

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS 9

The apostle proceeds in this chapter upon the same subject, the making a collection for the poor saints; gives the reason why he sent the brethren to them on this account; directs to the manner in which this service should be performed, and subjoins some fresh arguments to encourage them to it. As for the ministration itself, he suggests, it might seem needless to say any more about it, since he had said so much already in the preceding chapter, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:1) and especially seeing they were so forward to it, and were even prepared for it a year ago; of which the apostle had boasted to the Macedonian churches, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:2) and whereas it might be objected, that since there was such an inclination in them to this good work, why did he send these brethren to them? the reason of this he gives, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:3,4) that they might get their collection ready against the time he came, lest should any of the Macedonians come along with him, and this collection not be made, his glorying of them would be in vain, and both he and they would be ashamed; wherefore he sent them before hand to prevent everything of this kind, and that their collection might appear to be not done in a covetous niggardly way, but bountifully and cheerfully, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:5) which manner he directs unto, and encourages from the advantages of it, under the metaphorical phrases of sowing and reaping, intimating, that as a man sows, so he reaps; or in proportion to his giving, is he blessed, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:6) wherefore he advises to give heartily, freely, and cheerfully, and that from this consideration, because cheerful giving is acceptable to God, being like himself, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:7) who, as he loves, so he rewards the cheerful giver; and as he is able to give him abundance, so he does, whereby he is more qualified and fitted for such liberal service, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:8). And this is confirmed by a passage of Scripture cited out of (~~112~~ Psalm 112:9) showing, that he that gives bountifully to the poor is ever regarded by the Lord, (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:9) and which is further proved from the general course of Providence, which so multiplies and increases the seed sown in the earth, that it usually ministers seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; to which the apostle had alluded in the use

of these metaphorical expressions; or he puts up a prayer that there might, or delivers out a promise that there would be a like increase in giving liberally, as in sowing plentifully, (^{<4010>}2 Corinthians 9:10). And then he makes use of a new argument, stirring up to bountifulness, taken from the glory which is brought to God through thanksgiving to him, from the poor and needy, supplied by the liberality of those whose hearts he had opened, (^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 9:11). On which argument he enlarges, showing, that not only by this bounty the wants of the poor are supplied, and thanksgivings offered up to God on that account; but also the poor saints are led to glorify God for sending his Gospel to these their benefactors, and giving them his grace to submit unto it, which had had such an influence upon them as to cause them to communicate to their necessities in such a generous manner, (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 9:12,13). To which he adds another argument, taken from the prayers of the poor saints, for those who liberally contributed to them, that they might prosper in body and soul, in things temporal and spiritual, (^{<4014>}2 Corinthians 9:14). And the chapter is concluded with a thanksgiving to God for the grace bestowed upon all the churches, and particularly for the gift of Christ to the sons of men; which contains in it another argument for beneficence and liberality, (^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 9:15).

Ver. 1. *For as touching the ministering to the saints*, etc..] It looks at first sight as if the apostle was entering upon a new subject, though by what follows it appears to be the same; for by “ministering to the saints”, he does not mean the ministry of the Gospel to them; nor that mutual assistance members of churches are to give each other; but either the fellowship of ministering to the saints, which the churches had entreated him, and his fellow ministers, to take upon them, namely, to take the charge of their collections, and distribute them to the poor saints at Jerusalem; or rather these collections themselves, and their liberality in them: with respect to which he says,

it is superfluous for me to write to you; that is, he thought it unnecessary to say any more upon that head, because he had used so many arguments already to engage them in it, in the foregoing chapter; and because he had sent three brethren to them, who well understood the nature of this service, and were very capable of speaking to it, and of enforcing the reasonings already used; and more especially he judged it needless to dwell on this subject, for the reasons following.

