

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS 10

In this chapter the apostle has chiefly to do with the false teachers, and it is taken up in refuting their calumnies of him, and in exposing their boasting of themselves; and as he goes along, he takes notice of the efficacy of the Gospel, and of the success and extent of it, as it was preached by him, and other Gospel ministers, and points at the proper manner and ground of glorying. And whereas the false teachers had represented him as a mean spirited man, as well as his outward aspect was contemptible, and that he had not that authority and courage he boasted of, he describes himself by those characters they had reproached him with: by his name Paul, which signified little, they suggesting that he was little in soul, as well as in body; by his modesty and humility, when he was with the Corinthians, and by his boldness, now absent from them: and he entreats them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, which he imitated, and they ought also, that they would not join in those sneers, nor reproach him for these things, (~~4700E~~2 Corinthians 10:1) and that they would so behave, that, when he came among them, he might have no occasion of using that power and authority, which the false teachers called bluster and boldness; and which he had thought and determined in his own mind to exercise on some who traduced him and his fellow ministers as carnal selfish persons, (~~4700E~~2 Corinthians 10:2) which calumny he removes by owning, that they walked in the flesh, in the body, and were subject to imperfections, as men; but denies that their ministerial warfare or service was managed in a carnal and worldly, or in a weak way and manner, (~~4700E~~2 Corinthians 10:3) assigning this reason for it, because the weapons they made use of, in the warfare of their ministry, to defend truth, and annoy the enemy, to enlarge Christ's kingdom, and weaken Satan's, were not carnal, weak, and worldly, but spiritual and efficacious, through the power of God that accompanied them; and which appeared by the use they were of to the demolishing the strong holds of the flesh, and bringing down the haughty and lofty imaginations of the fleshly mind, which were opposed to the knowledge of God, and the refuting all the sophisms of fleshly wisdom, and carnal reasonings against the Gospel of Christ. This was the influence it had on some through the power of

divine grace, whereby they became obedient to Christ, and subject to his word and ordinances, (~~4704~~2 Corinthians 10:4,5) whilst on others, as on Elymas the sorcerer, who sought to pervert the right ways of God, the apostolical power was exercised in a way of just punishment and awful vengeance, (~~4706~~2 Corinthians 10:6). The apostle moreover suggests to the Corinthians, that they judged of him, and the false teachers, according to the outward appearance of things, which was wrong: however, let these men make ever so great a show in the flesh, or what pretensions soever to Christianity, to being the members and ministers of Christ, the apostle would have them observe, that he, and those with him, were, and were to be looked upon as equally the same, (~~4707~~2 Corinthians 10:7) nay, should he exalt himself above them, and affirm he had an authority superior to theirs, which he describes by the efficient cause of it, the Lord, and by its end, edification, and not destruction, he should have no reason to be ashamed, since he was capable of giving proof of it, (~~4708~~2 Corinthians 10:8) however, he would say no more of this for the present, lest he should strengthen the calumny cast upon him, that it was his way to terrify by his letters, with blustering menaces of his power and authority, (~~4709~~2 Corinthians 10:9) and which calumny is more fully expressed in the words of the false teachers, who said, that his letters were bold and blustering, and by which he would be thought to be a man of power and authority; though, alas! a man of no speech nor presence, when in person among men, and so not to be regarded, (~~4710~~2 Corinthians 10:10). In answer to which the apostle returns, that he would have such a reviler know, that as he was in word by letters when absent, such would he be found to be in deed when present, (~~4711~~2 Corinthians 10:11) and then proceeds to expose the vain glorying of the false teachers, and to observe those things which he, and other faithful ministers of the word, might glory of; though they could not give themselves the liberties they did, and chose to glory in the Lord; they could not commend themselves in that bold and insolent manner, to the contempt of others, when there was no necessity for it, as the false teachers did, (~~4712~~2 Corinthians 10:12) nor could they boast of things they never did; of conversions they never were instruments of; of the planting of churches they had no concern in; and of spreading the Gospel where they had never been, which was the case of these men: whereas, whenever they gloried, it was when there was an absolute necessity for it, and always with modesty, acknowledging the grace and goodness of God unto them, and ever with truth; and of their own labours, and not of others; and particularly with respect to Corinth, it was with the strictest regard to

truth that they affirmed they were the first that preached the Gospel there, converted souls, and planted a Gospel church, and hoped they should be the means of spreading it further still, (<sup><47003></sup>2 Corinthians 10:13-16). However, they did not desire to glory in themselves, but in the Lord, from whom they had all their gifts, success, and usefulness; and so they directed others to do, (<sup><47007></sup>2 Corinthians 10:17) and because, for this reason, that he that commends himself is not approved of God, but he that is commended by the Lord, (<sup><47008></sup>2 Corinthians 10:18).

