the body will be spiritual, while there is no mention made here of substance, and no change will be made upon it. 45. As it is written, The first Adam was made Lest it should seem to be some new contrivance as to the animal body, [113] he quotes Scripture, which declares that Adam became a living soul, (Genesis 2:7) -- meaning, that his body was quickened by the soul, so that he became a living man. It is asked, what is the meaning of the word soul here? It is well known, that the Hebrew word nphs, (nephesh,) which Moses makes use of, is taken in a variety of senses; but in this passage it is taken to mean either vital motion, or the very essence of life itself. The second of these I rather prefer. I observe that the same thing is affirmed as to beasts -- that they were made a living soul, (Genesis 1:20, 24;) but as the soul of every animal must be judged of according to its kind, there is nothing to hinder that a soul, that is to say, vital motion, may be common to all; and yet at the

same time the soul of man may have something peculiar and distinguishing, namely, immortal essence, as the light of intelligence and reason.The last Adam. This expression we do not find anywhere written. [114] Hence the phrase, It is written, must be understood as referring exclusively to the first clause; but after bringing forward this testimony of Scripture, the Apostle now begins in his own person to draw a contrast between Christ and Adam. "Moses relates that Adam was furnished with a living soul; Christ, on the other hand, is endowed with a life-giving Spirit. Now it is a much greater thing to be life, or the source of life, than simply to live." [115] It must be observed, however, that Christ did also, like us, become a living soul; but, besides the soul, the Spirit of the Lord was also poured-out upon him, that by his power he might rise again from the dead, and raise up others, This, therefore, must be observed, in order that no one may imagine, (as Apollinaris [116] did of old,) that the Spirit was in Christ in place of a soul. And independently of this, the interpretation of this passage may be taken from the eighth chapter of the Romans, where the Apostle declares, that the body, indeed, is dead, on account of sin, and we carry in us the elements of death; but that the Spirit of Christ, who raised him up from the dead, dwelleth also in us, and that he is life, to raise up us also one day from the dead. (Romans 8:10, 11.) From this you see, that we have living souls, inasmuch as we are men, but that we have the life-giving Spirit of Christ poured out upon us by the grace of regeneration. In short, Paul's meaning is, that the condition that we obtain through Christ is greatly superior to the lot of the first man, because a living soul was conferred upon Adam in his own name, and in that of his posterity, but Christ has procured for us the Spirit, who is life.Now as to his calling Christ the last Adam, the reason is this, that as the human race was created in the first man, so it is renewed in Christ. I shall express it again, and more distinctly: All men were created in the first man, because, whatever God designed to give to all, he conferred upon that one man, so that the condition of mankind was settled in his person. He by his fall [117] ruined himself and those that were his, because he drew them all, along with himself, into the same ruin: Christ came to restore our nature from ruin, and raise it up to a better condition than ever. They [118] are then, as it were, two sources, or two roots of the human race. Hence it is not without good reason, that the one is called the first man, and the other the last. This, however, gives no support to those madmen, who make Christ to be one of ourselves, as though there were and always had been only two men, and that this multitude which we behold, were a mere phantom! A similar comparison occurs in Romans 5:1246. But this is not first, which is spiritual. "It is necessary," says he, "that before we are restored in Christ, we derive our origin from Adam, and resemble him. Let us, therefore, not wonder, if we begin with the living soul, for as being born precedes in order being born again, so living precedes rising again."47. The first Adam was from the earth. The animal life comes first, because the earthy man is first. [119] The spiritual life will come afterwards, as Christ, the heavenly man, came after Adam. Now the Manichees perverted this passage, with the view of proving that Christ brought a body from heaven into the womb of the Virgin. They mistakingly imagined, however, that Paul speaks here of the substance of the body, while he is discoursing rather as to its condition, or quality. Hence, although the first man had an immortal soul, and that too, not taken from the earth, yet he, nevertheless, savoured of the earth, from which his body had sprung, and on which he had been appointed to live. Christ, on the other hand, brought us from heaven a life-giving Spirit, that he might regenerate us into a better life, and elevated above the earth. [120] In fine, we have it from Adam -- that we live in this world, as branches from the root: Christ, on the other hand, is the beginning and author of the heavenly life. But some one will say in

reply, Adam is said to be from the earth -- Christ from heaven; the nature of the comparison [121] requires this much, that Christ have his body from heaven, as the body of Adam was formed from the earth; or, at least, that the origin of man's soul should be from the earth, but that Christ's soul had come forth from heaven. I answer, that Paul had not contrasted the two departments of the subject with such refinement and minuteness, (for this was not necessary;) but when treating of the nature of Christ and Adam, he made a passing allusion to the creation of Adam, that he had been formed from the earth,, and at the same time, for the purpose of commending Christ's excellence, he states, that he is the Son of God, who came down to us from heaven, and brings with him, therefore, a heavenly nature and influence. This is the simple meaning, while the refinement of the Manichees is a mere calumny.We must, however, reply to another objection still. For Christ, so long as he lived in the world, lived a life similar to ours, and therefore earthly: hence it is not a proper contrast. The solution of this question will serve farther to refute the contrivance [122] of the Manichees. For we know, that the body of Christ was liable to death, and that it was exempted from corruption, not by its essential property, (as they speak,) [123] but solely by the providence of God. Hence Christ was not merely earthy as to the essence of his body, but was also for a time in an earthly condition; for before Christ's power could show itself in conferring the heavenly life, it was necessary that he should die in the weakness of the flesh, (2 Corinthians 13:4.) Now this heavenly life appeared first in the resurrection, that he might quicken us also.49. As we have borne Some have thought, that there is here an exhortation to a pious and holy life, into which Paul was led by way of digression; and on that account they have changed the verb from the future tense into the hortative mood. Nay more, in some Greek manuscripts the reading is phoresomen (let us bear,) [124] but as that does not suit so well in respect of connection, let us adopt in preference what corresponds better with the object in view and the context. [125] Let us observe, in the first place, that this is not an exhortation, but pure doctrine, and that he is not treating here of newness of life, but pursues, without any interruption, the thread of his discourse respecting the resurrection of the flesh. The meaning accordingly will be this: "As the animal nature, which has the precedency in us, is the image of Adam, so we shall be conformed to Christ in the heavenly nature; and this will be the completion of our restoration. For we now begin to bear the image of Christ, and are every day more and more transformed into it; [126] but that image consists in spiritual regeneration. But then it will be fully restored both in body and in soul, and what is now begun will be perfected, and accordingly we will obtain in reality what we as yet only hope for." If, however, any one prefers a different reading, this statement will serve to spur forward the Corinthians; and if there had been a lively meditation of sincere piety and a new life, it might have been the means of kindling up in them at the same time the hope of heavenly glory.50. Now this I say This clause intimates, that what follows is explanatory of the foregoing statement. "What I have said as to bearing the image of the heavenly Adam means this -- that we must be renewed in respect of our bodies, inasmuch as our bodies, being liable to corruption, cannot inherit God's incorruptible kingdom. Hence there will be no admission for us into the kingdom of Christ, otherwise than by Christ's renewing us after his own image." Flesh and blood, however, we must understand, according to the condition in which they at present are, for our flesh will be a participant in the glory of God, but it will be -- as renewed and quickened by the Spirit of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

51. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 51. Ecce, mysterium vobis dico: Non omnes quidem dormiemus, omnes tamen immutabimur, 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 52. In puncto temporis, in nictu oculi, cum extrema tuba, (canet enim tuba,) et mortui resurgent incorruptibiles, et nos immutabimur. 53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 53. Oportet enim corruptibile hoc induere immortalitatem. 54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 54. Quum autem corruptibile hoc induerit incorruptibilitatem, et mortale hoc induerit immortalitatem: tunc flet sermo qui scriptus est: (Hosea 13, 14, vel les.25, 8.) Absorpta est mors in victoriam. 55. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 55. Ubi, mors, tuus aculeus? Ubi tua, inferne, victoria? 56. The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 56. Aculeus autem mortis, peccatum est: virtus autem peccati, Lex.57. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.57. Sed Deo gratia, qui dedit nobis victoriam per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum.58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.58. Itaque, fratres mei dilecti, stabiles sitis, immobiles, abundantes in opere Domini semper, hoc cognifo, quod labor vester non sit inanis in Domino.Hitherto he has included two things in his reasoning. In the first place, he shows that there will be a resurrection from the dead: secondly, he shows of what nature it will be. Now, however, he enters more thoroughly into a description of the manner of it. This he calls a mystery, because it had not been as yet so clearly unfolded in any statement of revelation; but he does this to make them more attentive. For that wicked doctrine had derived strength from the circumstance, that they disputed as to this matter carelessly and at their ease; [127] as if it were a matter in which they felt no difficulty. Hence by the term mystery, he admonishes them to learn a matter, which was not only as yet unknown to them, but ought to be reckoned among God's heavenly secrets.51. We shall not indeed all sleep. Here there is no difference in the Greek manuscripts, but in the Latin versions there are three different readings. The first is, We shall indeed all die, but we shall not all be changed. The second is, We shall indeed all rise again, but we shall not all be changed. [128] The third is, We shall not indeed all sleep, but we shall all be changed. This diversity, I conjecture, had arisen from this -- that some readers, who were not the most discerning, dissatisfied with the true reading, ventured to conjecture a reading which was more approved by them. [129] For it appeared to them, at first view, to be absurd to say, that all would not die, while we read elsewhere, that it is appointed unto all men once to die. (Hebrews 9:27.) Hence they altered the meaning in this way -- All will not be changed, though all will rise again, or will die; and the change they interpret to mean -- the glory that the sons of God alone will obtain. The true reading, however, may be judged of from the context.Paul's intention is to explain what he had said -- that we will be conformed to Christ, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. A question presented itself, [130] what then will become of those who will be still

living at the day of the Lord? His answer is, that although all will not die, yet they will be renewed, that mortality and corruption may be done away. It is to be observed, however, that he speaks exclusively of believers; for although the resurrection of the wicked will also involve change, yet as there is no mention made of them here, we must consider everything that is said, as referring exclusively to the elect. We now see, how well this statement corresponds with the preceding one, for as he had said, that we shall bear the image of Christ, he now declares, that this will take place when we shall be changed, so thatmortality may be swallowed up of life, (2 Corinthians 5:4,)and that this renovation is not inconsistent with the fact, that Christ's advent will find some still alive.We must, however, unravel the difficulty -- that it is appointed unto all men once to die; and certainly, it is not difficult to unravel it in this way -- that as a change cannot take place without doing away with the previous system, that change is reckoned, with good reason, a kind of death; but, as it is not a separation of the soul from the body, it is not looked upon as an ordinary death. It will then be death, inasmuch as it will be the destruction of corruptible nature: it will not be a sleep, inasmuch as the soul will not quit the body; but there will be a sudden transition from corruptible nature into a blessed immortality.52. In a moment This is still of a general nature; that is, it includes all. For in all the change will be sudden and instantaneous, because Christ's advent will be sudden. And to convey the idea of a moment, he afterwards makes use of the phrase twinkling (or jerk) of the eye, for in the Greek manuscripts there is a twofold, reading -- rhopho (jerk,) or rhipho (twinkling.) [131] It matters nothing, however, as to the sense. Paul has selected a movement of the body, that surpasses all others in quickness; for nothing is more rapid than a movement of the eye, though at the same time he has made an allusion to sleep, with which twinkling of the eye is contrasted. [132]With the last trump. Though the repetition of the term might seem to place it beyond a doubt, that the word trumpet is here taken in its proper acceptation, yet I prefer to understand the expression as metaphorical. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, he connects together the voice of the archangel and the trump of God: As therefore a commander, with the sound of a trumpet, summons his army to battle, so Christ, by his far sounding proclamation, which will be heard throughout the whole world, will summon all the dead. Moses tells us, (Exodus 19:16,) what loud and terrible sounds were uttered on occasion of the promulgation of the law. Far different will be the commotion then, when not one people merely, but the whole world will be summoned to the tribunal of God. Nor will the living only be convoked, but even the dead will be called forth from their graves. [133] Nay more, a commandment must be given to dry bones and dust that, resuming their former appearance and reunited to the spirit, they come forth straightway as living men into the presence of Christ. The dead shall rise What he had declared generally as to all, he now explains particularly as to the living and the dead. This distinction, therefore, is simply an exposition of the foregoing statement -- that all will not die, but all will be changed "Those who have already died," says he, "will rise again incorruptible." See what a change there will be upon the dead! "Those," says he, "who will be still alive will themselves also be changed." You see then as to both. [134] You now then perceive how it is, that change will be common to all, but not sleep. [135]When he says, We shall be changed, he includes himself in the number of those, who are to live till the advent of Christ. As it was now the last times, (1 John 2:18,) that day (2 Timothy 1:18) was to be looked for by the saints every hour. At the same time, in writing to the Thessalonians, he utters that memorable prediction respecting the scattering [136] that would take place in the Church before Christ's coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:3.) This, however, does not hinder that he might, by bringing the Corinthians, as it were, into immediate contact with the event, associate

himself and them with those who would at that time be alive.53. For this corruptible must Mark, how we shall live in the kingdom of God both in body and in soul, while at the same time flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God -- for they shall previously be delivered from corruption. Our nature then, as being now corruptible and mortal, is not admissible into the kingdom of God, but when it shall have put off corruption, and shall have been beautified with in-corruption, it will then make its way into it. This passage, too, distinctly proves, that we shall rise again in that same flesh that we now carry about with us, as the Apostle assigns a new quality to it which will serve as a garment. If he had said, This corruptible must be renewed, the error of those fanatics, who imagine that mankind will be furnished with new bodies, would not have been so plainly or forcibly overthrown. Now, however, when he declares that this corruptible shall be invested with glory, there is no room left for cavil.54. Then shall be brought to pass the saying This is not merely an amplification, (epexergasia,) [137] but a confirmation, too, of the preceding statement. For what was foretold by the Prophets must be fulfilled. Now this prediction will not be fulfilled, until our bodies, laying aside corruption, will put on incorruption Hence this last result, also, is necessary. To come to pass, is used here in the sense of being fully accomplished, for what Paul quotes is now begun in us, and is daily, too, receiving further accomplishment; but it will not have its complete fulfillment until the last day.It does not, however, appear quite manifest, from what passage he has taken this quotation, for many statements occur in the Prophets to this effect. Only the probability is, that the first clause is taken either from Isaiah 25:8, where it is said that death will be for ever destroyed by the Lord, [138] or, (as almost all are rather inclined to think,) from Hosea 13:14, where the Prophet, bewailing the obstinate wickedness of Israel, complains that he was like an untimely child, that struggles against the efforts of his mother in travail, that he may not come forth from the womb, and from this he concludes, that it was owing entirely to himself, that he was not delivered from death. I will ransom them, says he, from the power of the grave: I will rescue them from death. It matters not, whether you read these words in the future of the indicative, or in the subjunctive [139] for in either way the meaning amounts to this -- that God was prepared to confer upon them salvation, if they would have allowed the favor to be conferred upon them, and that, therefore, if they perished, it was their own fault.He afterwards adds, I will be thy destruction, O death! thy ruin, O grave! In these words God intimates, that he accomplishes the salvation of his people [140] only when death and the grave are reduced to nothing. For no one will deny, that in that passage there is a description of completed salvation. As, therefore, we do not see such a destruction of death, it follows, that we do not yet enjoy that complete salvation, which God promises to his people, and that, consequently, it is delayed until that day. Then, accordingly, will death be swallowed up, that is, it will be reduced to nothing, [141] that we may have manifestly, in every particular, and in every respect, (as they say,) a complete victory over it. [142]As to the second clause, in which he triumphs over death and the grave, it is not certain whether he speaks of himself, or whether he meant there also to quote the words of the Prophet. For where we render it, "I will be thy destruction, O death! -- thy ruin, O grave!" the Greeks have translated it, "Where, O death, is thy suit? [143] where, O grave, thy sting?" Now although this mistake of the Greeks is excusable from the near resemblance of the words, [144] yet if any one will attentively examine the context, he will see that they have gone quite away from the Prophet's intention. The true meaning, then, will be this -- that the Lord will put an end to death, and destroy the grave. It is possible, however, that, as the Greek translation was in common use, Paul alluded to it, and in that there is nothing inconsistent, though he has not quoted literally, for instead of victory he has

used the term action, or law-suit. [145] I am certainly of opinion, that the Apostle did not deliberately intend to call in the Prophet as a witness, with the view of making a wrong use of his authority, but simply accommodated, in passing, to his own use a sentiment that had come into common use, as being, independently of this, of a pious nature. [146] The main thing is this -- that Paul, by an exclamation of a spirited nature, designed to rouse up the minds of the Corinthians, and lead them on, as it were, to a near view of the resurrection. Now, although we do not as yet behold the victory with our eyes, and the day of triumph has not yet arrived, (nay more, the dangers of war must every day be encountered,) yet the assurance of faith, as we shall have occasion to observe ere long, is not at all thereby diminished. 56. The sting of death is sin In other words, "Death has no dart with which to wound us except sin, since death proceeds from the anger of God. Now it is only with our sins that God is angry. Take away sin, therefore, and death will no more be able to harm us." This agrees with what he said in Romans 6:23, that the wages of sin is death. Here, however, he makes use of another metaphor, for he compared sin to a sting, with which alone death is armed for inflicting upon us a deadly wound. Let that be taken away, and death is disarmed, so as to be no longer hurtful. Now with what view Paul says this will be explained by him ere long.The strength of sin is the law It is the law of God that imparts to that sting its deadly power, because it does not merely discover our guilt, but even increases it. A clearer exposition of this statement may be found in Romans 7:9, where Paul teaches us that we are alive, so long as we are without the law, because in our own opinion it is well with us, and we do not feel our own misery, until the law summons us to the judgment of God, and wounds our conscience with an apprehension of eternal death. Farther, he teaches us that sin has been in a manner lulled asleep, but is kindled up by the law, so as to rage furiously. Meanwhile, however, he vindicates the law from calumnies, on the ground that it is holy, and good, and just, and is not of itself the parent of sin or the cause of death. Hence he concludes, that whatever there is of evil is to be reckoned to our own account, inasmuch as it manifestly proceeds from the depravity of our nature. Hence the law is but the occasion of injury. The true cause of ruin is in ourselves. Hence he speaks of the law here as the strength or power of sin, because it executes upon us the judgment of God. In the mean time he does not deny, that sin inflicts death even upon those that know not the law; but he speaks in this manner, because it exercises its tyranny upon them with less violence. For the law came that sin might abound, (Romans 5:20,) or that it might become beyond measure sinful. (Romans 7:13.)57. But thanks be to God From this it appears, why it it was that he made mention both of sin and of the law, when treating of death. Death has no sting with which to wound except sin, and the law imparts to this sting a deadly power. But Christ has conquered sin, and by conquering it has procured victory for us, and has redeemed us from the curse of the law. (Galatians 3:13.) Hence it follows, that we are no longer lying under the power of death. Hence, although we have not as yet a full discovery of those benefits, yet we may already with confidence glory in them, because it is necessary that what has been accomplished in the Head should be accomplished, also, in the members. We may, therefore, triumph over death as subdued, because Christ's victory is ours.When, therefore, he says, that victory has been given to us, you are to understand by this in the first place, that it is inasmuch as Christ has in his own person abolished sin, has satisfied the law, has endured the curse, has appeased the anger of God, and has procured life; and farther, because he has already begun to make us partakers of all those benefits. For though we still carry about with us the remains of sin, it, nevertheless, does not reign in us: though it still stings us, it does not do so fatally, because its edge is blunted, so that it

does not penetrate into the vitals of the soul. Though the law still threatens, yet there is presented to us on the other hand, the liberty that was procured for us by Christ, which is an antidote to its terrors. Though the remains of sin still dwell in us, yet the Spirit who raised up Christ from the dead is life, because of righteousness. (Romans 8:10.) Now follows the conclusion.58. Wherefore, my brethren Having satisfied himself that he had sufficiently proved the doctrine of the resurrection, he now closes his discussion with an exhortation; and this has much more force, than if he had made use of a simple conclusion with an affirmation. Since your labor, says he, is not in vain in the Lord, be steadfast, and abound in good works Now he says that their labor is not in vain, for this reason, that there is a reward laid up for them with God. This is that exclusive hope which, in the first instance, encourages believers, and afterwards sustains them, so that they do not stop short in the race. Hence he exhorts them to remain steadfast, because they rest on a firm foundation, as they know that a better life is prepared for them in heaven.He adds -- abounding in the work of the Lord; for the hope of a resurrection makes us not be weary in well doing, as he teaches in Colossians 1:10. For amidst so many occasions of offense as constantly present themselves to us, who is there that would not despond, or turn aside from the way, were it not that, by thinking of a better life he is by this means kept in the fear of God? Now, on the other hand, he intimates, that if the hope of a resurrection is taken away, then, the foundation (as it were) being rooted up, the whole structure of piety falls to the ground. [147] Unquestionably, if the hope of reward is taken away and extinguished, alacrity in running will not merely grow cold, but will be altogether destroyed.

1 Corinthians 16:1-7

1. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye.1. Caeterum de collecta quae fit in sanctos, quemadmodum ordinavi Ecclesiis Galatiae, ita et vos facite.2. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.2. In una sabbatorum unusquisque vestrum apud se seponat, thesaurizans quod successerit, ne, quum venero, tunc collectae fiant. [148]3. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.3. Ubi autem affuero, quos probaveritis per epistolas, eos mittam, ut perferant beneficentiam vestram in Ierusalem.4. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.4. Quodsi fuerit operae pretium me quoque proficisci, mecum proficiscentur.5. Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.5. Veniam autem ad vos, quum Macedoniam transiero: Macedoniam enim pertransiturus sum.6. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.6. Apud vos autem forte permanebo, aut etiam hibernabo, ut vos me deducatis quocunque proficiscar.7. For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.7. Nolo enim vos nunc in transcursu videre: sed spero me ad aliquod tempus mansurum apud vos, si Dominus permiserit.1. But concerning the collection Luke relates (Acts 11:28) that the prediction of Agabus, foretelling that there would be a famine under Claudius Caesar, gave occasion for alms being collected by the saints, with the view of affording help to the brethren in Jerusalem. For though the Prophet had foretold, that this calamity would be generally prevalent almost throughout the world, yet as they were more heavily oppressed with penury at Jerusalem, and as all the Gentile Churches were bound, if they would not be held guilty of very great ingratitude, to afford aid to that place from which they had received the gospel, every one, consequently, forgetful of self, resolved to afford relief to Jerusalem. That the pressure of want was felt heavily at Jerusalem, appears from the Epistle to the Galatians, (Galatians 2:10,) where Paul relates, that he had been charged by the Apostles to stir up the Gentiles to afford help. [149] Now the Apostles would never have given such a charge, had they not been constrained by necessity. Farther, this passage is an evidence of the truth of what Paul states there also -- that he had been careful to exhort the Gentiles to afford help in such a case of necessity. Now, however, he prescribes the method of relief; and that the Corinthians may accede to it the more readily, he mentions that he had already prescribed it to the Churches of Galatia; for they would necessarily be the more influenced by example, as we are wont to feel a natural backwardness to anything that is not ordinarily practiced. Now follows the method -- by which he designed to cut off all hinderances and impediments.2. On one of the Sabbaths. The end is this -- that they may have their alms ready in time. He therefore exhorts them not to wait till he came, as anything that is done suddenly, and in a bustle, is not done well, but to contribute on the Sabbath what might seem good, and according as every one's ability might enable -- that is, on the day on which they held their sacred assemblies. The clause rendered on one of the Sabbaths, (kata mian sabbaton,) Chrysostom explains to mean -- the first Sabbath. In this I do not agree with him; for Paul means rather that they should contribute, one on one Sabbath and another on another; or even each of

them every Sabbath, if they chose. For he has an eye, first of all, to convenience, and farther, that the sacred assembly, in which the communion of saints is celebrated, might be an additional spur to them. Nor am I more inclined to admit the view taken by Chrysostom -- that the term Sabbath is employed here to mean the Lord's day, (Revelation 1:10,) for the probability is, that the Apostles, at the beginning, retained the day that was already in use, but that afterwards, constrained by the superstition of the Jews, they set aside that day, and substituted another. Now the Lord's day was made choice of, chiefly because our Lord's resurrection put an end to the shadows of the law. Hence the day itself puts us in mind of our Christian liberty. We may, however, very readily infer from this passage, that believers have always had a certain day of rest from labor -- not as if the worship of God consisted in idleness, but because it is of importance for the common harmony, that a certain day should be appointed for holding sacred assemblies, as they cannot be held every day. For as to Paul's forbidding elsewhere (Galatians 4:10) that any distinction should be made between one day and another, that must be understood to be with a view to religion, [150] and not with a view to polity or external order. [151] Treasuring up I have preferred to retain the Greek participle, as it appeared to me to be more emphatic. [152] For although thesanrizein means to lay up, yet in my opinion, he designed to admonish the Corinthians, that whatever they might contribute for the saints would be their best and safest treasure. For if a heathen poet could say -- "What riches you give away, those alone you shall always have, [153] how much more ought that consideration to have influence among us, who are not dependent on the gratitude of men, but have God to look to, who makes himself a debtor in the room of the poor man, to restore to us one day, with large interest, whatever we give away? (Proverbs 19:17.) Hence this statement of Paul corresponds with that saying of Christ -- Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where it will not be exposed either to thieves, or to moths. (Matthew 6:20.)According as he has prospered. Instead of this the old translation has rendered it, What may seem good to him, misled, no doubt, by the resemblance between the word made use of, and another. [154] Erasmus renders it, What will be convenient. [155] Neither the one nor the other pleased me, for this reason -- that the proper signification of the word brings out a meaning that is much more suitable; for it means -- to go on prosperously. Hence he calls every one to consider his ability -- "Let every one, according as God hath blessed him, lay out upon the poor from his increase."3. And when I come As we are cheerful in giving, when we know for certain, that what we give is well laid out, he points out to the Corinthians a method, by which they may be assured of a good and faithful administration -- by selecting approved persons, to whom they may intrust the matter. Nay more, he offers his own services, if desired, which is an evidence that he has the matter at heart.5. When I shall pass through Macedonia The common opinion is, that this espistle was sent from Philippi. Persons coming thence to Corinth by land, required to pass through Macedonia; for that colony is situated in the farthest extremity, towards the Emathian mountains. Paul, it is true, might, instead of going by land, have gone thither by sea, but he was desirous to visit the Macedonian Churches, that he might confirm them in passing. So much for the common opinion. To me, however, it appears more probable, that the epistle was written at Ephesus; for he says a little afterwards, that he will remain there until Pentecost, (1 Corinthians 16:8) [156] ; and he salutes the Corinthians, not in the name of the Philippians, but of the Asiatics. (1 Corinthians 16:19.) [157] Besides, in the second epistle he explicitly states, that, after he had sent away this epistle, he passed over into Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 2:13.) Now after passing through Macedonia, he would be at a distance from Ephesus, and in the neighborhood of Achaia. Hence I have no doubt that he was at Ephesus

at that time: thence he could sail by a straight course to Achaia. For visiting Macedonia, a long circuit was needed, and a more disagreeable route. Accordingly he lets them know that he will not come to them by a direct course, as he required to go through MacedoniaTo the Corinthians, however, he promises something farther -- that he would make a longer stay with them By this he shows his affection towards them. For what reason had he for delay, except that he was concerned as to their welfare? On the other hand, he lets them know how fully assured he is of their affection towards him in return, by taking it, as it were, for granted that he would be conducted forward by them in the way of kindness; for he says this from confidence in their friendship. [158]After saying everything, however, he subjoins this limitation -- if the Lord permit With this reservation, saints ought to follow up all their plans and deliberations; for it is an instance of great rashness to undertake and determine many things for the future, while we have not even a moment in our power. The main thing indeed is, that, in the inward affection of the mind, we submit to God and his providence, whatever we resolve upon; [159] but at the same time, it is becoming that we should accustom ourselves to such forms of expression, that whenever we have to do with what is future we may make everything depend on the divine will. [160]

1 Corinthians 16:8-12

8. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. 8. Commorabor autem Ephesi usque ad Pentecosten. 9. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. 9. Nam ostium milli aperture est magnum et efficax, et [161] adversarii multi. 10. Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do 10. Quodsi venerit Timotheus, videte, ut absque metu sit apud vos: opus enim Domini operatur, quemadmodum et ego. 11. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. 11. Ne quis igitur eum spernat: sed prosequamini eum cum pace, [162] ut veniat ad me: exspecto enim eum cum fratribus. 12. As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time. 12. Porro de Apollo fratre, multum hortatus sum illum, ut veniret ad vos cum fratribus, at omnino non fuit voluntas nunc eundi: veniet autem, quam opportunitatem nactus erit. 8. I will remain. From this statement I have argued above, that this epistle was sent from Ephesus, rather than from Philippi. For the probability is, that the Apostle speaks of the place in which he was at the time, and not of a place, in going to which he would require to make a long circuit; and farther, in passing through Macedonia, [163] it would have been necessary to leave Corinth when already in the neighborhood of it, and cross the sea in order to reach Ephesus. He accordingly tells them beforehand that he will remain at Ephesus until Pentecost, adding the reason -- in order that they may wait for him the more patiently. Erasmus has preferred to render it -- until the fiftieth day, influenced by frivolous conjectures rather than by any solid argument. He objects, that there was as yet no day of Pentecost appointed among Christians, as it is now celebrated; and this I grant. He says, that it ought not to be understood as referring to the Jewish solemnity, because in various instances he annuls and condemns the superstitious observance of days. (Galatians 4:10; Romans 14:5; Colossians 2:16, 17.) I do not concede to him, however, that Paul celebrated that day at Ephesus from being influenced by a superstitious regard to the day, but because there would be a larger assembly at that time, and he hoped that, in that way, an opportunity would be presented to him of propagating the gospel. Thus, when he was hastening forward to Jerusalem, he assigned as the reason of his haste, that he might arrive there at Pentecost, (Acts 20:16;) but while others presented themselves there for the purpose of sacrificing according to the ritual of the law, he himself had another object in view -- that his ministry might be the more useful in proportion to the largeness of the attendance. It were, however, an excessively poor meaning to understand Paul here as simply specifying fifty days. Besides, when he expressly says ten pentekosten (the Pentecost,) he cannot but be understood as speaking of a particular day. As to this festival, see Leviticus 23:16 9. For a great and effectual door is opened to me. He assigns two reasons for remaining for a longer time at Ephesus -- 1st, Because an opportunity is afforded him there of furthering the gospel; and 2dly, Because, in consequence of the great number of adversaries that were there, his presence was particularly required. "I shall do much good by prolonging my stay here for a little while, and were I absent, Satan would do much injury." In the first clause, he makes use of a metaphor that is quite in common use, when he employs the term

door as meaning an opportunity. For the Lord opened up a way for him for the furtherance of the gospel. He calls this a great door, because he could gain many. He calls it effectual, inasmuch as the Lord blessed his labor, and rendered his doctrine effectual by the power of His Spirit. We see, then, how this holy man [164] sought everywhere Christ's glory, and did not select a place with a view to his own convenience or his own pleasure; but simply looked to this -- where he might do most good, and serve his Lord with most abundant fruit; and in addition to this, he did not merely not shrink back from hardships, but presented himself, of his own accord, where he saw that he would have to contend more keenly, and with greater difficulty. For the reason why he remained [165] was, that many adversaries were at hand; and the better equipped he was for enduring their assault, he required to be so much the better prepared, and the more resolute.10. But if Timothy come. He speaks as if he were not as yet certain as to his coming. Now he charges them as to Timothy, so that he may be with them in safety -- not as though he were in danger of his life among them, but because he would have enemies of Christ [166] to oppose him. He wishes, therefore, that they should carefully take heed that no injury be done to him.He adds the reason -- for he worketh the work of the Lord Hence we infer, that the Church of Christ ought to be concerned for the preservation of the lives of ministers. And assuredly, it is reasonable, that, in proportion as an individual is endowed with superior gifts for the edification of believers, and applies himself to it the more strenuously, his life ought to be so much dearer to us.The clause -- as I also do, is made use of, either to express his excellence, or simply to point out the similarity as to office, inasmuch as both labored in the word.11. Let no man, therefore, despise him Here we have a second charge, that they may not despise him -- perhaps because he was as yet of a youthful age, which usually draws forth less respect. He wishes them, therefore, to take care, that there be no hinderance in the way of this faithful minister of Christ being held in due esteem -- unless, perhaps, it be that Paul reckoned this very thing to be an evidence of contempt, if they were not concerned, as it became them to be, in reference to his life. This injunction, however, appears to include something farther, that they should not undervalue Timothy, from ignorance of his worth.In the third place, he charges them to conduct him forward in peace, or, in other words, safe from all harm, for peace here means safety.12. As to our brother Apollos. He had succeeded Paul in the work of building up the Corinthians; and hence he has in previous passages ascribed to him the office of watering. (1 Corinthians 3:6, and Acts 19:1.) He now states a reason why he does not come with the others, and he states the reason of this, in order that the Corinthians may not suspect that he had been hindered by him. For the better he was known by them, they were so much the more favourably disposed towards him, and they would be the more ready to conjecture, that matters had been designedly contrived, that he should not go to them, in consequence of offense having been taken. [167] They might, at least, be prepared to inquire among themselves: "Why has he sent these persons to us rather than Apollos?" He answers, that it was not owing to him, inasmuch as he entreated him; but he promises that he will come as soon as he has opportunity.

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

13. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 13. Vigilate, state in fide, viriliter agite, robusti estote. 14. Let all your things be done with charity. 14. Omnia vestra in caritate fiant. 15. I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) 15. Hortor autem vos, fratres, nostis domum Stephanae, primitias esse Achaiae, atque ut se in ministerium sanctorum ordinaverint: 16. That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. 16. Ut etiam subiecti sitis tallbus, et omnibus qui cooperantur et laborant. 17. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on our part they have supplied. 17. Gaudeo autem de praesentia Stephanie, et Fortunati, et Achaici: quia quod deerat a vobis, ipsi suppleverunt. 18. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such. 18. Refocillarunt enim spiritum meum et vestrum: agnoscite ergo tales.19. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.19. Salutant vos Ecclesiae Asiae: salutant vos multum in Domino Aquila et Priscilla cum domestica eorum Ecclesia.20. All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.20. Salutant vos fratres omnes: salutate vos invicem in osculo sancto.21. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.21. Salutatio mea manu Pauli.22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.22. Si quis non amat Dominum Iesum Christum, sit anathema maranatha.23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.23. Gratia Domini Iesu Christi sit vobiscum.24. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.24. Dilectio mea cum vobis omnibus in Christo Iesu. Amen.The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus.Ad Corinthios prior missa fuit e Philippis per Stephanam, et Fortunatum, et Andronicum, et Timotheum. [168]13. Watch ye. A short exhortation, but of great weight. He exhorts them to watch, in order that Satan may not oppress them, finding them off their guard. For as the warfare is incessant, the watching requires to be incessant too. Now watchfulness of spirit is this -- when, free and disentangled from earthly cares, we meditate on the things of God. For as the body is weighed down by surfeiting and drunkenness, (Luke 21:34,) so as to be fit for nothing, so the cares and lusts of the world, idleness or carelessness, are like a spiritual surfeiting that overpowers the mind. [169]The second thing is that they persevere in the faith, or that they hold fast the faith, so as to stand firm; because that is the foundation on which we rest. It is certain, however, that he points out the means of perseverance -- by resting upon God with a firm faith.In the third exhortation, which is much of the same nature, he stirs them up to manly fortitude. And, as we are naturally weak, he exhorts them fourthly to strengthen themselves, or gather strength. For where we render it be strong, Paul makes use of only one word, which is equivalent to strengthen yourselves.14. Let all your things be done in love Again he repeats what is the rule in all those transactions, in which we have dealings with one another. He wishes, then, that love shall be the directress; because the Corinthians erred chiefly in this respect -- that every one looked to himself without caring for others.15. Ye know the house of Stephanas We know, from daily experience, of what advantage it is, that those should have the highest authority, whom God has

adorned with the most distinguished gifts. Accordingly, if we wish to secure the welfare of the Church, let us always take care that honor be conferred upon the good: let their counsels have the greatest weight; let others give way to them, and allow themselves to be governed by their prudence. This Paul does in this instance, when admonishing the Corinthians to show respect to the house of Stephanas. Some manuscripts add, and Fortunatus. [170] For God manifests himself to us when he shows us the gifts of his Spirit. Hence, if we would not appear to be despisers of God, let us voluntarily submit ourselves to those, on whom God has conferred superior gifts.Now, that they may be the more inclined to put honor upon that house, (for as to the other, it appears to me to be, in this place at least, a spurious addition,) he reminds them that they were the first-fruits of Achaia, that is, that the household of Stephanas were the first that had embraced the gospel. Not indeed as though the first in order of time were in every case superior to the others, but where there is perseverance along with this, it is with good reason, that honor is conferred upon those, who have in a manner paved the way for the gospel by promptitude of faith. It must be observed, however, that he dignifies with this honorable title those, who had consecrated to believers their services and resources. For the same reason, he bestows commendation a little afterwards upon Fortunatus and Achaicus, that, in proportion to a man's superiority of excellence, [171] he might be held so much the more in esteem, that he might be able to do the more good. Farther, in order that the Corinthians may be the more disposed to love them, he says, that what had been wanting on the part of their entire Church had been compensated for by their vicarious services.19. With the Church that is in their house A magnificent eulogium, inasmuch as the name of the Church is applied to a single family! At the same time it is befitting, that all the families of the pious should be regulated in such a manner as to be so many little Churches. As to the term Congregation, which Erasmus has used in preference, it is foreign to Paul's design; for it was not his intention to designate a crowd of persons by a mere common term, but to speak in honorable terms of the management of a Christian household. His saluting them in the name of Aquila and Priscilla, confirms what I have noticed above -- that the Epistle was written at Ephesus, not at Philippi. For Luke informs us, that they remained at Ephesus, when Paul went elsewhere. (Acts 18:19.) 20. Salute one another with a holy kiss. The practice of kissing was very common among the Jews, as is manifest from the Scriptures. In Greece, though it was not so common and customary, it was by no means unknown; but the probability is, that Paul speaks here of a solemn kiss, with which they saluted each other in the sacred assembly. For I could easily believe, that from the times of the Apostles a kiss was used in connection with the administration of the Supper; [172] in place of which, among nations that were somewhat averse to the practice of kissing, there crept in the custom of kissing the patine. [173] However this may be, as it was a token of mutual love. I have no doubt, that Paul meant to exhort them to the cultivation of good-will among themselves -- not merely in their minds [174] and in needful services, but also by that token, provided only it was holy, that is, neither unchaste nor deceitful, [175] -- though, at the same time, holy may be taken to mean sacred.22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus The close of the Epistle consists of three parts. He entreats the grace of Christ in behalf of the Corinthians: he makes a declaration of his love towards them, and, with the severest threatening, he inveighs against those that falsely took upon themselves the Lord's name, while not loving him from the heart. For he is not speaking of strangers, who avowedly hated the Christian name, but of pretenders and hypocrites, who troubled the Churches for the sake of their own belly, or from empty boasting. [176] On such persons he denounces an anathema, and he also pronounces a curse upon them. It is not certain,

however, whether he desires their destruction in the presence of God, or whether he wishes to render them odious -- nay, even execrable, in the view of believers. Thus in Galatians 1:8, when pronouncing one who corrupts the Gospel to be accursed, [177] he does not mean that he was rejected or condemned by God, but he declares that he is to be abhorred by us. I expound it in a simple way as follows: "Let them perish and be cut off, as being the pests of the Church." And truly, there is nothing that is more pernicious, than that class of persons, who prostitute a profession of piety to their own depraved affections. Now he points out the origin of this evil, when he says, that they do not love Christ, for a sincere and earnest love to Christ will not suffer us to give occasion of offense to brethren. [178]What he immediately adds -- Maranatha, is somewhat more difficult. Almost all of the ancients are agreed, that they are Syriac terms. [179] Jerome, however, explains it: The Lord cometh; while others render it, At the coming of the Lord, or, Until the Lord comes. Every one, however, I think, must see how silly and puerile is the idea, that the Apostle spoke to Greeks in the Syriac tongue, when meaning to say -- The Lord has come. Those who translate it, at the coming of the Lord, do so on mere conjecture; and besides, there is not much plausibility in that interpretation. How much more likely it is, that this was a customary form of expression among the Hebrews, when they wished to excommunicate any one. For the Apostles never speak in foreign tongues, except when they repeat anything in the person of another, as for example, Eli, Eli, lammah sabathani, (Matthew 27:46,) Talitha cumi, (Mark 5:41,) and Ephphata, (Mark 7:34,) or when they make use of a word that has come into common use, as Amen -- Hosanna. Let us see, then, whether Maranatha suits with excommunication. Now Bullinger, [180] on the authority of Theodore Bibliander, has affirmed, that, in the Chaldee dialect, Maharamata has the same meaning as the Hebrew term chrm, cherem, (accursed,) [181] and I was myself at one time assured of the same thing by Wolfgang Capito, [182] a man of blessed memory It is nothing unusual, however, for the Apostles to write such terms differently from the way in which they are pronounced in the language from which they are derived; as may be seen even from the instances brought forward above. Paul, then, after pronouncing an anathema on those who do not love Christ, [183] deeply affected with the seriousness of the matter, as if he reckoned that he had not said enough, added a term that was in common use among the Jews, and which they made use of in pronouncing a sentence of anathema -- just as if, speaking in Latin, I should say, "I excommunicate thee," but if I add -- "and pronounce thee an anathema," this would be an expression of more intense feeling. [184]END OF THE COMMENTARIES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE.

COMMENTARIES

ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS BY JOHN CALVIN TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COLLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S FRENCH VERSION BY THE REV. JOHN PRINGLE CHRISTIAN CLASSICS ETHEREAL LIBRARY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The Epistles Of Paul To The Corinthians contain more of admonition and reproof than most of his other Epistles. While The Church Of Corinth was more than ordinarily distinguished in respect of spiritual gifts, it had fallen into corruptions and abuses, from which the other Churches appear to have been, to a great extent, free. There is, accordingly -- as might be expected -- in these Epistles, more frequent reference to local evils, than in most of the other Epistles of the New Testament. They are not, however, on that account the less adapted for general utility. While the reproofs which they contain were occasioned by the corrupt state of a particular Church, they will be found to involve general principles of the highest importance to the Church of Christ under all circumstances. The Epistles to the Corinthians "have," says Dr. Guyse, in his Preface to the Second Epistle, "some advantages that are not to be met with in any other part of the word of God, as they may be deemed the seat of divine directions, relating to the spiritual privileges, rights, and powers, worship and discipline of the Churches of Christ; to the purity of doctrines, manners, and celebrations of Gospel ordinances; and to the unity, peace, and order, mutual watch and care, and religious respect to faithful pastors, that ought to be preserved among them." As, in the perusal of the four Gospels, the attentive reader can scarcely fail to observe, that many of the instructive sayings of our blessed Lord, which are placed on record by the Evangelists, arose naturally out of occurrences of an accidental nature, -- though taking place under the watchful superintendence of him without whom not even a sparrow falleth on the ground, (Matthew 10:29,) #NAME? The Epistles to the Church of Corinth are a portion of Paul's writings, which, as is justly observed by Dr. Alexander, in his Preface to Billroth on the Corinthians, "occupies a very important place in the sacred canon. Besides containing some loca classica upon several of the most essential positions in doctrinal theology, such, for instance, as the deity of Christ, the personality and agency of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of the body, etc., the two Epistles to the Corinthians may be regarded as constituting the great code of practical ethics for the Christian Church. In this respect they stand to the science of practical theology in a relation analogous to that occupied by the Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Hebrews, to the science of systematic divinity; they contain the fullest development of those principles on which that science must rest, and the practices which its rules are to authorize or inculcate." [185] What increases not a little the utility of Paul's Epistles to the Corinthian Church is the circumstance that the latter Epistle was written by him a considerable time (about a year, it is generally supposed) subsequently to the former, when opportunity had been given for the Apostle's receiving accounts as to the effect produced upon the minds of the Corinthians by the faithful, though at the same time affectionate counsels and admonitions, which he had addressed to them in his first Epistle. The Apostle had been intensely anxious as to the effect, which his former Epistle might produce on the minds of the Corinthians. While his authority as an Apostle, and that too in a Church which he had himself planted, was at stake, he was, we may believe, chiefly concerned for the purity of doctrine and discipline, as in danger of being seriously impaired by the corrupt state of the Church of Corinth. With feelings of deep solicitude he left Ephesus, where it is generally believed he wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthian Church, and proceeded to Troas, a sea-port town on the coast of the AEgean Sea, hoping to meet with Titus

there on his return from Corinth. Disappointed in this expectation, he went forward to Macedonia, where he at length met with Titus, and received most gratifying accounts as to the favorable reception, which his former Epistle had met with from the Corinthians, and the salutary effect which it had produced in remedying, to a great extent., the evils that he had found occasion to censure. It must have afforded to the mind of the Apostle no ordinary satisfaction to learn, that his admonitions and reproofs had awakened in the minds of the Corinthians the most poignant grief in reflecting on the unworthy part which they had acted -- that they had manifested unabated esteem and affection toward him as their spiritual father -- that they had, in accordance with his instructions, excluded from their society a gross offender, whose unnatural crime they had too long connived at; and farther, that the exercise of discipline in that painful case had been most salutary in its effects upon the offender himself, so that the Apostle, from what he had learned as to the evidences of repentance, was now prepared to instruct the Corinthian Christians to receive him back, without hesitation or delay, into their fellowship. He had, also, the satisfaction of learning, that his exhortations, in the close of his former Epistle, to liberality in contributing for the relief of the "poor saints at Jerusalem," had been promptly and cheerfully responded to. While Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians furnishes in these and other respects, express proofs of the beneficial effects of his former Epistle, his entire silence in the latter Epistle in reference to various evils unsparingly censured by him in the former, gives reason to believe that, in connection with these also, a more hopeful state of matters had begun to appear. Among these we may notice their party contendings, their vexatious lawsuits, their corrupt administration of the Sacred Supper, their disorderly exercise of spiritual gifts, and, in fine, their erroneous views on the important subject of the resurrection. Thus "the success" of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, as is justly observed by Barnes, in the Introduction to his Notes on that Epistle, "was all that Paul could desire. It had the effect to repress their growing strifes, to restrain their disorders, to produce true repentance, and to remove the person who had been guilty of incest in the Church. The whole Church was deeply affected with his reproofs, and engaged in hearty zeal in the work of reform. (2 Corinthians 7:9-11.) The authority of the Apostle was recognised, and his Epistle read with fear and trembling. (2 Corinthians 7:15.) The act of discipline which he had required on the incestuous person was inflicted by the whole Church. (2 Corinthians 2:6.) The collection which he had desired, (1 Corinthians 16:1-4,) and in regard to which he had boasted of their liberality to others, and expressed the utmost confidence that it would be liberal, (2 Corinthians 9:2, 3,) was taken up agreeably to his wishes, and their disposition on the subject was such as to furnish the highest satisfaction to his mind. (2 Corinthians 7:13, 14.) Of the success of his letter, however, and of their disposition to take up the collection, Paul was not apprised until he had gone into Macedonia, where Titus came to him, and gave him information of the happy state of things in the Church at Corinth. (2 Corinthians 7:4-7, 13.) Never was a letter more effectual than this was, and never was authority in discipline exercised in a more happy and successful way." At the same time, Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthian Church is of a mixed character, being designed in part to rectify evils still existing among them, and to vindicate the Apostle from injurious aspersions, thrown out against him by the false teachers. In various parts of the Epistle, but more particularly toward the close, he establishes his claims to apostolical authority. A succinct view of the general tenor and design of this Epistle is given by Poole, in his Annotations, in the following terms: -- "The occasion of his" (Paul's) "writing this second Epistle seemeth to be partly the false teachers aspersing him: 1. As an inconstant man, because he had promised to come in person to Corinth, and was not yet

come; the reason of which he showeth, 2 Corinthians 1, was not levity, but the troubles he met with in Asia, and his desire to hear that they had first reformed the abuses he had taxed them for. 2. As an imperious man, because of the incestuous person against whom he had wrote; which charge he avoids, by showing the necessity of his writing in that manner, and giving new orders for the restoring him, upon the repentance he had showed.3. As a proud and vain-glorious man.4. As a contemptible person -- base in his person, as he expresseth it.The further occasions of his writing were -- to commend them for their kind reception of, and compliance with, the precepts and admonitions of his former Epistle, and their kind reception of Titus -- as also to exhort them to a liberal contribution to the necessities of the saints in Judea, to which they had showed their forwardness a year before; and his hearing that there was yet a party amongst them bad enough, that went on vilifying him and his authority, as well as in other sinful courses; against whom he vindicateth himself, magnifying his office, assuring them that he was about to come to Corinth, when they should find him present, such as being absent he had by his letters declared himself, if they were not reformed."The substance, therefore, of this Epistle, is partly apologetical, or excusatory, where he excuseth himself for his not coming to Corinth so soon as he thought, and for his so severe writing as to the incestuous person -- partly hortatory, where he persuadeth them more generally to walk worthy of the gospel; more specially (2 Corinthians 8:9) to a liberal contribution to the saints -- partly minatory or threatening, where he threateneth severity against those whom, when he came amongst them, he should find contumacious and impenitent offenders. He concludes the Epistle (as usually) with a salutation of them, pious exhortations to them, and a prayer for them."Calvin, it will be observed, dedicates his Commentary on the second Epistle to the Corinthians to Melchior Wolmar, a man of great celebrity, under whom Calvin acquired a knowledge of the Greek language. "The academy of Bourges," says Beza, in his Life of Calvin, "had [...] acquired great celebrity through Andrew Alciat, (undoubtedly the first lawyer of his age,) who had been invited to it from Italy. Calvin thought right to study under him also. He accordingly went thither, and on grounds both religious and literary, formed a friendship with Melchior Wolmar, a German from Rothweil, and professor of Greek. I have the greater pleasure in mentioning his name, because he was my own teacher, and the only one I had from boyhood up to youth. His learning, piety, and other virtues, together with his admirable abilities as a teacher of youth, cannot be sufficiently praised. On his suggestion, and with his assistance, Calvin learned Greek. The recollection of the benefit which he thus received from Wolmar he afterwards publicly testified, by dedicating to him his Commentary on the First" (Second) "Epistle to the Corinthians." [186]The circumstances connected with his attendance on the instructions of that distinguished teacher are interesting, as giving occasion to mark the leadings of providence in preparing Calvin for the important work, which was afterwards assigned him in the Church of Christ. His father had originally intended him for the ministry, and procured for him a benefice in the cathedral church of Noyon, and afterwards the rectory of Pont-Eveque, the birthplace of his father.Not long afterwards, however, his father resolved to send him to study civil law, as a more likely means of worldly preferment, while in the mean time Calvin, having been made acquainted with the doctrines of the reformed faith by one of his own relations, Peter Robert Olivet, had begun to feel dissatisfied with the Romish Church, and had left off attendance on the public services of the Church. With the view of devoting himself to the study of law, he removed to Orleans, and placed himself under the tuition of Peter De L'etoile, a French lawyer of great celebrity, and made in a short time surprising progress, so that very frequently, in the absence of the professors, he supplied their place, and

was regarded as a teacher rather than a pupil. He afterwards went to Bourges, with the view of prosecuting the study of law under the celebrated Andrew Alciat. While there he formed, as is stated in the foregoing extract from Beza's Life of Calvin, an intimate friendship with Melchior Wolmar, his instructor in the Greek tongue. Having received intimation of the sudden death of his father, he broke off abruptly the studies in which he was engaged, and having returned to Noyon, his native town, he soon afterwards devoted himself to other and higher pursuits. The study of civil law, to which he had devoted himself for a time, in compliance with his father's wishes, though ultimately abandoned, was not without its use, in connection with those sacred pursuits to which his subsequent life was devoted. It may be interesting to the reader to observe unequivocal evidences of this, as furnished in the following encomiums pronounced upon Calvin by two eminent writers of sound and unbiassed judgment: -- "A founder," says Hooker, "it" (the Presbyterian polity) "had, whom, for mine own part, I think incomparably the wisest man that ever the French Church did enjoy, since the hour it enjoyed him. His bringing up was in the study of the civil law. Divine knowledge he gathered, not by hearing and reading, so much as by teaching others. For, though thousands were debtors to him as touching knowledge in that kind, yet he to none but only to God, the Author of that most blessed fountain, the Book of Life, and of the admirable dexterity of wit, together with the helps of other learning, which were his guide." [187] "Calvin," says M. D'alembert, "who with justice enjoyed a high reputation, was a scholar of the first order. He wrote in Latin as well as is possible in a dead language, and in French with a purity that was extraordinary for his time. This purity, which is to the present day admired by our critics, renders his writings greatly superior to almost all of the same age; as the works of MM. de Port Royal are still distinguished on the same account, from the barbarous rhapsodies of their opponents and contemporaries. Calvin being a skilful lawyer, and as enlightened a divine as a heretic can be, drew up, in concert with the magistrates, a code of laws," etc. [188]While Calvin's large acquirements in the study of civil law were thus eminently serviceable in other and higher departments of labor, the other branch of study cultivated by him while at Bourges -- the knowledge of the Greek tongue -- was more directly fitted to prepare him, though he little thought of it at the time, for the sacred pursuits in which Providence called him to engage, with devotedness and success, in after years. Under the tuition of Wolmar, he appears to have applied himself to the study of the Greek language with the greatest diligence and ardour. "He did not indeed," says Tholuck, "learn Greek before his residence in Bourges, but he could not have been then, at most, more than twenty-two years old; and it is not therefore strange, that, with his resolute spirit, he made himself complete master of it." [189] His instructor in this department, Melchior Wolmar, was a man of distinguished talent, and of high moral worth. Beza, who, as we have seen, expresses in his Life of Calvin, in the strongest terms, his esteem for Wolmar, his sole instructor, has furnished in his Icones, (French edition,) entitled, "Les vrais Pourtraits des Hommes illustres," (à Génève 1581, pp.148-51,) the following interesting sketch of the leading particulars of the life of this distinguished man."Melior Wolmar of Rotweil, Professor of Civil Law, and of the Greek Language, in the University of Tübingen, (originally called Melchior, but latterly Joachim Camerarius, a very learned personage, and also Professor of Literature in Tübingen, admiring the probity of Wolmar, softened the name and changed it thus,) was born at Rotweil, which is an allied town of the Cantons, was brought up at Berne, and studied at Paris, where he immediately became well known for his admirable expertness in the Greek and Latin languages, as also in the town of Orleans, and more particularly at Bourges, where, being in the pay of Margaret Of Valois,

Queen Of Navarre, and Duchess of Berry, he read in Greek and in Latin, was admitted as teacher by the advice of Andrew Alciat, the prince of lawyers in our times. Farther, his house was frequented by men that were learned and fearers of God, among whom must be numbered John Calvin, who had no hesitation in placing himself under Wolmar, to learn from him the Greek language, he having opened a school expressly for certain young men of good family and of great hope, in which he succeeded so admirably, that there could not have been found a man better qualified for the successful training of youth, and there was no one who had educated in a proper manner so large a number as he had done."France would have reaped more fruits of Melior's industry, had not the persecutions that arose against the Church of God, and respect for Ulrich, Duke Of Wittemberg, by whom he was invited, drawn him away to Tübingen in the year 1535, when, having read in law, and having interpreted Greek authors during upwards of twenty years with great honor, he was at length permitted to resign. Having retired, with his wife, named Margaret, to Isne, a town belonging to that lady, he was attacked with paralysis, and at the end of some months, he and his wife (overcome as she was with grief) died on the same day -- it being the will of God, that those whom a sacred friendship had held bound during the space of twenty-seven years complete, should be inclosed in the same tomb."He was an accomplished personage in all the gifts that are requisite for making a man accomplished. Above all he was amazingly charitable to the poor, and at the same time so remote from ambition, that, while he had the Greek and Latin languages at his command, he put to the press nothing but an elegant preface, [190] introductory to the Grammar of Demetrius Chalcondyles."Having had in my childhood, as my preceptor, so distinguished a personage, (revered by me, while he lived, as my own father), I have bewailed his death, and that of his wife, in three Latin Epigrams, now rendered into French. He died at Isne in the year 1561, at the age of 64 years. I.

Vous, que le sainct lien de mariage assemble,

En ces deux contemplez d'vn mariage heureux,

L'exemplaire certain et rare tout ensemble,

MELIOR, Marguerite, en mesme iour es cieux,

Se virent esleuez. Ainsi ceux que la vie

Auoit apariez eurent par mesme mort,

La vie en mesme tombe à la mort asseruie,

Attendant ce iour plaisant et lumineux,

Que de l'heur eternel ils iouiront tous deux.II.

MELIOR, le meilleur, et le plus docte aussi

Qu'ait bienheuré ce temps ci,

Es tu donques couché, muet, dessous la charge

D'vn tombeau pesant et large?

Et ton disciple parle et demeure debout?

Las! oui, mais iusques au bout

Le viure et le parler desormais le martyre:

Car son coeur rien ne desire,

Sinon en mesme creux estre pres toy couché

Puis qu'auec toy gist caché

Le beau choeur des neuf soeurs, du ciel de fauorites, La douceur, les Charites.III.

Mausolee superbe, et vous, tant rechantees,

En l'Egypte iadis Pyramides plantees,

A iust occasion vous pouuez d'vn faux oeil

Regarder maintenant de ces deux le cercueil.

Il n'y a rien meilleur que nostre Melior, [191]

La perle ou Marguerite [192] est d'Inde le Thresor.Calvin's Commentary On The Second Epistle To The Corinthians appears to have been published by him only a few months after his Commentary on the First Epistle, his dedication to his Commentary on the Second Epistle bearing date 1st August 1546, while his first dedication to the Commentary on the First Epistle bears date 24th January 1546.In Senebier's Literary History of Geneva, quoted in Calvin on Genesis, (vol.1.) a list of Calvin's Commentaries is given in the order in which they are supposed to have been published. In that list the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans is placed first in order, and is stated to have been published in 1540. Next in order is the "Commentary on all the Epistles of Paul," which is stated to have been published in 1548. It will be observed, however, that while the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans is supposed to have been published in 1540, the first dedication to the Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the dedication to the Commentary on the Second Epistle, both of them bear date 1546. It is stated by Beza in his Life of Calvin, that during the contentions which prevailed in the Church in 1548, and some preceding years, Calvin was "not only not idle, but, as if he had been living in retirement, wrote most learned commentaries on six of Paul's Epistles." [193] The six Epistles referred to appear to have been the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, Calvin's Commentary on the last four of these having been published, as appears from the dedication prefixed to it, in 1548.What is chiefly of importance to be observed, in connection with the respective dates of the Epistles above referred to, is the circumstance noticed by Beza -- that Calvin wrote his "most learned Commentaries" on those Epistles "as if he had been living in retirement," while in reality amidst scenes, which would have incapacitated any ordinary mind for such pursuits. In the careful study of these interesting portions of the Volume of Inspiration, Calvin's devout mind found refreshment amidst scenes of turmoil; and we cannot doubt, that while preparing, under circumstances like these, his Commentaries on the Epistles to the Corinthians, and most of Paul's other Epistles, he had ample experience of what he himself so beautifully expresses, when commenting on Psalm 119:50,This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me:"The Prophet... had good reason for stating, that in the time of

affliction the faithful experience animation and vigour solely from the word of God inspiring them with life. Hence, if we meditate carefully on his word, we shall live even in the midst of death, nor will we meet with any sorrow so heavy for which it will not furnish us with a remedy. And if we are bereft of consolation and succour in our adversities, the blame must rest with ourselves; because, despising or overlooking the word of God, we purposely deceive ourselves with vain consolation." [194]J.P.