Ver. 2. *For I know the forwardness of your mind*, etc..] How that they were willing of themselves to engage in this good work; how readily they came into it; what a cheerful disposition of mind they showed towards it; and how forward they were to begin the collection:

for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia; he had one it before, which had put them upon the like service, and he still continued to boast of them,

that Achaia was ready a year ago: not that their collection was ready made so long ago; but they had shown a readiness of mind, as to every good work, so to this of communicating to the saints a year ago, when they made a beginning, though as yet had not finished. By Achaia is meant, the inhabitants of Achaia. The Arabic version renders it, the citizens of Achaia; of this country, (See Gill on "~~4182~~Acts 18:12"). It is sometimes taken in a large sense, and designs Greece, and includes the countries of Doris, Hellas, Aetolia, Locri, Phocis, Boeotia, Attica, and Megaris; and had its name, as some say, from the frequent inundation of waters; and others, from one of the three generals of the Pelasgi, who were of this name; and sometimes it is taken strictly and properly for the country of the Peloponnesus, or the Morea. And so Drusius, out of Hesychius, has observed, that the Achaeans were Greeks; but properly they were they that inhabited that part of Peloponnesus, called Achaia; and these seem to be intended here. The Gospel was preached in these parts with success; Epapnetus, whom the Apostle Paul salutes, (~~4165~~Romans 16:5) and the house of Stephanas he mentions, (~~4165~~1 Corinthians 16:15) were the firstfruits of it; and in process of time several churches were here gathered, and which continued for several ages. In the "second" century there was a synod in Achaia, concerning the time of keeping Easter, in which Bacchylus, bishop of Corinth, presided; in the beginning of the "fourth" century, the bishops of Achaia were present at the council of Nice, and in the same century bishops out of this country assisted at the synod in Sardica; in the "fifth" century there were many churches in Achaia, and the bishops of them were present in the Chalcedon synod; out of this country went several bishops, in the "seventh" century, to Constantinople, and were in the sixth synod there; and in the "eighth" century there were bishops of Achaia in the Nicene synod¹⁷⁶: here by Achaia are designed the churches of Christ, which were in that part of Greece in which Corinth stood, and of which that was the metropolis; so that when the apostle says Achaia was ready, his meaning is more particularly, that the Corinthians were ready:

and, adds he,

your zeal hath provoked very many: or “the zeal which is of you”; which sprung from, and was occasioned by them; for not the zeal of the Corinthians is here intended, as seems at first view, but that emulation which was stirred up in some of the leading persons among the Macedonians, upon hearing how ready they at Corinth were to minister to the necessitous brethren; and the zeal which appeared in these principal men, which was very warm, and yet prudent and seasonable, wrought very much on the minds of others, who, led by their example, contributed in a very generous and unexpected manner. In the Greek text it is, “the zeal out of you”; or, as the Arabic version renders it, “the zeal that arose from you”, which was occasioned by them.

Ver. 3. *Yet have I sent the brethren*, etc..] Titus, and the other two mentioned in the foregoing chapter: one manuscript reads, “we have sent”; and the Ethiopic version, “they have sent”, that is, the Macedonians; but the common reading is best. It might be objected, that since the apostle knew the forwardness of their minds, how ready they were a year ago, and had boasted so much of their liberality, that it must be unnecessary to send the brethren to them, to stir them up to this work; which objection is prevented by observing the reason of his sending them:

lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf: or, “in this part”, in this particular thing, *atwbx adh l* [, “concerning this business”, or affair of beneficence to the poor, as the Syriac version renders it. He had boasted of them with respect to other things besides this; but he was chiefly concerned, knowing the frailty and changeableness of human nature, and how possible it was that their forwardness might abate, and they grow cold and indifferent to such service, lest his glorying of them should be in vain in this particular instance; wherefore he sent the brethren to put them on, that as they had begun they would finish:

that as I said ye may be ready, That as he had said to the Macedonians, that they were ready in mind, it might appear to be so; or as he had ordered them in his former epistle, they might be actually ready; have their collection ready made, so that there might be no gathering when he came.

Ver. 4. *Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me*, etc..] The apostle had determined to come himself, though he was afterwards prevented by Providence, but could not be certain of the coming of the Macedonian

brethren with him; however, as it was probable that some of them would come, whose hearts were so much in this work, therefore he judged it fit and proper to send the brethren before hand, in case they should come:

and find you unprepared; not so ready for this service as had been boasted of, and the collection not finished, which had been begun a year ago.

We (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting; or “in this same substance”, or “subsistence of boasting”: a boasting, which, he thought, they had the most solid and substantial ground and foundation to proceed upon; which, should it come to nothing, must cause shame both in the apostles, who had so largely, and with so much assurance, boasted of them; and in the Corinthians, who must be put to the blush, when it should be told them how much they had been boasted of with respect to their readiness, and yet were unprepared: so **tl j wt**, “hope”, expectation, confidence, is rendered by the Septuagint **καυχημα**, “boasting”, (^{<0107>}Proverbs 11:7) and in (^{<0905>}Psalm 39:5) **υποστασις**, the word here used. And some copies, and also the Vulgate Latin version, only read, “in this substance”, or glorying, and leave out boasting as superfluous.

