

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS 7

This chapter begins with an inference deduced, from what is said in the latter part of the foregoing chapter, engaging to holiness of heart and life, in opposition to filthiness of flesh and spirit, (2 Corinthians 7:1) and the apostle, in order to prevail upon the Corinthians kindly to receive his exhortations, observes his own conduct, and that of his fellow ministers towards them; as that they had done them no injury by the advice they had given them, nor had they corrupted them by unsound doctrine, or had coveted their worldly substance, (2 Corinthians 7:2) not that by so saying he would insinuate as if they had been guilty of injury, corruption, and covetousness; it was far from his thoughts to suggest anything of that kind concerning them, for whom he had so great an affection, as never to separate from them, but living and dying to continue the same regards unto them, (2 Corinthians 7:3) and which he expresses, and had shown everywhere, by the freedom of speech he had used concerning them, and his boasting of them, and the joy and comfort he had in the midst of his troubles, by the good news he had received of them, (2 Corinthians 7:4), which he had in the following manner; for though when in Macedonia he had no rest, partly through outward troubles, and partly through inward fears, (2 Corinthians 7:5) yet meeting with Titus, who had been with them, and had brought an account of their state, it was a means God made use of for the comfort of him, (2 Corinthians 7:6) and it was not merely the sight of Titus that yielded him this consolation, but the comfortable reception he had met with at Corinth; and also the good effect the apostle's letter written to them had upon them, as related by Titus; what a desire they had to see him, what grief that they should sin, and by it distress him, and what a fervent affection they had for him (2 Corinthians 7:7) for which reason he did not repent of the letter he sent them, though it did produce sorrow in them, since that was of the right kind, and was but for a time, (2 Corinthians 7:8) yea, he was so far from it, that he was glad, not merely on account of their sorrow, but because their sorrow was a godly one, and issued in repentance; and so they were no losers, but gainers by the epistle, it producing such good effects, (2 Corinthians

7:9) which leads him to distinguish between a true right godly sorrow, and a worldly one, and that by their consequences; repentance and salvation following upon the one, and death upon the other, (~~4070~~2 Corinthians 7:10) the fruits and evidences of which godly and true repentance he makes mention of in seven particulars, by which it appeared that their sorrow and repentance were sincere and genuine, (~~4071~~2 Corinthians 7:11) when the apostle proceeds to observe to them the end he had in view in writing to them, upon the account of the incestuous person, in which he had used great plainness and faithfulness; and this was not merely on account of him that offended, nor only on account of the person injured by him, but chiefly to testify his care of, and concern for their welfare, as a church of Christ, (~~4072~~2 Corinthians 7:12) and inasmuch as though they had been grieved, yet were now comforted, it added to the consolation of the apostle and his companions, and the more delighted they were, when they understood what a reception Titus had among them, what reverence he was had in, what respect was shown him, and care was taken of him, (~~4073~~2 Corinthians 7:13) and the rather, seeing the apostle had boasted of the liberality, generosity, and affectionate regard of the Corinthians to the ministers of the Gospel, Titus found it to be all true what he had said; so that he had no reason to be ashamed, as he must have been, had they behaved otherwise, (~~4074~~2 Corinthians 7:14) and still it gave him further pleasure, that by their behaviour to Titus, they had gained his heart, and increased his affection towards them; which he could not but express, whenever he called to mind, or made mention of the great respect, veneration, and obedience, they yielded to him, (~~4075~~2 Corinthians 7:15) and indeed it was not only in this instance, but in all others, the apostle had confidence concerning them, which heightened his joy and pleasure in them, (~~4076~~2 Corinthians 7:16).

