

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS 4

In this chapter, the apostle declares the constancy, sincerity, and integrity of him, and his fellow ministers, in preaching the Gospel; asserts the clearness and perspicuity of it; removes the charge of pride and arrogance from them; takes notice of the afflictions he and others endured, for the sake of the Gospel; what supports they had under them, and what comforts they enjoyed: in (~~400B~~2 Corinthians 4:1) he observes, that seeing they were employed in such a ministry, as before described in the preceding chapter, though they met with troubles in it, they did not sink under them; the reason of which was, partly the excellency of the ministry, and partly the grace and mercy of God; and they were no less sincere than they were diligent; and were the reverse of the false teachers, who used dishonest methods, craftiness and deceit; these they disclaimed, and delivered out naked truth, with all simplicity and evidence, and as in the sight of God, in confirmation of which they could appeal to the consciences of all that heard them, (~~400B~~2 Corinthians 4:2) and whereas the apostle had affirmed the plainness and clearness of the Gospel ministry, both in the preceding chapter, and in the foregoing verse, he foresaw that an objection would be raised against it, which he anticipates, (~~400B~~2 Corinthians 4:3,4) showing, that though the Gospel was not spiritually discerned and savingly understood by some persons, yet this was not to be charged upon the Gospel, as if it was attended with darkness and obscurity; but it was owing to the unbelief of men, and the power of Satan over them, in blinding their minds; otherwise the Gospel in itself was light and glorious, in which Christ, the image of God, in a most resplendent manner appears; and those on whom Satan thus wrought were such as did not belong to God's elect, but were of the number of them that perish: moreover the integrity of the apostle and other ministers appeared in their preaching Christ, and not themselves; and in serving the churches in that way, for the sake of Christ; so that they were far from being chargeable with pride, vanity, and arrogance, (~~400B~~2 Corinthians 4:5) and they readily acknowledged, that all the Gospel light they had was from that God, who spoke light out of darkness in the first creation, whereby they were qualified to communicate

light to others, in the name of Christ, (~~4006~~2 Corinthians 4:6) and though they had a treasure committed to their trust, and which they had within them, yet they freely owned they were but earthen vessels; and the reason why such treasure was put there was, that the power seen in the conversion of sinners by their ministry might appear to be not of themselves, but of the Lord, (~~4007~~2 Corinthians 4:7) and then the apostle proceeds to give an account of the afflictions endured by them, and of the divine supports they had, by which they were preserved from being overwhelmed with them, (~~4008~~2 Corinthians 4:8,9) one end of which afflictions, and which are signified by bearing the dying of Jesus in their bodies, and by being exposed to death for his sake, was, that his life might be manifest in them, or his power in the upholding of them, (~~4009~~2 Corinthians 4:10,11) and herein lay the difference between them and the Corinthians; the one were in deaths oft, and in very great distresses, and the other in prosperous circumstances, (~~4010~~2 Corinthians 4:12) but however, they had much consolation amidst their sorrows and troubles, and which they had partly through the Spirit of faith, and in a way of believing; and who after the example of David, and having the same Spirit as he had, believed and spake, (~~4011~~2 Corinthians 4:13) and partly through the hope of the resurrection of the dead, to which they were encouraged by the resurrection of Christ, (~~4014~~2 Corinthians 4:14) as also by considering what valuable ends were answered by their bearing afflictions for the sake of Christ, and preaching the Gospel, namely the good of the churches of Christ, and the glory of God, (~~4015~~2 Corinthians 4:15) and besides, they had an experience of the daily renovation of the inward man, or of the carrying on of the work of grace upon their souls; and of an increase of grace, right, and joy in them; and this kept them from fainting, though their outward circumstances and outward man were but in a poor condition, (~~4016~~2 Corinthians 4:16) but more especially what raised their spirits, and kept them from sinking under their afflictions, was the view they had of eternal glory and happiness, to which they had respect; and the comparison they were led to make between their present afflictions, and glory, which their afflictions were working for as, that their afflictions were light, glory heavy; their afflictions were but for a moment, their weight of glory was for ever; their afflictions were seen and temporal, their glory unseen and eternal; or the things of this world, which they often needed, and yet did not regard, were visible and temporary things; but the things of another world they had their eye upon were invisible, only visible to faith, and would endure for ever.

Ver. 1. *Therefore seeing we have this ministry*, etc..] The apostle having largely insisted on the difference between the law and the Gospel, the ministration of the one and of the other, proceeds to give an account of his own conduct, and that of his fellow apostles and ministers: “we”, says he, “faint not”; under all the reproaches cast upon us, persecutions raised against us, and tribulations that attend us; we do not sink in our spirits, or give out from the ministry; we go on cheerfully in our work, in the thee of all opposition, encouraged by the consideration of the excellency of the ministry, which they had from the Lord, were put into, and continued in; which was so valuable in itself, and so useful in its effects; being the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness, having in it such an excelling glory to the law, and attended with so much light and liberty: to which he adds the consideration of the mercy of God they were partakers of,

as we have received mercy; which may refer either to the grace and mercy of God, which they had received in conversion; a sense of which abiding upon them, so influenced their minds, to hold forth the riches of abounding grace and mercy to poor sinners in the Gospel, that nothing could deter them from it; or to the grace, favour, and good will of God, in making, supporting, and continuing them as ministers of the word; all which, they were sensible, was owing not to men, but God; not to their merit, but to his mercy; not to their worthiness, parts, learning, etc.. but to his free gift, favour, and grace, by which only they were what they were, as preachers of the Gospel.