**Ver. 1.** *Now I Paul myself beseech you*, etc..] The apostle having said what was necessary and proper to stir up the Corinthians to a liberal contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem, returns to the vindication of himself against the false apostles; and earnestly entreats the members of this church,

*by the meekness and gentleness of Christ*, not to regard their reproaches, and join with them in them; for did they but consider the meek and gentle deportment of Christ, so worthy of his and their imitation, they would see there was no reason to reflect on him for that part of his conduct, in which he followed his Lord and master; whose meekness was to be seen in the assumption of human nature, in the whole of his life and conversation, and in his sufferings and death; and his “gentleness” of Spirit to be observed in his coming into this world, not to judge and condemn it, but that the world might be saved; in bearing all indignities and insults, without being provoked to wrath and revenge; in rebuking his disciples for the severity of their spirits, declaring he came to save, and not take away the lives of men; in praying for his enemies, and in his silence under all the ill treatment he met with from the worst of men. As the apostle had this excellent example before him, which served both to regulate his conduct, and support him under the hard measures he met with, so he was desirous to direct others to the observance of it, which might be a check upon the ill usage of him. He here speaks of himself in the language of his adversaries, who meant by these characters to expose him to scorn and contempt: “I Paul myself”; whose name the false teachers played upon, it signifying “little”; and he being of little stature, they reproached him for it, and would insinuate, that as his name was “little”, and his person mean, his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible, that he had a little soul, was a man of small knowledge, mean parts, and a very insignificant minister. Now it is as if the apostle should say, I am not ashamed of my name, nor of my person, and I am willing to own myself the least of the apostles, yea, less than the least of

all saints; but I beg of you by the mild and gentle Spirit of my Lord and master, whom I am not ashamed to imitate, that you would not join in those sneers. I am Paul, **αυτος**, the “same” in my principles and practice, in my doctrine and life, when present and absent; though my enemies say the contrary, as that I am such an one,

*who in presence am base*, or “humble among you”: they suggested, that when he was at Corinth he was humble and modest in his conversation, mild and gentle in all his expressions and deportment; and which they interpreted of a meanness and baseness of spirit, as though he crept and cringed to curry favour with men, to avoid offence, and gain and keep an interest among them:

*but being absent, am bold toward you*; wrote blustering, hectoring, terrifying letters, threatening to come with his apostolic rod and deliver them up to Satan, to fright them into a compliance with him.

**Ver. 2.** *But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present*, etc..] That is, he entreated them that they would so behave for the future, that he might have no occasion, when he came among them, to use that power and authority they called boldness, which he had received from Christ for edification, and not destruction; as for that asperity and roughness with which he wrote, and which was thought to be too severe, it was in order to reclaim them, and so prevent that sharpness he was empowered by Christ to use: for though he had said in his former epistle, (~~402~~ 1 Corinthians 4:21) “shall I come unto you with a rod or in love? and in the spirit of meekness?” he chose to come in the latter, rather than with the former; namely, not

*with that confidence wherewith*, says he,

*I think to be bold*: by “confidence” he means the faith of miracles he was possessed of, and particularly the power he, and other apostles had, of striking dead or blind incorrigible offenders, or of delivering them to Satan to undergo some corporeal punishment; which he had been thinking of, and reasoning about in his own mind, and was almost come to a conclusion concerning it, to inflict it upon, and with it to be bold,

*against some which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh*; who not barely thought so within themselves, but reasoned the matter with others, and would fain persuade them to believe that they did walk in a carnal manner; not that they had the face to say, that they walked after the

dictates of corrupt nature, or lived in open vice and profaneness; but that they walked in craftiness, had their conversation in the world with fleshly wisdom, seeking their own worldly interest and secular advantage; which is denied by the apostle, (<sup>(4012)</sup>2 Corinthians 1:12) and was the real case, and true picture of the false teachers themselves.

