

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS 11

In this chapter, the apostle continues his discourse concerning the false teachers; blames the Corinthians for their connivance at them, and subjection to them; gives a true and ample description of them; compares himself with them, and by various instances shows, that he was greatly superior to them: and whereas self commendation was necessary, and could not be avoided in this argument, and this might look like folly, and by some be deemed such, he entreats the Corinthians that they would bear with him in it, as well as in his reproofs and admonitions to them, (~~4710B~~2 Corinthians 11:1) and assigns his godly jealousy over them, as the reason why he entered into this subject, and proceeded in such a way of reasoning on it; and the rather this might be bore with in him, since he had such a concern in espousing them to Christ; his end in which was, to present them a chaste virgin to him, (~~4710D~~2 Corinthians 11:2) and what this jealousy was he explains, lest their minds should be corrupted by the false teachers, and they should forsake the pure and simple Gospel of Christ; which he exemplifies in the instance of Eve being deceived by the serpent, (~~4710E~~2 Corinthians 11:3) and proceeds to blame them for preferring these false teachers to the faithful ministers of the word; seeing, put them in the best light they could, it was but the same Jesus they preached, and not another and a better Saviour; and it was but the same spirit of faith they received through their ministry, and not another and a better; and the same Gospel they brought, and did not come with better news, or more joyful tidings; had this been the case, there would have been some reason for extolling one above another, (~~4710F~~2 Corinthians 11:4) for which there was not the least foundation, especially with respect to the Apostle Paul, who was not inferior to the chief of the true apostles of Christ, and therefore could not be at all behind these men, (~~4710G~~2 Corinthians 11:5) and seeing it might be objected to him that he was rude in speech, when these were men of great eloquence, he allows it; but then affirms he was not so in knowledge, in which he exceeded them; for the truth of which, lie appeals to the Corinthians themselves, (~~4710H~~2 Corinthians 11:6) and he suggests, that it was very ungrateful in them, that inasmuch as he humbled himself when

among them, by working with his own hands, that they might be exalted, that they should despise him on that account, and prefer these avaricious men before him, (~~47107~~2 Corinthians 11:7) when that he might be able to preach the Gospel freely, he took of other churches, (~~47108~~2 Corinthians 11:8) and particularly was supplied by the Macedonian brethren, and so was not at all chargeable and burdensome to them, and he was determined ever to remain so, (~~47109~~2 Corinthians 11:9) and which he confirms by an oath, that no man should ever be able to prevail upon him to take anything of the churches in the region of Achaia, in which Corinth was, (~~47110~~2 Corinthians 11:10) and whereas it might be insinuated that such a resolution showed that he had no true affection for them, this he denies, and appeals to the omniscient God for the truth of his love to them, (~~47111~~2 Corinthians 11:11) but the true reason why he had so determined, was to prevent the false teachers having any opportunity to reproach him, and exalt themselves, (~~47112~~2 Corinthians 11:12) and this leads him on to a description of them, by their ambition and arrogance, in assuming a title that did not belong to them; by their crafty, cunning, and deceitful manner of working, and by their hypocrisy in mimicking the apostles of Christ, (~~47113~~2 Corinthians 11:13) nor need this seem strange to any, when Satan himself has been transformed into an angel of light, (~~47114~~2 Corinthians 11:14) and whom, the apostle suggests, these men imitated; whose ministers they were, though they looked like ministers of righteousness, and on whom the apostle denounces severe punishment, (~~47115~~2 Corinthians 11:15) and as he saw himself under a necessity of boasting, in order to stop the mouths of these men, to vindicate himself, and prevent mischief being done by them, he renews his entreaty in (~~47106~~2 Corinthians 11:1) that the Corinthians would not reckon him as a fool; or if they did, that they would bear with his folly, and suffer him to boast of himself a little, (~~47116~~2 Corinthians 11:16) and that the Christian religion, and the Gospel of Christ, might not come under any reproach and blame, for his conduct in this particular, he observes, that what he was about to say on this head of boasting, was not by any order or direction from the Lord, but of himself, and might have the appearance of folly in it, (~~47117~~2 Corinthians 11:17) and the rather he might be indulged in it, seeing many, even the false teachers, had gloried in a carnal way, and of outward things, and which made it necessary that he should glory also, (~~47118~~2 Corinthians 11:18) and which foolish boasting in them, even many of the Corinthians had bore with, and that with a great deal of pleasure; and therefore might suffer him, a single man, to boast a little of himself unto them, whom he ironically calls wise,

(^{<47119>}2 Corinthians 11:19) of which he gives instances, by being brought into bondage, devoured, pillaged, insulted, and abused, by the false teachers, (^{<47120>}2 Corinthians 11:20) nor had they abused and reproached them only, but the apostle also, as weak and contemptible; but then he would not bear it, but would boldly engage and enter the lists with them, though this might be by some reckoned foolish boasting, (^{<47121>}2 Corinthians 11:21) and then follows the comparison between him and them, by which it appears that he was upon an equal foot with them, on account of nation, descent, and parentage, (^{<47122>}2 Corinthians 11:22) that he was superior to them as a minister of the Gospel, as was manifest by his more abundant labours in it, and by his sufferings for it, the dangers he was exposed unto on account of it, and the many hardships he endured in the ministration of it, of which he gives a variety of particulars, (^{<47123>}2 Corinthians 11:23-27) to which he adds, besides these things, and all other outward ones, that the daily care of all the churches of Christ was upon him, (^{<47128>}2 Corinthians 11:28) and such was his sympathy with all sorts of Christians, even the weak and offended brethren, that he was affected with them, bore their infirmities, and sought to reconcile and make them easy, which greatly increased the weight of business that was upon him, (^{<47129>}2 Corinthians 11:29) and seeing there was a necessity of glorying, he chose to glory in his infirmities and sufferings, and on which he had mostly enlarged, (^{<47130>}2 Corinthians 11:30) and for the glory of divine Providence, and to express his thankfulness for the mercy, he relates a particular instance of deliverance from imminent danger; for the truth of which he appeals to the God and Father of Christ, the eternally blessed One, (^{<47131>}2 Corinthians 11:31) the danger he escaped, the manner and means of the escape, and the place where, are particularly mentioned, (^{<47132>}2 Corinthians 11:32,33).

Ver. 1. *Would to God you could bear with me a little*, etc..] The false apostles boasted so much of their gifts, abilities, and usefulness, that the apostle found himself under a necessity of saying some things in his own defence, for the honour of God, and the good of this church; which otherwise his modesty would not have permitted him, and which he saw would be accounted and censured as folly in him by others; and therefore he entreats their patience a little while, and that they would suffer him to say a few things in vindication of his character, and not be offended; though it would be in commendation of himself, which, were he not forced to, would look vain and foolish: and therefore says,

bear with me a little in my folly, and which he presses with importunity,

and indeed bear with me; he insists upon it, he urges it as what he must not be denied in; for could he have avoided it, he would not have done it; but such was the case, that if he did not do it, he must greatly suffer in his character and usefulness; the members of this church would be in great danger from these false apostles, and the honour and glory of Christ lay greatly at stake; which when considered, he hoped his request would be granted: the last clause may be rendered, but also ye do bear with me; signifying that they had done so already, and continued to do so, and therefore he could not but encourage himself, that they still would bear with him a little longer, and in a few things more.