Ver. 2. *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty*, etc..] Or “shame”; this is a further account of the conduct of the first ministers of the Gospel, and very worthy of our imitation, and in which the apostle strikes at the different manner of behaviour in the false apostles: this may respect both doctrine and practice; they abhorred and rejected everything that was scandalous and reproachful to the Gospel of Christ; in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, they had their conversation in the world; they were open and above board, both in principle and practice; the same men in public, as in private; they used no art to cover their doctrines, or hide their conversations; everything of this kind was detestable to them; whereas the false teachers took a great deal of pains to colour over both their sentiments and their lives; and “a shame it was to speak of the things that were done of them in secret”, (~~AND~~ Ephesians 5:12). Moreover, they were

not walking in craftiness; they used no sly and artful methods to please men, to gain applause from them, or make merchandise of them; they did not lie in wait to deceive, watching an opportunity to work upon credulous and incautious minds; they did not, by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple; nor put on different forms, or make different appearances, in order to suit themselves to the different tempers and tastes of men, as did the false apostles:

not handling the word of God deceitfully. They did not corrupt it with human doctrines, or mix and blend it with philosophy, and vain deceit; they did not wrest the Scriptures to serve any carnal or worldly purpose; nor did they accommodate them to the lusts and passions of men; or conceal any part of truth, or keep back any thing which might be profitable to the churches:

but by the manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; that is, they with all plainness and evidence clearly preached the truth as it is in Jesus, presenting it to, and pressing it upon the consciences of men; where they left it, and to which they could appeal; and all this they did, in the sight and presence of the omniscient God, to whom they knew they must give an account of themselves and their ministry.

Ver. 3. *But if our Gospel be hid*, etc..] When the Gospel is called ours, the meaning is, not that ministers are the authors or subject of it; but it is so styled, because they are intrusted with it; it is preached by them; and is in opposition to another Gospel, the Gospel of the false apostles. Here an objection is obviated, which the apostle saw would be made against the clearness and perspicuity of the Gospel, asserted by him in the foregoing chapter; taken from some persons, who though they sat under the ministry of the word, were not enlightened by it, saw no glory nor excellency in it, nor were their minds in the least affected with it: to which he replies, saying, “if our Gospel be hid”,

it is hid to them that are lost. But why should the apostle put an if upon its being hid? is it not hid? is it not “the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom?” To which may be answered, that it was hid in God from the beginning of the world; and in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and in the ceremonial law, which contained types and shadows of many things in it; and was hid from whole nations, and for whole ages formerly: but now God has made known the mystery of

his will; Christ is manifest in the flesh; the ceremonial law is done away, and the Gospel is preached to Jews and Gentiles; so that it is hid to none, as to the outward ministration of it: and if the internal, spiritual, and saving knowledge and experience of it is hid from any, eventually and finally, it is “to them that are lost”: all mankind are in a lost and perishing condition through sin; though some will not be lost eternally, whom God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and who by the Spirit are brought savingly to believe in Christ; but there are others, that will be lost for ever; and to these the Gospel is hid; and they are such, who are left to the native blindness of their minds, and are given up to a reprobate mind, to judicial darkness, and are suffered to be under the influence of the prince of darkness, as in the following verse; now such instances are no more an objection to the clearness and perspicuity of the Gospel, and the ministration of it, than men born blind, who never could, nor never will see light, are to the bright and clear shining of the sun noon day.

Ver. 4. *In whom the god of this world hath blinded*, etc..] The description of the persons to whom the Gospel is hid, is here further carried on; in which the character of Satan is given, who is here styled “the god of this world”; just as he is by Christ, “the prince of this world”, (~~John~~ John 12:31 14:30) not because he had any hand in the making of it, or has any concern in the government of it, or in the disposal of men or things in it; but because of his influence over the worst, and greatest part of the world; which lies in wickedness, under the power of this wicked one, being led captive by him at his will; who have voluntarily given themselves up to him, and whose lusts they will do; and so declare themselves to be his children, and him their Father, yea, their god: the influence he has over them is, he

hath blinded the minds of them that believe not. The apostle here seems to refer to one of the devils, which the Jews ^{f35} frequently speak of **l ams**, “Samael”; who they say is the head of all the devils; a very malignant spirit, and who deceived our first parents; the word is compounded of **l a**, “god”, and **ams**, “to blind”; him they call the angel of death, and say ^{f36}, that he hath **aml [ynþ Æyçj a**, “brought darkness upon the face of the world”, or the creatures, the Gentiles: agreeably to which the apostle calls the devil, “the god that hath blinded”; what he blinds in men, is “their mind”: the more excellent and knowing part of man; not the eyes of their bodies, but of their understandings; which shows the near access Satan has to the souls