**Ver. 3.** *For though we walk in the flesh*, etc..] The apostle removes the calumny of walking after the flesh, by owning that they were in the flesh, in the body, in a state of imperfection, attended with many weaknesses and infirmities, and surrounded with a variety of afflictions and sorrows; in this sense they were, and lived and walked in the flesh; but then he denies the charge exhibited against them,

*we do not war after the flesh*: every Christian's life is a warfare with Satan, and his principalities and powers, with the world, the men and lusts of it, and with the corruptions of their own hearts; and much more is the life of a minister of the Gospel, who is called forth to meet the adversary in the gate; to stand in the hottest place of the battle, and sustain the whole fire and artillery of the enemy; to fight the good fight of faith, endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ, and with the weapons he is furnished with to war a good warfare: which is not done “after the flesh”; in such a manner as the men of the world wage war with one another; or upon carnal principles; or with carnal selfish views; or in a weak way and manner; but in a spiritual way, with all simplicity and disinterested views, with great courage and intrepidity of mind.

**Ver. 4.** *For the weapons of our warfare*, etc..] By “warfare” is here meant, not that which is common to all believers, who are enlisted as volunteers under the captain of their salvation, and fight his battles, and are more than conquerors through him; but what is peculiar to the ministers of the Gospel; and designs the ministerial function, or office, and the discharge of it. So the Levitical function, or the ministerial service of the Levites, is called **hdb[h abx]**, “the warfare of the service”, (<sup>(4025)</sup>Numbers 8:25 \* marg). The ministry of the word is so styled, because that as war is waged in defence of men's rights, properties, and liberties, and for the weakening of an enemy's power and possessions, and for the enlargement of kingdoms and dominions; so this is in defence of the truths and liberty of the Gospel, that they may continue and abide; for the weakening of Satan's kingdom, by delivering the lawful captives, taking the prey from the mighty, turning souls from the power of Satan to God, and translating them from the

kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ Jesus; and so for the enlargement of his kingdom, by spreading the Gospel far and near. The “weapons” with which this warfare is managed are the Scriptures of truth, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; and which indeed are an armoury, out of which may be taken weapons of all sorts, both offensive and defensive; such as serve both to establish and secure the doctrines of the Gospel, and to refute the errors of the wicked: to which may be added all those gifts which Christ has received for, and gives to men, qualifying them for the work of the ministry, and for the understanding of the sacred writings; together with all those means made use of by them for their improvement in spiritual knowledge; such as diligent reading the word of God, and the labours of his faithful servants, frequent meditation thereon, and earnest prayer to God for more light and experience. Also the various graces of the Spirit, with which they are endued, may be taken into the account; such as the breast plate of faith in Christ, and love to himself, his people, word, ordinances, cause, and interest; the helmet of salvation, hope, the girdle of truth and faithfulness, and the excellent grace of patience to endure all hardships, reproaches, insults, afflictions, and persecutions, cheerfully; and finally, all the acts of their ministration, such as preaching, prayer, the administration of ordinances, and laying on of censures, with the consent of the church. Now these weapons

*are not carnal*; such as the men of the world fight with, not the temporal sword; for Christ sent forth his apostles without that, naked and unarmed amidst their enemies, his kingdom not being of this world, and so not to be defended and propagated in such a way; or as the weapons the false apostles used, such as natural eloquence, fleshly wisdom, carnal reason, cunning craftiness, the hidden things of dishonesty, and great swelling words of vanity; or they were not weak and impotent, which is sometimes the signification of “flesh”; (see <sup>0100B</sup>Genesis 6:3, <sup>2310B</sup>Isaiah 31:3)

*but mighty through God*: powerful and effectual through the blessing of God, and the influences of his grace and Spirit for the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, the defence of truth, the confutation of error, the destruction of Satan's kingdom, and the enlargement of Christ's: for these weapons are not powerful of themselves; they are passive instruments, which are only efficacious when used by a superior hand; when the Gospel ministration is attended with “the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power”; and then they are serviceable

*to the pulling down of strong holds.* The allusion seems to be to the falling of the walls of Jericho, at the sound of ram's horns, which must be ascribed not to those instruments, which were in themselves weak and despicable, but to the power of God that went along with the sound of them. By strong holds are meant, the strong holds of sin and Satan; such as unbelief, pride, hardness of heart, etc.. with which the heart of man is walled (so **bl twryq**, “the walls of the heart”, (<sup>-2049-</sup>Jeremiah 4:19 \* marg)) against God and Christ, and the Gospel of the grace of God, and by which Satan fortifies himself, and keeps the palace and goods in peace, until the everlasting doors are thrown open, which were bolted and barred; and these walls of defence are pulled down by the King of glory, who enters in, which is usually done by the power of God, in the ministry of the Gospel: so sins are called strong holds, fortresses, and bulwarks, by the Talmudists <sup>f82</sup>, who give this as the sense of (<sup>-2094-</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:14)

“a little city, this is the body; “and few men in it”, these are the members; “and there came a great king against it, and besieged it”, this is the evil imagination, lust, or concupiscence; and built against it **μydwxm**, “great bulwarks”, or fortresses, **twnw[ hl a**, “these are iniquities”.”