Ver. 2. *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy*, etc..] He lets them know it was not so much on his own account, or at all with any selfish views, or for any secular interest of his own, that he was so concerned, but it was “a godly jealousy”, or a “zeal of God”; which he was inspired with by God, and which was for the honour and glory of God, even Jesus Christ, who is God overall; and for their real good and spiritual welfare, as a church of Christ, that possessed him, which put him upon saying what he was about to do; and what affected him the more was, when he considered himself as a friend of the bridegroom, who had been concerned in the betrothing of them to Christ:

for I have espoused you to one husband; by whom is meant Christ, as the following clause explains it: Christ stands in the relation of an husband to the church catholic and universal; to the whole general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; even to all the elect of God, that ever were, are, or shall be; and so he does to particular congregated churches, as he did to this church at Corinth, and so he does to every individual believer: which character he responds to, by loving them with a love prior to theirs, a love of complacency and delight, which is single, special, and peculiar, strong and affectionate, wonderful and inconceivable, constant, and what will last for ever; by sympathizing with them under all their afflictions, temptations, desertions, and exercises of every kind; by nourishing and cherishing them, which phrases are expressive of the spiritual food and clothing he provides for them, of that intimate communion he admits them to, and of that whole care he takes of them; by paying all their debts, supplying all their wants, supporting them with his right hand, protecting them against all their enemies, giving them grace here, and glory hereafter; and, last of all, by interesting them in his person, and all that he has, in all the blessings and promises of the covenant

in his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The act of espousing, the apostle here, with respect to this church, takes to himself, though in another sense, and which is the principal one, it is ascribed to Christ himself, who betroths all his to himself in righteousness, in judgment, in lovingkindness, and tender mercies; he saw them in his Father's purposes and decrees, in all the glory they were designed to be brought unto, when he loved them as his Father did, and desired them for his spouse and bride, which was granted to him; and then secretly in covenant betrothed them to himself, and ever after looked upon them as in a conjugal relation to him; wherefore though they fell in Adam, and became guilty and filthy, he gave himself for them as his church and bride, to sanctify and cleanse them, that he might present them to himself, just such a glorious church he had seen them before. In consequence of this, the Spirit of God attends the ministration of the Gospel, to the conversion of each of these souls, when they become willing to be the Lord's, and give their free and full consent to have him for their husband; and this is the day of their open espousal to him, and in this the apostle had, and other ministers of the Gospel have a concern; he was a means, in the hands of the Spirit, of their regeneration, a minister by whom they believed, an instrument in directing their souls to Christ, by setting forth his unsearchable riches, the glory of his person, and fulness of his grace: as Abraham's servant set forth the greatness of his master, and the large possessions his son was heir to, and brought out his bracelets and ear rings, his jewels of gold and silver, and thereby gained his point, a wife for Isaac; so the Spirit of God going along with the ministration of the apostle so wrought upon these Corinthians, as to give up themselves to the Lord, and take him for their head and husband, Saviour and Redeemer. This was the concern the apostle had herein, and his view, desire, and hope were, to set them before Christ their husband, pure and incorrupt:

that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ; that is, single in their love to, him, strictly adhering to him, and him only, as standing in such a relation to them; pure in the principles of faith, sincere and upright in their worship, and holy in their lives and conversations; nothing was more desirable to him than this, that he might thus present them to Christ at the great day; whereby it would appear, that his labour was not in vain in the Lord: now having been concerned in this affair of espousing them to Christ, and they not yet presented to him, or took home by him, he could not, as things were circumstanced, but entertain a godly jealousy over them

in his own breast, lest the false apostles should draw them aside in any degree from their love to Christ, and faith in him.

Ver. 3. *But I fear lest by any means*, etc..] Jealousy is always attended with fear, care, and solicitude, whether in things natural or spiritual. The apostle, as things were in this church, could not but express his fears, lest

as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety; that is, the old serpent the devil, who made use of a serpent, the most subtle creature of all the beasts of the field, and seduced Eve from her obedience to God, to transgress his command, by eating the forbidden fruit. The apostle here speaks the language and sense of the Jews, who say ^{f87}, that, **μῆλ ὅμοια** **ἰακώβ** **καὶ ὁ ὄφις** “Satan and the serpent have one name”, i.e. are the same; and that it was the old serpent (the devil), **ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀπαγέγων τὴν Ἐβὲν** ^{f88}, and who is said to be corrupted by him;

“the serpent (they say ^{f89}) was corrupted first, after that, **ἡ Ἐβὲν ἠμαρτήθη**, “Eve was corrupted”, and after that Adam was corrupted.”

So the apostle was jealous and fearful, knowing that the false apostles were ministers of Satan, artful and cunning men, lest, through their craftiness and sophistry,

your minds, says he,

should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; that is, lest their judgments should be misled, their minds be vitiated with corrupt principles, and be carried away in any degree with the error of the wicked, from off the pure and simple doctrine of the Gospel, which respects the person and grace of Christ; and chiefly lies in this one plain, easy, and important truth, salvation alone by him. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “your minds should be corrupted, and should fall from the simplicity that is in Christ”.

Ver. 4. *For if he that cometh*, etc..] Meaning either some particular man, the apostle might have had some information of, who came from Judea to Corinth, under the character of a true apostle; or anyone of the false apostles whatever, who came of their own accord, and was never sent by Christ, or by any of his churches:

preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached; that is, if he proposes and recommends in his ministry, a better Saviour and Redeemer than had been preached by the apostles; one that was better qualified, and more fit for the purposes of salvation; one that they could more safely venture their souls upon, and believe in, as the alone able and all sufficient Saviour, a thing impossible to be: or the sense is, if this other apostle taught the doctrine of salvation by Christ, in another and better method and in a clearer manner, more to the honour of the Redeemer, the glory of God, and the good of their souls, they would have some reason then to pay a greater regard to him:

or if ye receive another spirit which ye have not received; a better spirit than the Spirit of God, which they had received through the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles; either for graces, for they had received him as a spirit of regeneration and conversion, of sanctification and faith, of adoption and liberty, of peace and joy, and comfort; or for gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary, which could not possibly be; the spirit which the contrary ministers brought with it, and tended to not generate in them, must be the reverse of this, even a spirit of bondage again to fear:

or another Gospel which ye have not accepted, or “embraced”; a better Gospel than had been preached by the apostles, and received by them; which contained more wholesome doctrines, more comfortable truths, more excellent promises, better tidings of good things, than those of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, by a crucified Jesus; proposed a better scheme of things, more for the honour of the divine perfections, and for the comfort and safety of believers; and which laid a better foundation for faith and hope, and tended more to encourage true religion and powerful godliness:

ye might well bear with him; receive his doctrine, submit to his authority, and prefer him to the apostles: but since another and a better Saviour than Jesus of Nazareth could not be proposed, or the doctrine of salvation by him be preached in another and better manner than it was; nor had they received, nor could they receive, another and a better spirit, than the spirit of grace and truth, which was communicated to them, through the apostle's ministry; nor was a better and a more excellent Gospel preached to them, than what they had heard; therefore they ought not to connive at, indulge and tolerate, such a false apostle among them, which it seems they did; and was the reason of the apostle's fears and jealousies, before expressed: and

besides, supposing that this man that was among them, and caressed by many of them, did preach the same Jesus, and the same doctrine of salvation by him, and the same Spirit and power went along with his ministry, it being the same Gospel that was preached by Paul and others, there was no reason why he should be set up above them, who had been the instruments of conveying the Gospel, and the Spirit of it, to them, long before he was known by them.