of men; he penetrates into their very hearts and minds, and has an influence there: the persons whose minds he blinds, are those “who believe not”; which distinguishes them from others that perish, who never enjoyed the Gospel, and therefore he says, “in”, or “among whom”; and from true believers, on whom Satan can have no such influence; and is a reason of these men's perishing, and of Satan's influence over them; and must be understood of reprobates, and final unbelievers: the influence he has over them is expressed by “blinding” them; which he does, by diverting them from hearing the Gospel, and by stirring up the enmity of their minds against it, and by increasing their natural darkness and blindness with respect to it. The end which Satan has in doing this is,

lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them; here many things are hinted, in commendation of the Gospel, as that it is the Gospel of Christ; because he was not only the greatest and best preacher of it that ever was, but also is the author and subject of it; Christ is the sum and substance of the Gospel, the principal thing in it, or person that is spoken of therein; and then Christ who is the grand subject of the Gospel is described, in order to recommend it the more, as “the image of God”. The Jews^{f37} call the Messiah, **l a μ l x**, “the image of God”; some copies, and the Complutensian edition, and the Arabic version, read, “the image of the invisible God”, as in (^{<5015>}Colossians 1:15). So Christ is as the Son of God, being the natural, substantial, essential, eternal, not created, and perfect image of his Father; and so he is as man and Mediator: further, the Gospel is said to be the “glorious” Gospel of Christ, as it must needs be, since it so clearly and illustriously sets forth the glory of Christ; contains such glorious doctrines and promises in it, and is attended with such glorious effects, where it comes with power: add to all this, that “light” is attributed to it; the Jews^{f38} speak of the “light of the law”, and the law is called light; and say, that **hrwt al a rwa `ya**, “there is no light but the law”; but this may be more truly said of the Gospel, by which not only persons may be notionally enlightened, who never were made really partakers of the grace of God, but is the means of spiritual and saving illumination to thousands, when it is attended with the demonstration of the Spirit: now all these excellent characters of the Gospel serve to enhance the spite and malice of Satan, in endeavouring all he can to kinder the bright shining of this glorious Gospel, to and upon any of the sons of men; and his reason for so doing is, because

he knows, that should the Gospel shine unto them, the interest and glory of Christ would be advanced, and his own would decline.

Ver. 5. *For we preach not ourselves*, etc..] These words contain a reason why the apostles behaved themselves in the manner described, ([1 Cor. 2](#) Corinthians 4:2) and serve to explain in what sense this inspired writer is to be understood, when he calls the Gospel our Gospel, ([1 Cor. 2](#) Corinthians 4:3) and most clearly proves the Gospel to be a glorious one, which he had asserted, ([1 Cor. 2](#) Corinthians 4:4) since Christ, and not themselves, is the subject of it, “for we preach not ourselves”. They did not preach any doctrine of their own devising; they did not set up themselves as lords over the faith and consciences of men; nor was their view in preaching to set forth their learning, parts, and eloquence, or to amass wealth and riches to themselves; nor did they assert the purity of human nature, or the power of man to do anything of himself that is spiritually good; or that justification and salvation are by works of righteousness done by men. To do any, or each, or all of these, as did the false apostles, is to preach a man's self: but so did not these faithful dispensers of the word, but they

preached Christ Jesus the Lord; that is, the doctrines respecting the person, office, and grace of Christ; as that he is truly and properly God, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, God and man in one person, the only Mediator between God and man, and the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the true Messiah; and that this Christ is Jesus, a Saviour, the only able and willing one; and that this Jesus Christ is “Lord” of all, especially of the saints; not only as Creator, but as their head, husband, and Redeemer; that peace and reconciliation, pardon and righteousness, life and salvation, are only by him: and they also declared themselves the servants of the churches,

and ourselves your servants. The apostle does not say they were the servants of Christ, though they were, and esteemed it their greatest honour to be so; for he had no need to observe this, since this is included in their preaching him as “Lord”: nor does he say they were the servants of men, or menpleasers, for then they would not be the servants of Christ; but he asserts them to be the servants of the churches: and which must be understood, not with respect to things temporal, with which they had no concern; but with regard to things spiritual, particularly to the ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances: and this they professed to be,

for Jesus' sake; either for the sake of preaching Christ unto them; or because they were chosen and called by him to this service, and in which they were willing to continue, for the sake of his honour and interest.

Ver. 6. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, etc..]

