

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS 5

The apostle, in this chapter, enlarges upon the saints' comfortable assurance, expectation, and desire of the heavenly glory; discourses of the diligence and industry of himself and other Gospel ministers in preaching the word, with the reasons that induced them to it; and closes it with a commendation of the Gospel ministry from the important subject, sum, and substance of it. Having mentioned in the latter part of the, preceding chapter, the eternal weight of glory, the afflictions of the saints are working for, and the invisible realities of that state they are looking to, here expresses the assurance that he and others had of their interest therein; and which he signifies by an edifice, and illustrates it by its opposition to the body, which he compares to an house and tabernacle; the one is man's, the other of God, and not made with hands; the one is earthly, the other in heaven; the one is to be, and will be dissolved, the other is eternal, ([2 Corinthians 5:1](#)) and therefore it is no wonder that it should be so earnestly desired, as it is said to be in ([2 Corinthians 5:2](#)) where the desire of it is signified by groaning, which supposes something distressing, and which makes uneasy; and by an earnest longing after deliverance and happiness, and which is explained by a desire to be clothed upon with the house from heaven; where the heavenly glory is not only, as before, compared to an house, but also to a garment, which all those that are clothed with the righteousness of Christ may justly expect to be arrayed with; for these will not be found naked nor remain so, ([2 Corinthians 5:3](#)) which earnest desire after immortality and glory is more fully explained, ([2 Corinthians 5:4](#)) in which not only the body, in its present state, is again compared to a tabernacle, and the saints represented as being distressed, and so groaning whilst in it; but the cause of this groaning is suggested, which is a burden they labour under, both of sin and affliction; and yet such is the natural inclination of man to remain in the body, and his unwillingness to part from it, that he does not desire to be stripped of that, but to have the robe of immortality put upon it, that so the present mortality that attends it might be wholly swallowed up in it: and that the saints had reason to believe there was such a happiness to be enjoyed, and that they had such an interest in

it is clear; because as God had prepared that for them, he had also wrought and prepared them for that; and besides, had given them his Spirit as the earnest and pledge of it, ([2 Corinthians 5:5](#)) wherefore, as they were confidently assured of it, and considering that they were but sojourners and strangers whilst in the body, and in the present state of things, and not at home in their Father's house, and absent from Christ, ([2 Corinthians 5:6](#)) as is evident from their walking by faith in the comfortable assurance, lively hope, and earnest expectation of things future and unseen, and not in the beatific vision of them, ([2 Corinthians 5:7](#)). Hence they were very desirous, and chose rather to quit their present dwelling, the tabernacle of the body, that they might be at home, and enjoy the presence of the Lord, ([2 Corinthians 5:8](#)). And this confidence and hope of eternal things wrought in the apostle, and other faithful ministers of the word, great carefulness and diligence to serve the Lord acceptably, and discharge with faithfulness the trust reposed in them, ([2 Corinthians 5:9](#)) the reason of which concern also, or what likewise animated them to a diligent performance of their duty, was their certain appearance before the judgment seat of Christ; which appearance will be universal, and when there will be a distribution of rewards and punishments to everyone according to his works, ([2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). And besides, it was not only their own personal concern in this awful affair that engaged them to such a conduct, but the regard they had to the good of immortal souls, to whom the day of judgment must be terrible, unless they are brought to believe in Christ; and for the truth of this they could appeal both to God, and to the consciences of men, particularly the Corinthians, ([2 Corinthians 5:11](#)). And lest this should be imputed to pride and arrogance, the apostle suggests the reason why he made mention of all this, that they might have wherewith to answer the false teachers, and vindicate the faithful ministers of the Gospel, ([2 Corinthians 5:12](#)). However, let it be construed which way it will, as the effect of madness or sobriety, this he could with the greatest confidence affirm, that his view was the glory of God, and the good of souls, ([2 Corinthians 5:13](#)) and to this diligence and faithfulness in preaching the Gospel, he and others were not only moved by their desire and expectation of happiness, by the future judgment in which they must appear, and by their concern for immortal souls, that they might escape the vengeance of that day; but they were constrained thereunto by the love of Christ in dying for them, and in whom they died, ([2 Corinthians 5:14](#)) the end of which was, that they might live not to themselves, but to him that died and rose again, ([2 Corinthians 5:15](#)).

And as a further instance of their integrity and faithfulness, the apostle observes, that they had no regard to men on account of their carnal descent, and outward privileges, as the Jews; nor even did they consider Christ himself in a carnal view, or esteem of him as a temporal king, as they once did, (^{<47516>}2 Corinthians 5:16) their sole aims and views being the spiritual good of men, and the advancement of the spiritual interest and kingdom of Christ; and the conclusion from hence is, that whoever is truly in Christ, and in his kingdom, is a new creature, and is in a new world, in a new dispensation, in which both the old things of the law, and of Heathenism, and of his former conversation are gone, and all things in doctrine, worship, and conversation are become new, (^{<47517>}2 Corinthians 5:17). And from hence the apostle proceeds to a commendation of the Gospel dispensation, and the ministry of it, from its author God, and from the subject matter of it, reconciliation of men to God by Christ, (^{<47518>}2 Corinthians 5:18) which is more fully explained and enlarged on, both with respect to the efficient cause of reconciliation, the objects of it, and the means and manner in which it is brought about, and also the publication of it in the Gospel by the ministers of it, (^{<47519>}2 Corinthians 5:19) and who are described as the ambassadors of Christ, acting in the name of God, and as in the stead of Christ, for the good of men, (^{<47520>}2 Corinthians 5:20). And closes the chapter with an account of the great propitiation, Christ, by whom reconciliation is made; as that he was in himself without sin, and yet was by imputation made sin for sinners, that they, in the same way, might be made righteous in the sight of God through him, (^{<47521>}2 Corinthians 5:21).

