

Paul - Second Letter to Corinth

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2 Corinthians 1

Salutation. PAUL, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus the Brother, TO THE CHURCH of GOD WHICH IS IN CORINTH, AND TO ALL THE SAINTS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE PROVINCE OF ACHAIA.

Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father,

and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion, and the God of all comfort, who consoles me in all my tribulation, thereby enabling me to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the same comfort wherewith I am myself comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ I have come upon me above measure, so by Christ also my consolation is above measure mul-

tiplied. But if, on the one hand, I am afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, (which works in you a firm endurance of the same sufferings which I also suffer; so that my hope is steadfast on your behalf;) and if, on the other hand, I am comforted, it is for your consolation, because I know that as you partake of my sufferings, so you partake also of my comfort. For I would have you know, brethren, concerning the tribulation which befell me in the province of Asia, ¹ that I was exceedingly pressed down by it beyond my strength to bear, so as to despair, even of life. Nay, by my own self I was already doomed to death; that I might rely no more upon myself, but upon God who raises the dead to life; who delivered me from a death so grievous, and does yet deliver me; in whom I have hope that He will still deliver me for the time to come; you also helping me by your supplications for me, that thanksgivings may from many tongues be offered up on my behalf, for the blessing gained to me by many prayers.

For this is my boast the testimony of my conscience, that I have dealt with the world, and above all with you, in godly honesty and singleness of mind, not in the strength of carnal wisdom, but in the strength of God's grace. For I write nothing else to you but what you read openly, ² yea and what you acknowledge inwardly, and I hope that even to the end you will acknowledge, as some of you have already acknowledged, that I am your boast, even as you are mine, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And in this confidence it was my wish to come first to you, and that afterwards you might have a second benefit; and to go by you into Macedonia, and back again from Macedonia to you, and by you to be forwarded on my way to Judea. Am I accused then of forming this purpose in levity and

¹It has been questioned whether St. Paul here refers to the Ephesian tumult of Acts 19; and it is urged that he was not then in danger of his life. But had he been found by the mob during the period of their excitement, there can be little doubt that he would have been torn to pieces, or perhaps thrown to wild beasts in the Arena; and it seems improbable that within so short a period he should again have been exposed to peril of his life in the same place, and that nothing should have been said of it in the Acts. Some commentators have held (and the view has been ably advocated by Dean Alford) that St. Paul refers to a dangerous attack of illness. With this opinion we so far agree that we believe St. Paul to have been suffering from bodily illness when he wrote this Epistle. St. Paul's statement here that he was "self-doomed to death" certainly looks very like a reference to a very dangerous illness, in which he had despaired of recovery.

²The word means *you read aloud*, that is, when the Epistles of St. Paul were read publicly to the congregation. Compare 1 Thess. 5:27.

³Literally, the earnest money, i.e. a small sum which was paid in advance, as the ratification of a bargain; a custom which still prevails in many countries. The gift of the Holy Spirit in this life is said by St. Paul to be the earnest of their future inheritance; he repeats the expression 2 Cor. 5:5, and Eph. 1:14, and expresses the same thing under a different metaphor Rom. 8:23.

⁴St. Paul adds this sentence to soften what might seem the magisterial tone of the preceding, in which he had implied his power to punish the Corinthians.

⁵i.e. First Corinthians

⁶Literally, *if any man has caused pain*; a milder expression which would not in English bear so definite a meaning as it does in the Greek.

caprice? or is my purpose carnal, to please all, by saying at once both yea and nay? Yet as God is faithful, my words to you are no [deceitful] mixture of yea and nay. For when the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was proclaimed among you by us, (by me, I say, and Silvanus, and Timothy,) in Him was found no wavering between yea and nay, but in Him was yea alone; for all the promises of God have in Him the yea [which seals their truth]; wherefore also through Him the Amen [which acknowledges their fulfillment,] is uttered to the praise of God by our voice. But God is He who keeps both us and you steadfast to His anointed, and we also are anointed by Him. And He has set His seal upon us, and has given us the Spirit to dwell in our hearts, as the earnest ³ of His promises. But for my own part, I call God to witness, as my soul shall answer for it, that I gave up my purpose of visiting Corinth because I wished to spare you. I speak not ⁴ as though your faith was enslaved to my authority, but because I desire to your joy; for your faith is steadfast.

2 Corinthians 2

But I determined not again to visit you in grief; for if I cause you grief, who is there to cause me joy, but those whom I have grieved? And for this very reason I wrote ⁵ to you instead of coming, that I might not receive grief from those who ought to give me joy; and I confide in you all that my joy is yours. For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears; not to pain you, but that you might know the abundance of my love.

As concerns him ⁶ who has caused the pain it is

not me that he has pained, but some of you; [some, I say,] that I may not press too harshly upon all. For the offender himself, this punishment, which has been inflicted on him by the sentence of the majority, ⁷ is sufficient without increasing it. On the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest he should be overwhelmed by the excess of his sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you fully to restore him to your love. For the very end which I sought when I wrote before, was to test you in this matter, and learn whether you would be obedient in all things. But whomsoever you forgive, I forgive also; for whatever ⁸ I have forgiven, I have forgiven on your account in the sight of Christ, that we may not be overreached by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

When I had come to Troas to publish the Glad Tidings of Christ, and a door was opened to me in the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus my brother; so that I parted from them, ⁹ and came from thence into Macedonia. But thanks be to God who leads me on from place to place in the train of his triumph, to celebrate his victory over the enemies of Christ; ¹⁰ and by me sends forth the knowledge of Him, a steam of fragrant incense, throughout the world. For Christ's is the fragrance which I offer up to God, whether among those in the way of salvation, or among those in the way of perdition; but to these it is an odor of death, to those of life. And [if some among you deny my sufficiency], who then is sufficient for these things? For I seek not profit (like most) by setting the word of God to sale, ¹¹ but I speak from a single heart, from the command of God, as in God's presence, and in fellowship with Christ.