The causal particle for, shows these words to be also a reason of the foregoing; either why they so clearly beheld the glory of the Lord, (~~FOUR~~² Corinthians 4:18) or why they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, (~~FOUR~~² Corinthians 4:2) or why their Gospel could not be hid, (~~FOUR~~² Corinthians 4:3) or why they did not preach themselves, but Christ, (~~FOUR~~² Corinthians 4:5) because God had

shined in their hearts; and in this light, they saw the glory of Christ; could not bear any secret, hidden, scandalous practices; and held forth the word of light and life to others; and seeing so much of their own weakness, sinfulness, and unworthiness, dared not to preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; in which may be observed the character of the true God, as opposed to Satan, the god of this world, who is said to blind the minds of men, (~~FOUR~~² Corinthians 4:6) whereas the true God is represented as the author of “light”, and as producing it by a word of “command”, and that “out” of mere “darkness”; respect is here had to the creation of all things at the beginning, when “darkness was upon the face of the deep — and God said, let there be light and there was light”, (~~FOUR~~¹Genesis 1:2,3). Now this character of God, as creating light in this wonderful manner, is prefaced to his giving spiritual light unto his people; because of the agreement there is between light corporeal and spiritual, in their nature and production; for as there was darkness upon the earth before there was light, so there is a natural darkness in the minds of men, before any spiritual light is infused into them; and as light was the first production out of the dark and unformed chaos, so light is the first thing that is struck into the soul in conversion; moreover, as light was the effect of almighty power, so is the spiritual illumination, or the opening of the eyes of the understandings of men, who are naturally born blind; and as light was a creation of that which was not before, so the work of grace on the soul is not an increase of, or an addition to, or an improvement of the light of nature, but it is a new light, created in the understanding; add to all this, that both corporeal and spiritual light are good, and both called “day”; the influence that God has over the hearts of men, and the effect he produces there are, he

hath shined in our hearts. The hearts of men are like this dark terraqueous globe, having no light in them; God is as the sun, the fountain of light, which shines upon them and in them; so as to give them a true sight and sense of sin, and of their lost state and condition; so as to cause them to see the fulness and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour; so as to warm their affections, and draw out their desires after Christ, his ways, truths, ordinances, and people; and so as to give them light into the mysteries of the Gospel; particularly he so shines into the hearts of some, whom he makes ministers of the Gospel, as to give more light and knowledge into Gospel truths, than he does to others; and his end in doing this, is

to give: that is, that his ministering servants may give

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; men must be first made light in, and by the Lord, or they will never be fit and proper persons to hold forth the word of light, or to communicate light to others; God first shines into their hearts, and then they give light to others: by “the glory of God” is not meant the essential glory of God, or the perfections of his nature, though these are to be seen in the face, or person of Christ; but rather the glorious counsels of God, and scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ; or in other words, the glorious Gospel of God: and by “the knowledge” of it is designed, not a mere notional speculative knowledge of the Gospel, but an experimental one; a spiritual knowledge of the Gospel, of Christ in it, of God in Christ, and of an interest in God's salvation by Christ: now when the ministers of the word are said to give the light of this to men, or to enlighten them with this knowledge, it cannot be thought that they are the efficient causes, for such are only Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; but only that they are instrumental, and are means in the hands of God, of bringing persons to see the fellowship of this mystery: all which is done, “in the face of Jesus Christ”; this denotes the clearness and perspicuity of their ministry, and of that knowledge which is communicated by it; (see ⁴⁰¹²2 Corinthians 3:12) and also the authority by which they act; it is in the name and person of Christ, in which sense the phrase is used, (⁴⁰¹⁰2 Corinthians 2:10).

Ver. 7. *But we have, this treasure in earthen vessels,* etc..] This is a further commendation of the Gospel; and by which the apostle removes an objection against it, taken from the cross and persecutions that attend it, and the outward meanness of the ministers of it. The Gospel is called a “treasure”, for not grace, nor Christ, but the Gospel is here meant; which is

so styled, because it contains rich truths, and an abundance of them; comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones, for the price of them, their antiquity, distance of place from whence they come, and their duration; because it has in it rich blessings, spiritual ones, the blessings of the new covenant, solid, substantial, and irreversible ones, and a fulness of them; and because it consists of exceeding great and precious promises, of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; free, absolute, and unconditional ones, which are yea and amen in Christ, and relate both to this, and the other world; and also because it exhibits and shows forth to us the riches of God and of Christ, of grace and of glory; which are unsearchable, substantial, satisfying, and durable: the repository, or cabinet, in which this treasure is, are “earthen vessels”; by which are meant, ministers of the word, who are so in themselves, in their own esteem, and in the esteem of others; probably the apostle might have in view (^{2XRD}Lamentations 3:2). The doctors and scholars among the Jews are compared hereunto;

“says R. Eleazar ^{f39}, to what is a disciple of a wise man like, in the esteem of a man of the world? at first he is like to a golden cup; when he has conversed with him, he is like to a silver cup; and when he has received any profit by him, he is like **çrh l ç** **~wtyql**, “to an earthen cup”, which, when broken, cannot be repaired again: the law (say they) is not confirmed but by him, who makes himself **srj yl kk**, “as an earthen vessel”, ^{f40}: R. Joshua ^{f41} was a great man in the king's palace, and he was deformed; wherefore Caesar's daughter said, wisdom is beautiful **r [wkm** **yl kb**, “in an ugly vessel”; and he brought her a simile in proof of it from wine, which is not kept in a silver vessel.”