Ver. 1. *For we know, that if our earthly house,* etc..] By this house is meant the body, so called from its being like a well built house, a curious piece of architecture; as an house consists of a variety of parts fitly framed and put together in just symmetry and proportion, and with an entire usefulness in all, so is the body of man; which shows the power and wisdom of God the architect: likewise, because it is the dwelling place of the soul, which makes it appear, that the soul is more excellent than the body, is independent of it, and capable of a separate existence from it: it is said to be an “earthly” house, because it is from the earth; is supported by earthly things; has its present abode on the earth, and will quickly return to it: and the earthly house of this tabernacle, in allusion to the tabernacles the patriarchs and Israelites of old dwelt in; or to the tents and tabernacles of soldiers, shepherds, travellers, and such like persons, which are soon put

up and taken down, and removed from place to place; and denotes the frailty and short continuance of our mortal bodies. So Plato^{f48} calls the body **γηινον σκηνος**, “an earthly tabernacle”; so the Jews were wont to call the body an house, and a “tabernacle”:

“every man (they say^{f49}) has two houses, **Pwgh tyb**, “the house of the body”, and the house of the soul; the one is the outward, the other the inward house.”

So Abarbanel^{f50} paraphrases those words, (^{<2304>}Isaiah 18:4).

““I will consider in my dwelling place; I will return”, or again consider in my dwelling place, which is the body, for that is **çpnh ^kçm**, “the tabernacle of the soul”.”

Now this tabernacle may, and will be, “dissolved”, unpinned, and taken down; which does not design an annihilation of it, but a dissolution of its union with the soul, and its separation from it: and when the apostle puts an “if” upon it, it is not to be understood as though it is uncertain whether it would be dissolved or not, unless it be said with a view to the change that will be on living saints at Christ's second coming; but it is rather a concession of the matter, and may be rendered, “though the earthly house”, etc.. or it points out the time when the saints' future happiness shall begin, “when the earthly house”, etc.. and signifies that being in the body, in some sense, retards the enjoyment of it. Now it is the saints' comfort whilst they are in it, and in a view of the dissolution of it, that they

have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? which some understand of the glorified body upon its resurrection, as opposed to its frail, mortal, earthly frame in its present situation; though rather all this designs the happiness of the saints, which will be begun, and they shall immediately enter into, at the dissolution of their bodies, and will be consummated at the resurrection; which is all of God's building and preparing; not made by the hands of the creature; or obtained by works of righteousness done by men; and it lies in the heavens, and will continue for ever. So the^{f51} Jews speak of **acydq tyb**, “the holy house”, in the world to come, and which they suppose is intended in (^{<2805>}Isaiah 56:5 ^{<1048>}Proverbs 24:3). In this the saints have a present interest; they have it already built and prepared for them; they have an indubitate right and title to it through the righteousness of Christ; they have it secured

to them in Christ, their feoffee in trust, their head and representative; and they have the earnest of it, the Spirit of God in their hearts; of all which they have sure and certain knowledge: “for we know”; they are well assured of the truth of this from the promise of God, who cannot lie, from the declaration of the Gospel, the testimony of the Spirit, and the close and inseparable connection there is between the grace they have already received, and the glory that shall be hereafter.

Ver. 2. *For in this we groan earnestly*, etc.] Meaning either for this happiness we groan, or rather in this tabernacle we groan. These words are a reason of the former, proving that the saints have a building of God; and they know they have it, because they groan after it here; for the groanings of the saints are under the influence and direction of the Spirit of God, who makes intercession for them, as for grace, so for glory, according to the will of God: and this groaning is further explained by

desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; by which is meant not the glorified body in the resurrection morn; for though the bodies of the saints will be glorious, incorruptible, powerful, and spiritual, they are not said to be celestial, nor will they be from heaven, but be raised out of the earth: besides, the apostle is speaking of an habitation the soul will go into, and is desirous of going into as soon as it removes out of the earthly house of the body, and of a clothing it desires to be clothed with as soon as it is stripped of the garment of the flesh: wherefore, by the house from heaven must be meant the heavenly glory, which departed souls immediately enter into, and are arrayed with, even the white and shining robes of purity, perfection, and glory they shall be clothed with, as soon as ever their tabernacles are unpinned and dissolved. The Jews indeed speak of a celestial body which the soul shall be clothed with immediately upon its separation from the earthly body, and much in such figurative terms as the apostle does in this, and the following verse;

“when a man's time is come, say they ^{f52}, to go out of this world, he does not depart until the angel of death has stripped him of the clothing of body, ((see ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 5:4)) and when the soul is stripped of the body, by the angel of death, it goes *arj a apwg awhnb açbl tmw*, “and is clothed with that other body”, which is in paradise, of which it was stripped when it came into this world; for the soul has no pleasure but in the body, which is from thence, and it rejoices because it is stripped of the body of this world,

μϣλ ϙ arj a açwbl b çbl taw “and is clothed with another perfect clothing”.”

And a little after,

“the holy blessed God deals well with men, for he does not strip men of their clothes until he has provided for them other clothes, more precious and better than these, except the wicked of the world, who return not to their Lord by perfect repentance; for naked they came into this world, and naked ((see ^{⚡⚡⚡}2 Corinthians 5:3)) they shall return hence.”

And in another place ^{f53},

“the soul does not go up to appear before the Holy King, until it is worthy to be clothed al y[l d açwbl b, “with the clothing which is above”.”

Ver. 3. *If so be that being clothed*, etc..] This supposition is made with respect to the saints who shall be alive at Christ's second coming, who will not be stripped of their bodies, and so will “not be found naked”, or disembodied, and shall have a glory at once put upon them, both soul and body; or these words are an inference from the saints' present clothing, to their future clothing, thus; “seeing we are clothed”, have not only put on the new man, and are clothed and adorned with the graces of the Spirit, but are arrayed with the best robe, the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness,

we shall not be found naked; but shall be clothed upon with the heavenly glory, as soon as we are dismissed from hence. Some read these words as a wish, “O that we were clothed, that we might not be found naked!” and so is expressive of one of the sighs, and groans, and earnest desires of the saints in their present situation after the glories of another world.