⁷Not *many* (AV); but *the majority*. See, for the punishment, 1 Cor. 5:4.

⁸The best MSS have the neuter, not the masculine.

⁹Namely, from the Christians at Troas.

¹⁰The verb here used (which is mistranslated in A. V.) means to lead a man as a captive in a triumphal procession; the full phrase means, to lead captive in a triumph over the enemies of Christ. The metaphor is taken from the triumphal procession of a victorious general. God is celebrating His triumph over His enemies; St. Paul (who had been so great an opponent of the Gospel) is a captive following in the train of the triumphal procession yet (at the same time, by a characteristic change of metaphor) an incense bearer, scattering incense (which was always done on these occasions) as the procession moves on. Some of the conquered enemies were put to death when the procession reached the Capitol; to them the smell of the incense was "an odor of death unto death;" to the rest who were spared, 'an odor of life unto life.' The metaphor appears to have been a favorite one with St. Paul; it occurs again Col. 2:15.

¹¹Literally, *to sell by retail*, including a notion of fraud in the selling. Compare the similar imputations against his Judaizing adversaries in 1 Thess. 2:3.

¹²Literally, *being manifestly shown to be a letter of Christ conveyed by my ministration*.

¹³Literally, *to reach any conclusion by my own reason*.

¹⁴Literally, *if the ministration of death in letters, graven upon stones, was born in glory*.

¹⁵The whole of this contrast between the glory of the new and the old dispensations, appears to confirm the hypothesis that St. Paul's chief antagonists at Corinth were of the Judaizing party.

¹⁶Literally, *For that which has been glorified in this particular, has not been glorified, because of the glory which surpasses it*.

¹⁷See Exo. 34:35. St. Paul here (as usual) blends the allegorical with the historical view of the passage referred to in the Old Testament.

2 Corinthians 3

Will you say that I am again beginning to commend myself? Or think you that I need letters of commendation (like some other men) either to you, or from you? Nay, ye are yourselves my letter of commendation, a letter written on I my heart, known and read by all men; a letter ¹² coming manifestly from Christ, and committed to my charge; written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not upon tablets of stone, but upon the fleshly tablets of the heart. But through Christ have I this confidence before God; not thinking myself sufficient to gain wisdom by my own reasoning, ¹³ as if it came from myself, but drawing my sufficiency from God.

For He it is who has made me suffice for the ministration of a new covenant, a covenant not of letter, but of spirit; for the letter kills, (cf. Rom. 7:9 11) but the spirit makes the dead to live. Yet if a glory was shed upon the ministration of the law of death, (a law written in letters, and graven upon stones.) ¹⁴ so that the sons of Israel could not fix their eyes on the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, although its brightness was soon to fade; how far more glorious must the ministration of the spirit be. For if the ministration of doom had glory, far more must the ministration of righteousness abound in glory. ¹⁵ Yea, that which then was glorious has no glory now, because of ¹⁶ the surpassing glory wherewith it is compared. For if a glory shone upon that which" was doomed to pass away, much more doth glory rest upon that which remains for ever. Therefore, having this hope, I speak and act without disguise; and not like Moses, who spread a veil over his face, that ¹⁷ the sons of Israel might not see the end of that fading bright-

ness. But their minds were blinded; yea to this day, when they read in their synagogues ¹⁸ the ancient covenant, the same veil rests thereon, nor can they see beyond it that the law is done away in Christ; but even now, when Moses is read in their hearing, a veil ¹⁹ lies upon their heart. But when their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is rent away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord abides, there bondage gives place to freedom; and we all, while with face unveiled we behold in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are ourselves transformed continually into the same likeness; and the glory which shines upon us ²⁰ is reflected by us, even as it proceeds from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4

Therefore having this ministration, I discharge it with no faint hearted fears, remembering the mercy which I received. ²¹ I have renounced the secret dealings of shame, I walk not in the paths of cunning, I adulterate not the word of God; but openly setting forth the truth, as in the sight of God, I commend myself to the conscience of all men. But if there be still a veil which hides my Glad tidings from some who hear me, it is among those who are in the way of perdition; whose unbelieving minds the God of this world has blinded, and shut out the glorious light of the Glad tidings of Christ, who is the image of God. For I proclaim not myself, but Christ Jesus as Lord and Master, and myself your bondsman for the Sake of Jesus. :For God, who called forth light out of darkness, has caused His light to shine in my heart, that [upon others also] might shine forth the knowledge of His glory manifested in the face of Jesus Christ.

But this treasure is lodged in a body of fragile clay, ²² that so the surpassing might which accom-

plishes the work should be God's and not my own. I am hard pressed, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not despairing; persecuted, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed. In my body I bear about continually the dying of Jesus, that in my body the life also of Jesus might be shown forth. For I, in the midst of life, am daily given over to death for the sake of Jesus, that in my dying flesh the life whereby Jesus conquered death might show forth its power.

So then death working in me, works life ²³ in you. Yet having the same spirit of faith whereof it is written "I believed, and therefore did I speak." Psalm 116:10 I also believe, and therefore speak. For I know that He who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, shall raise me also by Jesus, and shall call me into His presence together with you; for all [my sufferings] are on your behalf, that the mercy which has abounded above them all, might call forth · your thankfulness; that so the fullness of praise might be poured forth to God, not by myself alone, but multiplied by many voices. ²⁴ Wherefore I faint not; but though my outward man decays, yet my inward man is renewed from day to day. For my light afflictions, which last but for a moment, work for me a weight of glory, immeasurable and eternal. Meanwhile I look not to things seen, but to things unseen: for the things that are seen pass away; but the things that are unseen endure for ever.