Ver. 5. *For I suppose I was not a whit behind*, etc..] This is very modestly expressed by the apostle; for he does not assert, and in a haughty and confident way affirm, but only supposes, or thinks that this might be admitted, that he was not inferior to, or did not come short of, in gifts, grace, and usefulness,

the very chiefest of the apostles: such as Peter, James, and John; who seemed to be pillars, were eminent apostles, of great note among them, and such as Christ, in the days of his flesh, took particular notice of. This he says, not to exalt himself, but to show, how weakly and injudiciously the Corinthians acted in setting up the false apostle above him; or else these words are spoken ironically, and design the false teachers, who vaunted so much of their gifts, learning, eloquence, and usefulness; and extolled themselves at such a rate, as if they were *υπερ λιαν αποστολων*, “greatly above the apostles”; and therefore he jeeringly calls them

the very chiefest of them; and yet thinks fit to put himself at least, upon an equality with them: one manuscript reads, “the chiefest of the apostles among you”; and the Ethiopic version seems to have read you.

Ver. 6. *But though I be rude in speech*, etc..] Which might be objected to him, setting himself upon a level with men so famous for their diction, and elegance of style; and to this he answers, not by owning he was so, but granting it to be so; for the Apostle Paul was not an unlearned man, an idiot in speech, unskilful in language, his writings testify the contrary; he did not indeed, in his public ministry, dress his sermons with the flowers of rhetoric, or adorn his discourses with the words of human wisdom, with bombast, and great swelling words of vanity; he chose a plainer and easier style, more accommodated to the vulgar, to the capacities of the people he was concerned with; for he had not to do with philosophers and senators, but with the common people chiefly; with persons of every sex, age, and condition of life: in this sense indeed he acted as an idiot, a plebeian, a private person; he used a popular style, or, as the Jews say of several of

their Rabbins ¹⁹⁰, he *j wydh ʿwçl çrwd*, “preached”, or explained “in the common language” of people; which the common people used, and not the learned, and to which reference may be had here: but though he wisely pursued this method, as being most likely to be useful,

yet he was

not rude

in knowledge, or unskilful in the mysteries of the Gospel; he was well learned in the knowledge of Christ, and in the doctrines of grace, as all his discourses, sermons, and letters testified; and however negligent he might be thought to be of his style, and take no pains or care about the elegance of his language, but rather studied a plain and popular diction, yet he was always careful to convey profitable and useful knowledge to the souls of men; and thought his discourses might not be fraught with all the beauties of oratory, and enticing words of man's wisdom, they were full of spiritual knowledge, and showed him to have a large understanding of divine things, for the truth of which he appeals to the Corinthians:

but we have been thoroughly manifest among you in all things; his faith and doctrine, as well as manner of life, were well known unto them; he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God unto them: his knowledge in the mystery of Christ's person and grace, and in all the parts of the everlasting Gospel, was no secret to them; he had used no artful methods to hide himself, or conceal the truth; but by manifestation of it, had commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God; and by observing this, as he had witnesses now among them of the truth of it, so he strikes at the hypocrisy and deceitful methods the false teachers took to cover themselves, their practices, and principles.

Ver. 7. *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself*, etc..] Either by behaving among them, when he was first with them, in a very modest and humble manner, in much fear and trembling, without pride and haughtiness, or affectation of power and authority over them; or by using a popular style, suited to the capacity of the common people; or by labouring with his own hands, exercising his trade of tent making among them, that he might provide food for himself, and not be chargeable to them; and which he suggests was so far from being criminal in him, that he ought rather to be commended for it; since it could not be thought to be with any view to himself, and his own advantage, but purely for their good:

that you might be exalted; that nothing might lie in their way of receiving the Gospel of Christ, or prejudice them against it; that they might the more easily be brought to listen to it, come to the knowledge of it, and embrace it, and so be exalted, as they were, to a participation of the grace of Christ; to fellowship with him; to the honour and dignity of being a church of Christ; to an enjoyment of the privileges of God's house; to have a name better than that of sons and daughters, and to have a right and title to the heavenly glory: “because”, or is it

because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely? The Gospel he preached was not his own, but God's; of which he was the author; his grace was the subject of it, and his glory the end of its ministration; which he had given to the apostle to preach; to which he had separated him, for which he had abundantly qualified him, and in which he was greatly succeeded by him. This he preached “freely” to the Corinthians at his first coming among them, without putting them to any expense, or receiving anything from them; which though he might lawfully have done, yet he judged it most advisable, at that time, to minister to his own necessities, by working with his hands, lest he should be burdensome to them; and this be an objection to the Gospel he preached, that he sought rather theirs than them; and for so doing he was not to be blamed, but to be praised: and yet such was the weakness of many at least in this church, that they highly valued the false apostles, who made merchandise of them, and treated with contempt this excellent servant of Christ, who had freely imparted the Gospel to them.

Ver. 8. *I robbed other churches*, etc..] Meaning the churches of Macedonia; not that what he had of them was by force and rapine, or by plundering of them, and spoiling of their substance, and living upon them against their wills, as soldiers use a conquered people, though the allusion is to such a custom; for what he had of theirs was freely communicated to him; as appears from the following verse: but because these churches from whom he received were poor, and the Corinthians whom he served were rich, he calls it a robbing of the former, though there was no injury in the case, for it was voluntary, because it was expended for the service of the latter:

taking wages of them to do you service; or “for your ministry”; either to supply their poor, or rather to support the ministry of the Gospel among them. The apostle continues the metaphor, taken from soldiers, to whom wages are due for their warfare; as are also to the ministers of the Gospel,

the good soldiers of Jesus Christ; since no man goes a warfare at his own charges and expense but is for by those in whose service he is: and therefore, though the apostle did not think it advisable to ask for, and insist upon wages from them at that time, for his service among them, yet he took it of others in lieu of it; and this he mentions, partly to show that wages were due to him for his ministry, and partly to observe to them who they were beholden to for the support of the Gospel at first among them; also to stir them up to be serviceable to other churches, as others had been to them.

Ver. 9. *And when I was present with you, and wanted,* etc..] Whilst he was among them, preaching the Gospel to them, he wanted the common necessaries of life: and yet, says he,

I was chargeable to no man, or “benumbed no man”; a metaphor, as some think, taken from the torpedo, or cramp fish; which is of such a cold and benumbing nature, as that, when even at the hook, it will strike the fisherman with its cold, and so benumb him as to take away his feeling, and the use of his limbs: now the apostle's meaning is, that he did not chill and benumb any man's charity, by asking relief from him, for he importuned no man on this account; nor was he benumbed himself, to the detriment of any man; for though he was reduced to great straits, he was not slothful and sluggish in preaching the Gospel, but pursued it with as much diligence and industry as if he had been supported by it in the most handsome manner; nor did he act the part of an idle drone, sit still and starve, but laboured with his own hands, to the relief of himself and others; and whereas it could not be thought he should be able to provide this way thoroughly, both for himself and these that were with him, it was made up by other hands:

for that which was lacking to me; which he could not make up by his own hand labour and industry:

the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied; meaning either Silas and Timotheus, who came to him from Macedonia, whilst he was at Corinth, working at his trade with Aquila and Priscilla, (~~4485~~ Acts 18:5) who might bring him a supply out of these parts; or else some that belonged to the churches of Macedonia, particularly the Philippians, who frequently communicated to him, and sent him presents by some or other of the brethren, as by Epaphroditus, (~~5015~~ Philippians 4:15,16,18).

And in all things, adds he,

I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you; he worked hard, lived sparingly, and received from others; that as in respect to his maintenance, so in everything else he might live without being a dead weight upon them, or any ways troublesome to them: not that a minister's maintenance is, or ought to be reckoned a burden upon a people; it is but a due debt, and what is their just right; but because it is accounted so by carnal men, and such as are disaffected to the Gospel, and the ministry of it, therefore the apostle uses such language:

and so will I keep myself; time is, for the future; he having taken up a resolution in himself not to be chargeable and troublesome to them, but to provide for himself some other way. This he adds, lest they should think that he had said what he did to stir them up to a discharge of their duty, in contributing towards his support for time to come.