Ver. 4. *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan*, etc..] There are some of the saints who are not in the tabernacle, the body. They were in it, but now are not; their bodies are in the grave, the house appointed for all living; and their souls are in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, in everlasting habitations, in the mansions prepared in Christ's Father's house; and they have done groaning, being delivered from every oppressor, sin, Satan, and the world; are at rest from all their labours, and are free from every burden; only the saints who are in the tabernacle of the

body, in an unsettled state, groan, being in the midst of tribulation, and not yet in the enjoyment of that happiness they are wishing for. The reason of their groaning is, because they are

burdened with the body itself, which is a clog and incumbrance to the soul in its spiritual exercises; and oftentimes by reason of its disorders and diseases a man becomes a burden to himself; but what the saints are mostly burdened with in this life, and which makes them groan the most, is the body of sin and death they carry about with them; the filth of it is nauseous, grievous, and intolerable; the guilt of it oftentimes lies very heavy on the conscience; the weight of it presses hard, and is a great hinderance to them in running their Christian race; nor have they any relief under this burden, but by looking to a sin bearing and sin atoning Saviour, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. They are also frequently burdened with Satan's temptations, with blasphemous thoughts, solicitations to sin, the fears of death, the pangs of it, and what will follow upon it; though God is faithful, who will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able to bear; however, these temptations are great burdens, and occasion many a groan: to which may be added the various afflictions of life, which though comparatively "light", are in themselves heavy, grievous burdens, and hard to be bore; the nature, number, and continuance of them often make them so; and especially they are such, when God is pleased to hide his face, and withhold the discoveries of his love and mercy. The apostle goes on to explain what he means by desiring to be clothed,

not for that we would be unclothed; that is, of our bodies; and this he says, not through any love and liking he had to this animal life, or to the sensual methods of living here, which make natural men in love with life, and desirous of always living here; but from a principle of nature, which recoils at death, does not like a dissolution, chooses any other way of removing out of this world than by death; a translation of soul and body together to heaven, like that of Enoch and Elijah's, is more eligible even to a good man; or such a change as will be upon the living saints at the coming of Christ, which the apostle seems to have in view, who will be not unclothed of their bodies, as men are at death,

but clothed upon; as is here desired, with incorruption and immortality:

that mortality might be swallowed up of life; not that the mortal body, or the substance of the body, which is mortal, might be consumed and destroyed, but that mortality, that quality to which it is subject by sin,

might be no more: and he does not say, that “death may be swallowed up of life”, which will be done in the resurrection morn; but mortality, which being swallowed up by a translation, or such a change as will be at the last day, will prevent death: and the phrase, swallowed up, denotes the suddenness of the change, in an instant, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and that without any pain, or such agonies as usually attend death; and also the utter, final, and total abolition of mortality; so that there will never be more any appearance of it; his desire is, that it may be swallowed up “of the life”, which is properly and emphatically life, as this life is not; and means the glorious, immortal, and everlasting life, which saints enter into as soon as they are rid of their mortal bodies, and the mortality of them.

Ver. 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing*, etc..] By “the selfsame thing” is meant, either the cross, the burden of sorrows and afflictions, under which the saints groan whilst here, which God has appointed them unto, and therefore to be bore patiently by them; or that glory and immortality, which they, as vessels of mercy, were prepared by him for from everlasting; for which their bodies and souls are formed by him in creation, and for which they are made meet in regeneration, by the curious workmanship of his Spirit and grace upon them: and seeing he “is God”, and not man, who hath wrought them for this, either by his secret purposes and preparations of grace in eternity, or by his open works of creation and regeneration in time; there is no doubt but they shall certainly enjoy it, since his counsels are immutable, and he is a rock, and his work is perfect; whatever he begins he finishes, nor is he ever frustrated of his end: one of Stephens's copies adds, “and hath anointed us”, which seems to have been transcribed from (~~4012~~ 2 Corinthians 1:21).

Who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit; and therefore may be assured of possessing the inheritance, of which he is the earnest; (see ~~4012~~ 2 Corinthians 1:22).

Ver. 6. *Therefore we are always confident*, etc..] Because God has formed us for immortality and glory, and given us his Spirit as the earnest of it, we take heart, are of good courage, do not sink under our burdens, or despair of happiness, but are fully assured of enjoying what we are desirous of:

knowing that whilst we are at home in the body; or whilst we are inmates or sojourners in the body; for the body is not properly the saints' home; whilst they are in it, they are but pilgrims and strangers; the time of their abode in it is the time of their sojourning: during which time they

are absent from the Lord; not with respect to his general presence, which is everywhere, and attends all creatures, an absence from which is impossible; nor with respect to his spiritual presence, which though not always sensibly enjoyed, yet frequently; nor are the children of God ever deprived of it totally and finally; but with respect to his glorious presence, and the full enjoyment of that. Now the knowledge and consideration of this, that the present state and situation of the saints, whilst in the body, is a state of pilgrimage, and so of absence from the Lord Christ, and from their Father's house, serves to increase their confidence and assurance, that they shall not long continue so, but in a little time shall be at home, and for ever with the Lord.

Ver. 7. *For we walk by faith, and not by sight.*] Faith is a grace which answers many useful purposes; it is the eye of the soul, by which it looks to Christ for righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation; the hand by which it receives him, and the foot by which it goes to him, and walks in him as it has received him; which denotes not a single act of faith, but a continued course of believing; and is expressive, not of a weak, but of a strong steady faith of glory and happiness, and of interest in it: and it is opposed to "sight": by which is meant, not sensible communion, but the celestial vision: there is something of sight in faith; that is a seeing of the Son; and it is an evidence of things not seen, of the invisible glories of the other world; faith looks at, and has a glimpse of things not seen, which are eternal; but it is but seeing as through a glass darkly; it is not that full sight, face to face, which will be had hereafter, when faith is turned into vision.