2 Corinthians 5

Yea, I know that if the tent which is my earthly house be destroyed, I have a mansion built by God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And herein I groan with earnest longings, desiring to cover my earthly raiment with the robes of

¹⁸In their synagogues is implied in the term used here. Compare Acts 15:21.

¹⁹Perhaps there may be here an allusion to the Tallith, which (if we may assume this practice to be as old as the apostolic age) was worn in the synagogue by every worshipper, and was literally a veil hanging down over the breast.

²⁰"From glory" indicates the origin of this transformation, namely, *the glory shining on us*; "to glory," the effect; namely, *the reflection of that glory by us*. For the metaphor, compare 1 Cor. 13:12. We observe that in both passages that even the representation of divine truth given us by Christianity is only a *reflection* of the reality.

²¹Referring to his conversion from a state of Jewish unbelief.

²²The whole of this passage, from this point to 5:10, shows that St. Paul was suffering from bodily illness when he wrote. See also 12:7-9.

²³Literally, *while death works in me, life works in you*. i.e. the mortal peril to which St. Paul exposed himself was the instrument of bringing spiritual life to his converts.

²⁴The literal translation would be, *that the favor which has abounded might, through the thanksgiving of the greater number, overflow to the praise of God*.

²⁵Literally, "If indeed I shall be found clad: and not stripped of my clothing", i.e. If, at the Lord's coming, I shall be found still living in the flesh. We know from other passages, that it was a matter of uncertainty with St. Paul whether he should survive to behold the second coming of Christ or not. Compare 1 Thess. 4:15, and 1 Cor. 15:51. So, in the next verse, he expresses his desire that his fleshly body should be transformed into a spiritual body, without being 'unclad' by death. The

my heavenly mansion. (If indeed I shall be found ²⁵ still clad in my fleshly garment.) For we who are dwelling in the tent, groan and are burdened; not desiring to put off our [earthly] clothing, but to put over it [our heavenly] raiment, that this our dying nature might be swallowed up by life. And He who has prepared me for this very end is God, who has given me the Spirit as the earnest of my hope. Therefore, I am ever of good courage, knowing that while my home is in the body, I am in banishment from the Lord (for I walk by faith, not by sight). Yea, my heart fails me not, but I would gladly suffer banishment from the body, and have my home with Christ. Therefore I strive earnestly that, whether in banishment or at home, I may be pleasing in His sight. For we must all be made manifest without disguise before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive according to that which he has done in the body, either good or evil.

Knowing therefore the fearfulness of the Lord's judgment, though I seek to win men, yet my uprightness is manifest in the sight of Gael · and I hope also that it is manifested by the witness of your consciences. I write not thus to repeat my own commendation but that I may furnish you with a ground of boasting on my behalf, that you may have an answer for those whose boasting is in the outward matters of sight, not in the inward possessions of the heart. For if I be mad, it is for God's cause; if sober, it is for yours. For the love of Christ constrains me, because I thus have judged, that if one died for all, then all died [in Him] ²⁶; and that He died for all, that the living might live no longer to themselves, but to Him, who, for their sakes, died and rose again.

I therefore, from henceforth, view no man carnally; yea, though once my view of Christ was carnal, ²⁷ yet now it is no longer carnal. Whosoever, then, is in Christ, is a new creation; his old being has passed away, and behold, all has become new. But all comes from God, for He it is who reconciled me to Himself by Jesus Christ, and charged me with the ministry of reconciliation; for God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, reckoning their sins no more against them, and having ordained me to speak the word of reconciliation. Therefore,

metaphor of 'nakedness' as combined with 'tent' seems suggested by the Oriental practice of striking the tent very early in the morning, often before the travelers are dressed. So we read in .McCheyne's account of his journey through the desert, "When morning began to dawn, our tents were taken down. Often we have found ourselves shelterless before being fully dressed." (Life McCheyne, p. 92.) It should be observed that the original denotes simply dressed, clad, the antithesis to naked.

²⁶The original cannot mean *all were dead* (AV), but *all died*. The death of all for whom He died, was virtually involved in His death.

²⁷We agree [with other commentators] that this cannot refer to any actual knowledge which St. Paul had of our Lord when upon earth; it would probably have been "Jesus" had that been meant.

I am an ambassador for Christ, as though God exhorted you by my voice; in Christ's stead I beseech you be ye reconciled to God. For Him who knew no sin, God struck with the doom of sin on our behalf; that we may be changed into the righteousness of God in Christ.

2 Corinthians 6

Moreover, as working together with Him, I also exhort you, that the grace which you have received from God be not in vain. For he saith: "I have heard thee in an acceptable time, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee." (Isa. 49:8) Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.

For I take heed to give no cause of stumbling, lest blame should be cast on the ministration wherein I serve: but in all things I commend myself as one who ministers to God's service; in steadfast endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in straits of distress, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleepless watching, in hunger and thirst; in purity, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness, in [the gifts of] the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned; speaking the word of truth, working with the power of God, fighting with the weapons of righteousness, both for attack and for defense; through good report and evil, through honor and through infamy; counted as a deceiver, yet being true; as unknown [by men], yet acknowledged [by God]; as ever dying, yet behold I live; as chastened by suffering, yet not destroyed; as sorrowful, yet ever filled with joy; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

Corinthians, my mouth has opened itself to you freely, my heart is enlarged towards you. You find no narrowness in my love, but the narrowness is in your own. I pray you therefore in return for my affection (I speak as to my children), let your hearts be opened in like manner.