Elgin, June 1849.

Chapter 12

THE AUTHOR'S DEDICATORY EPISTLE.

TO THAT MOST ACCOMPLISHED MAN, MELCHIOR WOLMAR RUFUS, LAWYER. JOHN CALVIN HEALTH. Should you be disposed to charge me, not merely with neglect, but even with incivility, for not having written to you for so long a time, I confess I have scarcely any apology to offer. For if I were to allege that the distance between us is so great, and that, during fully five years, I have met with no one that was going in your direction, this indeed were true, but it would be, I readily acknowledge, but a lame excuse. It appeared to me, accordingly, that I could not do better than offer to you some compensation, that might make up for the errors of the past, and might at once set me clear from all blame. Here, then, you have a commentary on the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, prepared by me with as much care as was in my power. [195] For I have no doubt that you will, in your kindness, accept of this as a sufficient compensation. At the same time there are other and weightier considerations, that have induced me to dedicate this to you. First of all, I remember with what fidelity [196] you cherished and strengthened the friendship, which had begun, (now long since,) in some small degree, to subsist between us -- how generously you were prepared to lay out yourself and your services on my account, when you thought that you had an opportunity presented to you of testifying your affection towards me; how carefully you made offer to me of your assistance [197] for my advancement, had not the calling in which I was at that time engaged prevented me from availing myself of it. Nothing, however, has had greater weight with me than the recollection of the first time I was sent by my father to learn civil law. Under your direction and tuition, I conjoined with the study of law Greek literature, of which you were at that time a most celebrated professor. And certainly it was not owing to you that I did not make greater proficiency; for, with your wonted kindness of disposition, you would have had no hesitation in lending me a helping hand for the completion of my course, had I not been called away by my father's death, when I had little more than started. I am, however, under no small obligations to you in this respect, that I was initiated by you in the rudiments, at least, which were afterwards of great advantage to me. Hence I could not satisfy myself without leaving to posterity some memorial of my gratitude, and at the same time rendering to you some fruit, such as it is, of your labor. [198] Farewell. Geneva, 1st August 1546.

THE ARGUMENT

ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. So far as we can judge from the connection of this Epistle, it appears that the first Epistle was not without some good effect among the Corinthians, [199] but at the same time was not productive of so much benefit as it ought to have been; and farther, that some wicked persons, despising Paul's authority, persisted in their obstinacy. For the fact of his being so much occupied, at one time in declaring his fidelity, and at another in maintaining the dignity of his office, is itself a token that they had not as yet been thoroughly confirmed. He himself, too, complains in express terms, that there were some that made sport of his former Epistle, instead of deriving benefit from it. Understanding, then, the condition of the Church among them to be such, and being detained by other matters, so as to be prevented from coming to them so soon as he had at that time contemplated, he wrote this Epistle from Macedonia. We are now in possession of the purpose which he had in view in writing this Epistle -- that he might perfect what he had already begun, in order that he might, when he came, find every thing in proper order. He begins, as he is wont, with thanksgiving, rendering thanks to God, that he had been marvellously rescued from the most imminent dangers, and at the same time he calls them to notice, that all his afflictions and distresses tended to their benefit and welfare, that he may the better secure their favor by this farther pledge of union, [200] while the, wicked perversely took occasion from this to lessen his influence. Farther, when wishing to apologize for delaying to come to them, he declares that he had not changed his purpose from lightness or unsteadiness, and that he had not, for the purpose of deceiving, professed anything that he had not really had in view; [201] for there was the same consistency to be seen by them in all his sayings, that they had had experience of in his doctrine. Here, too, he briefly notices, how stable and sure was the truth of his preaching, as being founded on Christ, by whom all the promises of God are fixed and ratified -- which is a high recommendation of the gospel. After this he declares, that the reason why he had not come was this, that he could not appear among them cheerful and agreeable. In this statement, he reproves those, who, from his change of purpose, took occasion to calumniate him. He accordingly throws the blame upon the Corinthians, as being not yet well prepared for receiving him. He shows, at the same time, with what fatherly forbearance he was actuated, inasmuch as he kept himself back from visiting their city for this reason -- that he might not be under the necessity of exercising severity upon them. Farther, lest any one should object, that he had in the mean time not at all refrained from handling the Corinthians severely in his writings, he apologizes for the vehemence that he made use of in his first Epistle, by saying that it was owing to others -- they having shut him up to the necessity of this against his will. That this keenness had proceeded from a friendly disposition he satisfactorily shows, by ordering that the incestuous person himself, on whose account he had been much exasperated, should be received back into favor, having since that time given some evidence of repentance. Farther, he brings forward this additional evidence of his affection towards them, that he had no rest in his mind (2 Corinthians 2:13) until he had learned through means of Titus the state of their affairs, for an anxiety of this kind originates in affection. Having had occasion, however, to make mention here of his journey to Macedonia, he begins to speak of the glory of his

ministry. As, however, those darling Apostles, who endeavored to detract from him, had obtained an easy victory over him by trumpeting their own praises, that he may have nothing in common with them, and that he may at the same time beat down their foolish boasting, he declares that he derives commendation from the work itself, [202] and does not borrow it from men. In the same passage, he extols in magnificent terms the efficacy of his preaching, and sets off to advantage the dignity of his Apostleship by comparing the gospel with the law, declaring, however, first of all, that he claimed nothing as his own, but acknowledged everything, whatever it might be, to have come forth from God. After this he relates again, with what fidelity and integrity he had discharged the office intrusted to him, and in this he reproves those who malignantly reproached him. Nay more, rising still higher in holy confidence, he declares, that all are blinded by the devil, who do not perceive the lustre of his gospel. Perceiving, however, that the meanness of his person (as being contemptible) [203] detracted much from the respect due to his Apostleship, embracing this favorable opportunity, he does not merely remove this occasion of offense, but turns it into an opposite direction, by saying, that the excellence of God's grace shines forth so much the more brightly, from the circumstance that so valuable a treasure was presented in earthen vessels.

(2 Corinthians 4:7.) Thus he turns to his own commendation those things which the malevolent were wont to cast up to him by way of reproach, because on his being weighed down with so many distresses, he always, nevertheless, after the manner of the palm tree, [204] rises superior to them. He treats of this subject up to the middle of the fourth chapter, (2 Corinthians 4). As, however, the true glory of Christians lies beyond this world, he teaches that we must, by contempt of this present life and mortification of the outward man, set ourselves with the whole bent of our mind to meditation on a blessed immortality. Farther, near the beginning of the fifth chapter, (2 Corinthians 5), he glories in this -- that being actuated by such a disposition, he has nothing else as the object of his desire, than to have his services approved unto the Lord, and he entertains a hope, that he will have the Corinthians as witnesses of his sincerity. As, however, there was a danger of his being suspected of vanity, or arrogance, he again repeats, that he is constrained to this by the unreasonableness of wicked persons, and that it was not for his own sake, as though he were eager to retain their good opinion, but for the benefit of the Corinthians, to whom it was of advantage to have this opinion and persuasion; and he declares that he is concerned for nothing but their welfare. With the view of confirming this, he subjoins a universal statement, showing what ought to be the object aimed at by the servants of Christ -- that, losing sight of themselves, they should live to the honor of their Lord; and at length he concludes, that everything except newness of life ought to be reckoned of no importance, so that he alone, who has denied himself, is to be held in esteem. From this he passes on to unfold the sum of the Gospel message, that by the magnitude and excellence of it he may stir up both ministers and people to a pious solicitude. This he does in the beginning of the sixth chapter, (2 Corinthians 6). Here again, after having noticed how faithfully he discharged his office, he gently reproves the Corinthians, as being hinderances to themselves in the way of their reaping advantage. To this expostulation he immediately subjoins an exhortation, to flee from idolatry -- from which it appears, that the Corinthians had not yet been brought so far as he wished. Hence it is not without good reason that he complains, that they had themselves to blame, inasmuch as they had not had their ears open to doctrine so plain. But lest he should, by pressing too severely their tender minds, dishearten or alienate them, he again assures them of his kind disposition towards them, and resuming his apology for severity, which he had left off in a manner abruptly, he brings it to a conclusion, though in a different way. For

assuming greater confidence, he acknowledges that he is not dissatisfied with himself for having grieved them, inasmuch as he had done it for their good; [205] while at the same time, by congratulating them on the happy issue, he shows them how cordially he desires their best interests. These things he treats of to the end of the seventh chapter, (2 Corinthians 7).From the beginning of the eighth chapter, (2 Corinthians 8), to the end of the ninth, (2 Corinthians 9), he stirs them up to cheerfulness in giving alms, of which he had made mention in the last chapter of the first Epistle. He commends them, it is true, for having begun well, but lest the ardour of their zeal should cool in process of time, as often happens, he encourages them by a variety of arguments to go on perseveringly in the course on which they had entered.In the tenth chapter, (2 Corinthians 10), he begins to defend himself, and his office as an Apostle, from the calumnies with which the wicked assailed him. And in the first place, he shows that he is admirably equipped with the armor that is requisite for maintaining Christ's warfare. [206] Farther, he declares, that the authority which he had exercised in the former Epistle was grounded on the assurance of a good conscience, and he shows them that he had no less power in his actions, when present, than authority in his words when absent. Lastly, by instituting a comparison between himself and them, he shows how vain their boasting is. [207]In the eleventh chapter, (2 Corinthians 11), he calls upon the Corinthians to renounce those depraved inclinations, by which they had been corrupted, showing them that nothing is more dangerous than to allow themselves to be drawn aside from the simplicity of the Gospel. The fact of his having begun to be somewhat disesteemed among them, while others had been more favorably received by them, had arisen, as he shows, not from any fault on his part, but from their being haughty or nice to please; inasmuch as those others had brought them nothing better or more excellent, while he was contemptible in their view because he did not set himself off to advantage by elegance of speech, [208] or because he had, by voluntary subjection, by way of humouring their weakness, given up his just claim. This irony [209] contains in it an indirect reproach for their ingratitude, for where was the reasonableness of esteeming him the less, because he had accommodated himself to them? He declares, however, that the reason why he had refrained from taking the wages to which he was entitled, was not that he had less affection to the Corinthians, [210] but in order that no advantage might be gained over him in any respect by the false apostles, who, he saw, laid snares for him by this stratagem.Having reproved the unreasonable and malignant judgment of the Corinthians, he magnifies himself in a strain of pious glorying, letting them know in what magnificent terms he could boast, were he so inclined, premising however, that it is for their sakes that he acts the fool [211] in heralding his own praises. At length, checking himself, as it were, in the middle of the course, he says that his chief ground of glorying is that abasement which was despised by the proud, for he had been admonished by the Lord, not to glory in anything but in his infirmities.Towards the close of the twelfth chapter, (2 Corinthians 12), he again expostulates with them for shutting him up to the necessity of thus playing the fool, while they give themselves up to ambitious men, [212] by whom they are estranged from Christ. Farther, he inveighs keenly against those who wantonly raged against him, adding to their previous crimes this impudence of opposition. [213]In the thirteenth chapter, (2 Corinthians 13), by forewarning such persons, that he will treat them with peculiar severity, he exhorts all in general to recognise his apostleship, as it will be for their advantage to do so; while it is a dangerous thing for them to despise one, whom they had found by experience to be a trusty and faithful ambassador from the Lord.

2 Corinthians 1:1-5

1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:1. Paulus Apostolus Iesu Christi per voluntatem Dei, et Timotheus frater, Ecclesiae Dei quae est Corinthi, cum sanctis omnibus qui sunt in tota Achaia:2. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.2. Gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro, et Domino Iesu Christo.3. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;3. Benedictus Deus, et Pater Domini nostri Iesu Christi, Pater misericordiarum, et Deus omnis consolationis,4. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.4. Qui consolatur nos in omni tribulatione nostra, ut possimus consolari eos qui in omni tribulatione sunt, per consolationem qua consolatur nos Deus.5. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.5. Quia sicuti abundant passiones Christi in nos: ita per Christum abundat etiam consolatio nostra.1. Paul an Apostle As to the reasons why he designates himself an Apostle of Christ, and adds that he has obtained this honor by the will of God, see the foregoing Epistle, where it has been observed that none are to be listened to but those, who have been sent by God, and speak from his mouth, and that, consequently, to secure authority for any one, two things are required -- a call, and fidelity on the part of the person who is called, in the execution of his office. [214] Both of these Paul claims for himself. The false apostles, it is true, do the same; but then, by usurping a title that does not belong to them, they gain nothing among the sons of God, who can with the utmost ease convict them of impertinence. Hence the mere name is not enough, if there be not the reality along with it, so that he who gives himself out as an Apostle must also show himself to be such by his work.To the Church of God We must always keep it in view, his recognising a Church to exist, where there was such a conflux of evils. For the faults of individuals do not prevent a society that has genuine marks of religion [215] from being recognised as a Church. [216] But what does he mean by the expression -- with all saints? Were those saints unconnected with the Church? I answer, that this phrase refers to believers, who were dispersed hither and thither, throughout various corners of the province -- it being likely, that in that greatly disturbed period, when the enemies of Christ were everywhere venting their rage, many were scattered abroad, who could not conveniently hold sacred assemblies.3 Blessed be God He begins (as has been observed) with this thanksgiving -- partly for the purpose of extolling the goodness of God -- partly, with the view of animating the Corinthians by his example to the resolute endurance of persecutions; and partly, that he may magnify himself in a strain of pious glorying, in opposition to the malignant slanderings of the false apostles. For such is the depravity of the world, that it treats with derision martyrdoms, [217] which it ought to have held in admiration, and endeavours to find matter of reproach in the splendid trophies of the pious. [218] Blessed be God, says he. On what account? who comforteth us [219] -- the relative being used instead of the causal particle. [220] He had endured his tribulations with fortitude and alacrity: this fortitude he ascribes to God, because it was owing to support derived from his consolation that he had not fainted.He calls him the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not without good reason, where

blessings are treated of; for where Christ is not, there the beneficence of God is not. On the other hand, where Christ intervenes,by whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (Ephesians 3:15,)there are all mercies and all consolations of God -- nay, more, there is fatherly love, the fountain from which everything else flows.4. That we may be able to comfort There can be no doubt, that, as he had a little before cleared his afflictions from reproach and unfavorable reports, so now he instructs the Corinthians, that his having come off victorious through heavenly consolation was for their sake and with a view to their advantage, that they may stir themselves up to fellowship in suffering, instead of haughtily despising his conflicts. As, however, the Apostle lived not for himself but for the Church, so he reckoned, that whatever favors God conferred upon him, were not given for his own sake merely, [221] but in order that he might have more in his power for helping others. And, unquestionably, when the Lord confers upon us any favor, he in a manner invites us by his example to be generous to our neighbours. The riches of the Spirit, therefore, are not to be kept by us to ourselves, but every one must communicate to others what he has received. This, it is true, must be considered as being applicable chiefly to ministers of the Word. [222] It is, however, common to all, according to the measure of each. Thus Paul here acknowledges, that he had been sustained by the consolation of God, that he might be able himself to comfort others 5. For as the sufferings of Christ abound -- This statement may be explained in two ways -- actively and passively. If you take it actively, the meaning will be this: "The more I am tried with various afflictions, so much the more resources have I for comforting others." I am, however, more inclined to take it in a passive sense, as meaning that God multiplied his consolations according to the measure of his tribulations. David also acknowledges that it had been thus with him:According to the multitude, says he, of my anxieties within me, thy consolations have delighted my soul. (Psalm 94:19.)In Paul's words, however, there is a fuller statement of doctrine; for the afflictions of the pious he calls the sufferings of Christ, as he says elsewhere,that he fills up in his body what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ. (Colossians 1:24.)The miseries and vexations, it is true, of the present life are common to good and bad alike, but when they befall the wicked, they are tokens of the curse of God, because they arise from sin, and nothing appears in them except the anger of God and participation with Adam, which cannot but depress the mind. But in the mean time believers are conformed to Christ, andbear about with them in their body his dying, that the life of Christ may one day be manifested in them. (2 Corinthians 4:10.)I speak of the afflictions which they endure for the testimony of Christ, (Revelation 1:9,) for although the Lord's chastisements, with which he chastises their sins, are beneficial to them, they are, nevertheless, not partakers, properly speaking, of Christ's sufferings, except in those cases in which they suffer on his account, as we find in 1 Peter 4:13. Paul's meaning then is, that God is always present with him in his tribulations, and that his infirmity is sustained by the consolations of Christ, so as to prevent him from being overwhelmed with calamities.

2 Corinthians 1:6-11

6. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 6. Sive autem affligimur pro vestra consolatione et salute, [223] quae efficitur in tolerantia ipsarum passionum, quas et nos patimur: sive consolationem accipimus pro vestra consolatione et salute: 7. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. 7. Spes nostra firma est de vobis, [224] scientes, quod quemadmodum socii estis passionum, ita et consolationis. 8. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 8. Nolo enim vos nescire, fratres, de tribulatione nostra, quae accidit nobis in Asia: nempe quod praeter modum gravati fuerimus supra vires, ita ut de vita quoque anxii essemus. 9. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 9. Quin etiam [225] ipsi in nobis ipsis sententiam mortis acceperamus: ne confideremus in nobis, sed in Deo, qui ad vitam suscitat mortuos: 10. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; 10. Qui ex tanta morte eripuit nos, et eripit, in quo spem fixam habemus, quod etiam posthaec eripiet; 11. Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. 11. Simul adiuvantibus et vobis per deprecationem pro nobis: ut donum, ex multis personis erga nos collatum, gratiarum actione per multos [226] celebretur pro nobis.6. Whether we are afflicted. From the circumstance that before the clause our hope of you is steadfast, there is introduced the connecting particle and, Erasmus has conceived the idea, that some word must be understood to correspond with those words -- for your consolation and salvation -- in this way, whether we are afflicted, IT IS for your consolation. I think it, however, more probable, that the connecting particle and is used here as meaning: Thus also, or in both cases. He had already stated, that he received consolation in order that he might communicate it to others. Now he goes a step farther, and says, that he has a steadfast hope, that they would be partakers of the consolation Besides, some of the most ancient Greek manuscripts introduce immediately after the first clause this statement -- and our hope of you is steadfast. [227] This reading removes all ambiguity. For when it is introduced in the middle, we must necessarily refer it to the latter clause, equally as to the former. At the same time, if any one wishes to have a complete sentence in each clause, by supplying some verb, there will be no great harm in this, and there will be no great difference as to the meaning. For if you read it as one continued statement, you must, at the same time, explain the different parts in this manner -- that the Apostle is afflicted, and is refreshed with consolation for the advantage of the Corinthians; and that he entertains, therefore, the hope, [228] that they will be at length partakers of the same consolation, with what is in reserve for himself. For my own part, I have adopted the way that I have judged the more suitable.It is, however, to be observed, that the word afflicted here refers not merely to outward misery, but also to that of the mind, so as to correspond with the opposite term comforted. (parakaleisthai) Thus the meaning is, that the person's mind is pressed down with anxiety from a feeling of misery. [229] What we render consolation, is in the

Greek paraklesis, -- a term which signifies also exhortation. If, however, you understand that kind of consolation, by which a person's mind is lightened of grief, and is raised above it, you will be in possession of Paul's meaning. For example, Paul himself would well-nigh have fallen down dead under the pressure of so many afflictions, had not God encouraged him, by raising him up by means of his consolation. Thus, too, the Corinthians derive strength and fortitude of mind from his sufferings, [230] while they take comfort from his example. Let us now sum up the whole matter briefly. As he saw that his afflictions were made by some an occasion of holding him in contempt, with the view of calling back the Corinthians from an error of this nature, [231] he shows in the first place that he ought to be in high esteem among them, in consideration of advantage redounding to themselves; and then afterwards he associates them with himself, that they may reckon his afflictions to be in a manner their own. "Whether I suffer afflictions, or experience consolation, it is all for your benefit, and I cherish an assured hope, that you will continue to enjoy this advantage." [232]For such were Paul's afflictions, and his consolations also, that they would have contributed to the edification of the Corinthians, had not the Corinthians of their own accord deprived themselves of the advantage redounding from it. He, accordingly, declares his confidence in the Corinthians to be such, that he entertains the assured hope that it will not be vain, that he has been afflicted, and has received consolation for their advantage. The false apostles made every effort to turn to Paul's reproach everything that befell him. Had they obtained their wish, the afflictions which he endured for their salvation, had been vain and fruitless; they would have derived no advantage from the consolations with which the Lord refreshed him. To contrivances of this nature he opposes his present confidence. His afflictions tended to promote the comfort of believers, as furnishing them with occasion of confirmation, on their perceiving that he suffered willingly, and endured with fortitude so many hardships for the sake of the gospel. For however we may acknowledge that afflictions ought to be endured by us for the sake of the gospel, we, nevertheless, tremble through a consciousness of our weakness, and think ourselves not prepared for it. [233] In that case, we should call to mind the examples of the saints, which should make us more courageous.On the other hand, his personal consolation flowed out to the whole Church, inasmuch as they concluded, [234] that God who had sustained and refreshed him in his emergency, would, in like manner, not be wanting to them. Thus their welfare was promoted in both ways, and this is what he introduces as it were by way of parenthesis, when he says -- which is made effectual in the endurance, etc. For he wished to add this clause, by way of explanation, that they might not think that they had nothing to do with the afflictions which he alone endured. Erasmus takes the participle goumenes in an active sense, [235] but a passive signification is more suitable, [236] as Paul designed simply to explain in what respect everything that befell him was for their salvation. He says, accordingly, that he suffers, indeed, alone, but that his sufferings are of use for promoting their salvation -- not as though they were expiations or sacrifices for sins, but as edifying them by confirming them. Hence he conjoins consolation and salvation, with the view of pointing out the way in which their salvation was to be accomplished. 7. Knowing, that as However there might be some of the Corinthians that were drawn away for the time by the calumnies of the false Apostles, so as to entertain less honorable views of Paul, on seeing him shamefully handled before the world, he, nevertheless, associates them with himself both in fellowship of afflictions, and in hope of consolation. [237] Thus he corrects their perverse and malignant view, without subjecting them to an open rebuke.8. For I would not have you ignorant He makes mention of the greatness and difficulty of his conflicts, that the glory of victory may

thereby the more abundantly appear. Since the time of his sending them the former epistle, he had been exposed to great dangers, and had endured violent assaults. The probability, however, is that he refers here to the history, which Luke relates in Acts 19:23, though in that passage he does not so distinctly intimate the extent of the danger. As, however, he states that the whole city was in a tumult, (Acts 19:29,) it is easy from this to infer the rest. For we know what is the usual effect of a popular tumult, when it has been once kindled. By this persecution Paul declares he had been oppressed beyond measure, nay more, above strength, that is, so as not to be able to endure the burden. For it is a metaphor taken from persons who give way under the pressure of a heavy load, or from ships that sink from being overladen -- not that he had actually fainted, but that he felt that his strength would have failed him, if the Lord had not imparted fresh strength. [238]So that we were in anxiety even as to life itself -- that is, "So that I thought life was gone, or at least I had very little hope of it remaining, as those are wont to feel who are shut up so as to see no way of escape." Was then so valiant a soldier of Christ, so brave a wrestler, left without strength, so as to look for nothing but death? [239] For he mentions it as the reason of what he had stated -- that he despaired of life. I have already observed, that Paul does not measure his strength in connection with help from God, but according to his own personal feeling of his ability. Now there can be no doubt, that all human strength must give way before the fear of death. Farther, it is necessary that even saints themselves should be in danger of an entire failure of strength, that, being put in mind of their own weakness, they may learn, agreeably to what follows, to place their entire dependence on God alone. At the same time I have preferred to explain the word exaporeisthai, which is made use of by Paul, as denoting a trembling anxiety, rather than render it, as Erasmus has done by the word despair; because he simply means, that he was hemmed in by the greatest difficulties, so that no means of preserving life seemed to remain. [240]9. Nay more, we had the sentence of death This is as though we should say -- "I had already laid my account with dying, or had regarded it as a thing fixed." He borrows, however, a similitude from those who are under sentence of death, and look for nothing but the hour when they are to die. At the same time he says, that this sentence had been pronounced by him upon himself, by which he intimates, that it was in his own view that he had been sentenced to death -- that he might not seem to have had it from any revelation from God. In this sentence, [241] therefore, there is something more implied than in the feeling of anxiety (exaporeisthai) that he had made mention of, because in the former case there was despair of life, but in this case there is certain death. We must, however, take notice, chiefly, of what he adds as to the design -- that he had been reduced to this extremity, that he might not trust in himself For I do not agree with what Chrysostom says -- that the Apostle did not stand in need of such a remedy, but set himself forth to others as a pattern merely in appearance. [242] For he was a man that was subject, in other respects, to like passions as other men -- (James 5:17) -- not merely to cold and heat, but also to misdirected confidence, rashness, and the like. I do not say that he was addicted to these vices, but this I say, that he was capable of being tempted to them, and that this was the remedy that God seasonably interposed, that they might not make their way into his mind. [243]There are, accordingly, two things to be observed here. In the first place -- that the fleshly confidence with which we are puffed up, is so obstinate, that it cannot be overthrown in any other way than by our falling into utter despair. [244] For as the flesh is proud, it does not willingly give way, and never ceases to be insolent until it has been constrained; nor are we brought to true submission, until we have been brought down by the mighty hand of God. (1 Peter 5:6.) Secondly, it is to be observed, that the saints themselves have

some remains of this disease adhering to them, and that for this reason they are often reduced to an extremity, that, stript of all self-confidence, they may learn humility: nay more, that this malady is so deeply rooted in the minds of men, that even the most advanced are not thoroughly purged from it, until God sets death before their eyes. And hence we may infer, how displeasing to God confidence in ourselves must be, when for the purpose of correcting it, it is necessary that we should be condemned to death. But in God that raiseth the dead As we must first die, [245] in order that, renouncing confidence in ourselves, and conscious of our own weakness, we may claim no honor to ourselves, so even that were not sufficient, if we did not proceed a step farther. Let us begin, therefore, with despairing of ourselves, but with the view of placing our hope in God. Let us be brought low in ourselves, but in order that we may be raised up by his power. Paul, accordingly, having brought to nothing the pride of the flesh, immediately substitutes in its place a confidence that rests upon God. Not in ourselves, says he, but in GodThe epithet that follows, Paul has adapted to the connection of the subject, as he does in Romans 4:17, where he speaks of Abraham. For tobelieve in God, who calleth those things that are not, as though they were, and to hope in God who raiseth the dead,are equivalent to his setting before him as an object of contemplation, the power of God in creating his elect out of nothing, and raising up the dead. Hence Paul says, that death had been set before his eyes, that he might, in consequence of this, recognize the more distinctly the power of God, by which he had been raised up from the dead. The first thing in order, it is true, is this -- that, by means of the strength with which God furnishes us, we should acknowledge him as the Author of life; but as in consequence of our dulness the light of life often dazzles our eyes, it is necessary that we should be brought to God by having death presented to our view. [246]10. Who hath delivered us from so great a death Here he applies to himself personally, what he had stated in a general way, and by way of proclaiming the grace of God, he declares that he had not been disappointed in his expectation, inasmuch as he had been delivered from death, and that too, in no common form. As to his manner of expression, the hyperbole, which he makes use of, is not unusual in the Scriptures, for it frequently occurs, both in the Prophets and in the Psalms, and it is made use of even in common conversation. What Paul acknowledges as to himself personally, let every one now take home as applicable to himself.In whom we have an assured hope. He promises himself as to the future, also, that beneficence of God, which he had often experienced in the past. Nor is it without good reason; for the Lord, by accomplishing in part what he has promised, bids us hope well as to what remains. Nay more, in proportion to the number of favors that we receive from him, does he by so many pledges, or earnests, as it were, confirm his promises. [247] Now, although Paul had no doubt that God would of his own accord be present with him, yet he exhorts the Corinthians to commend to God in their prayers his safety. For when he assumes it as certain, that he will be aided by them, this declaration has the force of an exhortation, and he means that they would not merely do it as a matter of duty, but also with advantage. [248]"Your prayers, also," he says, "will help me." [249] For God wills not that the duty of mutual intercession, which he enjoins upon us, should be without advantage. This ought to be a stimulus to us, on the one hand, to solicit the intercession of our brethren, when we are weighed down by any necessity, and, on the other, to render similar assistance in return, since we are informed, that it is not only a duty that is well pleasing to God, but also profitable to ourselves. Nor is it owing to distrust that the Apostle implores the friendly aid of his brethren, [250] for, while he felt assured, that his safety would be the object of God's care, [251] though he were destitute of all human help, yet he knew that it was well pleasing to God, that

he should be aided by the prayers of the saints. He had respect, also, to the promises that were given, that assistance of this kind would not be in vain. Hence, in order that he might not overlook any assistance that was appointed to him by God, he desired that the brethren should pray for his preservation.The sum is this -- that we follow the word of God, that is, that we obey his commandments and cleave to his promises. This is not the part of those who have recourse to the assistance of the dead; [252] for not contented with the sources of help appointed by God, they call in to their aid a new one, that has no countenance from any declaration of Scripture. For whatever we find mentioned there as to mutual intercession, has no reference to the dead, but is expressly restricted to the living. Hence Papists act childishly in perverting those passages, so as to give some colour to their superstition. [253]11. That the gift bestowed upon us through means of many persons. As there is some difficulty in Paul's words, interpreters differ as to the meaning. I shall not spend time in setting aside the interpretations of others, nor indeed is there any need for this, provided only we are satisfied as to the true and proper meaning. He had said, that the prayers of the Corinthians would be an assistance to him. He now adds a second advantage that would accrue from it -- a higher manifestation of God's glory. "For whatever God will confer upon me," says he, "being as it were obtained through means of many persons, will, also, by many be celebrated with praises:" or in this way -- "Many will give thanks to God in my behalf, because, in affording help to me, he has favorably regarded the prayers, not merely of one but of many." In the first place, while it is our duty to allow no favor from God to pass without rendering praise, it becomes us, nevertheless, more especially when our prayers have been favorably regarded by him, to acknowledge his mercy with thanksgiving, as he commands us to do in Psalm 50:15. Nor ought this to be merely where our own personal interest is concerned, but also where the welfare of the Church in general, or that of any one of our brethren is involved. Hence when we mutually pray one for another, and obtain our desire, the glory of God is so much the more set forth, inasmuch as we all acknowledge, with thanksgiving, God's benefits -- both those that are conferred publicly upon the whole Church, and also those that are bestowed privately upon individuals. In this interpretation there is nothing forced; for as to the circumstance that in the Greek the article being introduced between the two clauses by many persons, and the gift conferred upon me appears to disjoin them, [254] that has no force, as it is frequently found introduced between clauses that are connected with each other. Here, however, it is with propriety introduced in place of an adversative particle; [255] for although it had come forth from many persons, it was nevertheless peculiar to Paul. To take the phrase dia pollon (by means of many) in the neuter gender, [256] as some do, is at variance with the connection of the passage.It may, however, be asked, why he says From many persons, rather than From many men, and what is the meaning of the term person here? I answer, it is as though he had said -- With respect to many. For the favor was conferred upon Paul in such a way, that it might be given to many. Hence, as God had respect to many, he says on that account, that many persons were the cause of it. Some Greek manuscripts have huper humon -- on your account; and although this appears to be at variance with Paul's design, and the connection of the words, it may, nevertheless, be explained with propriety in this manner: "When God shall have heard you in behalf of my welfare, and that too for your own welfare, thanks will be given by many on your account."

2 Corinthians 1:12-14

12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. 12. Nam gloriatio nostra haec est: testimonium conscientiae nostrae, quod in simplicitate et puritate [257] Dei, non in sapientia carnali, sed in gratia Dei versati sumus in mundo; abundantius autem erga vos. 13. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; 13. Non enim alia scribimus vobis quam quae recognoscitis vel etiam agnoscitis: spero autem, quod usque in finem agnoscetis: 14. As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. 14. Quemadmodum et agnovistis nos ex parte: siquidem gloriatio vestra sumus: sicuti et vos nostra in die Domini Iesu. 12. For our glorying is this. He assigns a reason why his preservation should be a subject of interest to all -- that he had conducted himself [258] among them all in simplicity and sincerity He deserved, therefore, to be dear to them, and it would have been very unfeeling not to be concerned in reference to such a servant of the Lord, that he might be long preserved for the benefit of the Church. "I have conducted myself before all in such a manner, that it is no wonder if I have the approbation and love of all good men." He takes occasion from this, however, for the sake of those to whom he was writing, to make a digression for the purpose of declaring his own integrity. As, however, it is not enough to be approved of by man's judgment, and as Paul himself was harassed by the unjust and malignant judgments of some, or rather by corrupt and blind attachments, [259] he adduces his own conscience as his witness -- which is all one as though he had cited God as a witness, or had made what he says matter of appeal to his tribunal. But how does Paul's glorying in his integrity comport with that statement, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord?

(2 Corinthians 10:17.) Besides, who is so upright [260] as to dare to boast in the presence of God? In the first place, Paul does not oppose himself to God, as though he had anything that was his own, or that was from himself. Farther, he does not place the foundation of his salvation in that integrity to which he lays claim, nor does he make confidence in that the ground of his dependence. Lastly, he does not glory in God's gifts in such a way as not at the same time to render all the glory to him as their sole Author, and ascribe everything to him. [261] These three exceptions lay a foundation for every godly person glorying on good grounds in all God's benefits; while the wicked, on the other hand, cannot glory even in God, except on false and improper grounds. Let us therefore, first of all, acknowledge ourselves to be indebted to God for everything good that we possess, claiming no merit to ourselves. Secondly, let us hold fast this foundation -- that our dependence for salvation be grounded exclusively on the mercy of God. Lastly, let us repose ourselves [262] in the sole author of every blessing. Then in that there will be a pious [263] glorying in every kind of blessing. That in the simplicity [264] of God. He employs the expression simplicity of God here, in the same way as in Romans 3:23, the glory of God; and in John 12:43, the glory of God and of men. Those who love the glory of men, wish to appear something before men, or to stand well in the opinion of men. The glory of God is what a man has in the sight of

God. Hence Paul does not reckon it enough to declare that his sincerity was perceived by men, but adds, that he was such in the sight of God. Eilikrineia (which I have rendered purity) is closely connected with simplicity; for it is an open and upright way of acting, such as makes a man's heart as it were transparent. [265] Both terms stand opposed to craft, deception, and all underhand schemes. Not in fleshly wisdom. There is here a sort of anticipation; for what might be felt to be wanting in him he readily acknowledges, nay more, he openly proclaims, that he is destitute of, but adds, that he is endowed with what is incomparably more excellent -- the grace of God "I acknowledge," says he, "that I am destitute of fleshly wisdom, but I have been furnished with divine influence, and if any one is not satisfied with that, he is at liberty to depreciate my Apostleship. If, on the other hand, fleshly wisdom is of no value, then I want nothing that is not fitted to secure well-grounded praise." He gives the name of fleshly wisdom to everything apart from Christ, that procures for us the reputation of wisdom. See the first and second chapters of the former epistle. Hence, by the grace of God, which is contrasted with it, we must understand everything that transcends man's nature and capacity, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which openly manifested the power of God in the weakness of the flesh.More abundantly towards you Not that he had been less upright elsewhere, but that he had remained longer at Corinth, in order that he might (not to mention other purposes) afford a fuller and clearer proof of his integrity. He has, however, expressed himself intentionally in such a way as to intimate that he did not require evidences that were far-fetched, inasmuch as they were themselves the best witnesses of all that he had said.13. For we write no other things Here he indirectly reproves the false apostles, who recommended themselves by immoderate boastings, while they had little or no ground for it; and at the same time he obviates calumnies, in order that no one may object, that he claims for himself more than is his due. He says, therefore, that he does not in words boast of anything that he is not prepared to make good by deeds, and that, too, from the testimony of the Corinthians.The ambiguity, however, of the words, has given occasion for this passage being misinterpreted. Anaginoskein, among the Greeks, signifies sometimes to read, and at other times to recognize. Epiginoskein sometimes signifies to discover, while at other times it means what the Latins properly express by the verb agnoscere, to own, as among lawyers the phrase is used to own a child, [266] as Budaeus also has observed. In this way epiginoskein means more than anaginoskein For we say that a person recognises a thing, that is, that being silently convinced of it in his judgment, he perceives it to be true, while at the same time he does not acknowledge it, or, in other words, cordially intimate his assent to it.Let us now examine Paul's words. Some read thus -- We write no other things than what ye read and acknowledge, which it is very manifest is exceedingly lifeless, not to say senseless. For as to Ambrose's qualifying the statement in this way -- You not only read, but also acknowledge, there is no one that does not perceive that it is quite foreign to the import of the words. And the meaning that I have stated is plain, and hangs together naturally, and, up to this point, there is nothing to prevent readers from understanding it, were it not that they have had their eyes shut, from being misled by the different meanings of the word. The sum is this -- that Paul declares, that he brings forward no other things than what were known and perceived by the Corinthians -- nay more, things as to which they would bear him witness. The first term employed is recognoscere, (to recognize,) which is applicable, when persons are convinced from experience that matters are so. The second is agnoscere, (to acknowledge,) meaning that they give their assent to the truth. [267]And, I hope, will acknowledge even to the end. As the Corinthians had not yet perfectly returned to a sound mind, so as to be prepared to

weigh his fidelity in a just and even balance, [268] but at the same time had begun to abate somewhat of their perverse and malignant judgment respecting him, he intimates, that he hopes better as to the future. "You have already," says he, "to some extent acknowledged me. I hope that you will acknowledge more and more what I have been among you, and in what manner I have conducted myself." [269] From this it appears more clearly what he meant by the word epiginoskein. (acknowledge [270]) Now this relates to a season of repentance, for they had at the beginning acknowledged him fully and thoroughly; afterwards their right judgment had been beclouded [271] by unfair statements, but they had at length begun to return in part to a sound mind.14. For we are your glorying. We have briefly adverted to the manner in which it is allowable for saints to glory in God's benefits -- when they repose themselves in God alone, and have no other object of aim. Thus it was a ground of pious glorying on the part of Paul, that he had, by his ministry, brought the Corinthians under obedience to Christ; and of the Corinthians, on the other hand, that they had been trained up so faithfully and so virtuously by such an Apostle -- a privilege that had not been allotted to all. This way of glorying in men does not stand in the way of our glorying in God alone. Now he instructs the Corinthians, that it is of the greatest importance for themselves that they should acknowledge him to be a faithful, and not a merely pretended, servant of Christ; because, in the event of their withdrawing from him, they would deprive themselves of the highest glory. In these words he reproves their fickleness, inasmuch as they voluntarily deprived themselves of the highest glory, by listening too readily to the spiteful and envious. In the day of the Lord By this I understand the last day, which will put an end to all the fleeting [272] glories of this world. He means, then, that the glorying of which he is now speaking is not evanescent, as those things are that glitter in the eyes of men, but is abiding and stable, inasmuch as it will remain until the day of Christ. For then will Paul enjoy the triumph of the many victories that he had obtained under Christ's auspices, and will lead forth in splendor all the nations that have, by means of his ministry, been brought under Christ's glorious yoke; and the Church of the Corinthians will glory in having been founded and trained up by the services of so distinguished an Apostle.

2 Corinthians 1:15-20

15. And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; 15. Et hac fiducia volui primum ad vos venire, ut secundam [273] gratiam haberetis, 16. And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. 16. Et per vos transire in Macedoniam: [274] et rursum e Macedonia venire ad vos, et a vobis deduci in Iudaeam. 17. When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? 17. Hoc igitur quum animo propositum haberem, nuncubi levitate usus sum? aut quae cogito, secundum carnem cogito? ut sit apud me Etiam, etiam: et Non, non. 18. But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. 18. Fidelis Deus, quod sermo noster apud vos non fuit Etiam et non. 19. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. 19. Dei enim Filius Iesus Christus in vobis per nos praedicatus, per me, et Silvanum, et Timotheum, non fuit Etiam et non: sed Etiam fuit in ipso. 20. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. 20. Quaecunque enim sunt Dei promissiones, in illo sunt Etiam: quare et per ipsum sit Amen Deo ad gloriam per nos.15. In this confidence. After having given them reason to expect that he would come, he had subsequently changed his intention. This was made an occasion of calumny against him, as appears from the excuse that he brings forward. When he says that it was from relying on this confidence that he formed the purpose of coming to them, he indirectly throws the blame upon the Corinthians, inasmuch as they had, by their ingratitude, hindered, to some extent, his coming to them, by depriving him of that confidence.That ye might have a second benefit The first benefit had been this -- that he had devoted himself for the entire period of a year and six months (Acts 18:11) to the work of gaining them to the Lord; the second was their being confirmed, by means of his coming to them, in the faith which they had once received, and being stirred up by his sacred admonitions to make farther progress. Of this latter benefit the Corinthians had deprived themselves, inasmuch as they had not allowed the apostle to come to them. They were paying, therefore, the penalty of their own fault, and they had no ground for imputing any blame to Paul. If any one, however, prefers, with Chrysostom, to take charin (benefit) as used instead of karan, (joy,) I do not much object to it. [275] The former interpretation, however, is more simple.17. Did I use fickleness? There are two things, more especially, that prevent the purposes of men from being carried into effect, or their promises from being faithfully performed. The one is that they make changes upon them almost every hour, and the other is that they are too rash in forming their plans. It is a sign of changeableness to purpose or promise what you almost immediately afterwards regret. With that fault Paul declares he had not been chargeable. "I have not," says he, "through fickleness drawn back from the promise that I made." He declares also that he had been on his guard against rashness and misdirected confidence; for such is the way in which I explain the expression -- purpose according to the flesh For it is, as I have stated, the common practice of men, as though they were not dependent on God's providence, and were not subject to his will, to determine rashly and presumptuously what they will do. Now God, with the view of punishing this presumption,

defeats their plans, so as to prevent them from having a prosperous issue, and in many instances holds up themselves to ridicule.The expression, it is true, according to the flesh, might be extended farther, so as to include all wicked schemes, and such as are not directed to a right end, as for example such as are dictated by ambition, avarice, or any other depraved affection. Paul, however, in my opinion, did not intend here to refer to any thing of that nature, but merely to reprove that rashness which is but too customary on the part of man, and in daily use in the forming of plans. To purpose, therefore, according to the flesh, is not owning God as our ruler, but, instead of this, being impelled by a rash presumption, which is afterwards justly derided by God, and punished. The apostle, with the view of clearing himself from these faults, proposes a question, as if in the person of his opponents. Hence it is probable, as I have already said, that some unfavorable report had been put in circulation by wicked persons.That with me there should be yea, yea Some connect this statement with what goes before, and explain it thus: "As if it were in my power to perform whatever I purpose, as men determine that they will do whatever comes into their mind, and order their ways, as Solomon speaks, (Proverbs 16:1,) while they cannot so much as govern their tongue." And, undoubtedly, the words seem to imply this much -- that what has been once affirmed must remain fixed, and what has been once denied must never be done. So James in his Epistle (James 5:12) says,Let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into dissimulation.Farther, the context would in this way suit exceedingly well as to what goes before. For to purpose according to the flesh is this -- when we wish that, without any exception, our determinations shall be like oracles. [276] This interpretation, However, does not accord with what immediately follows -- God is faithful, etc., where Paul makes use of the same form of expression, when he has it in view to intimate, that he had not been unfaithful in his preaching. Now it were absurd, if almost in the same verse he reckoned it as a fault that his yea should be yea, and his nay nay, and yet at the same time laid claim to it as his highest praise. I am aware of what could be said in reply, if any one were disposed to sport himself with subtleties, but I have no relish for anything that is not solid.I have, therefore, no doubt, that in these words Paul designed to reprove fickleness, although they may seem to be susceptible of another meaning, for the purpose of clearing himself from that calumny -- that he was accustomed to promise in words what he failed to perform in deeds. [277] Thus the reiterating of the affirmation and negation will not have the same meaning as in Matthew 5:37 and in James, but will bear this meaning -- "that yea should with me be in this instance yea, and on the other hand, when it pleases me, nay, nay " At the same time it is possible that it may have crept in through the ignorance of transcribers, as the old translation does not redouble the words, [278] However this may be, we ought not to be very solicitous as to the words, provided we are in possession of the apostle's intention, which, as I have said, clearly appears from what follows. [279] 18. God is faithful. By the term word he means doctrine, as is manifest from the reason that he adds, when he says, that the Son of God, who is preached by him, is not variable, etc. As to his being always consistent with himself in point of doctrine, and not differing from himself, [280] he intends that by this they shall form a judgment as to his integrity, and in this way he removes every unfavorable suspicion of fickleness or unfaithfulness. It does not, however, necessarily follow, that the man who is faithful in doctrine, is also observant of truth in all his words. But as Paul did not reckon it of much importance in what estimation he was held, provided only the majesty of his doctrine remained safe and sound, he, on that account, calls the attention of the Corinthians chiefly to that matter. He intimates, it is true, that he observed in his whole life the same course of fidelity, as the Corinthians had seen in his

ministry. He seems, however, as if intentionally, in repelling the calumny, to transfer it from his person to his doctrine, because he was unwilling that his apostleship should be indirectly defamed, while he was not greatly concerned as to himself in other respects.But observe, with what zeal he applies himself to this. For he calls God to witness, how simple and pure his preaching was -- not ambiguous, not variable, not temporizing. In his oath, too, he connects the truth of God with the truth of his doctrine. "The truth of my preaching is as sure and stable as God is faithful and true." Nor is this to be wondered at, for the word of God, which Isaiah says endureth for ever, (Isaiah 40:8,) is no other than what prophets and apostles published to the world, as Peter explains it. (1 Peter 1:25.) Hence, too, his confidence [281] in denouncing a curse upon angels, if they dared to bring another gospel, one that was at variance with his. (Galatians 1:8.) Who would dare to make the angels of heaven subject to his doctrine, if he had not God as his authority and defense? With such an assurance of a good conscience does it become ministers [282] to be endowed, who mount the pulpit to speak the word in Christ's name -- so as to feel assured that their doctrine can no more be overthrown than God himself.19. For the Son of God Here we have the proof -- because his preaching [283] contained nothing but Christ alone, who is the eternal and immutable truth of God. The clause preached by us is emphatic. For, as it may be, and often does happen, that Christ is disfigured by the inventions [284] of men, and is adulterated, as it were, by their disguises, he declares that it had not been so as to himself or his associates, but that he had sincerely and with an integrity that was befitting, held forth Christ pure and undisguised. Why it is that he makes no mention of Apollos, while he mentions by name Timotheus and Silvanus, does not exactly appear; unless the reason be, as is probable, that the more that individuals were assailed by the calumnies of the wicked, [285] he was so much the more careful to defend them.In these words, however, he intimates that his whole doctrine was summed up in a simple acquaintance with Christ alone, as in reality the whole of the gospel is included in it. Hence those go beyond due limits, who teach anything else than Christ alone, with whatever show of wisdom they may otherwise be puffed up. For as he is the end of the law, (Romans 10:4,) so he is the head -- the sum -- in fine, the consummation -- of all spiritual doctrine.In the second place, he intimates that his doctrine respecting Christ had not been variable, or ambiguous, so as to present him from time to time in a new shape after the manner of Proteus; [286] as some persons make it their sport to make changes upon him, [287] just as if they were tossing a ball to and fro with their hand, simply for the purpose of displaying their dexterity. Others, with a view to procure the favor of men, present him under various forms, while there is still another class, that inculcate one day what on the next they retract through fear. Such was not Paul's Christ, nor can that of any true apostle [288] be such. Those, accordingly, have no ground to boast that they are ministers of Christ, who paint him in various colors with a view to their own advantage. For he alone is the true Christ, in whom there appears that uniform and unvarying yea, which Paul declares to be characteristic of him.20. For all the promises of God -- Here again he shows how firm and unvarying the preaching of Christ ought to be, inasmuch as he is the groundwork [289] of all the promises of God. For it were worse than absurd to entertain the idea that he, in whom all the promises of God are established, is like one that wavers. [290] Now though the statement is general, as we shall see ere long, it is, notwithstanding, accommodated to the circumstances of the case in hand, with the view of confirming the certainty of Paul's doctrine. For it is not simply of the gospel in general that he treats, but he honors more especially his own gospel with this distinction. "If the promises of God are sure and well-founded, my preaching also must of

necessity be sure, inasmuch as it contains nothing but Christ, in whom they are all established." As, however, in these words he means simply that he preached a gospel that was genuine, and not adulterated by any foreign additions, [291] let us keep in view this general doctrine, that all the promises of God rest upon Christ alone as their support -- a sentiment that is worthy of being kept in remembrance, and is one of the main articles of our faith. It depends, however, on another principle -- that it is only in Christ that God the Father is propitious to us. Now the promises are testimonies of his fatherly kindness towards us. Hence it follows, that it is in him alone that they are fulfilled. The promises, I say, are testimonies of Divine grace: for although God shows kindness even to the unworthy, (Luke 6:35,) yet when promises are given in addition to his acts of kindness, there is a special reason -- that in them he declares himself to be a Father. Secondly, we are not qualified for enjoying the promises of God, unless we have received the remission of our sins, which we obtain through Christ. Thirdly, the promise, by which God adopts us to himself as his sons, holds the first place among them all. Now the cause and root of adoption is Christ; because God is not a Father to any that are not members and brethren of his only-begotten Son. Everything, however, flows out from this source -- that, while we are without Christ, we are hated by God rather than favorably regarded, while at the same time God promises us everything that he does promise, because he loves us. Hence it is not to be wondered if Paul here teaches, that all the promises of God are ratified and confirmed in Christ.It is asked, however, whether they were feeble or powerless, previously to Christ's advent; for Paul seems to speak here of Christ as manifested in the flesh. (1 Timothy 3:16.) I answer, that all the promises that were given to believers from the beginning of the world were founded upon Christ. Hence Moses and the Prophets, in every instance in which they treat of reconciliation with God, of the hope of salvation, or of any other favor, make mention of him, and discourse at the same time respecting his coming and his kingdom. I say again, that the promises under the Old Testament were fulfilled to the pious, in so far as was advantageous for their welfare; and yet it is not less true, that they were in a manner suspended until the advent of Christ, through whom they obtained their true accomplishment. And in truth, believers themselves rested upon the promises in such a way, as at the same time to refer the true accomplishment of them to the appearing of the Mediator, and suspended their hope until that time. In fine, if any one considers what is the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection, he will easily gather from this, in what respect the promises of God have been sealed and ratified in him, which would otherwise have had no sure accomplishment.Wherefore, also, through him let there be Amen. Here also the Greek manuscripts do not agree, for some of them have it in one continued statement -- As many promises of God as there are, are in him Yea, and in him Amen to the glory of God through us. [292] The different reading, however, which I have followed, is easier, and contains a fuller meaning. For as he had said, that, in Christ, God has confirmed the truth of all his promises, so now he teaches us, that it is our duty to acquiesce in this ratification. This we do, when, resting upon Christ by a sure faith, we subscribe and set our seal that God is true, as we read in John 3:33, and that with a view to his glory, as this is the end to which everything should be referred. (Ephesians 1:13, and Romans 3:4.)The other reading, I confess, is the more common one, but as it is somewhat meagre, I have not hesitated to prefer the one that contains the fuller meaning, and, besides, is much better suited to the context. For Paul reminds the Corinthians of their duty -- to utter their Amen in return, after having been instructed in the simple truth of God. If, however, any one is reluctant to depart from the other reading, there must, in any case, be an exhortation deduced from it [293] to a mutual agreement in doctrine and

faith.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

21. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 21. Qui autem confirmat nos vobiscum in Christo, et qui unxit nos, Deus est: 22. Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 22. Qui et obsignavit nos, et dedit arrhabonem Spiritus in cordibus nostris. God, indeed, is always true and steadfast in his promises, and has always his Amen, as often as he speaks. But as for us, such is our vanity, that we do not utter our Amen in return, except when he gives a sure testimony in our hearts by his word. This he does by his Spirit. That is what Paul means here. He had previously taught, that this is a befitting harmony -- when, on the one hand, the calling of God is without repentance, (Romans 11:29,) and we, in our turn, with an unwavering faith, accept of the blessing of adoption that is held out to us. That God remains steadfast to his promise is not surprising; but to keep pace with God in the steadfastness of our faith in return -- that truly is not in man's power. [294] He teaches us, also, that God cures our weakness or defect, (as they term it,) when, by correcting our belief, he confirms us by his Spirit. Thus it comes, that we glorify him by a firm steadfastness of faith. He associates himself, however, with the Corinthians, expressly for the purpose of conciliating their affections the better, with a view to the cultivation of unity. [295] 21. Who hath anointed us. He employs different terms to express one and the same thing. For along with confirmation, he employs the terms anointing and sealing, or, by this twofold metaphor, [296] he explains more distinctly what he had previously stated without a figure. For God, by pouring down upon us the heavenly grace of the Spirit, does, in this manner, seal upon our hearts the certainty of his own word. He then introduces a fourth idea -- that the Spirit has been given to us as an earnest -- a similitude which he frequently makes use of, and is also exceedingly appropriate. [297] For as the Spirit, in bearing witness of our adoption, is our security, and, by confirming the faith of the promises, is the seal (sphragis), so it is on good grounds that he is called an earnest, [298] because it is owing to him, that the covenant of God is ratified on both sides, which would, but for this, have hung in suspense. [299] Here we must notice, in the first place, the relation [300] which Paul requires between the gospel of God and our faith; for as every thing that God says is more than merely certain, so he wishes that this should be established in our minds by a firm and sure assent. Secondly, we must observe that, as an assurance of this nature is a thing that is above the capacity of the human mind, it is the part of the Holy Spirit to confirm within us what God promises in his word. Hence it is that he has those titles of distinction -- the Anointing, the Earnest, the Comforter, and the Seal. In the third place we must observe, that all that have not the Holy Spirit as a witness, so as to return their Amen to God, when calling them to an assured hope of salvation, do on false grounds assume the name of Christians.

2 Corinthians 1:23-24

23. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. 23. Ego autem testem invoco Deum in animam meam, quod parcens vobis nondum venerim Corinthum. 24. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. 24. Non quod dominemur fidei vestrae, sed adiutores sumus [301] gaudii vestri: fide enim statis. 2 Corinthians 2:1-2 1. But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. 1. Decreveram autem hoc in me ipso, non amplius venire in tristitia ad vos. [302] 2. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? 2. Si enim ego contristo vos: et quis est qui me exhilaret, nisi is qui erit tristitia affectus ex me? 23. I call God for a witness. He now begins to assign a reason for his change of purpose; for hitherto he has merely repelled calumny. When, however, he says that he spared them, he indirectly throws back the blame upon them, and thus shows them that it would be unfair if he were put to grief through their fault, but that it would be much more unfair if they should permit this; but most of all unfair if they should give their assent to so base a calumny, as in that case they would be substituting in their place an innocent person, as if he had been guilty of their sin. Now he spared them in this respect, that if he had come he would have been constrained to reprove them more severely, while he wished rather that they should of their own accord repent previously to his arrival, that there might be no occasion for a harsher remedy, [303] which is a signal evidence of more than paternal lenity. For how much forbearance there was in shunning this necessity, when he had just ground of provocation! He makes use, also, of an oath, that he may not seem to have contrived something to serve a particular purpose. For the matter in itself was of no small importance, and it was of great consequence that he should be entirely free from all suspicion of falsehood and pretence. Now there are two things that make an oath lawful and pious -- the occasion and the disposition. The occasion I refer to is, where an oath is not employed rashly, that is, in mere trifles, or even in matters of small importance, but only where there is a call for it. The disposition I refer to is, where there is not so much regard had to private advantage, as concern felt for the glory of God, and the advantage of the brethren: For this end must always be kept in view, that our oaths may promote the honor of God, and promote also the advantage of our neighbours in a matter that is befitting. [304] The form of the oath must also be observed -- first, that he calls God to witness; and, secondly, that he says upon my soul For in matters that are doubtful and obscure, where man's knowledge fails, we have recourse to God, that he, who alone is truth, may bear testimony to the truth. But the man that appeals to God as his witness, calls upon him at the same time to be an avenger of perjury, in the event of his declaring what is false. This is what is meant by the phrase upon my soul. "I do not object to his inflicting punishment upon me, if I am guilty of falsehood." Although, however, this is not always expressed in so many words, it is, notwithstanding, to be understood. Forif we are unfaithful, God remaineth faithful

and will not deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13.)He will not suffer, therefore, the profanation of his name to go unpunished.24. Not that we exercise dominion He anticipates an objection that might be brought forward. "What! Do you then act so tyrannically [305] as to be formidable in your very

look? Such were not the gravity of a Christian pastor, but the cruelty of a savage tyrant." He answers this objection first indirectly, by declaring that matters are not so; and afterwards directly, by showing that the very circumstance, that he had been constrained to treat them more harshly, was owing to his fatherly affection. When he says that he does not exercise dominion over their faith, he intimates, that such a power is unjust and intolerable -- nay more, is tyranny in the Church. For faith ought to be altogether exempt, and to the utmost extent free, from the yoke of men. We must, however, observe, who it is that speaks, for if ever there was a single individual of mortals, that had authority to claim for himself such a dominion, Paul assuredly was worthy of such a privilege. Yet he acknowledges, [306] that it does not belong to him. Hence we infer, that faith owns no subjection except to the word of God, and that it is not at all in subjection to human control. [307] Erasmus has observed in his Annotations, that by supplying the Greek particle heneka, it may be understood in this way -- Not that we exercise dominion over you -- with respect to your faith -- a rendering which amounts almost to the same thing. For he intimates, that there is no spiritual dominion, except that of God only. This always remains a settled point -- pastors have no peculiar dominion over men's consciences, [308] inasmuch as they are ministers, not lords. (1 Peter 5:3.)What then does he leave to himself and others? He calls them helpers of their joy -- by which term I understand happiness. At the same time he employs the term joy as opposed to the terror which tyrants awaken through means of their cruelty, and also false prophets, [309] resembling tyrants, that rule with rigor and authority, as we read in Ezekiel 34:4. He argues from contraries, that he did by no means usurp dominion over the Corinthians, inasmuch as he endeavored rather to maintain them in the possession of a peace that was free, and full of joy.For by faith ye stand. As to the reason why he adds this, others either pass it over altogether in silence, or they do not explain it with sufficient distinctness. For my part, I am of opinion that he here again argues from contraries. For if the nature and effect of faith be such that we lean, in order that we may stand, [310] it is absurd to speak of faith as being subject to men. Thus he removes that unjust dominion, with which, he had a little before declared, he was not chargeable.