Ver. 5. *Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren*, etc..]

Titus, and the other two, on whom he did not lay his commands, or apostolical injunctions, according to the authority and dignity of his office; only exhorted or besought them, and which was judged by him very needful and proper at this time:

that they would go before hand unto you; before him, and the Macedonian brethren that might probably come with him:

and make up before hand your bounty; or blessing; for any present sent, or delivered, by one person to another, as a token of their friendship, favour, and good will, whether in a necessitous case or not, was by the Jews called **hkrb**, “a blessing”; (see ^{<0131>}Genesis 33:11) (^{<0257>}1 Samuel 25:27) and especially what is contributed for the relief of the poor may be so called, because it is not only a part of the bounty of Providence, and blessings of life, with which men are favoured; but is also one way of blessing God for the mercies he has blessed them with, and likewise of blessing, or doing good to fellow creatures and Christians. Moreover, because for this the poor bless their benefactors; and it is a blessing itself to do good to others.

Now the apostle judged it expedient to send the brethren before hand to complete and finish this good work begun.

Whereof, says he,

ye had notice before: in his former epistle, (~~4361~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1,2) or which was promised before by them; or had been spoken of so much before by him to other churches:

that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, or blessing,

not as of covetousness; that is, that the collection being ready made, largely and liberally, it might appear to be a free generous action, and show what a noble bountiful disposition they were of; and not performed as covetous men usually do what they do, sparingly, tenaciously, keeping their money as long as they can, being loath to part with it.

Ver. 6. *But this I say*, etc..] This the apostle would have the Corinthians take notice of, and well consider, it being what he could aver for truth, by observation and experience; that as in things natural, so in things of a moral and spiritual kind,

he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, or with blessings,

shall reap also bountifully; or with blessings; as a man sows, so shall he reap; the one is in proportion to the other. Sowing and reaping are here used in a metaphorical sense. The former signifies doing acts of beneficence and liberality. So it is used in the Old Testament, and in Jewish writings; (see ~~2006~~ Ecclesiastes 9:6, ~~2321~~ Isaiah 32:20). The interpretation of the latter text, give me leave to produce out of the Talmud^{f77} as follows, and which will serve to illustrate this of the apostle's.

“Says. R. Jochanan, in the name of R. Benaah, what is that which is written, “blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox, and the ass?” blessed are the Israelites, for when they are employed in the law, *μydsj twl ymgbw*, “and in acts of beneficence”, their evil concupiscence is delivered into their hand, and they are not delivered into the hand of their evil concupiscence: or, as it is elsewhere^{f78} said, such are worthy of the inheritance of two tribes, Joseph and Issachar; as it is said, “blessed are ye that sow beside all waters”, *hqdx al a h[yrz ^yaw*, “and

there is no sowing but alms"; or, by the word "sowing", nothing else is meant but doing of alms, as it is said, (~~3002~~Hosea 10:12) and there is no water but the law, or nothing else is meant by water but the law, as it is said, (~~2801~~Isaiah 55:1). And as to these words, "that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass", it is a tradition of the house of Elias, for ever let a man place himself by the words of the law, as an ox to the yoke, and an ass to the burden."

There is a good deal of likeness between sowing the seed in the earth, and doing of alms, or acts of beneficence. The seed that is sown is what is selected and reserved out of the stock expended or sold off, which if not done, there would be no provision for futurity; so that which a man gives for the relief of the necessitous, is what he lays by him in store of what God has prospered him with; in doing which he may hope for a fruitful harvest, whereas otherwise he could expect none: as seed is cast from, and scattered about by the sower all over the field; so what is given to the poor, it is parted with unto them, and spread among them, everyone has a portion; and it looks like a diminution of a man's substance, and as if it would never return with any advantage; though it does, as in a natural, so in a metaphorical sense. The sower casts and scatters his seed with an open hand; was he to gripe it in his fist, or only let go a grain of corn or wheat here and there, he would have but a poor harvest; so the cheerful giver opens his hand wide, and bountifully supplies the wants of the needy; who, as the sower casts his seed on the empty field, so he bestows his bounty on indigent persons, on all men in want, especially the household of faith: and, as when he has done, he harrows the ground, and covers the seed under the earth, where it lies hid, and is very unpromising for a while, and yet he exercises faith, hope, and patience, with respect to an harvest; so the generous benefactor does what he does in as private a manner as may be; and though for a time his good deeds may seem to be attended with little prospect of reward, yet in the end they certainly shall; for as a man sows, so shall he reap: if he sows, that is, gives nothing, he shall reap nothing; if he sows but little, he shall reap little; and if he sows much, he shall reap much; and that of the selfsame kind which he sows; as he is liberal in things temporal, so shall he prosper and succeed in the same; (see ~~3003~~Proverbs 3:9,10, 11:24,25, ~~2338~~Isaiah 32:8, ~~4007~~Galatians 6:7-10).