The allusion is either to the earth itself, in which treasure lies, or is hid, and out of which it is dug; or to pots and vessels made of earth, into which treasure has been used to be put; or to earthen pitchers, in which lights or lamps were formerly carried; (see ^{4U76}Judges 7:16) where Gideon's three hundred men, are said to have empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers; they carried lamps with them to give them light, it being night when they went into the camp of Midian; and those they put into pitchers, that the Midianites might not perceive them afar off, as a Jewish commentator well observes ^{f42}; in like manner the Gospel put into earthen vessels is a glorious light to some, whilst it is hidden to others: yea, even lamps themselves were no other than earthen vessels, in which light was

put; for so says Maimonides ^{f43}, a lamp, a burning light, is **צרj ylk**, “an earthen vessel”, like a reed; and on the top of it is a little ear, which joins to it; and when it is made, a piece of old cloth is put upon the burning oil, and it continues in it; also an earthen vessel is made, in which there is a hollow place for to set the light in, and in it is gathered all that flows from the oil out of the light; and it is strengthened about the head of the candlestick, that the brass might not be hurt by the oil; and this vessel is called the house in which the light subsides, or the receptacle of the light; and which receptacle, another of the Misnic commentators says ^{f44}, is an earthen vessel, made to put the light in; and the lamp, he also says, is like an earthen platter, sharp pointed below, etc.. and this allusion well agrees with the context, in which the Gospel is represented as a glorious light, shining in darkness, (~~f400~~ 2 Corinthians 4:4,6). The Greek word **οστρακινους**, the apostle uses, signifies also “shells of fishes”; and in like manner does Philo the Jew ^{f45} compare the human body;

“I am (says he) very little concerned for this mortal body which is about me, and cleaves to me **οστρεου δικην**, “like the shell of a fish”; though it is hurt by everyone.”

And the reference may be to pearls, which are said to have been found in such shells, particularly in oysters; and is designed to express, either the frail mortal bodies of the ministers of the Gospel, comparable to brittle shells; or baked earth; or rather the outward mean despicable condition of the apostles, and preachers of the word; being men of no figure in the world, for birth, learning, or outward grandeur; and being attended with sinful infirmities also, as other men; and more especially as they were labouring under reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of the Gospel; (see ~~f424~~ Jeremiah 32:14). The reason why it pleased God to put such a rich and valuable treasure into the hands of persons so mean and contemptible was,

that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us: that is, that it might appear that the making of such persons ministers of the word was not of themselves, was not owing to their natural abilities, or to any diligence and industry, and acquirements of their own, or to any instructions they had received from others, but to the grace of God, and the effectual working of his power; and that the success which attended their ministrations in the conversion of sinners, and building up of saints, could only be ascribed to the exceeding greatness of divine power; and that

the supporting of them in their work, under all the persecutions raised against them, and opposition made unto them, could be attributed to nothing else; of which power, instances are given in the following verses.

Ver. 8. *We are troubled on every side*, etc..] Or afflicted; *εν παντι*, either “in every place”, wherever we are, into whatsoever country, city, or town we enter, we are sure to meet with trouble, of one sort or another; for wherever we be, we are in the world, in which we must expect tribulation: or “always”, every day and hour we live, as in (~~4:10~~ 2 Corinthians 4:10,11) we are never free from one trial or another: or “by everyone”; by all sorts of persons, good and bad, professors and profane, open persecutors and false brethren; yea, some of the dear children of God, weak believers, give us trouble: or “with every sort” of trouble, inward and outward; trouble from the world, the flesh and the devil:

yet not distressed; so as to have no hope, or see no way of escape; so as to have no manner of comfort, or manifestations of the love of God; or so as to be straitened in our own souls; for notwithstanding all our troubles, we have freedom at the throne of grace, and in our ministry; we can go with liberty to God, and preach the Gospel boldly to you:

we are perplexed; and sometimes know not what to do, which way to take, what course to steer, or how we shall be relieved and supplied; we are sometimes at the utmost loss about things temporal, how we shall be provided for with food and raiment; nor are we without our perplexing thoughts, doubts, and fears, about spiritual affairs:

but not in despair; of the Lord's appearing and working salvation, both in a temporal and spiritual sense.

Ver. 9. *Persecuted, but not forsaken*, etc..] Pursued from place to place, and followed with menaces, curses, and reproaches; laid hold on, proscribed, imprisoned, and threatened with the severest tortures, and death itself; but our God never leaves us nor forsakes us; though we are followed close by evil men, and left by our friends, we are not forsaken of God:

cast down we sometimes are, as an earthen vessel; (~~4:7~~ 2 Corinthians 4:7), which may be cast out of a man's hands, in order to be dashed to pieces; or as a man in wrestling, (see ~~6:12~~ Ephesians 6:12) may be thrown to the ground by his antagonist, so we are sometimes foiled by sin, Satan, and the world:

but not destroyed; we are still safe in the hands of Christ, and are kept by the power of God; and, indeed, to what else can all this be ascribed? it is surprising that earthen vessels should bear and suffer so much, and not fall, or be dashed to pieces.