2 Corinthians 2:1-2

1 But I had determined Whoever it was that divided the chapters, made here a foolish division. For now at length the Apostle explains, in what manner he had spared them. "I had determined," says he, "not to come to you any more in sorrow," or in other words, to occasion you sorrow by my coming. For he had come once by an Epistle, by means of which he had severely pained them. Hence, so long as they had not repented, he was unwilling to come to them, lest he should be constrained to grieve them again, when present with them, for he chose rather to give them longer time for repentance. [311] The word ekrina (I determined) must be rendered in the pluperfect tense, [312] for, when assigning a reason for the delay that had occurred, he explains what had been his intention previously.2. For if I make you sorry Here we have the proof of the foregoing statement. No one willingly occasions sorrow to himself. Now Paul says, that he has such a fellow-feeling with the Corinthians, [313] that he cannot feel joyful, unless he sees them happy. Nay more, he declares that they were the source and the authors of his joy -- which they could not be, if they were themselves sorrowful. If this disposition prevail in pastors, it will be the best restraint, to keep them back from alarming with terrors those minds, which they ought rather to have encouraged by means of a cheerful affability. For from this arises an excessively morose harshness [314] -- so that we do not rejoice in the welfare of the Church, as were becoming.

2 Corinthians 2:3-5

3. And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. 3. Et scripseram vobis hoc, ne veniens tristitiam super tristitiam haberem, a quibus oportebat me gaudere: fiduciam habens de vobis omnibus, quod meum gaudium vestrum omnium sit. 4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. 4. Ex multa enim afflictione et angustia cordis scripsi vobis per multas lacrimas: non ut contristaremini, sed ut caritatem cognosceretis, quam habeo abundantius erga vos. 5. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 5. Si quis autem contristavit, non me contristavit, sed ex parte: ut ne vos omnes gravem. 3. I had written to you. As he had said a little before, that he delayed coming to them, in order that he might not come a second time in sorrow and with severity, (2 Corinthians 2:1,) so now also he lets them know, that he came the first time in sadness by an Epistle, that they might not have occasion to feel this severity when he was present with them. Hence they have no ground to complain of that former sadness, in which he was desirous to consult their welfare. He goes even a step farther, by stating that, when writing, he did not wish to occasion them grief, or to give any expression of displeasure, but, on the contrary, to give proof of his attachment and affection towards them. In this way, if there was any degree of keenness in the Epistle, he does not merely soften it, but even shows amiableness and suavity. When, however, he confesses afterwards, what he here denies, he appears to contradict himself. I answer, that there is no inconsistency, for he does not come afterwards to confess, that it was his ultimate object to grieve the Corinthians, but that this was the means, by which he endeavored to conduct them to true joy. Previously, however, to his stating this, he speaks here simply as to his design. He passes over in silence, or delays mentioning for a little the means, which were not so agreeable. Having confidence This confidence he exercises towards the Corinthians, that they may thus in their turn be persuaded of his friendly disposition. For he that hates, is envious; but where joy is felt in common, there must in that case be perfect love. [315] If, however, the Corinthians are not in accordance with Paul's opinion and judgment as to them, they shamefully disappoint him. 4. For out of much affliction Here he brings forward another reason with the view of softening the harshness which he had employed. For those who smilingly take delight in seeing others weep, inasmuch as they discover thereby their cruelty, cannot and ought not to be borne with. Paul, however, declares that his feeling was very different. "Intensity of grief," says he, "has extorted from me every thing that I have written." Who would not excuse, and take in good part what springs from such a temper of mind, more especially as it was not on his own account or through his own fault, that he suffered grief, and farther, he does not give vent to his grief, with the view of lightning himself by burdening them, but rather, for the purpose of shewing his affection for them? On these accounts, it did not become the Corinthians to be offended at this somewhat severe reproof. He adds, tears -- which, in a man that is brave and magnanimous are a token of intense grief. Hence we see, from what emotions of mind pious and holy admonitions and reproofs must of necessity proceed. For there are many noisy reprovers, who, by declaiming, or rather,

fulminating against vices, display a surprising ardour of zeal, while in the mean time they are at ease in their mind, [316] so that it might seem as if they exercised their throat and sides [317] by way of sport. It is, however, the part of a pious pastor, to weep within himself, before he calls upon others to weep: [318] to feel tortured in silent musings, before he shows any token of displeasure; and to keep within his own breast more grief, than he causes to others. We must, also, take notice of Paul's tears, which, by their abundance, shew tenderness of heart, but it is of a more heroical character than was the iron-hearted hardness of the Stoics. [319] For the more tender the affections of love are, they are so much the more praiseworthy. The adverb more abundantly may be explained in a comparative sense; and, in that case, it would be a tacit complaint -- that the Corinthians do not make an equal return in respect of affection, inasmuch as they love but coldly one by whom they are ardently loved. I take it, however, in a more simple way, as meaning that Paul commends his affection towards them, in order that this assurance may soften down every thing of harshness that might be in his words. 5. But if any one. Here is a third reason with the view of alleviating the offense -- that he had grief in common with them, and that the occasion of it came from another quarter. "We have," says he, "been alike grieved, and another is to blame for it." At the same time he speaks of that person, too, somewhat mildly, when he says, if any one -- not affirming the thing, but rather leaving it in suspense. This passage, however, is understood by some, as if Paul meant to say: "He that has given me occasion of grief, has given offense to you also; for you ought to have felt grieved along with me, and yet I have been left almost to grieve alone. For I do not wish to say so absolutely -- that I may not put the blame upon you all." In this way the second clause would contain a correction of the first. Chrysostom's exposition, however, is much more suitable; for he reads it as one continued sentence -- "He hath not grieved me alone, but almost all of you. And as to my saying in part, I do so in order that I may not bear too hard upon him." [320] I differ from Chrysostom merely in the clause in part, for I understand it as meaning in some measure. I am aware, that Ambrose understands it as meaning -- part of the saints, inasmuch as the Church of the Corinthians was divided; but that is more ingenious than solid.

2 Corinthians 2:6-11

6. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 6. Sufficit ei, qui talis est, correctio, quae illi contigit a pluribus. 7. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 7. Ut potius e diverso debeatis condonare, et consolari: ne forte abundantiori tristitia absorbeatur, qui eiusmodi est. 8. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 8. Quamobrem obsecro vos, ut confirmetis erga eum caritatem. 9. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 9. Nam in hoc etiam scripseram vobis, ut probationem vestri cognoscerem: an ad omnia obedientes sitis. 10. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 10. Cui autem condonatis, etiam ego: etenim cui condonavi, si quid condonavi, propter vos condonavi in conspectu Christi. 11. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. 11. Ut ne occupemur a Satana: non enim cogitationes eius ignoramus.6. Sufficient. He now extends kindness even to the man who had sinned more grievously than the others, and on whose account his anger had been kindled against them all, inasmuch as they had connived at his crime. In his showing indulgence even to one who was deserving of severer punishment, the Corinthians have a striking instance to convince them, how much he disliked excessive harshness. It is true, that he does not act this part merely for the sake of the Corinthians, but because he was naturally of a forgiving temper; but still, in this instance of mildness, the Corinthians could not but perceive his remarkable kindness of disposition. In addition to this, he does not merely show himself to be indulgent, but exhorts others to receive him into favor, in the exercise of the same mildness.Let us, however, consider these things a little more minutely. He refers to the man who had defiled himself by an incestuous marriage with his mother-in-law. As the iniquity was not to be tolerated, Paul had given orders, that the man should be excommunicated. He had, also, severely reproved the Corinthians, because they had so long given encouragement to that enormity [321] by their dissimulation and patient endurance. It appears from this passage, that he had been brought to repentance, after having been admonished by the Church. Hence Paul gives orders, that he be forgiven, and that he be also supported by consolation.This passage ought to be carefully observed, as it shows us, with what equity and clemency the discipline of the Church ought to be regulated, in order that there may not be undue severity. There is need of strictness, in order that the wicked may not be rendered more daring by impunity, which is justly pronounced an allurement to vice. But on the other hand, as there is a danger of the person, who is chastised, becoming dispirited, moderation must be used as to this -- so that the Church shall be prepared to extend forgiveness, so soon as she is fully satisfied as to his penitence. In this department, I find a lack of wisdom on the part of the ancient bishops; and indeed they ought not to be excused, but on the contrary, we ought rather to mark their error, that we may learn to avoid it. Paul is satisfied with the repentance of the offender, that a reconciliation may take place with the Church. They, on the other hand, by making no account of his repentance, have issued out canons as to repentance during three years, during seven years, and in some cases during life. By these they exclude poor unhappy men from the fellowship of the

Church. And, in this way, the offender is either alienated the more from the Church, or [322] is induced to practice hypocrisy. But even if the enactment were more plausible in itself, this consideration would, in my view, be enough to condemn it -- that it is at variance with the rule of the Holy Spirit, which the Apostle here prescribes.7. Lest such an one should be swallowed up by overmuch sorrow The end of excommunication, so far as concerns the power of the offender, is this: that, overpowered with a sense of his sin, he may be humbled in the sight of God and the Church, and may solicit pardon with sincere dislike and confession of guilt. The man who has been brought to this, is now more in need of consolation, than of severe reproof. Hence, if you continue to deal with him harshly, it will be -- not discipline, but cruel domineering. Hence we must carefully guard against pressing them beyond this limit. [323] For nothing is more dangerous, than to give Satan a handle, to tempt an offender to despair. Now we furnish Satan with arms in every instance, in which we leave without consolation those, who are in good earnest affected with a view of their sin.9. For I had written to you also for this purpose. He anticipates an objection, that they might bring forward. "What then did you mean, when you were so very indignant, because we had not inflicted punishment upon him? From being so stern a judge, to become all at once a defender -- is not this indicative of a man, that wavers between conflicting dispositions?" [324] This idea might detract greatly from Paul's authority; but he answers, that he has obtained what he asked, and that he was therefore satisfied, so that he must now give way to compassion. For, their carelessness having been corrected, there was nothing to hinder their lifting up the man by their clemency, when now prostrate and downcast. [325]10. To whom ye forgive. That he might the more readily appease them, he added his vote in support of the pardon extended by them. [326] "Do not hesitate to forgive: I promise that I shall confirm whatever you may have done, and I already subscribe your sentence of forgiveness." Secondly, he says that he does this for their sake; and that too, sincerely and cordially. He had already shown how desirous he was, that the man's welfare should be consulted: he now declares, that he grants this willingly to the Corinthians.Instead of the expression in the sight of Christ, some prefer person, [327] because Paul in that reconciliation was in the room of Christ, [328] and did in a manner represent his person. [329] I am, however, more inclined to understand him as declaring, that he forgives sincerely and without any pretence. For he is accustomed to employ this phrase to express pure and undisguised rectitude. If, however, any one prefers the former interpretation, it is to be observed that the person of Christ is interposed, because there is nothing that ought to incline us more to the exercise of mercy. 11. That we may not be taken advantage of by Satan. This may be viewed as referring to what he had said previously respecting excessive sorrow. For it is a most wicked [330] fraud of Satan, when depriving us of all consolation, he swallows us up, as it were, in a gulf of despair; and such is the explanation that is given of it by Chrysostom. I prefer, however, to view it as referring to Paul and the Corinthians. For there was a twofold danger, that beset them from the stratagems of Satan -- in the event of their being excessively harsh and rigorous, or, on the other hand, in case of dissension arising among them. For it very frequently happens, that, under colour of zeal for discipline, a Pharisaical rigour creeps in, which hurries on the miserable offender to ruin, instead of curing him. It is rather, however, in my opinion, of the second danger that he speaks; for if Paul had not to some extent favored the wishes of the Corinthians, Satan would have prevailed by kindling strife among them.For we are not ignorant of his devices That is, "We know, from being warned of it by the Lord, that one stratagem to which he carefully has recourse is, that when he cannot ruin us by open means, he surprises us when off our guard by

making a secret attack. [331] As, then, we are aware that he makes an attack upon us by indirect artifices, and that he assails us by secret machinations, we must look well before us, and carefully take heed that he may not, from some quarter, do us injury. He employs the word devices in the sense in which the Hebrews make use of the term zmh (zimmah,) but in a bad sense, [332] as meaning artful schemes and machinations, which ought not to be unknown to believers, and will not be so, provided they give themselves up to the guidance of God's Spirit. In short, as God warns us, that Satan employs every means to impose upon us, and, in addition to this, shows us by what methods he may practice imposture upon us, it is our part to be on the alert, that he may have not a single chink to creep through.

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

12. Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 12. Porro quum venissem Troadem in Evangelium Christi; etiam ostio mihi aperto in Domino, 13. I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. 13. Non habui relaxationem spiritui meo, eo quod non inveneram Titum fratrem meum; sed illis valedicens profectus sum in Macedoniam. 14. Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 14. Deo autem gratia, qui semper triumphare nos facit in Christo; et odorem cognitionis eius manifestat per nos in omni loco. 15. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 15. Quia Christi suavis odor sumus Deo, in iis qui salvi fiunt, et in iis qui pereunt. 16. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? 16. Aliis quidem odor mortis in mortem, illis vero odor vitae in vitam; et ad haec quis idoneus? 17. For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. 17. Non enim sumus quemadmodum multi, adulterantes sermonem Dei: sed tanquam ex sinceritate, tanquam ex Deo, in conspectu Dei in Christo loquimur. [333]12. When I had come to Troas By now mentioning what he had been doing in the mean time, in what places he had been, and what route he had pursued in his journeyings, he more and more confirms what he had said previously as to his coming to the Corinthians. He says that he had come to Troas from Ephesus for the sake of the gospel, for he would not have proceeded in that direction, when going into Achaia, had he not been desirous to pass through Macedonia. As, however, he did not find Titus there, whom he had sent to Corinth, and by whom he ought to have been informed respecting the state of that Church, though he might have done much good there, and though he had an opportunity presented to him, yet, he says, setting everything aside, he came to Macedonia, desirous to see Titus. Here is an evidence of a singular degree of attachment to the Corinthians, that he was so anxious respecting them, that he had no rest anywhere, even when a large prospect of usefulness presented itself, until he had learned the state of their affairs. Hence it appears why it was that he delayed his coming. He did not wish to come to them until he had learned the state of their affairs. Hence it appears, why it was that he delayed his coming. He did not wish to come to them, until he had first had a conversation with Titus. He afterwards learned from the report brought him by Titus, that matters were at that time not yet ripe for his coming to them. Hence it is evident, that Paul loved the Corinthians so much, that he accommodated all his journeyings and long circuits to their welfare, and that he had accordingly come to them later than he had promised -- not from having, in forgetfulness of his promise, rashly changed his plan, or from having been carried away by some degree of fickleness, (2 Corinthians 1:17,) but because delay was more profitable for them.A door also having been opened to me. We have spoken of this metaphor when commenting on the last chapter of the First Epistle. (1 Corinthians 16:9.) Its meaning is, that an opportunity of promoting the gospel had presented itself. [334] For as an opportunity of entering is furnished when the door is opened, so the servants of the Lord make advances when an opportunity is presented. The door is shut, when

no prospect of usefulness is held out. Now as, on the door being shut, it becomes us to enter upon a new course, rather than by farther efforts to weary ourselves to no purpose by useless labor, so where an opportunity presents itself of edifying, let us consider that by the hand of God a door is opened to us for introducing Christ there, and let us not withhold compliance with so kind an indication from God. [335]It may seem, however, as if Paul had erred in this -- that disregarding, or at least leaving unimproved, an opportunity that was placed within his reach, he betook himself to Macedonia. "Ought he not rather to have applied himself to the work that he had in hand, than, after making little more than a commencement, break away all on a sudden in another direction?" We have also observed already, that the opening of a door is an evidence of a divine call, and this is undoubtedly true. I answer, that, as Paul was not by any means restricted to one Church, but was bound to many at the same time, it was not his duty, in consequence of the present aspect of one of them, to leave off concern as to the others. Farther, the more connection he had with the Corinthian Church, it was his duty to be so much the more inclined to aid it; for we must consider it to be reasonable, that a Church, which he had founded by his ministry, should be regarded by him with a singular affection [336] -- just as at this day it is our duty, indeed, to promote the welfare of the whole Church, and to be concerned for the entire body of it; and yet, every one has, nevertheless, a closer and holier connection with his own Church, to whose interests he is more particularly devoted. Matters were in an unhappy state at Corinth, so that Paul was in no ordinary degree anxious as to the issue. It is not, therefore, to be wondered, if, under the influence of this motive, he left unimproved an opportunity that in other circumstances was not to be neglected; as it was not in his power to occupy every post of duty at one and the same time. It is not, however, at all likely that he left Troas, till he had first introduced some one in his place to improve the opening that had occurred. [337]14. But thanks be to God Here he again glories in the success of his ministry, and shows that he had been far from idle in the various places he had visited; but that he may do this in no invidious way, he sets out with a thanksgiving, which we shall find him afterwards repeating. Now he does not, in a spirit of ambition, extol his own actions, that his name may be held in renown, nor does he, in mere pretense, give thanks to God in the manner of the Pharisee, while lifted up, in the mean time, with pride and arrogance. (Luke 18:11.) Instead of this, he desires from his heart, that whatever is worthy of praise, be recognised as the work of God alone, that his power alone may be extolled. Farther, he recounts his own praises with a view to the advantage of the Corinthians, that, on hearing that he had served the Lord with so much fruit in other places, they may not allow his labor to be unproductive among themselves, and may learn to respect his ministry, which God everywhere rendered so glorious and fruitful. For what God so illustriously honors, it is criminal to despise, or lightly esteem. Nothing was more injurious to the Corinthians, than to have an unfavorable view of Paul's Apostleship and doctrine: nothing, on the other hand, was more advantageous, than to hold both in esteem. Now he had begun to be held in contempt by many, and hence, it was not his duty to be silent. In addition to this, he sets this holy boasting in opposition to the revilings of the wicked. Who causeth us to triumph If you render the word literally, it will be, Qui nos triumphat -- Who triumpheth over us. [338] Paul, however, means something different from what this form of expression denotes among the Latins. [339] For captives are said to be triumphed over, when, by way of disgrace, they are bound with chains and dragged before the chariot of the conqueror. Paul's meaning, on the other hand, is, that he was also a sharer in the triumph enjoyed by God, because it had been gained by his instrumentality, just as the lieutenants accompanied on horseback the chariot of the chief general, as sharers in

the honor. [340] As, accordingly, all the ministers of the gospel fight under God's auspices, so they also procure for him the victory and the honor of the triumph; [341] but, at the same time, he honors each of them with a share of the triumph, according to the station assigned him in the army, and proportioned to the exertions made by him. Thus they enjoy, as it were, a triumph, but it is God's rather than theirs. [342]He adds, in Christ, in whose person God himself triumphs, inasmuch as he has conferred upon him all the glory of empire. Should any one prefer to render it thus: "Who triumphs by means of us," even in that way a sufficiently consistent meaning will be made out.The odor of his knowledge. The triumph consisted in this, that God, through his instrumentality, wrought powerfully and gloriously, perfuming the world with the health-giving odor of his grace, while, by means of his doctrine, he brought some to the knowledge of Christ. He carries out, however, the metaphor of odor, by which he expresses both the delectable sweetness of the gospel, and its power and efficacy for inspiring life. In the mean time, Paul instructs them, that his preaching is so far from being savourless, that it quickens souls by its very odor. Let us, however, learn from this, that those alone make right proficiency in the gospel, who, by the sweet fragrance of Christ, are stirred up to desire him, so as to bid farewell to the allurements of the world.He says in every place, intimating by these words, that he went to no place in which he did not gain some fruit, and that, wherever he went, there was to be seen some reward of his labor. The Corinthians were aware, in how many places he had previously sowed the seed of Christ's gospel. He now says, that the last corresponded with the first. [343]15. A sweet odor of Christ The metaphor which he had applied to the knowledge of Christ, he now transfers to the persons of the Apostles, but it is for the same reason. For as they are called the light of the world, (Matthew 5:14,) because they enlighten men by holding forth the torch of the gospel, and not as if they shone forth upon them with their own lustre; so they have the name of odor, not as if they emitted any fragrance of themselves, but because the doctrine which they bring is odoriferous, so that it can imbue the whole world with its delectable fragrance. [344] It is certain, however, that this commendation is applicable to all the ministers of the gospel, because wherever there is a pure and unvarnished proclamation of the gospel, there will be found there the influence of that odor, of which Paul here speaks. At the same time, there is no doubt, that he speaks particularly of himself, and those that were like him, turning to his own commendation what slanderers imputed to him as a fault. For his being opposed by many, and exposed to the hatred of many, was the reason why they despised him. He, accordingly, replies, that faithful and upright ministers of the gospel have a sweet odor before God, not merely when they quicken souls by a wholesome savour, but also, when they bring destruction to unbelievers. Hence the gospel ought not to be less esteemed on that account. "Both odors," says he, "are grateful to God -- that by which the elect are refreshed unto salvation, and that from which the wicked receive a deadly shock."Here we have a remarkable passage, by which we are taught, that, whatever may be the issue of our preaching, it is, notwithstanding, well-pleasing to God, if the Gospel is preached, and our service will be acceptable to him; and also, that it does not detract in any degree from the dignity of the Gospel, that it does not do good to all; for God is glorified even in this, that the Gospel becomes an occasion of ruin to the wicked, nay, it must turn out so. If, however, this is a sweet odor to God, it ought to be so to us also, or in other words, it does not become us to be offended, if the preaching of the Gospel is not salutary to all; but on the contrary, let us reckon, that it is quite enough, if it advance the glory of God by bringing just condemnation upon the wicked. If, however, the heralds of the Gospel are in bad odor in the world, because their success does not in all respects come up

to their desires, they have this choice consolation, that they waft to God the perfume of a sweet fragrance, and what is to the world an offensive smell, is a sweet odor to God and angels. [345] The term odor is very emphatic. "Such is the influence of the Gospel in both respects, that it either quickens or kills, not merely by its taste, but by its very smell. Whatever it may be, it is never preached in vain, but has invariably an effect, either for life, or for death." [346] But it is asked, how this accords with the nature of the Gospel, which we shall find him, a little afterwards, calling the ministry of life? (2 Corinthians 3:6.) The answer is easy: The Gospel is preached for salvation: this is what properly belongs to it; but believers alone are partakers of that salvation. In the mean time, its being an occasion of condemnation to unbelievers -- that arises from their own fault. ThusChrist came not into the world to condemn the world, (John 3:17,)for what need was there of this, inasmuch as without him we are all condemned? Yet he sends his apostles to bind, as well as to loose, and to retain sins, as well as remit them. (Matthew 18:18; John 20:23.) He is the light of the world, (John 8:12,) but he blinds unbelievers. (John 9:39.) He is a Rock, for a foundation, but he is also to many a stone of stumbling. [347] (Isaiah 8:14.) We must always, therefore, distinguish between the proper office of the Gospel, [348] and the accidental one (so to speak) which must be imputed to the depravity of mankind, to which it is owing, that life to them is turned into death.16. And who is sufficient for these things? This exclamation is thought by some [349] to be introduced by way of guarding against arrogance, for he confesses, that to discharge the office of a good Apostle [350] to Christ is a thing that exceeds all human power, and thus he ascribes the praise to God. Others think, that he takes notice of the small number of good ministers. I am of opinion, that there is an implied contrast that is shortly afterwards expressed. "Profession, it is true, is common, and many confidently boast; but to have the reality, is indicative of a rare and distinguished excellence. [351] I claim nothing for myself, but what will be discovered to be in me, if trial is made." Accordingly, as those, who hold in common the office of instructor, claim to themselves indiscriminately the title, Paul, by claiming to himself a peculiar excellence, separates himself from the herd of those, who had little or no experience of the influence of the Spirit.17. For we are not. He now contrasts himself more openly with the false apostles, and that by way of amplifying, and at the same time, with the view of excluding them from the praise that he had claimed to himself. "It is on good grounds," says he, "that I speak in honorable terms of my apostleship, for I am not afraid of being convicted of vanity, if proof is demanded. But many on false grounds arrogate the same thing to themselves, who will be found to have nothing in common with me. For they adulterate the word of the Lord, which I dispense with the greatest faithfulness and sincerity for the edification of the Church." I do not think it likely, however, that those, who are here reproved, preached openly wicked or false doctrines; but am rather of opinion, that they corrupted the right use of doctrine, for the sake either of gain or of ambition, so as utterly to deprive it of energy. This he terms adulterating. Erasmus prefers to render it -- cauponari -- huckstering [352] The Greek word kapeleuein, is taken from retailers, or tavern-keepers, who are accustomed to adulterate their commodities, that they may fetch a higher price. I do not know whether the word cauponari is used in that sense among the Latins. [353]It is, indeed, certain from the corresponding clause, that Paul intended to express here -- corruption of doctrine -- not as though they had revolted from the truth, but because they presented it under disguise, and not in its genuine purity. For the doctrine of God is corrupted in two ways. It is corrupted in a direct way, when it is mixed up with falsehood and lies, so as to be no longer the pure and genuine doctrine of God, but is falsely commended under that title. It is corrupted indirectly, when, although retaining its purity, it is turned hither and

thither to please men, and is disfigured by unseemly disguises, by way of hunting after favor. Thus there will be found some, in whose doctrine there will be no impiety detected, but as they hunt after the applauses of the world by making a display of their acuteness and eloquence, or are ambitious of some place, or gape for filthy lucre, (1 Timothy 3:8,) or are desirous by some means or other to rise, they, nevertheless, corrupt the doctrine itself by wrongfully abusing it, or making it subservient to their depraved inclinations. I am, therefore, inclined to retain the word adulterate, as it expresses better what ordinarily happens in the case of all that play with the sacred word of God, as with a ball, and transform it according to their own convenience. [354] For it must necessarily be, that they degenerate from the truth, and preach a sort of artificial and spurious Gospel.But as of sincerity. The word as here is superfluous, as in many other places. [355] In contrast with the corruption that he had made mention of, he makes use, first of all, of the term sincerity, which may be taken as referring to the manner of preaching, as well as to the disposition of the mind. I approve rather of the latter. Secondly, he places in contrast with it a faithful and conscientious dispensation of it, inasmuch as he faithfully delivers to the Church from hand to hand, [356] as they say, the Gospel which God had committed to him, and had given him in charge. Thirdly, he subjoins to this a regard to the Divine presence. For whoever has the three following things, is in no danger of forming the purpose of corrupting the word of God. The first is -- that we be actuated by a true zeal for God. The second is -- that we bear in mind that it is his business that we are transacting, and bring forward nothing but what has come from him. The third is -- that we consider, that we do nothing of which he is not the witness and spectator, and thus learn to refer every thing to his judgment. In Christ means according to Christ. For the rendering of Erasmus, By Christ, is foreign to Paul's intention. [357]

2 Corinthians 3:1-3

1. Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?1. Incipimus rursum nos ipsos commendare? numquid, sicuti quidam, commendaticiis epistolis opus habemus ad vos? aut commendaticiis a vobis?2. Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:2. Epistola nostra vos estis, scripta in cordibus nostris, quae cognoscitur et legitur ab omnibus hominibus.3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.3. Dum palam fit, vos esse Epistolam Christi, subministratam a nobis, scriptam non atramento, sed Spiritu Dei vivi: non in tabulis lapideis, sed in tabulis cordis carneis. [358]1. Do we begin It appears that this objection also was brought forward against him -- that he was excessively fond of publishing his own exploits, and brought against him, too, by those who were grieved to find that the fame, which they were eagerly desirous to obtain, was effectually obstructed in consequence of his superior excellence. They had already, in my opinion, found fault with the former Epistle, on this ground, that he indulged immoderately in commendations of himself. To commend here means to boast foolishly and beyond measure, or at least to recount one's own praises in a spirit of ambition. Paul's calumniators had a plausible pretext -- that it is a disgusting [359] and odious thing in itself for one to be the trumpeter of his own praises. Paul, however, had an excuse on the ground of necessity, inasmuch as he gloried, only because he was shut up to it. His design also raised him above all calumny, as he had nothing in view but that the honor of his apostleship might remain unimpaired for the edification of the Church; for had not Christ's honor been infringed upon, he would readily have allowed to pass unnoticed what tended to detract from his own reputation. Besides, he saw that it was very much against the Corinthians, that his authority was lessened among them. In the first place, therefore, he brings forward their calumny, letting them know that he is not altogether ignorant as to the kind of talk, that was current among them.Have we need? The answer is suited (to use a common expression) to the person rather than to the thing, though we shall find him afterwards saying as much as was required in reference to the thing itself. At present, however, he reproves their malignity, inasmuch as they were displeased, if he at any time reluctantly, nay even when they themselves constrained him, made mention of the grace that God had bestowed upon him, while they were themselves begging in all quarters for epistles, that were stuffed entirely with flattering commendations. He says that he has no need of commendation in words, while he is abundantly commended by his deeds. On the other hand, he convicts them of a greedy desire for glory, inasmuch as they endeavored to acquire favor through the suffrages of men. [360] In this manner, he gracefully and appropriately repels their calumny. We must not, however, infer from this, that it is absolutely and in itself wrong to receive recommendations, [361] provided you make use of them for a good purpose. For Paul himself recommends many; and this he would not have done had it been unlawful. Two things, however, are required here -- first, that it be not a recommendation that is elicited by flattery, but an altogether unbiassed testimony; [362] and secondly, that it be not given for the purpose of procuring advancement for the individual, but simply that it may be the means of promoting the

advancement of Christ's kingdom. For this reason, I have observed, that Paul has an eye to those who had assailed him with calumnies.2. Ye are our Epistle. There is no little ingenuity in his making his own glory hinge upon the welfare of the Corinthians. "So long as you shall remain Christians, I shall have recommendation enough. For your faith speaks my praise, as being the seal of my apostleship." (1 Corinthians 9:2.)When he says -- written in our hearts, this may be understood in reference to Silvanus and Timotheus, and in that case the meaning will be: "We are not contented with this praise, that we derive from the thing itself. The recommendations, that others have, fly about before the eyes of men, but this, that we have, has its seat in men's consciences." It may also be viewed as referring in part to the Corinthians, in this sense: "Those that obtain recommendations by dint of entreaty, have not in the conscience what they carry about written upon paper, and those that recommend others often do so rather by way of favor than from judgment. We, on the other hand, have the testimony of our apostleship, on this side and on that, engraven on men's hearts."Which is known and read It might also be read -- "Which is known and acknowledged," owing to the ambiguity of the word anaginoskesai, [363] and I do not know but that the latter might be more suitable. I was unwilling, however, to depart from the common rendering, when not constrained to do so. Only let the reader have this brought before his view, that he may consider which of the two renderings is the preferable one. If we render it acknowledged, there will be an implied contrast between an epistle that is sure and of unquestionable authority, and such as are counterfeit. [364] And, unquestionably, what immediately follows, is rather on the side of the latter rendering, for he brings forward the Epistle of Christ, in contrast with those that are forged and pretended. 3. Ye are the Epistle of Christ Pursuing the metaphor, he says that the Epistle of which he speaks was written by Christ, inasmuch as the faith of the Corinthians was his work. He says that it was ministered by him, as if meaning by this, that he had been in the place of ink and pen. In fine, he makes Christ the author and himself the instrument, that calumniators may understand, that it is with Christ that they have to do, if they continue to speak against him [365] with malignity. What follows is intended to increase the authority of that Epistle. The second clause, [366] however, has already a reference to the comparison that is afterwards drawn between the law and the gospel. For he takes occasion from this shortly afterwards, as we shall see, to enter upon a comparison of this nature. The antitheses here employed -- ink and Spirit, stones and heart -- give no small degree of weight to his statements, by way of amplification. For in drawing a contrast between ink and the Spirit of God, and between stones and heart, he expresses more than if he had simply made mention of the Spirit and the heart, without drawing any comparison.Not on tables of stone He alludes to the promise that is recorded in Jeremiah 31:31, and Ezekiel 37:26, concerning the grace of the New Testament.I will make, says he, a new covenant with them, not such as I had made with their fathers; but I will write my laws upon their hearts, and engrave them on their inward parts. Farther, I will take away the stony heart from the midst of thee, and will give thee a heart of flesh, that thou mayest walk in my precepts. (Ezekiel 36:26, 27.)Paul says, that this blessing was accomplished through means of his preaching. Hence it abundantly appears, that he is a faithful minister of the New Covenant -- which is a legitimate testimony in favor of his apostleship. The epithet fleshly is not taken here in a bad sense, but means soft and flexible, [367] as it is contrasted with stony, that is, hard and stubborn, as is the heart of man by nature, until it has been subdued by the Spirit of God. [368]

2 Corinthians 3:4-11

4. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: 4. Fiduciam autem eiusmodi per Christum habemus erga Deum: 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; 5. Non quod idonei simus ex nobis ad cogitandum quicquam, tanquam ex nobis: sed facultas nostra ex Deo est. 6. Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 6. Qui nos fecit idoneos ministros Novi testamenti, [369] non literae, sed Spiritus: nam litera quidem occidit: Spiritus autem vivificat. 7. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: 7. Quodsi ministerium mortis in literis insculptum in lapidibus fuit in gloria, ita ut non possent intueri filii Israel in faciem Mosis propter gloriam vultus eius, quae aboletur: 8. How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? 8. Quomodo non magis ministerium Spiritus erit in gloria? 9. For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 9. Si enim ministerium damnationis, gloria: quomodo non magis abundet (vel, excellat) ministerium iustitiae in gloria?10. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.10. Etenim quod glorificatum fuit, in hac parte, non fuit glorificatum propter antecellentem gloriam.11. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.11. Si enim quod aboletur, per gloriam: multo magis quod manet, erit in gloria.4. And such confidence As it was a magnificent commendation, that Paul had pronounced to the honor of himself and his Apostleship, lest he should seem to speak of himself more confidently than was befitting, he transfers the entire glory to God, from whom he acknowledges that he has received everything that he has. "By this boasting," says he, "I extol God rather than myself, by whose grace I am what I am." (1 Corinthians 15:10.) He adds, as he is accustomed to do by Christ, because he is, as it were, the channel, through which all God's benefits flow forth to us.5. Not that we are competent. [370] When he thus disclaims all merit, it is not as if he abased himself in merely pretended modesty, but instead of this, he speaks what he truly thinks. Now we see, that he leaves man nothing. For the smallest part, in a manner, of a good work is thought. In other words, [371] it has neither the first part of the praise, nor the second; and yet he does not allow us even this. As it is less to think than to will, how foolish a part do those act, who arrogate to themselves a right will, when Paul does not leave them so much as the power of thinking aught! [372] Papists have been misled by the term sufficiency, that is made use of by the Old Interpreter. [373] For they think to get off by acknowledging that man is not qualified to form good purposes, while in the mean time they ascribe to him a right apprehension of the mind, which, with some assistance from God, may effect something of itself. Paul, on the other hand, declares that man is in want, not merely of sufficiency of himself, (autarkeian,) but also of competency (hikanoteta,) [374] which would be equivalent to idoneitas (fitness), if such a term were in use among the Latins. He could not, therefore, more effectually strip man bare of every thing good. [375]6. Who hath made us competent. [376] He had acknowledged himself to be altogether useless. Now he declares, that, by the grace of God, he has been qualified [377] for an

office, for which he was previously unqualified. From this we infer its magnitude and difficulty, as it can be undertaken by no one, that has not been previously prepared and fashioned for it by God. It is the Apostle's intention, also, to extol the dignity of the gospel. There is, at the same time, no doubt, that he indirectly exposes the poverty of those, who boasted in lofty terms of their endowments, while they were not furnished with so much as a single drop of heavenly grace.Not of the letter but of the spirit He now follows out the comparison between the law and the gospel, which he had previously touched upon. It is uncertain, however, whether he was led into this discussion, from seeing that there were at Corinth certain perverse [378] devotees of the law, or whether he took occasion from something else to enter upon it. For my part, as I see no evidence that the false apostles had there confounded the law and the gospel, I am rather of opinion, that, as he had to do with lifeless declaimers, who endeavored to obtain applause through mere prating, [379] and as he saw, that the ears of the Corinthians were captivated with such glitter, he was desirous to show them what was the chief excellence of the gospel, and what was the chief praise of its ministers. Now this he makes to consist in the efficacy of the Spirit. A comparison between the law and the gospel was fitted in no ordinary degree to show this. This appears to me to be the reason why he came to enter upon it.There is, however, no doubt, that by the term letter, he means the Old Testament, as by the term spirit he means the gospel; for, after having called himself a minister of the New Testament, he immediately adds, by way of exposition, that he is a minister of the spirit, and contrasts the letter with the spirit. We must now enquire into the reason of this designation. The exposition contrived by Origen has got into general circulation -- that by the letter we ought to understand the grammatical and genuine meaning of Scripture, or the literal sense, (as they call it,) and that by the spirit is meant the allegorical meaning, which is commonly reckoned to be the spiritual meaning. Accordingly, during several centuries, nothing was more commonly said, or more generally received, than this -- that Paul here furnishes us with a key for expounding Scripture by allegories, while nothing is farther from his intention. For by the term letter he means outward preaching, of such a kind as does not reach the heart; and, on the other hand, by spirit he means living doctrine, of such a nature as worketh effectually (1 Thessalonians 2:13) on the minds of men, [380] through the grace of the Spirit. By the term letter, therefore, is meant literal preaching -- that is, dead and ineffectual, perceived only by the ear. By the term spirit, on the other hand, is meant spiritual doctrine, that is, what is not merely uttered with the mouth, but effectually makes its way to the souls of men with a lively feeling. For Paul had an eye to the passage in Jeremiah, that I quoted a little ago, (Jeremiah 31:31,) where the Lord says, that his law had been proclaimed merely with the mouth, and that it had, therefore, been of short duration, because the people did not embrace it in their heart, and he promises the Spirit of regeneration under the reign of Christ, to write his gospel, that is, the new covenant, upon their hearts. Paul now makes it his boast, that the accomplishment of that prophecy is to be seen in his preaching, that the Corinthians may perceive, how worthless is the loquacity of those vain boasters, who make incessant noise [381] while devoid of the efficacy of the Spirit. It is asked, however, whether God, under the Old Testament, merely sounded forth in the way of an external voice, and did not also speak inwardly to the hearts of the pious by his Spirit. I answer in the first place, that Paul here takes into view what belonged peculiarly to the law; for although God then wrought by his Spirit, yet that did not take its rise from the ministry of Moses, but from the grace of Christ, as it is said in John 1:17 -- The law was given by Moses;

but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.True, indeed, the grace of God did not, during all that time, lie dormant, but it is enough that it was not a benefit that belonged to the law. [382] For Moses had discharged his office, when he had delivered to the people the doctrine of life, adding threatenings and promises. For this reason he gives to the law the name of the letter, because it is in itself a dead preaching; but the gospel he calls spirit, because the ministry of the gospel is living, nay, lifegiving.I answer secondly, that these things are not affirmed absolutely in reference either to the law or to the gospel, but in respect of the contrast between the one and the other; for even the gospel is not always spirit. When, however, we come to compare the two, it is truly and properly affirmed, that the nature of the law is to teach men literally, in such a way that it does not reach farther than the ear; and that, on the other hand, the nature of the gospel is to teach spiritually, because it is the instrument of Christ's grace. This depends on the appointment of God, who has seen it meet to manifest the efficacy of his Spirit more clearly in the gospel than in the law, for it is his work exclusively to teach effectually the minds of men.When Paul, however, calls himself a Minister of the Spirit, he does not mean by this, that the grace of the Holy Spirit and his influence, were tied to his preaching, so that he could, whenever he pleased, breathe forth the Spirit along with the utterance of the voice. He simply means, that Christ blessed his ministry, and thus accomplished what was predicted respecting the gospel. It is one thing for Christ to connect his influence with a man's doctrine. [383] and quite another for the man's doctrine [384] to have such efficacy of itself. We are, then, Ministers of the Spirit, not as if we held him inclosed within us, or as it were captive -- not as if we could at our pleasure confer his grace upon all, or upon whom we pleased -- but because Christ, through our instrumentality, illuminates the minds of men, renews their hearts, and, in short, regenerates them wholly. [385] It is in consequence of there being such a connection and bond of union between Christ's grace and man's effort, that in many cases that is ascribed to the minister which belongs exclusively to the Lord. For in that case it is not the mere individual that is looked to, but the entire dispensation of the gospel, which consists, on the one hand, in the secret influence of Christ, and, on the other, in man's outward efforts.For the letter killeth. This passage was mistakingly perverted, first by Origen, and afterwards by others, to a spurious signification. From this arose a very pernicious error -- that of imagining that the perusal of Scripture would be not merely useless, but even injurious, [386] unless it were drawn out into allegories. This error was the source of many evils. For there was not merely a liberty allowed of adulterating the genuine meaning of Scripture, [387] but the more of audacity any one had in this manner of acting, so much the more eminent an interpreter of Scripture was he accounted. Thus many of the ancients recklessly played with the sacred word of God, [388] as if it had been a ball to be tossed to and fro. In consequence of this, too, heretics had it more in their power to trouble the Church; for as it had become general practice to make any passage whatever [389] mean anything that one might choose, there was no frenzy so absurd or monstrous, as not to admit of being brought forward under some pretext of allegory. Even good men themselves were carried headlong, so as to contrive very many mistaken opinions, led astray through a fondness for allegory.The meaning of this passage, however, is as follows -- that, if the word of God is simply uttered with the mouth, it is an occasion of death, and that it is lifegiving, only when it is received with the heart. The terms letter and spirit, therefore, do not refer to the exposition of the word, but to its influence and fruit. Why it is that the doctrine merely strikes upon the ear, without reaching the heart, we shall see presently.7 But if the ministry of death. He now sets forth the dignity of the gospel by this argument -- that God conferred distinguished honor upon the law, which,

nevertheless, is nothing in comparison with the gospel. The law was rendered illustrious by many miracles. Paul, however, touches here upon one of them merely -- that the face of Moses shone with such splendor as dazzled the eyes of all. That splendour was a token of the glory of the law. He now draws an argument from the less to the greater -- that it is befitting, that the glory of the gospel should shine forth with greater lustre, inasmuch as it is greatly superior to the law. In the first place, he calls the law the ministry of death. Secondly, he says, that the doctrine of it was written in letters, and with ink. Thirdly, that it was engraven on stones. Fourthly, that it was not of perpetual duration; but, instead of this, its condition was temporary and fading. And, fifthly, he calls it the ministry of condemnation. To render the antitheses complete, it would have been necessary for him to employ as many corresponding clauses in reference to the gospel; but, he has merely spoken of it as being the ministry of the Spirit, and of righteousness, and as enduring for ever. If you examine the words, the correspondence is not complete, but so far as the matter itself is concerned, what is expressed is sufficient. [390] For he had said that the Spirit giveth life, and farther, that men's hearts served instead of stones, and disposition, in the place of inkLet us now briefly examine those attributes of the law and the gospel. Let us, however, bear in mind, that he is not speaking of the whole of the doctrine that is contained in the law and the Prophets; and farther, that he is not treating of what happened to the fathers under the Old Testament, but merely notices what belongs peculiarly to the ministry of Moses. The law was engraven on stones, and hence it was a literal doctrine. This defect of the law required to be corrected by the gospel, because it could not but be brittle, so long as it was merely engraven on tables of stone. The gospel, therefore, is a holy and inviolable covenant, because it was contracted by the Spirit of God, acting as security. From this, too, it follows, that the law was the ministry of condemnation and of death; for when men are instructed as to their duty, and hear it declared, that all who do not render satisfaction to the justice of God are cursed, (Deuteronomy 27:26,) they are convicted, as under sentence of sin and death. From the law, therefore, they derive nothing but a condemnation of this nature, because God there demands what is due to him, and at the same time confers no power to perform it. The gospel, on the other hand, by which men are regenerated, and are reconciled to God, through the free remission of their sins, is the ministry of righteousness, and, consequently, of life also.Here, however, a question arises: As the gospel is the odor of death unto death to some, (2 Corinthians 2:16,) and as Christ is a rock of offense, and a stone of stumbling set for the ruin of many, [391] (Luke 2:34; 1 Peter 2:8,) why does he represent, as belonging exclusively to the law, what is common to both? Should you reply, that it happens accidentally that the gospel is the source of death, and, accordingly, it the occasion of it rather than the cause, inasmuch as it is in its own nature salutary to all, the difficulty will still remain unsolved; for the same answer might be returned with truth in reference to the law. For we hear what Moses called the people to bear witness to -- that he had set before them life and death. (Deuteronomy 30:15.) We hear what Paul himself says in Romans 7:10 -- that the law has turned out to our ruin, not through any fault attaching to it, but in consequence of our wickedness. Hence, as the entailing of condemnation upon men is a thing that happens alike to the law and the gospel, the difficulty still remains.My answer is this -- that there is, notwithstanding of this, a great difference between them; for although the gospel is an occasion of condemnation to many, it is nevertheless, on good grounds, reckoned the doctrine of life, because it is the instrument of regeneration, and offers to us a free reconciliation with God. The law, on the other hand, as it simply prescribes the rule of a good life, does not renew men's hearts to the obedience of righteousness, and denounces

everlasting death upon transgressors, can do nothing but condemn. [392] Or if you prefer it in another way, the office of the law is to show us the disease, in such a way as to show us, at the same time, no hope of cure: the office of the gospel is, to bring a remedy to those that were past hope. For as the law leaves man to himself, it condemns him, of necessity, to death; while the gospel, bringing him to Christ, opens the gate of life. Thus, in one word, we find that it is an accidental property of the law, that is perpetual and inseparable, that it killeth; for as the Apostle says elsewhere, (Galatians 3:10,)All that remain under the law are subject to the curse.It does, not, on the other hand, invariably happen to the gospel, that it kills, for in it isrevealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith, and therefore it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. (Romans 1:17,18.) [393]It remains, that we consider the last of the properties that are ascribed. The Apostle says, that the law was but for a time, and required to be abolished, but that the gospel, on the other hand, remains for ever. There are various reasons why the ministry of Moses is pronounced transient, for it was necessary that the shadows should vanish at the coming of Christ, and that statement -- The law and the Prophets were until John --

(Matthew 11:13) -- applies to more than the mere shadows. For it intimates, that Christ has put an end to the ministry of Moses, which was peculiar to him, and is distinguished from the gospel. Finally, the Lord declares by Jeremiah, that the weakness of the Old Testament arose from this -- that it was not engraven on men's hearts. (Jeremiah 31:32,33.) For my part, I understand that abolition of the law, of which mention is here made, as referring to the whole of the Old Testament, in so far as it is opposed to the gospel, so that it corresponds with the statement -- The law and the Prophets were until John. For the context requires this. For Paul is not reasoning here as to mere ceremonies, but shows how much more powerfully the Spirit of God exercises his power in the gospel, than of old under the law.So that they could not look. He seems to have had it in view to reprove, indirectly, the arrogance of those, who despised the gospel as a thing that was excessively mean, [394] so that they could scarcely deign to give it a direct look. "So great," says he, "was the splendor of the law, that the Jews could not endure it. What, then, must we think of the gospel, the dignity of which is as much superior to that of the law, as Christ is more excellent than Moses?"10. What was rendered glorious. This is not a correction of what goes before, but rather a confirmation; for he means that the glory of the law is extinguished when the gospel comes forth. As the moon and stars, though in themselves they are not merely luminous, but diffuse their light over the whole earth, do, nevertheless, disappear before the brightness of the sun; so, however glorious the law was in itself, it has, nevertheless, no glory in comparison with the excellence of the gospel. Hence it follows, that we cannot sufficiently prize, or hold in sufficient esteem the glory of Christ, which shines forth in the gospel, like the splendor of the sun when beaming forth; and that the gospel is foolishly handled, nay more, is shamefully profaned, where the power and majesty of the Spirit do not come forth to view, so as to draw up men's minds and hearts heavenward.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

12. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 12. Habentes igitur hanc spem, multa fiducia (vel, libertate) utimur. 13. And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 13. Et non quemadmodum Moses (Exodus 34:33-35) ponebat velamen ante faciem suam, ut non intuerentur filii Israel in finem eius quod aboletur. [395] 14. But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 14. Sed excoecati sunt [396] sensus eorum: nam usque in hune diem velamen illud in lectione Veteris Testamenti [397] manet: nec tollitur, eo quod aboletur per Christum. [398] 15. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. 15. Sed usque in hodiernum diem, quum legitur Moses, velamen eorum cordibus impositum est. 16. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. 16. At ubi conversus fuerit ad Dominum, auferetur velamen. 17. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 17. Dominus Spiritus est: ubi autem Spiritus Domini, illic libertas.18. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.18. Nos autem omnes retecta facie gloriam Domini in speculo conspicientes, in eandem imaginem transformamur a gloria in gloriam, tanquam a Domini Spiritu.12. Having therefore this hope. Here he advances still farther, for he does not treat merely of the nature of the law, or of that enduring quality of which we have spoken, but also of its abuse. True, indeed, this also belonged to its nature, that, being covered with a veil, it was not so manifest to the eye, and that by its brightness it inspired terror, and accordingly Paul says elsewhere, what amounts to the same thing -- that the people of Israel had received from it the spirit of bondage unto fear. (Romans 8:15.) Here, however, he speaks rather of an abuse that was foreign and adventitious. [399] There was at that time in all quarters a grievous stumbling-block arising from the wantonness of the Jews, inasmuch as they obstinately rejected Christ. [400] In consequence of this, weak consciences were shaken, being in doubt, whether they should embrace Christ, inasmuch as he was not acknowledged by the chosen people. [401] This kind of scruple the Apostle removes, by instructing them, that their blindness had been prefigured even from the beginning, inasmuch as they could not behold the face of Moses, except through the medium of a veil. As, therefore, he had stated previously, that the law was rendered glorious by the lustre of Moses' countenance, so now he teaches, that the veil was an emblem of the blindness that was to come upon the people of Israel, for the person of Moses represents the law. The Jews, therefore, acknowledged by this, that they had not eyes to behold the law, except when veiled.This veil, he adds, is not taken away, except by Christ. From this he concludes, that none are susceptible of a right apprehension, but those who direct their minds to Christ. [402] In the first place, he draws this distinction between the law and the Gospel -- that the brightness of the former rather dazzled men's eyes, than enlightened them, while in the latter, Christ's glorious face is clearly beheld. He now triumphantly exults, on the ground that the majesty of the Gospel is not terrific, but amiable [403] -- is not hid, but is manifested familiarly to all. The term parresia confidence, he employs here, either as meaning an elevated magnanimity of spirit, with which all

ministers of the Gospel ought to be endowed, or as denoting an open and full manifestation of Christ; and this second view is the more probable, for he contrasts this confidence with the obscurity of the law. [404]13. Not as Moses Paul is not reasoning as to the intention of Moses. For as it was his office, to publish the law to his people, so, there can be no doubt that he was desirous, that its true meaning should be apprehended by all, and that he did not intentionally involve his doctrine in obscurity, but that the fault was on the part of the people. As, therefore, he could not renew the minds of the hearers, he was contented with faithfully discharging the duty assigned to him. Nay more, the Lord having commanded him to put a veil between his face and the eyes of the beholders, he obeyed. Nothing, therefore, is said here to the dishonor of Moses, for he was not required to do more than the commission, that was assigned to him, called for. In addition to this, that bluntness, or that weak and obtuse vision, of which Paul is now speaking, is confined to unbelievers exclusively, because the law though wrapt up in figures, [405] did nevertheless impart wisdom to babes, Psalm 19:7 [406]14. Their understandings were blinded. He lays the whole blame upon them, inasmuch as it was owing to their blindness, that they did not make any proficiency in the doctrine of the law. He afterwards adds, That veil remaineth even until this day. By this he means, that that dulness of vision was not for a single hour merely, but prefigured what the condition of the nation would be in time to come. "That veil with which Moses covered his face, when publishing the law, was the emblem of a stupidity, that would come upon that people, and would continue upon them for a long period. Thus at this day, when the law is preached to them, inhearing they hear not, and in seeing they see not.

(Matthew 13:13.)There is no reason, however, why we should be troubled,as though some new thing had happened. (1 Peter 4:12.)God has shown long ago under the type of the veil, that it would be so. Lest, however, any blame should attach to the law, he again repeats it, that their hearts were covered with a veilAnd it is not removed, because it is done away through Christ. He assigns a reason, why they are so long in blindness in the midst of light. For the law is in itself bright, but it is only when Christ. appears to us in it, that we enjoy its splendor. The Jews turn away their eyes as much as they can from Christ. It is not therefore to be wondered, if they see nothing, refusing as they do to behold the sun. This blindness on the part of the chosen people, especially as it is so long continued, admonishes us not to be lifted up with pride, relying on the benefits that God has conferred upon us. This point is treated of in Romans 11:20. Let, however, the reason of this blindness deter us from contempt of Christ, which God so grievously punishes. In the mean time, let us learn, that without Christ, the Sun of righteousness, (Malachi 4:2,) there is no light even in the law, or in the whole word of God. 16. But when he shall have turned to the Lord. This passage has hitherto been badly rendered, for both Greek and Latin writers have thought that the word Israel was to be understood, whereas Paul is speaking of Moses. He had said, that a veil is upon the hearts of the Jews, when Moses is read. He immediately adds, As soon as he will have turned to the Lord, the veil will be taken away. Who does not see, that this is said of Moses, that is, of the law? For as Christ is the end [407] of it, (Romans 10:4,) to which it ought to be referred, it was turned away in another direction, when the Jews shut out Christ from it. Hence, as in the law [408] they wander into by-paths, so the law, too, becomes to them involved like a labyrinth, until it is brought to refer to its end, that is, Christ. If, accordingly, the Jews seek Christ in the law, the truth of God will be distinctly seen by them, [409] but so long as they think to be wise without Christ, they will wander in darkness, and will never arrive at a right understanding of the law. Now what is said of the law applies to all Scripture -- that where it is not taken as referring to Christ as

its one aim, it is mistakingly twisted and perverted. [410]17. The Lord is the Spirit. This passage, also, has been misinterpreted, as if Paul had meant to say, that Christ is of a spiritual essence, for they connect it with that statement in John 4:24, God is a Spirit. The statement before us, however, has nothing to do with Christ's essence, but simply points out his office, for it is connected with what goes before, where we found it stated, that the doctrine of the law is literal, and not merely dead, but even an occasion of death. He now, on the other hand, calls Christ its spirit, [411] meaning by this, that it will be living and life-giving, only if it is breathed into by Christ. Let the soul be connected with the body, and then there is a living man, endowed with intelligence and perception, fit for all vital functions. [412] Let the soul be removed from the body, and there will remain nothing but a useless carcase, totally devoid of feeling.The passage is deserving of particular notice, [413] as teaching us, in what way we are to reconcile those encomiums which David pronounces upon the law -- (Psalm 19:7,8) -- "the law of the Lord converteth souls, enlighteneth the eyes, imparteth wisdom to babes," and passages of a like nature, with those statements of Paul, which at first view are at variance with them -- that it is the ministry of sin and death -- the letter that does nothing but kill. (2 Corinthians 3:6,7.) For when it is animated by Christ, [414] those things that David makes mention of are justly applicable to it. If Christ is taken away, it is altogether such as Paul describes. Hence Christ is the life of the law. [415]Where the Spirit of the Lord. He now describes the manner, in which Christ gives life to the law -- by giving us his Spirit. The term Spirit here has a different signification from what it had in the preceding verse. There, it denoted the soul, and was ascribed metaphorically to Christ. Here, on the other hand, it means the Holy Spirit, that Christ himself confers upon his people. Christ, however, by regenerating us, gives life to the law, and shows himself to be the fountain of life, as all vital functions proceed from man's soul. Christ, then, is to all (so to speak) the universal soul, not in respect of essence, but in respect of grace. Or, if you prefer it, Christ is the Spirit, because he quickens us by the life-giving influence of his Spirit. [416]He makes mention, also, of the blessing that we obtain from that source. "There," says he, "is liberty." By the term liberty I do not understand merely emancipation from the servitude of sin, and of the flesh, but also that confidence, which we acquire from His bearing witness as to our adoption. For it is in accordance with that statement -- We have not again received the spirit of bondage, to fear, etc. (Romans 8:15.)In that passage, the Apostle makes mention of two things -- bondage, and fear. The opposites of these are liberty and confidence. Thus I acknowledge, that the inference drawn from this passage by Augustine is correct -- that we are by nature the slaves of sin, and are made free by the grace of regeneration. For, where there is nothing but the bare letter of the law, there will be only the dominion of sin, but the term Liberty, as I have said, I take in a more extensive sense. The grace of the Spirit might, also, be restricted more particularly to ministers, so as to make this statement correspond with the commencement of the chapter, for ministers require to have another grace of the Spirit, and another liberty from what others have. The former signification, however, pleases me better, though at the same time I have no objection, that this should be applied to every one according to the measure of his gift. It is enough, if we observe, that Paul here points out the efficacy of the Spirit, which we experience for our salvation -- as many of us, as have been regenerated by his grace. 18. But we all, with unveiled face. I know not how it had come into the mind of Erasmus, to apply to ministers exclusively, what is evidently common to all believers. The word katoptrizesthai, it is true, has a double signification among the Greeks, for it sometimes means to hold out a mirror to be looked into, and at other times to look into a mirror

when presented. [417] The old interpreter, however, has correctly judged, that the second of these is the more suitable to the passage before us. I have accordingly followed his rendering. [418] Nor is it without good reason, that Paul has added a term of universality -- "We all," says he; for he takes in the whole body of the Church. It is a conclusion that suits well with the doctrine stated previously -- that we have in the gospel a clear revelation from God. As to this, we shall see something farther in the fourth chapter.He points out, however, at the same time, both the strength of the revelation, and our daily progress. [419] For he has employed such a similitude to denote three things: first, That we have no occasion to fear obscurity, when we approach the gospel, for God there clearly discovers to us His face; [420] secondly, That it is not befitting, that it should be a dead contemplation, but that we should be transformed by means of it into the image of God; and, thirdly, that the one and the other are not accomplished in us in one moment, but we must be constantly making progress both in the knowledge of God, and in conformity to His image, for this is the meaning of the expression -- from glory to gloryWhen he adds, -- as by the Spirit of the Lord, he again reminds of what he had said -- that the whole excellence of the gospel depends on this, that it is made life-giving to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit. For the particle of comparison -- as, is not employed to convey the idea of something not strictly applicable, but to point out the manner. Observe, that the design of the gospel is this -- that the image of God, which had been effaced by sin, may be stamped anew upon us, and that the advancement of this restoration may be continually going forward in us during our whole life, because God makes his glory shine forth in us by little and little.There is one question that may be proposed here. "Paul says, that we behold God's face with an unveiled face, [421] while in the former Epistle we find it stated, that we do not, for the present, know God otherwise than through a mirror, and in an obscure manner." In these statements there is an appearance of contrariety. They are, however, by no means at variance. The knowledge that we have of God for the present is obscure and slender, in comparison with the glorious view that we shall have on occasion of Christ's last coming. At the same time, He presents Himself to us at present, so as to be seen by us, and openly beheld, in so far as is for our advantage, and in so far as our capacity admits of. [422] Hence Paul makes mention of progress being made, inasmuch as there will then only be perfection.