And so Philo the Jew <sup>f83</sup> speaks of **τα βεβαιατης κακιας ερεισματα**, “the firm munitions of vice” being broken down. Or else by them may be meant the fortresses of a man's own righteousness, holiness, good works, and moral duties, in which he entrenches, and thinks himself safe: which the Spirit of God, in the ministry of the word, blows a blast upon, and which are cast down by it, that revealing a better righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ; or else the fleshly wisdom, rhetorical eloquence, and sophisms of false teachers, with which they endeavoured to fortify themselves against the doctrines of the Gospel, but in vain.

**Ver. 5.** *Casting down imaginations*, etc..] Or “reasonings”; the carnal reasonings of the minds of natural men against God, his providences and purposes, against Christ, and the methods of salvation, and every truth of the Gospel; which are all disproved, silenced, and confounded, by the preaching of the word, which though reckoned the foolishness and weakness of God, appears to be wiser and stronger than men; and whereby the wisdom of the wise is destroyed, and the understanding of the prudent brought to nothing:

*and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God;* every proud thought of the heart, every great swelling word of vanity, every big look, even all the lofty looks and haughtiness of men, with every airy flight, and high towering imagination, reasoning, and argument advanced against the Gospel of Christ; which is here meant by the knowledge of God, and so called, because it is the means of leading souls into the knowledge of God, even into a better knowledge of him than can be attained to, either by the light of nature, or law of Moses; to a knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him in Christ the Mediator, in whom the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is given; and with which knowledge of God eternal life is connected, yea, in this it consists; it is the beginning of it, and will issue in it.

*And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;* or “carrying captive the whole understanding”; that is, so illustrating it with divine light, that it clearly sees Christ to be the alone, able, willing, full, and suitable Saviour, and so becomes obedient to him, both as a Saviour and a King; such an enlightened soul looks to him alone for life and salvation, ventures on him, and relies upon him, and is desirous and willing to be saved by him in his own way; he receives and embraces all his truths and doctrines with faith and love, and obeys them from the heart, and cheerfully and willingly submits to all his commands and ordinances; for though he is taken by the grace of God, and all his strong holds, reasonings, and high thoughts are demolished by the power of God in the Gospel, and he himself is carried captive, yet not against, but with his will, to be a voluntary subject of Christ, and cheerfully to submit to the sceptre of his kingdom.

**Ver. 6.** *And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience,* etc..] Not with the temporal sword, as the civil magistrate, but with the spiritual one; meaning either censures and excommunication, which a faithful minister of the Gospel, with the suffrage of the church, has at hand, and a power to make use of, for the reclaiming of disobedient persons; or rather that extraordinary power which was peculiar to the apostles, of inflicting punishments on delinquents, such as what was exercised by Peter upon Ananias and Sapphira, by the Apostle Paul on Elymas the sorcerer, the incestuous person, and Hymenaeus and Philetus, and which still continued with him; it was ready at hand, he could exercise it whenever he pleased, he only waited a proper time:

*when your obedience is fulfilled:* till they were thoroughly reformed from the several abuses, both in doctrine and practice, they had fallen into, and were brought into a better order and decorum, and appeared to have been in all things obedient to the directions he had given; being unwilling, as yet, to use the awful authority he had from Christ, lest any of the dear children of God, who were capable of being restored by gentler methods, should suffer with the refractory and incorrigible.