Ver. 8. *We are confident, I say, and willing rather,* etc..] We are cheerful in our present state, being assured of future happiness; though we choose rather

to be absent from the body; that is, to die, to depart out of this world. The interval between death, and the resurrection, is a state of absence from the body, during which time the soul is disembodied, and exists in a separate state; not in a state of inactivity and sleep, for that would not be desirable, but of happiness and glory, enjoying the presence of God, and praising of him, believing and waiting for the resurrection of the body, when both will be united together again; and after that there will be no more absence, neither from the body, nor from the Lord:

and to be present with the Lord. This was promised to Christ in the everlasting covenant, that all his spiritual seed and offspring should be with

him. This he expected; it was the joy of this which was set before him, that carried him through his sufferings and death with so much cheerfulness; this is the sum of his prayers and intercession, and what all his preparations in heaven are on the account of. It is this which supports and comforts the saints under all their sorrows here, and which makes them meet death with pleasure, which otherwise is formidable and disagreeable to nature; and even desirous of parting with life, to be with Christ, which is far better.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent,* etc..] This may be understood either of the ministers of the Gospel in particular, who labour in the word and doctrine, are ambitious, as the word here used signifies, and strive to preach the Gospel, not to please men, but their Lord and master; or of saints in general, who are intent upon this, and whose highest ambition is, that whether living or dying they

may be accepted of him; both persons and services: such who are born again, who are believers in Christ, and truly love him, are earnestly desirous of doing those things which are pleasing to him; and do in the strength of Christ endeavour to perform them. Faith is a diligent, industrious, and operative grace, and makes persons like itself. As none ought to be, so none are more careful to perform good works, or more ambitious to excel others in them, and thereby please their Lord, than believers. And these are the only persons that can please him, for without faith it is impossible to please him; for these act from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory; and may they be but accepted of him, living and dying, both in this and the other world, they have the highest favour they can wish for and desire.

Ver. 10. *For we must all appear,* etc..] This is a reason why the saints are so diligent and laborious, so earnest and intent upon it, to be accepted of the Lord, because they must stand

before the judgment seat of Christ; who is appointed Judge of the whole earth, who is every way qualified for it, being God omnipotent and omniscient; and when he comes a second time will sit upon his great white throne, a symbol of purity and integrity, and will enter on this work, and finish it with the strictest justice and equity: and before him “we must all appear”; all the saints as well as others, ministers and people, persons of all ranks and conditions, of every nation, age, and sex; there will be no avoiding this judgment, all “must appear”, or “be made manifest”; they will

be set in open view, before angels and men; their persons, characters, and actions, even the most secret will be:

that everyone may receive the things done in his body; which he has performed by the members of the body as instruments thereof, or whatsoever he has done whilst in the body; and so this not only reaches to words and actions, but includes all the secret thoughts of the mind, and counsels of the heart, which will be made manifest: and when it is said, that “everyone shall receive” these; the meaning is, that he shall receive the reward of them,

according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; the reward of good works will be of grace, and not of merit: good works will be considered at the last judgment, not as causes of eternal life and happiness, to which the saints will be adjudged; but will be produced in open court as fruits of grace, and as evidences of the truth of faith, which will justify the Judge in proceeding according to what he himself, as a Saviour, has said,

he that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. The reward of bad works will be in strict and just proportion, according to the nature and demerit of them. The Jews say^{f54}, that

“all the works which a man does in this world, **apwgb**, “in the body”, and spirit, he must give an account of in body and spirit before he goes out of the world.”

And again^{f55}, all the works of men are written in a book, **cyb ^h bwj ^h**, “whether good or evil”, and for them all they must give account.

Ver. 11. *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord*, etc..] Or the fear of the Lord; by which is meant either the grace of the fear of the Lord, implanted in the hearts of the apostles, and in which they acted in their ministry, faithfully dispensing to men the mysteries of grace; from which they could by no means be moved, because the fear of God was before their eyes, and upon their hearts; or rather the terror of the Lord in the last judgment, which will be very great, considering the awfulness of the summons, arise ye dead, and come to judgment; the appearance of the Judge, which will be sudden, surprising, and glorious; the placing of the thrones, the opening of the books, the position of the wicked, the dreadful sentence pronounced on them, and the immediate execution of it; all which the ministers of the word know from the Scriptures of truth; they know the Judge, that there will be

a general judgment, and that the day is fixed for it, though they know not the exact time: and therefore

persuade men; not that their state is good because of a little outside morality, nor to make their peace with God, or get an interest in Christ, or to convert themselves, neither of which are in the power of men to do; but they endeavour to persuade them by the best arguments they are masters of, taken from the word of God, and their own experience, that they are in a dangerous state and condition, walking in a way that leads to destruction; that they are liable to the curses of the law, the wrath of God, and everlasting ruin; that present duties of religion will not make amends for past sins, nor can their tears atone for their crimes, or any works of righteousness done by them justify them before God; and that salvation is only by Christ, who is both able and willing to save the chief of sinners: and they endeavour to persuade and encourage poor sensible sinners to venture on Christ, and believe in him to the saving of their souls. So the Arabic version reads it, “we persuade men to believe”; though when they have done all they can, these persuasions of theirs are ineffectual, without the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit of God; however, in so doing they discharge a good conscience, and act the faithful part to God and men:

but we are made manifest unto God; who searches the heart, and tries the reins, who knows all actions, and the secret springs of them; to him the sincerity of our hearts, and the integrity of our conduct, are fully manifest; we can appeal to him that it is his glory, and the good of souls, we have in view in all our ministrations:

and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences; that you also can bear witness to our faithfulness and honesty, to the unwearied pains we have taken, and the hearty concern we have shown for the welfare of the souls of men. One of Stephens's copies reads, “and we trust”; which agrees with the apostle's speaking in the first person plural in this, and the preceding verses.