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;1. Quamobrem habentes ministerium hoc, sicuti misericordiam sumus consequuti, non deficimus,2. But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.2. Sed reiicimus latebras dedecoris, non ambulantes in astutia, neque dolo tractantes sermonem Dei: sed manifestatione veritatis commendantes nos apud omnem conscientiam hominum coram Deo.3. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:3. Si autem velatum est Evangelium nostrum: in iis qui pereunt velatum est.4. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.4. Quibus deus saeculi hujus excoecavit sensus: nempe infidelibus, ut ne illis resplendeat claritas Evangelii gloriæ Christi, qui est imago Dei invisibilis.5. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.5. Non enim nosmet ipsos praedicamus, sed Iesum Christum Dominum; nos veto servos vestros propter Iesum.6. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.6. Quoniam Deus qui iussit e tenebris lumen splendescere, idem illuxit in cordibus nostris ad illuminationem cognitionis gloriæ Dei in facie Iesu Christi.1. Having this ministry. He now returns to a commendation of himself personally, from which he had digressed into a general discussion, in reference to the dignity of the gospel. As, therefore, he has been treating of the nature of the gospel, so he now shows how faithful and upright a minister of it he is. He has previously shown, what is the true gospel of Christ. He now shows what he preaches to be such. "Having," says he, "this ministry" -- that ministry, the excellence of which he had extolled in terms so magnificent, and the power and usefulness of which he had so abundantly shown forth. Hence, in order that he may not seem to extol himself too much, he premises that it was not by his own efforts, or by his own merits, that he had reached such a pinnacle of honor, but had been led forward by the mercy of God exclusively. Now there was more implied in making the mercy of God the reason of his Apostleship, than if he had attributed it to the grace of God. We faint not [423] that is, we are not deficient in our duty, [424] so as not to discharge it with fidelity.2. But renounce the hidden things. While he commends his own sincerity, [425] he, on the other hand, indirectly reproves the false Apostles, who, while they corrupted by their ambition the genuine excellence of the gospel, were, nevertheless, desirous of exclusive distinction. Hence the faults, from which he declares himself to be exempt, he indirectly imputes to them. By the hidden things of disgrace, or concealments, some understand the shadows of the Mosaic law. Chrysostom understands the expression to mean the vain show, by which they endeavored to recommend themselves. I understand by it -- all the disguises, with which they adulterated the pure and native beauty of the gospel. For as chaste and virtuous women, satisfied with the gracefulness of natural beauty, do not resort to artificial adornings, while harlots never think themselves sufficiently adorned, unless they have corrupted nature, so Paul glories in having set forth the pure gospel, while others set forth one that was disguised, and covered over with unseemly additions. For as they were

ashamed of the simplicity of Christ, or at least could not have distinction [426] from true excellencies of Apostles, they framed a new gospel, not unlike a profane philosophy, swelled up with empty bombast, while altogether devoid of the efficacy of the Spirit. Spurious ornaments of this nature, [427] by which the gospel is disfigured, he calls the concealments of disgrace, because the nakedness of those, who have recourse to concealments and disguises, must of necessity be dishonorable and disgraceful.As to himself, he says that he rejects or disdains disguises, because Christ's face, the more that it is seen opened up to view in his preaching, shines forth so much the more gloriously. I do not, however, deny, that he alludes at the same time to the veil of Moses, (Exodus 34:33,) of which he had made mention, but he ascribes a quite different veil to the false Apostles. For Moses covered his face, because the excessive brightness of the glory of the law could not be endured by tender and blear eyes. They, [428] on the other hand, put on a veil by way of ornament. Besides, as they would be despicable, nay, infamous, if the simplicity of the gospel shone forth, they, on this account, hide their shame under ever so many cloaks and masks.Not walking in craftiness. There can be no doubt, that the false Apostles delighted themselves greatly in the craftiness that Paul reproves, as though it had been a distinguished excellence, as we see even at this day some, even of those who profess the gospel, who would rather be esteemed subtile than sincere, and sublime rather than solid, while in the mean time all their refinement is mere childishness. But what would you do? It delights them to have a name for acuteness, and they have, under that pretext, applause among the ignorant. [429] We learn, however, in what estimation Paul holds this appearance of excellence. Craftiness he declares to be unworthy of Christ's servants. As to what follows -- nor handling deceitfully -- I am not sure that this sufficiently brings out Paul's meaning; for the verb doloun does not so properly mean acting fraudulently, as what is called falsifying [430] as horse-jockeys [431] are wont to do. In this passage, at least, it is placed in contrast with upright preaching, agreeably to what follows.But by manifestation of the truth He claims to himself this praise -- that he had proclaimed the pure doctrine of the gospel in simplicity and without disguise, and has the consciences of all as witnesses of this in the sight of God. As he has placed the manifestation of the truth in contrast with the disguised [432] doctrine of the sophists, so he appeals the decision to their consciences, and to the judgment-seat of God, whereas they abused the mistaken judgment of men, or their corrupt affection, and were not so desirous to be in reality worthy of praise as they were eager to appear so. Hence we infer, that there is a contrast here between the consciences of men and their ears. Let the servants of Christ, therefore, reckon it enough to have approved their integrity to the consciences of men in the sight of God, and pay no regard to the corrupt inclinations of men, or to popular applause.3. But if our gospel is hid It might have been an easy thing to pour calumny upon what he had said as to the clearness of his preaching, because he had many adversaries. That calumny he repels with stern authority, for he threatens all who do not acknowledge the power of his gospel, and warns them that this is a token of reprobation and ruin. "Should any one affirm that he does not perceive that manifestation of Christ of which I boast, he clearly shows himself, by this very token, to be a reprobate, [433] for my sincerity in the work of instructing [434] is clearly and distinctly perceived by all that have eyes. Those, therefore, from whom it is hid, must be blind, and destitute of all rational understanding." The sum is this -- that the blindness of unbelievers detracts nothing from the clearness of his gospel; for the sun is not less resplendent, that the blind do not perceive his light. [435]But some one will say that this applies equally to the law, for in itself it is a lamp [436] to guide our feet, (Psalm 119:105,) enlightens the eyes, (Psalm 19:8,) etc., and is hid

only from those that perish. I answer that, when Christ is included in the law, the sun shines forth through the midst of the clouds, so that men have light enough for their use; but when Christ is disjoined from it, there is nothing left but darkness, or a false appearance of light, that dazzles men's eyes instead of assisting them. It is, however, a token of great confidence, that he ventures to regard as reprobates all that reject his doctrine. It is befitting, however, that all that would be looked upon as ministers of God's word should be endued with the like confidence, that with a fearless confidence they may unhesitatingly summon all the adversaries of their doctrine to the judgment-seat of God, that they may bring thence a sure condemnation.4. Whose minds the god of this world He intimates, that no account should be made of their perverse obstinacy. "They do not see," says he, "the sun at mid-day, because the devil has blinded their understandings." No one that judges rightly can have any doubt, that it is of Satan that the Apostle speaks. Hilary, as he had to do with Arians, who abused this passage, so as to make it a pretext for denying Christ's true divinity, while they at the same time confessed him to be God, twists the text in this way -- "God hath blinded the understandings of this world." In this he was afterwards followed by Chrysostom, with the view of not conceding to the Manicheans their two first principles. [437] What influenced Ambrose does not appear. Augustine had the same reason as Chrysostom, having to contend with the Manicheans.We see what the heat of controversy does in carrying on disputes. Had all those men calmly read Paul's words, it would never have occurred to any one of them to twist them in this way into a forced meaning; but as they were harassed by their opponents, they were more concerned to refute them, than to investigate Paul's meaning. But what occasion was there for this? For the subterfuge of the Arians was childish -- that if the devil is called the god of this world, the name of God, as applied to Christ, does not express a true, eternal, and exclusive divinity. For Paul says elsewhere, many are called gods, (1 Corinthians 8:5;) but David, on the other hand, sings forth -- the gods of the nations are demons. [438] (Psalm 96:5.) When, therefore, the devil is called the god of the wicked, on the ground of his having dominion over them, and being worshipped by them in the place of God, what tendency has this to detract from the honor of Christ? And as to the Manicheans, this appellation gives no more countenance to the Manicheans, than when he is called the prince of this world. (John 14:30.) [439]There is, therefore, no reason for being afraid to interpret this passage as referring to the devil, there being no danger in doing so. For should the Arians come forward and contend, [440] that Christ's divine essence is no more proved from his having the appellation God applied to him, than Satan's is proved from its being applied to him, a cavil of this nature is easily refuted; for Christ is called God without any addition, [441] nay, he is called God blessed for ever. (Romans 9:5.) He is said to be that God who was in the beginning, before the creation of the world. (John 1:1-3.)The devil, on the other hand, is called the god of this world, in no other way than as Baal is called the god of those that worship him, or as the dog is called the god of Egypt. [442] The Manicheans, as I have said, for maintaining their delusion, have recourse to other declarations of Scripture, as well as this, but there is no difficulty in refuting those also. They contend not so much respecting the term, as respecting the power. As the power of blinding is ascribed to Satan, and dominion over unbelievers, they conclude from this that he is, from his own resources, the author of all evil, so as not to be subject to God's control -- as if Scripture did not in various instances declare, that devils, no less than the angels of heaven, are servants of God, each of them severally in his own manner. For, as the latter dispense to us God's benefits for our salvation, so the former execute his wrath. Hence good angels are called powers and principalities, (Ephesians 3:10,) but it is simply because they exercise the power given

them by God. For the same reason Satan is the prince of this world, not as if he conferred dominion upon himself, or obtained it by his own right, or, in fine, exercised it at his own pleasure. On the contrary, he has only so much as the Lord allows him. Hence Scripture does not merely make mention of the good spirit of God, and good angels, but he also speaks of evil spirits of God. An evil spirit from God came upon Saul. (1 Samuel 16:14.) Again, chastisements through means of evil angels. (Psalm 78:49.)With respect to the passage before us, the blinding is a work common to God and to Satan, for it is in many instances ascribed to God; but the power is not alike, nor is the manner the same. I shall not speak at present as to the manner. Scripture, however, teaches that Satan blinds men, [443] not merely with God's permission, but even by his command, that he may execute his vengeance. Thus Ahab was deceived by Satan, (1 Kings 22:21,) but could Satan have done this of himself? By no means; but having offered to God his services for inflicting injury, he was sent to be alying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. (1 Kings 22:22.)Nay more, the reason why God is said to blind men is, that after having deprived us of the right exercise of the understanding, and the light of his Spirit, he delivers us over to the devil, to be hurried forward by him to a reprobate mind, (Romans 1:28,) gives him the power of deception, and by this means inflicts just vengeance upon us by the minister of his wrath. Paul's meaning, therefore, is, that all are possessed by the devil, who do not acknowledge his doctrine to be the sure truth of God. For it is more severe to call them slaves of the devil, [444] than to ascribe their blindness to the judgment of God. As, however, he had a little before adjudged such persons to destruction, (2 Corinthians 4:3,) he now adds that they perish, for no other reason than that they have drawn down ruin upon themselves, as the effect of their own unbelief.Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine upon them. This serves to confirm what he had said -- that if any one rejected his gospel, it was his own blindness that prevented him from receiving it. "For nothing," says he, "appears in it but Christ, and that not obscurely, but so as to shine forth clearly." He adds, that Christ is the image of God, by which he intimates that they were utterly devoid of the knowledge of God, in accordance with that statement -- He that knoweth not me knoweth not my Father. (John 14:7.)This then is the reason, why he pronounced so severe a sentence upon those that had doubts as to his Apostleship -- because they did not behold Christ, who might there be distinctly beheld. It is doubtful whether he employed the expression, the gospel of the glory of Christ, as meaning the glorious gospel, agreeably to the Hebrew idiom; or whether he means by it -- the gospel, in which Christ's glory shone forth. The second of these meanings I rather prefer, as having in it more completeness.When, however, Christ is called the image of the invisible God, this is not meant merely of his essence, as being the "co-essential of the Father," as they speak, [445] but rather has a reference to us, because he represents the Father to us. The Father himself is represented as invisible, because he is in himself not apprehended by the human understanding. He exhibits himself, however, to us by his Son, and makes himself in a manner visible. [446] I state this, because the ancients, having been greatly incensed against the Arians, insisted more than was befitting on this point -- how it is that the Son is inwardly the image of the Father by a secret unity of essence, while they passed over what is mainly for edification -- in what respects he is the image of God to us, when he manifests to us what had otherwise been hid in him. Hence the term image has a reference to us, as we shall see again presently [447] The epithet invisible, though omitted in some Greek manuscripts, I have preferred to retain, as it is not superfluous. [448] 5. For we preach not ourselves Some make this to be an instance of Zeugma, [449] in this manner: We preach not ourselves to be lords, but God's only Son, whom the Father has set over

all things, to be the one Lord. [450] I do not, indeed, find fault with that interpretation, but as the expression is more emphatic (emphatikotera) and has a more extensive signification, [451] when it is said, that one preaches himself. I am more inclined to retain this interpretation, especially as it is almost unanimously approved of. For there are other ways in which men preach themselves, than by arrogating to themselves dominion, as for example, when they aim at show, rather than at edification -- when they are desirous in any way to have distinction -- when, farther, they make gain of the gospel. Ambition, therefore, and avarice, and similar vices in a minister, taint the purity of his doctrine, so that Christ has not there the exclusive distinction. Hence, he that would preach Christ alone, must of necessity forget himself.And ourselves your servants. Lest any one should mutter out the objection -- "But in the mean time you say many things respecting yourself," he answers, that he desires nothing farther, than that he should be their servant. "Whatever things I declare respecting myself (so loftily, and boastfully, in your opinion) have this object in view -- that I may in Christ serve you advantageously." It follows, that the Corinthians are excessively proud and ungrateful, if they reject this condition. Nay more, it follows, that they had been previously of a corrupt judgment, inasmuch as they had not perceived his holy affection.Here, however, all pastors of the Church are admonished as to their state and condition, for by whatever title of honor they may be distinguished, they are nothing more than the servants of believers, and unquestionably, they cannot serve Christ, without serving his Church at the same time. An honorable servitude, it is true, this is, and superior to any principality, [452] but still it is a servitude, so that Christ alone may be elevated to distinction -- not encumbered by the shadow of a single rival [453] Hence it is the part of a good pastor, not merely to keep aloof from all desire of domineering, but to regard it as the highest pitch of honor, at which he aspires -- that he may serve the people of God. It is the duty of the people, on the other hand, to esteem the servants of Christ first of all on the ground of the dignity of their Master, and then farther on account of the dignity and excellence of their office, that they may not despise those, whom the Lord has placed in so illustrious a station.6. God who commanded light to shine out of darkness. I see that this passage may be explained in four different ways. In the first place thus: "God has commanded light to shine forth out of darkness: that is, by the ministry of men, who are in their own nature darkness, He has brought forward the light of His gospel into the world." Secondly, thus: "God has made the light of the gospel to take the place of the law, which was wrapt up in dark shadows, and thus, He has brought light out of darkness." Those that are fond of subtleties, would be prepared readily to receive expositions of that sort, but any one, who will examine the matter more closely, will perceive, that they do not correspond with the Apostle's intention. The third exposition is that of Ambrose: "When all things were involved in darkness, God kindled up the light of His gospel. For mankind were sunk in the darkness of ignorance, when God on a sudden shone forth upon them by his gospel." The fourth is that of Chrysostom, who is of opinion, that Paul alluded to the creation of the world, in this way: "God, who by his word created light, drawing it, as it were, out of the darkness [454] -- that same Being has now enlightened us in a spiritual manner, when we were buried in darkness." This transition, [455] from light that is visible and corporeal to what is spiritual, has more of elegance, and there is nothing forced in it. The preceding one, [456] however, is not unsuitable. Let every one follow his own judgment.Hath shined in our hearts. He speaks of a twofold illumination, which must be carefully observed -- the one is that of the gospel, the other is secret, taking place in our hearts. [457] For as God, the Creator of the world, pours forth upon us the brightness of the sun, and gives us eyes to receive it, so, as the Redeemer, in the person of

his Son, He shines forth, indeed, upon us by His gospel, but, as we are blind, that would be in vain, if He did not at the same time enlighten our understandings by His Spirit. His meaning, therefore, is, that God has, by His Spirit, opened the eyes of our understandings, so as to make them capable of receiving the light of the gospel.In the face of Jesus Christ. In the same sense in which he had previously said that Christ is the image of the Father, (2 Corinthians 4:4) he now says, that the glory of God is manifested to us in his face. Here we have a remarkable passage, from which we learn that God is not to be sought out (Job 11:7) in His unsearchable height, (for He dwells in light that is inaccessible, 1 Timothy 6:16,)but is to be known by us, in so far as He manifests himself in Christ. Hence, whatever men desire to know respecting God, apart from Christ, is evanescent, for they wander out of the way. True, indeed, God in Christ appears in the first instance to be mean, but he appears at length to be glorious in the view of those, who hold on, so as to come from the cross to the resurrection. [458] Again we see, that in the word person [459] there is a reference made to us, [460] because it is more advantageous for us to behold God, as He appears in His only-begotten Son, than to search out His secret essence.

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 7. Habemus autem thesaurum hunc in vasis testaceis: ut exsuperantia potentira sit Dei, et non ex nobis: 8. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 8. Quando in omnibus premimur, at non anxii reddimur: laboramus inopia, at non destituimur: 9. Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 9. Persequutionem patimur, at non deserimur: deiicimur, at non perlinus: 10. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 10. Semper mortificationem Iesu Christi circumferentes in corpore nostro, ut vita Iesu manifestetur in corpore nostro. 11. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 11. Semper enim nos, dum vivimus, [461] in mortera tradimur propter Iesum, ut vita Iesu manifestetur [462] in mortali carne nostra. 12. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 12. Itaque mors quidem in nobis operatur, vita autem in vobis. [463]7. But we have this treasure. Those that heard Paul glorying in such a magnificent strain as to the excellence of his ministry, and beheld, on the other hand, his person, contemptible and abject in the eyes of the world, might be apt to think that he was a silly and ridiculous person, and might look upon his boasting as childish, while forming their estimate of him from the meanness of his person. [464] The wicked, more particularly, caught hold of this pretext, when they wished to bring into contempt every thing that was in him. What, however, he saw to be most of all unfavorable to the honor of his Apostleship among the ignorant, he turns by an admirable contrivance into a means of advancing it. First of all, he employs the similitude of a treasure, which is not usually laid up in a splendid and elegantly adorned chest, but rather in some vessel that is mean and worthless; [465] and then farther, he subjoins, that the power of God is, by that means, the more illustrated, and is the better seen. "Those, who allege the contemptible appearance of my person, with the view of detracting from the dignity of my ministry, are unfair and unreasonable judges, for a treasure is not the less valuable, that the vessel, in which it is deposited, is not a precious one. Nay more, it is usual for great treasures to be laid up in earthen pots. Farther, they do not consider, that it is ordered by the special Providence of God, that there should be in ministers no appearance of excellence, lest any thing of distinction should throw the power of God into the shade. As, therefore, the abasement of ministers, and the outward contempt of their persons give occasion for glory accruing to God, that man acts a wicked part, who measures the dignity of the gospel by the person of the minister."Paul, however, does not speak merely of the universal condition of mankind, but of his own condition in particular. It is true, indeed, that all mortal men are earthen vessels Hence, let the most eminent of them all be selected, and let him be one that is adorned to admiration with all ornaments of birth, intellect, and fortune, [466] still, if he be a minister of the gospel, he will be a mean and merely earthen depository of an inestimable treasure Paul, however, has in view himself, and others like himself, his associates, who were held in contempt, because they had nothing of show.8. While we are pressed on every side. This is added by way of explanation, for he shows, that his abject condition is so far from detracting from the glory of God, that it is the occasion of advancing it. "We are reduced," says he, "to straits, but

the Lord at length opens up for us an outlet; [467] we are oppressed with poverty, but the Lord affords us help. Many enemies are in arms against us, but under God's protection we are safe. In fine, though we are brought low, so that it might seem as if all were over with us, [468] still we do not perish." The last is the severest of all. You see, how he turns to his own advantage every charge that the wicked bring against him. [469]10. The mortification of Jesus [470] He says more than he had done previously, for he shows, that the very thing that the false apostles used as a pretext for despising the gospel, was so far from bringing any degree of contempt upon the gospel, that it tended even to render it glorious. For he employs the expression -- the mortification of Jesus Christ -- to denote everything that rendered him contemptible in the eyes of the world, with the view of preparing him for participating in a blessed resurrection. In the first place, the sufferings of Christ, [471] however ignominious they may be in the eyes of men, have, nevertheless, more of honor in the sight of God, than all the triumphs of emperors, and all the pomp of kings. The end, however, must also be kept in view, that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together with him. (Romans 8:17.) Hence he elegantly reproves the madness of those, who made his peculiar fellowship with Christ a matter of reproach. At the same time, the Corinthians are admonished to take heed, lest they should, while haughtily despising Paul's mean and abject appearance, do an injury to Christ himself, by seeking an occasion of reproach [472] in his sufferings, which it becomes us to hold in the highest honor.The word rendered mortification, [473] is taken here in a different sense from what it bears in many passages of Scripture. For it often means self-denial, when we renounce the lusts of the flesh, and are renewed unto obedience to God. Here, however, it means the afflictions by which we are stirred up to meditate on the termination of the present life. To make the matter more plain, let us call the former the inward mortification, and the latter the outward. Both make us conformed to Christ, the one directly, the other indirectly, so to speak. Paul speaks of the former in Colossians 3:5, and in Romans 6:6, where he teaches thatour old man is crucified, that we may walk in newness of life He treats of the second in Romans 8:29, where he teaches, that we were predestinated by God to this end -- that we might be conformed to the image of his Son. It is called, however, a mortification of Christ only in the case of believers, because the wicked, in the endurance of the afflictions of this present life, share with Adam, but the elect have participation with the Son of God, so that all those miseries that are in their own nature accursed, are helpful to their salvation. All the sons of God, it is true, have this in common, that they bear about the mortification, of Christ; [474] but, according as any one is distinguished by a larger measure of gifts, he, in that proportion, comes so much the nearer to conformity with Christ in this respect.That the life of Jesus. Here is the best antidote to adversity -- that as Christ's death is the gate of life, so we know that a blessed resurrection will be to us the termination of all miseries, [475] inasmuch as Christ has associated us with himself on this condition, that we shall be partakers of his life, if in this world we submit to die with him.The sentence that immediately follows may be explained in two ways. If you understand the expression delivered unto death as meaning to be incessantly harassed with persecutions and exposed to dangers, this would be more particularly applicable to Paul, and those like him, who were openly assailed by the fury of the wicked. And thus the expression, for Jesus' sake, will be equivalent to for the testimony of Christ. (Revelation 1:9.) As, however, the expression to be daily delivered unto death, means otherwise -- to have death constantly before our eyes, and to live in such a manner, that our life is rather a shadow of death, [476] I have no objection, that this passage, also, should be expounded in such a way as to be applicable to all believers, and that, too, to every one in his order. Paul

himself, in Romans 8:36, explains in this manner Psalm 44:22. In this way for Christ's sake would mean -- because this condition is imposed upon all his members. Erasmus, however, has rendered it, with not. so much propriety, we who live. The rendering that I have given is more suitable -- while we live. For Paul means that, so long as we are in the world, we resemble the dead rather than the living.12. Hence death indeed. This is said ironically, because it was unseemly that the Corinthians should live happily, and in accordance with their desire, and that they should, free from anxiety, take their ease, while in the mean time Paul was struggling with incessant hardships. [477] Such an allotment would certainly have been exceedingly unreasonable. It was also necessary that the folly of the Corinthians should be reproved, inasmuch as they contrived to themselves a Christianity without the cross, and, not content with this, held in contempt the servants of Christ, because they were not so effeminate. [478] Now as death denotes all afflictions, or a life full of vexations, so also life denotes a condition that is prosperous and agreeable; agreeably to the maxim: "Life is -- not to live, but to be well." [479]

2 Corinthians 4:13-18

13. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; 13. Habentes autem eundem Spiritum fidei, quemadmodum scriptum est (Psalm 116:10) Credidi, propterea loquutus sum: nos quoque credimus, ideo et loquimur: 14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 14. Scientes, quod qui suscitavit Dominum Iesum, nos etiam cum Iesu suscitabit, et constituet vobiscum. 15. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 15. Nam omnia propter vos, ut gratia quæ abundaverit propter gratiarum actionem, quæ a multis proficiscetur, abundet in gloriam Dei. 16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 16. quamobrem non deficimus: verum etsi externus homo noster corrumpitur, noster internus renovatur de die in diem. 17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 17. Levitas enim afflictionis nostrae supramodum momentanea, [480] mternum supramodum pondus glorim operatur in nobis (vel, motentatea levitas operatur in excellentia excellenter.) 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 18. Dum non spectamus ea quæ videntur, sed quæ non videntur: nam quae videntur, temporaria sunt: quæ autem non videntur, æterna.13. Having the same spirit. This is a correction of the foregoing irony. He had represented the condition of the Corinthians as widely different from his own, (not according to his own judgment, but according to their erroneous view,) inasmuch as they were desirous of a gospel that was pleasant and free from all molestation of the cross, and entertained less honorable views of him, because his condition was less renowned. Now, however, he associates himself with them in the hope of the same blessedness. "Though God spares you, and deals with you more indulgently, while he treats me with somewhat more severity, this diversity, nevertheless, will be no hinderance in the way of the like glorious resurrection awaiting both of us. For where there is oneness of faith, there will, also, there be one inheritance." It has been thought, that the Apostle speaks here of the holy fathers, who lived under the Old Testament, and represents them as partakers with us, in the same faith. This, indeed, is true, but it does not accord with the subject in hand. For it is not Abraham, or the rest of the fathers, that he associates with himself in a fellowship of faith, but rather the Corinthians, whereas they separated themselves from him by a perverse ambition. "However my condition," says he, "may appear to be the worse for the present, we shall, nevertheless, one day be alike participants in the same glory, for we are connected together by one faith." Whoever will examine the connection attentively, will perceive, that this is the true and proper interpretation. By metonymy, he gives the name of the spirit of faith [481] to faith itself, because it is a gift of the Holy Spirit.As it is written What has given occasion for the mistake [482] is, that he quotes the testimony of David. It ought, however, to be taken in connection with the confession -- not with the oneness of faith, or if you prefer it, it agrees with what follows -- not with what goes before, in this way: "Because we have an assured hope of a blessed resurrection, we are bold to speak and preach what we believe, as it is written, I believed,

therefore have I spoken " Now, this is the commencement of Psalm 116, [483] where David acknowledges, that, when he had been reduced to the last extremity, he was so overpowered that he almost gave way, but, having soon afterwards regained confidence, he had overcome that temptation. Accordingly, he opens the Psalm thus: I believed, therefore will I speak. For faith is the mother [484] of confession. Paul, it is true, stirring himself up to imitate him, [485] exhorts the Corinthians to do the same, and, in accordance with the common Greek translation, has used the preterite instead of the future, but this is of no consequence [486] For he simply means to say, that believers ought to be magnanimous, and undaunted, inconfessing [487] what they have believed with their heart. (Romans 10:9, 10.)Let now our pretended followers of Nicodemus [488] mark, what sort of fiction they contrive for themselves in the place of faith, when they would have faith remain inwardly buried, and altogether silent, and glory in this wisdom -- that they utter, during their whole life, not a single word of right confession.15. For all things are for your sakes He now associates himself with the Corinthians, not merely in the hope of future blessedness, but also in these very afflictions, in which they might seem to differ from him most widely, for he lets them know, that, if he is afflicted, it is for their benefit. Hence it follows, that there was good reason why they should transfer part of them to themselves. What Paul states, depends first of all on that secret fellowship, which the members of Christ have with one another, but chiefly on that mutual connection and relationship, which required more especially to be manifested among them. Now this admonition was fraught with great utility to the Corinthians, and brought with it choice consolation. For what consolation there is in this -- that while God, sparing our weakness, deals with us more gently, those that are endowed with more distinguished excellence, are afflicted for the common advantage of all! They were also admonished, that, since they could not aid Paul otherwise, they should, at least, help him by their prayers and sympathy.That the grace which hath abounded. That agreement [489] between the members of Christ he now commends on the ground of the fruit that springs from it -- its tendency to advance the glory of God. By a metonymy, according to his usual manner, he means, by the term grace, that blessing of deliverance, of which he had made mention previously -- that,while he was weighed down, he was, nevertheless, not in anxiety: while oppressed with poverty, he was not left destitute, etc., (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9,)and in fine, that he had a deliverance continually afforded him from every kind of evil [490] This grace, he says, overflows. By this he means, that it was not confined to himself personally, so that he alone enjoys it, but it extends itself farther -- namely, to the Corinthians, to whom it was of great advantage. When he makes the overflowing of God's gift consist in gratitude, tending to the glory of its Author, he admonishes us, that every blessing that God confers upon us perishes through our carelessness, if we are not prompt and active in rendering thanks. 16. For which cause we faint not [491] He now, as having carried his point, rises to a higher confidence than before. "There is no cause," says he, "why we should lose heart, or sink down under the burden of the cross, the issue of which is not merely so desirable to myself, but is also salutary to others." Thus he exhorts the Corinthians to fortitude by his own example, should they happen at any time to be similarly afflicted. Farther, he beats down that insolence, in which they in no ordinary degree erred, inasmuch as under the influence of ambition, they held a man in higher estimation, the farther he was from the cross of Christ.Though our outward man. The outward man, some improperly and ignorantly confound with the old man, for widely different from this is the old man, of which we have spoken in [36]Romans 4:6. Chrysostom, too, and others restrict it entirely to the body; but it is a mistake, for the Apostle intended to comprehend, under this term, everything that relates to

the present life. As he here sets before us two men, so you must place before your view two kinds of life -- the earthly and the heavenly. The outward man is the maintenance of the earthly life, which consists not merely in the flower of one's age, (1 Corinthians 7:36,) and in good health, but also in riches, honors, friendships, and other resources. [492] Hence, according as we suffer a diminution or loss of these blessings, which are requisite for keeping up the condition of the present life, is our outward man in that proportion corrupted. For as we are too much taken up with the present life, so long as everything goes on to our mind, the Lord, on that account, by taking away from us, by little and little, the things that we are engrossed with, calls us back to meditate on a better life. Thus, therefore, it is necessary, that the condition of the present life should decay, [493] in order that the inward man may be in a flourishing state; because, in proportion as the earthly life declines, does the heavenly life advance, at least in believers. For in the reprobate, too, the outward man decays, [494] but without anything to compensate for it. In the sons of God, on the other hand, a decay of this nature is the beginning, and, as it were, the cause of production. He says that this takes place daily, because God continually stirs us up to such meditation. Would that this were deeply seated in our minds, that we might uninterruptedly make progress amidst the decay of the outward man!17. Momentary lightness. As our flesh always shrinks back from its own destruction, whatever reward may be presented to our view, and as we are influenced much more by present feeling than by the hope of heavenly blessings, Paul on that account admonishes us, that the afflictions and vexations of the pious have little or nothing of bitterness, if compared with the boundless blessings of everlasting glory. He had said, that the decay of the outward man ought to occasion us no grief, inasmuch as the renovation of the inward man springs out of it. As, however, the decay is visible, and the renovation is invisible, Paul, with the view of shaking us off from a carnal attachment to the present life, draws a comparison between present miseries and future felicity. Now this comparison is of itself abundantly sufficient for imbuing the minds of the pious with patience and moderation, that they may not give way, borne down by the burden of the cross. For whence comes it, that patience is so difficult a matter but from this, -- that we are confounded on having experience of evils for a brief period, [495] and do not raise our thoughts higher? Paul, therefore, prescribes the best antidote against your sinking down under the pressure of afflictions, when he places in opposition to them that future blessedness which is laid up for thee in heaven. (Colossians 1:5.) For this comparison makes that light which previously seemed heavy, and makes that brief and momentary which seemed of boundless duration.There is some degree of obscurity in Paul's words, for as he says, With hyperbole unto hyperbole, [496] so the Old Interpreter, and Erasmus [497] have thought that in both terms the magnitude of the heavenly glory, that awaits believers is extolled; or, at least, they have connected them with the verb worketh out. To this I have no objection, but as the distinction that I have made is also not unsuitable, I leave it to my readers to make their choice.Worketh out an eternal weight Paul does not mean, that this is the invariable effect of afflictions; for the great majority are most miserably weighed down here with evils of every kind, and yet that very circumstance is an occasion of their heavier destruction, rather than a help to their salvation. As, however, he is speaking of believers, we must restrict exclusively to them what is here stated; for this is a blessing from God that is peculiar to them -- that they are prepared for a blessed resurrection by the common miseries of mankind.As to the circumstance, however, that Papists abuse this passage, to prove that afflictions are the causes of our salvation, it is exceedingly silly; [498] unless, perhaps, you choose to take causes in the sense of means, (as they commonly speak.) We, at least, cheerfully

acknowledge, that we must through many tribulations [499]

enter into the kingdom of heaven, (Acts 14:22,)and as to this there is no controversy. While, however, our doctrine is, that the momentary lightness of afflictions worketh out in us an eternal weight [500] of life, for this reason, that all the sons of God arepredestinated to be conformed to Christ, (Romans 8:29,)in the endurance of the cross, and in this manner are prepared for the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance, which they have through means of God's gracious adoption; Papists, on the other hand, imagine that they are meritorious works, [501] by which the heavenly kingdom is acquired.I shall repeat it again in a few words. We do not deny that afflictions are the path by which the heavenly kingdom is arrived at, but we deny that by afflictions we merit the inheritance, [502] which comes to us in no other way than through means of God's gracious adoption. Papists, without consideration, seize hold of one little word, with the view of building upon it a tower of Babel, (Genesis 11:9,) -- that the kingdom of God is not an inheritance procured for us by Christ, but a reward that is due to our works. For a fuller solution, however, of this question, consult my Institutes. [503]While we look not. Mark what it is, that will make all the miseries of this world easy to be endured, -- if we carry forward our thoughts to the eternity of the heavenly kingdom. For a moment is long, if we look around us on this side and on that; but, when we have once raised our minds heavenward, a thousand years begin to appear to us to be like a moment. Farther, the Apostle's words intimate, that we are imposed upon by the view of present things, because there is nothing there that is not temporal; and that, consequently, there is nothing for us to rest upon but confidence in a future life. Observe the expression, looking at the things which are unseen, [504] for the eye of faith penetrates beyond all our natural senses, and faith is also on that account represented as a looking at things that are invisible. (Hebrews 11:1.)

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

1. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.1. Scimus enim, quod, si terrenum nostrum domicilium destruatur, aedificationem ex Deo habemus, domum non manufactam, aeternam in coelis.2. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:2. Etenim in hoc gemimus, domicilium nostrum quod est e coelo, superinduere desiderantes:3. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.3. Siquidem etiam vestiti, non nudi reperiamur. [505]4. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.4. Etenim dum sumus in tabernaculo, gemimus gravati; eo quod non exui volumus, [506] sed superindui, ut destruatur, quod mortale est, a vita.5. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.5. Qui autem aptavit nos ad hoc ipsum, Deus est: qui etiam dedit nobis arrhabonem Spiritus.6. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:6. Confidimus ergo semper, et scimus, quod habitantes in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino.7. (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)7. Per fidem enim ambulamus, et non per aspectum.8. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.8. Confidimus, inquam, et libentius optamus peregrinari a corpore, et habitare apud Dominum.1. For we know. Here follows an amplification (epexergasia) or embellishment of the foregoing statement. [507] For Paul has it in view, to correct in us impatience, dread, and dislike of the cross, contempt for what is mean, and in fine, pride, and effeminacy; and this can only be accomplished by raising up our minds as high as heaven, through contempt of the world. Now he has recourse to two arguments. On the one hand, he shows the miserable condition of mankind in this life, and on the other hand, the supreme and perfect blessedness, which awaits believers in heaven after death. For what is it that keeps men so firmly bound in a misplaced attachment to this life, but their deceiving themselves with a false imagination -- thinking themselves happy in living here? On the other hand, it is not enough to be aware of the miseries of this life, if we have not at the same time in view the felicity and glory of the future life. This is common to good and bad alike -- that both are desirous to live. This, also, is common to both -- that, when they consider, how many and how great miseries they are here exposed to, (with this difference, however, that unbelievers know of no adversities but those of the body merely, while the pious are more deeply affected [508] by spiritual distresses,) they often groan, often deplore their condition, and desire a remedy for their evils. As, however, all naturally view death with horror, unbelievers never willingly quit this life, except when they throw it off in disgust or despair. Believers, on the other hand, depart willingly, because they have a better hope set before them beyond this world. This is the sum of the argument. Let us now examine the words one by one.We know, says he. This knowledge does not spring from the human intellect, but takes its rise from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Hence it is peculiar to believers. Even the heathens had some idea of the immortality of the soul, but there was not one of them, that had assurance of it -- not one of them could boast that he spoke of a thing that was known to him. [509] Believers alone can affirm this, [510] to whom it has been

testified of by the word and Spirit of God.Besides, it is to be observed, that this knowledge is not merely of a general kind, as though believers were merely in a general way persuaded, that the children of God will be in a better condition after death, and had no assurance as to themselves individually, [511] for of how very little service this would be for affording a consolation, so difficult of attainment! On the contrary, every one must have a knowledge peculiar to himself, for this, and this only, can animate me to meet death with cheerfulness -- if I am fully persuaded, that I am departing to a better life.The body, such as we now have it, he calls a house of tabernacle For as tabernacles [512] are constructed, for a temporary purpose, of slight materials, and without any firm foundation, and then shortly afterwards are thrown down, or fall of their own accord, so the mortal body is given to men as a frail hut, [513] to be inhabited by them for a few days. The same metaphor is made use of, also, by Peter in his Second Epistle, (2 Peter 1:13, 14,) and by Job, (Job 4:19,) when he calls it a house of clay. He places in contrast with this a building of perpetual duration. It is not certain, whether he means by this term a state of blessed immortality, which awaits believers after death, or the incorruptible and glorious body, such as it will be after the resurrection. In whichever of these senses it is taken, it will not be unsuitable; though I prefer to understand it as meaning, that the blessed condition of the soul after death is the commencement of this building, and the glory of the final resurrection is the consummation of it. [514] This exposition will correspond better with the Apostle's context. The epithets, which he applies to this building, tend to confirm more fully its perpetuity. 3. Since clothed He restricts to believers, what he had stated respecting the certainty of a future life, as it is a thing peculiar to them. For the wicked, too, are stripped of the body, but as they bring nothing within the view of God, but a disgraceful nakedness, they are, consequently, not clothed with a glorious body. Believers, on the other hand, who appear in the view of God, clothed with Christ, and adorned with His image, receive the glorious robe of immortality. For I am inclined to take this view, rather than that of Chrysostom and others, who think that nothing new is here stated, but that Paul simply repeats here, what he had previously said as to putting on an eternal habitation. The Apostle, therefore, makes mention here of a twofold clothing, with which God invests us -- the righteousness of Christ, and sanctification of the Spirit in this life; and, after death, immortality and glory. The first is the cause of the second, becausethose whom God has determined to glorify, he first justifies. (Romans 8:30.)This meaning, too, is elicited from the particle also, which is without doubt introduced for the purpose of amplifying -- as if Paul had said, that a new robe will be prepared for believers after death, since they have been clothed in this life also.4. We groan, being burdened, because we desire not to be unclothed. The wicked, too, groan, because they are not contented with their present condition; but afterwards an opposite disposition prevails, that is, a clinging to life, so that they view death with horror, and do not feel the long continuance of this mortal life to be a burden. The groaning of believers, on the other hand, arises from this -- that they know, that they are here in a state of exile from their native land, and that they know, that they are here shut up in the body as in a prison. Hence they feel this life to be a burden, because in it they cannot enjoy true and perfect blessedness, because they cannot escape from the bondage of sin otherwise than by death, and hence they aspire to be elsewhere.As, however, it is natural for all animals to desire existence, how can it be, that believers are willing to cease to exist? The Apostle solves this question, when he says, that believers do not desire death for the sake of losing any thing, but as having regard to a better life. At the same time, the words express more than this. For he admits, that we have naturally an aversion to the quitting of this life, considered in itself, as no one willingly allows

himself to be striped of his garments. Afterwards, however, he adds, that the natural horror of death is overcome by confidence; [515] as an individual will, without any reluctance, throw away a coarse, dirty, threadbare, and, in one word, tattered garment, with the view of his being arrayed in an elegant, handsome, new, and durable one.Farther, he explains the metaphor by saying -- that what is mortal may be destroyed [516] by life. For as flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, (1 Corinthians 15:50,)it is necessary, that what is corruptible in our nature should perish, in order that we may be thoroughly renewed, and restored to a state of perfection. On this account, our body is called a prison, in which we are confined.5. Now he that hath fitted us. This is added in order that we may know, that this disposition is supernatural. For mere natural feeling will not lead us forward to this, for it does not comprehend that hundredfold recompense which springs from the dying of a single grain. (John 12:24.) We must, therefore, be fitted for it by God. The manner of it is at the same time subjoined -- that he confirms us by his Spirit, who is as it were an earnest At the same time the particle also seems to be added for the sake of amplification. "It is God who forms in us this desire, and, lest our courage should give way or waver, the Holy Spirit is given us as an earnest, because by his testimony he confirms, and ratifies the truth of the promise." For these are two offices of the Holy Spirit -- first, to show to believers what they ought to desire, and secondly, to influence their hearts efficaciously, and remove all their doubt, that they may steadfastly persevere in choosing what is good. There would, however, be nothing unsuitable in extending the word fitted, so as to denote that renovation of life, with which God adorns his people even in this life, for in this way he already separates them from others, and shows that they are, by means of his grace, marked out for a peculiar condition.6. Therefore we are always confident That is, as exercising dependence on the earnest of the Spirit; for, otherwise, we always tremble, or, at least, are courageous or alarmed by turns, and do not retain a uniform and even tenor of mind. Hence, that good courage of which Paul speaks has no place in us, unless it is maintained by the Spirit of God. The connecting particle and, which immediately follows, ought to be understood as meaning because, in this way: We are of good courage, Because we know that we are absent, etc. For this knowledge is the cause of our calmness and confidence; for the reason, why unbelievers are constantly in a ferment of anxiety, or obstinately murmur against God, is, that they think they will ere long cease to exist, and they place in this life the highest and uppermost summit of their felicity. [517] We, on the other hand, live in the exercise of contentment, [518] and go forward to death with alacrity, [519] because a better hope is laid up for us. We are absent from the Lord Scripture everywhere proclaims, that God is present with us: Paul here teaches, that we are absent from him. This is seemingly a contradiction; but this difficulty is easily solved, when we take into view the different respects, in which he is said to be present or absent. He is, then, present with all men, inasmuch as he upholds them by his power. He dwells in them, becausein him they live and move and have their being. (Acts 17:28.)He is present with his believing people by the energy of his Spirit; he lives in them, resides in the midst of them, nay more, within them. But in the mean time he is absent from us, inasmuch as he does not present himself to be seen face to face, because we are as yet in a state of exile from his kingdom, and have not as yet attained that blessed immortality, which the angels that are with him enjoy. At the same time, to be absent, in this passage, refers merely to knowledge, as is manifest from the reason that is afterwards added.7. For we walk by faith (Eidos) I have here rendered aspectum, (sight,) because few understood the meaning of the word species, (appearance.) [520] He states the reason, why it is that we are now absent from the Lord -- because we do not as yet see him face to face. (1

Corinthians 13:12.) The manner of that absence is this -- that God is not openly beheld by us. The reason why he is not seen by us is, that we walk by faith Now it is on good grounds that faith is opposed to sight, because it, perceives those things that are hid from the view of men -- because it reaches forth to future things, which do not as yet appear. For such is the condition of believers, that they resemble the dead rather than the living -- that they often seem as if they were forsaken by God -- that they always have the elements of death shut up within them. Hence they must necessarily hope against hope. (Romans 4:18.) Now the things that are hoped for are hid, as we read in Romans 8:24, and faith is themanifestation of things which do not appear. (Hebrews 11:1.) [521]It is not to be wondered, then, if the apostle says, that we have not as yet the privilege of sight, so long as we walk by faith For we see, indeed, but it is through a glass, darkly; (1 Corinthians 13:12,) that is, in place of the reality we rest upon the word.8. We are confident, I say He again repeats, what he had said respecting the confidence of the pious -- that they are so far from breaking down under the severity of the cross, and from being disheartened by afflictions, that they are made thereby more courageous. For the worst of evils is death, yet believers long to attain it, as being the commencement of perfect blessedness. Hence and may be regarded as equivalent to because, in this way: "Nothing can befall us, that can shake our confidence and courage, since death (which others so much dread) is to us great gain. (Philippians 1:21.) For nothing is better than to quit the body, that we may attain near intercourse with God, and may truly and openly enjoy his presence. Hence by the decay of the body we lose nothing that belongs to us."Observe here -- what has been once stated already -- that true faith begets not merely a contempt of death, but even a desire for it, [522] and that it is, accordingly, on the other hand, a token of unbelief, when dread of death predominates in us above the joy and consolation of hope. Believers, however, desire death -- not as if they would, by an importunate desire, anticipate their Lord's day, for they willingly retain their footing in their earthly station, so long as their Lord may see good, for they would rather live to the glory of Christ than die to themselves, (Romans 14:7,) and for their own advantage; [523] for the desire, of which Paul speaks, springs from faith. Hence it is not at all at variance with the will of God. We may, also, gather from these words of Paul, that souls, when released from the body, live in the presence of God, for if, on being absent from the body, they have God present, [524] they assuredly live with him.Here it is asked by some -- "How then did it happen that the holy fathers dreaded death so much, as for example David, Hezekiah, and the whole of the Israelitish Church, as appears from Psalm 4, from Isaiah 38:3, and from Psalm 115:17?" I am aware of the answer, that is usually returned -- that the reason, why death was so much dreaded by them was, that the revelation of the future life was as yet obscure, and the consolation, consequently, was but small. Now I acknowledge, that this, in part, accounts for it, but not entirely, for the holy fathers of the ancient Church did not in every case tremble, on being forewarned of their death. Nay more, they embraced death with alacrity, and with joyful hearts. For Abraham departed without regret, full of days. [525] (Genesis 25:8.) We do not read that Isaac was reluctant to die. (Genesis 35:29.) Jacob, with his last breath, declares that he iswaiting for the salvation of the Lord. (Genesis 49:18.)David himself, too, dies peacefully, without any regrets, (1 Kings 2:10,) and in like manner Hezekiah. As to the circumstance, that David and Hezekiah did, each of them, on one occasion deprecate death with tears, the reason was, that they were punished by the Lord for certain sins, and, in consequence of this, they felt the anger of the Lord in death. Such was the cause of their alarm, and this believers might feel even at this day, under the reign of Christ. The desire, however, of which Paul speaks, is the disposition of a well-regulated

mind. [526]

2 Corinthians 5:9-12

9. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 9. Quapropter contendimus, sive domi agentes, sive foris peregrinantes, ut illi placeamus. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 10. Omnes enim nos manifestari [527] oportet coram tribunali Christi, ut reportet unusquisque, quæ per corpus facta fuerint, prout fecerit, sive bonum, sive malum. [528] 11. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. 11. Scientes igitur terrorem illum Domini, suademus hominibus, [529] Deo autem manifesti sumus; confido autem nos et in conscientiis vestris, manifestos esse. 12. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. 12. Non enim nosmetipsos iterum commendamus vobis, sed occasionem vobis damus gloriandi de nobis, ut aliquid habeatis adversus eos, [530] qui in facie gloriantur, et non in corde. 9. Wherefore we strive. Having shown how magnanimous Christians ought to be in the endurance of afflictions, [531] so that even in dying they may be conquerors over death, and that too, because by afflictions and death they attain to a blessed life, he now from the same source draws also another conclusion -- that they must, by all means, make it their main desire to please God. And indeed it cannot but be, that the hope of a resurrection, and thoughtfulness as to the judgment, will awaken in us this desire; as, on the other hand, the true reason why we are so indolent and remiss in duty is, that we seldom, if ever, think of what ought to be constantly kept in remembrance, [532] that we are here but lodgers [533] for a short time, that we may, after finishing our course, return to Christ. Observe, however, what he says -- that this is the desire both of the living and of the dead, by which statement the immortality of the soul is again confirmed. 10. We must be manifested. Though this is common to all, yet all without distinction do not raise their views in such a way as to consider every moment, that they must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. But while Paul, from a holy desire of acting aright, constantly sisted himself before the bar of Christ, he had it in view to reprove indirectly those ambitious teachers, who reckoned it enough to have the plaudits of their fellow-men. [534] For when he says, that no one can escape, he seems in a manner to summon them to that heavenly tribunal. Farther, though the word translated to be manifested might be rendered to appear, yet Paul had, in my opinion, something farther in view -- that we shall then come forth to the light, while for the present many are concealed, as it were, in the darkness. For then the books, which are now shut, will be opened. (Daniel 7:10.) That every one may give account. As the passage relates to the recompensing of deeds, we must notice briefly, that, as evil deeds are punished by God, so also good deeds are rewarded, but for a different reason; for evil deeds are requited with the punishment that they deserve, but God in rewarding good deeds does not look to merit or worthiness. For no work is so full and complete in all its parts as to be deservedly well-pleasing to him, and farther, there is no one whose works are in themselves well-pleasing to God, unless he render satisfaction to the whole law. Now no one is found to be thus perfect. Hence the only resource is in his accepting us through unmerited goodness, and

justifying us, by not imputing to us our sins. After he has received us into favor, he receives our works also by a gracious acceptance. It is on this that the reward hinges. There is, therefore, no inconsistency in saying, that he rewards good works, provided we understand that mankind, nevertheless, obtain eternal life gratuitously. On this point I have expressed myself more fully in the preceding Epistle, and my Institutes will furnish a full discussion of it. [535] When he says in the body, I understand him to mean, not merely outward actions, but all the deeds that are done in this corporeal life. 11. Knowing therefore. He now returns to speak of himself, or he again applies the general doctrine to himself personally. "I am not ignorant," says he, "nor devoid of the fear of God, which ought to reign in the hearts of all the pious." To know the terror of the Lord, then, is to be influenced by this consideration -- that an account must one day be rendered before the judgment-seat of Christ; for the man who seriously considers this must of necessity be touched with fear, and shake off all negligence. [536] He declares, therefore, that he discharges his apostleship faithfully and with a pure conscience, (2 Timothy 1:3,) as one that walks in the fear of the Lord, (Acts 9:31,) thinking of the account to be rendered by him. As, however, his enemies might object: "You extol yourself, it is true, in magnificent terms, but who is there that sees what you affirm?" He says, in reply to this, that he discharges indeed the work of a teacher in the sight of men, but that it is known to God with what sincerity of mind he acts. "As my mouth speaks to men, so does my heart to God."And I trust This is a kind of correction of what he had said, for he now boasts that he has not merely God as the witness of his integrity, but also the Corinthians themselves, to whom he had given proof of himself. Two things, therefore, are to be observed here: in the first place, that it is not enough that an individual conducts himself honorably and assiduously [537] among men, if his heart is not right in the sight of God, (Acts 8:21;) and secondly, that boasting is vain, where evidence of the reality itself is wanting. For none are more bold in arrogating everything to themselves, than those that have nothing. Let, therefore, the man who would have credit given him, bring forward such works as may afford confirmation to his statements. To be made manifest in their consciences is more than to be known by proofs; for conscience reaches farther than carnal judgment.12. For we commend not ourselves. He confirms what he had said immediately before, and at the same time anticipates a calumny that might be brought against him. For it might seem as if he were too careful as to his own praise, inasmuch as he spoke so frequently respecting himself. Nay, it is probable that this reproach had been cast upon him by the wicked. For when he says -- We commend not ourselves again, he says this as if speaking in his own person. To commend is taken in a bad sense, as meaning to boast, or to brag.When he adds -- that he gives them occasion of glorying, he intimates in the first place, that he pleads their cause rather than his own, inasmuch as he gives up all with a view to their glory, and he again indirectly reproves their ingratitude, because they had not perceived it to be their duty to magnify, of their own accord, his Apostleship, so as not to impose upon him this necessity; and farther, because they had not perceived, that it was their interest rather than that of Paul himself, that his Apostleship should be accounted honorable. We are here taught, that Christ's servants ought to be concerned as to their own reputation, only in so far as is for the advantage of the Church. Paul affirms with truth, that he is actuated by this disposition. [538] Let others see that they do not on false grounds pretend to follow his example. [539] We are taught farther, that that alone is a minister's true praise, that is common to him with the whole Church, rather than peculiar to himself exclusively -- in other words, that redounds to the advantage of all.That ye may have something in opposition to those He intimates, in passing, that it is necessary to repress the vanity

of those that make empty boasts, and that it is the duty of the Church to do so. For as ambition of this nature is a peculiarly destructive pestilence, it is dangerous to encourage it by dissimulation. As the Corinthians had not taken care to do this, Paul instructs them how they should act for the future.To glory in appearance, not in heart, is to disguise one's self by outward show, and to regard sincerity of heart as of no value; for those that will be truly wise will never glory but in God. (1 Corinthians 1:31.) But wherever there is empty show, there is no sincerity, and no integrity of heart.