14 Cease to yoke yourselves unequally in ill-matched intercourse with unbelievers; for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?

what communion has light with darkness? what concord has Christ with Belial? what partnership has a believer with an unbeliever? what agreement has the temple of God with idols?

For ye are yourselves a temple of the living God, as God said: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Lev. 26:11,12) Wherefore, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." (Isa. 52:11) And, "I will be unto you a father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."²⁸

2 Corinthians 7

Having therefore these promises, my beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement, either of flesh or spirit, and perfect our holiness, in the fear of God.

Give me a favorable hearing. I have wronged no man, I have ruined no man no man, I have defrauded no man; I say not this to condemn you, [as though I had myself been wronged by you,] for I have said before that I have you in my heart, to live and die with you.

Great is my freedom towards you, great is my boasting of you; I am filled with the comfort which you have caused me; I have more than an overweight of joy, for all the affliction which has befallen me. When first I came into Macedonia my flesh had no rest, but I was troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. But God, who comforts them that are cast down, comforted me by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the comfort which he felt on your account, and the tidings which he brought of your longing for my love, your mourning for my reproof, your zeal for my cause; so that my sorrow has been turned into joy.

For though I grieved you in my letter, I do not regret it; but though I did regret it, (for I see that grief was caused you by that letter, though but for a season,) I now rejoice; not because you were

²⁸This passage is not to be found exactly in the Old Testament, although 2 Sam. 7:14 and Jer. 31:9 and 32:38, contain the substance of it.

²⁹Indignation against the offender.

³⁰Fear of the wrath of God.

³¹Zeal on behalf of right, and against wrong.

³²Namely, the father of the offender. We need not be perplexed at his wife's forming another connection during his lifetime, when we consider the great laxity of the law of divorce among Greeks and Romans.

grieved, but because your grief led you to repentance; for the grief I caused you was a godly sorrow; so that I might nowise harm you [even when I grieved you]. For the work of godly sorrow is repentance not to be repented of, leading to salvation; but the work of worldly sorrow is death. Consider what was wrought among yourselves when you were grieved with a godly sorrow; what earnestness it wrought in you, yea, what eagerness to clear yourselves from blame, what indignation,²⁹ what fear,³⁰ what longing, what zeal,³¹ what punishment of wrong. You have cleared yourselves altogether from every stain of guilt in this matter. Know, therefore, that although I wrote to [rebuke] you, it was not so much to punish the wrong doer, nor to avenge him³² who suffered the wrong, but that my earnest zeal for you in the sight of Gael might be manifest to yourselves.

This, therefore, is the ground of my comfort; but besides my consolation on your account, I was beyond measure rejoiced by the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For whatever boast of you I may have made to him, I have not been put to shame. But as all I ever said to you was spoken in truth, so also my boasting of you to Titus has been proved a truth. And his heart is more than ever drawn towards you, while he calls to mind the obedience of you all, and the fear and trembling wherewith you received him. I rejoice that in all things you give me ground for courage.

2 Corinthians 8

I desire, brethren, to make known to you the manifestation of God's grace, which has been given in the churches of Macedonia. For in the heavy trial which has proved their steadfastness, the fullness of their joy has overflowed, out of the depth of their poverty, in the richness of their liberality. They have given (I bear them witness) not only according to their means, but beyond their means, and that of their own free will; for they besought me with much entreaty that they might bear their part in the grace of ministering to the saints.

And far beyond my hope, they gave their very selves to the Lord first, and to me also by the will of

God. So that I have desired Titus [to revisit you], that as he caused you to begin this work before, so he may lead you to finish it, that this grace may not be wanting in you; but that, as you abound in all gifts, in faith and utterance, and knowledge, and earnest zeal, and in the love which joins your hearts with mine, so you may abound in this grace also. I say not this by way of command; but by the zeal of others I would prove the reality of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that you, by His poverty might be made rich.

And I give you my advice in this matter; for it becomes you to do thus, inasmuch as you began not only the contribution, but the purpose of making it before others,³³ in the year which is passed. Now, therefore, fulfill your purpose by your deeds, that as you then showed your readiness of will, so now you may finish the work, according to your means. For if there be a willing mind, the gift is acceptable when measured by the giver's power, and needs not to go beyond. Nor [is this collection made] that others may be eased, and you distressed, but to make your burdens equal, that as now your abundance supplies their need, your own need may [at another time] be relieved in equal measure by their abundance, as it is written, "He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack." (Exo. 16:18) But, thanks be to God, by whose gift the heart of Titus has the same zeal as my own on your behalf; for he not only has consented to my desire, but is himself very zealous in the matter, and departs to you of his own accord. And I have sent as his companion the brother who is with him, whose praise in publishing the Glad tidings is spread throughout all the churches; who has moreover been chosen by the churches [of Macedonia] to accompany me in my journey (when I bear this gift, which I have undertaken to administer); that the Lord might be glorified, and that³⁴ I might undertake the task with more good will. For I guard myself against all suspicion which might be cast upon me in my administration of this bounty

³³"Began before" namely, before the Macedonian churches. The meaning is, that the Corinthians had been the first not only to make the collection, but to propose it.

³⁴The reading of the best MSS, gives the sense as follows: *to promote my willingness of mind*, i.e. *to render me more willing to undertake the administration of the alms*, which St. Paul would have been unwilling to do without coadjutors elected by the contributors, lest he should incur unworthy suspicion.

³⁵The quotation here is from Prov. 3:4, cited also in Rom. 12:17.