**Ver. 7.** *Do ye look on things after the outward appearance,* etc..] Or “look upon things”, ironically said; or “ye do look on things”, a reproof for making judgment of persons and things, by the outward appearance of them; so many judged of Paul by the meanness of his person, the weakness of his body, the lowness of his voice, his outward circumstances of life, his poverty, afflictions, and persecutions; and despised him; whilst they looked upon the riches, eloquence, haughty airs, noisiness, and personable mien, of the false apostles, and admired them:

*if a man trusts to himself that he is Christ's:* is fully assured that he has an interest in his love and favour, is redeemed by his blood, is a partaker of his grace, and a believer in him; or rather, that he is a minister of the Gospel, and an apostle of Christ, one that is qualified and sent forth by him to preach the word:

*let him, of himself, think this again, that as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's;* that is, he may, and ought of himself, without another's observing it to him, of his own accord, willingly reason and conclude, by the selfsame marks and evidences he would be thought to be a minister of Christ, that we are also. The sense is, that let a man be ever so confident of his being a true minister of the Gospel, he will not be able to point out one criterion or proof of his being so, but what he might discern in the Apostle Paul, and the rest of his fellow ministers, and therefore ought to conclude the same of them as of himself. In which may be observed the great modesty of the apostle, who does not go about to disprove others being Christ's, who so confidently boasted of it; nor bid them look to it to see if they were or not, since all that say so are not; only as if granting that they were, he would have them look upon him, and his fellow apostles as such also, who had at least equal pretensions to this character.

**Ver. 8.** *For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority,* etc..] Than as yet he had done, or used to do; or rather the sense is, should he boast of a greater authority than the false apostles, or even than the true

ministers of the Gospel in common had, he should not exceed the bounds of truth and modesty; for as an apostle he not only had an authority from Christ to preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances, but also had an extraordinary power of punishing offenders, as before observed:

*which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for destruction;* a power which no mere man, no creature, though ever so exalted, could have given; none but Christ, who is Lord of heaven and earth, and who has all power in his hands, could clothe with such authority as this; and which is given by him, though for the destruction of the flesh, or punishment of the body, yet for the salvation and good of the soul or spirit, as in the case of the incestuous person; and though sometimes for the destruction of the individual person or persons punished by it, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, yet for the edification, spiritual instruction, and welfare of the whole community or church, of which these were a part. So this authority was exercised on Hymenaeus and Philetus, that either they themselves might not learn to blaspheme, or cease to blaspheme Christ, or his apostles, or the truths of the Gospel; or that others might be deterred from such a practice; and so was for the edification of the one, or the other, and the preservation of the whole.

*I should not be ashamed;* as one that has told an untruth, or as a vain glorious man, who has made his boast of what he has not. The apostle signifies, that he should be able to make good such an assertion, should he think fit to mention it.

**Ver. 9.** *That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.*] Here seems to be something wanting, which is to be supplied, The sense is, though I might lawfully boast of the superior authority which we apostles have above other persons, in using sharpness with men insolent and hardened in sin; yet I will not, I forbear every thing of that kind, I drop it, I do not choose to insist upon it; **ana amj m**, “I overlook”, or “neglect” it, “I do not care” to do it, as the Syriac version supplies it; and this he thought most prudent and advisable, lest he should give any occasion to the above calumny that he was bold, and blustering, and terrifying by his letters when absent, and only threatened that he had no power to perform.

**Ver. 10.** *For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful,* etc..] These words contain the reason why he did not choose to say any more of his authority as an apostle to punish offenders, that he might give no occasion

for such a calumny, some among them, or the false apostles, had cast upon him; that his epistles, referring particularly to his former epistle, and that part of it which respected the incestuous person, and his delivery to Satan, were blustering and thundering; were laden with sharp reproofs and severe menaces; were heavy with charges, were filled with great swelling words, with boasts of power and authority, and with threatenings what he would do, when he came among them; whereas when present, as at his first coming to them, he was mild and gentle, even to a degree of meanness and baseness, as they suggested; and so they concluded he would be, should he come again; and therefore his letters were not to be regarded:

*but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible:* he made a mean figure, being of a low stature, and having an infirm body: the account the historian<sup>f84</sup> gives of him is this, that

“he had a small and contracted body, somewhat crooked and bowed, a pale face, looked old, and had a little head; he had a sharp eye; his eyebrows hung downwards; his nose was beautifully bent, somewhat long; his beard thick and pretty long; and that, as the hair of his head, had a sprinkling of gray hairs:”

hence one in Lucian<sup>f85</sup> scoffingly says of him,

“when the bald headed Galilean met me, with his hook nose, who went through the air to the third heaven:”

though the words of this text rather regard his mind and mien than the make of his body; and suggest that he was not a man of that greatness of soul, and largeness of mind, not possessed of those abilities and gifts, and of that freedom of speech, and flow of words, his letters promised; but instead of that, was a man of a mean spirit, very abject and servile, and to be despised; his conduct weak, and carrying no majesty and authority with his presence, his words without weight, his language vulgar, and style neglected; and, upon all accounts, a person worthy of no notice, and not at all to be either feared or regarded.