Ver. 1. *Having therefore these promises*, etc..] That God will walk in his temple, and dwell in his churches, be their God, and they his people, that he will receive them, and be their Father, and they his sons and daughters; which promises they had not in hope, as Old Testament saints had the promises of the Messiah and his kingdom, and as New Testament saints have of the resurrection, the new heavens and new earth, and of appearing with Christ in glory; but in hand, in actual possession; for God was really become their God and Father, and they were his people and children; they had had communion with him, and were received, protected, and preserved by him; which promises and blessings of grace, and which are absolute and unconditional, the apostle makes use of to engage them to purity and

holiness; and is a clear proof, that the doctrine of an absolute and unconditional covenant of grace has no tendency to licentiousness, but the contrary: and that his following exhortation might be attended to, and cheerfully received, he uses a very affectionate appellation,

dearly beloved; so they were of God, being his people, his sons and daughters, adopted, justified, called, and chosen by him; and so they were by the apostle and his fellow ministers, who, as he says in a following verse, were in their hearts to die and live with them; some copies read brethren, and so the Ethiopic version. The exhortation he urges them to, and, that it might be the better received, joins himself with them in it, is,

let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit: by “the filthiness of the flesh” is meant external pollution, defilement by outward actions, actions committed in the body, whereby the man is defiled; such as all impure words, filthiness, and foolish talking, all rotten and corrupt communication, which defile a man's own body; as the tongue, a little member, when so used does, and corrupts the good manners of others; all filthy actions, as idolatry, adultery, fornication, incest, sodomy, murder, drunkenness, revellings, etc.. and everything that makes up a filthy conversation, which is to be hated, abhorred, and abstained from by the saints: by “filthiness of the spirit” is meant internal pollution, defilement by the internal acts of the mind, such as evil thoughts, lusts, pride, malice, envy, covetousness, and the like: such a distinction of **Pwgh tamwj** , “the filthiness of the body”, and **çpnh tamwj** , “the filthiness of the soul”, is to be met with among the Jews; who say ^{f65}, that when a man has taken care to avoid the former, it is fit he should take care of the latter; they also call the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, “the filth of the body” ^{f66}.

Now when the apostle says, “let us cleanse ourselves”, this does not suppose that men have a power to cleanse themselves from the pollution of their nature, or the defilement of their actions; for this is God's work alone, as appears from his promises to cleanse his people from their sins; from the end of Christ's shedding his blood, and the efficacy of it; from the sanctifying influences of the Spirit; and from the prayers of the saints to God, to create in them clean hearts, to wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin: besides, the apostle is not here speaking either of the justification of these persons, in which sense they were already cleansed, and that thoroughly, from all their sins and iniquities; nor of the inward work of sanctification, in respect of which they

were sprinkled with clean water, and were washed in the layer of regeneration; but what the apostle respects is the exercise of both internal and external religion, which lies in purity of heart and conversation, the one not being acceptable to God without the other; he is speaking of, and exhorting to the same thing, as in the latter part of the preceding chapter; and suggests, that it becomes those who have received such gracious promises to be separate from sin and sinners, to abstain from all appearance of sin, and to have no fellowship with sinners; to lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of haughtiness, and, under a sense of either external or internal pollution, to have recourse to the fountain opened; to deal by faith with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, of heart, lip, and life; and which is the only effectual method a believer can make use of, to cleanse himself from sin; namely, by washing his garments, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb:

perfecting holiness in the fear of God; by “holiness” is not meant the work of sanctification upon the heart, for that is wholly the work of the Spirit of God, and not of man; he begins it, carries it on, and perfects it of himself; but holiness of life and conversation is here designed, which in conversion the people of God are called unto, and which highly becomes them: and this they are to be “perfecting”; not that a believer is able to live a life of holiness, without sin being in him, or committed by him; this is in, possible and impracticable in the present life; but the sense of the word *επιτελουντες* is, that he is to be carrying on a course of righteousness and holiness to the end; to the end of his life, he is to persevere as in faith, so in holiness; as he is to go on believing in Christ, so he is to go on to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to the end of his days; which requires divine power to preserve him from sin, and keep him from falling; and the grace of God, the strength of Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, to enable him to perform acts of holiness, and the several duties of religion, and to continue in well doing: all which is to be done, “in the fear of God”; not in a servile slavish fear, a fear of hell and damnation, but in a filial fear, a reverential affection for God, an humble trust in him, and dependence on him, for grace and strength; it is that fear which has God for its author, is a blessing of the new covenant, is implanted in regeneration, and is increased by discoveries of pardoning grace; and it has God for its object, not his wrath and vindictive justice, but his goodness, grace, and mercy. This shows from what principle, and upon what views believers act in a course of righteousness and holiness; not from the fear of hell, nor from the fear of

men, or with a view to gain their applause, but as in the sight of God, from a reverential affection to him, a child like fear of him, and with a view to his glory.