Ver. 12. *For we commend not ourselves again to you*, etc..] We have no need to do so, being well known to you; nor do we intend it when we thus speak of ourselves, and of our ministrations:

but give you occasion to glory on our behalf; suggest some things to you which you may make use of in our favour, for the vindicating of our characters and conduct:

that you may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart; by whom are meant the false apostles who gloried in an outward show, in their learning, eloquence, and popular applause they had acquired, and not in the sincerity of their hearts, and the testimony of a good conscience, things which the true apostles of Christ were most ambitious of.

Ver. 13. *For whether we be besides ourselves*, etc..] As some took them to be, and as Festus thought the Apostle Paul was, because of the doctrines they preached, and the self-commendation they were obliged to enter into through the calumnies of their adversaries; in which they did not so much seek their own reputation, as the honour and glory of God, which was struck at through them:

it is to God; it is for his glory, and not our own, that we act this part, for which we are condemned as madmen.

Or whether we be sober; think and speak meanly of ourselves, and behave with all modesty and lowliness of mind: it is for your cause; for your instruction and imitation. The glory of God, and the good of his churches, were what concerned them in every part of life. Some refer this to the apostle's being, or not being, in an ecstasy or rapture. Others to his speaking, either of the more sublime doctrines of the Gospel, on account of which he was reckoned mad, though in the delivering of them he had nothing else but the glory of God in view; or of the lower and easier truths of it, which were more accommodated to meaner capacities; in doing which he sought their edification and advantage.

Ver. 14. *For the love of Christ constraineth us*, etc..] Or “containeth us”; holds and keeps us in our station and duty, as soldiers are held and kept together under a banner, or ensign displayed; to which the church refers, when she says, “his banner over me was love”, (~~2014~~ Song of Solomon 2:4). Nothing more effectually keeps ministers, or other believers, in the work and service of their Lord, or more strongly obliges and constrains them to a cheerful discharge of their duty to him, and one another, than his love displayed in his covenant engagements, in his assumption of human nature,

and particularly in his dying for them, which is the instance given in the text:

because we thus judge; having well weighed, and maturely considered the affair,

that if one died for all, then were all dead; or “seeing one died for all”; for it is rather an assertion than a supposition, upon which the apostle reasons. The person designed, who died for all, is Jesus Christ, though not mentioned, and is to be supplied from the former clause. The doctrine of Christ's dying for men was well known, so that there was no need to mention his name; he is called “one”, in distinction to the “all” he died for, and as exclusive of all others, he being sufficient of himself to answer the ends of his death; and therefore is to be looked unto, and believed on, alone for salvation, and to have all the glory of it. The manner of his dying is for, or in the room and stead of all; so that he died not merely as a martyr, or by way of example, or only for their good, but as their substitute, in their room and stead, having all the sins of his people upon him, for which he made satisfaction; and this the nature of his death shows, which was a sacrifice, a ransom, a propitiation and atonement. The persons for whom Christ died are all; not every individual of mankind, but all his people, all his sheep, all the members of his church, or all the sons he, as the great Captain of salvation, brings to glory. Wherefore this text does not make for the doctrine of general redemption; for it should be observed, that it does not say that Christ died for “all men”, but for “all”; and so, agreeably to the Scriptures, may be understood of all the persons mentioned. Moreover, in the latter part of the text it is said, that those for whom Christ died, for them he rose again; he died for no more, nor for others, than those for whom he rose again: now those for whom he rose again, he rose for their justification; wherefore, if Christ rose for the justification of all men, all would be justified, or the end of Christ's resurrection would not be answered; but all men are not, nor will they be justified, some will be condemned; hence it follows, that Christ did not rise from the dead for all men, and consequently did not die for all men: besides, the “all” for whom Christ died, died with him, and through his death are dead both to the law and sin; and he died for them, that they might live, not to themselves, but to him; neither of which are true of all the individuals of mankind: to which may be added, that the context explains the all of such who are in Christ, are new creatures, are reconciled to God, whose trespasses are not imputed to them, for whom Christ was

made sin, and who are made the righteousness of God in him; which cannot be said of all men. The conclusion from hence is,

then were all dead; meaning, either that those for whom Christ died, were dead in Adam, dead in law, dead in trespasses and sins, which made it necessary for him to die for them; otherwise, there would have been no occasion for his death; yet it does not follow from hence, that Christ died for all that are in such a condition; only that those for whom Christ died were dead in this sense, admitting this to be the sense of the passage; though death in sin seems not to be intended, since that all men are dead in sin, would have been a truth, if Christ had died for none; and much less is this an effect, or what follows upon the death of Christ; nor does it capacitate, but renders men incapable of living to Christ: wherefore a mystical death in, and with Christ, seems rather to be meant; and so the Ethiopic version reads it, “in whom everyone is dead”. Christ died as the head and representative of his people, and they all died in him, were crucified with him, and through his death became dead to the law, as to its curse and condemnation; and to sin, as to its damning power, being acquitted, discharged, and justified from it; the consequence of which is a deliverance from the dominion of it, whereby they become capable of living to the glory of Christ. The sense of the passage is not, that Christ died for all that were dead, but that all were dead for whom he died; which is true of them, whether in the former, or in the latter sense: the article *οι*, is anaphorical or relative, as Beza and Piscator observe; and the meaning is, that if Christ died for all, then all “those” were dead for whom he died.

Ver. 15. *And that he died for all, that they which live*, etc..] The end of Christ's dying for men was that they might live; live, in a legal sense, live a life of justification; and that they which live in such a sense,

should not henceforth live unto themselves: to their own lusts, and after their own wills, to either sinful self, or righteous self:

but unto him which died for them, and rose again; that is, for them, for their justification; for all those for whom Christ died, for them he rose again; and who were justified, acquitted, and discharged when he was; which cannot be said of all mankind; and which is an obligation on such persons to live to Christ, to ascribe the whole of their salvation to him, and to make his glory the end of all their actions. Some copies read, “which died for them all”.

Ver. 16. *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh.* etc..]