³⁶There is even less to guide us in our conjectures as to the person here indicated, than in the case of the other deputy mentioned above. Here, also, the emissary was elected by some of the Churches who had contributed to the collection. He may have been either Luke, Gaius, Tychicus, or Trophimus (Acts. 20:4).

³⁷Literally, the word means, *the groundwork on which some superstructure is founded*. His appeal to the Macedonians was grounded on this readiness of the Corinthians. If (with the best MSS) we omit "of my boasting," the meaning will be unaltered.

with which I am charged; being "provident of good report" not only "in the sight of the Lord," but also "in the sight of men."³⁵ The brother³⁶ whom I have sent likewise with them, is one whom I have put to the proof in many trials, and found always zealous in the work, but who is now yet more zealous from the full trust which he has in you. Concerning Titus, then (on the one hand), he is partner of my lot, and fellow laborer with me for your good; concerning our brethren (on the other hand), they are ambassadors of the churches a manifestation of the glory of Christ. Show them, therefore, the proof of your love, and justify my boasting on your behalf, in the sight of the churches.

2 Corinthians 9

For of your ministration to the saints [at Jerusalem] it is needless that I should write to you, since I know the forwardness of your mind, and boast of it to the Macedonians on your behalf, saying that Achaia has been ready ever since last year, and the knowledge of your zeal has roused the most of them. But I have sent the brethren, lest my report of you in this matter should be turned into an empty boast; that you may be truly ready, as I declared you to be. Lest perchance the Macedonians who may come with me to visit you, should find you not yet ready, and so shame should fall upon me (for I will not say upon you) in this ground of my boasting.³⁷ Therefore, I thought it needful to desire these brethren to visit you before my coming, and to arrange beforehand the completion of this bounty which you before promised to have in readiness; so it be really given by your bounty, not wrung from your covetousness. But remember, he who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully, shall reap bountifully. Let each do according to the free choice of his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for "God loveth a cheerful giver." (Prov. 22:8) And God is able to give you an overflowing measure of all good gifts, that all your wants of every kind may be supplied at all

times, and you may give of your abundance to every good work. As it is written, “The good man hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever.”³⁸ And He who furnishes “seed to the sower, and bread for the food of man,”³⁹ will furnish you with plenteous store of seed, and bless your righteousness with fruits of increase; being enriched with all good things, that you may give ungrudgingly; causing thanksgivings to God, from those to whom I bear your gifts. For the ministration of this service not only fills up the measure of the necessities of the saints, but also overflows beyond it, in many thanks to God; while they praise God for the proof thus given of the obedience wherewith you have consented to the Glad tidings of Christ, and for the single mindedness of your liberality both to them, and to all. Moreover, in their prayers for you they express the earnest longings of their love towards you, caused by the surpassing grace of God manifested in you. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

2 Corinthians 10

Now, I Paul, myself exhort you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, (I, who am mean, forsooth, and lowly in outward presence, while I am among you, yet treat you boldly when I am absent) beseech you (I say), that you will not force me to show, when I am present, the bold confidence in my power, wherewith I reckon to deal with some who reckon I me by the standard of the flesh. For, though living in the flesh, my warfare is not waged according to the flesh. For the weapons which I wield are not of fleshly weakness, but mighty in the strength of God to overthrow the strongholds of the adversaries. Thereby can I overthrow the reasoning of the disputer, and pull down all lofty bulwarks that raise themselves against the knowledge of God, and bring every rebellious thought into captivity and subjection to Christ. And when the obedience of your church shall be complete, I am ready to punish all who may be disobedient.⁴⁰

Do you look at matters of outward advantage? If

³⁸Psalm 110:9. The subject of the verb “scattered” in the psalm is “the good man” (in the 5th verse), which St. Paul leaves to be supplied by the memory of his readers. To represent the quotation accurately to an English reader, it is necessary to insert this word, otherwise it would seem as if “God” were the subject of the verb.

³⁹These words are an exact quotation from Isaiah 55:10. Ignorance of this fact has caused an inaccuracy in the A.V. The literal translation of the remainder of the verse is: *Furnish and make plenteous your seed, and increase the fruits springing from your righteousness.*

⁴⁰We should notice in verses 3-6 the completeness of the military allegory. The image is that of a campaign against rebels: rock-forts (such as those on St. Paul’s own Cilician coast) must be cast down; and when the general obedience of the country is secured, those who are still rebellious must be summarily punished. We should observe, too, the new turn given to one phrase (not *casting down* but *building up*) in verse 8, and even in 13:10.

there be any among you who confidently assumes that he belongs [above the rest] to Christ, let him reckon anew by his reason, that if he belong to Christ, so do I no less. For although I were to boast somewhat highly concerning the authority which the Lord has given me (not to cast you down, but to build you up), my words would not be shamed by the truth. I say this, lest you should imagine that I am writing empty threats. “For his letters,” says one, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” Let such a man assure himself that the words which I write while absent, I will bear out by my deeds when present! For I venture not to number or compare myself with certain of the self commenders; nay, they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are guilty of folly.

But I, for my part, will not let my boasting carry me beyond measure, but will confine it within that measure given me by God, who made my line reach even to you. For I stretch not myself beyond due bounds (as though I reached you not); for I have already come as far even as Corinth to publish the Glad tidings of Christ. I am not boasting beyond measure, in the labors of others; but, I hope that as your faith goes on increasing, among yourselves, I shall be still further honored within my appointed limits, by bearing the Glad tidings to the countries beyond you; not by boasting of work made ready to my hand within another man’s limit. Meantime, “He that boasteth, let him boast in the Lord.” (Jer. 9:24) For a man is proved worthy, not when he commends himself, but when he is commended by the Lord.