Ver. 2. *Receive us*, etc..] Into your affections, let us have a place in your hearts, as you have in ours: Gospel ministers ought to be received with love and respect, both into the hearts and houses of the saints; for “he that receiveth you”, says Christ, “receiveth me”, (~~4000~~ Matthew 10:40). Their doctrines are to be received in the love of them, and with faith and meekness; and this may be another part of the apostle's meaning here; receive the word and ministry of reconciliation, which we as the ambassadors of Christ bring, and the several exhortations we give in his name, particularly the last mentioned: next follow reasons, or arguments, engaging, them to comply with this request,

we have wronged no man; we have done no man any injury in his person, estate, or name. There is one among you that has done wrong, and another among you that has suffered wrong, (~~4712~~ 2 Corinthians 7:12) and we have given very faithful advice to the church how to behave in this affair; but, in so doing, we have neither wronged him nor you; and as not in this, so neither in any other case: if I or my fellow apostles have wronged you in anything, it is in not being “burdensome” to you for our maintenance, “forgive me this wrong”, (~~4713~~ 2 Corinthians 12:13) for in no other respect have we done you any: some understand this of any lordly power, or tyrannical domination they had exercised over them, denied by the apostle; we have not behaved in an insolent manner towards you, we have not lorded it over God's heritage, or claimed any dominion over your faith, or required any unreasonable obedience and submission from you:

we have corrupted no man; neither by our doctrines and principles, which are perfectly agreeable to the word of God, make for the good of souls, and tend to the glory of Christ; nor by our example, but have been careful to lead such lives and conversations as are becoming the Gospel of Christ, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and are patterns to them that believe; nor have we corrupted by flatteries, or with bribes, any of the leading men among you, in order to gain their good will, and thereby respect and credit among others:

we have defrauded no man, or “coveted no man”; no man's silver, gold, or apparel; we have not sought yours, but you; not to amass wealth to ourselves, but that we might be useful to your souls, for your spiritual

good, and serviceable to the glory of Christ; we have not through covetousness made merchandise of you, with feigned words, as the false apostles have done, therefore receive us.

Ver. 3. *I speak not this to condemn you*, etc..] Referring either to the exhortations before given, to have no sinful conversation with unbelievers, and to cleanse themselves from all impurity, external and internal; and to go on in a course of holiness, in the fear of God, to the end of life; or to the account just given of himself and fellow ministers; and his sense is this, the exhortations I have given must not be so understood, as though I charged and accused you with keeping company with unbelievers, or as though you were not concerned for purity of life and conversation; or when I remove the above mentioned things from myself and others, I mean not to lay them upon you, as if I thought that you had wronged, corrupted, or defrauded any; when I clear myself and others, I do not design to accuse or condemn you; my view is only to the false apostles, who have done these things, when we have not, and therefore we have the best claim to your affections:

for I have said before, you are in our hearts; you are inscribed on our hearts, engraven there, “ye are our epistle written in our hearts”, ([1](#) Cor. 3:2) ye are not straitened in us, ([2](#) Cor. 6:12) you have a place and room enough in our affections, which are strong towards you, insomuch that it is our desire and resolution

to die and live with you; or together: neither death nor life shall separate our love, or destroy our friendship; there is nothing we more desire than to live with you; and should there be any occasion for it, could freely die with you, and for you.