Ver. 10. *As the truth of Christ is in me*, etc..] To show the firmness of his resolution, and how determined he was to abide by it, he joins an oath to it; for these words are the form of an oath; and it is as if he should say, as sure as Christ is truth, who is in me; or as that the truth of grace, or the truth of the Gospel of Christ is in my heart and mouth, so sure will I constantly persevere in this determination; or let the truth of Christ never be thought to be in me, if I do not:

no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia; or this boasting shall not be stopped in me; of preaching the Gospel freely at Corinth, and that he had not been chargeable and burdensome to them; nor would he be for time to come, neither there, nor in any part of Achaia, of which Corinth was the metropolis; (See Gill on "~~400~~2 Corinthians 9:2"). No man should stop his mouth from boasting of this, by putting anything into his hands, for he was determined not to receive anything from any person in these climates; not but that he reserved a liberty in himself to receive from other persons and churches, for his comfortable subsistence, and so much the limitation of his resolution to these parts implies; for if he had not intended to have received a supply from any persons whatever, the restriction to the regions of Achaia would have been unnecessary; and he should rather have said, that no man should stop him of this boasting in any part of the world. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "this boasting shall not be broken"; and to the same sense the Syriac version, "this boasting shall not be abolished".

Ver. 11. *Wherefore? because I love you not?* etc..] Why did the apostle do this? why did he take nothing, and resolve to take nothing of the Corinthians, for preaching the Gospel to them? why did he determine, that no man should prevent his glorying of this, in all the country of Achaia? was it because he did not love the Corinthians? some might insinuate this was the reason of it, that he had no true affection for them, and therefore would take none of their gifts, but despised both them and theirs, and loved the Macedonian and other churches better than they. To which he answers by saying,

God knoweth; which is another form of an oath, and is a solemn appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, who knows all things, that he knew he heartily loved them; that it was not want of love to them, which was the reason of his entering into such a resolution, never to take anything of them; but it was something else, quite another thing, which induced him to it, and is mentioned in the following verse.

Ver. 12. *But what I do, that I will do,* etc..] As he preached the Gospel freely at Corinth and in Achaia, so he was determined to do it for the future, for this reason only, or chiefly:

that, says he,

I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion: meaning the false apostles, who sought for, and were desirous of every occasion and opportunity of exalting themselves, and reproaching him: that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we; the sense of which according to some interpreters is, that whereas some of the false apostles, at least who were rich men, took nothing for preaching, but gave their labours freely, were very desirous that the apostle would receive of the churches in these parts, that they might have an occasion against him, and an opportunity of showing themselves, as in learning and eloquence, so in this respect, to be superior to him, in that they preached freely, and he for gain; wherefore to cut off such an occasion, the apostle determines he would take nothing; that in this very thing which they boasted of, that they preached the Gospel freely, they might appear to be at most to be but upon a par with the apostle, and not to exceed him. This sense would seem very appropriate, was it a clear point that the false apostles received nothing for preaching; but the contrary is most evident; wherefore the apostle's meaning is, that these men were desirous that he would take wages, because they did; that in this respect he might not excel them, and that they might be able to plead

his example and authority, and so get an occasion of extorting more money from the Corinthians: wherefore to cut off all such occasion from them, the apostle resolves to take nothing himself; that whereas they boasted they were equal to, or superior to the apostles, they might be found, would they follow their example, even as they, not taking any money at all of them, and poor, and working with their own hands.

Ver. 13. *For such are false apostles*, etc..] Such as those he had in view, who sought an occasion to depress him, and exalt themselves, and to get money from the Corinthians; these were “false apostles”, or apostles falsely so called; they had the name, but not the thing; they were not called and sent forth by Christ; they had not the grace of apostleship, or gifts qualifying them for that high office; the power and authority they exercised was usurped by them; they could not prove their mission by true and real miracles; nor had they any seals of their apostleship, as those who were sent by Christ had:

deceitful workers; they went by the name of labourers in Christ's vineyard, when they were loiterers in it; they pretended to work, but did not; and to work for Christ, when they only served themselves, and their own bellies; they took upon them to interpret the Scriptures, but in a very fallacious manner; they walked in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully, and lay in wait to deceive men; and were masters of so much art and cunning, that, if it was possible, they would have deceived the very elect:

transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: not so much by putting on a like garb or dress, but by pretending to be of the same principles, and to follow their practices, and to pursue the same good ends in their ministrations.

Ver. 14. *And no marvel*, etc..] This need not be wondered at, nor is it any new or strange thing; nor should it be thought to be incredible that there are such persons in being:

for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; a good angel, one that has his abode in the regions of light; and is possessed of divine and spiritual light and understanding; who is clothed and arrayed with light, this is his form and essence. The apostle speaks agreeably to the notion, of the Jews, who say^{f91},

“*ῥωα μῆ μὶ κ μῦκαλ μῆç*, “that all the angels are light”, the clothing of God himself;”

and they have a distinction between *μῠῠδ ἄγκαλ μ*, “angels of the day”, and angels of the night ^{f92}: now Satan, the enemy of mankind, sometimes appears in the form of one of these; as he did to Eve in the garden, and to Christ in the wilderness; and by such appearances he often imposes on mankind; pretends the greatest friendship, when he designs nothing but ruin; and under a notion of good, either honest, or pleasant, or profitable, draws on into the commission of the greatest evils; and, under a show of truth, introduces the most notorious falsehoods and errors; and, under a pretence of religion, all sorts of idolatry, superstition, and impiety; it is in this way he has succeeded in his enterprises and temptations; these are his wiles, stratagems, and cunning devices.

Ver. 15. *Therefore it is no great thing*, etc..] It is no strange and wonderful thing; it may easily be given into; no man need to make any doubt of it, or hesitate concerning it, since the devil himself, who is an angel of darkness, is transformed into an angel of light:

if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; not that they really are transformed into such ministers, but they appear and look like such; they are not really, but “as the ministers of righteousness”; they put on the form and air of faithful upright ministers of the word, and would be thought to be such; they mimic Gospel preachers, who assert the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, though they most miserably corrupt it, and blend it with something of their own; and which they endeavour to palliate, and cover from the sight of men; and especially they set up themselves as such, by pretending to be great friends to holiness and good works, which they press with much vehemence, and oppose to the doctrines of grace, with all their might and main; in doing which, they greatly serve their master, whose ministers they are; and who well knows that the doctrine of works may do much prejudice to the Gospel interest, and churches of Christ, but will never convert nor save one soul: a dreadful character these men have, for though they would pass for ministers of righteousness, friends to holiness, and men zealous of good works, they are no other than ministers of Satan, doing his work, serving his interest, and propagating his kingdom, which is a kingdom of darkness:

whose end shall be according to their works; for either God will make public examples of them in this world, or if they are not made manifest here, though they may deceive themselves and others, they cannot deceive God; he will take off the mask, their hypocrisy shall be detected, their evil works will be laid open, and they will be judged according to them, and condemned for them to everlasting punishment.

Ver. 16. *I say again, let no man think me a fool*, etc..] For praising himself, or speaking in his own commendation; which he was obliged to do, in vindication of his own character, against the false apostles, for the sake of the Gospel he preached, and for the advantage and welfare of the Corinthians; that they might not be imposed upon and carried away with the insinuations of these deceitful men; wherefore he desires them once more, that if he must be accounted a fool for speaking in his own behalf;

if otherwise, says he, if they could not be persuaded that he acted a wise part, but must be looked upon as a fool, for what he said of himself,

yet as a fool receive me; or “suffer me”, or bear with my folly: he desires that he might have, and use the liberty which fools have usually granted to them, to speak out the truth, and all they know, which is not always allowed to wise men:

that I may boast myself a little; in a few instances, and for a small space of time; he suggests, that the false apostles boasted much of themselves, and they bore with them, and had done so for a great while; and therefore it was no unreasonable request he made, that they would also suffer him to boast of himself a little, especially since there was such an absolute necessity for it.