Ver. 10. *Always bearing about in the body*, etc..] The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, “in our body”; and the Syriac version, in this and the next clause, reads, “in our bodies”, and some copies in this read, “bodies”; continually carrying about with us, in these mortal bodies of ours, wherever we go,

the dying of the Lord Jesus; by which is meant, not the doctrine of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of salvation by a crucified Saviour, which they bore and carried about with them in a ministerial way, wherever they came and preached, but the sufferings they themselves underwent: so called, because of the likeness there is between the sufferings of Christ, and theirs; as he was traduced as a wicked man, a deceiver, and a stirrer up of sedition, so were they; as he was persecuted, so were they; as he was liable to death, and at last was delivered up to it, so were they: and also because of the union and sympathy which were between them; Christ and they were one body and one Spirit; so that what was endured by the members, the head had a fellow feeling of, and sympathy with; and reckoned what was done to them, as done to himself: and besides, the sufferings they underwent, and death they were exposed unto, were for his sake, as it is explained in the next verse:

for we which live; who are still in the land of the living, though it is almost a miracle we are, considering the circumstances we are in:

are always delivered; that is, continually exposed

to death for Jesus' sake: and the end of all these sufferings, which is expressed alike in both verses is,

that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body, or “mortal flesh”; the meaning of which is, that it might appear that Jesus, though he died, is risen again from the dead, and lives at the Father's right hand, and ever lives to make intercession for us; of which there is a full proof, inasmuch as we are supported by him under all the trials and sufferings we endure for his sake; for because he lives, we live also, amidst so many dangers and deaths, which attend us.

Ver. 11. (See Gill on “~~4010~~2 Corinthians 4:10”).

Ver. 12. *So then death worketh in us*, etc..] This is the conclusion of the foregoing account, or the inference deduced from it; either the death, or dying of Christ, that is, the sufferings of his body, the church, for his sake, *ενεργειται*, “is wrought in us”; fulfilled and perfected in us; (see ~~50024~~Colossians 1:24) or rather a corporeal death has seized upon us; the seeds of death are in us; our flesh, our bodies are mortal, dying off apace; death has already attacked us, is working on our constitutions gradually, and unpinning our tabernacles, which in a short time will be wholly took down and laid in the dust:

but life in you. Some understand these words as spoken ironically, like those in (~~4008~~1 Corinthians 4:8,9) but the apostle seems not to be speaking in such a strain, but in the most serious manner, and about things solemn and awful; and his meaning is, ours is the sorrow, the trouble, the affliction, and death itself, yours is the gain, the joy, the pleasure, and life; what we get by preaching the Gospel are reproach, persecution, and death; but this Gospel we preach at such expense is the savour of life unto life to you, and is the means of maintaining spiritual life in your souls, and of nourishing you up unto eternal life; and which is no small encouragement to us to go on in our work with boldness and cheerfulness: or these words regard the different state and condition of the apostle, and other ministers, and of the Corinthians; the one were in adversity, and the other in prosperity.

Ver. 13. *We having the same Spirit of faith*, etc..] By faith here is meant, not the doctrine, but the grace of faith; a believing in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in the person of Christ; an exercise of that grace upon the death and resurrection of Christ; and particularly a looking by faith in full expectation of the saints' resurrection from the dead, and eternal glory, together with a reliance on the power, faithfulness, and promises of God to support under the afflictions of this life. Now of this faith the Spirit of God is the author; this is not of ourselves, of our own power, it is the free gift of God, and a valuable gift it is; it is of the operation of God, and the produce of his almighty power; and of this the Spirit of God, in conversion, is the powerful operator: hence he is here called the “Spirit of faith”. So the “third” number in the Cabalistic tree of the Jews, the intelligence sanctifying, which answers to the third person in our doctrine of the Trinity, is called ^{f46},

“*mwa hnwma* and *hnmah ba*, “the artificer of faith”, and “the author or parent of faith”, because from its power faith flows.”

Which is the “same” in all saints; the Spirit is the same in one as in another, and so is the faith which he is the author of; (see ⁶⁰⁰⁰2 Peter 1:1). Faith is the same in all the saints that have been from the beginning of the world, under the Old and New Testament dispensations; it was the same in all the churches in the apostle's time, in Rome as at Ephesus, in Ephesus as at Rome, and in Thessalonica as at Rome and Ephesus, and so in all the other churches; though it may be, the apostle may chiefly design the sameness of faith, and of the Spirit, in him and his fellow ministers, and in these Corinthians, though death was working in the one, and life in the other; which appeared in their free and bold ministration of the word, notwithstanding all they met with on account of it, in imitation and encouraged by the example of David,

according as it is written, (³⁹³⁰Psalm 116:10).