Ver. 7. *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart,* etc..] Which is not to be understood of the quantity, or any set sum he has fixed upon in

his mind to give; but of the quality or nature of giving; or of the manner in which he is to give:

so let him give; of his own will and free choice, from his very heart; not as directed and forced by others, but according to his own counsel and determination:

not grudgingly; or not of grief; with pain and uneasiness of mind, grieving at parting with what is given, reflecting on the persons that move him to it, or on the objects moved for. The Jews^{f79} reckon this the lowest degree of all in giving alms; “when a man gives to anyone” $\beta\chi[\beta$, “with grief”, to which the apostle seems to refer: who adds,

or of necessity; of force, by coaction, being obliged to it by the influence, example, or commands of superiors; or through the powerful motives, or prevailing entreaties of others; for without these, men, according to their abilities, should give of themselves freely and liberally:

for God loveth a cheerful giver; or one that gives $\tau\omega\pi\gamma \mu\eta\nu\beta \rho\beta\sigma\beta$, “with a cheerful countenance”, as the Jews^{f80} say; or as elsewhere^{f81}, “with a cheerful heart”: their rule is this,

“he that doth the commandment, i.e. alms, let him do it $j \ m\zeta \ \beta l \ \beta$,
“with a cheerful heart”.”

Who looks pleasantly on the person or persons that move him to it, or on the object to whom he gives; who parts with his money willingly, and takes delight in doing good to others; such givers God loves: not that their cheerful beneficence is the cause of his special peculiar love to them in his own heart, which arises from nothing in man, or done by him; but the meaning is, that God does well to such persons; shows his love to them; he lets them know how kindly he takes such acts of theirs, by prospering and succeeding them in their worldly affairs. In the Septuagint in (^{22:8}Proverbs 22:8) are these words, “God blesses a cheerful man, and a giver”, which the apostle refers to.

Ver. 8. *And God is able to make all grace abound towards you*, etc.] By “all grace” is meant, not the love and favour of God, the source of all blessings enjoyed in time and eternity; nor the blessings of grace, the fruits of it; nor the Gospel which reveals them; nor the various graces of the Spirit implanted in regeneration; nor gifts of grace, fitting men for

ministerial service; all which God is able to make to abound, and does, when he gives enlarged discoveries of his love, makes fresh applications of covenant grace, leads more fully into the knowledge of his Gospel, carries on the work of his grace in the soul, and calls forth grace into act and exercise, and increases gifts bestowed; nor even merely temporal blessings of every sort, which men are unworthy of, are all the gifts of his goodness, and are given to his people in a covenant way; and which he can, and often does increase: but by it is meant all that goodness, beneficence, and liberality exercised towards the poor members of Christ; God is able, and he will, and it ought to be believed that he will, cause to return with an increase, all that which is expended in relieving the necessities of the saints; that is not thrown away and lost, which is communicated to them, but shall be repaid with use and interest, be restored with abundance, any more than the seed which the husbandman casts into the earth; for as God is able, and has promised, and will, and does cause that to spring up again, and bring forth an abundant increase, so will he multiply the seed of beneficence, and increase the fruits of righteousness. This now contains a new argument to move to liberality, and an antidote against the fears of want, which persons are sometimes pressed with, and tend to prevent their bountiful acts of charity:

that ye always having all sufficiency in all things: that is, God is able to increase, and will so increase your worldly substance, that you shall have a sufficiency, a perfect and entire sufficiency; enough for yourselves and families, for the entertainment of your friends, and the relief of the poor; which shall give you satisfaction and contentment, and that at all times, and with respect to everything necessary for you, as to food and raiment, that so ye may abound to every good work; as to all good works, so to this of beneficence in particular, and to every branch of it, as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and the like.