Ver. 4. *Great is my boldness of speech towards you*, etc..] Or “liberty of speaking”, which I use with you; I very freely, and without any disguise, open my mind to you; I faithfully tell you your faults; I am free in my exhortations and counsels to you, as in the case of the incestuous person, and in other instances, which is a sign of true friendship; for had I any suspicion of you, or not cordial affection for you, I should have been more reserved, more upon my guard, and have spoke and wrote with more caution: besides,

great is my glorying, or “boasting of you”; of your faith in Christ, your love to the people of God, respect to the ministers of the Gospel, obedience to us, and very great liberality to the poor saints, of which the

apostle frequently boasts in this epistle: now as speaking freely to them when present with them, or in writing to them, so glorying in them, and speaking well of them when absent, clearly showed what an opinion he had of them, and what true hearty respect he had for them:

I am filled with comfort, says he; not only with divine and spiritual consolations from God, but with the news Titus brought of the state of this church, of the good effect the apostle's reproof and advice had both upon them, and the offender among them, and of their tender and affectionate regard to him: this filled him brimful of comfort, yea, adds he,

I am exceeding joyful; I abound, I over abound in joy; such is the joy that possesses my soul, at the tidings brought me, that it superabounds all the sorrow and anguish of spirit, out of which I wrote unto you, occasioned by the unhappy affair among you: yea, it makes me inexpressibly joyful in all our tribulation; which is not small we meet with, wherever we go, in preaching the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 5. *For when we were come into Macedonia*, etc..] Whither Paul went in quest of Titus, not finding him at Troas, (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 2:12,13) and where he met with him, and had the agreeable account from him of the state of this church; but here, as elsewhere, they had their troubles:

our flesh had no rest; that is, their outward man, their bodies; they were continually fatigued with preaching, disputing, fighting; what with false teachers, and violent persecutors, they had no rest in their bodies; though, in their souls, they had divine support and spiritual consolation; and it was no small addition to their joy to hear of the flourishing condition of this church:

but were troubled on every side; from every quarter, by all sorts of enemies; (see ^{<4018>}2 Corinthians 4:8).

Without were fightings, within were fears; there seems to be an allusion to (^{<4825>}Deuteronomy 32:25). They had continual combats with false teachers, and furious persecutors, without the church, or in the world, or in their bodies; and within the church, or in themselves, in their own minds, had many fears, lest any should be discouraged by the violence of persecutions, or be drawn aside by the doctrines of the false apostles: and as it was with the apostles in these respects, so it is with private believers: without are fightings; their outward conversation in this life is a warfare; partly with false teachers, with whom they fight the "good fight of faith", contend for

the doctrine of faith, using the spiritual weapons of the Scriptures of truth; and partly with the men of the world, to whose rage and contempt they are exposed, and among whom they endure a great fight of afflictions, with patience, and in the exercise of faith, whereby they gain the victory over the world and partly with Satan, their avowed adversary, and implacable enemy, against whom they wrestle in the strength of Christ, making use of the whole armour God provided for them, by the help of which, through divine grace, they come off more than conquerors; and partly with the lusts and corruptions, or open prevailing iniquities which are in the world, to which they oppose themselves, and, by the power of God keeping them, are preserved from: not that their only fightings are thus without; for there is, as it were, a company of two armies within them, sin and grace, flesh and spirit, opposing each other: and hence, as well as from other causes, are “fears within”; about their interest in everlasting love, electing grace, and the covenant of grace; about the presence of God with them, and the truth of grace in them; about their interest in Christ, their sonship, their final perseverance, and enjoyment of the heavenly glory: and though these fears are not their excellencies, but their infirmities, yet this will be more or less their case, till that state takes place, when there will be no more fightings, no more fears.

Ver. 6. *Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down*, etc..] Or “humble ones”: such as are humbled under the afflicting hand of God, and have low and mean apprehensions of themselves; these God looks unto, dwells with, revives their hearts, cheers their drooping spirits, and fills them with comforts; he has been used to do so with such persons; he has raised comfort to them; they may expect it, and the apostle experienced it; and which he refers to God as the author of it, as he had done in the beginning of this epistle, calling him “the God of all comfort”; he was the efficient cause, the means by which it was effected was the coming of Titus:

comforted us by the coming of Titus; to whom the apostle bore a very great affection, he being his son in a spiritual sense, a companion with him in his travels, and of great usefulness and service in the ministration of the Gospel; so that the very sight of him gave him pleasure; and the more, inasmuch as he had for some time longed to see him, that he might have some account from him of the affairs of this church.