I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak: where there is true faith, and the true Spirit of faith, there will be a speaking of, for, and in the name of Christ, as there ought to be: for as “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”. This is true of believers in common, sooner or later, at one time or another; but more especially of the ministers of the word, who have a firm and well grounded belief in the doctrines of the Gospel, and person of Christ; and therefore speak freely, and without any doubt and hesitation about these things, boldly, and without the fear of men, and sincerely and faithfully, as in the sight of God: hence they make Christ the main subject of their ministry, because they believe in him, and nothing can stop their mouths from speaking of him; faith, and a spirit of faith, fit for public work and service, and give freedom and boldness in the ministration of the Gospel, and are a great support under persecution for the sake of it.

Ver. 14. *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus*, etc..] Besides having the same spirit of faith, mentioned in the preceding verse as a support under tribulation, the apostle proceeds in this, and some following verses, to take notice of other things which gave them relief under their pressures; such as the resurrection from the dead, all their afflictions being for the good of the churches and glory of God, the inward and comfortable

experiences of the love and grace of God in the midst of them, and the end and issue of them, eternal glory. The former of these is observed here; “knowing”, being firmly persuaded, and fully assured, that he “which raised up the Lord Jesus”; by whom God the Father is more especially designed, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who were jointly concerned in raising the dead body of our Lord: shall raise us up also by Jesus; which may regard the resurrection of all the saints by Christ, not as a mere instrument, but as a co-efficient cause with the Father and Spirit: this the apostle concludes from the power of God in raising up Christ from the dead; he that is able to do the one, is certainly of power to effect the other; and also from that union there is between Christ and his people; he is the head, they are his members; and because the head is raised, the members shall be likewise. Christ's resurrection is not only the pattern, but the pledge of the resurrection of the saints. Now this doctrine, as it was fully known, and firmly believed by the apostles, was of great use to bear them up under their outward troubles; for though they were so afflicted and persecuted, death was visibly working in them, and they might expect in a short time to be laid in the grave; yet this was their consolation, that they should be raised again immortal and glorious by Christ; some copies read, “with Jesus”, and so the Vulgate Latin version: “he shall present us with you”; that is, he will present us ministers, together with you the saints, and the rest of the elect of God; first, **hytwl**, “to himself”, as the Syriac version adds, and then to his Father, in their full number, completely righteous and holy. These words indeed may be understood of a deliverance from temporal affliction, from that death they were labouring under, and exposed unto, and the sense be this; we firmly believe that he that raised up Christ from the dead, will deliver us from the present death of affliction, which will be a sort of resurrection from the dead, and will make us to stand by you, or in your presence; or, in other words, being thus delivered, we shall have an opportunity of visiting you, we have so long desired, and you have expected, which will be to your edification and comfort.

Ver. 15. *For all things are for your sakes*; etc..] This is a very large and comprehensive expression, and reaches to all the things of Christ, as well as of his ministers. The incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ, are all for the sake of God's elect; and so the ministry of his apostles and servants, their gifts, graces, comforts, and experiences; and so likewise all their reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions; (see ~~ROM~~ 2 Corinthians

1:6). These were endured for their sakes, and tended to their establishment in the faith; were for the furtherance of the Gospel, and of the faith and joy of saints; and this gave no small pleasure and relief to them under their sufferings, that they were of such use to others. Moreover, all their deliverances, when in any imminent danger; were for the sake of the churches:

that the abundant grace; held forth in their ministrations, manifestly to be seen in supporting them under their troubles, and delivering them out of them:

might through the thanksgiving of many; for such appearances of divine goodness, (see ^{<small>4011>}2 Corinthians 1:11)

redound to the glory of God; which is another thing that yielded them a pleasing satisfaction, in all their distresses for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel.

Ver. 16. *For which cause we faint not*, etc..] Since our afflictions are overruled for the good of others, and the glory of God, we are not discouraged by them; our spirits do not sink under the weight of them; we do not give out from the work of the ministry because of them, but go on cheerfully therein: and the more so, since

though our outward man perish; our outward circumstances of life are very mean and despicable; we are oftentimes in a very distressed condition through hunger, thirst, nakedness, and want of the common necessities of life; our bodies are almost worn out with fatigue, labour, and sorrow; our earthly tabernacles are tottering, and just ready to fall in pieces:

yet the inward man is renewed day by day; that is, continually; it answers to מָוֶה מָוֶה, an Hebraism; (see ^{<small>4021>}Esther 2:11 3:4) the internal hidden man of the heart, the new man is in a prosperous condition; our souls are in good health; the work of God is comfortably carried on in us; we have sweet and repeated experiences of the love of God; we are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; and, like the palm tree, the more weight is hung upon it, the more it thrives; and, like the children of Israel in Egypt, the more they were afflicted the more they grew.