Ver. 9. *As it is written*, etc..] In (~~scri~~ Psalm 112:9) where it is said of the good and righteous man,

he hath dispersed hynwmm, “his riches”, his substance, as the Chaldee paraphrase adds by way of explanation; not in a profuse extravagant manner, but with wisdom and prudence, and yet largely and liberally, according to his ability. Just as the sower scatters his seed here, and there, and in every place, with an open and wide hand, to the good man distributes to all in necessity, and makes them all partakers of his bounty;

he gives not only to one, but to many, and not to all without distinction he meets with, whether necessitous or not:

he hath given to the poor. This explains the former phrase, and points out the persons, the objects of the good man's bounty and compassion:

his righteousness remaineth for ever. This is not to be understood of his justifying righteousness, as if that consisted of, and was established upon his works of bounty and charity to the poor; nor of his fame among men on account of his liberality; nor of any reward in another world; but of his beneficence itself, it being common with the Jews to call alms *hqdx*, "righteousness": (See Gill on "^{<406>}Matthew 6:1") and the sense is, that what such a man bestows in charity on the poor shall not be lost, but shall be like the seed cast into the earth, shall spring up again, and bring forth fruit with increase, according to what follows.

Ver. 10. *Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, and bread for your food,* etc..] For so the words ought to be pointed and read, as is clear from (^{<2550>}Isaiah 55:10) to which they refer; and are a "periphrasis" of God, who so blesses the seed that is cast into the earth, that it brings forth such an increase, as that there is a sufficiency of bread for food to the eater for the present year, and a sufficiency of seed to sow with again the next year; and that God, that does this every year, is able "to minister to", or supply your present necessities;

and to multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; though some consider these as a wish or prayer of the apostle's, that God would do all this for them. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read all in the future tense, "he will minister" to you, or "supply" you, "and will multiply your seed sown",

and will increase the fruits of your righteousness; and so contain a promise of a divine blessing, encouraging to liberality with cheerfulness, by strengthening their faith in the providence of God; who as he multiplies, not the seed expended in the family, or sold at market, or as in the barn, or laid up for a better price, but the seed sown in the field, so he will multiply the substance of men; not what they lay out on themselves and families, or lay up in their coffers, but what they give away, or bestow on Christ's poor: and all effects which follow acts of liberality, and which are here designed by "fruits of righteousness", such as a good name among men,

blessing, praise, thanksgiving, and prosperity in things temporal and spiritual, these God will abundantly increase; some of which are mentioned in the following verses. So alms with the Jews is not only called *hqdx*, “righteousness”, but “seed sown”. Thus Jarchi interprets (⁴⁹⁷⁵Psalm 37:26) “and his seed is blessed”, he that [*rwz*, “sows” righteousness or alms, its end shall be for a blessing, or in the end he shall be blessed; and the phrase, “rain righteousness”, in (²⁸⁰²Hosea 10:12) is by the Septuagint rendered, *γεννηματα δικαιοσυνης*, “fruits of righteousness”, the same as here, from whence it seems to be taken.

Ver. 11. *Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness*, etc..] These words may be connected with (⁴⁰⁰⁸2 Corinthians 9:8-10) being included in a parenthesis; and the sense is, that God was not only able to give them a sufficiency, and would give them a sufficiency of temporal things, as food and raiment to their satisfaction, and contentment for themselves, but a fulness, an exuberancy, an overplus also; not for luxury and intemperance, but that having such an affluence in all the good things of life, they might at all times, and upon every occasion, exercise a bountiful disposition in relieving the poor:

which causeth through us thanksgiving to God; not their riches and fulness, but their liberal distribution of them to the poor saints, to which they were stirred up by the apostles; who were thankful to God who had so well succeeded their exhortations and advice, and which was the cause of thanksgivings in others: and since therefore such beneficence tended to the glory of God, as giving of thanks makes for his glory, this then ought to be attended to, and diligently performed; and so it furnishes out a new argument to this good work, which is enlarged upon in the following verses.