2 Corinthians 11

Would that ye could bear with me a little in my folly! Yea, ye already bear with me. For I love you with a godly jealousy, because I betrothed you to one only husband, even to Christ, that I might present you unto Him in virgin purity; but I fear lest, as Eve was beguiled by the craftiness of the

serpent, so your imaginations should be corrupted, and you should be seduced from your single minded faithfulness to Christ. For if he that comes among you is preaching another Jesus, whom I preached not, or if you are receiving [from him] another Spirit, which you received not before, or a new Glad tidings, which you accepted not before, you would do well to bear with me; for I reckon myself no whit behind your super eminent Apostles. Yea, though I be unskilled in the arts of speech, yet I am not wanting in the gift of knowledge; but I have manifested it towards you in all things, and amongst all men. Or is it a sin [which must rob me of the name of Apostle], that I proclaimed to you, without fee or reward, the Glad tidings of God, and abased; myself that you might be exalted? Other churches I spoiled, and took their wages to do you service. And when I was with you, though I was in want, I pressed not upon any of you; for the brethren,⁴¹ when they came from Macedonia, supplied my needs; and I kept, and will keep myself altogether from casting a burden upon you. As the truth of Christ is in me, no deed of mine shall rob me of this boasting in the region of Achaia. And why? Because I love you not? God knows my love. But what I do I will continue to do, that I may cut off all ground from those who wish to find some ground of slander; and let them show the same cause for their boasting as I for mine. For men like these are false Apostles, deceitful workmen, clothing themselves in the garb of Christ's Apostles. And no wonder; for even Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. It is not strange, then, if his servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness: but their end shall be according to their works.

I entreat you all once more I not to count me for a fool; or, if you think me such, yet bear with me in my folly, that I, too, may boast a little of myself. But, in so doing, I speak not in the spirit of the Lord, but, as it were, in folly, while we stand upon this ground of boasting; for, since many are boasting in the spirit of the flesh, I will boast likewise.

⁴¹Probably Timothy and Silvanus, who may have brought the contribution sent by the Philippians.

⁴²The five Jewish scourgings, two of the three Roman beatings with rods (one being at Philippi), and the three shipwrecks, are all unrecorded in the Acts. The stoning was at Lystra. What a life of incessant adventure and peril is here disclosed to us. And when we remember that he who endured and dared all this was a man constantly suffering from infirm health, such heroic self-devotion seems almost superhuman.

⁴³We prefer the reading of the Textus Receptus (which is also adopted by Chrysostom and by Tischendorf) to that of the Vatican Manuscript, adopted by Lachmann. On the other hand, for what follows we take Lachmann's reading, on the authority of the Codex Vaticanus, instead of the Textus Receptus. The whole passage is most perplexing, from the obscurity of its connection with what precedes and what follows. Why did St. Paul mention his escape from Damascus in so much detail? Was it merely as an event ignominious to himself? This seems the best view, but it is far from satisfactory. There is something most disappointing in his beginning thus to relate in detail the first in that series of wonderful escapes of which he had just before given a rapid sketch, and then suddenly and abruptly breaking off; leaving our curiosity roused and yet ungratified. We cannot agree with DeWette in considering the Damascene escape to be introduced as the climax of all the other perils mentioned, nor in referring to it the solemn attestation of verse 31.

And I know that you bear kindly with fools as be- seems the wise. Nay, you bear with men, though they enslave you, though they devour you, though they entrap you, though they exalt themselves over you, though they smite you on the face, to degrade you. I say that I was weak; and yet, if any have ground of boldness, I too (I speak in folly) have ground to be as bold as they. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they sons of Israel? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were beside myself) such, far more am I. In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. (five times I received from Jews the forty stripes save one; thrice I was scourged with the Roman rods; once I was stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck;⁴² a night and a day have I spent in the open 7 sea.) In journeyings often; in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers; in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the heathen; in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea; in perils among false brethren. In toil and weariness, often in sleepless watchings; in hunger and thirst, often without bread to eat; in cold and nakedness. And besides all the rest, I there is the crowd which presses upon me daily, and the care of all the churches. Who is weak, but I share his' weakness? Who is caused to fall, but I burn with indignation? If I must needs boast, I will boast of my weakness. God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He who is blessed for ever, knows that I lie not.

In Damascus, the governor under Aretas, the king, kept watch over the city with a garrison, purposing to apprehend me; and I was let down by the wall, through a window, in a basket, and thus [not by my strength, but by my weakness] I escaped his hands.⁴³

2 Corinthians 12

It is not for me, then, to boast. But I will come also to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man who was caught up fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth), caught up, I say, in the power of Christ, even to the third heaven, And I know that such a man (whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth) was caught up into Paradise, and heard, unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter. Of such a man I will boast; but of myself I will not boast, save in the tokens of my weakness.

If I should choose to boast, I should not be guilty of empty vanity, for I should speak the truth; but I forbear to speak, that I may not cause any man to think of me more highly than when he sees my deeds or hears my teaching. And lest, through the exceeding greatness of these revelations, I should be lifted up with pride, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me, to keep down my pride. And thrice I besought the Lord concerning it, that it might depart from me. But He hath said to me, , My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is mighty ⁴⁴ in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, will I boast rather in my weakness than in my strength, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me and dwell in me. Therefore I rejoice in signs of weakness, in outrage, in necessities, in persecutions, in straitness of distress, endured for Christ; for when I am weak, then am I strong.