Since the death and resurrection of Christ, which has broken down the middle wall of partition, and has took away all distinction of men, we know, we esteem, we value no man on account of his carnal descent, and fleshy privileges, as being of the Jewish nation, a descendant of Abraham, and circumcised as he was; or on account of their outward state and condition, as being rich and honourable among men, or on account of their natural parts and acquirements, their learning, wisdom, and eloquence; nor do we own any man to be a Christian, that lives after the flesh, to himself, and not to Christ; nor do we make account of the saints themselves as in this mortal state, but as they will be in the resurrection, in consequence of Christ's having died for them, and rose again.

Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh: some of them had seen him in the flesh; others valued him on account of his being of the Jewish nation, and of his relation to them according to the flesh; and all of them had formerly entertained carnal apprehensions of him, and his kingdom, as though it would be a temporal one:

yet now henceforth know we him more; no more in this mortal state, being risen from the dead; nor do we value ourselves upon having seen him in the flesh; for though such a sight and knowledge of him was desirable, yet a spiritual knowledge is much more preferable; and many there were who knew him in the flesh, who neither enjoy his spiritual presence here, nor will they be favoured with his glorious presence hereafter. Moreover, we do not judge of him as we did before we had a spiritual knowledge of him, and as our countrymen did, by his outward circumstances, by his parentage and education, his poverty and afflictions, his company and conversation, that he could not be the Messiah, the Son of God, and therefore was worthy of death; we have quite other thoughts and apprehensions of him now, believing him to be the Christ of God, a spiritual Saviour and Redeemer, whose kingdom is not of this world; we have relinquished all our national prejudices, and former notions, concerning the Messiah, his kingdom, and people. Some copies add, “after the flesh”; and the Arabic version, “yet now know we him no more in that”.

Ver. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ,* etc..] There's a secret being in Christ from everlasting; so all that are loved by him, espoused unto him, chosen and preserved in him, to whom he was a covenant head, surety, and representative, are in him, united to him, and one with him; not in such

sense as the Father is in him, and the human nature is in him, but as husband and wife, and head and members are one: and there is an open being in Christ at conversion, when a man believes in Christ, and gives up himself to him; faith does not put a man into Christ, but makes him appear to be in him: and such an one “is a new creature”; or, as some read it, “let him be a new creature”: who understand being in Christ to be by profession, and the sense this, whoever is in the kingdom or church of Christ, who professes himself to be a Christian, ought to be a new creature: the Arabic version reads it, “he that is in the faith of Christ is a new creature”. All such who are secretly in Christ from everlasting, though as yet some of them may not be new creatures, yet they shall be sooner or later; and those who are openly in him, or are converted persons, are actually so; they are a new “creation”, as the words may be rendered: **hçdj hyrb**, “a new creation”, is a phrase often used by the Jewish ^{f56} doctors, and is applied by the apostle to converted persons; and designs not an outward reformation of life and manners, but an inward principle of grace, which is a creature, a creation work, and so not man's, but God's; and in which man is purely passive, as he was in his first creation; and this is a new creature, or a new man, in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, the corruption of nature; and because it is something anew implanted in the soul, which never was there before; it is not a working upon, and an improvement of the old principles of nature, but an implantation of new principles of grace and holiness; here is a new heart, and a new spirit, and in them new light and life, new affections and desires, new delights and joys; here are new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new feet to walk, and new hands to work and act with:

old things are passed away: the old course of living, the old way of serving God, whether among Jews or Gentiles; the old legal righteousness, old companions and acquaintance are dropped; and all external things, as riches, honours, learning, knowledge, former sentiments of religion, are relinquished:

behold, all things are become new; there is a new course of life, both of faith and holiness; a new way of serving God through Christ by the Spirit, and from principles of grace; a new, another, and better righteousness is received and embraced; new companions are sought after, and delighted in; new riches, honours, glory, a new Jerusalem, yea, new heavens, and a new earth, are expected by new creatures: or the sense of the whole may be this, if any man is entered into the kingdom of God, into the Gospel

dispensation, into a Gospel church state, which seems to be the sense of the phrase “in Christ”, in (⁴⁸⁸Galatians 3:28 5:6 6:15) he is become a new creature, or is got into a new creation, as it were into a new world, whether he be a Jew or a Gentile; for with respect to the former state of either, “old things are passed away”; if a Jew, the whole Mosaic economy is abolished; the former covenant is waxen old, and vanished away; the old ordinances of circumcision and the passover are no more; the daily sacrifice is ceased, and all the other sacrifices are at an end, Christ, the great sacrifice, being offered up; the priesthood of Aaron is antiquated, there is a change of it, and of the whole law; the observance of holy days, new moons and sabbaths, is over; the whole ceremonial law is at end; all the shadows of it are fled and gone, the things they were shadows of being come by Christ, the sum and substance of them; and there is no more a serving God in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit: and if a Gentile, all the former idols he worshipped he turns from, and his language is, “what have I to do any more with idols? or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” all former sacrifices, superstitious rites and ceremonies, with which he worshipped them, are relinquished by him; with all other Heathenish customs, rules, and methods of conduct he had been used to: “behold, all things are become new”; to the one, and to the other; the Gospel dispensation is a new state of things; a new form of church state is erected, not national, as among the Jews, but congregational, consisting of persons gathered out of the world, and anew embodied together; new ordinances are appointed, which were never in use before, as baptism and the Lord's supper; a new and living way is opened by the blood of Christ into the holiest of all, not by the means of slain beasts, as among the Jews, nor by petty deities as with the Gentiles; a new commandment of love is enjoined all the followers of the Lamb; and another name is given them, a new name, which the mouth of the Lord their God has named, not of Jews nor Gentiles, but of Christians; and new songs are put into their mouths, even praise to God: in short, the Gospel church state seems to be, as it were, a new creation, and perhaps is meant by the new heavens and new earth, (²⁶¹⁵Isaiah 65:15,17) as well as those who are the proper members of it, are new creatures in the sense before given.