**Ver. 11.** *Let such an one think this,* etc..] The apostle seems to have in view some one particular person, though he does not choose to name him, who had more especially reproached him after this manner; and who was either one of the members of this church, or rather one of the false apostles: and so in the foregoing verse, instead of “say they”, in which way both the Syriac and Vulgate Latin read, and is followed in our version, it is

in the original text φησι, “says he”, or “he says”; and so a certain particular person seems designed in (<del>4710</del> 2 Corinthians 11:4) whom the apostle would have to know and conclude with himself, and of which he might fully assure himself, that such as we are in word by letters, when we are absent, such will be also in deed, when we are present: he threatens the calumniator, that he should find him, to his sorrow, the same man present as absent; that what he sent by letters, should be found to be fact, when he came again; whose coming would not be with all that tenderness and gentleness, as when he first preached the Gospel to them, for which there was then a reason; since he and others had swerved from the truths of the Gospel, and the right ways of God, which would require the severity he threatened them with, and the execution of which might be depended upon.

**Ver. 12.** *For we dare not make ourselves of the number*, etc..] Some understand this as spoken ironically, as if the apostle jeeringly should say, he would not pretend to join, or put himself upon a level, who was a poor, little, mean, despicable person, with such great men as the false apostles were, men of such large gifts, and of such great learning and eloquence; though they may be understood without an irony, that the modesty of the apostle and his fellow ministers would not suffer them to mingle with such persons, and act the vainglorious part they did: or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; they were not so vain and foolish, as to give high encomiums of themselves, therefore would not boast even of the authority they had, and much less say that in letters, which they could not make good in fact:

*but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise*, or “understand not”; how foolish they are, how ridiculous they make themselves; they do not understand what they say, nor whereof they affirm; they do not understand themselves, what they really are; for to form a right judgment of themselves, they should have considered the gifts and abilities, the learning and knowledge of others, and thereby might have taken an estimate of their own; but instead of this, they only consulted themselves, and measured and compared themselves with themselves; which was acting just such a foolish part, as if a dwarf was to measure himself not with any kind of measure, or with another person, but with himself; only surveys himself, and his own dimensions, and fancies himself a giant. Just the reverse is this, to what is said in Philo the Jew<sup>f86</sup>,

“την γαρ ουψενειαν την εμαυτου μετρειν εμαυτον, “I have learned to measure the nothingness of myself”, and to contemplate thy exceeding great bounties; and moreover, perceive myself to be dust and ashes, or if there is any thing more abject.”

**Ver. 13.** *But we will not boast of things without our measure*, etc..] Or things unmeasurable; meaning not doctrines, the knowledge of which they had not attained to, and which were not to be measured by reason or revelation, such as the Gnostics boasted of; but the sense is, that they would not glory in, and boast of actions, that were never done by them, within the compass of their ministration, as the false apostles did; who pretended that they had been everywhere, and had preached the Gospel, and had made converts in all parts of the world; but the apostle and his fellow labourer, desired only to speak of those things which were done of them, and of their successful labours:

*according to the measure of the rule*; not the measure of the gift of Christ, or of faith bestowed upon them; nor the measuring rule and canon of the Scriptures, though both are truths; but the places or parts of the world, which God in his secret purpose had fixed, and in his providence directed them to preach in: or as he says,

*which God hath distributed to us*; parted and divided to them; assigning such and such places to some, and such and such to others, as he himself pleased, to discharge their ministerial office in; drawing as it were a line, or setting a bound, by which and how far each should go, and no further:

*a measure to reach even unto you*; the line of their ministration was drawn, or the bounds of their preaching were carried from Judea, and through all the intermediate places to Corinth, so that the Corinthians were properly under the jurisdiction of the apostles, and in their district; wherefore the false apostles had really no right nor claim to be among them; nay, their measure reached to the ends of the world, according to (~~19604~~ Psalm 19:4) “their line”  $\mu\omega\omega$ , “is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world”.

