

## CHAPTER 6

### INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS 6

The apostle having given a commendation of the Gospel in the latter part of the preceding chapter, does in this address the ministers of it that were at Corinth, under the character of fellow labourers, and by way of entreaty, that they would be careful to make it appear that they had not received neither the Gospel of the grace of God, nor gifts to minister it, in vain, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:1) and in proof of the Gospel being a ministry of reconciliation, and a doctrine of free grace and salvation, which carry in them so many arguments why it should not be received in vain, the apostle in (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:2) cites a passage out of (~~2308~~ Isaiah 49:8) by which it appears, that the Gospel dispensation is a time of acceptance, and of salvation; and which he accommodates to the then present time in which he lived; and is true of the whole intermediate time between the sufferings and death of Christ, which was the time in which he was helped and succoured, and his second coming, when all the elect will have been gathered in: after which he proceeds to give directions how to conduct without offence, that so no blame and reproach might fall upon the ministration of the Gospel, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:3) and proposes himself, and other faithful ministers, as examples to them, who had approved themselves as the ministers of God by their patient bearing all kind of afflictions for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, of which a particular enumeration is given in (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:4,5) and by the exercise of various other graces, virtues, and gifts bestowed upon them, and which were illustrious in them, of which there is a particular detail in (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:6,7) though by reason of the different lights in which they were viewed by men, as well as the different appearances they made, and the different things that might be said of them, either through misrepresentation or ignorance, or as under different considerations, many very strange and enigmatical things are predicated of them, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:8-10) which can only be unriddled by their being possessors of the Gospel of Christ, and being partakers of the grace of God. And next the apostle addresses the members of the church at Corinth; and to make way for the exhortations he had to deliver to them, and that they might be taken in good part by them, he expresses his great regard to

them; how free he was to communicate anything that might be profitable to them, and how much his heart was enlarged with love to them, (<sup>4061</sup>2 Corinthians 6:11) that there was no straitness of Spirit in him towards them, though there was so much in them towards him, (<sup>4062</sup>2 Corinthians 6:12). Wherefore he entreats them, as his children, that as he had shown paternal love to them, they would also express filial affection and obedience to him, (<sup>4063</sup>2 Corinthians 6:13) and then he enters upon his exhortation to have no communion with ungodly persons; and which he confirms by five arguments taken from the disagreement of righteousness and unrighteousness, of light and darkness, of Christ and Belial, of a believer and an unbeliever, and of the temple of God and of idols, (<sup>4064</sup>2 Corinthians 6:14-16) by which he suggests, that as the proper characters of wicked men are unrighteousness, darkness, Belial, unbelievers, and idols, or idolaters; so the names of saints were righteousness, light, Christ, believers, and the temple of God; and in proof of the latter, he produces some passages out of (<sup>4065</sup>Leviticus 26:11,12 <sup>4066</sup>Ezekiel 36:26,27) and in the words of the prophet (<sup>4067</sup>Isaiah 52:11) he calls upon the Corinthians to quit the company of sinful and unclean men, to separate from them, and have nothing to do with them in things criminal and sinful; and for their encouragement to regard such an exhortation, the promises of God are mentioned; as that he will receive such persons into his protection, and will behave as a father towards them, and treat them as his sons and daughters, (<sup>4067</sup>2 Corinthians 6:17,18).

**Ver. 1.** *We then, as workers together with him*, etc..] The ministers of the Gospel are workers or labourers; their ministry is a work, and a very laborious one, which none have strength equal to, and are sufficient for; of themselves: it is a work that requires faithfulness and diligence, is honourable; and those who perform it aright deserve respect. These do not work alone: according to our version, they are “workers together with him”; meaning either God or Christ, not as co-ordinate with him, but as subordinate to him: he is the chief shepherd, they under ones; he is the chief master builder, they under workers; but inasmuch as he is with them, and they with him, he is over them, and stands by them, great honour is done them; they have encouragement to work; and hence it is that their work is successful. Though the phrase, “with him”, is not in the original text, where only one word, **συνεργουντες**, is used, and may be rendered “fellow workers”, or “fellow labourers”, meaning with one another: and since therefore reconciliation was made by Christ, and the ministry of it

was committed to them, and they were appointed ambassadors for him, and were in his stead, therefore, say they,

*we beseech you also*; you ministers also; as we have entreated the members of the church, to be reconciled to the order of the Gospel, and the laws of Christ in his house, so as fellow labourers with you, and jointly concerned in the same embassy of peace, we beseech you the ministers of the word in this church,