I have been guilty of folly, but you forced me to it; for I ought myself to have been commended by you: for I came no whit behind your super eminent Apostles, though I be of no account. The marks, at least, of an Apostle were seen in the deeds which I wrought among you, in signs, and wonders, and miracles, with steadfast endurance of persecution. Wherein had you the disadvantage of other churches, unless, indeed, that I did not burden you with my own maintenance? forgive me this wrong. Behold I am now for the third time I preparing to visit you, and I purpose to cast no burden upon you; for I seek not your substance, but yourselves. Since children should not lay up wealth for parents, but parents for children. Nay, rather, most gladly will I spend, yea, and myself be spent, for your souls, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

⁴⁴"Has its full development."

But though it be granted that I did not burden you myself, yet perchance this was my cunning, whereby I entrapped your simplicity. Did I defraud you of your wealth by some of the messengers whom I sent to you? I desired Titus to visit you, and with him I sent the brother, his fellow traveler. Did Titus defraud you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?

Do you again imagine that it is before you I defend myself!! Nay, before God I speak, in Christ; but all, beloved, for your sakes, that you may be built up. For I fear lest perchance when I come I should find you not such as I could wish, and that you also should find me other than you desire. I fear to find you full of strife, jealousies, passions, intrigues, slandering, backbiting, vaunting, sedition. I fear lest, when I come, my God will again humble me by your faults, and I shall mourn over many among those who have sinned before and who have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and wantonness which they committed.

2 Corinthians 13

I now come to you for the third time. "Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be confirmed." (Deut. 19:15) I have warned you formerly, and I now forewarn you, as when I was present the second time so now, while I am absent, saying to those who had sinned before [my last visit], and to all the rest of the offenders, "If I come again I win not spare." I Thus you shall have the proof you seek of the power of Christ, who speaks in me; for He shows no weakness towards you, but works mightily among you.

For although He died upon the cross through the weakness of the flesh, yet now He lives through the power of God. And so I, too, share the weakness of His body; yet I shall share also the power of God, whereby He lives, when I come to deal with you. Examine [not me, but] yourselves, whether you are truly in the faith; put yourselves to the proof [concerning Christ's presence with you which ye seek in me]. Know ye not of your own selves, that Jesus Christ is dwelling in you? unless, perchance, when thus proved, you fail to abide the proof. But I hope you will find that I, for my part, abide the proof. Yet I pray to God that you may do no evil; desiring not that my own power may be clearly proved, but that you may do right, although I should seem un-

able to abide the proof: for I have no power against the truth, but only for the truth's defense. I rejoice, I say, when I am powerless [against you] and you are strong; yea, the very end of my prayers is your perfect reformation. Therefore I write this to you while absent, that, when present, I may not deal harshly with you in the strength of that authority which the Lord has given me, not to cast down; but to build up.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Reform what is amiss
Conclusion. in yourselves, exhort one another, be of one mind, live in peace; so shall the God of love and peace be with you. Salute one another with the kiss of holiness. All the saints here salute you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

In this letter we find a considerable space devoted to subjects connected with a collection now in progress for the poor Christians in Judea. It is not the first time that we have seen St. Paul actively exerting himself in such a project. Nor is it the first time that this particular contribution has been brought before our notice. At Ephesus, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul gave special directions as to the method in which it should be laid up in store (1 Cor. 16:1-4). Even before this period similar instructions had been given to the Churches of Galatia. And the whole project was in fact the fulfillment of a promise made at a still earlier period, that in the course of his preaching among the Gentiles, the poor in Judea should be remembered (Gal. 2:10).

The collection was going on simultaneously in Macedonia and Achaia; and the same letter gives us information concerning the manner in which it was conducted in both places. The directions given to the Corinthians were doubtless similar to those under which the contribution was made at Thessalonica and Philippi. Moreover, direct information is incidentally given of what was actually done in Macedonia; and thus we are furnished with materials for depicting to ourselves a passage in the Apostle's life which is not described by St. Luke. There is much instruction to be gathered from the method and principles according to which these funds were collected by St. Paul and his associates, as well as from the conduct of those who contributed for their distant and suffering brethren.

Both from this passage of Scripture and from others we are fully made aware of St. Paul's motives for urging this benevolent work. Besides his promise

made long ago at Jerusalem, that in his preaching among the Gentiles the poor Jewish Christians should be remembered, the poverty of the residents in Judea would be a strong reason for his activity in collecting funds for their relief, among the wealthier communities who were now united with them in the same faith and hope. But there was a far higher motive, which lay at the root of the Apostle's anxious and energetic zeal in this cause. It is that which is dwelt on in the closing verses of the ninth chapter of the Epistle which has just been read, (2 Cor. 9:12-15) and is again alluded to in words less sanguine in the Epistle to the Romans. (Rom. 15:30,31) A serious schism existed between the Gentile and Hebrew Christians, which, though partially closed from time to time, seemed in danger of growing continually wider under the mischievous influence of the Judaizers.

The great labor of St. Paul's life at this time was directed to the healing of this division. He felt that if the Gentiles had been made partakers of the spiritual blessings of the Jews, their duty was to contribute to them in earthly blessings (Rom. 15:27), and that nothing would be more likely to allay the prejudices of the Jewish party than charitable gifts freely contributed by the Heathen converts. According as cheerful or discouraging thoughts predominated in his mind, and to such alternations of feeling even an Apostle was liable, he hoped that "the ministration of that service would not only fill up the measure of the necessities of Christ's people" in Judea, but would "overflow" in thanksgivings and prayers on their part for those whose hearts had been opened to bless them (2 Cor. 9:12-15), or he feared that this charity might be rejected, and he entreated the prayers of others, "that he might be delivered from the disobedient in Judea, and that the service which he had undertaken for Jerusalem might be favorably received by Christ's people" (Rom. 15:30, 31).