Ver. 12. *For the administration of this service*, etc..] Not only by the Corinthians, and others, in giving and collecting, but by the apostles in ministering and distributing their contributions to the poor saints, produced these two very good effects: for it

not only supplieth the wants of the saints; makes up their deficiencies, relieves their necessities, and furnishes them with what is comfortable and refreshing to them under their many sorrowful circumstances, which is answering a very valuable end:

but is abundant also by many thanks givings to God; it has over and above this excellency in it, or its excellent use is enhanced, and abundantly appears by this consideration; that many precious souls are sent hereby to the throne of grace to give thanks to God, who put it into the hearts of the apostles to move the churches on their behalf, and who wrought upon them so cheerfully and largely to contribute to their necessities.

Ver. 13. *Whiles by the experiment of this ministration*, etc..] That is, the poor saints at Jerusalem having a specimen, a proof, an experience of the liberality of the Gentile churches ministered to them by the apostles, first,

they glorify God; by giving thanks unto him, acknowledging him to be the author of all the grace and goodness which they, and others, were partakers of; particularly

for your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel of Christ is the doctrine of grace, life, and salvation by Christ, of which he is the author, as God, the subject matter, as Mediator, and the preacher, as man: subjection to it lies in a hearty receiving of the doctrines of it, and a cheerful submission to his ordinances; and this subjection was professed, declared, and made known to the churches in Judea, by their sending so largely to their relief, which they would never have done, if they had not cordially embraced the Gospel of Christ; for true faith in the doctrine of grace, and a sincere obedience to it, are best declared and known by love to the saints; for faith works by love, both to Christ, and to his people: next they glorified God by giving thanks to him,

for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; which shows, that though they were truly grateful, and heartily thankful for the favours they themselves received, yet not for these only, but for what other poor saints, in other places, were also partakers of; yea, that in the first place they were more sensibly affected with, and more especially thankful for the grace of God bestowed on the Gentiles, in sending the Gospel among them, and bringing them to a subjection to it, than for the temporal good they received from them.

Ver. 14. *And by their prayer for you*, etc..] The sense is, they glorify God on your behalf, making mention of you in all their prayers at the throne of grace, giving thanks to God for your liberality to them, and imploring all the blessings both of the upper and nether springs upon you; and this contains another argument engaging the Corinthians to liberality, taken

from the prayers of the saints for them: or the words may be connected with (2 Corinthians 9:12) the thirteenth verse being in a parenthesis; and show not only that this ministering to the poor saints relieved their wants, and caused thanksgivings to God, but abounded in this fruit also; it put them upon daily and importunate supplications to God for their welfare both in soul and body.

Which long after you; or “earnestly desire you”; that is, “to see you”, as the Ethiopic version adds; or exceedingly love you: their affections are wonderfully drawn out to you; not so much, or barely for your kindness to them, as

for the exceeding grace of God in you; for that large measure of it which was bestowed upon them in regeneration, as their unfeigned faith, lively hope, and sincere love; and for all that grace which was displayed in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whole salvation.

Ver. 15. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*] Meaning either the goodness of God, both to the giver and receiver; for that the one gave so liberally, and the other received so largely, was from the grace of God, who so powerfully inclines the hearts of his children to do good, and offer so willingly of what he has given them, and who so wonderfully provides for the supply of the poor and needy; or else that exceeding grace of God which was so eminently, largely, and freely bestowed on the Corinthians in their effectual calling; or, as some think, Christ himself, who is to be sure “the unspeakable gift” of God; who, though his Son, his own Son, his only begotten Son, the Son of his love, his Son and heir, yet he gave him to be a covenant to the people, the head of his church, the Saviour of sinners, and to be a sacrifice in their room and stead: none can tell how great this gift is, which is so suitable and seasonable, so large and comprehensive, nor declare the love both of the Father and the Son, expressed in it. Thankful we should be for it; and our thankfulness should be shown by highly prizing and valuing this gift; by laying the whole stress of our salvation on Christ; by ascribing all the glory of it to him; by giving up ourselves to him, and to his interest; by walking worthy of him in all well pleasing, and by communicating to the support of his cause, and the supply of his poor ministers and members. And thus the apostle tacitly suggests one of the strongest arguments that can be used, to stir up the saints to generosity and liberality, taken from the wonderful grace of God in the gift of his Son; for if he of his free grace, and unmerited love, has given his Son to, and for his

people, and with him all things freely, both the riches of grace and glory, then they ought freely and bountifully to communicate temporal good things to the poor members of Christ, for whom God and Christ have an equal love, as for themselves.