*that ye receive not the grace of God in vain*: by “the grace of God”, is not meant the grace of God in regeneration, and effectual calling, which can never be received in vain; for the grace of God never fails of producing a thorough work of conversion; nor is it ever lost, but is strictly connected with eternal, glory: but by it is meant either the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of Christ, so called, because it is a declaration of the love and grace of God to sinners, ascribes salvation in part, and in whole, to the free grace of God, and is a means of implanting and increasing grace in the hearts of men. Now this may be received in vain by ministers and people, when it is but notionally received, or received in word only: when it is abused and perverted to vile purposes, and when men drop, deny it, and fall off from it; or else by the grace of God may be designed gifts of grace, qualifying for ministerial service; and the sense of the exhortation be, that they be careful that the gifts bestowed on them might not be neglected by them, but be used and improved to the advantage of the church, and the glory of Christ; by giving up themselves to study, meditation, and prayer, by labouring constantly in the word and doctrine, and by having a strict regard to their lives and conversations, “that the ministry be not blamed”; which exhortation he pursues in, and by his own example and others, in some following verses, the next being included in a “parenthesis”.

**Ver. 2.** *For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted*, etc..] These words are a citation from (<sup>2408</sup>Isaiah 49:8) and are spoken by the Father to Christ, declaring he had heard him, as he always did. He heard him when he put up that prayer to him, recorded (<sup>4870E</sup>John 17:1-26) for the glorification of himself, by strengthening him as man in his work, by raising him from the dead, setting him at his own right hand, and giving him the glory he had with him before the world was; for the good of his people, the preservation of those that were called, the conversion of them that are called, and the glorification of all the Father had given him: he heard him in the garden, and answered him; the will of God was done according to his

desire, and his will was conformed to the will of his Father, and he was delivered from the fear of death; his ends in his prayer there were answered, which were to show the greatness of his sufferings, the impossibility of man's salvation in any other way, and that there could be no alteration made in the methods of obtaining it. He heard him on the cross with respect to the deliverance of him from man, with regard to his being forsaken by God, and for the forgiveness of his enemies. Now this period of time in which he was heard on account of these several things, is called a time accepted; or, as in the Hebrew text,  $\hat{w}xr\ t[$ , “a time of good will, or acceptance”; a season in which God expressed good will to the sons of men, by sending his own Son to work out salvation for them; this was good will to men, and not to angels, to such as were ungodly, enemies, sinners, and the worst of sinners: it was a time very grateful to him; it was “the accepted year of the Lord”; the sufferings, sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness of his Son were well pleasing to him; because his purposes, promises, and covenant transactions had their accomplishment, his perfections were glorified, and his people saved. And it was a time of acceptance, or an acceptable time to men, since it was the day of their salvation, and therefore must be exceedingly agreeable to all such who see their need of it, know the worth of it, and are sensible that there is no other way of salvation than by him.

*And in the day of salvation have I succoured thee.* These words are still spoken to Christ, who whilst he was in human nature, working out the salvation of his people, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, was succoured, or helped by his Father. This help was promised to him as man, and he expected it, and exercised faith on God for it, and which was actually and punctually given him; and which is no instance of weakness in Christ, who is the mighty God, and was mighty to save; but an indication of the Father's regard to the human nature of Christ, and of his concern for the salvation of men; and also shows what power and strength were necessary to accomplish it.

*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* These are the words of the apostle, applying the former to the present Gospel dispensation; which he introduces with prefixing a “behold” to each sentence, in order to raise both attention to, and admiration at what is delivered:

*now is the accepted time*; not that the Gospel dispensation is a milder dispensation of things, in which God will accept of an imperfect sincere obedience to his law, in the room of a perfect one; or in which Christ is now offered to sinners, and it is left to them whether they will accept of him or not: but it is so called, because God and Christ now testify their good will to the sons of men, and are ready to accept of, and embrace poor sensible sinners coming to them; and because the Gospel publishes salvation by Christ, which, as it is worthy of their acceptation, cannot but be acceptable to them: now is the day of salvation: now is salvation preached, as being done, already obtained by Christ for sinners, the chief of sinners; it is now brought home to their souls by the ministration of the Gospel under the influence of the Spirit of God; now sinners are convinced of their need of it, and that it cannot be had elsewhere; now they are made to submit to Christ, to be saved by him, and him alone, are encouraged to believe in him, and are by him actually possessed of it. “Now” is, and not yesterday was, the day of salvation; and “now”, and that for ever, that is, as long as the Gospel dispensation continues; for it will be always now till all the elect of God are gathered in. This day of grace and salvation will never be over till that time comes; it is still “now is the day of salvation”: though men may have long withstood the ministration of the Gospel, and notwithstanding their manifold sins and transgressions. There is no withstanding the “now” of grace when it comes with the power of the Holy Ghost.