Ver. 7. *And not by his coming only*, etc..] It was not barely by his coming, that he and his fellow ministers were so much comforted:

but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you. The church at Corinth received Titus with all respect and reverence; treated him in the most kind and tender manner; satisfied him in the affair of the incestuous person; greatly refreshed his spirits with an account of their faith in Christ, experience of the grace of God, and their regard and close attachment to the honour of religion, and the interest of the Redeemer; many comfortable opportunities had he with them, in preaching among them, and conversing with them; and the account of this added to the apostle's consolation; for the joys and comforts of one believer yield a considerable pleasure, and are matter of joy and comfort, to another:

when he told us your earnest desire; that is, of seeing the apostle, of satisfying him in the thing he had complained of, and of reformation in their conduct, and the discipline of Christ's house for the future:

your mourning; for the evil that had been committed among them; the dishonour it had brought upon the doctrine and ways of Christ; their remissness, carelessness, and neglect in discharging their duty; and the grief and sorrow occasioned hereby to the apostle:

your fervent mind toward me; in vindicating him, his character, doctrine, and conduct, against the false apostles, and others:

so that I rejoiced the more: his joy on this narrative of things abundantly exceeded his troubles and afflictions, which surrounded him on every side, and overcame and extinguished that sorrow, which had possessed him on their account; and greatly added to the joy he felt by the coming of Titus, and the consolation that he had met with at Corinth.

Ver. 8. *For though I made you sorry with a letter*, etc..] His former epistle, relating to the incestuous person:

I do not repent, though I did repent; not of writing the letter, which was wrote by divine inspiration; but of the sorrow occasioned by it, though now he did not repent of that:

for I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though it were but for a season; inasmuch as the sorrow was true, hearty, and genuine, though it

was but for a time, the apostle was entirely satisfied, and the more pleased, because of its brevity, since it was sincere.

Ver. 9. *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry*, etc..] Their grief and sorrow, as a natural passion, was no matter or cause of joy to him; nor was this what he sought after, being what he could take no real pleasure in; for so far as that was a pain to them, it was a pain to him:

but that ye sorrowed to repentance; their sorrow issued in true evangelical repentance, and this was the ground of his rejoicing; for as there is joy in heaven among the angels, at the repentance of a sinner, so there is joy in the church below, among the saints and ministers of the Gospel, when either sinners are brought in, or backsliders returned by repentance:

for ye were made sorry after a godly sort; what gave him so much joy and satisfaction was, that their sorrow was of the right sort; it was a godly sorrow, they sorrowed after; or according to God, according to the will of God, and for sin, as it was committed against him; it was a sorrow that God wrought in them:

that ye might receive damage by us in nothing; what added to his pleasure was, that his writing to them, and the effect it produced, had not been in the least detrimental to them; things had worked so kindly, and this sorrow had wrought in such a manner, that they were not hurt in their souls, but profited; nor in their church state, they had not lost one member by it; nay, the offender himself, which was the occasion of all this trouble, was recovered and restored by these means.

Ver. 10. *For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation*, etc..] These words contain a reason, proving that they had received no damage, but profit by the sorrow that had possessed them, from the nature of it, a “godly” sorrow; a sorrow which had God for its author; it did not arise from the power of free will, nor from the dictates of a natural conscience, nor from a work of the law on their hearts, or from a fear of hell and damnation, but it sprung from the free grace of God; it was a gift of his grace, the work of his Spirit, and the produce of his almighty power; being such, which no means, as judgments, mercies, or the most powerful ministry of themselves could effect; it was owing to divine instructions; it was heightened and increased with a discovery of the love of God, and views of pardoning grace and mercy being attended with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: it had God also for its object, as well as its author; it was a