Ver. 18. *And all things are of God*, etc..] A man's being brought into a Gospel church state is of God; the causing all old things to pass away, whether in the Jewish or Gentile world, is of God; the shaking of the

heavens and the earth, and the removing of those things that are shaken, the abrogation of the ceremonial law, the putting an end to all the Mosaic rites and sacrifices, the ejection of Satan out of the Heathen temples, and the abolition of Gentilism, with every thing else that comes under the names of old, and new, are of God: it is he that causes old things to pass away, and makes all things new, (see ⁶²⁰Revelation 21:1,5). Moreover, as all things in the old creation are from him, all creatures owe their beings to him, are supported in them by him, and all are made for his pleasure, and his glory so all things in the new creation are of him; the work of renovation itself is his; all the grace that is implanted in regeneration comes from him: nothing is of the creature, or to be ascribed to it. All things in redemption are of him; he drew the plan of it, called his Son to be the Redeemer, appointed and sent him as such; and particularly that branch of it, reconciliation, is of him:

who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. The work of reconciliation, or making atonement for sin, is ascribed to the Father; not that he is the author of it, for it is properly Christ's work; but because he took the first step towards it: he formed the scheme of it; he set forth his Son in his purposes and decrees to be the propitiary sacrifice; he assigned him this work in council and covenant, in promise and in prophecy, and sent him to effect it; therefore he is said to do it "by" him; that is, by his blood and sacrifice, by his sufferings and death, to which, and to which alone, the Scriptures ascribe our peace and reconciliation: and this is made to "himself": as being the party offended, whose law was broken, against whom sin was committed, and whose justice required and demanded satisfaction:

and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; which is the Gospel of peace, the word which preaches, publishes and declares, peace made by the blood of Christ; which is a gift to ministers, and a blessing to the people. The free grace of God greatly appears in this matter; God the Father sets this work of reconciliation on foot, Christ has brought it about, and the ministers of the Gospel publish it.

Ver. 19. *To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,* etc..] This expresses and explains the subject matter of the ministration of the Gospel, especially that part of it which concerns our reconciliation with God; and declares the scheme, the author, the subjects, the way, and means, and consequence of it. The phrase, "in Christ", may be

either joined with the word “God”, as in our version, “God was in Christ reconciling”; that is, he was in Christ drawing the scheme, fixing the method of reconciliation; his thoughts were employed about it, which were thoughts of peace; he called a council of peace, and entered into a covenant of peace with Christ, who was appointed and agreed to, to be the peacemaker. Or with the word “reconciling”, thus, God “was reconciling in Christ”; that is, by Christ; and so it denotes, as before, actual reconciliation by Christ. God, in pursuance of his purposes, council, and covenant, sent his Son to make peace; and laid our sins, and the chastisement of our peace upon him; this is the punishment of sin, whereby satisfaction was made for it, and so peace with God: or with the word “world”, thus, “God was reconciling the world in Christ”; by whom are meant, not all the individuals of mankind, for these are not all in Christ, nor all reconciled to God, multitudes dying in enmity to him, nor all interested in the blessing of non-imputation of sin; whereas each of these is said of the world: but the elect of God, who are chosen in Christ, whose peace Christ is, whose sins are not imputed to them, and against whom no charge of any avail can be laid; and particularly the people of God among the Gentiles are here designed, who are frequently called “the world” in Scripture; being the world which God loved, for whose sins Christ is the propitiation, and of the reconciling of which mention is particularly made, (~~ROM~~ John 3:16 ~~1JOH~~ 1 John 2:2 ~~ROM~~ Romans 11:12,15). And this sense well agrees with the context, which signifies, that no man is regarded for his natural descent; it is no matter whether he is a Jew or a Gentile, provided he is but a new creature: for Gospel reconciliation, and the ministry of it, concern one as well as another. Moreover, this reconciliation must be considered, either as intentional, or actual, or as a publication of it in the ministry of the word; and taken either way it cannot be thought to extend to every individual person in the world: if it is to be understood intentionally, that God intended the reconciliation of the world to himself by Christ, and drew the scheme of it in him, his intentions cannot be frustrated; his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure; a scheme so wisely laid by him in his Son, cannot come to nothing, or only in part be executed; and yet this must be the case, if it was his design to reconcile every individual of mankind to himself, since a large number of them are not reconciled to him: and if the words are to be understood of an actual reconciliation of the world unto God by Christ, which sense agrees with the preceding verse, then it is out of all question, that the word “world” cannot be taken in so large a sense as to take in every man and woman in the world; since it is certain that

there are many who are not reconciled to God, who die in their sins, whose peace is not made with him, nor are they reconciled to the way of salvation by Christ: and should it be admitted that the ministry of reconciliation is here designed, which is not an offer of reconciliation to the world, but a proclamation or declaration of peace and reconciliation made by the death of Christ; this is not sent to all men; multitudes were dead before the word of reconciliation was committed to the apostles; and since, there have been great numbers who have never so much as heard of it; and even in the times of the apostles it did not reach to everyone then living: besides, the text does not speak of what God did by the ministry of his apostles, but of what he himself had been doing in his Son, and which was antecedent, and gave rise unto and was the foundation of their ministry. There was a scheme of reconciliation drawn in the counsels of God before the world began, and an actual reconciliation by the death of Christ, which is published in the Gospel, which these words contain the sum and substance of: and this reconciliation, as before, is said to be “unto himself”; to his offended justice, and for the glory of his perfections, and the reconciling of them together in the affair of salvation:

not imputing their trespasses. This was what he resolved upon from all eternity, that inasmuch as Christ was become the surety and substitute of his people, he would not impute their sins to them, or look for satisfaction for them from them; but would reckon and place them to the account of their surety, and expect satisfaction from him; and accordingly he did, and accordingly he had it. And this will, not to impute sin to his people, or not to punish for it, which existed in God from everlasting, is no other than a justification of them; for to whom the Lord does not impute sin, he imputes righteousness, and such are properly justified.