**Ver. 3.** *Giving no offence in anything*, etc..] These words are in connection with (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:1) and to be considered either as a continuation of the exhortation to others, that they would take care to give no offence to any; or rather as an account the apostle gives of himself, and other ministers, by way of example; and is as if he had said, I Paul, Timotheus, Silvanus, and other ministers of the word, take all possible care to lay no stumblingblock in the way of the hearers of the Gospel; to give no offence to them that are without, or to them that are within, to Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God, neither by word nor writing, by doctrine or conversation, or in any way whatever: that the ministry be not blamed; the ministry of the word of reconciliation, which they had received of the Lord Jesus. The apostle knew there were persons enow who were waiting all opportunities, and taking all advantages to vilify and reproach the ministry of the Gospel, and so hinder its progress and spread; and that if that was once brought into contempt by the disagreeable conduct of the

preachers of it, there would be but little hope of success from it. Some copies read, “our ministry”; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; the Ethiopic version reads, “your ministry”.

**Ver. 4.** *But in all things approving ourselves*, etc..] It is not sufficient for a minister of the Gospel to avoid everything that might bring any blot or scandal on his ministry; but he should in all things, and by all ways and means, proper, lawful, and laudable, approve, prove, and show himself to be a true and faithful dispenser of the word. All in such an office ought to make it appear, that they are such by behaving and conducting

*as the ministers of God*; as becomes such, whom he has chosen, called, and fitted for that service; and particularly in, or

*by much patience*; by a large, constant, and continued exercise of that grace; and by bearing patiently many things for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, without murmuring at the hand of God, or being angry with men, and without fainting and sinking in their own spirits:

*in afflictions*; that is, in patiently bearing, them. This word may be considered as a general word, including all sorts of afflictions whatever, of which the following are particular species:

*in necessities*; want of food, drink, and raiment, being hungry, thirsty, and naked, as the apostles sometimes were: in distresses; both of bad mind; being in such straits and difficulties they know not where to look, what course to steer, or which way to turn themselves.

**Ver. 5.** *In stripes*, etc..] As the Apostle Paul particularly was, who was thrice beaten with rods, and five times scourged by the Jews with the scourge of forty stripes save one.

*In imprisonments*; under which are included bonds, in which they often were for the Gospel of Christ:

*in tumults*; and uproars of the people, when their lives were frequently in imminent danger: or “in tossings to and fro”; being drove from place to place through the fury of their enemies;

*in labours*; in a laborious ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances; or by labouring with their own hands to supply their necessities:

*in watchings*; being obliged to work night and day at their hand labour, and in preaching, praying, and singing psalms; which exercises they were often employed in at midnight:

*in fastings*; by which are meant not voluntary, but involuntary ones, through want of food to eat.

**Ver. 6.** *By pureness*, etc..] The apostle having observed how he, and other ministers of God, showed themselves to be such by patiently bearing everything that was afflictive and distressing to the outward man, proceeds to show how they approved themselves in other respects; and which more chiefly regard the inward man, the exercise of grace, and a spiritual behaviour: “by pureness”; of doctrine and conversation, chastity of body and mind, sincerity of heart, and integrity of life:

*by knowledge*; of the Scriptures of truth, the mysteries of grace; or by a prudent conduct, a walking in wisdom with caution and circumspection:

*by longsuffering*: not easily provoked to wrath, but bearing with patience every indignity and affront:

*by kindness*; gentleness, sweetness of temper and manners, affability and courteousness:

*by the Holy Ghost*; influencing and assisting in the exercise of every grace, and the discharge of every duty, or by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, ordinary and extraordinary:

*by love unfeigned*; without dissimulation, being not in word only, but in deed and in truth towards the brethren, and to all men.

**Ver. 7.** *By the word of truth*, etc..] By preaching the Gospel, truly, sincerely, without any adulteration of it, which comes from the God of truth, has for its subject matter Christ, who is the truth, and into which ministers are guided by the Spirit of truth, and every doctrine of which is truth:

*by the power of God*; accompanying the word to the conversion and salvation of multitudes of souls; or by the signs, wonders, and miracles which were wrought for the confirmation of it:

*by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand, and on the left*: meaning, either the whole armour of God, with which a Christian is all over

clothed from head to foot, and in the strength of Christ may engage any adversary without fear; or else particularly the sword of the Spirit in the right hand, and the shield of faith in the left, whereby both the offensive and defensive part may be acted; or, as others think, uprightness of conscience, and holiness of life and conversation; with which being blessed, though on the one hand he meets with prosperity, and on the other hand with adversity, he is not lifted up with the one, nor cast down with the other; he is moved by neither, but passes on unconcerned.