Ver. 17. *For our light affliction*, etc..] The difference between the present and future state of the saints is here expressed, the disparity between them shown, and the influence the one has upon the other. The present state is a

state of “affliction”. Affliction is the common lot of the children of men, but more especially of the children of God, and is here designed by “our” affliction; for these, besides their soul trouble, meet with such in the world, and from the men of it, others do not. Afflictions are appointed for them by their heavenly Father; provision is made for them, and support under them, in the covenant of grace; they are Christ's legacy to them, and by which they are conformed to him; they are always for their good, spiritual and eternal; and lie in their way to heaven, through which they must pass into the kingdom: now these their outward afflictions which are here meant, lie chiefly in the meanness of their outward circumstances; in poverty and distress, in disgrace, reproaches, and persecutions for their profession of Christ, and his truths: and in opposition to this their mean and despicable condition in the eyes of the world, their future state is signified by “glory”, as it often is in the word of God; and is of such a nature, that all the glories of this world, such as kingdoms, crowns, inheritances, possessions, riches, honour, and substance of every kind and degree, by all which the heavenly state is expressed, are but faint resemblances of it: it is the same glory Christ has entered into, is possessed of for, and will give to all his people; it will chiefly lie in communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, with angels, and one another; there will be a visible glory upon the bodies of the saints, which will be fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; and their souls will be blessed with perfect knowledge and holiness. Their affliction is represented as “light” which though it is not in itself, but often very grievous and heavy to be borne, especially when any soul trouble is added to it; yet is light, when the saint is supported by the arm of the Lord, indulged with his presence, and favoured with the discoveries of his love. The afflictions of God's people are light, when compared with their deserts, with the sufferings of Christ, the torments of the damned in hell, and the joys of heaven, which are here, by way of opposition thereunto, styled a “weight of glory”. The apostle has respect to the Hebrew word *dwbk*, which signifies both “weight” and “glory”, and is often used for riches, honour, and whatsoever is excellent, solid, and substantial: and here the phrase designs the weighty riches of glory, that massy crown of glory which fadeth not away, that bulky and more enduring substance, which Christ will cause them that love him to inherit. Again, the afflictions of the children of God are said to be

for a moment; they are but for a while, and that a little while; at most they are but for the present time of life, and that is but as a vapour which

appears for a little while, and then vanishes away; it is but as a moment, a point of time, in comparison of eternity: but the glory the saints are chosen and called unto, that weight of it which shall be put upon them is “eternal”, it will last for ever; it will know no end: hence it is called an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, an everlasting kingdom, everlasting habitations, an incorruptible inheritance, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Now the present affliction of the people of God has a considerable influence upon this; it is said here, that it

worketh for us this glory. The Jews^{f47} introduce God speaking words much like these.

“Saith the holy blessed God, I have sent them chastisements in this world, *abh μl w[l μtw[wrz qzj l*, “to strengthen their arms for”, or that their arms may lay hold upon the world to come.”

Now afflictions may be said to work eternal glory for the saints, not by way of merit, for they are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed; there is no proportion between them; besides, the heavenly kingdom and glory was prepared from the foundation of the world, and is a free grace gift of their heavenly Father; but they work as means of enjoying it, as the word and ordinances do; the Spirit of God makes use of them, as of the other, to work up the saints for that selfsame thing, glory: these are means of trying, exercising, and improving their graces, of weaning their hearts from this world, and drawing out their desires, hope, and expectation of another; they are the way in which believers walk to glory, and which it last issue and terminate in it; glory follows upon them, though it is not for them.

Ver. 18. *While we look not at the things which are seen*, etc..] These are the things of this world, such as riches, honours, pleasures, profits, etc.. which are visible to, and strike the senses of a natural man, and are temporal, endure but for a time, are transitory, fleeting, and quickly gone. To “look” at these things is to desire them, set the affections on them, and to make the enjoyment of them a man's chief scope and aim; and when this is the case, afflictions cannot be said to work for such, or to work them for an eternal weight of glory; but when believers have their eyes and hearts taken off of these things, they either look not at them, or with contempt upon them; “while”, and when they are in such frames of soul, afflictions are operating for their future good. Or by these things that are seen may be

meant afflictions themselves, the cross, with all that belongs to it; which also are discernible by the outward senses, and are but for a time. Now a believer is not to stand looking and poring upon his afflictions; for while he does so, they work impatience, murmurings, repinings, unbelief, etc.. but when and while he looks off of these to Christ, and to what he has done and suffered, and to the glories of another world, and to the recompense of reward, he not only finds himself supported under his present afflictions, which he does not so overlook as to despise; but he also finds his heart seeking after, and his affections set upon, and his faith, hope, and expectation raised in the views of things above, where Christ is: and so he is kept looking

at the things which are not seen; by the corporeal eye, nor by the eye of carnal sense and reason; only by the eye of faith, which is “the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen”: and these things, the joys and glories of heaven, “are eternal”; will last for ever, will never end; all which is great encouragement to faith and patience under the present afflictive dispensations of Providence.