2 Corinthians 5:13-17

13. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. 13. Nam sive insanimus, Deo insanimus: sive sani sumus, vobis sani sumus. 14. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 14. Caritas enim Christi constringit nos: iudicantes illud, quodsi unus pro omnibus mortuus fuit, ergo omnes sunt mortui. [540] 15. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 15. Et quidem pro omnibus mortuus est: ut qui vivunt, posthac non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro omnibus mortuus est, et resurrexit. 16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. 16. Itaque nos posthac neminem novimus secundum carnem: quin etiam si secundum carnem novimus Christum, iam non amplius novimus. 17. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 17. Proinde si quis in Christo, nova sit creatura, [541] vetera praeterierunt: ecce, nova facta sunt omnia. 13. Whether we are beside ourselves. This is said by way of concession; for Paul's glorying was sane, or it was, if we may so term it, a sober and most judicious madness; [542] but as he appeared foolish in the eyes of many, he speaks according to their views. Now he declares two things: in the first place, that he makes no account of himself, but has this one object in view -- that he may serve God and the Church; and, secondly, that he fears not the opinion of men, so that he is prepared for being reckoned either sane or insane, provided only he transacts faithfully the affairs of God and the Church. The meaning, therefore, is this: "As to my making mention so frequently of my integrity, persons will take this as they choose. It is not, however, for my own sake that I do it, but, on the contrary, I have God and the Church exclusively in view. Hence I am prepared to be silent and to speak, according as the glory of God and the advantage of the Church will require, and I shall be quite contented that the world reckon me beside myself, provided only it is not to myself, but to God, that I am beside myself." [543] This is a passage that is deserving not merely of notice, but also of constant meditation; for unless we shall have our minds thus regulated, the smallest occasions of offense will from time to time draw us off from our duty. 14. For the love of Christ. The term love may be taken either in a passive signification, or in an active. I prefer the latter. For if we be not harder than iron, we cannot refrain from devoting ourselves entirely to Christ, when we consider what great love he exercised towards us, when he endured death in our stead. Paul, too, explains himself when he adds, that it is reasonable that we should live to him, being dead to ourselves. Hence, as he had previously stated: (2 Corinthians 5:11,) that he was stirred up to duty by fear, inasmuch as an account was one day to be rendered by him, so he now brings forward another motive -- that measureless love of Christ towards us, of which he had furnished us with an evidence in his death. "The knowledge," I say, "of this love, ought to constrain our affections, that they may go in no other direction than that of loving him in return.There is a metaphor [544] implied in the word constrain, denoting that it is impossible but that every one that truly considers and ponders that wonderful love, which Christ has manifested towards us by his death, becomes, as it were, bound to him, and constrained by the closest tie, and devotes himself wholly to his service.If one died for all. This design is to be

carefully kept in view -- that Christ died for us, that we might die to ourselves. The exposition is also to be carefully noticed -- that to die to ourselves is to live to Christ; or if you would have it at greater length, it is to renounce ourselves, that we may live to Christ; for Christ. redeemed us with this view -- that he might have us under his authority, as his peculiar possession. Hence it follows that we are no longer our own masters. There is a similar passage in Romans 14:7-9. At the same time, there are two things that are here brought forward separately -- that we are dead in Christ, in order that all ambition and eagerness for distinction may be laid aside, and that it may be felt by us no hardship to be made as nothing; and farther, that we owe to Christ our life and death, because he has wholly bound us to himself. [545]16. Therefore we henceforth know no man. To know, here, is taken as meaning to reckon. "We do not judge according to external appearance, so as to reckon that man to be the most illustrious who seems so in appearance." Under the term flesh, he includes all external endowments which mankind are accustomed to hold in estimation; and, in short, every thing which, apart from regeneration, is reckoned worthy of praise. At the same time, he speaks more particularly of outward disguise, or appearance, as it is termed. He alludes, also, without doubt, to the death of which he had made mention. "Since we ought, all of us, to be dead to the present life, nay more, to be nothing in ourselves, no one must be reckoned a servant of Christ on the ground of carnal excellence."Nay, though we have known Christ. The meaning is -- "Though Christ lived for a time in this world, and was known by mankind in those things that have to do with the condition of the present life, he must now be known in another way -- spiritually, so that we may have no worldly thoughts respecting him." This passage is perverted by some fanatics, such as Servetus, [546] for the purpose of proving, that Christ's human nature is now absorbed by the Divinity. But how very far removed such a frenzy is from the Apostle's intention, it is not difficult to perceive; for he speaks here, not of the substance of his body, but of external appearance, nor does he affirm that the flesh is no longer perceived by us in Christ, but says, that Christ is not judged of from that. [547]Scripture proclaims throughout, that Christ does now as certainly lead a glorious life in our flesh, as he once suffered in it. [548] Nay more, take away this foundation, and our whole faith falls to the ground; for whence comes the hope of immortality, except from this, that we have already a pattern [549] of it in the person of Christ? For as righteousness is restored to us on this ground, that Christ, by fulfilling the law in our nature, has abolished Adam's disobedience, so also life has been restored to us by this means, that he has opened up for our nature the kingdom of God, from which it had been banished, and has given it a place in the heavenly dwelling. Hence, if we do not now recognize Christ's flesh, [550] we lose the whole of that confidence and consolation that we ought to have in him. But we acknowledge Christ as man, and as our brother in his flesh -- not in a fleshly manner; because we rest solely in the consideration of his spiritual gifts. Hence he is spiritual to us, not as if he laid aside the body, and became a spirit, but because he regenerates and governs his own people by the influence of his Spirit.17. Therefore if any man is in Christ. As there is something wanting in this expression, it must be supplied in this way -- "If any one is desirous to hold some place in Christ, that is, in the kingdom of Christ, or in the Church [551] let him be a new creature " By this expression he condemns every kind of excellence that is wont to be in much esteem among men, if renovation of heart is wanting. "Learning, it is true, and eloquence, and other endowments, are valuable, and worthy to be honored; but, where the fear of the Lord and an upright conscience are wanting, all the honor of them goes for nothing. Let no one, therefore, glory in any distinction, inasmuch as the chief praise of Christians is self-renunciation." Nor is this said merely for the purpose of repressing

the vanity of the false apostles, but also with the view of correcting the ambitious judgments of the Corinthians, in which outward disguises were of more value than real sincerity -- though this is a fault that is common to almost all ages. For where shall we find the man that does not attach much more importance to show, than to true holiness? Let us, therefore, keep in view this admonition -- that all that are not renewed by the Spirit of God, should be looked upon as nothing in the Church, by whatever ornaments they may in other respects be distinguished.Old things are passed away. When the Prophets speak of the kingdom of Christ, they foretell that there will be new heavens and a new earth, (Isaiah 65:17,) meaning thereby, that all things will be changed for the better, until the happiness of the pious is completed. As, however, Christ's kingdom is spiritual, this change must take place chiefly in the Spirit, and hence it is with propriety that he begins with this. There is, therefore, an elegant and appropriate allusion, when Paul makes use of a commendation of this kind, for the purpose of setting forth the value of regeneration. Now by old things he means, the things that are not formed anew by the Spirit of God. Hence this term is placed in contrast with renewing grace. The expression passed away, he uses in the sense of fading away, as things that are of short duration are wont to fall off, when they have passed their proper season. Hence it is only the new man, that flourishes and is vigorous [552] in the kingdom of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 18. Pro omnia ex Deo, qui nos reconciliavit sibi Iesum Christum: et dedit nobis ministerium reconciliationis. 19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 19. Quoniam erat Deus in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi, non imputando illis sua ipsorum peccata: et deposuit in nobis sermonem reconciliationis. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 20. Itaque pro Christo legatione fungimur, tanquam Deo exhortante per nos: rogamus pro Christo, reconciliemini Deo. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 21. Eum qui peccatum non noverat, pro nobis peccatum fecit, ut nos efficeremur iustitia Dei in ipso. 18. All things are of God. He means, all things that belong to Christ's kingdom. "If we would be Christ's, we must be regenerated by God. Now that is no ordinary gift." He does not, therefore, speak here of creation generally; but of the grace of regeneration, which God confers peculiarly upon his elect, and he affirms that it is of God -- not on the ground of his being the Creator and Artificer of heaven and earth, but inasmuch as he is the new Creator of the Church, by fashioning his people anew, according to his own image. Thus all flesh is abased, and believers are admonished that they must now live to God, inasmuch as they are a new creature. (2 Corinthians 5:17.) This they cannot do, unless they forget the world, as they are also no longer of the world, (John 17:16,) because they are of God Who hath reconciled us Here there are two leading points -- the one relating to the reconciliation of men with God; and the other, to the way in which we may enjoy the benefit of this reconciliation. Now these things correspond admirably with what goes before, for as the Apostle had given the preference to a good conscience above every kind of distinction, (2 Corinthians 5:11,) he now shows that the whole of the gospel tends to this. He shows, however, at the same time, the dignity of the Apostolical office, that the Corinthians may be instructed as to what they ought to seek in him, whereas they could not distinguish between true and false ministers, for this reason, that nothing but show delighted them. Accordingly, by making mention of this, he stirs them up to make greater proficiency in the doctrine of the gospel. For an absurd admiration of profane persons, who serve their own ambition rather than Christ, originates in our not knowing, what the office of the preaching of the gospel includes, or imports. I now return to those two leading points that are here touched upon. The first is -- that God hath reconciled us to himself by Christ This is immediately followed by the declaration -- Because God was in Christ, and has in his person accomplished reconciliation. The manner is subjoined -- By not imputing unto men their trespasses Again, there is annexed a second declaration -- Because Christ having been made a sin-offering for our sins, has procured righteousness for us. The second part of the statement is -- that the grace of reconciliation is applied to us by the gospel, that we may become partakers of it. Here we have a remarkable passage, if there be any such in any part of Paul's writings. Hence it is proper, that we should carefully examine the words one by one. The ministry of reconciliation Here we have an illustrious designation of the gospel, as being an embassy for reconciling men to God.

It is also a singular dignity of ministers -- that they are sent to us by God with this commission, so as to be messengers, and in a manner sureties. [553] This, however, is not said so much for the purpose of commending ministers, as with a view to the consolation of the pious, that as often as they hear the gospel, they may know that God treats with them, and, as it were, stipulates with them as to a return to his grace. Than this blessing what could be more desirable? Let us therefore bear in mind, that this is the main design of the gospel -- that whereas we are by nature children of wrath, (Ephesians 2:3,) we may, by the breaking up of the quarrel between God and us, be received by him into favor. Ministers are furnished with this commission, that they may bring us intelligence of so great a benefit, nay more, may assure us of God's fatherly love towards us. Any other person, it is true, might also be a witness to us of the grace of God, but Paul teaches, that this office is specially intrusted to ministers. When, therefore, a duly ordained minister proclaims in the gospel, that God has been made propitious to us, he is to be listened to just as an ambassador of God, and sustaining, as they speak, a public character, and furnished with rightful authority for assuring us of this.19. God was in Christ. Some take this as meaning simply -- God reconciled the world to himself in Christ; but the meaning is fuller and more comprehensive -- first, that God was in Christ; and, secondly, that he reconciled the world to himself by his intercession. It is also of the Father that this is affirmed; for it were an improper expression, were you to understand it as meaning, that the divine nature of Christ was in him. [554] The Father, therefore, was in the Son, in accordance with that statement -- I am in the Father, and the Father in me. (John 10:38.)Therefore he that hath the Son, hath the Father also. For Paul has made use of this expression with this view -- that we may learn to be satisfied with Christ alone, because in him we find also God the Father, as he truly communicates himself to us by him. Hence the expression is equivalent to this -- "Whereas God had withdrawn to a distance from us, he has drawn near to us in Christ, and thus Christ has become to us the true Emmanuel, and his coming is God's drawing near to men."The second part of the statement points out the office of Christ -- his being our propitiation, (1 John 2:2,) because out of Him, God is displeased with us all, inasmuch as we have revolted from righteousness. [555] For what purpose, then, has God appeared to men in Christ? For the purpose of reconciliation -- that, hostilities being removed, those who were aliens, might be adopted as sons. Now, although Christ's coming as our Redeemer originated in the fountain of Divine love towards us, yet until men perceive that God has been propitiated by the Mediator, there must of necessity be a variance remaining, with respect to them, which shuts them out from access to God. On this point we shall speak more fully ere long.Not imputing to them. Mark, in what way men return into favor with God -- when they are regarded as righteous, by obtaining the remission of their sins. For so long as God imputes to us our sins, He must of necessity regard us with abhorrence; for he cannot be friendly or propitious to sinners. But this statement may seem to be at variance with what is said elsewhere -- that, we were loved by Him before the creation of the world, (Ephesians 1:4,) and still more with what he says, (John 3:16,) that the love, which he exercised towards us was the reason, why He expiated our sins by Christ, for the cause always goes before its effect. I answer, that we were loved before the creation of the world, but it was only in Christ In the mean time, however, I confess, that the love of God was first in point of time, and of order, too, as to God, but with respect to us, the commencement of his love has its foundation in the sacrifice of Christ. For when we contemplate God without a Mediator, we cannot conceive of Him otherwise than as angry with us: a Mediator interposed between us, makes us feel, that He is pacified towards us. As, however, this also is necessary to be known by us -- that Christ came

forth to us from the fountain of God's free mercy, the Scripture explicitly teaches both -- that the anger of the Father has been appeased by the sacrifice of the Son, and that the Son has been offered up for the expiation of the sins of men on this ground -- because God, exercising compassion towards them, receives them, on the ground of such a pledge, into favor. [556]The whole may be summed up thus: "Where sin is, there the anger of God is, and therefore God is not propitious to us without, or before, his blotting out our sins, by not imputing them. As our consciences cannot apprehend this benefit, [557] otherwise than through the intervention of Christ's sacrifice, it is not without good reason, that Paul makes that the commencement and cause of reconciliation, with regard to us. And hath committed to us. Again he repeats, that a commission has been given to the ministers of the gospel to communicate to us this grace. For it might be objected, "Where is Christ now, the peacemaker between God and us? At what a distance he resides from us!" He says, therefore, that as he has once suffered, [558] (1 Peter 3:18,) so he daily presents to us the fruit of his suffering through means of the Gospel, which he designed, should be in the world, [559] as a sure and authentic register of the reconciliation, that has once been effected. It is the part of ministers, therefore, to apply to us, so to speak, the fruit of Christ's death.Lest, however, any one should dream of a magical application, such as Papists contrive, [560] we must carefully observe what he immediately subjoins -- that it consists wholly in the preaching of the Gospel. For the Pope, along with his priests, makes use of this pretext for giving a color of warrant for the whole of that wicked and execrable system of merchandise, which they carry on, in connection with the salvation of souls. "The Lord," say they, "has furnished us with a commission and authority to forgive sins." This I acknowledge, provided they discharge that embassy, of which Paul here makes mention. The absolution, however, which they make use of in the Papacy, is entirely magical; and besides, they inclose pardon of sins in lead and parchment, or they connect it with fictitious and frivolous superstitions. What resemblance do all these things bear to the appointment of Christ? Hence the ministers of the Gospel restore us to the favor of God in a right and orderly manner, when they bear testimony to us by means of the Gospel as to the favor of God having been procured for us. Let this testimony be removed, and nothing remains but mere imposture. Beware, then, of placing even the smallest drop of your confidence on any thing apart from the Gospel.I do not, indeed, deny, that the grace of Christ is applied to us in the sacraments, and that our reconciliation with God is then confirmed in our consciences; but, as the testimony of the Gospel is engraven upon the sacraments, they are not to be judged of separately by themselves, but must be taken in connection with the Gospel, of which they are appendages. In fine, the ministers of the Church are ambassadors, for testifying and proclaiming the benefit of reconciliation, only on this condition -- that they speak from the Gospel, as from an authentic register.20. As if God did beseech you This is of no small importance for giving authority to the embassy: nay more, it is absolutely necessary, for who would rest upon the testimony of men, in reference to his eternal salvation? It is a matter of too much importance, to allow of our resting contented with the promise of men, without feeling assured that they are ordained by God, and that God speaks to us by them. This is the design of those commendations, with which Christ himself signalizes his Apostles:He that heareth you, heareth me, etc. (Luke 10:16.)Whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven, (Matthew 18:18,)and the like.We entreat you, in Christ's stead. Hence we infer, with what propriety Isaiah exclaims,How blessed are the feet of them that preach the Gospel! (Isaiah 52:7.)For that one thing, that is of itself sufficient for completing our felicity, and without which we are most miserable, is conferred upon us, only

through means of the Gospel. If, however, this duty is enjoined upon all the ministers of the Church, in such a way, that he who does not discharge this embassy is not to be regarded either as an Apostle, or as a Pastor, we may very readily judge from this, as to the nature of the Pope's entire hierarchy. They are desirous, indeed, to be looked upon as Apostles and Pastors; but as they are dumb idols, how will their boasting [561] correspond with this passage of Paul's writings. The word entreat is expressive of an unparalleled [562] commendation of the grace of Christ, inasmuch as He stoops so low, that he does not disdain to entreat us. So much the less excusable is our depravity, if we do not, on meeting with such kindness, show ourselves teachable and compliant.Be reconciled. It is to be observed, that Paul is here addressing himself to believers. He declares, that he brings to them every day this embassy. Christ therefore, did not suffer, merely that he might once expiate our sins, nor was the gospel appointed merely with a view to the pardon of those sins which we committed previously to baptism, but that, as we daily sin, so we might, also, by a daily remission, be received by God into his favor. For this is a continued embassy, [563] which must be assiduously sounded forth in the Church, till the end of the world; and the gospel cannot be preached, unless remission of sins is promised.We have here an express and suitable declaration for refuting the impious tenet of Papists, which calls upon us to seek the remission of sins after Baptism from some other source, than from the expiation that was effected through the death of Christ. Now this doctrine is commonly held in all the schools of Popery -- that, after baptism, we merit the remission of sins by penitence, through means of the aid of the keys, [564] (Matthew 16:19,) -- as if baptism itself could confer this [565] upon us without penitence. By the term penitence, however, they mean satisfactions. But what does Paul say here? He calls us to go, not less after baptism, than before it, to the one expiation made by Christ, that we may know that we always obtain it gratuitously. Farther, all their prating as to the administration of the keys is to no purpose, inasmuch as they conceive of keys apart from the Gospel, while they are nothing else than that testimony of a gratuitous reconciliation, which is made to us in the Gospel. 21. Him who knew no sin. Do you observe, that, according to Paul, there is no return to favor with God, except what is founded on the sacrifice of Christ alone? Let us learn, therefore, to turn our views in that direction, whenever we desire to be absolved from guilt. He now teaches more clearly, what we adverted to above -- that God is propitious to us, when he acknowledges us as righteous. For these two things are equivalent -- that we are acceptable to God, and that we are regarded by him as righteous.To know no sin is to be free from sin. He says, then, that Christ, while he was entirely exempt from sin, was made sin for us. It is commonly remarked, that sin here denotes an expiatory sacrifice for sin, and in the same way the Latin's term it, piaculum [566] Paul, too, has in this, and other passages, borrowed this phrase from the Hebrews, among whom 'sm (asham) denotes an expiatory sacrifice, as well as an offense or crime. [567] But the signification of this word, as well as the entire statement, will be better understood from a comparison of both parts of the antithesis. Sin is here contrasted with righteousness, when Paul teaches us, that we were made the righteousness of God, on the ground of Christ's having been made sin. Righteousness, here, is not taken to denote a quality or habit, but by way of imputation, on the ground of Christ's righteousness being reckoned to have been received by us. What, on the other hand, is denoted by sin? It is the guilt, on account of which we are arraigned at the bar of God. As, however, the curse of the individual was of old cast upon the victim, so Christ's condemnation was our absolution, and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5.)The righteousness of God in him In the first place, the righteousness of God is taken

here to denote -- not that which is given us by God, but that which is approved of by him, as in John 12:43, the glory of God means -- that which is in estimation with him -- the glory of men denotes the vain applause of the world. Farther, in Romans 3:23, when he says, that we have come short of the glory of God, he means, that there is nothing that we can glory in before God, for it is no very difficult matter to appear righteous before men, but it is a mere delusive appearance of righteousness, which becomes at last the ground of perdition. Hence, that is the only true righteousness, which is acceptable to God.Let us now return to the contrast between righteousness and sin How are we righteous in the sight of God? It is assuredly in the same respect in which Christ was a sinner. For he assumed in a manner our place, that he might be a criminal in our room, and might be dealt with as a sinner, not for his own offenses, but for those of others, inasmuch as he was pure and exempt from every fault, and might endure the punishment that was due to us -- not to himself. It is in the same manner, assuredly, that we are now righteous in him -- not in respect of our rendering satisfaction to the justice of God by our own works, but because we are judged of in connection with Christ's righteousness, which we have put on by faith, that it might become ours. On this account I have preferred to retain the particle en, (in,) rather than substitute in its place per, (through,) for that signification corresponds better with Paul's intention. [568]

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

1. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.1. Nos vero adiuvantes (vel, collaborantes) [569] etiam obsecramus, ne frustra gratiam Dei receperitis.2. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)2. Dicit enim (Ies.49, 8) Tempore accepto exaudivi te, et in die salutis auxiliatus sum tibi: ecce, nunc tempus acceptum: ecce, nunc dies salutis.3. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:3. Nullum dantes [570] ulla in re offensionem, ut ne vituperetur ministerium:4. But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,4. Sed in omnibus commendantes nos [571] tanquam Dei moerore, in patientia multa, in afflictionibus, in necessitatibus, in angustiis,5. In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;5. In plagis, in carceribus, in seditionibus, in laboribus, in vigiliis, in ieiuniis;6. By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,6. In sinceritate, in scientia, in tolerantia, in mansuetudine, in Spiritu Sancto, in caritate non ficta,7. By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,7. In sermone veritatis, in potentia Dei, per arma iustitiæ dextra et sinistra:8. By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;8. Per gloriam et ignominiam, per infamiam, et bonam famam: tanquam impostores, tamen veraces:9. As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;9. Tanquam ignoti, tamen celebres: tanquam morientes, et ecce, vivimus; tanquam castigati, tamen morte non affecti:10. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.10. Tanquam moerore affecti, semper tamen gaudentes: tanquam inopes, multos tamen ditantes: tanquam nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes.1. Assisting. He has repeated the instructions of embassy with which the ministers of the gospel have been furnished by God. After they have faithfully communicated these instructions, they must also use their endeavor, that they may be carried into effect, [572] in order that their labor may not be in vain. They must, I say, add continual exhortation's, [573] that their embassy may be efficacious. This is what he means by sunergountes, (fellow-workers,) that is, devoted to the advancement of the work; for it is not enough to teach, if you do not also urge. In this way, the particle sun would have a relation to God, or to the embassy, which he assigns to his servants. For the doctrine of the gospel is helped by exhortations, so as not to be without effect, and ministers connect their endeavors with God's commission; [574] as it is the part of an ambassador to enforce by arguments, what he brings forward in the name of his prince.The particle sun may also be taken as referring to the endeavors of ministers in common; for if they do the Lord's work in good earnest, they must mutually lend a helping hand to each other, so as to give assistance to each other. I rather prefer, however, the former exposition. Chrysostom interprets it as referring to the hearers, with whom ministers are fellow-workers, when they rouse them up from slothfulness and indolence.Ministers are here taught, that it is not enough simply to advance doctrine. They must also labor that it may be received by the hearers, and that not once merely, but continually. For as they are messengers between God and men, the first duty devolving upon them is, to make offer

of the grace of God, [575] and the second is, to strive with all their might, that it may not be offered in vain.2. For he saith, In an acceptable time. He quotes a prediction of Isaiah, exceedingly appropriate to the exhortation of which he speaks. It is without doubt of the kingdom of Christ that he there speaks, [576] as is manifest from the context. The Father, then, appointing his Son a leader, for the purpose of gathering together a Church, addresses him in these words:"I have heard thee in an acceptable time." (Isaiah 49:8.)We know, however, what a degree of correspondence [577] there is between the Head and the members. For Christ was heard in our name, as the salvation of all of us is entrusted into his hand, and nothing else has he taken under his charge. Hence we are all admonished in the person of Christ -- not to slight the opportunity that is afforded for obtaining salvation. While the rendering of the Greek interpreter is, euprosdekton, (acceptable,) [578] the word made use of by the Prophet is, rtsvn, (ratson,) that is, benevolence, or free favour. [579]The quotation must be applied to the subject in hand in this way: "As God specifies a particular time for the exhibition of his grace, it follows that all times are not suitable for that. As a particular day of salvation is named, it follows that a free offer of salvation is not made every day." Now this altogether depends on the providence of God, for the acceptable time is no other than what is called in Galatians 4:4, the fullness of the time [580] The order of arrangement also must be observed. First, he makes mention of a time of benevolence, and then afterwards of a day of salvation By this it is intimated, that salvation flows to us from the mercy of God exclusively, as from a fountainhead. Hence we must not seek the cause in ourselves, as if we by means of our own works moved God to assign to us his favor, for whence comes the day of salvation? It is because it is the acceptable time, that is, the time which God has in his free favor appointed. In the mean time, we must keep in view what Paul designs to teach -- that there is need of prompt expedition, that we may not allow the opportunity to pass unimproved, inasmuch as it displeases God, that the grace that he offers to us should be received by us with coolness and indifference. Behold now is the time The Prophet had spoken of the time, when Christ was to be manifested in the flesh for the redemption of men. Paul transfers the prophecy to the time when Christ is revealed by the continued preaching of the gospel, and it is with good reason that he does so, for as salvation was once sent to the whole world, when Christ appeared, so now it is sent to us every day, when we are made partakers of the gospel. Here we have a beautiful passage, and affording no ordinary consolation, because, while the gospel is preached to us, we know assuredly that the way is opened up for us into the kingdom of God, and that there is a signal of divine benevolence raised aloft, to invite us to receive salvation, for the opportunity of obtaining it must be judged of by the call. Unless, however, we embrace the opportunity, we must fear the threatening that Paul brings forward -- that, in a short time, the door will be shut against all that have not entered in, while opportunity was afforded. For this retribution always follows contempt of the word.3. Giving no offense We have already on several occasions remarked, that Paul sometimes commends the ministry of the gospel generally, and at other times his own integrity. [581] In the present instance, then, he speaks of himself, and sets before us in his own person a living picture of a good and faithful apostle, that the Corinthians may be led to see how unfair they were in their judgment, in preferring before him empty blusterers. [582] For as they assigned the praise to mere pretences, [583] they held in the highest esteem persons that were effeminate and devoid of zeal, while, on the other hand, as to the best ministers, they cherished no views but such as were mean and abject. Nor is there any reason to doubt, that those very things that Paul makes mention of to his own commendation, had been brought forward by them in part as a ground of

contempt; and they were so much the more deserving of reproof, inasmuch as they converted into matter of reproach, what was ground of just praise.Paul, therefore, treats here of three things: In the first place, he shows what are the excellences, on the ground of which preachers of the gospel ought to be esteemed; secondly, he shows that he is himself endowed with those excellences; thirdly, he admonishes the Corinthians not to acknowledge as Christ's servants those who conduct themselves otherwise than he prescribes here by his example. His design is, that he may procure authority for himself and those that were like him, with a view to the glory of God and the good of the Church, or may restore it where it has fallen into decay; and secondly, that he may call back the Corinthians from an unreasonable attachment to the false apostles, which was a hinderance in the way of their making so much proficiency in the gospel as was necessary. Ministers give occasion of stumbling, when by their own misconduct they hinder the progress of the gospel on the part of their hearers. That Paul says he does not do; for he declares that he carefully takes heed not to stain his apostleship by any spot of disgrace.For this is the artifice of Satan -- to seek some misconduct on the part of ministers, that may tend to the dishonor of the gospel. For when he has been successful in bringing the ministry into contempt, all hope of profit is at an end. Hence the man who would usefully serve Christ, must strive with his whole might to maintain the credit of his ministry. The method is -- to take care that he be deserving of honor, for nothing is more ridiculous than striving to maintain your reputation before others, while you call forth upon yourself reproach by a wicked and base life. That man, therefore, will alone be honorable, who will allow himself in nothing that is unworthy of a minister of Christ.4. In much patience. The whole of the enumeration that follows is intended to show, that all the tests by which the Lord is accustomed to try his servants were to be found in Paul, and that there was no kind of test to which he had not been subjected, in order that the faithfulness of his ministry might be more fully established. [584] Among other things that he enumerates, there are some that are under all circumstances required for all the servants of Christ. Of this nature are labors, sincerity, knowledge, watchings, gentleness, love, the word of truth, the Spirit, the power of God, the armor of righteousness. There are other things that are not necessary in all cases; for in order that any one may be a servant of Christ, it is not absolutely necessary, that he be put to the test by means of stripes and imprisonments Hence these things will in some cases be wanting in the experience of the best. It becomes all, however, to be of such a disposition as to present themselves to be tried, as Paul was, with stripes and imprisonments, if the Lord shall see meet.Patience is the regulation of the mind in adversity, which is an excellence that ought invariably to distinguish a good minister. [585] Afflictions include more than necessities; for by the term necessity here I understand poverty. Now this is common to many ministers, there being few of them that are not in poor circumstances; but at the same time not to all. For why should a moderate amount of riches prevent a man from being reckoned a servant of Christ, who, in other respects, is pious, is of upright mind and honorable deportment, and is distinguished by other excellences. As the man that is poor is not on that account to be straightway accounted a good minister, so the man that is rich is not on that account to be rejected. Nay more, Paul in another passage glories not less in his knowing how to abound, than in knowing how to be in want. (Philippians 4:12.) Hence we must observe the distinction that I have mentioned, between occasional and invariable grounds of commendation. [586] 5. In tumults In proportion to the calmness and gentleness of Paul's disposition was there the greater excellence displayed in his standing undaunted in the face of tumults; and he takes praise to himself on this account -- that while he regarded tumults with abhorrence, he nevertheless

encountered them with bravery. [587] Nor does the praise simply consist in his being unmoved by tumults, (this being commonly found among all riotous persons, [588]) but in his being thrown into no alarm by tumults that had been stirred up through the fault of others. And, unquestionably, two things are required on the part of ministers of the Gospel -- that they should endeavor to the utmost of their power to maintain peace, and yet on the other hand go forward, undaunted, through the midst of commotions, so as not to turn aside from the right course, though heaven and earth should be mingled. [589] Chrysostom, however, prefers to understand akatastasiais to mean -- frequent expulsions, [590] inasmuch as there afforded him a place of rest. [591] In fastings He does not mean -- hunger arising from destitution, but a voluntary exercise of abstinence.Knowledge may be taken in two senses -- either as meaning doctrine itself, or skill in acting properly and knowingly. The latter appears to me the more likely, as he immediately adds -- the word of truth The Spirit is taken by metonymy, to denote spiritual graces. Frivolous, however, is the cavil of Chrysostom, who infers from this, that the other excellences are peculiar to the Apostle, because he makes mention of the Spirit separately, as if kindness, knowledge, pureness, armor of righteousness, were from any other source, than from the Holy Spirit. He makes mention, however, of the Spirit separately, as a general term in the midst of particular instances. [592] The power of God showed itself in many things -- in magnanimity, in efficacy in the maintaining of the truth, in the propagation of the Gospel, in victory over enemies, and the like.7. By the armor of righteousness By righteousness you must understand -- rectitude of conscience, and holiness of life. He employs the metaphor of armor, because all that serve God require to fight, inasmuch as the devil is always on the alert, to molest them. Now they must be completely armed, because, if he does not succeed in one onset, he thereupon makes a new attempt, and attacks them at one time from before, at another from behind -- now on this side, and then on that. [593]8. By honor and dishonor This is no slight test for subjecting a man to trial, for to a man of a noble spirit nothing is more unpleasant, than to incur disgrace. Hence we may observe in all histories, that there have been few men of heroism that have not fallen back, on being irritated by insults. [594] Hence it is indicative of a mind well established in virtue, not to be moved away from one's course by any disgrace that may be incurred -- a rare virtue, but one without which you cannot show that you are a servant of God. We must, it is true, have a regard to good character, but it must be only in so far as the edification of our brethren requires it, and in such a way as not to be dependent on reports [595] -- nay more, so as to maintain in the same even course in honor and in dishonor. For God allows us to be tried even by the slander of wicked men, with the view of trying us, [596] whether we act uprightly from disinterested motives; [597] for if one is drawn aside from duty by the ingratitude of men, that man shows that he had not his eye directed to God alone. As then we see that Paul was exposed to infamy and insults, and yet did not on that account stop short, but held forward with undaunted courage, and broke through every impediment so as to reach the goal, [598] let us not give way, if the same thing should befall us.As deceivers Here he relates, not simply in what estimation he was held by the wicked and those that were without, (1 Corinthians 5:12,) but also what views were entertained of him by those that were within. Now let every one consider with himself, how unseemly was the ingratitude of the Corinthians, and how great was his magnanimity in struggling forward, in spite of such formidable obstacles. By indirect representations, however, he sharply reproves their perverse judgment, when he says that he lives and is joyful, while they despised him as one that was dead and overwhelmed with grief. He reproaches them, also, with ingratitude, when he says, that he made many rich, while he was

contemned on account of his poverty. For they were of the number of those whom he enriched by his wealth: nay more, all of them to a man were under obligations to him on many accounts. Thus he said previously, by way of irony, that he was unknown, while at the same time the fruit of his labor was everywhere known and celebrated. But how cruel to despise the poverty of the man who supplies you [599] from his abundance! He means spiritual riches, which ought to be much more esteemed than earthly.

2 Corinthians 6:11-18

11. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 11. Os nostrum apertum est ad vos, O Corinthii, cor nostrum dilatatum est. 12. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. 12. Non estis angusti in nobis, sed angusti estis in visceribus vestris. [600] 13. Now, for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. [601] 13. Eandem vero remunerationem, nem, ut a filiis, exigo: dilatamini et vos. 14. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 14. Ne ducatis iugum cum infidelibus: quæ enim participatio iustitæ cum iniquitate: quæ communicatio luci cum tenebris? 15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 15. Quis consensus Christo cum Belial: aut quo portio fideli cum infideli? 16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 16. Quautem conventio templo Dei cum idolis? vos enim estis templum Dei viventis: quemadmodum dicit Deus (Leviticus 26:12,) Habitabo in ipsis, et in medio eorum ambulabo: et ero Deus illorum, et erunt mihi populus.17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,17. Quamobrem exite de medio eorum et separamini, dicit Dominus (Ies. lii.11,) et immundum ne tetigeritis:18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.18. Et ego suscipiam vos, et ero vobis in patrem, et eritis mihi in filios et filias, dicit Dominus omnipotens, (Jeremiah 31:9.)11 Our mouth is opened. As the opening of the mouth is a sign of boldness, [602] if you are inclined to connect this with what goes before, the meaning will be this, -- "I have ample ground of glorying, and an upright conscience opens my mouth. Your entertaining unfavorable views of us, is not owing to any fault on our part, but arises from your being unfair judges. For you ought to have entertained more favorable views of my ministry, which God has rendered honorable to you in so many ways." I explain it, however, otherwise; for he says that the reason why his mouth was opened was, that his heart was enlarged Now what is meant by enlargement of heart? Undoubtedly it means the cheerfulness that springs from benevolence. [603] It is quite a common figure, to speak of a narrow and contracted heart as denoting either grief, or disgust, while, on the other hand, an enlarged heart is employed to denote dispositions of an opposite kind. Hence Paul here says nothing but what we every day experience, for when we have to do with friends, our heart is enlarged, all our feelings are laid open, there is nothing there that is hid, nothing shut, -- nay more, the whole mind leaps and exults to unfold itself openly to view. [604] Hence it is, that the tongue, also, is free and unfettered, does not faulter, does not with difficulty draw up from the bottom of the throat broken syllables, as usually happens when the mind is influenced by a less joyful affection.12. Ye are not straitened in us That is, "It is owing to your own fault that you are not able to share in this feeling of cheerfulness, which I entertain towards you. My mouth is opened, so that I deal familiarly with you, my very heart would willingly pour itself forth, [605] but you shut up your bowels." He means to say, that it is owing to their corrupt judgment, that the things that he utters are not relished by them.13. Now the same requital He softens his reproof by addressing them

kindly as his sons, and also by this exhortation, by which he intimates that he still entertains good hopes of them. By the same requital he means -- mutual duty, for there is a mutual return of duty between a father and his sons. For as it is the duty of parents to nourish their children, to instruct them, to direct them by their counsel, and to defend them, so it is the dictate of equity, that children should requite their parents. (1 Timothy 6:4.) In fine, he means what the Greeks call antipelargian -- affection exercised in return. [606] "I cherish," says he, "towards you paternal affection: show yourselves then to be my sons by affection and respect in return." At the same time there is a particular circumstance that must be noticed, That the Corinthians, having found so indulgent a father, may also show gentleness in their turn, and may requite his kind condescension by their docility, he exhorts them with this view to be enlarged in their own bowels. The Old Interpreter, not having caught Paul's meaning, has added the participle having, and has thus expressed his own view rather than Paul's. In our exposition, on the other hand, (which is Chrysostom's, also,) there is nothing forced. [607]14. Be not yoked As if regaining his authority, he now reproves them more freely, because they associated with unbelievers, as partakers with them in outward idolatry. For he has exhorted them to show themselves docile to him as to a father: he now, in accordance with the rights that belong to him, [608] reproves the fault into which they had fallen. Now we mentioned in the former epistle [609] what this fault was; for, as they imagined that there was nothing that was unlawful for them in outward things, they defiled themselves with wicked superstitions without any reserve. For in frequenting the banquets of unbelievers, they participated along with them in profane and impure rites, and while they sinned grievously, they nevertheless thought themselves innocent. On this account Paul inveighs here against outward idolatry, and exhorts Christians to stand aloof from it, and have no connection with it. He begins, however, with a general statement, with the view of coming down from that to a particular instance, for to be yoked with unbelievers means nothing less than tohave fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, (Ephesians 5:11,)and to hold out the hand to them [610] in token of agreement. Many are of opinion that he speaks of marriage, but the context clearly shows that they are mistaken. The word that Paul makes use of means -- to be connected together in drawing the same yoke. It is a metaphor taken from oxen or horses, which require to walk at the same pace, and to act together in the same work, when fastened under one yoke. [611] When, therefore, he prohibits us from having partnership with unbelievers in drawing the same yoke, he means simply this, that we should have no fellowship with them in their pollutions. For one sun shines upon us, we eat of the same bread, we breathe the same air, and we cannot altogether refrain from intercourse with them; but Paul speaks of the yoke of impiety, that is, of participation in works, in which Christians cannot lawfully have fellowship. On this principle marriage will also be prohibited, inasmuch as it is a snare, by which both men and women are entangled into an agreement with impiety; but what I mean is simply this, that Paul's doctrine is of too general a nature to be restricted to marriage exclusively, for he is discoursing here as to the shunning of idolatry, on which account, also, we are prohibited from contracting marriages with the wicked.For what fellowship He confirms his exhortation on the ground of its being an absurd, and, as it were, monstrous connecting together of things in themselves much at variance; for these things can no more coalesce than fire and water. In short it comes to this, that unless they would have everything thrown into confusion, they must refrain from the pollutions of the wicked. Hence, too, we infer, that even those that do not in their hearts approve of superstitions are, nevertheless, polluted by dissimulation if they do not openly and ingenuously stand aloof from them.15. What concord has Christ with Belial? As to the

etymology of the word Belial, even the Hebrews themselves are not agreed [612] The meaning, however, is not doubtful. [613] For Moses takes a word or thought of Belial [614] to mean a wicked and base thought, [615] and in various instances [616] those who are wicked and abandoned to iniquity, are called men, or sons of Belial. (Deuteronomy 13:13; Judges 19:22; 1 Samuel 2:12.) Hence it is, that Paul has employed the word here to mean the devil, the head of all wicked persons. For from what holds good as to the two heads, he comes down without delay to the members: "As there is an irreconcilable variance between Christ and Satan, so we also must keep aloof from partnership with the wicked." When, however, Paul says that a Christian has no participation with an unbeliever, he does not mean as to food, clothing, estates, the sun, the air, as I have mentioned above, but as to those things that are peculiar to unbelievers, from which the Lord has separated us.16. What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Hitherto he has in general terms prohibited believers from associating with the wicked. He now lets them know what was the chief reason, why he had prohibited them from such an association -- because they had ceased to reckon the profession of idolatry to be a sin. He had censured that liberty, and had exposed it at great length in the former Epistle. It is probable, however, that all had not yet been gained over, so as to receive the counsel which he had given. Hence it was that he complained of their being straitened in their own bowels -- the only thing that hindered their proficiency. [617] He does not, however, resume that subject anew, but contents himself with a short admonition, as we are accustomed to do, when we treat of things that are well known. At the same time his brevity does not prevent his giving sharp cuts. For how much emphasis there is in that single word, where he teaches that there is no agreement between the temple of God and idols! "It is a sacrilegious profanation, [618] when an idol or any idolatrous service is introduced into the temple of God Now we are the true temples of God. Hence it is sacrilege to defile ourselves with any contamination of idols. This one consideration, I say, should be to you as good as a thousand. If you are a Christian, what have you to do with idols, (Hosea 14:8,) for you are the temple of God?" Paul, however, as I have already in part noticed, contends rather by way of exhortation than of doctrine, inasmuch as it would have been superfluous to be still treating of it, as if it were a thing doubtful or obscure.As God saith, I will walk. He proves that we are the temples of God from this, that God of old promised to the people of Israel that he would dwell in the midst of them. In the first place, God cannot dwell among us, without dwelling in each one of us, for he promises this as a singular privilege -- I will dwell in the midst of you Nor does this dwelling or presence consist merely in earthly blessings, but must be understood chiefly of spiritual grace. Hence it does not mean simply that God is near us, as though he were in the air, flying round about us, but it means rather that he has his abode in our hearts. If, then, any one objects, that the particle in simply means among, I grant it; but I affirm that, from the circumstance that God promises that he will dwell among us, we may infer that he also remains in us. [619] And such was the type of the ark, of which mention is made by Moses in that passage, from which Paul appears to have borrowed this quotation. (Leviticus 26:12.) If, however, any one thinks that Paul had rather in his eye Ezekiel 37:27, the argument will be the same. For the Prophet, when describing the restoration of the Church, mentions as the chief good, the presence of God, which he had himself in the beginning promised by Moses. Now what was prefigured by the ark, was manifested to us more fully in Christ, when he became to us Immanuel [620] (Matthew 1:23.) On this account, I am of opinion that it is Ezekiel, rather than Moses, that is here quoted, because Ezekiel alludes at the same time to the type of the ark, and declares that it will have its fulfillment under the reign of Christ. Now the Apostle takes it

for granted, that God dwells nowhere but in a sacred place. If we say of a man, "he dwells here," that will not make the place a temple; but as to God there is this peculiarity, that whatever place he honors with his presence, he at the same time sanctifies. 17. Wherefore come out from the midst of them. This exhortation is taken from Isaiah 52:11, where the Prophet, when foretelling the deliverance, at length addresses the priests in these terms. For he makes use of a circumlocution to describe the priests, when he says, Ye that bear the vessels of the Lord, inasmuch as they had the charge of the vessels, by means of which the sacrifices, and other parts of divine worship, were performed. There can be no doubt that his design is to admonish them, that, while eagerly desirous to come forth, [621] they should be on their guard against any contamination from the many pollutions with which the country [622] was overrun. Now this is no less applicable to us, than to the ancient Levites, for if so much purity is required on the part of the keepers of the vessels, how much more in the vessels themselves! [623] Now all our members are vessels, set apart for the spiritual worship of God; we are also a royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2:9.) Hence, as we are redeemed by the grace of God, it is befitting that we keep ourselves undefiled in respect of all uncleanness, that we may not pollute the sanctuary of God. As, however, while remaining in this world, we are nevertheless redeemed, and rescued, from the pollutions of the world, so we are not to quit life with the view of departing from all uncleanness, but must simply avoid all participation. The sum is this. "If with a true affection of the heart, we aim at the benefit of redemption, we must beware of defiling ourselves by any contamination from its pollutions."18. I will be a Father unto you. This promise does not occur in one passage merely, but is repeated in various instances. Paul has added it with this view, that a recognition of the great honor to which God has exalted us, might be a motive to stir us up to a more ardent desire for holiness. For when God has restored his Church which he has gathered from profane nations, their redemption is attended with this fruit, that believers are seen to be his sons and daughters It is no common honor that we are reckoned among the sons of God: it belongs to us in our turn to take care, that we do not show ourselves to be degenerate children to him. For what injury we do to God, if while we call him father, we defile ourselves with abominations of idols! Hence, the thought of the high distinction to which he has elevated us, ought to whet our desire for holiness and purity.

2 Corinthians 7:1

1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.1. Has igitur promissiones quum habeamus, dilecti, mundemus nos ab omni inquinamento carnis et spiritus, sanctificationem perficientes in timore Dei.1. These promises, therefore. God, it is true, anticipates us in his promises by his pure favor; but when he has, of his own accord, conferred upon us his favor, he immediately afterwards requires from us gratitude in return. Thus what he said to Abraham, I am thy God, (Genesis 17:7,) was an offer of his undeserved goodness, yet he at the same time added what he required from him -- Walk before me, and be thou perfect As, however, this second clause is not always expressed, Paul instructs us that in all the promises this condition is implied, [624] that they must be incitements to us to promote the glory of God. For from what does he deduce an argument to stimulate us? It is from this, that God confers upon us such a distinguished honor. Such, then, is the nature of the promises, that they call us to sanctification, as if God had interposed by an implied agreement. We know, too, what the Scripture teaches in various passages in reference to the design of redemption, and the same thing must be viewed as applying to every token of his favor.From all filthiness of flesh and spirit. Having already shown, that we are called to purity, [625] he now adds, that it ought to be seen in the body, as well as in the soul; for that the term flesh is taken here to mean the body, and the term spirit to mean the soul, is manifest from this, that if the term spirit meant the grace of regeneration, Paul's statement in reference to the pollution of the spirit would be absurd. He would have us, therefore, pure from defilements, not merely inward, such as have God alone as their witness; but also outward, such as fall under the observation of men. "Let us not merely have chaste consciences in the sight of God. We must also consecrate to him our whole body and all its members, that no impurity may be seen in any part of us." [626]Now if we consider what is the point that he handles, we shall readily perceive, that those act with excessive impudence, [627] who excuse outward idolatry on I know not what pretexts. [628] For as inward impiety, and superstition, of whatever kind, is a defilement of the spirit, what will they understand by defilement of the flesh, but an outward profession of impiety, whether it be pretended, or uttered from the heart? They boast of a pure conscience; that, indeed, is on false grounds, but granting them what they falsely boast of, they have only the half of what Paul requires from believers. Hence they have no ground to think, that they have given satisfaction to God by that half; for let a person show any appearance of idolatry at all, or any indication of it, or take part in wicked or superstitious rites, even though he were -- what he cannot be -- perfectly upright in his own mind, he would, nevertheless, not be exempt from the guilt of polluting his body.Perfecting holiness. As the verb epitelein in Greek sometimes means, to perfect, and sometimes to perform sacred rites, [629] it is elegantly made use of here by Paul in the former signification, which is the more frequent one -- in such a way, however, as to allude to sanctification, of which he is now treating. For while it denotes perfection, it seems to have been intentionally transferred to sacred offices, because there ought to be nothing defective in the service of God, but everything complete. Hence, in order that you may sanctify yourself to God aright, you must dedicate both body and soul entirely to him.In the fear of God. For if the fear of

God influences us, we will not be so much disposed to indulge ourselves, nor will there be a bursting forth of that audacity of wantonness, which showed itself among the Corinthians. For how does it happen, that many delight themselves so much in outward idolatry, and haughtily defend so gross a vice, unless it be, that they think that they mock God with impunity? If the fear of God had dominion over them, they would immediately, on the first moment, leave off all cavils, without requiring to be constrained to it by any disputations.

2 Corinthians 7:2-7

2. Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. 2. Capaces estote nostri: nemini fecimus iniuriam, neminem corrupimus, neminem fraudavimus. 3. I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you 3. Non [hoc] ad condemnationem vestri dico: siquidem iam ante dixi vobis, quod in coribus nostris sitis ad commoriendum et convivendum. 4. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. 4. Multa mihi fiducia erga vos, multa mihi gloriatio de vobis: impletus sum consolatione supra modum, exundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra. 5. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. 5. Etenim quum venissemus in Macedoniam, nullam relaxationem habuit caro nostra, sed in omnibus fuimus afflicti: foris pugnae, intus timores. 6. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 6. Sed qui consolatur humiles, consolatus est nos Deus in adventu Titi. 7. And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. 7. Neque solum in adventu eius, sed in consolatione quam acceperat de vobis, annuntians nobis vestrum desiderium, vestras lacrimas, vestrum stadium pro me: ita ut magis gauderem.2. Make room for us. Again he returns from a statement of doctrine to treat of what more especially concerns himself, but simply with this intention -- that he may not lose his pains in admonishing the Corinthians. Nay more, he closes the preceding admonition with the same statement, which he had made use of by way of preface. For what is meant by the expressions Receive us, or Make room for us? It is equivalent to, Be ye enlarged, (2 Corinthians 6:13;) that is, "Do not allow corrupt affections, or unfavorable apprehensions, to prevent this doctrine from making its way into your minds, and obtaining a place within you. For as I lay myself out for your salvation with a fatherly zeal, it were unseemly that you should turn a deaf ear [630] upon me." [631]We have done injury to no man. He declares that there is no reason why they should have their minds alienated, [632] inasmuch as he had not given them occasion of offense in any thing. Now he mentions three kinds of offenses, as to which he declares himself to be guiltless. The first is, manifest hurt or injury. The second is, the corruption that springs from false doctrine. The third is, defrauding or cheating in worldly goods. These are three things by which, for the most part, pastors [633] are wont to alienate the minds of the people from them -- when they conduct themselves in an overbearing manner, and, making their authority their pretext, break forth into tyrannical cruelty or unreasonableness, -- or when they draw aside from the right path those to whom they ought to have been guides, and infect them with the corruption of false doctrine, -- or when they manifest an insatiable covetousness, by eagerly desiring what belongs to another. Should any one wish to have it in shorter compass-the first is, fierceness and an abuse of power by excessive insolence [634] the second, unfaithfulness in teaching. the third, avarice.3. I say not this to condemn you. As the foregoing apology was a sort of expostulation, and we can scarcely avoid reproaching when we expostulate, he softens on this account what he had said. "I clear myself," says he, "in such a way as to be desirous to avoid, what would tend to your

dishonor." The Corinthians, it is true, were unkind, and they deserved that, on Paul's being acquitted from blame, they should be substituted in his place as the guilty party; nay more, that they should be held guilty in two respects -- in respect of ingratitude, and on the ground of their having calumniated the innocent. Such, however, is the Apostle's moderation, that he refrains from recrimination, contenting himself with standing simply on the defensive.For I have before said. Those that love do not assail; [635] nay more, if any fault has been committed, they either cover it over by taking no notice of it, or soften it by kindness. For a disposition to reproach is a sign of hatred. Hence Paul, with the view of showing that he has no inclination to distress the Corinthians, declares his affection towards them. At the same time, he undoubtedly in a manner condemns them, while he says that he does not do so. As, however, there is a great difference between gall and vinegar, so there is also between that condemnation, by which we harass a man in a spirit of hatred, with the view of blasting him with infamy, and, on the other hand, that, by which we endeavor to bring back an offender into the right way, that, along with safety, he may in addition to this regain his honors unimpaired.Ye are in our hearts -- that is, "I carry you about with me inclosed in my heart." To die and live with you -- that is, "So that no change can loosen our attachment, for I am prepared not merely to live with you, but also to be associated with you in death, if necessary, and to endure anything rather than renounce your friendship." Mark well, in what manner all pastors. [636] ought to be affected.4. Great is my boldness. Now, as if he had obtained the enlargement of heart that he had desired on the part of the Corinthians, he leaves off complaining, and pours out his heart with cheerfulness. "What need is there that I should expend so much labor upon a matter already accomplished? For I think I have already what I asked. For the things that Titus has reported to me respecting you are not merely sufficient for quieting my mind, but afford me also ground of glorying confidently on your account [637] Nay more, they have effectually dispelled the grief, which many great and heavy afflictions had occasioned me." He goes on step by step, by way of climax; for glorying is more than being of an easy and quiet mind; and being freed from grief occasioned by many afflictions, is greater than either of those. Chrysostom explains this boldness somewhat differently, in this manner -- "If I deal with you the more freely, it is on this account, that, relying on the assurance of your good will towards me, I think I may take so much liberty with you." I have stated, however, what appeared to me to be the more probable meaning -- that the report given by Titus had removed the unfavorable impression, which had previously racked his mind. [638] 5. For when we had come into Macedonia The heaviness of his grief tends to show, how efficacious the consolation was. "I was pressed on every side," says he, "by afflictions both internal and external. All this, however, has not prevented the joy that you have afforded me from prevailing over it, and even overflowing." [639] When he says that he had no rest in his flesh, it is as if he had said -- "As a man, I had no relief." [640] For he excepts spiritual consolations, by which he was in the mean time sustained. He was afflicted, therefore, not merely in body, but also in mind, so that, as a man, he experienced nothing but great bitterness of afflictions.Without were fightings By fightings he means outward assaults, with which his enemies molested him: fears he means the anxieties, that he endured on account of the internal maladies of the Church, for it was not so much by personal as by public evils, that he was disquieted. What he means, then, to say is this -- that there were not merely avowed enemies that were hostile to him, but that he endured, nevertheless, much distress in consequence of domestic evils. For he saw how great was the infirmity of many, nay of almost all, and in the mean time what, and how diversified, were the machinations, by which Satan attempted to throw every thing

into confusion -- how few were wise, how few were sincere, how few were steadfast, and how many, on the other hand, were either mere pretenders, and worthless, or ambitious, or turbulent. Amidst these difficulties, the servants of God must of necessity feel alarmed, and be racked with anxieties; and so much the more on this account -- that they are constrained to bear many things silently, that they may consult the peace of the Churches. Hence he expressed himself with propriety when he said -- Without were fightings; within were fears. For faithful pastors openly set themselves in opposition to those enemies that avowedly attack Christ's kingdom, but they are inwardly tormented, and endure secret tortures, when they see the Church afflicted with internal evils, for the exterminating of which they dare not openly sound the trumpet. [641] But although he had almost incessant conflicts, it is probable that he was at that time more severely pressed than usual. The servants of Christ, undoubtedly, have scarcely at any time exemption from fears, and Paul was seldom free from outward fightings; but as he was at that time more violently oppressed, he makes use of the plural number -- fightings and fears, meaning that he required to fight in many ways, and against various enemies, and that he had at the same time many kinds of fear.6. Who comforteth the lowly. This is mentioned as a reason; for he means that consolation had been offered to him, because he was borne down with evils, and almost overwhelmed, inasmuch as God is wont to comfort the lowly, that is, those that are cast down. Hence a most profitable doctrine may be inferred -- that the more we have been afflicted, so much the greater consolation has been prepared for us by God. Hence, in the epithet here applied to God, there is a choice promise contained, as though he had said, that it is peculiarly the part of God to comfort those that are miserable and are abased to the dust.7. And not by his coming only. Lest the Corinthians should object in these terms -- "What is it to us if Titus has cheered you by his coming? No doubt, as you loved him, you would feel delighted to see him;" he declares, that the occasion of his joy was, that Titus had, on returning from them, communicated the most joyful intelligence. Accordingly he declares, that it was not so much the presence of one individual, as the prosperous condition of the Corinthians, that had cheered him.Your desire Mark, what joyful tidings were communicated to Paul respecting the Corinthians. Their desire originated in the circumstance, that they held Paul's doctrine in high estimation. Their tears were a token of respect; because, being affected with his reproof, they mourned over their sins. Their zeal was an evidence of good will. From these three things he inferred that they were penitent. This afforded him full satisfaction, because he had no other intention or anxiety, than the consulting of their welfare.So that I rejoiced the more -- that is, "So that all my griefs and distresses gave way to joy." Hence we see, not merely with what fervor of mind he desired the public good of the Church, but also how mild and gentle a disposition he possessed, as being one that could suddenly bury in oblivion offenses of so serious a nature. At the same time, this may rather be taken in another way, so as to be viewed in connection with what follows, and I am not sure but that this meaning would correspond better with Paul's intention. As, however, it is a matter of no great moment, I pass over it slightly.

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

8. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 8. Quoniam et si contristavi vos in epistola, non me poenitet: etiamsi poenituerit. Video enim, quod epistola illa, et si ad tempus, vos contristavit. 9. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 9. Nunc gaudeo: non quod sitis contristati, sed quod sitis contristati in poenitentiam, contristati enim estis secundum Deum, ita ut nulla in re damno affecti sitis ex nobis. 10. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 10. Nam quae secundum Deum est tristitia, poenitentiam ad salutem non poenitendam efficit: mundi autem tristitia mortem efficit. 11. For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! 11. Ecce enim hoc ipsum, quod secundum Deum, contristati estis quantum produxit in vobis stadium! Imo defensionem, imo indignationem, imo timorem, imo desiderium, imo zelum, imo vindictam! 8. For though I grieved you. He now begins to apologize to the Corinthians for having handle them somewhat roughly in the former Epistle. Now we must observe, in what a variety of ways he deals with them, so that it might appear as though he sustained different characters. The reason is that his discourse was directed to the whole of the Church. There were some there, that entertained an unfavorable view of him -- there were others that held him, as he deserved, in the highest esteem -- some were doubtful: others were confident -- some were docile: others were obstinate. [642] In consequence of this diversity, he required to direct his discourse now in one way, then in another, in order to suit himself to all. Now he lessens, or rather he takes away altogether any occasion of offense, on account of the severity that he had employed, on the ground of its having turned out to the promotion of their welfare. "Your welfare," says he, "is so much an object of desire to me, that I am delighted to see that I have done you good." This softening-down is admissible only when the teacher [643] has done good so far as was needed, by means of his reproofs; for if he had found, that the minds of the Corinthians still remained obstinate, and had he perceived an advantage arising from the discipline that he had attempted, he would, undoubtedly, have abated nothing from his former severity. It is to be observed, however, that he rejoices to have been an occasion of grief to those whom he loved; for he was more desirous to profit, than to please them. But what does he mean when he adds -- though I did repent? For if we admit, that Paul had felt dissatisfied with what he had written, there would follow an inconsistency of no slight character -- that the former Epistle had been written under a rash impulse, rather than under the guidance of the Spirit. I answer, that the word repent is used here in a loose sense for being grieved. For while he made the Corinthians sad, he himself also participated in the grief, and in a manner inflicted grief at the same time upon himself. "Though I gave you pain against my inclination, and it grieved me to be under the necessity of being harsh to you, I am grieved no longer on that account, when I see that it has been of advantage to you." Let us take an instance from the case of a father; for a father feels grief in connection with his severity, when at any time he chastises his son, but approves of

it, notwithstanding, because he sees that it is conducive to his son's advantage. In like manner Paul could feel no pleasure in irritating the minds of the Corinthians; but, being conscious of the motive that influenced his conduct, he preferred duty to inclination. For I see. The transition is abrupt; but that does not at all impair the distinctness of the sense. In the first place, he says, that he had fully ascertained by the effect, that the former Epistle, though for a time unwelcome, had nevertheless at length been of advantage, and secondly, that he rejoiced on account of that advantage. 9. Not because you have been made sorry. He means, that he feels no pleasure whatever in their sorrow -- nay more, had he his choice, he would endeavor to promote equally their welfare and their joy, by the same means; but that as he could not do otherwise, their welfare was of so much importance in his view, that he rejoiced that they had been made sorry unto repentance. For there are instances of physicians, who are, indeed, in other respects good and faithful, but are at the same time harsh, and do not spare their patients. Paul declares, that he is not of such a disposition as to employ harsh cures, when not constrained by necessity. As, however, it had turned out well, that he had made trial of that kind of cure, he congratulates himself on his success. He makes use of a similar form of expression in 2 Corinthians 5:4,We in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, because we are desirous not to be unclothed, but clothed upon.10. Sorrow according to God [644] In the first place, in order to understand what is meant by this clause according to God, we must observe the contrast, for the sorrow that is according to God he contrasts with the sorrow of the world Let us now take, also, the contrast between two kinds of joy. The joy of the world is, when men foolishly, and without the fear of the Lord, exult in vanity, that is, in the world, and, intoxicated with a transient felicity, look no higher than the earth. The joy that is according to God is, when men place all their happiness in God, and take satisfaction in His grace, and show this by contempt of the world, using earthly prosperity as if they used it not, and joyful in the midst of adversity. Accordingly, the sorrow of the world is, when men despond in consequence of earthly afflictions, and are overwhelmed with grief; while sorrow according to God is that which has an eye to God, while they reckon it the one misery -- to have lost the favor of God; when, impressed with fear of His judgment, they mourn over their sins. This sorrow Paul makes the cause and origin of repentance. This is carefully to be observed, for unless the sinner be dissatisfied with himself, detest his manner of life, and be thoroughly grieved from an apprehension of sin, he will never betake himself to the Lord. [645] On the other hand, it is impossible for a man to experience a sorrow of this kind, without its giving birth to a new heart. Hence repentance takes its rise in grief, for the reason that I have mentioned -- because no one can return to the right way, but the man who hates sin; but where hatred of sin is, there is self-dissatisfaction and grief.There is, however, a beautiful allusion here to the term repentance, when he says -- not to be repented of; for however unpleasant the thing is at first taste, it renders itself desirable by its usefulness. The epithet, it is true, might apply to the term salvation, equally as to that of repentance; but it appears to me to suit better with the term repentance "We are taught by the result itself, that grief ought not to be painful to us, or distressing. In like manner, although repentance contains in it some degree of bitterness, if, is spoken of as not to be repented of on account of the precious and pleasant fruit which it produces."To salvation Paul seems to make repentance the ground of salvation. Were it so, it would follow, that we are justified by works. I answer, that we must observe what Paul here treats of, for he is not inquiring as to the ground of salvation, but simply commending repentance from the fruit which it produces, he says that it is like a way by which we arrive at salvation. Nor is it without good reason; for Christ calls us by way

of free favor, but it is to repentance. (Matthew 9:13.) God by way of free favor pardons our sins, but only when we renounce them. Nay more, God accomplishes in us at one and the same time two things: being renewed by repentance, we are delivered from the bondage of our sins; and, being justified by faith, we are delivered also from the curse of our sins. They are, therefore, inseparable fruits of grace, and, in consequence of their invariable connection, repentance may with fitness and propriety be represented as an introduction to salvation, but in this way of speaking of it, it is represented as an effect rather than as a cause. These are not refinements for the purpose of evasion, but a true and simple solution, for, while Scripture teaches us that we never obtain forgiveness of sins without repentance, it represents at the same time, in a variety of passages, the mercy of God alone as the ground of our obtaining it.11. What earnest desire it produced in you I shall not enter into any dispute as to whether the things that Paul enumerates are effects of repentance, or belong to it, or are preparatory to it, as all this is unnecessary for understanding Paul's design, for he simply proves the repentance of the Corinthians from its signs, or accompaniments. At the same time he makes sorrow according to God to be the source of all these things, inasmuch as they spring from it -- which is assuredly the case; for when we have begun to feel self-dissatisfaction, we are afterwards stirred up to seek after the other things. What is meant by earnest desire, we may understand from what is opposed to it; for so long as there is no apprehension of sin, we lie drowsy and inactive. Hence drowsiness or carelessness, or unconcern, [646] stands opposed to that earnest desire, that he makes mention of. Accordingly, earnest desire means simply an eager and active assiduity in the correcting of what is amiss, and in the amendment of life.Yea, what clearing of yourselves Erasmus having rendered it satisfaction, ignorant persons, misled by the ambiguity of the term, have applied it to popish satisfactions, whereas Paul employs the term apologian, (defense.) It is on this account that I have preferred to retain the word defensionem, which the Old Interpreter had made use of. [647] It is, however, to be observed, that it is a kind of defense that consists rather in supplication for pardon, than in extenuation of sin. As a son, who is desirous to clear himself to his father, does not enter upon a regular pleading of his cause, but by acknowledging his fault excuses himself, rather in the spirit of a suppliant, than in a tone of confidence, hypocrites, also, excuse themselves -- nay more, they haughtily defend themselves, but it is rather in the way of disputing with God, than of returning to favor with him; and should any one prefer the word excusationem, (excuse,) I do not object to it; because the meaning will amount to the same thing, that the Corinthians were prompted to clear themselves, whereas previously they cared not what Paul thought of them.Yea, what indignation [648] This disposition, also, is attendant on sacred sorrow -- that the sinner is indignant against his vices, and even against himself, as also all that are actuated by a right zeal [649] are indignant, as often as they see that God is offended. This disposition, however, is more intense than sorrow. For the first step is, that evil be displeasing to us. The second is, that, being inflamed with anger, we press hard upon ourselves, so that our consciences may be touched to the quick. It may, however, be taken here to mean the indignation, with which the Corinthians had been inflamed against the sins of one or a few, whom they had previously spared. Thus they repented of their concurrence or connivance.Fear is what arises from an apprehension of divine judgment, while the offender thinks -- "Mark it well, an account must be rendered by thee, and what wilt thou advance in the presence of so great a judge?" For, alarmed by such a consideration, he begins to tremble.As, however, the wicked themselves are sometimes touched with an alarm of this nature, he adds desire This disposition we know to be more of a voluntary nature than fear, for we are often afraid against our

will, but we never desire but from inclination. Hence, as they had dreaded punishment on receiving Paul's admonition, so they eagerly aimed at amendment.But what are we to understand by zeal? There can be no doubt that he intended a climax. Hence it means more than desire Now we may understand by it, that they stirred up each other in a spirit of mutual rivalry. It is simpler, however, to understand it as meaning, that every one, with great fervor of zeal, aimed to give evidence of his repentance. Thus zeal is intensity of desire.Yea, what revenge What we have said as to indignation, must be applied also to revenge; for the wickedness which they had countenanced by their connivance and indulgence, they had afterwards shown themselves rigorous in avenging. They had for some time tolerated incest; but, on being admonished by Paul, they had not merely ceased to countenance him, but had been strict reprovers in chastening him, -- this was the revenge that was meant. As, however, we ought to punish sins wherever they are, [650] and not only so, but should begin more especially with ourselves, there is something farther meant in what the Apostle says here, for he speaks of the signs of repentance. There is, among others, this more particularly -- that, by punishing sins, we anticipate, in a manner, the judgment of God, as he teaches elsewhere, If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged by the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:31.) We are not, however, to infer from this, that mankind, by taking vengeance upon themselves, compensate to God for the punishment due to him, [651] so that they redeem themselves from his hand. The case stands thus -- that, as it is the design of God by chastising us, to arouse us from our carelessness, that, being reminded of his displeasure, we may be on our guard for the future, when the sinner himself is beforehand in inflicting punishment of his own accord, the effect is, that he no longer stands in need of such an admonition from God.But it is asked, whether the Corinthians had an eye to Paul, or to God, in this revenge, as well as in the zeal, and desire, and the rest. [652] I answer, that all these things are, under all circumstances, attendant upon repentance, but there is a difference in the case of an individual sinning secretly before God, or openly before the world. If a person's sin is secret, it is enough if he has this disposition in the sight of God; on the other hand, where the sin is open, there is required besides an open manifestation of repentance. Thus the Corinthians, who had sinned openly and to the great offense of the good, required to give evidence of their repentance by these tokens.