Ver. 17. *That which I speak*, etc..] Meaning in vindication and commendation of himself, on this subject of glorying; or, as here expressed,

in this confidence of boasting; for which he thought he had good ground and foundation to go upon, and therefore might express himself with the greatest assurance, (see ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 9:4) this he declares he spoke not as from the Lord, but of himself:

I speak it not after the Lord; or “Christ”, as some copies read; or “our Lord”, as the Syriac version; his sense is, that he did not then speak as an apostle, or one sent by Christ; he put off this character for the present, and took that of a fool upon him, that he might speak the more freely to the

Corinthians, and the more severely against the false apostles; he did not pretend to any express command from Christ for so doing, or that he acted in imitation of him, who was meek and lowly; or that what he said came from the Spirit of the Lord; or, indeed, that it was agreeably to his own Spirit, and the principles of grace formed in him; but was obliged to it, through the boasts of the false apostles; which though it was not criminal and unlawful, but necessary, right, and proper, considering the reasons of it, the end for which, and the intention and view with which it was done; yet viewing the form and manner of this boasting, without attending to the circumstances of it, it had the appearance of folly: wherefore the apostle says, he spoke not as according to the commandment, or example of his Lord; or according to the Spirit of the Lord, or his own Spirit, as renewed by his grace:

but as it were foolishly; he does not say that what he said was foolishness, but it looked like it, and would be deemed so by such who were strangers to the true springs of it.

Ver. 18. *Seeing that many glory after the flesh*, etc..] Or with respect to things external, such as their high birth and parentage, carnal descent, circumcision, learned education, and the like; of which the false apostles, being Jews, boasted, who it seems were many; and though a multitude is not to be followed to do evil, yet the apostle thought, that since there were so many who were indulged by this church in this way, he might be allowed to boast also of such like things, so far as he could with truth and a good conscience, and in order to secure some valuable ends:

I will glory also; for he was of the seed of Abraham as well as they, of the stock of Israel, and tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but these are not all the things he could, and would, and did glory of; he gloried of these, and of others besides them, which the false apostles could not, and thereby proved himself to be superior to them, even in external things, of which they bragged so much.

Ver. 19. *For ye suffer fools gladly*, etc..] They bore with the false apostles, who were fools; were continually proclaiming their folly, boasting of themselves, ascribing that to themselves which did not belong to them, and were puffed up by their fleshly minds; they indulged these men in their folly, and that with pleasure and delight; they not only winked at it, and overlooked it, but were pleased with it: seeing ye yourselves are wise; acting like men who count themselves wise, and keep fools for their

pleasure, diversion, and sport. These words may be considered either as spoken seriously by the apostle, and as wondering that they should suffer such fools to go on in their vain boasts, and especially with pleasure; since they were men of wisdom, who were otherwise taught of God, and by the word; they had been made wise unto salvation, and were enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge; they had been instructed by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and in the mysteries of his Gospel; and therefore it was surprising that they could bear with such vain and foolish men, and especially with delight; for though it is the part of a wise man to bear with fools, yet not with pleasure; so that this carries in it a tacit reproof to them: or else the last clause may be considered as spoken ironically, and as a severe jibe upon their folly for tolerating such a parcel of fools among them; as if he should say, you show yourselves to be men of wisdom, as you would be thought to be; you act the wise part, do not you, in suffering such empty headed men to converse with you, and delight in their vain talk and conversation? however, the whole furnishes out an argument for the apostle, and which he means to improve; that if they could suffer and bear with such fools, and so many of them, and that gladly, then they might and ought to bear a little with him in his folly, which is what he entreats of them.

Ver. 20. *For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage*, etc..] They not only suffered and tolerated the foolish boasting of these men with pleasure, but patiently and stupidly bore their oppressions, injuries, and insults, things that were intolerable, which no man of any sense and wisdom would ever suffer; and yet they took all quietly from them, made no objection, but patiently submitted to them, and therefore might well bear a little with him; they were voluntarily led captive, and brought into bondage by them, to the yoke of the ceremonial law, to the observance of circumcision, meats and drinks, days, months, times and years; and to the yoke of human doctrines, traditions, tenets, laws, and rules: if a man devour or eat; though they devoured their houses, as the Pharisees did; ate up their substance, were insatiable in their covetousness; were greedy dogs that could never have enough, could not satisfy their voracious appetites, without devouring and consuming all they had, yet they took it patiently:

if a man take of you; not food and raiment, or a proper stipend, or wages which might be voluntarily raised, and cheerfully given; but they took away their goods from them by force, as the Arabic version reads it, whether they would or not, to which they quietly submitted:

if a man exalt himself; as these men did, extolling their nation, their descent and lineage, their parentage and education, and fleshly privileges; in suiting the Corinthians as persons of a mean and base extraction, as having been Heathens and sinners of the Gentiles, yet not a word was returned in answer thereunto:

if a man smite you on the face; though they gave them very opprobrious language, vilifying and reproaching them as uncircumcised persons, upbraiding and hitting them on the teeth with their former idolatries and manners of life; yet all was taken in good part, so much were they under the government and influence of these men.

Ver. 21. *I speak as concerning reproach*, etc..] These words may be considered either as explanative of the latter part of the former verse, “if a man smite you on the face”; that is not to be understood strictly and literally, of one man's striking another on the face, but of reproach and contumelious language, used by the false apostles to the Corinthians; or they may have reference to the apostle's design in the whole, which was partly to reproach, the Corinthians for acting such a stupid part, in patiently bearing so many and such indignities from these men; and partly to expose the scandalous and reproachful usage of them by the false apostles, that if possible their eyes might be opened to see through them, and discard them: or else these words may be regarded in connection with what follows,

as though we had been weak; and then the apostle's meaning is, that as to the business of scandal and reproach he was speaking of, this was not confined to the Corinthians only, but they the true apostles had their share of it; for the false apostles reproached them, as poor, weak, fearful, and pusillanimous men; because they did not use that authority, and exercise that domination over them, they did not bring them into bondage, devour their substance, take away their goods from them by force, insult over them, and treat them in an ignominious and contemptuous manner; and intimated that they were upon all accounts inferior to them, and not worthy to be mentioned with them; which moved the apostle to exert himself, and boldly rise up in his own defence, saying,

howbeit, wherein soever any is bold; to boast of his pedigree, character, office, and usefulness,

I speak foolishly; as it might seem, and be so interpreted by some,

I am bold also; to enter the lists with him, to compare notes, and see on which side the superiority lies; and which is done in the following verses, to the full confutation of all the pride, vanity, blind boasting of the false apostles.