**Ver. 8.** *By honour and dishonour*, etc..] Some persons think and speak honourably of us, and behave in a reverent manner towards us; they wish us well, bid us God speed, receive us into their houses, and treat us with respect: others think meanly of us, speak of us with the utmost contempt, and use us as if we were the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; so we pass through the world; this is the treatment we meet with on the right hand and on the left; nor are we much affected with it:

*by evil report and good report*; as it fares with our persons, so with our doctrine: some speak well of it, receive and embrace it; others blaspheme it, and have it in the utmost abhorrence; we are charged with the vilest of crimes, and our doctrines loaded with the most absurd and wicked consequences, and both branded in the most infamous manner by one set of men; and by others both our persons and principles are cleared and vindicated from all such aspersions, and are highly commended and applauded.

*As deceivers*; for so they were accounted, as Christ was before them, by the unbelieving Jews, and by the false apostles, as if they were the authors, or abettors, and spreaders of errors, and the instruments of leading people aside.

*And yet true*; true and faithful ministers of the word; true to their Lord and master; true to the trust committed to them; true to the Gospel of Christ, and to the souls of men.

**Ver. 9.** *As unknown, and yet well known*, etc..] Not unknown to Father, Son, and Spirit, or to one another, but to the world; and that not with respect to their outward estate, but their spiritual and eternal state; as that they were the chosen of God, the children of God, and born again; they knew not what a life they lived, or what they lived upon; and as they were unacquainted with their inward troubles, they were strangers to their



spiritual joys here, and to what they shall partake of hereafter. Moreover, something more may be intended in this word “unknown”; as that they were not owned, esteemed, and approved of by them, but slighted, despised, hated, and persecuted:

*and yet well known*; to God the Father, who loved them with an everlasting love, chose them in Christ, gave them to him, made a covenant with him on their account, and sent his Son to redeem them, which knowledge of them is special, eternal, affectionate, approbative, and attended with care of them; well known to Jesus Christ, who knows all that are his, specially, distinctly, perfectly, and that from everlasting, bears a strong affection for them, takes great care of them, indulges them with intimate communion with him, and openly owns and acknowledges them as his own; well known to the Spirit of God, who enlightened and quickened them, regenerated and sanctified them, wrought faith and every other grace in them, witnessed their adoption to them, led them into all truth, filled and furnished them with his gifts, and dwelt in them, and abode with them, as the seal and earnest of their future glory; and were well known to the saints, and one another: they loved each other, delighted in each other's company; they knew each other's experiences, joys, and sorrows, and, in some measure, their hearts, and even their spiritual and eternal estate.

*As dying, and behold we live*. They were as dying men, having the seeds of mortality in them, being subject to diseases, which bring on death; and especially as they carried about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, were continually exposed to death, and in danger of it, lived in the views of it, had the sentence of it in themselves, and were appointed to it. And “behold”, to admiration “we live”; a natural life, which we have from God, depends upon him, and is preserved by him amidst a thousand dangers and enemies to which it is exposed; and we live a spiritual life, a life of grace from Christ, a life of faith on him, and communion with him.

*As chastened and not killed*; “chastened” by men, and chastened by God; not in a way of vindictive wrath, but in a fatherly manner; but “not killed”, or put to a corporeal death by our persecutors, who have sought to take away our lives, but have not yet been suffered to do it: or by the Lord, by the means of afflictions, the messengers of death; these sometimes bring very near it, and God chastens by them, but does not as yet give over to death, because our time is not yet come, and our work not yet done.

**Ver. 10.** *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, etc..] As to their outward appearance they are

*sorrowful*, and oftentimes really so on account of sin, their own and others, by reason of afflictions, temporal and spiritual; and as to the state and condition of the church of Christ, and the interest of religion: and

*yet always rejoicing*; not in themselves, or in any creature, but in the Lord, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and salvation by him. As poor, yet making many rich. It is, generally speaking, the lot of Christ's ministers to be poor in this world; and there are some reasons for it, why it is, and should be so; as that they might be maintained by the people, which is the ordinance of God; that it might appear that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; that the faith of men might not stand in the riches of the world, but in the power of God; that ministers might not be above their work, nor neglect it, nor drop it; and that they might not be ensnared and encumbered with the things of life.

