

Second Corinthians

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[Prepared for the Milwaukee City Pastoral Conference of the Wisconsin Synod]

When the above topic was assigned to the present writer, the idea was not that the matter should be treated in essay form. The Conference intended to make a study of Second Corinthians and the undersigned was to lead in the discussion. This method was followed for several sessions of the Conference, which then met monthly. When a little later the Conference resolved to hold quarterly meetings, and the discussions had covered chapters 1 and 2, the essay form was (experimentally) adopted by the undersigned, and the copy was requested by the Managing Editor of the *Quartalschrift* for publication. The change from the original plan and the desire to keep to the first objective as much as possible under the changed conditions account for a certain lack of uniformity in the manner of presentation.

Now since the first of the three main sections of the Epistle has been completed, the time may be opportune to do what was suggested by members of the Conference, namely, to treat also chapters 1 and 2 in essay form for the readers of the *Quartalschrift*.

Chapters 1 and 2

The salutation follows the usual pattern, the writer identifies himself, he names the addressees, and adds his greetings.

The writer in this case is Paul, who is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. This is the same form that he used in First Corinthians; only there he had mentioned that he was *called* to be an apostle, κλήτος. In writing the second letter he has Timothy as an associate. He calls him the *brother*. When Paul wrote First Corinthians, Timothy was not with him, he was on his way to Corinth via Macedonia (Acts 19:22). In First Corinthians Paul mentions the brother Sosthenes as his associate.

We take up the salutation itself. It is the same in both epistles: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The name of the addressees is also the same in both letters, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, to the church of God which is in Corinth. In Second Corinthians others are joined to this church as belonging to the addressees of the letter: σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν τοῖς οὔσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ, together with the Corinthians, the letter is addressed to all the saints who are in all Achaia. Attica was joined to the province of Achaia by the Romans. There was a group of Christians in Athens. There was also a congregation in the harbor town of Corinth, Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1). These and other Christians scattered throughout the province are included in the addressees. The letter is addressed to the Corinthians in the first place, but throughout, and particularly when Paul adds a πάντες, the other Christians in Achaia must be included. The matters discussed in the letter, including the case of church discipline, concern them all.

The first letter was addressed strictly to the congregation in Corinth, but there the members were reminded of their peculiar standing in the world: ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ κλητοὶς ἁγίοις, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called (as) saints. Then they were further reminded that they are such σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, jointly with all those that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were not to consider themselves as an isolated body, nor to act without consideration for the other Christians in the world. Paul underscored this latter thought by adding ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν, in every place, theirs and ours. Yes, the place where they are located is theirs, their home, but it is also ours.

Thus Paul in the salutation of his first letter impressed upon the Corinthians the fact which they never must lose sight of: that the confessing Christians (ἐπικαλουμένοις) have common interests and mutual

obligations. This is then most tersely stressed in ch. 14:36: “What, came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?”—In the second letter Paul stresses that congregations living in the vicinity of each other often have common problems, which they will have to work out jointly.

A. Verses 3–7

In reading this brief section our attention is arrested by the repetition of *παρακαλεῖν*, either as a verb or in noun formation. It occurs ten times. This root can represent various shades of meaning according to the context in which it is used. Its general meaning is to urge. This may take the form of admonition, of exhortation, of encouragement, of comfort, etc. Since our present section introduces God as the Father of *mercies*, and speaks about *παρακλήσις* as a remedy for *θλίψις*, the meaning of comfort and consolation is clearly indicated.

The apostle begins by voicing his praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. The whole work of our redemption is couched in these words in an appealing, heart-warming way, gushing forth from a heart deeply concerned about the readers and over-filled with joy at the blessing which this Savior God has showered on both writer and readers.

At once Paul, by the use of an apposition, designates this author of our salvation as the Father of *mercies* and God of every comfort, *ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως*. There is but one article joining *πατὴρ* and *θεός* into a single concept: the One who is both Father and God. *Οἰκτιρμός*, usually found in the plural, means pity or mercy. It is the love of God as it manifests itself over against misery. It occurs only six times in the New Testament, twice coupled with *σπλάγχνα*, the intestines, the heart. (Once in the genitive, *σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμῶν*, Col. 3:12; and once as united by *καὶ*, *σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί*, Phil. 2:1.) The genitive in our text is best read as qualifying: the Father who is characterized by *mercies*, merciful in His heart, and practicing mercy, delighting in doing so. Also the genitive *παρακλήσεως* is qualifying. God is a God who is rich in dispensing comfort. Paul adds *πάσης*. His comfort is not limited. He has comfort for every occasion.