Influenced by these motives, he spared no pains in promoting the work; but every step was conducted with the utmost prudence and delicacy of feeling. He was well aware of the calumnies with which his enemies were ever ready to assail his character; and, therefore, he took the most careful precautions against the possibility of being accused of mercenary motives. At an early stage of the collection, we find him writing to the Corinthians, to suggest that "whomsoever they should judge fitted for the trust, should be sent to carry their benevolence to Jerusalem" (1 Cor. 16:3); and again he alludes to the delegates commissioned with Titus,

as , guarding himself against all suspicion which might be cast on him in his administration of the bounty with which he was charged,” and as being” careful to do all things in a seemly manner, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (2 Cor. 8:20, 21).

This regard to what was seemly appears most strikingly in his mode of bringing the subject before those to whom he wrote and spoke. He lays no constraint upon them. They are to give” not grudgingly or of necessity,” but each” according to the free choice of his heart; for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).” If there is a willing mind, the gift is acceptable when measured by the giver’s power, and needs not to go beyond” (2 Cor. 8:12). He spoke rather as giving” advice” (2 Cor. 8:10), than a” command;” and he sought to prove the reality of his converts” love, by reminding them of the zeal of others (2 Cor. 8:8).

In writing to the Corinthians, he delicately contrasts their wealth with the poverty of the Macedonians. In speaking to the Macedonians themselves, such a mode of appeal was less natural, for they were poorer and more generous. Yet them also he endeavored to rouse to a generous rivalry, by telling them of the zeal of Achaia (2 Cor. 8:24, 9:2). To them also he would doubtless say that” he who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully” (2 Cor. 9:6), while he would gently remind them that God was ever able to give them an overflowing measure of all good gifts, supplying all their wants, and enabling them to be bountiful to others. And that one overpowering argument could never be forgotten, the example of Christ, and the debt of love we owe to Him,” You know the grace of our Lord .Jesus Christ, how, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that you, by His poverty, might be made rich” (8:9). Nor ought we, when speaking of the instruction to be gathered from this charitable undertaking, to leave unnoticed the calmness and deliberation of the method which he recommends of laying aside, week by week, what is devoted to God (1 Cor. 16:2), a practice equally remote from the excitement of popular appeals, and the mere impulse of instinctive benevolence.

The Macedonian Christians responded nobly to the appeal which was made to them by St. Paul. The zeal of their brethren in Achaia” roused the most of them to follow it” (2 Cor. 9:2). God’s grace

was abundantly” manifested in the Churches” on the north of the Aegean. Their conduct in this matter, as described to us by the Apostle’s pen, rises to the point of the highest praise. It was a time, not of prosperity, but of great affliction, to the Macedonian Churches; nor were they wealthy communities like the Church of Corinth; yet,” in their heavy trial, the fullness of their joy overflowed out of the depth of their poverty in the riches of their liberality’. Their contribution was no niggardly gift, wrung from their covetousness (2 Cor. 8:5) ; but they gave honestly” according to their means’, and not only so, but even” beyond their means’; nor did they give grudgingly, under the pressure of the Apostle’s urgency, but” of their own free will, beseeching him with much entreaty that they might bear their part in the grace of ministering to Christ’s people’. And this liberality arose from that which is the basis of all true Christian charity.” They gave themselves first to the Lord Jesus Christ, by the will of God’.

The Macedonian contribution, if not complete, was in a state of much forwardness, when St. Paul wrote to Corinth. He speaks of liberal funds as being already pressed upon his acceptance (2 Cor. 8:4), and the delegates who were to accompany him to Jerusalem had already been chosen (2 Cor. 8:19, 23). We do not know how many of the Churches of Macedonia took part in this collection, ⁴⁵ but we cannot doubt that that of Philippi held a conspicuous place in so benevolent a work. In the case of the Philippian Church, this bounty was only a continuation of the benevolence they had begun before, and an earnest of that which gladdened the Apostle’s heart in his imprisonment at Rome.” In the beginning of the Gospel” they and they only had sent once and again 3 to relieve his wants, both at Thessalonica and at Corinth (Phil. 4:15, 16); and” at the last” their care of their friend and teacher” flourished again” , and they sent their gifts to him at Rome, as now they sent to their unknown brethren at Jerusalem. The Philippians are in the Epistles what that poor woman is in the Gospels, who placed two mites in the treasury. They gave much, because they gave of their poverty; and wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the whole world, there shall this liberality be told for a memorial of them.

If the principles enunciated by the Apostle in reference to the collection command our devout atten-

⁴⁵In 2 Cor. 9:9 we find Philippi used as equivalent to Macedonia, and so it may be here. But it is not absolutely certain that 2 Cor. was written at Philippi. The churches in Macedonia were few, and communication among them was easy along the Via Egnatia; as when the first contributions were sent from Philippi to St. Paul at Thessalonica.

tion, and if the example of the Macedonian Christians is held out to the imitation of all future ages of the Church, the conduct of those who took an active part in the management of the business should not be unnoticed. Of two of these the names are unknown to us, though their characters are described. One was a brother," whose praise in publishing the Gospel was spread throughout the Churches," and who had been chosen by the Church of Macedonia to accompany St. Paul with the charitable fund to

Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:18, 19). The other was one" who had been put to the proof in many trials, and always found zealous in the work'. But concerning Titus, the third companion of these brethren," the partner of St. Paul's lot, and his fellow laborer for the good of the Church," we have fuller information; and this seems to be the right place to make a more particular allusion to him, for he was nearly concerned in all the steps of the collection now in progress.