2 Corinthians 7:11-16

11. In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 11. Modis omnibus comprobastis vos puros esse in negotio. 12. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. 12. Itaque si scripsi vobis, non eius causa qui laeserat, neque eius causa qui laesus fuerat, scripsi: sed ut palam fieret stadium vestrum pro nobis apud vos, (vel, stadium nostrum in nobis erga vos,) in conspectu Dei. 13. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. 13. Idcirco consolatione vestri: quin uberius etiam gavisi sumus ob gaudium Titi, quod refocillatus sit eius spiritus ab omnibus vobis. 14. For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. 14. Quodsi quid apud illum de vobis gloriatus sum, non fuerim pudefactus: sed ut omnia in veritate loquuti sumus vobis, ita et gloriatio nostra apud Titum veritas facta est. 15. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. 15. Et viscera eius maiorem in modum erga vos affecta sunt: dum memoria repetit vestram omnium obedientiam, quemadmodum cum timore et tremore exceperitis eam. 16. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things 16. Gaudeo, quod vobis in omnibus confidam.11. Ye have approved yourselves to be clear. The Old Interpreter reads, "Ye have shown yourselves." Erasmus renders it, "Ye have commended yourselves." I have preferred a third rendering, which appeared to me to suit better -- that the Corinthians showed by clear evidences, that they were in no degree participants in the crime, with which they had appeared, from their connivance, to have had some connection. What those evidences were, we have already seen. At the same time, Paul does not altogether clear them, but palliates their offense. For the undue forbearance, which they had exercised, was not altogether free from blame. He acquits them, however, from the charge of concurrence. [653] We must farther observe, that he does not acquit all of them without exception, but merely the body of the Church. For it may readily be believed, that some were concerned in it, and countenanced it; but, while all of them together were involved in disgrace, it afterwards appeared that only a few were in fault.12. Wherefore if I wrote. He acts as persons are wont to do, that are desirous of a reconciliation. He wishes all past things to be buried, he does not any more reproach them, he does not reprove them for any thing, he does not expostulate as to any thing; in fine, he forgets every thing, inasmuch as he was satisfied with their simply repenting. And, certainly, this is the right way -- not to press offenders farther, when they have been brought to repentance. For if we stillcall their sins to remembrance, (1 Kings 17:18,)it is certain that we are actuated by malevolence, rather than by pious affection, or a desire for their welfare. These things, however, are said by Paul by way of concession, for, unquestionably, he had followed up the offense that he had taken, and had felt desirous that the author of this offense should be chastised, but now he puts his foot upon what had been in some degree offensive. "I am now desirous, that whatever I have written may be looked upon as having been written with no other view, than that you might perceive your affection towards me. As to all other things, let us now leave them as they are."

Others explain it in this way, -- that he had not regard to one individual in particular, but consulted the common advantage of all. The former interpretation, however, is the more natural one.Your concern for us. As this reading occurs very generally in the Greek versions, I have not ventured to go so far as to erase it, though at the same time in one ancient manuscript the reading is hemon, (of us,) [654] and it appears from Chrysostom s Commentaries, that the Latin rendering [655] was more commonly received in his times even among the Greeks -- that our concern for you might become manifest to you, that is, that it might be manifest to the Corinthians, how much concerned Paul was in regard to them. The other rendering, however, in which the greater part of the Greek manuscripts concur, is, notwithstanding, a probable one. For Paul congratulates the Corinthians on their having learned at length, through means of this test, how they stood affected towards him. "You were not yourselves aware of the attachment that you felt towards me, until you had trial of it in this matter." Others explain it as referring to the particular disposition of an individual, in this way: "That it might be manifest among you, how much respect each of you entertained for me, and that, through the occurrence of this opportunity, each of you might discover what had previously been concealed in his heart." As this is not of great moment, my readers are at liberty, so far as I am concerned, to make choice of either; but, as he adds at the same time, in the sight of God, I rather think that he meant this -- that each of them, having made a thorough search, as if he had come into the presence of God, [656] had come to know himself better than before.13. We received consolation. Paul was wholly intent upon persuading the Corinthians, that nothing was more eagerly desired by him than their advantage. Hence he says, that he had shared with them in their consolation. Now their consolation had been this -- that, acknowledging their fault, they did not merely take the reproof in good part, but had received it joyfully. For the bitterness of a reproof is easily sweetened, so soon as we begin to taste the profitableness of it to us.What he adds -- that he rejoiced more abundantly on account of the consolation of Titus, is by way of congratulation. Titus had been overjoyed in finding them more obedient and compliant than could have been expected -- nay more, in his finding a sudden change for the better. Hence we may infer, that Paul's gentleness was anything but flattery, inasmuch as he rejoiced in their joy, so as to be, at the same time, chiefly taken up with their repentance.14. But if I have boasted any thing to him. He shows indirectly, how friendly a disposition he had always exercised towards the Corinthians, and with what sincerity and kindness he had judged of them; for at the very time that they seemed to be unworthy of commendation, he still promised much that was honorable on their behalf. Here truly we have a signal evidence of a rightly constituted and candid mind, -- reproving to their face those that you love, and yet hoping well, and giving others good hopes respecting them. Such sincerity ought to have induced them not to take amiss any thing that proceeded from him. In the mean time, he takes this opportunity of setting before them again, in passing, his fidelity in all other matters. "You have hitherto had opportunity of knowing my candor, so that I have shown myself to be truthful, and not by any means fickle. I rejoice, therefore, that I have now also been found truthful, when boasting of you before others." 15. His bowels more abundantly. As the bowels are the seat of the affections, the term is on that account employed to denote compassion, love, and every pious affection. [657] He wished, however, to express emphatically the idea, that while Titus had loved the Corinthians previously, he had been, at that time, more vehemently stirred up to love them; and that, from the innermost affections of his heart. Now, by these words he insinuates Titus into the affections of the Corinthians, as it is of advantage that the servants of Christ should be loved, that they may have it in their power to do the more good. He at

the same time encourages them to go on well, that they may render themselves beloved by all the good.With fear and trembling. By these two words he sometimes expresses simply respect, (Ephesians 6:5,) and this perhaps would not suit ill with this passage, though I should have no objection to view the trembling as mentioned particularly to mean, that, being conscious of having acted amiss, they were afraid to face him. It is true that even those, that are resolute in their iniquities, tremble at the sight of the judge, but voluntary trembling, that proceeds from ingenuous shame, is a sign of repentance. Whichever exposition you may choose, this passage teaches, what is a right reception for the ministers of Christ. Assuredly, it is not sumptuous banquets, it is not splendid apparel, it is not courteous and honorable salutations, it is not the plaudits of the multitude, that gratify the upright and faithful pastor. He experiences, on the other hand, an overflowing of delight, when the doctrine of salvation is received with reverence from his mouth, when he retains the authority that belongs to him for the edification of the Church, when the people give themselves up to his direction, to be regulated by his ministry under Christ's banners. An example of this we see here in Titus. He at length, in the close, confirms again, what he had previously stated -- that he had never been offended to such a degree, as altogether to distrust the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;1. Certiores autem vos facio, fratres, de gratia Dei, quae data est in Ecclesiis Macedoniae;2. How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.2. Quoniam in multa probatione afflictionis exsuperavit gaudium ipsorum, et profunda illorum paupertas exundavit in divitias simplicitatis [658] eorum.3. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves;3. Nam pro viribus (testor) atque etiam supra vires fuerunt voluntarii;4. Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.4. Multa cum obtestatione rogantes nos, ut gratiam et societatem ministrii susciperemus in sanctos.5. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.5. Ac non quatenus sperabamus: sed se ipsos dediderunt, primum Domino, deinde et nobis per voluntatem Dei:6. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.6. Ut abhortaremur Titum, ut quemadmodum ante coepisset, ita et consummaret erga vos hanc quoque gratiam.7. Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; see that ye abound in this grace also.7. Verum quemadmodum ubique abundatis fide, et scientia, et omnia diligentia, et ea, quae ex vobis erga nos est caritate: facite, ut in hac quoque beneficentia abundetis.As, in the event of the Corinthians retaining any feeling of offense, occasioned by the severity of the preceding Epistle, that might stand in the way of Paul's authority having influence over them, he has hitherto made it his endeavor to conciliate their affections. Now, after clearing away all occasion of offense, and regaining favor for his ministry, he recommends to them the brethren at Jerusalem, that they may furnish help to their necessities. He could not, with any great advantage, have attempted this in the commencement of the Epistle. Hence, he has prudently deferred it, until he has prepared their minds for it. Accordingly, he takes up the whole of this chapter, and the next, in exhorting the Corinthians to be active and diligent in collecting alms to be taken to Jerusalem for relieving the indigence of the brethren. For they were afflicted with a great famine, so that they could scarcely support life without being aided by other churches. The Apostles had intrusted Paul with this matter, (Galatians 2:10,) and he had promised to concern himself in reference to it, and he had already done so in part, as we have seen in the former Epistle. [659] Now, however, he presses them still farther.1. I make known to you. He commends the Macedonians, but it is with the design of stimulating the Corinthians by their example, although he does not expressly say so; for the former had no need of commendation, but the latter had need of a stimulus. And that he may stir up the Corinthians the more to emulation, he ascribes it to the grace of God that the Macedonians had been so forward to give help to their brethren. For although it is acknowledged by all, that it is a commendable virtue to give help to the needy, they, nevertheless, do not reckon it to be a gain, nor do they look upon it as the grace of God Nay rather, they reckon, that it is so much of what was theirs taken from them, and lost. Paul, on the other hand, declares, that we ought to ascribe it to the grace of God, when we afford aid to our brethren, and that it ought to be desired by us as a privilege of no ordinary kind.He makes

mention, however, of a twofold favor, that had been conferred upon the Macedonians. The first is, that they had endured afflictions with composure and cheerfulness. The second is, that from their slender means, equally as though they had possessed abundance, [660] they had taken something -- to be laid out upon their brethren. Each of these things, Paul affirms with good reason, is a work of the Lord, for all quickly fail, that are not upheld by the Spirit of God, who is the Author of all consolation, and distrust clings to us, deeply rooted, which keeps us back from all offices of love, until it is subdued by the grace of the same Spirit.2. In much trial -- In other words, while they were tried with adversity, they, nevertheless, did not cease to rejoice in the Lord: nay, this disposition rose so high, as to swallow up sorrow; for the minds of the Macedonians, which must otherwise have been straitened, required to be set free from their restraints, that they might liberally [661] furnish aid to the brethren.By the term joy he means that spiritual consolation by which believers are sustained under their afflictions; for the wicked either delude themselves with empty consolations, by avoiding a perception of the evil, and drawing off the mind to rambling thoughts, or else they wholly give way to grief, and allow themselves to be overwhelmed with it. Believers, on the other hand, seek occasions of joy in the affliction itself, as we see in the 8th chapter of the Romans. [662] And their deep poverty. Here we have a metaphor taken from exhausted vessels, as though he had said, that the Macedonians had been emptied, so that they had now reached the bottom. He says, that even in such straits they had abounded in liberality, and had been rich, so as to have enough -- not merely for their own use, but also for giving assistance to others. Mark the way, in which we shall always be liberal even in the most straitened poverty -- if by liberality of mind we make up for what is deficient in our coffers.Liberality is opposed to niggardliness, as in Romans 12:8, where Paul requires this on the part of deacons. For what makes us more close-handed than we ought to be is -- when we look too carefully, and too far forward, in contemplating the dangers that may occur -- when we are excessively cautious and careful -- when we calculate too narrowly what we will require during our whole life, or, in fine, how much we lose when the smallest portion is taken away. The man, that depends upon the blessing of the Lord, has his mind set free from these trammels, and has, at the same time, his hands opened for beneficence. Let us now draw an argument from the less to the greater. "Slender means, nay poverty, did not prevent the Macedonians from doing good to their brethren: What excuse, then, will the Corinthians have, if they keep back, while opulent and affluent in comparison of them?"3. To their power, and even beyond their power. When he says that they were willing of themselves, he means that they were, of their own accord, so well prepared for the duty, that they needed no exhortation. It was a great thing -- to strive up to the measure of their ability; and hence, to exert themselves beyond their ability, showed a rare, and truly admirable excellence. [663] Now he speaks according to the common custom of men, for the common rule of doing good is that which Solomon prescribes, (Proverbs 5:15) -- to drink water out of our own fountains, and let the rivulets go past, that they may flow onwards to others. [664]The Macedonians, on the other hand, making no account of themselves, and almost losing sight of themselves, concerned themselves rather as to providing for others. [665] In fine, those that are in straitened circumstances are willing beyond their ability, if they lay out any thing upon others from their slender means.4. Beseeching us with much entreaty. He enlarges upon their promptitude, inasmuch as they did not only not wait for any one to admonish them, but even besought those, by whom they would have been admonished, had they not anticipated the desires of all by their activity. [666] We must again repeat the comparison formerly made between the less and the greater. "If the Macedonians,

without needing to be besought, press forward of their own accord, nay more, anticipate others by using entreaties, how shameful a thing is it for the Corinthians to be inactive, more especially after being admonished! If the Macedonians lead the way before all, how shameful a thing is it for the Corinthians not, at least, to imitate their example! But what are we to think, when, not satisfied with beseeching, they added to their requests earnest entreaty, and much of it too?" Now from this it appears, that they had besought, not as a mere form, but in good earnest.That the favor and the fellowship. The term favor he has made use of, for the purpose of recommending alms, though at the same time the word may be explained in different ways. This interpretation, however, appears to me to be the more simple one; because, as our heavenly Father freely bestows upon us all things, so we ought to be imitators of his unmerited kindness in doing good, (Matthew 5:45); or at least, because, in laying out our resources, we are simply the dispensers of his favor. The fellowship of this ministry consisted in his being a helper to the Macedonians in this ministry. They contributed of their own, that it might be administered to the saints. They wished, that Paul would take the charge of collecting it.5. And not as He expected from them an ordinary degree of willingness, such as any Christian should manifest; but they went beyond his expectation, inasmuch as they not only had their worldly substance in readiness, but were prepared to devote even themselves. They gave themselves, says he, first to God, then to us.It may be asked, whether their giving themselves to God, and to Paul, were two different things. It is quite a common thing, that when God charges or commands through means of any one, he associates the person whom he employs as his minister, both in authority to enjoin, and in the obedience that is rendered.It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us;say the Apostles, (Acts 15:28,) while at the same time they merely, as instruments, declared what had been revealed and enjoined by the Spirit. Again,The people believed the Lord and his servant Moses, (Exodus 14:31,)while at the same time Moses had nothing apart from God. This, too, is what is meant by the clause that follows -- by the will of God For, as they were obedient to God, who had committed themselves to his ministry, to be regulated by his counsel, they were influenced by this consideration in listening to Paul, as speaking from God's mouth. 6. That we should exhort Titus. Now this is an exhortation that is of greater force, when they learn that they are expressly summoned to duty. [667] Nor was it offensive to the Macedonians, that he was desirous to have the Corinthians as partners in beneficence. In the mean time an apology is made for Titus, that the Corinthians may not think that he pressed too hard upon them, as if he had not confidence in their good disposition. For he did that, from having been entreated, and it was rather in the name of the Macedonians, than in his own.7. But as He had already been very careful to avoid giving offense, inasmuch as he said, that Titus had entreated them, not so much from his own inclination, as in consideration of the charge given him by the Macedonians. Now, however, he goes a step farther, by admonishing them, that they must not even wait for the message of the Macedonians being communicated to them; and that too, by commending their other virtues. "You ought not merely to associate yourselves as partners with the Macedonians, who require that; but surpass them in this respect, too, as you do in others."He makes a distinction between utterance and faith, because it. is impossible that any one should have faith, and that, too, in an eminent degree, without being at the same time much exercised in the word of God. Knowledge I understand to mean, practice and skill, or prudence. He makes mention of their love to himself, that he may encourage them also from regard to himself personally, and in the mean time he gives up, with a view to the public advantage of the brethren, the personal affection with which they regarded him. [668] Now in this way he lays a restraint upon

himself in everything, that he may not seem to accuse them when exhorting them.

2 Corinthians 8:8-12

8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. 8. Non secundum imperium loquor, sed per aliorum sollicitudinem, et vestrae dilectionis sinceritatem approbans. 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 9. Nostis enim gratiam Domini nostri Iesu Christi, quod propter vos pauper factus sit, quum esset dives: ut vos illius paupertate ditesceretis. 10. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. 10. Et consilium in hoc do: nam hoc vobis conducit: qui quidem non solum facere, verum etiam velle coepistis anno superiore. 11. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. 11. Nunc autem etiam illud quod facere coepistis, perficite: ut quemadmodum voluntas prompta fuit, ita et perficiatis ex eo quod suppetit. 12. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. 12. Etenim si iam adest animi promptitudo, ea iuxta id quod quisque possidet, accepta est: non iuxta id quod non possidet. 8. I speak not according to commandment Again he qualifies his exhortation, by declaring that he did not at all intend to compel them, as if he were imposing any necessity upon them, for that is to speak according to commandment, when we enjoin any thing definite, and peremptorily require that it shall be done. Should any one ask -- "Was it not lawful for him to prescribe what he had by commandment of the Lord?" The answer is easy -- that God, it is true, everywhere charges us to help the necessities of our brethren, but he nowhere specifies the sum; [669] that, after making a calculation, we might divide between ourselves and the poor. He nowhere binds us to circumstances of times, or persons, but calls us to take the rule of love as our guide. At the same time, Paul does not here look to what is lawful for him, or unlawful, but says, that he does not command as if he reckoned that they required to be constrained by command and requirement, as though they refused to do their duty, unless shut up to it by necessity. He assigns, on the other hand, two reasons why he, notwithstanding, stirs them up to duty: first, Because the concern felt by him for the saints compels him to do so; and, secondly, Because he is desirous, that the love of the Corinthians should be made known to all. For I do not understand Paul to have been desirous to be assured of their love, (as to which he had already declared himself to be perfectly persuaded,) [670] but he rather wished that all should have evidence of it. At the same time, the first clause in reference to the anxiety of others, admits of two meanings -- either that he felt an anxiety as to the individuals, which did not allow him to be inactive, or that, yielding to the entreaties of others, who had the matter at heart, he spoke not so much from his own feeling, as at the suggestion of others.9. For ye know the grace. Having made mention of love, he adduces Christ as an all perfect and singular pattern of it. "Though he was rich," says he, "he resigned the possession of all blessings, that he might enrich us by his poverty." He does not afterwards state for what purpose he makes mention of this, but leaves it to be considered by them; for no one can but perceive, that we are by this example stirred up to beneficence, that we may not spare ourselves, when help is to be afforded to our brethren.Christ was rich, because he was God, under whose power and authority all things are; and farther, even

in our human nature, which he put on, as the Apostle bears witness, (Hebrews 1:2; Hebrews 2:8,) he was the heir of all things, inasmuch as he was placed by his Father over all creatures, and all things were placed under his feet. He nevertheless became poor, because he refrained from possessing, and thus he gave up his right for a time. We see, what destitution and penury as to all things awaited him immediately on his coming from his mother's womb. We hear what he says himself, (Luke 9:58,)The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.Hence he has consecrated poverty in his own person, that believers may no longer regard it with horror. By his poverty he has enriched us all for this purpose -- that we may not feel it hard to take from our abundance what we may lay out upon our brethren.10. And in this I give my advice. The advice he places in contrast with the commandment of which he had spoken a little before. (2 Corinthians 8:8.) "I merely point out what is expedient in the way of advising or admonishing." Now this advantage is not perceived by the judgment of the flesh; for where is the man to be found, who is persuaded that it is of advantage to deprive himself of something with the view of helping others? It is, indeed, the saying of a heathen -- "What you have given away is the only riches that you will always have; [671] but the reason is, that whatever is given to friends is placed beyond all risk." The Lord, on the other hand, would not have us influenced by the hope of a reward, or of any remuneration in return, but, on the contrary, though men should be ungrateful, so that we may seem to have lost what we have given away, he would have us, not- withstanding, persevere in doing good. The advantage, however, arises from this -- that"He that giveth to the poor (as Solomon says in Proverbs 19:17) lendeth to the Lord,"whose blessing, of itself, is to be regarded as a hundredfold more precious than all the treasures of the world. The word useful, however, is taken here to mean honorable, or at least Paul measures what is useful by what is honorable, because it would have been disgraceful to the Corinthians to draw back, or to stop short in the middle of the course, when they had already advanced so far. At the same time it would also have been useless, inasmuch as everything that they had attempted to do would have come short of acceptance in the sight of God.Who had begun not only to do. As doing is more than willing, the expression may seem an improper one; but willing here is not taken simply, (as we commonly say,) but conveys the idea of spontaneous alacrity, that waits for no monitor. For there are three gradations, so to speak, as to acting. First, we sometimes act unwillingly, but it is from shame or fear. Secondly, we act willingly, but at the same time it is from being either impelled, or induced from influence, apart from our own minds. Thirdly, we act from the prompting of our own minds, when we of our own accord set ourselves to do what is becoming. Such cheerfulness of anticipation is better than the actual performance of the deed. [672]11. Now what ye have begun to do. It is probable, that the ardor of the Corinthians had quickly cooled down: otherwise they would, without any delay, have prosecuted their purpose. The Apostle, however, as though no fault had as yet been committed, gently admonishes them to complete, what had been well begun. When he adds -- from what you have, he anticipates an objection; for the flesh is always ingenious in finding out subterfuges. Some plead that they have families, which it were inhuman to neglect; others, on the ground that they cannot give much, make use of this as a pretext for entire exemption. Could I give so small a sum? All excuses of this nature Paul removes, when he commands every one to contribute according to the measure of his ability. He adds, also, the reason: that God looks to the heart -- not to what is given, for when he says, that readiness of mind is acceptable to God, according to the individual's ability, his meaning is this -- "If from slender resources you present some small sum, your disposition is not less

esteemed in the sight of God, than in the case of a rich man's giving a large sum from his abundance. (Mark 12:44.) For the disposition is not estimated according to what you have not, that is, God does by no means require of thee, that thou coldest contribute more than thy resources allow." In this way none are excused; for the rich, on the one hand, owe to God a larger offering, and the poor, on the other hand, ought not to be ashamed of their slender resources.

2 Corinthians 8:13-17

13. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 13. Non enim ut aliis relaxatio sit, vobis autem angustia: sed ut ex aequabilitate. 14. But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: 14. In praesenti tempore vestra copia illorum succurrat inopiae: et illorum copia vestrae succurrat inopiae, quo fiat aequabilitas. 15. As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack. 15. Quemadmodum scriptum est (Exodus 16:18.) Qwui multum habebat, huic nihil superfluit: et qui paulum habebat, is nihilominus habuit. 16. But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. 16. Gratia autem Deo, qui dedit eandem sollicitudinem pro vobis in corde Titi, 17. For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. 17. Qui exhortationem acceperit: quin potius, quum esset diligentior, suapte sponte ad vos venerit. 13. Not that others. This is a confirmation of the preceding statement -- that a readiness of will is well-pleasing to God alike in poverty and in wealth, inasmuch as God does not mean that we should be reduced to straits, in order that others may be at ease through our liberality. True, indeed, it is certain, that we owe to God, not merely a part, but all that we are, and all that we have, but in His kindness He spares us thus far, that He is satisfied with that participation of which the Apostle here speaks, What he teaches here you must understand to mean an abatement from the rigor of law. [673] In the mean time, it is our part to stir ourselves up from time to time to liberality, because we must not be so much afraid of going to excess in this department. The danger is on the side of excessive niggardliness. This doctrine, however, is needful in opposition to fanatics, who think that you have done nothing, unless you have stripped yourself of every thing, so as to make every thing common; [674] and, certainly, they gain this much by their frenzy, that no one can give alms with a quiet conscience. Hence we must carefully observe Paul's (epieikeia) mildness, [675] and moderation, in stating that our alms are well-pleasing to God, when we relieve the necessity of our brethren from our abundance -- not in such a way that they are at ease, and we are in want, but so that we may, from what belongs to us, distribute, so far as our resources allow, and that with a cheerful mind. [676]By an equality Equality may be taken in two senses, either as meaning a mutual compensation, when like is given for like, or, as meaning a proper adjustment. I understand isoteta simply as meaning -- an equality of proportional right, [677] as Aristotle terms it. [678] In this signification it is made use of, also, in Colossians 4:1, where he exhorts "masters to give to their servants what is equal." He certainly does not mean, that they should be equal in condition and station, but by this term he expresses that humanity and clemency, and kind treatment, which masters, in their turn, owe to their servants. Thus the Lord recommends to us a proportion of this nature, that we may, in so far as every one's resources admit, afford help to the indigent, that there may not be some in affluence, and others in indigence. Hence he adds -- at the present time. At that time, indeed, necessity pressed upon them. Hence we are admonished that, in exercising beneficence, we must provide for the present necessity, if we would observe the true rule of equity.14. And their abundance It is uncertain, what sort of abundance he means. Some interpret it as meaning, that this had been the case, inasmuch as the

Gospel had flowed out to them from the Church at Jerusalem, from which source they had, in their penury, been assisted by their spiritual riches. This, I think, is foreign to Paul's intention. It ought rather, in my opinion, to be applied to the communion of saints, which means, that whatever duty is discharged to one member, redounds to the advantage of the entire body. "If it is irksome to you to help your brethren with riches that are of no value, consider how many blessings you are destitute of, and these too, far more precious, with which you may be enriched by those who are poor as to worldly substance. This participation, which Christ has established among the members of his body, should animate you to be more forward, and more active in doing good." The meaning may, also, be this. "You now relieve them according to the necessity of the occasion, but they will have an opportunity given them at another time of requiting you." [679] I approve rather of the other sentiment, which is of a more general nature, and with this accords what he again repeats in reference to equality. For the system of proportional right in the Church is this -- that while they communicate to each other mutually according to the measure of gifts and of necessity, this mutual contribution produces a befitting symmetry, though some have more, and some less, and gifts are distributed unequally. [680]15. As it is written. The passage, that Paul quotes, refers to the manna, but let us hear what the Lord says by Moses. He would have this to serve as a never-failing proof, that men do not live by bread alone, but are Divinely supported, by the secret influence of His will, who maintains and preserves all things that he has created. Again, in another passage, (Deuteronomy 8:3,) Moses admonishes them, that they had been nourished for a time with such food, that they might learn that men are supported -- not by their own industry or labor, but by the blessing of God. Hence it appears, that in the manna, as in a mirror, there is presented to us an emblem of the ordinary food that we partake of. Let us now come to the passage that Paul quotes. When the manna had fallen, they were commanded to gather it in heaps, so far as every one could, though at the same time, as some are more active than others, there was more gathered by some than was necessary for daily use, [681] yet no one took for his own private use more than an homer, [682] for that was the measure that was prescribed by the Lord. This being the case, all had as much as was sufficient, and no one was in want. This we have in Exodus 16:18Let us now apply the history to Paul's object. The Lord has not prescribed to us an homer, or any other measure, according to which the food of each day is to be regulated, but he has enjoined upon us frugality and temperance, and has forbidden, that any one should go to excess, taking advantage of his abundance. Let those, then, that have riches, whether they have been left by inheritance, or procured by industry and efforts, consider that their abundance was not intended to be laid out in intemperance or excess, but in relieving the necessities of the brethren. For whatever we have is manna, from whatever quarter it comes, provided it be really ours, inasmuch as riches acquired by fraud, and unlawful artifices, are unworthy to be called so, but are rather quails sent forth by the anger of God. (Numbers 11:31.) And as in the case of one hoarding the manna, either from excessive greed or from distrust, what was laid up immediately putrified, so we need not doubt that the riches, that are heaped up at the expense of our brethren, are accursed, and will soon perish, and that too, in connection with the ruin of the owner; so that we are not to think that it is the way to increase, if, consulting our own advantage for a long while to come, we defraud our poor brethren of the beneficence that we owe them. [683] I acknowledge, indeed, that there is not enjoined upon us an equality of such a kind, as to make it unlawful for the rich to live in any degree of greater elegance than the poor; but an equality is to be observed thus far -- that no one is to be allowed to starve, and no one is to hoard his abundance at the expense of defrauding

others. The poor man's homer [684] will be coarse food and a spare diet; the rich man's homer will be a more abundant portion, it is true, according to his circumstances, but at the same time in such a way that they live temperately, and are not wanting to others. 16. But thanks be to God who hath put. That he may leave the Corinthians without excuse, he now at length adds, that there had been provided for them active prompters, who would attend to the matter. And, in the first place, he names Titus, who, he says, had been divinely raised up. This was of great importance in the case. For his embassy would be so much the more successful, if the Corinthians recognized him as having come to them, from having been stirred up to it by God. From this passage, however, as from innumerable others, we infer that there are no pious affections that do not proceed from the Spirit of God; [685] and farther, that this is an evidence of God's concern for his people, that he raises up ministers and guardians, to make it their endeavor to relieve their necessities. But if the providence of God shows itself in this manner, in providing the means of nourishment for the body, how much greater care will he exercise as to the means of spiritual nourishment, that his people may not be in want of them! Hence it is His special and peculiar work to raise up pastors. [686]His receiving the exhortation means that he had undertaken this business, [687] from being exhorted to it by Paul. He afterwards corrects this by saying, that Titus had not been so much influenced by the advice of others, as he had felt stirred up of his own accord, in accordance with his active disposition.

2 Corinthians 8:18-24

18. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; 18. Misimus autem una cum illo fratrem, cuius laus est in Evangelio per omnes Ecclesias. 19. And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: 19. Nec id solum, verum etiam delectus ab Ecclesiis est comes peregrinationis nostrae, cum hac beneficentia [688] quae administratur a nobis, ad eiusdem Domini gloriam, et animi vestri promptitudinem: 20. Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: 20. Declinantes hoc, ne quis nos carpat in hac exsuperantia, quae administratur a nobis. 21. Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 21. Procurantes honesta, non tantum coram Deo, sed etiam coram hominibus. 22. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. 22. Misimus autem una cum illis fratrem nostrum, quem probaveramus in multis saepenumero diligentem; nunc autem multo diligentiorem, ob multam fiduciam quam habeo ergo vos: 23. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. 23. Sive Titi nomine, qui socius meus est, et erga vos adiutor, sive aliorum, qui fratres nostri sunt, et Apostoli Ecclesiarum, gloria Christi. [689]24. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.24. Proinde documentum caritatis vestrae et nostrae de vobis gloriationis erga eos ostendit et in conspectu Ecclesiarum.18. We have sent with him the brother. The circumstance that three persons are sent, is an evidence, that great expectations were entertained respecting the Corinthians, and it became them to be so much the more attentive to duty, that they might not disappoint the hopes of the Churches. It is uncertain, however, who this second person was; only that some conjecture that it was Luke, others that it was Barnabas. Chrysostom prefers to consider it to have been Barnabas. I agree with him, because it appears that, by the suffrages of the Churches, [690] he was associated with Paul as a companion. As, however, it is almost universally agreed, that Luke was one of those who were the bearers of this Epistle, I have no objection that he be reckoned to be the third that is made mention of.Now the second person, whoever he may be, he honors with a signal commendation, that he had conducted himself as to the gospel in a praiseworthy manner, that is, he had earned applause by promoting the gospel. For, although Barnabas gave place to Paul in the department of speaking, yet in acting they both concurred. He adds farther, that he had received praise, not from one individual, or even from one Church merely, but from all the Churches. To this general testimony he subjoins a particular one, that is suitable to the subject in hand -- that he had been chosen for this department by the concurrence of the Churches. Now it was likely, that this honor would not have been conferred upon him, had he not been long before known to be qualified for it. We must observe, however, the mode of election -- that which was customary among the Greeks -- cheirotonia, (a show of hands,) [691] in which the leaders [692] took the precedence by authority and counsel, and regulated the whole proceeding, while the common people intimated their approval. [693]19.

Which is administered by us. By commending his ministry, he still farther encourages the Corinthians. He says, that it tends to promote the glory of God, and their kindness of disposition. Hence it comes, that these two things are conjoined -- the glory of God and their liberality, and that the latter cannot be given up without the former being proportionally diminished. There is, in addition to this, the labor of those distinguished men, which it were very inconsistent to reject, or allow to pass unimproved.20. Avoiding this, [694] that no one Lest any one should think, that the Churches had an unfavorable opinion of Paul, as if it had been from distrusting his integrity that they had associated partners with him, as persons that are suspected are wont to have guards set over them, he declares that he had been the adviser of this measure, with the view of providing against calumnies. Here some one will ask, "Would any one have been so impudent, as to venture to defame with even the slightest suspicion the man, whose fidelity must have been, in all quarters, beyond every surmise?" I answer, Who is there that will be exempt from Satan's bite, when even Christ himself was not spared by them? Behold, Christ is exposed to the reproaches [695] of the wicked, and shall his servants be in safety? (Matthew 10:25.) Nay rather, the more upright a person is, in that proportion does Satan assail him by every kind of contrivance, if he can by any means shake his credit, for there would arise from this a much greater occasion of stumbling. [696] Hence the higher the station in which we are placed, we must so much the more carefully imitate Paul's circumspection and modesty. He was not so lifted up, as not to be under control equally with any individual of the flock. [697] He was not so self-complacent, as to think it beneath his station to provide against calumnies. Hence he prudently shunned dangers, and used great care not to furnish any wicked person with a handle against him. And, certainly, nothing is more apt to give rise to unfavorable surmises, than the management of public money.21. Providing things honest I am of opinion, that there were not wanting, even among the Corinthians, some who would have proceeded so far as to revile, if occasion had been allowed them. Hence he wished them to know the state of matters, that he might shut the mouths of all everywhere. Accordingly he declares, that he is not merely concerned to have a good conscience in the sight of God, but also to have a good character among men. At the same time, there can be no doubt, that he designed to instruct the Corinthians, as well as all others, by his example, that, in doing what is right, the opinion of men is not to be disregarded. The first thing, [698] it is true, is that the person take care, that he be a good man. This is secured, not by mere outward actions, but by an upright conscience. The next thing is, that the persons, with whom you are conversant, recognize you as such. Here, however, the object in view must be looked to. Nothing, assuredly, is worse than ambition, which vitiates the best things in the world, disfigures, I say, the most graceful, and makes sacrifices of the sweetest smell have an offensive odor before the Lord. Hence this passage is slippery, so that care must be taken [699] lest one should pretend to be desirous, in common with Paul, of a good reputation, and yet be very far from having Paul's disposition, for he provided things honest in the sight of men, that no one might be stumbled by his example, but that, on the contrary, all might be edified. Hence we must, if we would desire to be like him, take care that we be not on our own account desirous of a good name. "He that is regardless of fame," says Augustine, "is cruel, because it is not less necessary before our neighbor, than a good conscience is before God." This is true, provided you consult the welfare of your brethren with a view to the glory of God, and in the mean time are prepared to bear reproaches and ignominy in place of commendation, if the Lord should see it meet. Let a Christian man, however, always take care to frame his life with a view to the edification of his neighbors, and diligently take heed, that the

ministers of Satan shall have no pretext for reviling, to the dishonor of God and the offense of the good.22. On account of the great confidence. The meaning is, "I am not afraid of their coming to you proving vain and fruitless; for I have felt beforehand an assured confidence, that their embassy will have a happy issue; I am so well aware of their fidelity and diligence." He says that the brother, whose name he does not mention, had felt more eagerly inclined; partly because he saw that he [700] had a good opinion of the Corinthians, partly because he had been encouraged by Titus, and partly because he saw many distinguished men apply themselves to the same business with united efforts. Hence one thing only remained -- that the Corinthians themselves should not be wanting on their part. [701]In calling them the Apostles of the Churches, he might be understood in two senses -- either as meaning that they had been set apart by God as Apostles to the Churches, or that they had been appointed by the Churches to undertake that office. The second of these is the more suitable. They are called also the glory of Christ, for this reason, that as he alone is the glory of believers, so he ought also to be glorified by them in return. Hence, all that excel in piety and holiness are the glory of Christ, because they have nothing but by Christ's gift.He mentions two things in the close: "See that our brethren behold your love," and secondly, "Take care, that it be not in vain that I have boasted of you." For autous (to them,) appears to me to be equivalent to coram ipsis, (before them,) for this clause does not refer to the poor, but to the messengers of whom mention had been made. [702] For he immediately afterwards subjoins, that they would not be alone witnesses, but in consequence of the report given by them, a report would go out even to distant Churches.

2 Corinthians 9:1-5

1. For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:1. Nam de subministratione quae fit in sanctos, supervacuum mihi est scribere vobis.2. For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.2. Novi enim promptitudinem animi vestri, de qua pro vobis gloriatus sum apud Macedones: quod Achaia parata sit ab anno superiori: et aemulatio vestri excitavit complures.3. Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:3. Misi autem fratres, ut ne gloriatio nostra de vobis inanis fiat in hac parte: ut, quemadmodum dixi, parati sitis.4. Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.4. Ne si forte mecum venerint Macedones, et vos deprehenderint imparatos, nos pudore suffundamur (ne dicam vos) in hac fiducia gloriationis.5. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.5. Necessarium ergo existimavi, exhortari fratres, ut ante venirent ad vos: ut praepararent qante promissam benedictionem vestram, quo in promptu sit, atque ita ut benedictio, [703] non tenacitas.This statement may seem at first view to suit ill, or not sufficiently well, with what goes before; for he seems to speak of a new matter, that he had not previously touched upon, while in reality he is following out the same subject. Let the reader, however, observe, that Paul treats of the very same matter that he had been treating of before -- that it was from no want of confidence that he exhorted the Corinthians, and that his admonition is not coupled with any reproof as to the past, but that he has particular reasons that influence him. The meaning, then, of what he says now is this: "I do not teach you that it is a duty to afford relief to the saints, for what need were there of this? For that is sufficiently well known to you, and you have given practical evidence that you are not prepared to be wanting to them; [704] but as I have, from boasting everywhere of your liberality, pledged my credit along with yours, this consideration will not allow me to refrain from speaking." But for this, such anxious concern might have been somewhat offensive to the Corinthians, because they would have thought, either that they were reproached for their indolence, or that they were suspected by Paul. By bringing forward, however, a most, suitable apology, he secures for himself the liberty of not merely exhorting them, without giving offense, but even from time to time urging them.Some one, however, may possibly suspect, that Paul here pretends what he does not really think. This were exceedingly absurd; for if he reckons them to be sufficiently prepared for doing their duty, why does he set himself so vigorously to admonish them? and, on the other hand, if he is in doubt as to their willingness, why does he declare it to be unnecessary to admonish them? Love carries with it these two things, -- good hope, and anxious concern. Never would he have borne such a testimony in favor of the Corinthians, had he not been fully of the mind that he expresses. He had seen a happy commencement: he had hoped, that the farther progress of the matter would be corresponding; but as he was well aware of the unsteadiness of the human mind, he could not provide too carefully against their turning aside from their pious design.1. Ministering. This term seems not

very applicable to those that give of their substance to the poor, inasmuch as liberality is deserving of a more splendid designation. [705] Paul, however, had in view, what believers owe to their fellowmembers. [706] For the members of Christ ought mutually to minister to each other. In this way, when we relieve the brethren, we do nothing more than discharge a ministry that is due to them. On the other hand, to neglect the saints, when they stand in need of our aid, is worse than inhuman, inasmuch as we defraud them of what is their due.2. For which I have boasted. He shows the good opinion that he had of them from this, that he had, in a manner, stood forward as their surety by asserting their readiness. But what if he rashly asserted more than the case warranted? For there is some appearance of this, inasmuch as he boasted, that they had been ready a year before with it, while he is still urging them to have it in readiness. I answer, that his words are not to be understood as though Paul had declared, that what they were to give was already laid aside in the chest, but he simply mentioned what had been resolved upon among them. This involves no blame in respect of fickleness or mistake. It was, then, of this promise that Paul spoke. [707]3. But I have sent the brethren. He now brings forward the reason -- why it is that, while entertaining a favorable opinion as to their willingness, he, nevertheless, sets himself carefully to exhort them. "I consult," says he, "my own good name and yours; for while I promised in your name, we would, both of us in common, incur disgrace, if words and deeds did not correspond. Hence you ought to take my fears in good part." 4. In this confidence The Greek term being hupostasis the Old Interpreter has rendered it substantiam, (substance.) [708] Erasmus renders it argumentum, (subject-matter,) but neither is suitable. Budaeus, however, observes, that this term is sometimes taken to mean boldness, or confidence, as it is used by Polybius when he says, ouch houto ten dunamin hos ten hupostasin kai tolman autou katapeplegmenon ton enantion -- "It was not so much his bodily strength, as his boldness and intrepidity, that proved confounding to the enemy." [709] Hence hupotatikos sometimes means one that is bold and confident. [710] Now every one must see, how well this meaning accords with Paul's thread of discourse. Hence it appears, that other interpreters have, through inadvertency, fallen into a mistake.5. As a blessing, not in the way of niggardliness In place of blessing, some render it collection. I have preferred, however, to render it literally, as the Greeks employed the term eulogias to express the Hebrew word vrkh, (beracah,) which is used in the sense of a blessing, that is, an invoking of prosperity, as well as in the sense of beneficence. [711] The reason I reckon to be this, that it is in the first instance ascribed to God. [712] Now we know how God blesses us efficiently by his simple nod. [713] When it is from this transferred to men, it retains the same meaning, -- improperly, indeed, inasmuch as men have not the same efficacy in blessing, [714] but yet not unsuitably by transference. [715]To blessing Paul opposes pleonexian, (grudging,) which term the Greeks employ to denote excessive greediness, as well as fraud and niggardliness. [716] I have rather preferred the term niggardliness in this contrast; for Paul would have them give, not grudgingly, but. with a liberal spirit, as will appear still more clearly from what follows.

2 Corinthians 9:6-9

6. But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 6. Hoc autem (est): Qui sementem facit parce, is parce messurus est: et qui sementem facit in benedictionibus, [717] in benedictionibus [718] etiam metet. 7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 7. Unusquisque secundum propositum cordis, non ex molestia aut necessitate: nam hilarem datorem diligit Deus. 8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 8. Potens est autem Deus efficere, ut tota gratia in vos exuberet: ut in omnibus omnem sufficientiam habentes, exuberetis in omne opus bonum. 9. (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. 9. Quemadmodum scriptum est (Psalm 112:9): Dispersit, dedit pauperibus, iustitia eius manet in saeculum. 6. Now the case is this [719] He now commends alms-giving by a beautiful similitude, comparing it to sowing. For in sowing, the seed is cast forth by the hand, is scattered upon the ground on this side and on that, is harrowed, and at length rots; and thus it seems as good as lost. The case is similar as to alms-giving. What goes from you to some other quarter seems as if it were, diminishing of what you have, but the season of harvest will come, when the fruit will be gathered. For as the Lord reckons every thing that is laid out upon the poor as given to himself, so he afterwards requites it with large interest. (Proverbs 19:17.) Now for Paul's similitude. He that sows sparingly will have a poor harvest, corresponding to the sowing: he that sows bountifully and with a full hand, will reap a correspondingly bountiful harvest. Let this doctrine be deeply rooted in our minds, that, whenever carnal reason keeps us back from doing good through fear of loss, we may immediately defend ourselves with this shield -- "But the Lord declares that we are sowing." The harvest, however, should be explained as referring to the spiritual recompense of eternal life, as well as to earthly blessings, which God confers upon the beneficent. For God requites, not only in heaven, but also in this world, the beneficence of believers. Hence it is as though he had said, "The more beneficent you are to your neighbors, you will find the blessing of God so much the more abundantly poured out upon you." He again contrasts here blessing with sparing, as he had previously done with niggardliness. Hence it appears, that it is taken to mean -- a large and bountiful liberality. 7 Every one according to the purpose of his heart. As he had enjoined it upon them to give liberally, this, also, required to be added -- that liberality is estimated by God, not so much from the sum, as from the disposition. He was desirous, it is true, to induce them to give largely, in order that the brethren might be the more abundantly aided; but he had no wish to extort any thing from them against their will. Hence he exhorts them to give willingly, whatever they might be prepared to give. He places purpose of heart in contrast with regret and constraint. For what we do, when compelled by necessity, is not done by us with purpose of heart, but with reluctance. [720] Now the necessity meant you must understand to be what is extrinsic, as it is called -- that is, what springs from the influence of others. For we obey God, because it is necessary, and yet we do it willingly. We ourselves, accordingly, in that case impose a necessity of our own accord, and because the flesh is reluctant, we often even constrain ourselves to perform a duty that is

necessary for us. But, when we are constrained from the influence of others, having in the mean time an inclination to avoid it, if by any means we could, we do nothing in that case with alacrity -- nothing with cheerfulness, but every thing with reluctance or constraint of mind. For God loveth a cheerful giver He calls us back to God, as I said in the outset, for alms are a sacrifice. Now no sacrifice is pleasing to God, if it is not voluntary. For when he teaches us, that God loveth a cheerful giver, he intimates that, on the other hand, the niggardly and reluctant are loathed by Him. For He does not wish to lord it over us, in the manner of a tyrant, but, as He acts towards us as a Father, so he requires from us the cheerful obedience of children. [721]8. And God is able Again he provides against the base thought, which our infidelity constantly suggests to us. "What! will you not rather have a regard to your own interest? Do you not consider, that when this is taken away, there will be so much the less left for yourself?" With the view of driving away this, Paul arms us with a choice promise -- that whatever we give away will turn out to our advantage. I have said already, that we are by nature excessively niggardly -- because we are prone to distrust, which tempts every one to retain with eager grasp what belongs to him. For correcting this fault, we must lay hold of this promise -- that those that do good to the poor do no less provide for their own interests than if they were watering their lands. For by alms-givings, like so many canals, they make the blessing of God flow forth towards themselves, so as to be enriched by it. What Paul means is this: "Such liberality will deprive you of nothing, but God will make it return to you in much greater abundance." For he speaks of the power of God, not as the Poets do, but after the manner of Scripture, which ascribes to him a power put forth in action, the present efficacy of which we ourselves feel -- not any inactive power that we merely imagine.That having all sufficiency in all things He mentions a twofold advantage arising from that grace, which he had promised to the Corinthians -- that they should have what is enough for themselves, and would have something over and above for doing good. By the term sufficiency he points out the measure which the Lord knows to be useful for us, for it is not always profitable for us, to be filled to satiety. The Lord therefore, ministers to us according to the measure of our advantage, sometimes more, sometimes less, but in such a way that we are satisfied -- which is much more, than if one had the whole world to luxuriate upon. In this sufficiency we must abound, for the purpose of doing good to others, for the reason why God does us good is -- not that every one may keep to himself what he has received, but that there may be a mutual participation among us, according as necessity may require.9. As it is written, He hath dispersed He brings forward a proof from Psalms 112:9, where, along with other excellencies of the pious man, the Prophet mentions this, too, -- that he will not be wanting in doing good, but as water flows forth incessantly from a perennial fountain, so the gushing forth of his liberality will be unceasing. Paul has an eye to this -- that we be not weary in well doing, (Galatians 6:9,) and this is also what the Prophet's words mean. [722]

2 Corinthians 9:10-15

10. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) 10. Pro qui suppeditat semen seminanti, is et panem in cibum supeditet, et multiplicet sementem vestram, et augeat proventus iustitiae vestrae. 11. Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. 11. Ut in omnibus locupletemini in omnem simplicitatem, quae per vos producit gratiarum actionem Deo. 12. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 12. Nam ministerium huius functionis [723] non solum supplet ea quae desunt sanctis: verum etiam exuberat in hoc, quod per multos agantur gratiae Deo: 13. Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; 13. Quod per probationem ministrii huius glorificant Deum super obedientia consensus vestri in Evangelium Christi: et de simplicatate communicationis in ipsos, et in omnes: 14. And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. 14. Et precatione eorum pro vobis: qui desiderant vos propter eminentem Dei gratiam in vobis. 15. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. 15. Gratia autem Deo super inenarrabili suo munere.10. He that supplieth. A beautieth circumlocution, in place of the term God, and full of consolation. [724] For the person that sows seed in the proper season, appears when reaping to gather the fruit of his labor and industry, and sowing appears as though it were the fountainhead from which food flows forth to us. Paul opposes this idea, by maintaining that the seed is afforded and the food is furnished by the favor of God even to the husbandmen that sow, and who are looked upon as supporting themselves and others by their efforts. There is a similar statement in Deuteronomy 8:16,18 -- God fed thee with manna -- food which thy fathers knew not: lest perhaps when thou hast come into the land which he shall give thee, thou shouldst say, My hand and my strength have gotten, me this wealth; for it is the Lord that giveth power to get wealth, etc.Supply Here there are two different readings, even in the Greek versions. For some manuscripts render the three verbs in the future -- will supply, will multiply, will increase. [725] In this way, there would be a confirmation of the foregoing statement, for it is no rare thing with Paul to repeat the same promise in different words, that it may be the better impressed upon men's minds. In other manuscripts these words occur in the infinitive mood, and it is well known that the infinitive is sometimes used in place of the optative. I rather prefer this reading, both because it is the more generally received one, and because Paul is accustomed to follow up his exhortations with prayers, entreating from God what he had previously comprised in his doctrine; though at the same time the former reading would not be unsuitable.Bread for food He mentions a two-fold fruit of the blessing of God upon us -- first, that we have sufficiency for ourselves for the support of life; and, secondly, that we have something to lay up for relieving the necessities of others. For as we are not born for ourselves merely, [726] so a Christian man ought neither to live to himself, nor lay out what he has, merely for his own use.Under the terms seed, and fruits of righteousness, he refers to alms. The fruits of righteousness he indirectly contrasts with those returns that the greater number lay up in cellars, barns, and keeping-places, that they may, every one of them, cram in

whatever they can gather, nay, scrape together, so as to enrich themselves. By the former term he expresses the means of doing good; by the latter the work itself, or office of love; [727] for righteousness is taken here, by synecdoche, to mean beneficence. "May God not only supply you with what may be sufficient for every one's private use, but also to such an extent, that the fountain of your liberality, ever flowing forth, may never be exhausted!" If, however, it is one department of righteousness -- as assuredly it is not the least [728] -- to relieve the necessities of neighbors, those must be unrighteous who neglect this department of duty.11. May be enriched unto all bountifulness. Again he makes use of the term bountifulness, to express the nature of true liberality -- when,casting all our care upon God, (1 Peter 5:7,)we cheerfully lay out what belongs to us for whatever purposes He directs. He teaches us [729] that these are the true riches of believers, when, relying upon the providence of God for the sufficiency of their support, they are not by distrust kept back from doing good. Nor is it without good reason, that he dignifies with the title of affluence the satisfying abundance of a mind that is simple, and contented with its moderate share; for nothing is more famished and starved than the distrustful, who are tormented with an anxious desire of having.Which produces through you. He commends, in consideration of another result, the alms which they were about to bestow -- that they would tend to promote the glory of God. He afterwards, too, expresses this more distinctly, with amplification, in this way: "Besides the ordinary advantage of love, they will also produce thanksgiving." Now he amplifies by saying, that thanks will be given to God by many, and that, not merely for the liberality itself, by which they have been helped, but also for the entire measure of piety among the Corinthians.By the term administration, he means what he had undertaken at the request of the Churches. Now what we render functionem (service), is in the Greek leitourgia term that sometimes denotes a sacrifice, sometimes any office that is publicly assigned. [730] Either of them will suit this passage well. For on the one hand, it is no unusual thing for alms to be termed sacrifices; and, on the other hand, as on occasion of offices being distributed among citizens, [731] no one grudges to undertake the duty that has been assigned him, so in the Church, imparting to others ought to be looked upon as a necessary duty. [732] The Corinthians, therefore, and others, by assisting the brethren at Jerusalem, presented a sacrifice to God, or they discharged a service that was proper, and one which they were bound to fulfill. Paul was the minister of that sacrifice, but the term ministry, or service, may also be viewed as referring to the Corinthians. It is, however, of no particular importance. 13. By the experiment of that administration The term experiment here, as in a variety of other places, means proof or trial [733] For it was a sufficient token for bringing the love of the Corinthians to the test, -- that they were so liberal to brethren that were at a great distance from them. Paul, however, extends it farther -- to their concurrent obedience in the gospel. [734] For by such proofs we truly manifest, that we are obedient to the doctrine of the gospel. Now their concurrence appears from this -- that alms are conferred with the common consent of all.14. And their prayer He omits no advantage which may be of any use for stirring up the Corinthians. [735] In the first place, he has made mention of the comfort that believers would experience; secondly, the thanksgiving, by means of which God was to be glorified. Nay more, he has said that this would be a confession, which would manifest to all their unanimous concurrence in faith, and in pious obedience. He now adds the reward that the Corinthians would receive from the saints -- good-will springing from gratitude, [736] and earnest prayers. "They will have," says he, "the means of requiting you in return; for they will regard you with the love with which they ought, and they will be careful to commend you to God in their prayers." At length, as though he had obtained

his desire, he prepares himself [737] to celebrate the praises of God, by which he was desirous to testify the confidence felt by him, as though the matter were already accomplished.