And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation; or put it in us, as a rich and valuable treasure; for such the doctrine of peace and reconciliation, by the blood of Christ, is; a sacred deposition, committed to the trust of faithful men, to be dispensed and disposed of for the use and purpose for which it is given them.

Ver. 20. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,* etc..] Since God has made reconciliation by Christ, and the ministry of it is committed to us, we are ambassadors for him; we come with full powers from him, not to propose terms of peace, to treat with men about it, to offer it to them, but

to publish and proclaim it as made by him: we represent him, and God who made it by him,

as though God did beseech you by us; to regard this embassy and message of peace, which we bring from him; to consider from whence it takes its rise, what methods have been used to effect it, and how it is accomplished; which should oblige to say and sing with the angels, “glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men”; and to behave in peaceable manner to all men, and one another:

we pray you in Christ's stead; representing him as if he was present before you:

be ye reconciled to God; you, who are new creatures, for whom Christ has died, and peace is made; you, the members of the church at Corinth, who upon a profession of faith have been taken into such a relation; be ye reconciled to all the dispensations of divine Providence towards you; let your wills bow, and be resigned to his, since he is the God of peace to you; and as you are reconciled by Christ as a priest, be reconciled to him as your King, and your God; to all his ordinances and appointments; to all the orders and laws of his house; conform in all things to his will and pleasure, which we, as his ambassadors, in his name and stead, have made known unto you. You ought to be all obedience to him, and never dispute anything he says or orders.

Ver. 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us*, etc..] Christ was made of a woman, took flesh of a sinful woman; though the flesh he took of her was not sinful, being sanctified by the Spirit of God, the former of Christ's human nature: however, he appeared “in the likeness of sinful flesh”; being attended with infirmities, the effects of sin, though sinless; and he was traduced by men as a sinner, and treated as such. Moreover, he was made a sacrifice for sin, in order to make expiation and atonement for it; so the Hebrew word **haj j** signifies both sin and a sin offering; (see ^{<3906>}Psalm 40:6) and so **αμαρτια**, (^{<6106>}Romans 8:3 ^{<5306>}Hebrews 10:6). But besides all this, he was made sin itself by imputation; the sins of all his people were transferred unto him, laid upon him, and placed to his account; he sustained their persons, and bore their sins; and having them upon him, and being chargeable with, and answerable for them, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been not only a sinner, but a mass of sin; for to be made sin, is a stronger expression than to be made a sinner: but now that this

may appear to be only by imputation, and that none may conclude from hence that he was really and actually a sinner, or in himself so, it is said he was “made sin”; he did not become sin, or a sinner, through any sinful act of his own, but through his Father's act of imputation, to which he agreed; for it was “he” that made him sin: it is not said that men made him sin; not but that they traduced him as a sinner, pretended they knew he was one, and arraigned him at Pilate's bar as such; nor is he said to make himself so, though he readily engaged to be the surety of his people, and voluntarily took upon him their sins, and gave himself an offering for them; but he, his Father, is said to make him sin; it was he that “laid”, or “made to meet” on him, the iniquity of us all; it was he that made his soul an offering for sin, and delivered him up into the hands of justice, and to death, and that “for us”, in “our” room and stead, to bear the punishment of sin, and make satisfaction and atonement for it; of which he was capable, and for which he was greatly qualified: for he

knew no sin; which cannot be understood or pure absolute ignorance of sin; for this cannot agree with him, neither as God, nor as Mediator; he full well knew the nature of sin, as it is a transgression of God's law; he knows the origin of sin, the corrupt heart of man, and the desperate wickedness of that; he knows the demerit, and the sad consequences of it; he knows, and he takes notice of too, the sins of his own people; and he knows the sins of all wicked men, and will bring them all into judgment, convince of them, and condemn for them: but he knew no sin so as to approve of it, and like it; he hates, abhors, and detests it; he never was conscious of any sin to himself; he never knew anything of this kind by, and in himself; nor did he ever commit any, nor was any ever found in him, by men or devils, though diligently sought for. This is mentioned, partly that we may better understand in what sense he was made sin, or a sinner, which could be only by the imputation of the sins of others, since he had no sin of his own; and partly to show that he was a very fit person to bear and take away the sins of men, to become a sacrifice for them, seeing he was the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish, typified in this, as in other respects, by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation; also to make it appear that he died, and was cut off in a judicial way, not for himself, his own sins, but for the transgressions of his people; and to express the strictness of divine justice in not sparing the Son of God himself, though holy and harmless, when he had the sins of others upon him, and had made himself responsible for them. The end of his being made sin, though he himself had none, was,

that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; not the essential righteousness of God, which can neither be imparted nor imputed; nor any righteousness of God wrought in us; for it is a righteousness “in him”, in Christ, and not in ourselves, and therefore must mean the righteousness of Christ; so called, because it is wrought by Christ, who is God over all, the true God, and eternal life; and because it is approved of by God the Father, accepted of by him, for, and on the behalf of his elect, as a justifying one; it is what he bestows on them, and imputes unto them for their justification; it is a righteousness, and it is the only one which justifies in the sight of God. Now to be made the righteousness of God, is to be made righteous in the sight of God, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Just as Christ is made sin, or a sinner, by the imputation of the sins of others to him; so they are made righteousness, or righteous persons, through the imputation of his righteousness to them; and in no other way can the one be made sin, or the other righteousness. And this is said to be “in him”, in Christ; which shows, that though Christ's righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe, it is imputed to them, and put upon them; it is not anything wrought in them; it is not inherent in them. “Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength”, says the church, (²³⁸³⁴Isaiah 45:24) and also, that the way in which we come by this righteousness is by being in Christ; none have it reckoned to them, but who are in him, we are first “of” God “in” Christ, and then he is made unto us righteousness. Secret being in Christ, or union to him from everlasting, is the ground and foundation of our justification, by his righteousness, as open being in Christ at conversion is the evidence of it.