sorrow, **ahl a l j md**, “which is for God”, as the Syriac version reads the words, and also the Ethiopic; on the account of God, his honour, interest, and glory; it was a sorrow for sin, because it was committed against a God of infinite holiness, justice, and truth, goodness, grace, and mercy; and it was a sorrow, **κατα θεον**, “according to God”, according to the mind and will of God; it was, as it is rendered by the Arabic version, “grateful to God”; what he took notice of, observed, and approved of; and was also such a sorrow as bore some resemblance to what in God goes by the name of grieving and repenting, as that he had made man, because of sin; there being in it a displicency with sin, an hatred of it, and a repentance that ever it was committed: moreover, this sorrow is further described, from its salutary operation, it “worketh repentance”; it is the beginning of it, a part of it, an essential part of it, without which there is no true repentance; this produces it, issues in it, even in an ingenuous confession of sin, a forsaking of it, and in bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, in the life and conversation: and this repentance is unto salvation; not the cause or author of it, for that is Christ alone; nor the condition of it, but is itself a blessing of salvation, a part of it, the initial part of it, by which, and faith we enter upon the possession of salvation; it is an evidence of interest in it, and issues in the full enjoyment of it: and this, or repentance, is such as is

not to be repented of; or that is stable and immovable, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; which “never returns”, or goes back, as the Syriac version, but remains the same not repented of; for to either of them may it be applied: salvation is not to be repented of; it is not repented of by God, who repents not, neither of the thing itself, nor of the way and manner in which it is effected, nor of the persons saved by it, and his choice of them to it; nor is it repented of by them, who believe in Christ to the saving of their souls: nor is true repentance, which is connected with it, to be repented of; God does not repent of giving it, for “his gifts and calling are without repentance”; nor does the repenting sinner repent of it; nor has he any occasion, since it is unto life, even “unto eternal life”, as the Ethiopic version here renders it; and as it is called “repentance unto life”, in (~~4118~~ Acts 11:18). This sorrow is likewise illustrated by its contrary,

but the sorrow of the world worketh death; a worldly sorrow is such, as is common to men of the world, as Cain, Pharaoh, Judas, and others; it springs from worldly selfish principles, and proceeds on worldly views; it is often nothing more than a concern for the loss of worldly things, as riches, honours, etc.. or for a disappointment in the gratification of worldly lusts

and pleasures: and this worketh death; temporal and eternal death; it sometimes brings diseases and disorders on the body, which issue in death; and sometimes puts men upon destroying themselves, as it did Ahithophel and Judas; it works in the minds of men a fearful apprehension of eternal death, and, if grace prevent not, issues in it.

Ver. 11. *For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort,* etc..] The apostle proceeds to describe godly sorrow by its effects, which are so many evidences of the sincerity and genuineness of it; some of the things mentioned are peculiar to the case of the Corinthians, and others common to evangelical repentance in any:

what carefulness it wrought in you; to remove the incestuous person from communion with them, which they were very negligent of before; to sin no more after this sort; to keep up, for the future, a more strict and regular discipline in the church; to perform good works in general, and not to offend God:

yea, what clearing of yourselves; not by denying the fact, or lessening, or defending it; but by acknowledging their neglect, praying it might be overlooked, declaring that they were not partakers of the sin; nor did they approve of it, but disliked and abhorred it, and were highly pleased with the method the apostle advised to:

yea, what indignation; not against the person of the offender, but against his sin; and not his only but their own too, in not appearing against him, and taking notice of him sooner; and particularly that they should act in such a manner, as to deserve the just rebuke of the apostle:

yea, what fear; not of hell and damnation, as in wicked men and devils, who repent not; but of God, and of grieving his ministers; and lest the corruption should spread in the church, as the apostle had suggested, “a little leaven leavens the whole lump”;

yea, what vehement desire; of seeing the apostle; of giving him full satisfaction; of behaving in quite another manner for the time to come; and to be kept from evil, and to honour God by a becoming conversation:

yea, what zeal; for God and his glory; for restoring the discipline of the church: for the doctrines of the Gospel; for the ordinances of Christ's house; for the supporting the character of the apostle, and other ministers of the word, against the false apostles:

yea, what revenge; not of persons in a private way, vengeance belongs to God; but of all disobedience, particularly that of the unhappy criminal among them, which has shown in the punishment inflicted on him by many:

in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter; of the incestuous person: it appeared plainly that they did not consent to, and approve of his sin; and though at first they were unconcerned about it, did not mourn over it as they ought, nor make such haste to deal with the offender as they should, yet having discovered true repentance for their sloth, negligence, and indulgence, they are acquitted, and stand, in the apostle's view of them, as if they had not offended.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore, though I wrote unto you*, etc..] Meaning in his former epistle, with so much sharpness and severity, and as may have been thought too much:

I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong; not for the sake of the incestuous person only and chiefly, not merely for his correction and restoration; though these things were intended, and earnestly desired by the apostle:

nor for his cause that suffered wrong: that is, the father of the incestuous person, who had been injured by this wicked action; it was not only or merely out of favour and respect to him, and that some compensation should be made to him in a church way, by detesting the crime, casting out the offender, and declaring themselves on the side of the injured person, and against him that had done the injury:

but that our care for you, in the sight of God, might appear unto you: some copies, and the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "that your care for us", etc.. and then the sense is, that you might have an opportunity of showing your affection for us, your regard to us, how readily you obey us in all things; but the other reading is to be preferred, the meaning of which is, that the apostle in writing did not so much consult and regard the private good of any particular person, either the injurer or the injured, though these were not out of his view; but he wrote in the manner he did, chiefly that it might be manifest what a concern he had for the good and welfare of the whole church; lest that should be corrupted, and receive any damage from such a notorious delinquent being tolerated or connived at among them; and that it was such

a care and concern as was real, hearty, and sincere, was well known to God, and for the truth of which he could appeal to him.

Ver. 13. *Therefore we were comforted in your comfort*, etc..] In the comfortable situation the church was in; not in their grief and sorrow, as a natural passion, but in the effects of it as a godly sorrow; by which it appeared that their repentance was genuine, and that they were clear in the matter that had given so much trouble; and that things had so well succeeded for the welfare and more comfortable estate of the church for the future. The comfortable estate, flourishing condition, and well being of churches, yield great pleasure and consolation to the ministers of the Gospel: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, “our comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we, for the joy of Titus”; not only the repentance of the Corinthians, and the blessed effects of that, occasioned joy in the apostle; but what added to it, and increased it the more abundantly, was the joy of Titus, which he had been a partaker of during his stay with them:

because his spirit was refreshed by you all; not by one only, or a few, but by all the members of the church; he was received by them with great respect, provided for in a liberal manner, treated with all humanity and courteousness; and, above all, his mind was eased and filled with an unexpected pleasure, to find them in such an agreeable frame of mind; so sensible of their neglect of duty, so ready to reform, so united in themselves, so affected to the apostle, and so determined to abide by the order, ordinances, and truths of the Gospel, against all false teachers.

Ver. 14. *For if I have boasted anything to him of you*, etc..] As of their faith in Christ, of their liberality to the saints, their affection for him, and obedience to him as children to a father:

I am not ashamed; since these all appeared to be true; as he must have been had they been otherwise:

but as we spake all things to you in truth; that is, our preaching among you was true; all the doctrines we delivered to you were truth; our word was not yea and nay, but uniform, and all of a piece:

even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth; some understand this of the boasting which the apostle made concerning Titus, in his epistle to them, highly commending him, and which they found to be in

all things exactly true; but the words rather design his boasting of the Corinthians unto Titus, which was found to be true by him.

Ver. 15. *And his inward affection is more abundant toward you*, etc..] Or “his bowels”; denoting the tenderness of his heart, the strength of his affections, which inwardly and to a very great degree moved towards them; especially

whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all; to him, and to me by him; to the advice and orders given, which were so readily, cheerfully, and universally complied with; and

how with fear and trembling you received him; that is, with great humility and respect, with much deference to him: considering his character as a minister of the Gospel, and as one sent by the apostle to them, they embraced him with great marks of honour and esteem; for this is not to be understood of any inward slavish fear or dread of mind, or trembling of body at the sight of him, and because he came to know their estate, and with reproofs from the apostle to them.

Ver. 16. *I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.*] That I can speak freely and boldly to you, reprove, admonish, and advise you, since you take it all in good part, as I design it; that I can confidently speak in your favour, boast of your love and obedience, which is found upon trial and by experience to be truth; and that I can promise myself every good thing from you, that is proper to ask of you, and lies in your power to perform; which he says partly to commend them for their past conduct, and partly to pave the way for what he had to say to them, concerning making a collection for the poor saints.