**Ver. 14.** *For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure*, etc..] They did not go beyond the bounds set them by the purpose and providence of God, by going to Corinth; nor did they boast of things without their measure, when they spoke of their labours, and of the success of their ministrations among them; nor did they assume and arrogate to themselves what did not

belong to them, when they claimed an authority over them, and a right of exercising their apostolical office among them:

*as though we reached not unto you*; by right, or according to the will of God, and the measuring line and bounds he drew and fixed for them:

*for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the Gospel of Christ.*

The case is clear, it is a plain matter of fact, that they were not only come to other places, where they had preached the Gospel, and planted churches, but as far as to Corinth also, where they came “in, by, or with the Gospel of Christ”: not their own, or what was of their own invention, but Christ's; of which he is the author, minister, and subject; they did not come without something with them; they came with the good news and glad tidings of salvation by Christ; they came preaching the Gospel, which was owned for the conversion of many souls, and for the raising a very considerable church; all which was a full proof that they were of right, and not by usurpation, come to them; that they had not thrust themselves in, where they had no business, and consequently still retained a power over them.

**Ver. 15.** *Not boasting of things without our measure*, etc..] The apostle here asserts what he had done before, (~~4003~~ 2 Corinthians 10:13) with a view to explain it, as he does, saying,

*that is of other men's labours*; when they boasted of the Corinthians as their converts and children, whom they had begotten through the Gospel of Christ, they did not boast of other men's labours, as did the false apostles; who when they came to Corinth, found a church already planted by the apostle, and a multitude of believers, of whose conversion and faith he had been an instrument; and yet these men claimed them as their own, and an authority over them, when they were the fruit of the apostle's labours:

*but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly*; the sense is, that the apostle hoped, for he could not be sure, this lying in the secret will of God, that when the faith of the Corinthians was grown stronger, and more settled and established, and so would not stand in so much need of their care and instruction, they should be enlarged through their means; and that they should not stop here, but that the line, measure, or rule of their ministry, should be drawn to a greater length, and the bounds of it extended and carried abundantly further. The apostle intimates, that the weakness of their faith, and the disorders and divisions that were among them, were a

hinderance to the spread of the Gospel; and that if their church state were in a better and a more settled condition, as it would give the apostles more leisure to preach the Gospel elsewhere, so it would serve to recommend it to other places beyond them; which would be an enlargement of the bounds of their ministry, and a means of magnifying of Christ and his Gospel, and of them also.

**Ver. 16.** *To preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you*, etc..] Here the apostle clearly expresses what he hoped for, and explains what he meant by being enlarged according to rule; namely, that he should be at liberty to preach the Gospel elsewhere; and hoped he should be directed by the providence of God, to carry it into the more remote and distant parts of the world, where as yet Christ had not been named:

*and not to boast in another man's line*: or enter into another man's province, glory in other men's labours, as did the false apostles: and boast *of things made ready to our hand*; that is, of places cultivated and improved, by the preaching of the Gospel, so as to bring forth fruit to the honour and glory of God; where many souls were already converted, and churches were planted and put into good order, and were in a flourishing condition; (see <sup><61818></sup>Romans 15:18-21).

**Ver. 17.** *But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*.] Not in himself, nor in his outward circumstances of life, or inward endowments of mind; not in his natural or acquired parts; not in his wisdom, knowledge, learning, and eloquence; nor in his own righteousness, labours, and services, much less in other men's labours; nor in his own sense of himself; nor in the opinion and popular applause of others; but in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the author and donor of all gifts, natural and spiritual; in his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and in his judgment and approbation of men and things, which sense the following words direct unto.

**Ver. 18.** *For not he that commendeth himself is approved*, etc..] Such may be said to commend themselves, who ascribe that to themselves, which do not belong to them; as that they are the ministers of Christ, and sent forth by him, when they are not; who boast that they have large ministerial gifts, when they have none; and of their great service and usefulness, when it is all the produce of other men's labours; and what they have and do, they wholly impute to their own power and industry, and not to the grace and

power of God: now such persons are neither approved by God, nor good men; for their own self-commendation stands for nothing, and is so far from being acceptable to God or men, that it must be nauseous and disagreeable; (see <sup>1770</sup>Proverbs 27:2).

*But whom the Lord commendeth:* they are approved by God and men, and they are such whom he highly honours, as he did Paul, by counting them faithful; and putting them into the ministry, by qualifying them for his service, by assisting them in it, and making them abundantly useful for the good of souls, and the glory of his name: by all which he bears a testimony to them, and shows his approbation of them, and at last will say, well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.