Ver. 22. *Are they Hebrews? so am I*, etc..] The nation of the Jews were called Hebrews, not from Abraham, as some have ^{f93} thought, through ignorance of the Hebrew language, which will by no means admit of such a derivation and etymology of the name; wherefore the Jewish writers never make mention of this opinion as among any of them; had they took their name from Abram or Abraham, they would rather have been called Abramires or Abrahamites, and not Hebrews; besides, Abraham himself is called an Hebrew, (^{<01413>}Genesis 14:13) and to be so called from himself, and not denominated from some other person or thing, can never be imagined, it would be most absurd and ridiculous; to which may be added, that the apostle in this verse makes mention of being the seed of Abraham, as a distinct character from that of Hebrews: others have been of opinion that the name is derived from **rb** [, “Habar”, which signifies, “to pass over”; and was occasioned by one or other of the following events; either from Abraham's passing over the river Euphrates, when he came out of Mesopotamia into the land of Canaan, and so was called Abram, **yrb** [h “Hahibri, the passer over”, or the Hebrew ^{f94} , and so his posterity were called after him; or from the posterity of Canaan, who, after the confusion at Babel, settled in that part of Asia which lies between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean sea, and from them called the land of Canaan; and who were called by the Chaldeans, from whom they separated, and by the neighbouring nations, Hebrews, or passers over, because they passed over the river Jordan; and so Abraham passing over the river Euphrates to them, and learning their language, and continuing there, he was called an Hebrew also, and his posterity after him ^{f95} ; or from Arphaxad, or Heber, passing over the river Tigris or Euphrates, and settling in the land of Canaan ^{f96} ; but it is not likely that a nation should take its name from such an event: others think it a more probable opinion that Abraham was so called, and hence his posterity after him, from the name which the Canaanites gave to Mesopotamia, from whence he came; calling it Heber Hannahar, or the country beyond the river: just as we call foreigners Transmarines, or people beyond sea; and of this opinion were some of the Jewish writers ^{f97} ; but not Mesopotamia, but Canaan, is called the land of the Hebrews, (^{<01415>}Genesis 40:15). The more commonly received opinion with the ^{f98} Jews is, and

which is most likely, that they are so called from Heber, the father of Peleg, in whose days the confusion of languages was made, and what is now called the Hebrew language being the first and original one, was retained in him and in his family; hence Shem is said to be the father of all the children of Heber, (^{<0102>}Genesis 10:21) that is, the Hebrews, as the same people are called the children of Israel from Israel, and the children of Judah from Judah, and sometimes they go by the name of Heber, as in (^{<0204>}Numbers 24:24) when as the Assyrians are called Ashur, from whom they have their name, so the Hebrews are called Heber, from whom they take their denomination: and it should be observed, that this is not only a national but a religious name, and those people were called so, because they were of the faith as well as the descendants of Heber; so Shem was the father of others, but in a peculiar manner the father of the children of Heber, because the religion he professed was continued with them; and so Abraham is particularly called the Hebrew, not only because he descended from Heber, but was of the same, religion; and so his posterity, not in the line of Ishmael, but of Isaac, are so called; and not as descending from Isaac in the line of Esau, but of Jacob; and hence it was not lawful for the Egyptians to eat bread with the Hebrews, not because they were of another nation, but because of another religion, (^{<0432>}Genesis 43:32). It seems that these false apostles were Jews, since it is not denied by the apostle, but granted; they were some such like false brethren as those who came from Judea to Antioch, and disturbed the church there, (^{<415>}Acts 15:1) and whereas they boasted of their being Hebrews, the descendants of the ancient patriarch Heber in the line of Abraham; the apostle was able to match them in this, and asserts himself to be an Hebrew too, which he could do with the strictest truth, for he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, he was an Hebrew by father and mother's side:

are they Israelites? so am I. The Jews were called Israelites from Israel, a name which was given to Jacob their ancestor, upon his wrestling with an angel, and prevailing over him; and was accounted an honourable one, or title of honour; for the people of Israel were they whom God chose for a peculiar people to himself above all others, brought them out of Egypt, fed them in the wilderness, and led them through it, and settled them in the land of Canaan, and bestowed upon them special and peculiar privileges; (see ^{<5004>}Romans 9:4,5). The Jews are very extravagant in the praise of Israelites; they not only make them the favourites of God, beloved of him, because called children, and had the law given them ^{f99}, and extol them

above all mankind; (See Gill on “~~488~~ Romans 3:9”) but they even make them equal to the ministering angels, and say they are pure from sin as they, especially on the day of atonement ^{f100}, yea, more excellent than they ^{f101}: in this also the apostle could answer them, for he was of the stock of Israel, and of the tribe of Benjamin, a son of Jacob, or Israel; and was an Israelite indeed, as Nathanael, for all are not Israel that are of Israel:

are they the seed of Abraham? so am I: of this the Jews mightily boasted; (see ~~488~~ John 8:33) they reckon themselves, even the poorest among them, as the nobles and princes of the earth ^{f102}; and even other people have been fond of being reckoned of the stock of Abraham, as particularly the Lacedemonians,

“Areus king of the Lacedemonians to Onias the high priest, greeting: It is found in writing, that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham:” (1 Maccabees 12:20,21)

The Jews make a merciful disposition to men to be a sign and evidence of being of the seed of Abraham ^{f103}; but in a spiritual sense, an interest in Christ, and faith in him, denominate men to be truly Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise: this is to be understood here in a natural sense, and of being of Abraham's seed in the line of Jacob, for otherwise the Ishmaelites and Idumeans were of the seed of Abraham; but they were his seed in that line in which the promised seed, the Messiah, was to come; though this was of no avail, without having the same faith Abraham had, and believing truly in Christ, as his spiritual seed do, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; however, the apostle was equal to them in this respect; he was of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and above them in another, in that he was of Abraham's spiritual seed by faith in Christ Jesus.

Ver. 23. *Are they ministers of Christ?* etc..] The apostle could have answered to this question that they were not, being neither sent by Christ, nor preachers of him, and who sought their own things and not his, being false apostles, and deceitful workers; but he chose not to litigate this point with them, and by a rhetorical concession allows it; and replies,

I speak as a fool; that is, he might be thought to speak as such an one, for what he afterwards says; and if he was, he must be content, he could not help it, there was a necessity for it, to stop the mouths of these vain boasters:

I am more; that is, more a minister of Christ than they, more manifestly so than they were; yea, he was more than an ordinary minister of Christ, he was an apostle, the apostle of the Gentiles, and laboured and suffered more than even the rest of the true apostles of Christ, and therefore must be greatly superior to the false ones:

in labours more abundant; in taking fatiguing journeys, preaching the Gospel constantly, administering ordinances, working with his own hands, etc..

in stripes above measure; which were cruelly and unmercifully inflicted on him by his enemies, and which he afterwards mentions:

in prisons more frequent; as at Philippi, and so after this at Jerusalem, and Rome, and perhaps in other places, though not recorded; Clemens Romanus says ^{f104}, that he was seven times in bonds:

in deaths oft; that is, frequently in danger of death, in such afflictions and evils as threatened with death, and therefore are so called; (see ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

Ver. 24. *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*] We have no account in the Acts of the Apostles, or elsewhere, of any one of these five scourgings, which the apostle underwent from the Jews; but there is no doubt to be made of them. The number of stripes he received at each time agrees with the traditions and customs of the Jews. The original law for scourging a delinquent is in (~~4270~~Deuteronomy 25:2,3) where it is said, “forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed”; according to the nature of the case, forty stripes and no more might be inflicted, but fewer might suffice in some cases; the apostle's having but thirty nine at a time was not because the Jews thought his crime did not require full forty; or that they out of tenderness and compassion to him abated him one; but they proceeded with him to the utmost rigour of this law, according to their interpretation of it; for so runs their tradition ^{f105},

“with how many stripes do they beat him? (a criminal,) it is answered, *tj a rsj μy[bra*, “with forty save one”; as it is said, “with the number forty”; that is, which is next to forty; R. Judah says, with full forty is he to be beaten;”

but the decision is not according to R. Judah, as the commentators say ^{f106}; and this is the general sense of their ^{f107} interpreters of that law, and what

they take to be the genuine meaning of it; so that the apostle was punished according to the extremity of it, in their account. This is a settled rule and point with them, *tj a rsj μy[bra hrwt twql m*^{f108}, “that scourging according to the law is with forty stripes save one”; Maimonides^{f109} observes, that