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

1. Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:1. Pro ipse ego Paulus exhortor vos [738] per lenitatem et mansuetudinem Christi, qui secundum faciem humilis quidem sum inter vos, absens autem audax sum in vos.2. But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.2. Rogo autem, ne praesens audeam ea fiducia, qua cogito audax esse in quosdam, qui nos aestimant, acsi secundum carnem ambularemus.3. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:3. Nam in carne ambulantes, non secundum carnem militamus.4. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)4. Siquidem arma militiae nostrae non carnilia sunt, sed potentia Deo ad destructionem munitionum, quibus consilia destruimus.5. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;5. Et omnem celsitudinem, quae extollitur adversus cognitionem Dei: et captivam ducimus omnem cogitationem ad obediendum Christo: [739]6. And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.6. Et in promptu habemus vindictam adversus omnem inobedientiam, quum impleta fuerit vestra obedientia.Having finished his exhortation, he now proceeds partly to refute the calumnies with which he had been defamed by the false apostles, and partly to repress the insolence [740] of certain wicked persons, who could not bear to be under restraint. Both parties, with the view of destroying Paul's authority, construed the vehemence with which he thundered in his Epistles to be thrasodeilian -- (mere bravado,) [741] because when present he was not equally prepared to show himself off in respect of appearance, and address, but was mean and contemptible. "See," said they, "here is a man, that, under a consciousness of his inferiority, is so very modest and timid, but now, when at a distance, makes a fierce attack! Why is he less bold in speech than in letters? Will he terrify us, when he is at a distance, who, when present, is the object of contempt? How comes he to have such confidence as to imagine, that he is at liberty to do anything with us?" [742] They put speeches of this kind into circulation, with the view of disparaging his strictness, and even rendering it odious. Paul replies, that he is not bold except in so far as he is constrained by necessity, and that the meanness of his bodily presence, for which he was held in contempt, detracted nothing from his authority, inasmuch as he was distinguished by spiritual excellence, not by carnal show. Hence those would not pass with impunity, who derided either his exhortations, or his reproaches, or his threatenings. The words I myself are emphatic; as though he had said, that however the malevolent might blame him for inconstancy, he was in reality not changeable, but remained uniformly the same.1. I exhort you. The speech is abrupt, as is frequently the case with speeches uttered under the influence of strong feeling. The meaning is this: "I beseech you, nay more, I earnestly entreat you by the gentleness of Christ, not to compel me, through your obstinacy, to be more severe than I would desire to be, and than I will be, towards those who despise me, on the ground of my having nothing excellent in external appearance, and do not recognize that spiritual excellence, with which the Lord has distinguished me, and by which I ought

rather to be judged of."The form of entreaty, which he makes use of, is taken from the subject in hand, when he says -- by the meekness and gentleness of Christ Calumniators took occasion to find fault with him, because his bodily presence was deficient in dignity, [743] and because, on the other hand, when at a distance, he thundered forth in his Epistles. Both calumnies he befittingly refutes, as has been said, but he declares here, that nothing delights him more than gentleness, which becomes a minister of Christ, and of which the Master himself furnished an example.Learn of me, says he, for I am meek and lowly. My yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:29, 30.)The Prophet also says of him,His voice will not be heard in the streets: a bruised reed he shall not break, etc. (Isaiah 42:2, 3.)That gentleness, therefore, which Christ showed, he requires also from his servants. Paul, in making mention of it, intimates that he is no stranger to it. [744] "I earnestly beseech you not to despise that gentleness, which Christ showed us in his own person, and shows us every day in his servants, nay more, which ye see in me."Who in presence He repeats this, as if in the person of his adversaries, by way of imitating them. [745] Now he confesses, so far as words go, what they upbraided him with, yet, as we shall see, in such a way as to concede nothing to them in reality. 2. I beseech you, that I may not be bold, when I am present. Some think, that the discourse is incomplete, and that he does not express the matter of his request. [746] I am rather of opinion, however, that what was wanting in the former clause is here completed, so that it is a general exhortation. "Show yourselves docile and tractable towards me, that I may not be constrained to be more severe." It is the duty of a good pastor to allure his sheep peacefully and kindly, that they may allow themselves to be governed, rather than to constrain them by violence. Severity, it is true, is, I acknowledge, sometimes necessary, but we must always set out with gentleness, and persevere in it, so long as the hearer shews himself tractable. [747] Severity must be the last resource. "We must," says he, "try all methods, before having recourse to rigor; nay more, let us never be rigorous, unless we are constrained to it." In the mean time, as to their reckoning themselves pusillanimous and timid, when he had to come to close quarters, he intimates that they were mistaken as to this, when he declares that he will stoutly resist face to face the contumacious [748] "They despise me," says he, "as if I were a pusillanimous person, but they will find that I am braver and more courageous than they could have wished, when they come to contend in good earnest." From this we see, when it is time to act with severity -- after we have found, on trial being made, that allurements and mildness have no good effect. "I shall do it with reluctance," says Paul, "but still I have determined to do it." Here is an admirable medium; for as we must, in so far as is in our power, draw men rather than drive them, so, when mildness has no effect, in dealing with those that are stern and refractory, rigor must of necessity be resorted to: otherwise it will not be moderation, nor equableness of temper, but criminal cowardice. [749]Who account of us. Erasmus renders it -- "Those who think that we walk, as it were, according to the flesh." The Old Interpreter came nearer, in my opinion, to Paul's true meaning -- "Qui nos arbitrantur, tanquam secundum carnem ambulemus;" -- ("Those who think of us as though we walked according to the flesh;" [750]) though, at the same time, the phrase is not exactly in accordance with the Latin idiom, nor does it altogether bring out the Apostle's full meaning. For logizesthai is taken here to mean -- reckoning or esteeming. [751] "They think of us," says Paul, "or they take this view of us, as though we walked according to the flesh."To walk according to the flesh, Chrysostom explains to mean -- acting unfaithfully, or conducting one's self improperly in his office; [752] and, certainly, it is taken in this sense in various instances in Paul's writings. The term flesh, however, I rather understand to mean --

outward pomp or show, by which alone the false Apostles are accustomed to recommend themselves. Paul, therefore, complains of the unreasonableness of those who looked for nothing in him except the flesh, that is, visible appearance, as they speak, or in the usual manner of persons who devote all their efforts to ambition. For as Paul did not by any means excel in such endowments, as ordinarily procure praise or reputation among the children of this world, (Luke 16:8,) he was despised as though he had been one of the common herd. But by whom? [753] Certainly, by the ambitious, who estimated him from mere appearance, while they paid no regard to what lay concealed within.3. For though we walk in the flesh. Walking in the flesh means here -- living it the world; or, as he expresses it elsewhere,being at home in the body. (2 Corinthians 5:6.)For he was shut up in the prison of his body. This, however, did not prevent the influence of the Holy Spirit from showing itself marvelously in his weakness. There is here again a kind of concession, which, at the same time, is of no service to his adversaries.Those war according to the flesh, who attempt nothing but in dependence upon worldly resources, in which alone, too, they glory. They have not their confidence placed in the government and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Paul declares that he is not one of this class, inasmuch as he is furnished with other weapons than those of the flesh and the world. Now, what he affirms respecting himself is applicable, also, to all true ministers of Christ. [754] For theycarry an inestimable treasure in earthen vessels,as he had previously said. (2 Corinthians 4:7.) Hence, however they may be surrounded with the infirmities of the flesh, the spiritual power of God, nevertheless, shines forth resplendently in them.4. For the weapons of our warfare. The warfare corresponds with the kind of weapons. He glories in being furnished with spiritual weapons. The warfare, accordingly, is spiritual. Hence it follows by way of contraries, [755] that it is not according to the flesh In comparing the ministry of the gospel to a warfare, he uses a most apt similitude. The life of a Christian, it is true, is a perpetual warfare, for whoever gives himself to the service of God will have no truce from Satan at any time, but will be harassed with incessant disquietude. It becomes, however, ministers of the word and pastors to be standard-bearers, going before the others; and, certainly, there are none that Satan harasses more, that are more severely assaulted, or that sustain more numerous or more dreadful onsets. That man, therefore, is mistaken, who girds himself for the discharge of this office, and is not at the same time furnished with courage and bravery for contending; for he is not exercised otherwise than in fighting. For we must take this into account, that the gospel is like a fire, by which the fury of Satan is en-kindled. Hence it cannot but be that he will arm himself for a contest, whenever he sees that it is advanced. But by what weapons is he to be repelled? It is only by spiritual weapons that he can be repelled. Whoever, therefore, is unarmed with the influence of the Holy Spirit, however he may boast that he is a minister of Christ, will nevertheless, not prove himself to be such. At the same time, if you would have a full enumeration of spiritual weapons, doctrine must be conjoined with zeal, and a good conscience with the efficacy of the Spirit, and with other necessary graces. Let now the Pope go, and assume to himself the apostolic dignity [756] What could be more ridiculous, if our judgment is to be formed in accordance with the rule here laid down by Paul!Mighty through God. Either according to God, or from God. I am of opinion, that there is here an implied antithesis, so that this strength is placed in contrast with the weakness which appears outwardly before the world, and thus, paying no regard to the judgments of men, he would seek from God approbation of his fortitude. [757] At the same time, the antithesis will hold good in another sense -- that the power of his arms depends upon God, not upon the world.In the demolishing of fortresses. He makes use of

the term fortresses to denote contrivances, and every high thing that is exalted against God, [758] as to which we shall find him speaking afterwards. It is, however, with propriety and expressiveness that he so designates them; for his design is to boast, that there is nothing in the world so strongly fortified as to be beyond his power to overthrow. I am well aware how carnal men glory in their empty shows, and how disdainfully and recklessly they despise me, as though there were nothing in me but what is mean and base, while they, in the mean time, were standing on a lofty eminence. But their confidence is foolish, for that armor of the Lord, with which I fight, will prevail in opposition to all the bulwarks, in reliance upon which they believe themselves to be invincible. Now, as the world is accustomed to fortify itself in a twofold respect for waging war with Christ -- on the one hand, by cunning, by wicked artifices, by subtilty, and other secret machinations; and, on the other hand, by cruelty and oppression, he touches upon both these methods. For by contrivances he means, whatever pertains to carnal wisdom.The term high thing denotes any kind of glory and power in this world. There is no reason, therefore, why a servant of Christ should dread anything, however formidable, that may stand up in opposition to his doctrine. Let him, in spite of it, persevere, and he will scatter to the winds every machination of whatever sort. Nay more, the kingdom of Christ cannot be set up or established, otherwise than by throwing down everything in the world that is exalted. For nothing is more opposed to the spiritual wisdom of God than the wisdom of the flesh; nothing is more at variance with the grace of God than man's natural ability, and so as to other things. Hence the only foundation of Christ's kingdom is the abasement of men. And to this effect are those expressions in the Prophets:The moon shall be ashamed, and the sun shall be confounded, when the Lord shall begin to reign in that day; (Isaiah 24:23.)Again,The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the high looks of mortals shall be abased, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.(Isaiah 5:15, and Isaiah 2:17)Because, in order that God alone may shine forth, it is necessary that the glory of the world should vanish away.5. And bring into captivity I am of opinion, that, having previously spoken more particularly of the conflict of spiritual armor, along with the hinderances that rise up in opposition to the gospel of Christ, he now, on the other hand, speaks of the ordinary preparation, by which men must be brought into subjection to him. For so long as we rest in our own judgment, and are wise in our own estimation, we are far from having made any approach to the doctrine of Christ. Hence we must set out with this, thathe who is wise must become a fool, (1 Corinthians 3:18,)that is, we must give up our own understanding, and renounce the wisdom of the flesh, and thus we must present our minds to Christ empty that he may fill them. Now the form of expression must be observed, when he says, that he brings every thought into captivity, for it is as though he had said, that the liberty of the human mind must be restrained and bridled, that it may not be wise, apart from the doctrine of Christ; and farther, that its audacity cannot be restrained by any other means, than by its being carried away, as it were, captive. Now it is by the guidance of the Spirit, that it is brought to allow itself to be placed under control, and remain in a voluntary captivity.6. And are in readiness to avenge. This he adds, lest insolent men should presumptuously lift themselves up in opposition to his ministry, as if they could do so with impunity. Hence he says, that power had been given him -- not merely for constraining voluntary disciples to subjection to Christ, but also for inflicting vengeance upon the rebellious, [759] and that his threats were not empty bugbears, [760] but had the execution quite in readiness -- to use the customary expression. Now this vengeance is founded on Christ's word -- whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven. (Matthew 18:18.)For although God does not thunder forth immediately on the minister's

pronouncing the sentence, yet the decision is ratified, [761] and will be accomplished in its own time. Let it, however, be always understood, that it is when the minister fights with spiritual armor. Some understand it as referring to bodily punishments, by means of which the Apostles inflicted vengeance upon contumacious and impious persons; as for example, Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, and Paul struck Elymas the sorcerer blind. (Acts 5:1-10, and Acts 13:6-11.) But the other meaning suits better, for the Apostles did not make use of that power invariably or indiscriminately. Paul, however, speaks in general terms that he has vengeance ready at hand against all the disobedient.When your obedience shall be fulfilled How prudently he guards against alienating any by excessive severity! For as he had threatened to inflict punishment upon the rebellious, that he may not seem to provoke them, he declares that another duty had been enjoined upon him with regard to them -- simply that of making them obedient to Christ. And, unquestionably, this is the proper intention of the gospel, as he teaches both in the commencement and in the close of the Epistle to the Romans. (Romans 1:5, and Romans 16:26.) Hence all Christian teachers ought carefully to observe this order, that they should first endeavor with gentleness to bring their hearers to obedience, so as to invite them kindly before proceeding to inflict punishment upon rebellion. [762] Hence, too, Christ [763] has given the commandment as to loosing before that of binding. [764]

2 Corinthians 10:7-11

7. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. 7. Quae secundum faciem sunt videtis: si quis sibi confidit, quia sit Christi, hoc reputet etiam ex se ipso rursum, quod sicuti ipse Christi, ita et nos Christi. 8. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: 8. Nam etsi abundantius glorier de potestate nostra, quam dedit nobis Dominus in aedificationem, et non in destructionem vestram, non pudefiam; 9. That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. 9. Ne autem videar terrere vos per Epistolas. 10. For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. 10. (Siquidem Epistolae, inquiunt, graves sunt ac robustae; praesentia autem corporis infirma, et sermo contemptus.) 11. Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. 11. Hoc cogitet qui talis est, quod quales sumus absentes, sermone per Epistolas, tales sumus etiam praesentes, opere. 7. That are according to appearance. In the first place, the clause according to appearance, may be taken in two ways: either as meaning the reality itself, visible and manifest, or an outward mask, [765] that deceives us. The sentence, too, may be read either interrogatively or affirmatively: nay more, the verb blepete may be taken either in the imperative mood, or in the subjunctive. I am rather of opinion, however, that it is expressive of chiding, and that the Corinthians are reaproved, because they suffered their eyes to be dazzled with empty show. "You greatly esteem others who swell out with mighty airs of importance, while you look down upon me, because I have nothing of show and boasting." For Christ himself contrasts the judgment that is according to appearance with righteous judgment. (John 7:24, and John 8:15.) Hence he reproves the Corinthians, because, contenting themselves with show, or appearance, they did not seriously consider, what kind of persons ought to be looked upon as the servants of Christ. If any one trusteth in himself -- an expression that is full of great confidence, for he takes it, as it were, for granted, that he is so certainly a minister of Christ, that this distinction cannot be taken from him. "Whoever," says he, "is desirous to be looked upon as a minister of Christ, must necessarily count me in along with himself." For what reason? "Let him," says he. "think for himself, for whatever things he may have in himself, that make him worthy of such an honor, the same will he find in me." By this he hinted to them, that whoever they might be that reviled him, ought not to be looked upon as the servants of Christ. It would not become all to speak thus confidently, for it might certainly happen -- nay, it happens every day, that they same claim is haughtily advanced by persons, that are of no reputation, and are nothing else than a dishonor to Christ. [766] Paul, however, affirmed nothing respecting himself but what he had openly given proof of by clear and sure evidences among the Corinthians. Now should any one, while destitute of all proof of the reality, recommend himself in a similar manner, what would he do but expose himself to ridicule? To trust in one's self is equivalent to assuming to one's self power and authority on the pretext that he serves Christ, while he is desirous to be held in estimation.8. For though I should boast more largely of my authority. It was a sign of modesty, that he put himself into the number of those, whom he greatly excelled. At the same time, he was not

disposed to show such modesty, as not to retain his authority unimpaired. He accordingly adds, that he has said less than his authority entitled him to say; for he was not one of the ordinary class of ministers, but was even distinguished among the Apostles. Hence he says: "Though I should boast more, I should not be ashamed, for there will be good ground for it." He anticipates an objection, because he does not fail to speak of his own glory, while at the same time he refrains from making farther mention of it, that the Corinthians may understand, that, if he boasts, it is against his will, as in truth the false Apostles constrained him to it; otherwise he would not have done so.By the term power he means -- the authority of his Apostleship, which he had among the Corinthians for, through all the ministers of the word have the same office in common, there are nevertheless, degrees of honor. Now God had placed Paul on a higher eminence than others, inasmuch as he had made use of his endeavors for founding [767] that Church, and had in many ways put honor upon his Apostleship. Lest, however, malevolent persons should stir up odium against him, on the ground of his making use of the term power, he adds the purpose for which it was given him -- the salvation of the Corinthians. Hence it follows, that it ought not to be irksome to them, or grievous, for who would not bear patiently, nay more, who would not love what he knows to be of advantage to him? In the mean time, there is an implied contrast between his power, and that in which the false apostles gloried -- which was of such a nature that the Corinthians received no advantage from it, and experienced no edification. There can, however, be no doubt, that all the ministers of the word are also, furnished with power; for of what sort were a preaching of the word, that was without power? Hence it is said to all -- He that heareth you, heareth me;

he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me. (Luke 10:16.)As however, many, on false grounds, claim for themselves what they have not, we must carefully observe, how far Paul extends his power -- so as to be to the edification of believers. Those, then, who exercise power in the way of destroying the Church, prove themselves to be tyrants, and robbers -- not pastors. In the second place, we must observe, that he declares, that it was given to him by God. He, therefore, that is desirous to have any thing in his power to do, must have God as the Author of his power. Others, it is true, will boast of this also, as the Pope with full mouth thunders forth, that he is Christ's vicar. But what evidence does he give of this? [768] For Christ has not conferred power of this kind upon dumb persons, but upon the Apostles, and his other ministers, that the doctrine of his Gospel might not be without defense. Hence the whole power of ministers is included in the word -- but in such a way, nevertheless, that Christ may always remain Lord and Master. Let us, therefore, bear in mind, that in lawful authority these two things are required -- that it be given by God, and that it be exercised for the welfare of the Church. It is well known, who they are, on whom God has conferred this power, and in what way he has limited the power he has given. Those exercise it in a proper manner, who faithfully obey his commandment.Here, however, a question may be proposed. "God says to Jeremiah,Behold, I set thee over the nations, and kingdoms,

to plant, and to pluck up, to build and to destroy. (Jeremiah 1:10.)We have, also, found it stated a little before, (2 Corinthians 10:5) that the Apostles were set apart on the same footing -- that they might destroy every thing that exalted itself against Christ. Nay more, the teachers of the gospel cannot build up in any other way, than by destroying the old man. Besides, they preach the gospel to the condemnation and destruction of the wicked." I answer that, what Paul says here, has nothing to do with the wicked, for he addresses the Corinthians, to whom he wished his Apostleship to be beneficial. With regard to them, I say, he could do nothing but with a view to

edification. We have already observed, also, that this was expressly stated, that the Corinthians might know, that the authority of this holy man was not assailed by any one but Satan, the enemy of their salvation, while the design of that authority was their edification. At the same time, it is in other respects true in a general way, that the doctrine of the gospel has in its own nature a tendency to edification -- not to destruction. For as to its destroying, that comes from something apart from itself -- from the fault of mankind, while they stumble at the stone that was appointed form as a foundation (1 Peter 2:8.) As to the fact, that we are renewed after the image of God by the destruction of the old man -- that is not at all at variance with Paul's words, for in that case destruction is taken in a good sense, but here in a bad sense, as meaning the ruin of what is God's, or as meaning the destruction of the soul -- as if he had said, that his power was not injurious to them, for instead of this the advantage of it for their salvation was manifested.9 That I may not seem to terrify. Again he touches on the calumny which he had formerly refuted, (2 Corinthians 10:2,) that he was bold in his writings, while in their presence his courage failed him. On this pretext they disparaged his writings. [769] "What!" Said they, "will he terrify us by letters when at a distance, while, if present with us, he would scarcely venture to mutter a word!" Lest, therefore, his letters should have less weight, he answers, that no objection is advanced against him, that should either destroy or weaken his credit, and that of his doctrine, for deeds were not to be less valued than words. He was not less powerful in actions when present, than he was by words when absent. Hence it was unfair, that his bodily presence should be looked upon as contemptible. By deed, here, he means, in my opinion, the efficacy and success of his preaching, as well as the excellences that were worthy of an Apostle, and his whole manner of life. Speech, on the other hand, denotes -- not the very substance of doctrine, but simply the form of it, and the bark, so to speak: for he would have contended for doctrine with greater keeness. The contempt, however, proceeded from this -- that he was deficient in that ornament and splendor of eloquence, which secures favor. [770]

2 Corinthians 10:12-18

12. For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 12. Non enim audemus nos quibusdam inserere aut comparare, qui se ipsos commendant: verum ipsi in se ipsis se metientes, et se ipsos comparantes sibi, non sapiunt. 13. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. 13. Nos autem non sine modo gloriabimur, sed pro mensura regulae, quam nobis distribuit Deus: mensura, inquam, perveniendi etiam usque ad vos. 14. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: 14. Non enim quasi ad vos non perveniremus, supra modum extendimus nos ipsos: siquidem usque ad vos pertigimus in Evangelio Christi. 15. Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 15. Non gloriantes sine modo in alienis laboribus, [771] spem autem habentes, crescente fide vestra in vobis, nos magnificatum iri secundum nostram regulam in exuberantiam. 16. To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. 16. Ut etiam ultra vos evangelizem, non in aliena regula, ut de iis, quae parata sunt, glorier. 17. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 17. Caeterum qui gloriatur in Domino glorietur.18. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.18. Non enim qui se ipsum commendat, ille probatus est: sed quem Dominus commendat.12. For we dare not. He says this by way of irony, for afterwards he does not merely compare himself boldly with them, but, deriding their vanity, he leaves them far behind him. Now by this irony he gives a stroke, not merely to those foolish boasters, [772] but also to the Corinthians, who encouraged them in their folly by their misdirected approbation. "I am satisfied," says he, "with my moderate way; for I would not dare to put myself on a footing with your Apostles, who are the heralds of their own excellence." In the mean time, when he intimates that their glory consists of mere speaking and boasting, he shows, how silly and worthless they are, while he claims for himself deeds instead of words, that is, true and solid ground of glorying. He may seem, however, to err in the very thing for which he reproves others, for he immediately afterwards commends himself. I answer, that his design must be taken into view, for those do not aim at their own commendation, who, entirely free from ambition, have no desire but to serve the Lord usefully. [773] As to this passage, however, there is no need of any other explanation than what may be gathered from the words themselves, for those are said to commend themselves, who, while in poverty and starvation as to true praise, exalt themselves in vain-glorious boasting, and falsely give out, that they are what they are not. This, also, appears from what follows.But they measure themselves by themselves Here he points out, as with his finger their folly. The man that has but one eye sees well enough among the blind: the man that is dull of hearing hears distinctly enough among the totally deaf. Such were those that were satisfied with themselves, and showed themselves off among others, simply because they did not look to any that were superior to themselves, for if they had compared themselves with Paul, or any one

like him, they would have felt constrained to lay aside immediately that foolish impression which they entertained, and would have exchanged boasting for shame.For an explanation of this passage we need look no farther than to the monks; for as they are almost all of them the most ignorant asses, and at the same time are looked upon as learned persons, on account of their long robe and hood, if any one has merely a slight smattering of elegant literature, he proudly spreads out his feathers like a peacock -- a marvelous fame goes abroad respecting him -- among his companions he is adored [774] Were, however, the mask of the hood laid aside, [775] and a thorough examination entered upon, their vanity would at once be discovered. Why so? The old proverb holds good: "Ignorance is pert." [776] But the excessively insolent arrogance of the monks [777] proceeds chiefly from this -- that they measure themselves by themselves; for, as in their cloisters there is nothing but barbarism, [778] it is not to be wondered, if the man that has but one eye is a king among the blind. Such were Paul's rivals, for inwardly they flattered themselves, not considering what virtues entitled a person to true praise, and how far short they came of the excellence of Paul, and those like him. And, certainly, this single consideration might justly have covered them with shame, but it is the just punishment of the ambitious, that by their silliness they expose themselves to ridicule, (than which there is nothing that they are more desirous to avoid,) and in place of glory, which they are immoderately desirous of, [779] they incur disgrace.13. But we will not boast beyond our measure He now contrasts his own moderation with the folly of the false Apostles, [780] and, at the same time, he shows what is the true measure of glorying -- when we keep within the limits that have been marked out for us by the Lord. "Has the Lord given me such a thing? I shall be satisfied with this measure. I shall not either desire or claim to myself any thing more." This he calls the measure of his rule. [781] For every one's rule, according to which he ought to regulate himself is this -- God's gift and calling. At the same time, it is not lawful for us to glow in God's gift and calling on our own account, but merely in so far as it is expedient for the glory of him, who is so liberal to us with this view -- that we may acknowledge ourselves indebted to him for everything. [782]A measure to reach. By this clause he intimates, that he stands in no need of commendations expressed in words among the Corinthians, who were a portion of his glow, as he says elsewhere, (Philippians 4:1,) ye are my crown. He carries out, however, the form of expression, which he had previously entered upon. "I have," says he, "a most ample field for glorying, so as not to go beyond my own limits, and you are one department of that field." He modestly reproves, however, their ingratitude, [783] in overlooking, in a manner, his apostleship, which ought to have been especially in estimation among them, on the ground of God's commendation of it. In each clause, too, we must understand as implied, a contrast between him and the false Apostles, who had no such approbation to show. 14. For we do not overstretch. He alludes to persons who either forcibly stretch out their arms, or raise themselves up on their feet, when wishing to catch hold of what is not at their hand, [784] for of this nature is a greedy thirst for glory, nay more, it is often more disgusting. For ambitious persons do not merely stretch out their arms and lift up their feet, but are even carried headlong with the view of obtaining some pretext for glorying. [785] He tacitly intimates that his rivals were of this stamp. He afterwards declares on what ground he had come to the Corinthians -- because he had founded their church by his ministry. Hence he says, in the gospel of Christ; for he had not come to them empty, [786] but had been the first to bring the gospel to them. The preposition in is taken by some in another way; for they render it, by the gospel, and this meaning does not suit ill. At the same time, Paul seems to set off to advantage his coming to the Corinthians, on the ground of his having been furnished with

so precious a gift.15. In the labors of others. He now reproves more freely the false Apostles, who, while they had put forth their hand in the reaping of another man's harvest, had the audacity at the same time to revile those, who had prepared a place for them at the expense of sweat and toil. Paul had built up the Church of the Corinthians -- not without the greatest struggle, and innumerable difficulties. Those persons afterwards come forward, and find the road made and the gate open. That they may appear persons of consequence, they impudently claim for themselves what did not of right belong to them, and disparage Paul's labors.But having hope. He again indirectly reproves the Corinthians, because they had stood in the way of his making greater progress in advancing the gospel. For when he says that he hopes that, when their faith is increased the boundaries of his glowing will be enlarged, he intimates, that the weakness of faith under which they labored was the reason, why his career had been somewhat retarded. "I ought now to have been employed in gaining over new Churches, and that too with your assistance, if you had made as much proficiency as you ought to have done; but now you retard me by your infirmity. I hope, however, that the Lord will grant, that greater progress will be made by you in future, and that in this way the glory of my ministry will be increased according to the rule of the divine calling." [787] To glory in things that have been prepared is equivalent to glorying in the labors of others; for, while Paul had fought the battle, they enjoyed the triumph. [788]17. But he that glorieth This statement is made by way of correction, as his glorying might be looked upon as having the appearance of empty boasting. Hence he cites himself and others before the judgment-seat of God, saying, that those glory on good grounds, who are approved by God. To glory in the Lord, however, is used here in a different sense from what it bears in the first chapter of the former Epistle, (1 Corinthians 1:31,) and in Jeremiah 9:24. For in those passages it means -- to recognize God as the author of all blessings, in such a way that every blessing is ascribed to his grace, while men do not extol themselves, but glorify him alone. Here, however, it means -- to place our glory at the disposal of God alone, [789] and reckon every thing else as of no value. For while some are dependent on the estimation of men, and weigh themselves in the false balance of public opinion, and others are deceived by their own arrogance, Paul exhorts us to be emulous of this glow -- that we may please the Lord, by whose judgment we all stand or fall.Even heathens say, that true glory consists in an upright conscience. [790] Now that is so much, but it is not all; for, as almost all are blind through excessive self-love, we cannot safely place confidence in the estimate that we form of ourselves. For we must keep in mind what he says elsewhere, (1 Corinthians 4: 4,) that he is not conscious to himself of anything wrong, and yet is not thereby justified. What then? Let us know, that to God alone must be reserved the right of passing judgment upon us; for we are not competent judges in our own cause. This meaning is confirmed by what follows -- For not he that commendeth himself is approved "For it is easy to impose upon men by a false impression, and this is matter of every day occurrence. Let us, therefore, leaving off all other things, aim exclusively at this -- that we may be approved by God, and may be satisfied to have his approbation alone, as it justly ought to be regarded by us as of more value than all the applauses of the whole world. There was one that said, that to have Plato's favorable judgment was to him worth a thousand. [791] The question here is not as to the judgment of mankind, in respect of the superiority of one to another, but as to the sentence of God himself, who has it in his power to overturn all the decisions that men have pronounced.

2 Corinthians 11:1-6

1. Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.1. Utinam tolerassetis me paulisper in insipientia mea: imo etiam sufferte me. [792]2. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.2. Nam zelotypus sum erga vos Dei zelo: adiunxi enim vos uni viro, ad exhibendam virginem castam Christo.3. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.3. Sed metuo, ne qua fiat, ut quemadmodum serpens Evam decepit versutia sua: ita corrumpantur sensus vestri a simplicitate, quae est in Christo.4. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him4. Nam si is qui venit, (vel, si quis veniens,) alium Iesum praedicat, quem non praedicavimus; aut si alium Spiritum accipitis, quem non accepitis: aut Evangelium aliud, quod non accepistis, recte sustinuissetis.5. For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.5. Arbitror enim me nihilo inferiorem fuisse eximiis Apostolis.6. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things.6. Caeterum licet imperitus sim sermone, non tamen scientia: verum ubique manifesti fuimus in omnibus erga vos.1. Would that ye did bear with me. As he saw that the ears of the Corinthians were still in part pre-engaged, [793] he has recourse to another contrivance, for he turns to express a wish, as persons do when they do not venture openly to entreat. [794] Immediately afterwards, however, as if gathering confidence, he nevertheless entreats the Corinthians to bear with his folly. He gives the name of folly to that splendid proclamation of his praises, which afterwards follows. Not as if he were a fool in glorying; for he was constrained to it by necessity, and besides, he restrained himself in such a manner, that no one could justly regard him as going beyond bounds; but as it is an unseemly thing to herald one's own praises, and a thing that is foreign to the inclinations of a modest man, he speaks by way of concession.What I have rendered in the imperative -- bear with me, Chrysostom interprets as an affirmation, and certainly the Greek word is ambiguous, and either sense suits sufficiently well. As, however, the reasons that the Apostle subjoins are designed to induce the Corinthians to bear with him, and as we will find him afterwards expostulating with them again on the ground of their not conceding anything to him, I have followed the Old Interpreter. [795] By saying, Would that, etc., he had seemed to be distrustful; now, as if correcting that hesitation, he openly and freely commands.2. For I am jealous Mark why it is that he acts the fool, for jealousy hurries a man as it were headlong. "Do not demand that I should show the equable temper [796] of a man that is at ease, and not excited by any emotion, for that vehemence of vehemence of jealousy, with which I am inflamed towards you, does not suffer me to be at ease." As, however, there are two kinds of jealousy -- the one springs from self love, and of a wicked and perverse nature, while the other is cherished by us on God's account, [797] he intimates of what sort his zeal is. For many are zealous -- for themselves, not for God. That on the other hand, is the only pious and right zeal, that has an eye to God, that he may not be defrauded of the honors that of right belong to him.For I have united you to one man. That his zeal was of such a nature, he

proves from the design of his preaching, for its tendency was to join them to Christ in marriage, and retain them in connection with him. [798] Here, however, he gives us in his own person a lively picture of a good minister; for One alone is the Bridegroom of the Church -- the Son of God. All ministers are the friends of the Bridegroom, as the Baptist declares respecting himself. (John 3:29.) Hence all ought to be concerned, that the fidelity of this sacred marriage remain unimpaired and inviolable. This they cannot do, unless they are actuated by the dispositions of the Bridegroom, so that every one of them may be as much concerned for the purity of the Church, as a husband is for the chastity of his wife. Away then with coldness and indolence in this matter, for one that is cold [799] will never be qualified for this office. Let them, however, in the mean time, take care, not to pursue their own interest rather than that of Christ, that they may not intrude themselves into his place, lest while they give themselves out as his paranymphs, [800] they turn out to be in reality adulterers, by alluring the bride to love themselves.To present you as a chaste virgin. We are married to Christ, on no other condition than that we bring virginity as our dowry, and preserve it entire, so as to be free from all corruption. Hence it is the duty of ministers of the gospel to purify our souls, that they may be chaste virgins to Christ; otherwise they accomplish nothing. Now we may understand it as meaning, that they individually present themselves as chaste virgins to Christ, or that the minister presents the whole of the people, and brings them forward into Christ's presence. I approve rather of the second interpretation. Hence I have given a different rendering from Erasmus. [801] 3. But I fear He begins to explain, what is the nature of that virginity of which he has made mention -- our cleaving to Christ alone, sincerely, with our whole heart. God, indeed, everywhere requires from us, that we be joined with him in body and in spirit, and he warns us that he is a jealous God, (Exodus 20:5,) to avenge with the utmost severity the wrong done to him, in the event of any one's drawing back from him. This connection, however, is accomplished in Christ, as Paul teaches in Ephesians, (Ephesians 5:25, 27.) He points out, however, at present the means of it -- when we remain in the pure simplicity of the gospel, for, as in contracting marriages among men, there are written contracts [802] drawn out, so the spiritual connection between us and the Son of God is confirmed by the gospel, as a kind of written contract. [803] Let us maintain the fidelity, love, and obedience, that have been there promised by us; he will be faithful to us on his part.Now Paul says that he is concerned, that the minds of the Corinthians may not be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ Paul, it is true, says in Greek eis Christon, which Erasmus renders towards Christ, [804] but the Old Interpreter has come nearer, in my opinion, to Paul's intention, [805] because by the simplicity that is in Christ is meant, that which keeps us in the unadulterated and pure doctrine of the gospel, and admits of no foreign admixtures [806] By this he intimates that men's minds are adulterated, [807] whenever they turn aside, even in the least degree, to the one side or to the other, from the pure doctrine of Christ. Nor is it without good reason, for who would not condemn a matron as guilty of unchastity, so soon as she lends an ear to a seducer? So in like manner we, when we admit wicked and false teachers, who are Satan's vile agents, show but too clearly, that we do not maintain conjugal fidelity towards Christ. We must also take notice of the term simplicity, for Paul's fear was not, lest the Corinthians should all at once openly draw back altogether from Christ, but lest, by turning aside, by little and little, from the simplicity which they had learned, so as to go after profane and foreign contrivances, they should at length become adulterated.He brings forward a comparison as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty For if false teachers have a show of wisdom, if they have any power of eloquence for persuading, if they plausibly insinuate themselves into the

minds of their hearers, and instill their poison by fawning artifices, it was in a similar way that Satan also beguiled Eve, as he did not openly declare himself to be an enemy, but crept in privily under a specious pretext.4. For if he that cometh. He now reproves the Corinthians for the excessive readiness, which they showed to receive the false apostles. For while they were towards Paul himself excessively morose and irritable, [808] so that on any, even the least occasion, they were offended if he gave them even the slightest reproof, there was, on the other hand, nothing that they did not bear with, on the part of the false Apostles. They willingly endured their pride, haughtiness, and unreasonableness. An absurd reverence of this nature he condemns, because in the mean time they showed no discrimination or judgment. "How is it that they take [809] so much liberty with you, and you submit patiently to their control? Had they brought you another Christ, or another gospel, or another Spirit, different from what you received through my hands, I would assuredly approve of your regard for them, for they would be deserving of such honor. But as they have conferred upon you nothing, that I had not given you previously, what sort of gratitude do you show in all but adoring those, to whom you are indebted for nothing, while you despise me, through whom God has bestowed upon you so many and so distinguished benefits?" Such is the reverence that is shown even at this day by Papists towards their pretended Bishops. For while they are oppressed by their excessively harsh tyranny, [810] they submit to it without difficulty; but, at the same time, do not hesitate to treat Christ himself with contempt. [811]The expressions -- another Christ, and another gospel, are made use of here in a different sense from what they bear in Galatians 1:8. For another is used there in opposition to what is true and genuine, and hence it means false and counterfeit. Here, on the other hand, he means to say -- "If the gospel had come to you through their ministry, and not through mine."5. For I reckon that I am. He now convicts them of ingratitude, by removing the only thing that could serve as an excuse for them, for he shows that he is on a level, even with the chief of the Apostles. The Corinthians, therefore, were ungrateful [812] in not esteeming him more highly, after having found him, by experience, to be such; while, on the other hand, the authority that was justly due to him, they transferred to persons of no value. For the sake of modesty, however, he says that he reckons so, while the thing was known and manifest to all. His meaning, however, is, that God had honored his Apostleship with no less distinguished marks of favor, than that of John or Peter. Now the man that despises the gifts of God, which he himself recognizes, cannot clear himself from the charge of being spiteful and ungrateful. Hence, wherever you see the gifts of God, you must there reverence God himself: [813] I mean, that every one is worthy of honor, in so far as he is distinguished by graces received from God, and especially if any advantage has redounded to thee from them. 6. But though I am rude There was one thing [814] in which he might appear, at first view, to be inferior -- that he was devoid of eloquence. This judgment, [815] therefore, he anticipates and corrects, while he acknowledges himself, indeed, to be rude and unpolished in speech, while at the same time he maintains that he has knowledge By speech here he means, elegance of expression; and by knowledge he means, the very substance of doctrine. For as man has both a soul and a body, so also in doctrine, there is the thing itself that is taught, and the ornament of expression with which it is clothed. Paul, therefore, maintains that he understands, what should be taught, and what is necessary to be known, though he is not an eloquent orator, so as to know how to set off his doctrine by a polished and eloquent manner of expression.It is asked, however, whether elegance of speech [816] is not also necessary for Apostles; for how will they otherwise be prepared for teaching? Knowledge might perhaps suffice for others, but how could a teacher be

dumb? I answer, that, while Paul acknowledges himself to be rude in speech, it is not as though he were a mere infant, but as meaning, that he was not distinguished by such splendid eloquence as others, to whom he yields the palm as to this, retaining for himself what was the principal thing -- the reality itself, [817] while he leaves them talkativeness without gravity. If, however, any one should inquire, why it is that the Lord, who made men's tongues, (Exodus 4:11,) did not also endow so eminent an apostle with eloquence, that nothing might be wanting to him, I answer, that he was furnished with a sufficiency for supplying the want of eloquence. For we see and feel, what majesty there is in his writings, what elevation appears in them, what a weight of meaning is couched under them, what power is discovered in them. In fine, they are thunderbolts, not mere words. Does not the efficacy of the Spirit appear more clearly in a naked rusticity of words, (so to speak,) than under the disguise of elegance and ornament? Of this matter, however, we have treated more largely in the former Epistle. [818] In short, he admits, as far as words are concerned, what his adversaries allege by way of objection, while he denies in reality what they hold forth. Let us also learn, from his example, to prefer deeds to words, and, to use a barbarous but common proverb -- "Teneant alii quid nominis, nos autem quid rei;" -- "Let others know something of the name, but let us know something of the reality." [819] If eloquence is superadded, let it be regarded by us as something over and above; and farther, let it not be made use of for disguising doctrine, or adulterating it, but for unfolding it in its genuine simplicity.But everywhere. As there was something magnificent in placing himself on a level with the chief Apostles, that this may not be ascribed to arrogance, he makes the Corinthians judges, provided they judge from what they have themselves experienced; for they had known sufficiently well, from many proofs, that he did not boast needlessly, or without good reason. He means, therefore, that he needs not make use of words, inasmuch as reality and experience afford clear evidence of every thing that he was about to say [820]

2 Corinthians 11:7-12

7. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? 7. Num illud peccavi, quod me ipsum humiliaverim, [821] ut vos exaltaremini: quod gratuito Evangelium Dei praedicaverim vobis? 8. I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. 8. Caeteras Ecclesias depraedatus sum accepto ab illis stipendio, quo vobis inservirem. 9. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself 9. Et quum apud vos essem et egerem, non onerosus fui cuiquam; [822] nam quod mihi deerat, suppleverunt fratres, qui venerant ex Macedonia; et in omnibus sic me servavi, ne cui essem onerosus, atque ita servabo. 10. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 10. Est veritas Christi in me, quod haec gloriatio non interrumpetur contra me in regionibus Achaiae. 11. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. 11. Quapropter? An quod non diligam vos? Deus novit. 12. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. 12. Verum quod facio, idem et faciam: ut amputem occasionem iis qui cupiunt occasionem, ut in quo gloriantur, reperiantur, quemadmodum et nos.7. Have I committed an offense? His humility was cast up to him by way of reproach, while it was an excellence that was deserving of no ordinary commendation. Humility here means -- voluntary abasement; for in conducting himself modestly, as if he had nothing in him that was particularly excellent, so that many looked upon him as one of the common people, he had done that for the advantage of the Corinthians. For the man was inflamed with so great a desire, [823] and so great an anxiety for their salvation, that he made a regard to himself a secondary consideration. Hence he says, that he had of his own accord made a surrender of his own greatness, that they might become great through his abasement. For his design was, that he might promote their salvation. He now indirectly charges them with ingratitude, in imputing to him as a fault so pious a disposition -- not indeed for the purpose of reproaching him, but with the view of restoring them so much the better to a sound mind. And certainly, he wounded them more severely by speaking ironically, than if he had spoken in a simple way, and without a figure. He might have said, "What is this? Am I despised by you, because I have lowered myself for your advantage?" The questioning, however, which he makes use of, was more forcible for putting them to shame.Because I preached freely This is a part of his abasement. For he had given up his own right, as though his condition had been inferior to that of others; but such was the unreasonableness of some of them, that they esteemed him the less on that account, as if he had been undeserving of remuneration. The reason, why he had given his services to the Corinthians gratuitously, is immediately subjoined -- for he did not act in this manner everywhere, but, as we have seen in the former Epistle, [824] there was a danger of his furnishing the false Apostles with a handle against him.8. I robbed other churches He has intentionally, in my opinion, made use of an offensive term, that he might the more forcibly express the unreasonableness of the matter -- in respect of his being despised by the Corinthians. "I have," says he, "procured pay for myself from the spoils of others, that I might

serve you. While I have thus spared you, how unreasonable it is to make me so poor a return!" It is, however, a metaphor, that is taken from what is customary among soldiers; for as conquerors take spoils from the nations that they have conquered, so every thing that Paul took from the Churches that he had gained to Christ was, in a manner, the spoils of his victories, though, at the same time, he never would have taken it from persons against their will, but what they contributed gratuitously was, in a manner, due by right of spiritual warfare. [825]Observe, however, that he says that he had been in want, for he would never have been a burden to them, had he not been constrained by necessity. He, nevertheless, in the mean time, labored with his hands, as we have seen before, (1 Corinthians 4:12,) but, as the labor of his hands was not sufficient for sustaining life, something additional was contributed by the Macedonians. Accordingly he does not say, that his living had been furnished to him by the Macedonians, [826] but merely that they had supplied what was wanting. We have spoken elsewhere of the Apostle's holy prudence and diligence in providing against dangers. Here we must take notice of the pious zeal of the Macedonians, who did not hesitate to contribute of their substance for his pay, that the gospel might be proclaimed to others, and those, too, that were wealthier than themselves. Ah! how few Macedonians are there in the present day, and on the other hand how many Corinthians you may find everywhere!10. The truth of Christ is in me. Lest any one should suspect, that Paul's words were designed to induce the Corinthians to be more liberal to him in future, and endeavor to make amends for their error in the past, he affirms with an oath, that he would take nothing from them, or from others in Achaia, though it were offered to him. For this manner of expression -- the truth of Christ is in me, is in the form of oath. Let me not be thought to have the truth of Christ in me if I do not retain this glorying among the inhabitants of Achaia. Now Corinth was in Achaia. [827]11. Is it because I love you not? Those that we love, we treat with greater familiarity. Lest the Corinthians, therefore, should take it amiss, that he refused their liberality, while he allowed himself to be assisted by the Macedonians, and even declared with an oath that he would do so still, he anticipates that suspicion also. And by the figure termed anthypophora, [828] he asks, as it were in their name, whether this is a token of a malevolent mind? He does not return a direct answer to the question, but the indirect answer that he returns has much more weight, inasmuch as he calls God to be a witness of his good disposition towards them. You see here, that in the course of three verses [829] there are two oaths, but they are lawful and holy, because they have a good design in view, and a legitimate reason is involved. Hence to condemn indiscriminately all oaths is to act the part of fanatics, who make no distinction between white and black. [830] 12. But what I do. He again explains the reason of his intention. [831] The false Apostles, with the view of alluring to themselves ignorant persons, took no pay. Their serving gratuitously was a show of uncommon zeal. [832] If Paul had availed himself of his right, he would have given them occasion to raise their crest, as if they had been greatly superior to him. Paul, accordingly, that he might give them no occasion of doing injury, did himself, also, preach the Gospel, free of charge, and this is what he adds -- that he is desirous to cut off occasion from those that desire occasion For the false Apostles were desirous to insinuate themselves by this artifice, and to detract, in proportion to this, from Paul's credit, if they were superior to him in any respect. He says, that he will not give them this advantage. "They will be found," says he, "on a level with us in that glorying which they would wish to have for themselves exclusively." This, however, is a useful admonition in connection with cutting off occasion from the wicked, as often as they desire one. For this is the only way to overcome them -- not in the way of furnishing them with arms through our imprudence. [833]

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

13. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 13. Saiquidem istiusmodi pseudoapostoli; operarii dolosi sunt, qui transformant se in Apostolos Christi. 14. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 14. Neque id mirum; quondoquidem ipse Satanas transfiguratur in Angelum lucis. 15. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. 15. Non magnum igitur, si et ministri illius transformant se, perinde acsi essent ministri iustitiae: quorum finis erit secundum opera ipsorum. 13. For such are false Apostles While he has already taken away from them what they chiefly desired, yet, not contented with having put himself on a level with them with respect to that in which they were desirous to excel, he leaves them nothing for which they deserve any commendation. It was apparently a laudable thing to despise money, but he says, that they make use of a pretense for the purpose of deceiving, exactly as if a harlot were to borrow the apparel of a decent matron. For it was necessary to pull off the mask, which obscured the glory of God. They are deceitful workers, says he, that is -- they do not discover their wickedness at first view, but artfully insinuate themselves under some fair pretext. [834] Hence they require to be carefully and thoroughly sifted, lest we should receive persons as servants of Christ, as soon as any appearance of excellence is discovered. Nor does Paul in malice and envy put an unfavorable construction upon what might be looked upon as an excellence, but, constrained by their dishonesty, he unfolds to view the evil that lay hid, because there was a dangerous profanation of virtue in pretending to burn with greater zeal than all the servants of Christ. 14. And no marvel It is an argument from the greater to the less. "If Satan, who is the basest of all beings, nay, the head and chief of all wicked persons, transforms himself, what will his ministers do?" We have experience of both every day, for when Satan tempts us to evil, he does not profess to be what he really is. For he would lose his object, if we were made aware of his being a mortal enemy, and opposer of our salvation. Hence he always makes use of some cloak for the purpose of insnaring us, and does not immediately show his horns, (as the common expression is,) but rather makes it his endeavor to appear as an angel Even when he tempts us to gross crimes, he makes use, nevertheless, of some pretext that he may draw us, when we are off our guard, into his nets. What then, if he attacks us under the appearance of good, nay, under the very title of God? His life-guards imitate, as I have said, the same artifice. These are golden preambles -- "Vicar of Christ" -- "Successor of Peter" -- "Servant of God's servants," but let the masks be pulled off, and who and what will the Pope be discovered to be? Scarcely will Satan himself, his master, surpass so accomplished a scholar in any kind of abomination. It is a well known saying as to Babylon, that she gives poison to drink in a golden cup. (Jeremiah 51:7.) Hence we must be on our guard against masks. Should any one now ask, "Shall we then regard all with suspicion?" I answer, that the Apostle did not by any means intend this; for there are marks of discrimination, which it were the part of stupidity, not of prudence, to overlook. He was simply desirous to arouse our attention, that we may not straightway judge of the lion from the skin [835] For if we are not hasty in forming a judgment, the Lord will order it so that the ears of the animal will be discovered ere long. Farther, he was desirous in like manner to

admonish us, in forming an estimate of Christ's servants, not to regard masks, but to seek after what is of more importance. Ministers of righteousness is a Hebraism for faithful and upright persons. [836] 15. Whose end shall be. He adds this for the consolation of the pious. For it is the statement of a courageous man, who despises the foolish judgments of men, and patiently waits for the day of the Lord. In the mean time, he shows a singular boldness of conscience, which does not dread the judgment of God.

2 Corinthians 11:16-21

16. I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. 16. Iterum dico, ne quis me putet insipientem esse: alioqui iam etiam ut insipientem accipite me, ut paululum quiddam et ego glorier. 17. That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 17. Quod dico, non dico secundum Dominum, sed velut per insipientiam: in hac audacia gloriationis. 18. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. 18. Quandoquidem multi gloriantur secundum carnem, et ego gloriabor. 19. For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. 19. Libenter enim suffertis insipientes: quum sitis ipsi sapientes. 20. For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. 20. Suffertis enim, si quis vos in servitutem adigit, si quis exedit, si quis accipit, si quis attollit sese, si quis vos in faciem caedit. 21. I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. 21. Iuxta contumeliam loquor, perinde quasi nos infirmi fuerimus: imo in quocunque audet aliquis, per insipientiam loquor, ego quoque audeo.16. I say again The Apostle has a twofold design. He has it partly in view to expose the disgusting vanity of the false Apostles, inasmuch as they were such extravagant trumpeters of their own praises; and farther, to expostulate with the Corinthians, because they shut him up to the necessity of glorying, contrary to the inclinations of his own mind. "I say again," says he. For he had abundantly shown previously, that there was no reason, why he should be despised. He had also shown at the same time, that he was very unlike others, and therefore ought not to have his grounds of glorying estimated according to the rule of their measure. Thus he again shows, for what purpose he had hitherto gloried -- that he might clear his apostleship from contempt; for if the Corinthians had done their duty, he would not have said one word as to this matter.Otherwise now as a fool "If I am reckoned by you a fool, allow me at least to make use of my right and liberty -- that is, to speak foolishly after the manner of fools." Thus he reproves the false Apostles, who, while they were exceedingly silly in this respect, were not merely borne with by the Corinthians, but were received with great applause. He afterwards explains what kind of folly it is -- the publishing of his own praises. While they did so without end and without measure, he intimates that it was a thing to which he was unaccustomed; for he says, for a little while For I take this clause as referring to time, so that the meaning is, that Paul did not wish to continue it long, but assumed, as it were, for the moment, the person of another, and immediately thereafter laid it aside, as we are accustomed to pass over lightly those things that are foreign to our object, while fools occupy themselves constantly (en parergois) [837] in matters of inferior moment.17. What I speak, I speak not after the Lord His disposition, it is true, had an eye to God, but the outward appearance [838] might seem unsuitable to a servant of the Lord. At the same time, the things that Paul confesses respecting himself, he, on the other hand, condemns in the false Apostles. [839] For it was not his intention to praise himself, but simply to contrast himself with them, with the view of humbling them. [840] Hence he transfers to his own person what belonged to them, that he may thus open the eyes of the Corinthians. What I have rendered boldness, is in the Greek hupostasis, as to the meaning of which term we have spoken in the [62]ninth chapter. (2

Corinthians 9:4.) Subject-matter [841] or substance, unquestionably, would not be at all suitable here. [842]18. Since many glory. The meaning is -- Should any one say to me, by way of objection, that what I do is faulty, what then as to others? Are not they my leaders? Am I alone, or am I the first, in glorying according to the flesh? Why should that be reckoned praiseworthy in them, that is imputed to me as a fault?" So far then is Paul from ambition in recounting his own praises, that he is contented to be blamed on that account, provided he exposes the vanity of the false apostles.To glory after the flesh, is to boast one's self, rather in what has a tendency towards show, than in a good conscience. For the term flesh, here, has a reference to the world -- when we seek after praise from outward masks, which have a showy appearance before the world, and are regarded as excellent. In place of this term he had a little before made use of the expression -- in appearance. (2 Corinthians 10:7.)19. For ye bear with fools willingly. He calls them wise -- in my opinion, ironically. He was despised by them, which could not have been, had they not been puffed up with the greatest arrogance [843] He says, therefore -- "Since you are so wise, act the part of wise men in bearing with me, whom you treat with contempt, as you would a fool." Hence I infer, that this discourse is not addressed to all indiscriminately, but some particular persons are reproved, who conducted themselves in an unkind manner. [844]20. For ye bear with it, if any one. There are three ways in which this may be understood. He may be understood as reproving the Corinthians in irony, because they could not endure any thing, as is usually the case with effeminate persons; or he charges them with indolence, because they had given themselves up to the false Apostles in a disgraceful bondage; or he repeats, as it were, in the person of another, what was spitefully affirmed respecting himself, [845] as if he claimed for himself a tyrannical authority over them. The second meaning is approved by Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine, and hence it is commonly received; and, indeed, it corresponds best with the context, although the third is not less in accordance with my views. For we see, how he was calumniated from time to time by the malevolent, as if he domineered tyrannically, while he was very far from doing so. As, however, the other meaning is more generally received, I have no objection, that it should be held as the true one. Now this statement will correspond with the preceding one in this way: "You bear with every thing from others, if they oppress you, if they demand what belongs to you, if they treat you disdainfully. Why then will you not bear with me, as they are in no respect superior to me?" For as to his saying that he is not weak, he means that he had been endowed by God with such excellent graces, that he ought not to be looked upon as of the common order. For the word weak has a more extensive signification, as we shall see again ere long.It has been the invariable custom, and will be so to the end, to resist contumaciously [846] the servants of God, to get enraged on the least occasion, [847] to grumble and murmur incessantly, to complain of even a moderate strictness, [848] to hold all discipline in abhorrence; while, on the other hand, they put themselves under servile subjection to false apostles, impostors, or mere worthless pretenders, give them liberty to do any thing whatever, and patiently submit to and endure, whatever burden they may choose to impose upon them. Thus, at the present day, you will scarcely find one in thirty, who will put his neck willingly under Christ's yoke, while all have endured with patience a tyranny so severe as that of the Pope. Those very persons are all at once in an uproar, [849] in opposition to the fatherly and truly salutary reproofs of their pastors, who, on the other hand, had formerly swallowed down quietly every kind of insult, even the most atrocious, from the monks. [850] Are not those worthy of Antichrist's torturing rack, rather than of Christ's mild sway, who have ears so tender and backward to listen to the truth? But thus it has been from the beginning.21.

Nay, in whatsoever. Paul had asked, why the Corinthians showed more respect to others than to him, while he had not been by any means weak, that is, contemptible. He now confirms this, because, if a comparison had been entered upon, he would not have been inferior to any one in any department of honor.

2 Corinthians 11:22-29

22. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 22. Hebraei sunt? Ego quoque. Israelitae sunt? Ego quoque: semen Abrahae sunt? Ego quoque. 23. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 23. Ministri Christi sunt? Desipiens loquor, plus ego; in laboribus abundantius, in plagis supra modum, in carceribus copiosius, in mortibus saepe. 24. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 24. A Iudaeis quinquies quadraginta plagas accepi una minus. 25. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 25. Ter virgis caesus sum, semel lapidatus sum, ter naufragium feci, noctes et dies egi in profundo. 26. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 26. In itineribus saepe, periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex Gentibus, periculis in urbe, periculis in deserto, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis fratribus: 27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 27. In labore et molestia, in vigiliis saepe, in fame et siti, in ieiuniis saepe, in frigore et nuditate:28. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.28. Praeter ea quae extrinsecus accidunt, quotidiana mea moles, [851] sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum.29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?29. Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? Quis offenditur, et ego non uror?22. He now, by enumerating particular instances, lets them see more distinctly, that he would not by any means be found inferior, if matters came to a contest. And in the first place, he makes mention of the glory of his descent, of which his rivals chiefly vaunted. "If," says he, "they boast of illustrious descent, I shall be on a level with them, for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham." This is a silly and empty boast, and yet Paul makes use of three terms to express it; nay more, he specifies, as it were, three different marks of excellence. By this repetition, in my opinion, he indirectly reproves their folly, inasmuch as they placed the sum-total [852] of their excellence in a thing that was so trivial, [853] and this boasting was incessantly in their mouth, so as to be absolutely disgusting, as vain men are accustomed to pour forth empty bravadoes as to a mere nothing.As to the term Hebrews, it appears from Genesis 11:15, that it denotes descent, and is derived from Heber; and farther, it is probable, that Abraham himself is so called in Genesis 14:13, in no other sense than this -- that he was descended from that ancestor. [854] Not altogether without some appearance of truth is the conjecture of those, who explain the term to mean those dwelling beyond the river. [855] We do not read, it is true, that any one was called so before Abraham, who had passed over the river, when he quitted his native country, and afterwards the appellation came to be a customary one among his posterity, as appears from the history of Joseph. The termination, however, shows that it is expressive of descent, and the passage, that I have quoted, abundantly confirms it. [856]23. Are they ministers of Christ? Now when he is treating of matters truly praiseworthy, he is no longer satisfied with being on an equality with them, but exalts himself above them. For their carnal glories he has previously been

scattering like smoke by a breath of wind, [857] by placing in opposition to them those which he had of a similar kind; but as they had nothing of solid worth, he on good grounds separates himself from their society, when he has occasion to glory in good earnest. For to be a servant of Christ is a thing that is much more honorable and illustrious, than to be the first-born among all the first-born of Abraham's posterity. Again, however, with the view of providing against calumnies, he premises that he speaks as a fool "Imagine this," says he, "to be foolish boasting: it is, nevertheless, true."In labors. By these things he proves that he is a more eminent servant of Christ, and then truly we have a proof that may be relied upon, when deeds instead of words are brought forward. He uses the term labors here in the plural number, and afterwards labor What difference there is between the former and the latter I do not see, unless perhaps it be, that he speaks here in a more general way, including those things that he afterwards enumerates in detail. In the same way we may also understand the term deaths to mean any kind of perils that in a manner threatened present death, instances of which he afterwards specifies. "I have given proof of myself in deaths often, in labors oftener still." He had made use of the term deaths in the same sense in the first chapter. (2 Corinthians 1:10.)24. From the Jews. It is certain that the Jews had at that time been deprived of jurisdiction, but as this was a kind of moderate punishment (as they termed it) it is probable that it was allowed them. Now the law of God was to this effect, that those who did not deserve capital punishment should be beaten in the presence of a judge, (Deuteronomy 25:2, 3,) provided not more than forty stripes were inflicted, lest the body should be disfigured or mutilated by cruelty. Now it is probable, that in process of time it became customary to stop at the thirty-ninth lash, [858] lest perhaps they should on any occasion, from undue warmth, exceed the number prescribed by God. Many such precautions, [859] prescribed by the Rabbins, [860] are to be found among the Jews, which make some restriction upon the permission that the Lord had given. Hence, perhaps, in process of time, (as things generally deteriorate,) they came to think, that all criminals should be beaten with stripes to that number, though the Lord did not prescribe, how far severity should go, but where it was to stop; unless perhaps you prefer to receive what is stated by others, that they exercised greater cruelty upon Paul. This is not at all improbable, for if they had been accustomed ordinarily to practice this severity upon all, he might have said that he was beaten according to custom. Hence the statement of the number is expressive of extreme severity. 25. Thrice was I beaten with rods Hence it appears, that the Apostle suffered many things, of which no mention is made by Luke; for he makes mention of only one stoning, [861] one scourging, and one shipwreck. We have not, however, a complete narrative, nor is there mention made in it of every particular that occurred, but only of the principal things.By perils from the nation he means those that befell him from his own nation, in consequence of the hatred, that was kindled against him among all the Jews. On the other hand, he had the Gentiles as his adversaries; and in the third place snares were laid for him by false brethren. Thus it happened, thatfor Christ's name's sake he was hated by all.