*And yet making many rich*: are instruments in making many souls rich in things spiritual; by showing them their spiritual poverty, stripping them of what they trusted in, and valued themselves upon; directing them where true riches are, and furnishing them with spiritual knowledge, with the knowledge of things more worth than thousands of gold and silver.

*As having nothing, and yet possessing all things*; for the apostles left all for Christ, were sent out bare by him; what they had they gave away, and were very destitute of worldly enjoyments: “and possessing all things”; they had food and raiment, with which they were content, what was sufficient for them, and which they had in mercy, and with a blessing; and then they enjoyed all spiritual good things; they had not only a right unto them, but were possessed of them; they had all things pertaining to life and godliness; they had Christ, and all things with him, and therefore could say as Jacob did, that they had enough, yea, that they had all things.

**Ver. 11.** *O ye Corinthians*, etc..] The apostle having exhorted the ministers of the church at Corinth to take care of their ministry, that they fulfil it, and that it might appear that the Gospel, and gifts fitting them to preach it, were not received in vain by them; all which he strengthens and encourages by his own example; and that of others, addresses the members of the church in a very pathetic manner, saying,

*our mouth is open to you*; to speak our minds freely to you; we shall hide and conceal nothing from you, we shall deal with you with all plainness and faithfulness. This seems to refer unto, and pave the way for what he afterwards says about their unequal fellowship with unbelievers:

*our heart is enlarged*: with love to you, and eager desires after your good; and it is from the abundance of our hearts, and hearty affection for you, that our mouth is open so freely to communicate to you.

**Ver. 12.** *Ye are not straitened in us*, etc..] The meaning of which is, either you are not brought into straits and difficulties by us; we do not afflict and distress you, or fill you with anguish and trouble;

*but ye are straitened in your own bowels*; you are distressed by some among yourselves, who ought not to be with you, with whom you should have no fellowship and communion: or thus, you have room enough in our hearts, our hearts are so enlarged with love to you, that they are large enough to hold you all; an expression, setting forth the exceeding great love, and strong affection the apostle bore to the Corinthians; when, on the other hand, they had but very little love to him comparatively; he had a heart to hold them all without being straitened for room; and among all them they could scarce find room enough in their hearts and affections for him.

**Ver. 13.** *Now for a recompence in the same*, etc..] That your love to me may answer mine to you; that as you have my heart, I may have yours, and the same room in your heart, as you have in mine. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “having the same recompence”; and the Arabic version renders it, “grant to me the same recompence”; and the Syriac version, “recompence to me my usuries that are with you”; that is, repay me with affection, let love be returned for love.

*I speak as unto my children*; which relation subsisting between us requires mutual affection; for as a father should love his children, so children should love their father:

*be ye also enlarged*; in your love to me, as I am to you; and then, as if he should say, you will bear with, and take in good part the following exhortation and advice.

**Ver. 14.** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*, etc..] This seems to be an allusion to the law in (<sup>(1820)</sup>Deuteronomy 22:10) and to be a

mystical explanation of it; and is to be understood not as forbidding civil society and converse with unbelievers; for this is impracticable, then must believers needs go out of the world; this the many natural and civil relations subsisting among men make absolutely necessary; and in many cases is both lawful and laudable, especially when there is any opportunity or likelihood of doing them any service in a spiritual way: not is it to be understood as dehorting from entering into marriage contracts with such persons; for such marriages the apostle, in his former epistle, had allowed to be lawful, and what ought to be abode by; though believers would do well carefully to avoid such an unequal yoke, since oftentimes they are hereby exposed to many snares, temptations, distresses, and sorrows, which generally more or less follow hereon: but there is nothing in the text or context that lead to such an interpretation; rather, if any particular thing is referred to, it is to joining with unbelievers in acts of idolatry; since one of the apostle's arguments to dissuade from being unequally yoked with unbelievers is, "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" and from the foregoing epistle it looks as if some in this church had joined with them in such practices; (see ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 10:14,20-22). But I rather think that these words are a dissuasive in general, from having any fellowship with unbelievers in anything sinful and criminal, whether in worship or in conversation:

*for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?* This, with what is said in the following verse, and in the beginning of the next to that, contain reasons or arguments engaging believers to attend to the exhortation given not to keep company with unbelievers. By "righteousness" is meant righteous persons, who are made the righteousness of God in Christ, to whom Christ is made righteousness, or to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed for justification; and who also have principles of grace and holiness in their hearts, or have the kingdom of God in them, which consists of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and who being made free from the dominion of sin, are become servants of righteousness: and by unrighteousness is designed unrighteous persons, who are destitute of a justifying righteousness, are filled with all unrighteousness, and are, as it were, a mass and lump of iniquity; now, what fellowship can there be between persons of such distant characters?