“they did not add to forty, if a man was as strong and robust as Samson, but they lessen the number to a man that is weak; for if a weak man should be beaten with many stripes, he may die; wherefore the wise men say, that if he be never so robust, they scourge him but with “thirty nine”;

so that no mercy shown to Paul, or any regard had to his weak constitution, for it was the utmost they ever inflicted; besides, according to their manner of scourging, (see Gill on “~~<4007>~~Matthew 10:17”), they could not have given him another stroke, without giving him three stripes more, which would have made it forty two, and so have exceeded, which the law forbids; for they whipped with a scourge of three cords, and every stroke went for three; so that by thirteen strokes, thirty nine stripes were given, and if a fourteenth had been added, there would have been forty two stripes; agreeably to which they say^{f110},

“when they condemn a delinquent to how many stripes he is able to receive, they do not count but by stripes that are fit to be trebled; if they reckon he is able to bear twenty, they do not say he is to be beaten with twenty one, so that they may be able to treble, but he is to be beaten with eighteen; they condemn to receive forty, and after he begins to be beaten, they see he is weak, and they say he cannot receive more than these nine or “twelve” with which he is beaten, lo, this is free; they condemn him to receive twelve, and after he is scourged they see he is strong and able to receive more, lo, he is free, and is not to be beaten any more upon the estimation:”

so that you see that, according to their own canons, they could if they would have mitigated this punishment of the apostle's; but such was their cruelty and malice, that they carried it to the utmost height they could.

Ver. 25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods*, etc..] Or “wands”, by the Romans; for this was a Roman punishment, distinct from scourging with cords used by the Jews. There is mention made but of one time only that he was so beaten, elsewhere, and that is in (~~<4462>~~Acts 16:22,23) which was at Philippi;

but that he was so many times beaten in this way, there is no room to doubt:

once was I stoned. This was at Lystra, at the instigation of the Jews that came from Antioch and Iconium, (^{<444B>}Acts 14:19) by whom he was left for dead:

thrice I suffered shipwreck; neither of which are mentioned by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles; for the shipwreck he suffered as when he went to Rome was some time after the writing of this epistle, and therefore cannot be one of these here referred to

a night and a day I have been in the deep; some understand this of a well, called “Bythos”, or “the deep”, which was near Lystra, where the apostle was hid for such a space of time after his deliverance there; but this, were it so, he would scarcely reckon among his very great hardships and sufferings: others of a prison at Cyzicum in Asia, which, because of its very great height, was called “the depth of the sea”, in which the apostle was imprisoned for such a time; but, we nowhere read that he ever was at that place, or preached there, and much less was imprisoned there; and had he, it is not likely that he should particularly point out such a short imprisonment, but would have let it pass in the general account of being in prisons before mentioned: but rather this is to be understood of the sea, often called the “deep” in Scripture, where by some accident he was cast, and was in it, as the Syriac version has it, *atnyps al d*, “where was no ship”, or without one, being shipwrecked; or being cast, or having fallen into the sea, he was swimming in it, or was preserved by a broken piece of the ship, or by some other means, or by the wonderful providence of God for so long a time; though as sailing in those times was chiefly by coasting, this phrase may only signify that the ship in which he was was drove from the coast into the sea, and lost sight of the land for the space of a day and night, and lay floating about in the deep, which was reckoned very dangerous. The word *νυκθημερον*, “a night day”, signifies a whole natural day, consisting of a night and a day; and is an Hebraism, and answers to *rqbw br[*, “the evening and the morning”, which make a full day; (see ^{<0006>}Genesis 1:5,8,13,19,23) (^{<2784>}Daniel 8:14 * marg).

Ver. 26. *In journeying often*, etc..] Through several countries and kingdoms to preach the Gospel, as he did from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum:

in perils of waters; by the floods being out, which made it very troublesome and dangerous travelling, especially to persons on foot, as was the case of our apostle:

in perils of robbers; for though he had seldom much to lose, yet was in danger of being ill used, and of his life being taken away by such ruffians:

in perils by my own countrymen; the Jews, who bore an implacable hatred to him, because of the doctrines of grace he preached, in opposition to the works of the law of Moses, whether moral or ceremonial; and who generally were concerned in stirring up the Gentiles against him wherever he came:

in perils by the Heathen; the Gentiles, who were incensed against him for inveighing against their idols and idolatrous worship, and other wicked and enormous practices they were addicted to; particularly at Ephesus, by the means of Demetrius the shrine maker, (~~4423~~Acts 19:23-41),

in perils in the city; in any and every city he came into; for bonds and affliction abode him everywhere, as at Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, etc..

in perils in the wilderness; by robbers and wild beasts, through hunger and thirst, and by the sands in hurricanes and tempests; though this may be understood not strictly of desert places, but of the country in distinction from the city; (See Gill on "~~4400~~Matthew 3:1") where travelling is difficult and dangerous, and the people more rustic and uncivil: the phrase, **twrbdmh tnksb**, "in perils of the wildernesses", is a Rabbinical one ^{f111}; as is also **pyb hnksh**, "peril in the sea" ^{f112}, next mentioned:

in perils in the sea; not only by shipwreck, but through pirates, and the ill usage of mariners, want of provisions, etc..

in perils among false brethren; who pretended to be Christians, but "judaized", teaching the necessity of observing circumcision, and other ceremonies of the law, in order to salvation; these, as the apostle always warmly opposed, so they were sworn enemies to him, and ever sought to do him what mischief they could.

Ver. 27. *In weariness and painfulness*, etc..] Through long journeys and frequent preaching; or "in labour and trouble"; or in troublesome labour, for all labour is not so; as hunting, hawking, etc.. though laborious, yet

delightful; but the labours of the apostle were painful and troublesome to the flesh, though he had much inward spiritual delight and pleasure in them:

in watchings often; being sometimes engaged at midnight, either in preaching, or praying, or staging psalms, and sometimes obliged to work early and late with his own hands to supply his necessities:

in hunger and thirst; as when at sea, or in wilderness places, or where no notice was taken of him for preaching the Gospel; he doing that freely without asking the assistance of any, which in some places would have been prejudicial to his designs, and the spread of the Gospel:

in fastings often; voluntary ones, which he engaged in, not as meritorious works, but to keep under his body, and as proper to attend the work of prayer at certain times:

in cold and nakedness; when travelling in the winter season, and but poorly clothed to keep him from the inclemencies of the weather; and having no certain dwelling place to retire unto and abide in, during any severe season there might be, and wanting the comforts of life to support him under such inconveniences.

Ver. 28. *Besides those things that are without*, etc..] Or are omitted, which he had passed by, and had not mentioned in the account and enumeration of things he had given; for otherwise the things he had taken notice of and instanced in, were things external; but besides them and many other things which would be too tedious to relate,

that which cometh upon me daily, is not to be forgotten; meaning the prodigious deal of business which was every day upon his hands, through the continual coming of brethren to him, either for advice, or comfort, or instruction; and through the multiplicity of letters from divers parts, which he was obliged to give answers to; and the several duties of the day, as prayer, meditation, reading, praising, preaching, etc.. and to sum up the whole, and which is explanative of the phrase,

the care of all the churches; not of ten, or twenty, or some only; but of all of them, he being the apostle of the Gentiles, and was concerned in planting, and raising them, and preaching the Gospel to most of them; and who continually stood in need of his watch and care over them, to provide ministers for some, to prevent schisms and heat divisions in others; to

preserve others from errors and heresies, and warn them of the dangers to which they were exposed by false teachers; and to animate, strengthen, and support others under violent persecutions, lest their faith should fail, and they be tempted to desert the Gospel, and drop their profession of religion.