(Matthew 10:22.)By fastings I understand those that are voluntary, as he has spoken previously of hunger and want. Such were the tokens by which he showed himself, and on good grounds, to be an eminent servant of Christ. For how may we better distinguish Christ's servants than by proofs so numerous, so various, and so important? On the other hand, while those effeminate boasters [862] had done nothing for Christ, and had suffered nothing for him, they, nevertheless, impudently vaunted.It is asked, however, whether any one can be a servant of Christ, that has not been tried with so many evils, perils, and vexations? I answer, that all these things are not indispensably

requisite on the part of all; [863] but where these things are seen, there is, undoubtedly, a greater and more illustrious testimony afforded. That man, therefore, who will be signalized by so many marks of distinction, will not despise those that are less illustrious, and less thoroughly tried, nor will he on that account be elated with pride; but still, whenever there is occasion for it, he will be prepared, after Paul's example, to exult with a holy triumph, in opposition to pretenders [864] and worthless persons, provided he has an eye to Christ, not to himself -- for nothing but pride or ambition could corrupt and tarnish all these praises. For the main thing is -- that we serve Christ with a pure conscience. All other things are, as it were, additional.28. Besides those things that are without "Besides those things," says he, "which come upon me from all sides, and are as it were extraordinary, what estimate must be formed of that ordinary burden that constantly presses upon me -- the care that I have of all the Churches." The care of all the Churches he appropriately calls his ordinary burden. For I have taken the liberty of rendering episustasin in this way, as it sometimes means -- whatever presses upon us. [865]Whoever is concerned in good earnest as to the Church of God, stirs up himself and bears a heavy burden, which presses upon his shoulders. What a picture we have here of a complete minister, embracing in his anxieties and aims not one Church merely, or ten, or thirty, but all of them together, so that he instructs some, confirms others, exhorts others, gives counsel to some, and applies a remedy to the diseases of others! Now from Paul's words we may infer, that no one can have a heartfelt concern for the Churches, without being harassed with many difficulties; for the government of the Church is no pleasant occupation, in which we may exercise ourselves agreeably and with delight of heart, [866] but a hard and severe warfare, as has been previously mentioned, (2 Corinthians 10:4,) -- Satan from time to time giving us as much trouble as he can, and leaving no stone unturned to annoy us.29. Who is weak. How many there are that allow all offenses to pass by unheeded -- who either despise the infirmities of brethren, or trample them under foot! This, however, arises from their having no concern for the Church. For concern, undoubtedly, produces sumpatheian (sympathy,) [867] which leads the Minister of Christ to participate in the feelings of all, [868] and put himself in the place of all, that he may suit himself to all.

2 Corinthians 11:30-33

30. If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 30. Si gloriari oportet, in iis quae infirmitatis meae sunt gloriabor. 31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. 31. Deus et Pater Domini nostri Iesu Christi novit, qui est benedictus in saecula, quod non mentiar. 32. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; 32. Damasci Aretas, regius gentis praefectus, custodiebat urbem Damascenorum, volens me apprehendere. (Acts 9:24, 25.) 33. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands. 33. Et per fenestram demissus fui in sporta per muros, atque effugi manus eius. 30. If he must glory. Here we have the conclusion, drawn from all that has gone before -- that Paul is more inclined to boast of those things that are connected with his infirmity, that is, those things which might, in the view of the world, bring him contempt, rather than glory, as, for example, hunger, thirst, imprisonments, stonings, stripes, and the like -- those things, in truth, that we are usually as much ashamed of, as of things that incur great dishonor. [869] 31. The God and Father As he was about to relate a singular feat, [870] which, at the same time, was not well known, he confirms it by making use of an oath. Observe, however, what is the form of a pious oath, [871] -- when, for the purpose of declaring the truth, we reverently call God as our witness. Now this persecution was, as it were, Paul's first apprenticeship, [872] as appears from Luke, (Acts 9:23-25); but if, while yet a raw recruit, he was exercised in such beginnings, what shall we think of him, when a veteran soldier? As, however, flight gives no evidence of a valiant spirit, it may be asked, why it is that he makes mention of his flight? I answer, that the gates of the royal city having been closed, clearly showed with what rage the wicked were inflamed against him; and it was on no light grounds that they had been led to entertain such a feeling, [873] for if Paul had not fought for Christ with a new and unusual activity, the wicked would never have been thrown into such a commotion. His singular perseverance, however, shone forth chiefly in this -- that, after escaping from so severe a persecution, he did not cease to stir up the whole world against him, by prosecuting fearlessly the Lord's work. It may be, however, that he proceeds to mock those ambitious men, who, while they had never had experience of any thing but applauses, favors, honorable salutations, and agreeable lodgings, wished to be held in the highest esteem. For, in opposition to this, he relates, that he was shut in, so that he could with difficulty save his life by a miserable and ignominious flight. Some, however, ask, whether it was lawful for Paul to leap over the walls, inasmuch as it was a capital crime to do so? I answer, in the first place, that it is not certain, whether that punishment was sanctioned by law in the East; and farther, that even if it was so, Paul, nevertheless, was guilty of no crime, because he did not do this as an enemy, or for sport, but from necessity. For the law would not punish a man, that would throw himself down from the walls to save his life from the flames; and what difference is there between a fire, and a fierce attack from robbers? We must always, in connection with laws, have an eye to reason and equity. [874] This consideration will exempt Paul entirely from blame.

2 Corinthians 12:1-5

1. It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.1. Gloriari sane non expedit mihi: veniam enim ad visiones et revelatones Domini.2. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.2. Novi hominem in Christo ante annos quatuordecim (sive in corpore, nescio: sive extra corpus, nescio, Deus novit) eiusmodi, inquam, hominem raptum fuisse usque in tertium coelum:3. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)3. Scio de eiusmodi homine (sive in corpore, nescio: sive extra corpus, nescio, Deus scit.)4. How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.4. Quod raptus sit in Paradisum, et audierit verba ineffabilia, [875] quae non licet [876] homini loqui.5. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.5. De eiusmodi homine gloriabor: de me ipso non gloriabor, nisi in infirmitatibus meis.1. It is not expedient for me to glory Now, when as it were in the middle of the course, he restrains himself from proceeding farther, and in this way he most appropriately reproves the impudence of his rivals and declares that it is with reluctance, that he engages in this sort of contest with them. For what a shame it was to scrape together from every quarter commendations, or rather to go a-begging for them, that they might be on a level with so distinguished a man! As to the latter, he admonishes them by his own example, that the more numerous and the more excellent the graces by which any one of us is distinguished, so much the less ought he to think of his own excellence. For such a thought is exceedingly dangerous, because, like one entering into a labyrinth, the person is immediately dazzled, so as to be too quick-sighted in discerning his gifts, [877] while in the mean time he is ignorant of himself. Paul is afraid, lest this should befall him. The graces conferred by God are, indeed, to be acknowledged, that we may be aroused, -- first, to gratitude for them, and secondly, to the right improvement of them; but to take occasion from them to boast -- that is what cannot be done without great danger.For I will come [878] to visions. "I shall not creep on the ground, but will be constrained to mount aloft. Hence I am afraid, lest the height of my gifts should hurry me on, so as to lead me to forget myself." And certainly, if Paul had gloried ambitiously, he would have fallen headlong from a lofty eminence; for it is humility alone that can give stability to our greatness in the sight of God.Between visions and revelations there is this distinction -- that a revelation is often made either in a dream, or by an oracle, without any thing being presented to the eye, while a vision is scarcely ever afforded without a revelation, or in other words, without the Lord's discovering what is meant by it. [879]2. I knew a man in Christ As he was desirous to restrain himself within bounds, he merely singles out one instance, and that, too, he handles in such a way as to show, that it is not from inclination that he brings it forward; for why does he speak in the person of another rather than in his own? It is as though he had said, "I should have preferred to be silent, I should have preferred to keep the whole matter suppressed within my own mind, but those persons [880] will not allow me. I shall mention it, therefore, as it were in a stammering way, that it may be seen that I speak through constraint." Some think that the clause in Christ is introduced for the purpose of confirming what he says. I view it rather as referring to the

disposition, so as to intimate that Paul has not here an eye to himself, but looks to Christ exclusively.When he confesses, that he does not know whether he was in the body, or out of the body, he expresses thereby the more distinctly the greatness of the revelation. For he means, that God dealt with him in such a way, [881] that he did not himself understand the manner of it. Nor should this appear to us incredible, inasmuch as he sometimes manifests himself to us in such a way, that the manner of his doing so is, nevertheless, hid from our view. [882] At the same time, this does not, in any degree, detract from the assurance of faith, which rests simply on this single point -- that we are aware that God speaks to us. Nay more, let us learn from this, that we must seek the knowledge of those things only that are necessary to be known, and leave other things to God. (Deuteronomy 29:29.) He says, then, that he does not know, whether he was wholly taken up -- soul and body -- into heaven, or whether it was his soul only, that was caught upFourteen years ago Some [883] enquire, also, as to the place, but it does not belong to us to satisfy their curiosity. [884] The Lord manifested himself to Paul in the beginning by a vision, when he designed to convert him from Judaism to the faith of the gospel, but he was not then admitted as yet into those secrets, as he needed even to be instructed by Ananias in the first rudiments. [885] (Acts 9:12.) That vision, therefore, was nothing but a preparation, with the view of rendering him teachable. It may be, that, in this instance, he refers to that vision, of which he makes mention also, according to Luke's narrative. (Acts 22:17.) There is no occasion, however, for our giving ourselves much trouble as to these conjectures, as we see that Paul himself kept silence respecting it for fourteen years, [886] and would not have said one word in reference to it, had not the unreasonableness of malignant persons constrained him. Even to the third heaven. He does not here distinguish between the different heavens in the manner of the philosophers, so as to assign to each planet its own heaven. On the other hand, the number three is made use of (kat ezochen) by way of eminence, to denote what is highest and most complete. Nay more, the term heaven, taken by itself, denotes here the blessed and glorious kingdom of God, which is above all the spheres, [887] and the firmament itself, and even the entire frame-work of the world. Paul, however, not contenting himself with the simple term, [888] adds, that he had reached even the greatest height, and the innermost recesses. For our faith scales heaven and enters it, and those that are superior to others in knowledge get higher in degree and elevation, but to reach the third heavens has been granted to very few.4. In paradise [889] As every region that is peculiarly agreeable and delightful [890] is called in the Scriptures the garden of God, it came from this to be customary among the Greeks to employ the term paradise to denote the heavenly glory, even previously to Christ's advent, as appears from Ecclesiasticus. (Sirach, 40, 17, 27.) It is also used in this sense in Luke 23:43, in Christ's answer to the robber -- "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," that is, "Thou shalt enjoy the presence of God, in the condition and life of the blessed."Heard unspeakable words By words here I do not understand things, as the term is wont to be made use of after the manner of the Hebrews; [891] for the word heard would not correspond with this. Now if any one inquires, what they were, the answer is easy -- that it is not without good reason that they are called unspeakable [892] words, and such as it is unlawful to utter. Some one, however, will reply, that what Paul heard was, consequently, needless and useless, for what purpose did it serve to hear, what was to be buried in perpetual silence? I answer, that this took place for the sake of Paul himself, for one who had such arduous difficulties awaiting him, enough to break a thousand hearts, required to be strengthened by special means, that he might not give way, but might persevere undaunted. [893] Let us consider for a little, how many adversaries his doctrine had,

and of what sort they were; and farther, with what a variety of artifices it was assailed, and then we shall wonder no longer, why he heard more than it was lawful for him to utterFrom this, too, we may gather a most useful admonition as to setting bounds to knowledge. We are naturally prone to curiosity. Hence, neglecting altogether, or tasting but slightly, and carelessly, doctrine that tends to edification, we are hurried on to frivolous questions. Then there follow upon this -- boldness and rashness, so that we do not hesitate to decide on matters unknown, and concealed.From these two sources has sprung up a great part [894] of scholastic theology, and every thing, which that trifler Dionysius [895] has been so daring as to contrive in reference to the Heavenly Hierarchies, It becomes us so much the more to keep within bounds, [896] so as not to seek to know any thing, but what the Lord has seen it good to reveal to his Church. Let this be the limit of our knowledge.5. Of such a man It is as though he had said "I have just ground for glorying, but I do not willingly avail myself of it. For it is more in accordance with my design, to glory in my infirmities If, however, those malicious persons harass me any farther, and constrain me to boast more than I am inclined to do, they shall feel that they have to do with a man, whom God has illustriously honored, and raised up on high, with a view to his exposing their follies.

2 Corinthians 12:6-10

6. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. 6. Nam si voluero gloriari, non ero insipiens: veritatem enim dicam: sed supersedeo: ne quis de me cogitet supra id quod videt esse me, aut quod audit ex me. 7. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 7. Et en exellentia revelationum suppra modum efferrer, datus mihi fuit stimulus carni, nuntius Satanae qui me colaphis caederet, ne supra modum efferrer. 8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 8. Supra hoc ter Dominum rogavi, ut discederet a me: 9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 9. Et dixit mihi: Sufficit tibi gratia mea: nam virtus mea in infirmitate perficitur: libentissime igitur gloriabor super infirmitatibus meis, ut inhabitet in me virtus Christi. 10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 10. Quamobrem placeo nihi in infirmitatibus, in contumeliis, in necessitatibus, in persequutionibus, in anxietatibus pro Christo: quum enim infirmus sum, tinc robustus sum. 6. For if I should desire. Lest what he had said, as to his having no inclination to glory, should be turned into an occasion of calumny, and malevolent persons should reply -- "You are not inclined for it, because it is not in your power, he anticipates such a reply. "I would have it quite in my power," says he, "on good grounds; nor would I be justly accused of vanity, for I have ground to go upon, but I refrain from it." He employs the term folly here in a different sense from what he had done previously, for even those that boast on good grounds act a silly and disgusting part, if there appears any thing of boasting or ambition. The folly, however, is more offensive and insufferable, if any one boasts groundlessly, or, in other words, pretends to be what he is not; for in that case there is impudence in addition to silliness. The Apostle here proceeded upon it as a set, tied matter, that his glorying was as humble as it was well founded. Erasmus has rendered it -- "I spare you," [897] but I prefer to understand it as meaning -- "I refrain," or, as I have rendered it, "I forbear." Lest any one should think of me He adds the reason -- because he is contented to occupy the station, which God has assigned him. "My appearance," says he, "and speech do not give promise of any thing illustrious in me: I have no objection, therefore, to be lightly esteemed." Here we perceive what great modesty there was in this man, inasmuch as he was not at all concerned on account of his meanness, which he discovered in his appearance and speech, while he was replenished with such a superiority of gifts. There would, however, be no inconsistency in explaining it in this way, that satisfied with the reality itself, he says nothing respecting himself, that he may thus reprove indirectly the false Apostles, who gloried in themselves as to many things, none of which were to be seen. What I mentioned first, however, is what I rather approve of.7. And lest through the superiority of revelations. Here we have a second reason -- that God, designing to repress in him every approach to insolence, subdued him with a rod. That rod he calls a goad, by a metaphor taken from oxen. The word flesh is, in the Greek, in the dative [898] Hence Erasmus has

rendered it "by the flesh." I prefer, however, to understand him as meaning, that the prickings of this goad were in his flesh.Now it is asked, what this goad was. Those act a ridiculous part, who think that Paul was tempted to lust. We must therefore repudiate that fancy. [899] Some have supposed, that he was harassed with frequent pains in the head. Chrysostom is rather inclined to think, that the reference is to Hymeneus and Alexander, and the like, because, instigated by the devil, they occasioned Paul very much annoyance. My opinion is, that under this term is comprehended every kind of temptation, with which Paul was exercised. For flesh here, in my opinion, denotes -- not the body, but that part of the soul which has not yet been regenerated. "There was given to me a goad that my flesh might be spurred up by it, for I am not yet so spiritual, as not to be exposed to temptations according to the flesh."He calls it farther the messenger of Satan on this ground, that as all temptations are sent by Satan, so, whenever they assail us, they warn us that Satan is at hand. Hence, at every apprehension of temptation, it becomes us to arouse ourselves, and arm ourselves with promptitude for repelling Satan's assaults. It was most profitable for Paul to think of this, because this consideration did not allow him to exult like a man that was off his guard. [900] For the man, who is as yet beset with dangers, and dreads the enemy, is not prepared to celebrate a triumph. "The Lord, says he, has provided me with an admirable remedy, against being unduly elated; for, while I am employed in taking care that Satan may not take advantage of me, I am kept back from pride."At the same time, God did not cure him by this means exclusively, but also by humbling him. For he adds, to buffet me; by which expression he elegantly expresses this idea. -- that he has been brought under control. [901] For to be buffeted is a severe kind of indignity. Accordingly, if any one has had his face made black and blue, [902] he does not, from a feeling of shame, venture to expose himself openly in the view of men. In like manner, whatever be the infirmity under which we labor, let us bear in mind, that we are, as it were, buffeted by the Lord, with the view of making us ashamed, that we may learn humility. Let this be carefully reflected upon by those, especially, who are otherwise distinguished by illustrious virtues, if they have any mixture of defects, if they are persecuted by any with hatred, if they are assailed by any revilings -- that these things are not merely rods of the Heavenly Master, but buffetings, to fill them with shame, and beat down all forwardness. [903] Now let all the pious take notice as to this, that they may see [904] how dangerous a thing the "poison of pride" is, as Augustine speaks in his third sermon "On the words of the Apostle," inasmuch as it "cannot be cured except by poison." [905] And unquestionably, as it was the cause of man's ruin, so it is the last vice with which we have to contend, for other vices have a connection with evil deeds, but this is to be dreaded in connection with the best actions; and farther, it naturally clings to us so obstinately, and is so deeply rooted, that it is extremely difficult to extirpate it.Let us carefully consider, who it is that here speaks -- He had overcome so many dangers, tortures, and other evils -- had triumphed over all the enemies of Christ -- had driven away the fear of death -- had, in fine, renounced the world; and yet he had not altogether subdued pride. Nay more, there awaited him a conflict so doubtful, that he could not overcome without being buffeted. Instructed by his example, let us wage war with other vices in such a way, as to lay out our main efforts for the subduing of this one.But what does this mean -- that Satan, who was aman-slayer [906] from the beginning, (John 8:44,)was a physician to Paul, and that too, not merely in the cure of the body, but -- what is of greater importance -- in the cure of the soul? I answer, that Satan, in accordance with his disposition and custom, had nothing else in view than to kill and to destroy, (John 10:10,) and that the goad, that Paul makes mention of, was dipt in deadly poison; but that it was a special

kindness from the Lord, to render medicinal what was in its own nature deadly. 8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice. Here, also, [907] the number three is employed to denote frequent repetition. [908] He means, however, to intimate, that this annoyance had been felt by him distressing, inasmuch as he had so frequently prayed to be exempted from it. For if it had been slight, or easy to be endured, he would not have been so desirous to be freed from it; and yet he says that he had not obtained this: hence it appears, how much need he had of being humbled. He confirms, therefore, what he had said previously -- that he had, by means of this bridle, been held back from being haughty; for if relief from it had been for his advantage, he would never have met with a refusal.It may seem, however, to follow from this, that Paul had not by any means prayed in faith, if we would not make void all the promises of God. [909] "We read everywhere in Scripture, that we shall obtain whatever we ask in faith: Paul prays, and does not obtain." I answer, that as there are different ways of asking, so there are different ways of obtaining. We ask in simple terms those things as to which we have an express promise -- as, for example, the perfecting of God's kingdom, and the hallowing of his name, (Matthew 6:9,) the remission of our sins, and every thing that is advantageous to us; but, when we think that the kingdom of God can, nay must be advanced, in this particular manner, or in that, and that this thing, or that, is necessary for the hallowing of his name, we are often mistaken in our opinion. In like manner, we often fall into a serious mistake as to what tends to promote our own welfare. Hence we ask those former things confidently, and without any reservation, while it does not belong to us to prescribe the means. If, however, we specify the means, there is always a condition implied, though not expressed. Now Paul was not so ignorant as not to know this. Hence, as to the object of his prayer, there can be no doubt that he was heard, although he met with a refusal as to the express form. By this we are admonished not to give way to despondency, as if our prayers had been lost labor, when God does not gratify or comply with our wishes, but that we must be satisfied with his grace, that is, in respect of our not being forsaken by him. For the reason, why he sometimes mercifully refuses to his own people, what, in his wrath, he grants to the wicked, is this -- that he foresees better what is expedient for us, than our understanding is able to apprehend.9. He said to me. It is not certain, whether he had this answer by a special revelation, and it is not of great importance. [910] For God answers us, when he strengthens us inwardly by his Spirit, and sustains us by his consolation, so that we do not give up hope and patience. He bids Paul be satisfied with his grace, and, in the mean time, not refuse chastisement. Hence we must bear up under evil of ever so long continuance, because we are admirably well dealt with, when we have the grace of God to be our support. [911] The term grace, here, does not mean here, as it does elsewhere, the favor of God, but by metonymy, the aid of the Holy Spirit, which comes to us from the unmerited favor of God; and it ought to be sufficient for the pious, inasmuch as it is a sure and invincible support against their ever giving way.For my strength Our weakness may seem, as if it were an obstacle in the way of God's perfecting his strength in us. Paul does not merely deny this, but maintains, on the other hand, that it is only when our weakness becomes apparent, that God's strength is duly perfected. To understand this more distinctly, we must distinguish between God's strength and ours; for the word my is emphatic. "My strength," says the Lord, (meaning that which helps man's need -- which raises them up when they have fallen down, and refreshes them when they are faint,) "is perfected in the weakness of men;" that is, it has occasion to exert itself, when the weakness of men becomes manifest; and not only so, but it is more distinctly recognized as it ought to be. For the word perfected has a reference to the perception and apprehension of

mankind, because it is not perfected unless it openly shines forth, so as to receive its due praise. For mankind have no taste of it, unless they are first convinced of the need of it, and they quickly lose sight of its value, if they are not constantly exercised with a feeling of their own weakness.Most gladly, therefore This latter statement confirms the exposition that I have given. I will glory, says he, in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me [912] Hence, the man that is ashamed of this glorying, shuts the door upon Christ's grace, and, in a manner, puts it away from him. For then do we make room for Christ's grace, when in true humility of mind, we feel and confess our own weakness. The valleys are watered with rain to make them fruitful, while in the mean time, the high summits of the lofty mountains remain dry. [913] Let that man, therefore, become a valley, who is desirous to receive the heavenly rain of God's spiritual grace. [914] He adds most gladly, to show that he is influenced by such an eager desire for the grace of Christ, that he refuses nothing for the sake of obtaining it. For we see very many yielding, indeed, submission to God, as being afraid of incurring sacrilege in coveting his glory, but, at the same time, not without reluctance, or at least, less cheerfully than were becoming. [915]10. I take pleasure in infirmities There can be no doubt, that he employs the term weakness in different senses; for he formerly applied this name to the punctures that he experienced in the flesh. He now employs it to denote those external qualities, which occasion contempt in the view of the world. Having spoken, however, in a general way, of infirmities of every kind, he now returns to that particular description of them, that had given occasion for his turning aside into this general discourse. Let us take notice, then, that infirmity is a general term, and that under it is comprehended the weakness of our nature, as well as all tokens of abasement. Now the point in question was Paul's outward abasement. He proceeded farther, for the purpose of showing, that the Lord humbled him in every way, that, in his defects, the glory of God might shine forth the more resplendently, which is, in a manner, concealed and buried, when a man is in an elevated position. He now again returns to speak of his excellences, which, at the same time, made him contemptible in public view, instead of procuring for him esteem and commendation.For when I am weak, that is -- "The more deficiency there is in me, so much the more liberally does the Lord, from his strength, supply me with whatever he sees to be needful for me." For the fortitude of philosophers is nothing else than contumacy, or rather a mad enthusiasm, such as fanatics are accustomed to have. "If a man is desirous to be truly strong, let him not refuse to be at the same time weak Let him," I say, "be weak in himself that he may be strong in the Lord." (Ephesians 6:10.) Should any one object, that Paul speaks here, not of a failure of strength, but of poverty, and other afflictions, I answer, that all these things are exercises for discovering to us our own weakness; for if God had not exercised Paul with such trials, he would never have perceived so clearly his weakness. Hence, he has in view not merely poverty, and hardships of every kind, but also those effects that arise from them, as, for example, a feeling of our own weakness, self-distrust, and humility.

2 Corinthians 12:11-15

11. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. 11. Factus sum insipiens gloriando: vos me coegistis: nam ego debueram a vobis commendari: nulla enim in er inferior fui summis Apostolis, tametsi nihil sum. 12. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 12. Signa quidem apostoli peracta fuerunt inter vos, in omni patientia, et signis, et prodigiis, et virtutibus. 13. For what is it wherein you were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong. 13. Nam quid est, in quo fueritis inferiores caeteris Ecclesiis, nisi quod ego ipse non fui vobis onerosus? Condonate mihi hanc iniuriam. 14. Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 14. Ecce, tertio propensus animo sum, ut veniam ad vos, neque vobis ero oneri: non enim quaero quae vestra sunt, sed vos: etenim non esd parentes filiis. 15. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. 15. Ego vero libentissime impendam et expendar pro animabus vestris: licet uberius bos diligens, minus diligar. 11. I have become a fool Hitherto he had, by various apologies, solicited their forgiveness for what was contrary to his own custom and manner of acting, and contrary, also, to propriety, and what was due to his office as an Apostle -- the publishing of his own praises. Now, instead of soliciting, he upbraids, throwing the blame upon the Corinthians, who ought to have been beforehand in this. [916] For when the false Apostles calumniated Paul, they should have set themselves vigorously in opposition to them, and should have faithfully borne the testimony that was due to his excellences. He chides them, however, thus early, lest those, who were unfavorably disposed towards them, should put a wrong construction upon the defense which he brought forward, in consequence of his being constrained to it by their ingratitude, [917] or should persist in calumniating him. For in nothing We are ungrateful to God, if we allow his gifts, of which we are witnesses, to be disparaged, or contemned. He charges the Corinthians with this fault, for they knew him to be equal to the chiefest Apostles, and yet they lent an ear to calumniators, when they slandered him.By the chiefest Apostles some understand his rivals, who arrogated to themselves the precedence. [918] I understand it, however, as meaning -- those that were chief among the twelve. "Let me be compared with any one of the Apostles, [919] I have no fear, that I shall be found inferior." For, although Paul was on the best of terms with all the Apostles, so that he was prepared to extol them above himself, he, nevertheless, contended against their names when falsely assumed. [920] For the false Apostles abused this pretext, that they had been in the company of the twelve -- that they were in possession of all their views [921] -- that they were fully acquainted with all their institutions, and the like. Hence Paul, perceiving that they falsely gloried in these masks and counterfeit titles, and were successful, to some extent, among unlearned persons, [922] reckoned it necessary to enter upon a comparison of that nature. [923]The correction that he adds -- though I am nothing, means, that Paul was not disposed to claim any thing as his own, but simply gloried in the Lord, (2 Corinthians 10:17,) unless, perhaps, you prefer to consider this as a concession, in which he makes mention of what is thrown out

against him by adversaries and slanderers. [924]12. The signs of an Apostle By the signs of an Apostle he means -- the seals, that tend to confirm the evidence of his Apostleship, or, at least, for the proofs and evidences of it. "God has confirmed my Apostleship among you to such a degree, that it stands in no need of proof being adduced." The first sign he makes mention of is patience -- either because he had remained invincible, [925] by nobly withstanding all the assaults of Satan and his enemies, and on no occasion giving way; or because, regardless of his own distinction, he suffered all injuries patiently, endured in silence countless grievances, [926] and, by patience, overcame indignities. [927] For a virtue so heroic is, as it were, a heavenly seal, by which the Lord marks out his Apostles.He assigns the second place to miracles, for while he makes mention of signs and wonders and mighty deeds, he makes use of three terms, as he does elsewhere, (2 Thessalonians 2:9,) for expressing one and the same thing. Now he calls them signs, because they are not empty shows, but are appointed for the instruction of mankind -- wonders, because they ought, by their novelty, to arouse men, and strike them with astonishment -- and powers or mighty deeds, because they are more signal tokens of Divine power, [928] than what we behold in the ordinary course of nature. Farther, we know that this was the main design of miracles, when the gospel began to be preached -- that its doctrine might have greater authority given to it. Hence, the more that any one was endowed with the power of working miracles, so much the more was his ministry confirmed, as has been stated in the fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. [929]13. What is there in which. Here is an aggravation of their ingratitude -- that he had been distinguished, that they might receive benefit -- that they had derived advantage from the attestation furnished of his Apostleship, and had, notwithstanding, given their concurrence to the slanders [930] of the false Apostles. He subjoins one exception -- that he had not been burdensome to them; and this, by way of irony, for in reality this was over and above so many acts of kindness, which he had conferred upon them -- that he had served them gratuitously. To busy themselves after this, as they did, in pouring contempt upon him, what was this but to insult his modesty? Nay, what cruelty there was in it! Hence, it is not without good reason, that he sharply reproves pride so frantic. Forgive me this wrong, says he. For they were doubly ungrateful, inasmuch as they not only contemned the man, by whose acts of kindness they had been brought under obligation, but even turned his kind disposition into an occasion of reproach. Chrysostom is of opinion, that there is no irony implied, and that, instead of this, there is an expression of apology; but, if any one examines the entire context more narrowly, he will easily perceive, that this gloss is quite foreign to Paul's intention.14. Behold, this third time He commends his own deed, for which he had received a very poor requital from the Corinthians. For he says, that he refrained from taking their worldly substance for two reasons first, because he sought them, not their wealth; and secondly, because he was desirous to act the part of a father towards them. From this it appears, what commendation was due to his modesty, which occasioned him contempt among the Corinthians.I seek not yours. It is the part of a genuine and upright pastor, not to seek to derive gain from his sheep, but to endeavor to promote their welfare; though, at the same time, it is to be observed, that men are not to be sought with the view of having [931] every one his own particular followers. It is a bad thing, to be devoted to gain, or to undertake the office of a pastor with the view of making a trade of it; but for a person to draw away disciples after him, (Acts 20:30,) for purposes of ambition, is greatly worse. Paul, however, means, that he is not greedy of hire, but is concerned only for the welfare of souls. There is, however, still more of elegance in what he says, for it is as though he had said: "I am in quest of a larger hire than you

think of. I am not contented with your wealth, but I seek to have you wholly, that I may present a sacrifice to the Lord of the fruits of my ministry." But, what if one is supported by his labors? Will he in that case seek the worldly substance of the people. [932] Unquestionably, if he is a faithful Pastor, he will always seek the welfare of the sheep -- nothing else. His pay will, it is true, be an additional thing; but he ought to have no other aim, than what we have mentioned. Woe to those, that have an eye to any thing else! Parents for their children Was he then no father to the Philippians, who supported him even when absent from them? (Philippians 4:15, 16.) Was there no one of the other Apostles that was a father, inasmuch as the Churches ministered to their support? He did not by any means intend this; for it is no new thing for even parents to be supported by their children in their old age. Hence, those are not necessarily unworthy of the honor due to fathers, who live at the expense of the Church; but Paul simply wished to show from the common law of nature, that what he had done proceeded from fatherly affection. This argument, therefore, ought not to be turned in a contrary direction. For he did this as a father; but, though he had acted otherwise, he would, notwithstanding, have been a father still.15. And I will most gladly spend This, certainly, was an evidence of a more than fatherly affection -- that he was prepared to lay out in their behalf not merely his endeavors, and everything in his power to do, but even life itself. Nay more, while he is regarded by them with coldness, he continues, nevertheless, to cherish this affection. What heart, though even as hard as iron, would such ardor of love not soften or break, especially in connection with such constancy? Paul, however, does not here speak of himself, merely that we may admire him, but that we may, also, imitate him. Let all Pastors, therefore, learn from this, what they owe to their Churches.

2 Corinthians 12:16-21

16. But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. 16. Sed esto: ipse non gravavi vos: verum quum essem astutus, dolo vos cepi. 17. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? 17. Num per quenquam eorum, quos nisi ad vos, expilavi vos? [933] 18. I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? 18. Rogavi Titume, et una cum illo misi fratrem: num quid a vobis extorsit Titus? An non eodem spirtu ambulavimus? An non iisdem vestigiis? 19. Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. 19. Rursum arbitramini, quod nos vobis excusemus? In conspectu Dei in christo loquimur: sed omnia, carissimi, pro vestra aedificatione. 20. For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: 20. Nam metuo, ne qua fiat, ut, si venero, non quales velim reperiam vos: et ego reperiar a vobis, qualem nolitis: ne quo modo sint contentiones, obtrectationes, susurri, tumores, seditiones. 21. And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed. 21. Ne iterum, ubi venero, humiliet me Deus meus apud vosm et lugeam multos eorum qui ante peccaverumt, nec poenitentiam egerunt immunditiae libidinis et impudicitiae quam patrarunt.16. But be it so. These words intimate, that Paul had been blamed by malevolent persons, as though he had in a clandestine way procured, through means of hired persons, what he had refused to receive with his own hands [934] -- not that he had done any such thing, but they "measure others," as they say, "by their own ell." [935] For it is customary for the wicked impudently to impute to the servants of God, whatever they would themselves do, if they had it in their power. Hence, Paul is constrained, with the view of clearing himself of a charge impudently fabricated, [936] to defend the integrity of those whom he sent, for if they had committed any error, it would have been reckoned to his account. Now, who would be surprised at his being so cautious as to alms, when he had been harassed by such unfair judgments as to his conduct, after having made use of every precaution? [937] Let his case, however, be a warning to us, not to look upon it as a thing that is new and intolerable, if at any time we find occasion to answer similar calumnies; but, more especially, let this be an admonition to us to use strict caution, not to furnish any handle to revilers. For we see, that it is not enough to give evidence of being ourselves upright, if those, whose assistance we have made use of, are not, also, found to be so. Hence, our choice of them must not be made lightly, or as a matter of mere form, but with the utmost possible care.19. Do you again think. As those that are conscious to themselves of something wrong are sometimes more anxious than others to clear themselves, it is probable, that this, also, was turned into a ground of calumny -- that Paul had in the former Epistle applied himself to a defense of his ministry. Farther, it is a fault in the servants of Christ, to be too much concerned as to their own reputation. With the view, therefore, of repelling those calumnies, he declares in the first place, that he speaks in the presence of God, whom evil consciences always dread. In the second place, he maintains, that he

has not so much a view to himself, as to them. He was prepared to go through good report and bad report, (2 Corinthians 6:8,) nay, even to be reduced to nothing; but it was of advantage to the Corinthians, that he should retain the reputation that he deserved, that his ministry might not be brought into contempt.20. For I fear He declares, in what way it tends to their edification, that his integrity should be vindicated, for, on the ground that he had come into contempt, many grew wanton, as it were, with loosened reins. Now respect for him would have been a means of leading them to repentance, for they would have listened to his admonitions.I fear, says he. This fear proceeded from love, for, unless he had been concerned as to their welfare, he would very readily have overlooked all this, from which he sought to obtain no personal advantage. For otherwise we are afraid to give occasion of offense, when we foresee that it will be hurtful to ourselves.And I shall be found by you. Here is a second ground of fear -- lest he should be constrained to act with greater severity. Now it is a token not merely of love, but even of indulgence, to shun severity, and have recourse to milder measures. "As to my striving at present to maintain my authority, and endeavoring to bring you back to obedience, I do this, lest I should find occasion to punish your obstinacy more severely, if I come, and find among you nothing of amendment." He teaches, accordingly, by his example, that mild remedies must always be resorted to by Pastors, for the correction of faults, before they have recourse to extreme severity; and, at the same time, that we must, by admonitions and reproofs, prevent the necessity of having recourse to the utmost rigor.Lest, by any means, there be contentions. He enumerates the vices, which chiefly prevailed among the Corinthians; almost all of which proceeded from the same source. For had not every one been devoted to self, they would never have contended with each other -- they would never have envied one another -- there would have been no slandering among them. [938] Thus the sum and substance of the first catalogue [939] is want of love, because (philautia) self-love, [940] and ambition prevailed.21. Lest, when I come, my God should humble me His abasement was reckoned to him as a fault. The blame of it he throws back upon the Corinthians, who, when they should have honored his Apostleship, loaded it, on the contrary, with disgrace; for their proficiency [941] would have been the glory and honor of Paul's Apostleship. When, therefore, they were, instead of this, overrun with many vices, they heaped disgrace upon him to the utmost of their power. He does not, indeed, charge them all with this crime, but only a few, who had impudently despised all his admonitions. The meaning, then, is this: "They think contemptuously of me, because I appear contemptible. Let them, then, give me no occasion of abasement: nay more, let them, on the contrary, laying aside their forwardness, begin to feel shame; and let them, confounded at their iniquities, prostrate themselves on the ground, instead of looking down upon others with disdain." In the mean time, he lets us know the disposition of a true and genuine Pastor, when he says that he will look upon the sins of others with grief. And, undoubtedly, the right way of acting is this -- that every Christian shall have his Church inclosed within his heart, and be affected with its maladies, as if they were his own, -- sympathize with its sorrows, and bewail its sins. We see, how Jeremiah entreats, that there may be given him a fountain of tears, (Jeremiah 9:1,) that he may bewail the calamity of his people. We see, how pious kings and prophets, to whom the government of the people was committed, were touched with similar feelings. It is, indeed, a thing that is common to all the pious, to be grieved in every case in which God is offended, and to bewail the ruin of brethren, and present themselves before God in their room as in a manner guilty, but it is more particularly requisite on the part of Pastors. [942] Farther, Paul here brings forward a second catalogue of vices, which, however, belong to one general

head -- unchastity.

2 Corinthians 13:1-4

1. This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.1. Hic tertius erit adventus meus ad vos. In ore duorum aut trium testium stabilietur omne verbum. (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17; Hebrews 10:28.)2. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:2. Praedixi et praedico, ut praesens quum essem iterum, ita et absens nunc scribo iis, qui ante peccaverunt, et reliquis omnibus: quod, si venero denuo, non parcam.3. Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.3. Quandoquidem esperimentum quaeritis in me loquentis Christi: qui erga vos non est infirmus, sed potens est in vobis.4. For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.4. Nam quamvis crucifixus fuit ex infirmitate, vivit tamen ex virtute Dei: siquidem et nos infirmi sumus in illo, sed vivmus cum illo ex virtute Dei erga vos.1. This will be the third. He goes on to reprove still farther the insolence of those of whom he had been speaking, some of whom living in profligacy and licentiousness, and others, carrying on contentions and strifes among themselves, cared nothing for his reproof. For his discourse did not apply to the entire body of the Church, but to certain diseased and half-rotten members of it. Hence he now, with greater freedom, uses sharpness, because he has to do with particular individuals, not with the whole body of the people, and besides this, it was with persons of such a stamp, that he perceived, that he would do them no good by kindness, and mild remedies. After having spent a year and a half among them, (Acts 18:11,) he had visited them a second time. Now he forewarns them, that he will come to them a third time, and he says, that his three comings to them will be in the place of three witnesses. He quotes the law as to the authority of witnesses; not in the natural and literal sense, as it is termed, but by accommodation, [943] or similitude, applying it to his particular purpose."The declaration of the law," says he, "is, that we must rest on the testimony of two or three witnesses for putting an end to disputes." [944] (Deuteronomy 19:15.)For the word established means that a decision is pronounced respecting a matter, that the strife may cease. "I, indeed, am but one individual, but coming a third time I shall have the authority of three witnesses, or, my three comings will be in the place of three testimonies." For the threefold effort that was made for their welfare, and perseverance, as made trial of on three different occasions, might, with good reason, be held equivalent to three persons.2. I told you before, and foretell you. The friendly and agreeable admonitions, that he had addressed to them so frequently, had been of no advantage. He, accordingly, betakes himself to a more severe remedy, with which he had previously threatened them in words when present with them. When we see him act with so much strictness, we need have no doubt, that they were surprisingly ungovernable and obstinate; for it appears from his writings, what mildness, and what unwearied patience he was otherwise prepared to manifest. As, however, it is the part of a good parent to forgive and bear with many things, so it is the part of a foolish parent, and one that has no proper regard for the welfare of his children, to neglect to use severity, when there is occasion for it, and to mingle strictness with mildness. We are well aware,

that nothing is more hurtful than excessive indulgence [945] Let us, therefore, use mildness, when we can safely do so, and that too, dignified and properly regulated: let us act with greater severity, when necessity requires.It is asked, however, why it was, that the Apostle allowed himself to expose the particular faults of individuals in so open a manner, as in a manner to point his finger at the very persons? I answer, that he would never have done so, if the sins had been hid, but as they were manifest to all, and matter of notoriety, so as to furnish a pernicious example, it was necessary that he should not spare the authors of a public scandal. [946]It is asked, secondly, what kind of chastisement he threatens to inflict upon them, as he could scarcely chastise them more severely in words. I have no doubt that he means, that he will inflict punishment upon them by excommunication. For what is more to be dreaded, than being cut off from the body of Christ, expelled from the kingdom of God, and delivered over to Satan for destruction, (1 Corinthians 5:5,) unless you repent?3. Since ye seek a proof A twofold meaning may be drawn from these words. The first is, "Since you wish to try me, whether I speak of myself, or whether Christ speaks by me;" and in this way Chrysostom, and Ambrose, explain it. I am rather inclined, however, to understand him as declaring, that it does not so much concern himself as Christ, when his authority is detracted from -- that when his admonitions are despised, Christ's patience is tried. "It is Christ that speaks by me; when therefore, you bring my doctrine under your lash, it is not so much to me as to him that you do injury." Some one, however, will object thus: "What! Will a man's doctrine, then, be exempted from all investigation, so soon as he makes it his boast, that he has Christ as his authority? And what false prophet will not make this his boast? What distinction, then, will there be between truth and falsehood, and what will, in that case, become of that injunction:Try the spirits, whether they are of God." (1 John 4:1.)Every objection of this nature Paul anticipates, when he says that Christ has wrought efficaciously in them by his ministry. For these two clauses, Christ speaking in me, and, who is mighty in you, not weak, must be read in connection, in this sense: "Christ, by exercising his power towards you in my doctrine, has declared that he spoke by my mouth, so that you have no excuse on the ground of ignorance."We see, that he does not merely boast in words, but proves in reality that Christ speaks in him, and he convinces the Corinthians, before requiring them to give him credit. Whoever, then, will speak in the Church, whatever be the title that he claims for himself, it will be allowable to inquire as to his doctrine, until Christ has manifested himself in him, and thus it will not be of Christ that judgment will be formed, but of the man. When, however, it is apparent, that it is the word of God that is advanced, what Paul says holds good -- that it is God himself who is not believed [947] Moses spake with the same confidence. (Numbers 16:11.)What are we -- I and Aaron? You are tempting God.In like manner, Isaiah:Is it too small a thing that you grieve men, unless you grieve my God also? (Isaiah 7:13.)For there is no more room for shuffling, when it has been made apparent, that it is a minister of God that speaks, and that he discharges his office faithfully. I return to Paul. As the confirmation of his ministry had been so decided among the Corinthians, inasmuch as the Lord had shown himself openly, it is not to be wondered, if he takes it so much amiss, that he meets with resistance. On good grounds, truly, [948] might he throw back upon them, as he does, the reproach, that they were rebels against Christ.4. For though he was crucified. He speaks, with particular intention, of Christ's abasement, with the view of intimating indirectly, [949] that nothing was despised in him, but what they would have been prepared to despise, also, in Christ himself, inasmuch as heemptied himself, even to the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:8.)He shows, however, at the same time, how absurd it is to despise in Christ [950] the abasement of the cross, inasmuch as it is

conjoined with the incomparable glory of his resurrection. "Shall Christ be esteemed by you the less, because he showed signs of weakness in his death, as if his heavenly life, that he leads subsequently to his resurrection, were not a clear token of his Divine power?" For as the term flesh here means Christ's human nature, [951] so the word God is taken here to denote his Divinity.Here, however, a question arises -- whether Christ labored under such infirmity as to be subjected to necessity against his will; for, what we suffer through weakness, we suffer from constraint, and not from our own choice. As the Arians of old abused this pretext for effectually opposing the divinity of Christ, the orthodox Fathers gave this explanation of it -- that it was effected by appointment, inasmuch as Christ so desired, and not from his being constrained by any necessity. This answer is true, provided it be properly understood. There are some, however, that mistakenly extend the appointment to Christ's human will -- as if this were not the condition of his nature, but a permission contrary to his nature. For example: "His dying," they say, "did not happen because his humanity was, properly speaking, liable to death, but by appointment, because he chose to die." I grant, indeed, that he died, because he chose to do so; but, whence came this choice, but from this -- that he had, of his own accord, clothed himself with a mortal nature [952] If, however, we make Christ's human nature so unlike ours, the main support of our faith is overturned. Let us, therefore, understand it in this way -- that Christ suffered by appointment, not by constraint, because, being in the form of God he could have exempted himself from this necessity, but, nevertheless, he suffered through weakness, because he emptied himself (Philippians 2:6.)We are weak in him. To be weak in Christ means here to be a partaker of Christ's weakness. Thus he makes his own weakness glorious, because in it he is conformed to Christ, and he no longer shrinks back from the disgrace, that he has in common with the Son of God; but, in the mean time, he says that he will live towards them after Christ's example. "I also," says he, "will be a partaker of Christ's life, after I shall have been exempted from weakness." [953] To weakness he opposes life, and, accordingly, he understands by this term a condition that is flourishing, and full of honor. [954] The clause towards you may also be taken in connection with the power of God, but it is of no importance, as the meaning always remains the same -- that the Corinthians, when they began to judge aright, would have respectful and honorable views of the power of God, which was in Paul, and would no longer despise outward infirmity.

2 Corinthians 13:5-9

5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 5. Vosmet iposo tentate, num sitis in fide: vos ipsos probate. Annon cognoscitis vosmet ipsos, quod Iesus Christus in vobis est, nisi si cubi reprobi estis? 6. But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. 6. At spero vos cognituros, quod nos non simus reprobi. 7. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. 7. Opto autem apud Deum, ne quid male faciatis; non quo nos probati appareamus, sed ut vos quod honestum est faciatis, nos vero veluti reprobi sumus. 8. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 8. Non enim possumus quicquam adversus veritatem, sed pro veritate. 9. For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection. 9. Gaudemus enim, quum nos infirmi fuerimus, vos autem validi fueritis: hoc vero etiam optamus, vestram integritatem. 5. Try yourselves. He confirms, what he had stated previously -- that Christ's power showed itself openly in his ministry. For he makes them the judges of this matter, provided they descend, as it were, into themselves, and acknowledge what they had received from him. In the first place, as there is but one Christ, it must be of necessity, that the same Christ must dwell alike in minister and people. Now, dwelling in the people, how will he deny himself in the minister. [955] Farther, he had shown his power in Paul's preaching, in such a manner that it could be no longer doubtful or obscure to the Corinthians, if they were not altogether stupid. [956] For, whence had they faith? whence had they Christ? whence, in fine, had they every thing? It is with good reason, therefore, that they are called to look into themselves, that they may discover there, what they despise as a thing unknown. Then only has a minister a true and well grounded assurance for the approbation of his doctrine, when he can appeal to the consciences of those whom he has taught, that, if they have any thing of Christ, and of sincere piety, they may be constrained to acknowledge his fidelity. We are now in possession of Paul's object. This passage, however, is deserving of particular observation on two accounts. For, in the first place, it shows the relation, [957] which subsists between the faith of the people, and the preaching of the minister -- that the one is the mother, that produces and brings forth, and the other is the daughter, that ought not to forget her origin. [958] In the second place, it serves to prove the assurance of faith, as to which the Sorbonnic sophists have made us stagger, nay more, have altogether rooted out from the minds of men. They charge with rashness all that are persuaded that they are the members of Christ, and have Him remaining in them, for they bid us be satisfied with a "moral conjecture," [959] as they call it -- that is, with a mere opinion [960] so that our consciences remain constantly in suspense, and in a state of perplexity. But what does Paul say here? He declares, that all are reprobates, who doubt whether they profess Christ and are a part of His body. Let us, therefore, reckon that alone to be right faith, which leads us to repose in safety in the favor of God, with no wavering opinion, but with a firm and steadfast assurance.Unless by any means you are reprobates. He gives them in a manner their choice, whether they would rather be reprobates, than give due testimony to his ministry; for he leaves them no alternative, but either to show respect to his Apostleship, or to allow that they are reprobates. For, unquestionably, their faith had

been founded upon his doctrine, and they had no other Christ, than they had received from him, and no other gospel than what they had embraced, as delivered to them by him, so that it were vain for them to attempt to separate any part of their salvation from his praise.6. I hope that you shall know He presses them still more urgently, while indulging this confident persuasion -- that he will not be rejected by the Corinthians. One of two things was necessary -- that they should either assign to Paul the honor due to an Apostle, or condemn themselves for unbelief, and acknowledge that they have no Church. He softens, however, the severity of the statement, by making use of the expression -- I hope; but in such a manner as to remind them the better of their duty; for to disappoint the hopes that have been entertained as to our integrity, is excessively cruel. "I hope," says he, "that you shall know -- when you have been restored to a sound mind." He prudently, however, says nothing as to himself in this second clause, calling them to consider God's benefits, by which they had been distinguished; nay more, he puts their salvation in the place of his authority.7. I desire before God. Again he declares, that he cares nothing for his own honor, but is simply desirous of promoting their advantage. For nothing was so undesirable for them, as to deprive themselves of advantage from his doctrine -- as they had begun to do, through their pride and contempt. "As to myself," says he, "for my reputation among men, I am not concerned. My only fear is, lest you should offend God. Nay more, I am prepared to be as a reprobate, provided you are free from all blame." "I am a reprobate," says he, "in the judgment of mankind, who very frequently reject those who are deserving of the highest honor." [961] At the same time, the particle as is not superfluous. For it corresponds with what he says elsewhere -- as deceivers and yet true. (2 Corinthians 6:8.) And this, certainly, is the true rule -- that the Pastor, having no regard to himself, should be devoted exclusively to the edification of the Church. Let him be concerned as to his own reputation, in so far as he sees it to be conducive to the public advantage. Let him be prepared to feel indifferent to it, whenever he may do so, without public disadvantage.8. For we can do nothing: That is -- "I do not seek, or desire any other power, than what the Lord has conferred upon me, that I may promote the truth. To false Apostles it is all one, provided they have power; and they feel no concern to make use of their power for the promotion of what is good." In short, he defends and maintains the honor of his ministry, in so far as it is connected with the truth of God. "What does it matter to me? For unless I have in view to promote the truth, all the power that I shall claim will be false and groundless. If, however, I lay out, whatever I have, for the promotion of the truth, I, in that case, do not consult my own interest. Now, when the authority of doctrine is safe, and truth is uninjured, I have what I desire. In contending, therefore, so keenly, I am not influenced by any exclusive regard for myself personally." By this consideration, however, he intimates, that the man, who fights and labors for the truth alone will not take it amiss, should occasion require it, to be regarded in the judgment of men as a reprobate, provided this does not interfere with the glory of God, the edification of the Church, and the authority of sound doctrine.This passage must be carefully observed, because it limits the power, which the Pastors of the Church should have, and fixes its proper bounds -- that they be ministers of the truth. Papists loudly tell us, that it is said, He that heareth you, heareth me;

he that despiseth you, despiseth me, (Luke 10:16);and likewise:Obey them that are set over you, (Hebrews 13:17);and under this pretext they take to themselves the utmost liberty, so as to usurp unbounded dominion, while they are, at the same time, the avowed and sworn enemies of the truth, and aim at its destruction by every means in their power. For exposing such impudence, this one statement of Paul will suffice -- which declares, that they must themselves be in subjection to

the truth. [962]9. For, we rejoice. Either the causal particle gar, (for,) must be taken as meaning -- therefore; or it is a second reason, why he does not refuse to be regarded as a reprobate -- for their sake, and with a view to their advantage. Let the reader select whichever he may choose, for it is of no consequence. [963] When he says, Provided you are strong, I shall willingly submit to be reckoned weak, there is an antithesis in the words -- not in the meaning; for weakness means here, as formerly, (2 Corinthians 13:4,) contempt. On the other hand, he means that the Corinthians will be strong, if they are full of the power and grace of God.And this also, He now again repeats, what he had already stated several times, that he was from necessity -- not from his own inclination, more severe than they would have wished; and farther, that by this means, too, [964] he spared them, that he might not be constrained to resort to severer measures, when he was present with them.The perfection, of which he speaks, consists in a fit proportion, and sound condition, of all the members. Now [965] he alludes to good physicians, who cure particular diseases in such a way as not in any part to mutilate the body; [966] and, as he is concerned to secure a perfection of this nature, he says, that, for that reason, he provides against the necessity of having recourse to severer measures. [967] For we see, that those, who at first shrink back from the slight pain, or uneasy feeling of a plaster, are at length constrained to endure the torture of burning, or amputating, and that, too, where the issue is extremely doubtful. [968]

2 Corinthians 13:10-14

10. Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction. 10. Propterea haec absens scribo: ne quum praesens fuero, rigidus sim iuxta potestatem, quam dedit mihi Dominus in aedificationem, et non in destructionem. 11. Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. 11. Quod superest, fratres, valete, integri estote, [969] consolationem habete, unanimes sitis, in pace agite: et Deus caritatis ac pacis erit vobiscum. 12. Greet one another with an holy kiss. 12. Salutate vos mutuo in osculo sancto. 13. All the saints salute you. 13. Salutant vos sacti omnes. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. 14. Gratia Domini Iesu Christi, et caritas Dei, et communicatio Spiritus sancti sit cum omnibus vobis. Amen. The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas. Ad Corinthios secumda missa fuit a Philippis Macedoniae -- per Titum et Lucam.10. According to the power In the first place, he arms the strictness of which he speaks, with the authority of God, that it may not appear to be thunder without lightning, or a rashly excited onset. [970] Farther, he lets them know, that he would rather employ his power to another purpose, for which it was peculiarly designed -- the promoting of their edification. "I shall not rashly have recourse to cruel remedies, nor will I give indulgence to my passion, but will simply execute the commission that the Lord has given me."When he speaks of power given him for edification, and not for destruction, he employs these terms for a somewhat different purpose from what he had done previously in 2 Corinthians 10:8. For in that passage there was a commendation of the Gospel from the advantage it yields -- because what is for our advantage is wont to be agreeable, and is willingly received by us. Here, however, he simply means to declare, that although he might justly inflict upon the Corinthians a severe blow, yet it was much more his inclination to exercise his power for their advantage, than for their destruction -- the former being its proper design. For as the Gospel, in its own nature, is the power of God unto salvation, (Romans 1:16,) and an odor of life unto life, (2 Corinthians 2:15, 16,) but in a way of contingency, is an odor of death; so the authority, which is conferred upon the Ministers of it, ought to be salutary to the hearers. If, on the other hand, it turns out to their condemnation, that is contrary to its nature. The meaning, therefore, is this: "Do not, through your own fault, allow that to turn to your destruction, which God has appointed for salvation." In the mean time, the Apostle admonishes all pastors by his example, in what manner they should limit the use of their power.11. Finally, brethren He qualifies whatever there has been of sharpness throughout the whole of the epistle, as he did not wish to leave their minds in an exasperated state, [971] but rather to soothe them. For then only are reproofs beneficial, when they are in a manner seasoned with honey, that the hearer may, if possible, receive them in an agreeable spirit. At the same time, he appears to turn from a few diseased persons [972] to the entire Church. Hence he declares, that he aims at promoting its perfection, and desires its consolation.To be of one mind, and to live in peace, are expressions which mean two different things; for the one takes its rise from the other. The former relates to agreement of sentiment; the latter denotes benevolence, and union of hearts.And the

God of peace This he adds, that his exhortation may have more weight with them, but, at the same time, he intimates that God will be with us, if we cultivate peace among ourselves; but that those that are at variance with each other are at a distance from him. [973] For where there are strifes and contentions, there, it is certain, the devil reigns.Now what agreement is there between light and darkness? (2 Corinthians 6.14.)He calls him the God of peace and love, because he has recommended to us peace and love, because he loves them, and is the author of them. Of the kiss here mentioned we have spoken in the two preceding Epistles.14. The grace of the Lord Jesus. He closes the Epistle with a prayer, which contains three clauses, in which the sum of our salvation consists. In the first place, he desires for them the grace of Christ; secondly, the love of God; and, thirdly, the communion of the Spirit The term grace does not here mean unmerited favor, but is taken by metonymy, to denote the whole benefit of redemption. The order, however, may appear to be here inverted, because the love of God is placed second, while it is the source of that grace, and hence it is first in order. I answer, that the arrangement of terms in the Scriptures is not always so very exact; but, at the same time, this order, too, corresponds with the common form of doctrine, which is contained in the Scriptures -- thatwhen we were enemies to God,

we were reconciled by the death of his Son, (Romans 5:10,)though the Scripture is wont to speak of this in two ways. For it sometimes declares what I have quoted from Paul -- that there was enmity between us and God, before we were reconciled through Christ. On the other hand, we hear what John says -- thatGod so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, etc. (John 3:16.)The statements are apparently opposite; but it is easy to reconcile them; because in the one case we look to God, and in the other to ourselves. For God, viewed in himself, loved us before the creation of the world, and redeemed us for no other reason than this -- because he loved us. As for us, on the other hand, as we see in ourselves nothing but occasion of wrath, that is, sin, we cannot apprehend any love of God towards us without a Mediator. Hence it is that, with respect to us, the beginning of love is from the grace of Christ. According to the former view of the matter, Paul would have expressed himself improperly, had he put the love of God before the grace of Christ, or, in other words, the cause before the effect; but according to the latter, it were a suitable arrangement to begin with the grace of Christ, which was the procuring cause of God's adopting us into the number of his sons, and honoring us with his love, whom previously he regarded with hatred and abhorrence on account of sin. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is added, because it is only under his guidance, that we come to possess Christ, and all his benefits. He seems, however, at the same time, to allude to the diversity of gifts, of which he had made mention elsewhere, (2 Corinthians 12:11;) because God does not give the Spirit to every one in a detached way, but distributes to each according to the measure of grace, that the members of the Church, by mutually participating, one with another, may cherish unity.

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