*And what communion hath light with darkness?* regenerate men are made light in the Lord; they are enlightened into their state and condition by

nature, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to behold the glory, beauty, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, so as to be sensible of their need of him, and to be able to look unto him for life and salvation; they are enlightened more or less into the doctrines of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; and their path is a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Unregenerate persons are “darkness” itself; they are dark and ignorant of God in Christ, of the way of salvation by Christ, of the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart, and of the mysteries of grace; they know not themselves, nor the sad estate they are in; they are born, and brought up in darkness worse than Egyptian darkness; they go on in it, and if grace prevent not, will be cast into utter and eternal darkness. Now, what “communion” can there be between persons so different one from another? for what is more so than light and darkness? these the God of nature has divided from each other; and they are in nature irreconcilable to one another, and so they are in grace.

**Ver. 15.** *And what concord hath Christ with Belial?* etc..] The word “Belial” is an Hebrew word, and is only used in this place in the New Testament, but often in the Old; this word is differently read and pronounced, some copies read it “Beliar”, and accordingly in the Ethiopic version it is “Belhor”, and by Jerom read <sup>f57</sup> Belvir”; but he observes, that it is more rightly called Belial”: in some copies it is “Belias”, and so Tertullian <sup>f58</sup> read it; and Jerom <sup>f59</sup> says, that most corruptly read it “Belias”, for “Belial”: some derive it from **yl b**, “Beli”, and **hl [**, “Alah”, and signifies “without ascent”; one in a very low condition, of low life, that never rises up, and comes to any thing; to which Kimchi’s etymology of the word seems to agree, who says <sup>f60</sup>, that Belial is a wicked man, **j yl xy l bw hl [y l b**, “who does not succeed, and does not prosper”: others say it signifies <sup>f61</sup> one that is **l w[ yl b**, “Beli Ol, without a yoke”, without the yoke of the law; so Jarchi explains children of Belial, in (<sup>f62</sup>Deuteronomy 13:13) without yoke, who break off the yoke of God; and so say <sup>f63</sup> the Talmudists,

“children of Belial, are children that break off **μυμϚ l w[**, “the yoke of heaven” (i.e. the law) from their necks;”

lawless persons, who are under no subjection to God or man: others <sup>f63</sup> derive it from **l [y**, “Jaal”, and **yl b**, “Beli”, and so it signifies one that is unprofitable, does no good, and is good for nothing; and it is applied in

Scripture to any wicked person, or thing; it is commonly rendered by the Chaldee paraphrast, a “wicked man”; and by Aquila and Suidas it is interpreted, “an apostate”, and so it is rendered here in the Arabic version; sometimes the corruption of nature is called “Belial” by the Jews<sup>f64</sup>, than which nothing can be more contrary to Christ; it is also a name of the devil; by Hesychius, “Beliar” is interpreted “a dragon”, by which name the devil is sometimes called; and here the Syriac version is, “what concord hath Christ with Satan?” most interpreters by Belial understand the devil, who has cast off the yoke of obedience to God, and is unprofitable, yea, noxious and hurtful to men; between whom and Christ there is no concord, but a perpetual enmity; and as there is no concord between Christ personal, and Belial the devil, so what can there be between Christ mystical the church, which goes by the name of Christ, (~~<K12>~~1 Corinthians 12:12) and wicked men, the sons of Belial; who have cast away the law of the Lord, are not subject to the law of God, nor can they be, and are become unprofitable to themselves, and others?

*or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?* such have no part, and shall have no part or portion in one and the same thing; the believer's part and portion are God, Christ, and an eternal inheritance; the unbeliever's part and portion will be in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and therefore what part, society, or communion, can they have with one another?

**Ver. 16.** *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?* etc..] That is, what association, confederation, or covenant agreement can the saints, who are the temple of God, have with idols, or their worshippers? no more than the ark of the Lord had with Dagon, or Dagon with the ark; which when brought into his temple, and set by him, the idol fell down, and part of him was broke to pieces:

*for ye are the temple of the living God;* some copies read “we are”, and so the Ethiopic version. The Corinthians, not only as particular believers, were the temples of God, both with respect to their souls and bodies, but they, as a church of Christ incorporated together, were the temple of God; wherefore the apostle does not say, ye are the “temples”, but “the temple” of the living God, in allusion to the temple built by Solomon; and that in respect to him the builder of it, who was a type of Christ, the son of David, the Prince of peace, the beloved of the Lord, who was to build the temple, the Gospel church, and to bear the glory; and as Solomon's temple was

built on an eminence, on Mount Moriah, so the church is built upon a rock, higher than men, than angels, than the heavens, and out of the reach of men and devils, so as to hurt and destroy it. The matter of the temple at Jerusalem were timber of cedar, and costly stones, hewed, squared, and fitted for the building, before they were brought thither; so the proper materials of a Gospel church are such as are born of incorruptible seed, and therefore comparable to cedars; and are lively stones, hewed, fitted, and squared by the Spirit and grace of God, and put and jointed in among the saints: Solomon's temple was a very stately magnificent building; it was overlaid within with pure gold, expressing the internal glory of Christ's church, which is all glorious within, having the Lord himself to be the Glory in the midst of her: the church of Christ may be compared to the temple also, for the firmness of its foundations and pillars; Christ is the foundation of his church, and that itself is the pillar and ground of truth: that temple was holy, being set apart for the worship and service of God, as the church of Christ is sanctified by the Spirit of God, and is built up a spiritual house, to offer the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise to God: it is called the "temple of God", because it is of his building, and where he dwells; "of the living God", because he has life in himself, and gives both spiritual and eternal life to his people; and in opposition to the idols of the Gentiles, who have no life in them; are representations of dead men, cannot give life, nor any of the comforts of life to their votaries; and who, by worshipping them, expose themselves to eternal death. The evidence of the saints, or church of Christ being the temple of the living God, is as follows,

*as God hath said,* (<sup>4351</sup>Leviticus 26:11,12 <sup>4376</sup>Ezekiel 37:26,27). I will dwell in them; not by his omnipresence, so he dwells everywhere; nor by his omnipotence, so he dwells in, and with all his creatures, supporting them by the word of his power; but by his Spirit and grace, or by his spiritual and gracious presence, which he favours his people with, in the use of ordinances, and where according to his promises they may expect it:

*and walk in them.* This denotes the communion God is pleased to afford his church and people, and that gracious presence of his with them, whilst they are sojourners here, and passing on to the heavenly glory; as God is said to "walk in a tent and tabernacle" with the "Israelites", whilst they were travelling through the wilderness to Canaan; so he walks in his temple, and with his church and people, whilst they are travelling home to the heavenly Canaan; he walks in them, as in his court and palace, or as in his garden, where he takes much pleasure and delight, and great notice and

care of them. R. Solomon Jarchi explains the phrase in (<sup><13612></sup>Leviticus 26:12) “I will walk among you”, thus; I will walk with you in the garden of Eden, or paradise, as one of you, and ye shall not be afraid of me: but the passage regards the presence of God with his people here, and not hereafter:

*and I will be their God*; not as the God of nature and providence only, but as the God of all grace; as their covenant God and Father in Christ; which is the greatest happiness that can be enjoyed:

*and they shall be my people*: his special people, loved by him with a peculiar love, on whom he bestows peculiar blessings; and who are made a willing people, willing to be his people by powerful grace, and are formed for himself, his service, and glory: hence it follows,

**Ver. 17.** *Wherefore come out from among them*, etc..] Since they were the temple of the living God, built up an habitation for the Most High; since he resided among them, took his walks in the midst of them, was their God, and they were his people. These words are taken out of (<sup><2521></sup>Isaiah 52:11) where the several phrases here used may be observed. They seem to be directed to the Israelites, and particularly to the priests and Levites, who bore the vessels of the Lord; and are fitly applied to believers under the Gospel dispensation, who are by Christ made priests unto God. They are usually interpreted by the Jewish writers, as a call to the Jews to come out of captivity, to quit Babylon and Persia, and the several cities and countries where they were; and are applied in (<sup><6184></sup>Revelation 18:4) to mystical Babylon, the church of Rome, as a call to God's people, to leave the superstitions and idolatries of that church, lest they be partakers of her plagues; and here, by the apostle, as an exhortation to believers in general, to forsake the company and conversation of the men of the world: who may be said to come out from among them at first conversion, when they are called to forsake their own people, and their Father's house, to leave their native country, and seek an heavenly one; and when, in consequence of effectual calling grace, their conversations are different from what they were before, and from other Gentiles; when they dislike their former companions, abhor their sinful conversation, abstain from it, keep out of it, as being infectious, hurtful, and detrimental to them; when they have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity, but reprove them both by words and deeds, which is their incumbent duty: the phrase in Isaiah is, “go ye out from the midst of her”; which Kimchi interprets, “out of the midst of every



city in which thou art”; that is, in which idolaters lived; and well agrees with **ἐκ μεσου αυτων** here, “out of the midst of them”:

*and be ye separate, saith the Lord*; this phrase is not to be met with expressly in our version of the above text in Isaiah, but is signified by several expressions in it; the words rendered “depart ye, depart ye”, are by the Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase on the place, expressed by **wçrpta wçrpta**, “be ye separate, be ye separate”, which are the very words of the apostle here; and the phrase, “touch no unclean thing”, is explained by R. Aben Ezra, **מל w[h twmwam wl dbyç**, “that they might be separate from the nations of the world” and another word, **wrbh**, “be ye clean”, signifies such a purgation as is made by separation, by removing the clean from the unclean, by separating the wheat from the chaff. The people of God are a separate people in election, redemption, and the effectual calling, and ought to be so in their conduct and conversation; they ought to separate themselves from all superstition and will worship in religious matters, and from the evil customs and manners of the world, though they are sure to become a prey, and to expose themselves to the contempt and rage of it:

*and touch not the unclean thing*. The allusion is to several laws under the former dispensation, which forbid touching many things which were accounted unclean, whereby pollution was contracted, and the persons were obliged to a ceremonial cleansing; (see <sup><RRD></sup>Leviticus 5:2,3) (<sup><H91E></sup>Numbers 19:11,16). It has no regard to touching, tasting, and eating any sort of food, which was forbid as unclean by the ceremonial law; for the difference between meats clean and unclean was now removed; but if anything is particularly designed by the unclean thing, it seems to be idolatry, and to be a prohibition of joining with worshippers of idols in their idolatrous practices, whereby a moral pollution is contracted; since in the beginning of the former verse it is said, “what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” though it is rather intended in general, to forbid all communion and fellowship with unclean persons and things, not to touch them, to come nigh them, or have anything to do with them:

*and I will receive you*; this, and what follows in the next verse, are said to encourage believers to keep at a distance from wicked and immoral persons, whose company and conversation are dishonourable, ensnaring, and defiling. These persons had been already received into the love of God, his best and strongest affections, from which there can be no separation;

and in the covenant of grace, which as it cannot be removed, so neither could they be removed out of that; they were received into the church of Christ, and had a place and a name in it, better than that of sons and daughters; and as they had been received by Christ, when they came to him as poor perishing sinners without him, so they were still received graciously, notwithstanding their many backslidings: neither of these therefore is the sense of this passage: but, that whereas by quitting society with carnal men, they would expose themselves to their resentments; the Lord here promises, that he would take them under the wings of his protection; he would take care of them and preserve them, keep them as the apple of his eye, and be a wall of fire round about them, whilst in this world; and when he had guided them by his counsel here, would “receive” them “to glory”: this clause seems to be taken from the latter part of (<sup>2502</sup>Isaiah 52:12) which may be rendered, “the God of Israel will gather you”; i.e. to himself, and protect them.

**Ver. 18.** *And will be a father unto you,* etc..] The same is promised to Solomon, (<sup>1074</sup>2 Samuel 7:14) and said of Israel, (<sup>2609</sup>Jeremiah 31:9) which is thought to be referred unto. This is not to be understood of the first commencement of this relation, as though God now began to be their Father; nor indeed of the first manifestation of it, which had been already made to their souls by the Spirit of adoption, witnessing to their spirits that God was their Father, and they were his children; but of his acting, and continuing to act the part of a father to them; which he does, by pitying his children, sympathizing with them, and supporting them under all their trials and afflictions; by taking care of them, that they have food and raiment convenient for them; by laying up for them, as he has done in his covenant, in his Son, and in heaven; by communicating unto them, by passing by their offences and miscarriages to him, and by correcting them for their good, and at last giving them the heavenly inheritance, and putting them into the possession of it:

*and ye shall be my sons and daughters.* This also does not relate to the first act of adoption, when these persons first became the sons and daughters of God; for so they were by adopting grace, in the mind, counsel, and covenant of God, from eternity; as such they were considered when given to Christ, when he assumed their nature, and died to gather them together in one; and as antecedent to faith and the work of the Spirit upon their souls: nor even of the first discovery of this grace unto them; but the meaning is, that whereas they were the sons and daughters of God,

they should be treated as such; whenever he spoke to them, or dealt with them in providence, he would speak to them and deal with them as children; or it may refer to the more full and open manifestation of their sonship, before angels and men, at the appearance of Christ: to all which is added,

*saith the Lord Almighty*; for confirmation sake, and to encourage the faith of the saints; since he who said all this is the Lord God Almighty, and so able to perform it; and of which, and his willingness, no question is to be made, since he has said it.