Ver. 29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak?* etc..] What church is so? or what particular believer is so? for he had not only the care of all the churches, but of all believers upon him; whoever was weak in the faith he was concerned for them, to instruct, establish, and strengthen them; and suited his discourses, reasonings, and language, to their capacity, that they might understand him, and take in right notions of things: or whoever was of a weak and scrupulous conscience about things indifferent, and fearful of using them lest they should sin in so doing, he was cautious of offending them, or doing anything by which their consciences should be defiled, and their peace be broken: or whoever was afflicted, either in body or mind, he sympathized and bore a part with them: “who is offended, and I burn not?” whoever was stumbled and made to fall by anything he said or did, or by the words and actions of others, it gave him sensible pain, it made him very uneasy; he was as one in a flame, all on fire, full of grief and trouble till the cause of the offence was removed, and the person offended made easy and restored; the word here used answers to the Hebrew word מג, used in (~~Job~~ Job 30:25) where it is said, “was not my soul grieved for the poor?” which Mr. Broughton renders, “did not my soul burn for the poor?” Now by all this which the apostle did and suffered, by all actions and sufferings, care and sympathy, he fully appeared to be a true and faithful minister of Christ, and abundantly more than the false apostles, who could produce none of these things as testimonies in their favour.

Ver. 30. *If I must needs glory,* etc..] The apostle signifies that glorying was not agreeable to him; he was not fond of it, it was a subject he did not delight to dwell upon; what he had done was by force, and through necessity; he was compelled to it by the boasts of the false apostles: and since he must needs glory in order to stop their mouths;

I will glory, says he, of things which concern mine infirmities; meaning not his sins, for these cause shame; but his afflictions and sufferings for Christ, under which he was supported, and from which he was delivered by the power of Christ; and that was the reason he chose to glory of them; for though they rendered him mean and despicable in the eyes of the world, yet his bearing them with so much patience, courage, and pleasure, and his

many singular deliverances out of them, served greatly to illustrate the power and grace of Christ, and at the same time proved him to be a true and faithful minister of the Gospel; to whom so much honour was vouchsafed, as to suffer shame for the name of Christ, and to be so singularly marked out by him, as the object of his favour, love, and care.

Ver. 31. *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, etc..] These words are in the form of an oath, and are a solemn appeal to God, that knows all things, for the truth of the whole that he had declared in the foregoing verses, and of the remarkable deliverance related in the following. “God”, says he, who is the searcher of hearts, and an omniscient being, to whom all things are open and manifest,

knoweth that I lie not; in anyone single instance he had mentioned, nor in what he was about to declare; which because it was a fact done by a stratagem, and a good while ago, and which was not known to the Corinthians, and of which perhaps at that time he could not produce any witnesses; therefore calls God to testify the truth of it, whom he describes as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”; God is his “God” as Mediator, and head of the elect, to whom as to them he is a covenant God; and as man, being his Creator, supporter, and the object of his faith, hope, love, and worship; and his “Father” as God, and the Son of God, by supernatural generation, being the only begotten of him, in a way ineffable and inexpressible: “and who is blessed for evermore”; in himself, and Son, and Spirit, and is the source of all happiness to his creatures.

Ver. 32. *In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king*, etc..] Aretas or Al-Hareth was a king of Arabia, of the family of the Gassanii; among whom were many of this name ^{f113}; and who for some hundreds of years ruled over Syria, of which Damascus was the metropolis. The fourth king of that family was of this name, and perhaps is the person here meant; and after him there were four more of the same family so called; it was a name of Arabian kings in other families. The fifteenth king of the Yamanensians was of this name, and so was the “seventeenth” of the Hirensians ^{f114}, and the “third” of the kings of Cenda; in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, there was an Aretas king of the Arabians, mentioned in the Apocrypha ^{f115}.

“In the end therefore he had an unhappy return, being accused before Aretas the king of the Arabians, fleeing from city to city, pursued of all men, hated as a forsaker of the laws, and being had in

abomination as an open enemy of his country and countrymen, he was cast out into Egypt.” (2 Maccabees 5:8)

Josephus^{f116} also makes mention of Aretas king of the Arabians, who seems to have been king of Arabia Petraea, since his royal seat was at Petra, to whom Hyrcanus fled by the advice of Antipater, the father of Herod the great; and there was also one of this name in the times of Herod himself, who succeeded Obodas^{f117}; yea, there was an Aretas king of Petraea, in the times of Herod the tetrarch, whose daughter Herod married, and put her away when he took Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, which occasioned a quarrel between him and Aretas, which issued in a battle, in which Herod was beaten^{f118}; and who is thought to be the same king which is here spoken of: the name Aretas or Al-Hareth, as Hillerus^{f119}, observes, signifies the lion; and a lion with the eastern nations was a symbol of royalty and dominion; hence such names were given to persons of illustrious birth and power; so Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet, was called by the Arabs and Persians the lion of God: now Syria, where Damascus was, and which is called by Pliny^{f120} Damascus of Syria, had been of long time in the hands of the kings of Arabia; and^{f121} Josephus makes mention of Aretas, king of Coele Syria, who was called to the government by those who had Damascus in their hands; very probably by Milesius, who was governor of the tower of Damascus, and commanded **των δαμασκηων την πολιν**, “the city of the Damascenes”, as Josephus calls Damascus, just as it is here in the next clause; in which country of Coele Syria, Ptolomy^{f122} also places Damascus; and Grotius has proved from Justin Martyr^{f123} and Terlullian^{f124}, that Damascus formerly belonged to Arabia, though in their times it was reckoned to Syro Phoenicia: here the apostle preached to the confounding of the Jews that dwelt there, which provoked them to enter into a consultation to take away his life; and that he might not escape their hands, they moved to the then governor who was under the king, that the gates might be watched day and night; (see ^{<492>}Acts 9:23-25) to which he agreed; and as the apostle here says,

kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, or set a guard about it; or as the Arabic version reads it, “he shut up the city”; and placed a watch at the gates of it night and day, or allowed the Jews to do so:

desirous to apprehend me; in order to deliver him into their hands, who were now his sworn enemies for the Gospel's sake; willing to do them this

favour to ingratiate himself into their affections; or perhaps it might be insinuated to him, that he was a seditious person.

Ver. 33. *And through a window in a basket was I let down*, etc..] The house in which he was, like Rahab's, was built upon the wall of the city, and as she let down the spies by a cord through the window, and as David was by Michal; so the apostle was let down by the brethren with cords, as Jeremiah was, (²⁸⁸⁶Jeremiah 38:6) where the Septuagint use the same word as here, through a window; “which”, as the Arabic version reads it, “was in the wall”; or he was let down by the wall side, “in a basket or net”; so *σάργανη*, and *atgyrs*, the word which the Syriac version here uses, signify and design a basket made of withs, wrought together in the form of network; frequent mention is made in the Jewish writings ^{f125} of *twrwl j h twgyrs*, “the networks and lattices of windows”; whether these were not taken off the window and put into a form like a basket, and in it the apostle let down by the brethren with the help of cords, may be inquired into: however, he

escaped his hands; the governor's, and the Jews too who lay in wait for him. This deliverance he mentions with thankfulness to God, and as an instance of divine Providence in the preservation of him, for much usefulness to the church of Christ; the Vulgate Latin version reads, and “thus he escaped his hands”.