God has manifested Himself as such, and is continuing to do so. He is acting as Comforter: *ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν*, our comforter in our entire tribulation. The Greek present participle has the force of an English noun in *er*, *ὁ παρακαλῶν* equals: the Comforter. — *Ἐπὶ* with the dative indicates the occasion, which in this case was *πασα ἡ θλίψις* of Paul and his associates. *Πας* in the predicative position with the definite article makes of the *θλίψις*, of all its various forms and manifestations, one coherent thing, a unit. Paul is now not thinking of all the many tribulations which befell him in his career as an apostle as so many isolated events, he sees in them simply links in a long unbroken chain. And throughout God proved Himself to be the Comforter.

Paul next mentions one of the results of this characteristic of God, *εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει*, so that we are able to comfort those in every trouble. *Εἰς* may express purpose, but if Paul had meant to stress the idea of purpose, he probably would have chosen *προν* in preference to *εἰς*. Paul is here interested in the actual result of his tribulations and God’s comfort that he experienced in them. It was this that through God’s comfort he acquired a certain ability, the ability to pass on to others the comfort by which he himself had been sustained in his afflictions. Speaking about the others he again uses *pas*, but without an article, in every tribulation, whatever form it may assume in any given case.

Although the cases may vary, and though the comfort may have to take on different forms in the individual cases, yet virtually, in its essence, it is always one and the same comfort, *διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως ἧς παρακαλούμεθα αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ*, by means of the comfort with which we ourselves are being comforted by God. We take note that *παρακαλούμεθα* is the present tense. The comfort which Paul can pass on to others is not something which he has received at some time in the past; no, just as his tribulation is one unbroken chain, so also the comfort which God supplies reaches him in continuous succession.

The tribulations which Paul suffers may surpass those of others in vehemence because of his office as an apostle, but in kind they are those which are common to Christians. This is a thought for which Paul is quietly preparing his readers, although he will not state it directly until a little later. He calls his afflictions the *παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, the sufferings of Christ. The genitive *τοῦ Χριστοῦ* does not mean the sufferings which

Christ Himself endured in His own person. It might mean that they are sufferings which Christ imposes, but it seems most likely that it points to such sufferings which everybody must expect who is united with Christ in faith, and because of his connection with Christ. Christ Himself said that every one who would follow Him as His disciple must take his cross upon himself. Paul warned the Galatians that there is no other way into the kingdom of heaven than through tribulation. These are the sufferings of Christ.

Of these Paul says that they abound, *περισσεύει*, in his case, but that they are always matched by the abounding comfort. Ὅτι καθὼς περισσεύει τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς, οὕτως διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ περισσεύει καὶ ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν, for just as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also through Christ does our comfort abound.

In the foregoing verse Paul had spoken in a general way about people who were in trouble, *τοὺς ἐν θλίψει*, he now turns directly and specifically to the Corinthians saying twice *ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως*, for, or in behalf of, your comfort. Note that he has *ὑμῶν* in the attributive position, thereby giving it some prominence. The comforting of the Corinthians is the aim to be achieved. To this he adds the first time *καὶ σωτηρίας*, and (in behalf of) your salvation. Nothing less than their salvation is at stake. Their salvation will be advanced by the comfort which Paul dispenses, and contrariwise, their salvation will suffer if Paul would withhold his comfort or if they would refuse to accept it, or would in some way or other squander it.

For the purpose of emphasis Paul divides between his own sufferings, on the one hand, and the consolation that sustains him, on the other. He connects the two by *εἴτε...εἴτε*. He joins this statement to the foregoing by a simple *δε*, which in this instance is not adversative, nor purely progressive. The relation between the two statements may in English be conveniently expressed by a simple *now*. *Εἴτε δὲ θλιβόμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας; εἴτε παρακαλούμεθα, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως*, now, whether we are being troubled (it is) on behalf of your comfort and salvation; if we are being comforted it is on behalf of your comfort. Behind all this lies, unexpressed, indeed, but plainly evident, the thought that Paul has but one interest in his life, and that he is sacrificing his very life in order to attain his purpose, namely the advancement of his readers on the way to salvation.

The thought to which he had referred only in a veiled way by speaking of the sufferings of Christ he now draws into the discussion directly by adding to the comforting of the Corinthians the remark *τῆς ἐνεργουμένης ἐν ὑπομονῇ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων*, which becomes effective in the enduring of the same sufferings. Yes, the Corinthians will need comfort, strong and effective comfort. They will be subjected to sufferings. The truth which Paul proclaimed so emphatically to the newly founded churches of Galatia still is in force also for the Corinthians: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:23). There is no other way. Jesus asked them who would come after Him to take up their cross and follow Him. The Corinthians, for the time being, may seem to enjoy exemption. But difficulties will strike them when God so ordains. Then they will be in need of comfort. Therefore Paul assures them that the comfort that he experienced from the Father of all comfort will prove effective in their case also. Their afflictions may assume a different form from those that struck Paul, but in essence they will be the same. His afflictions were extremely severe, as he will tell his readers in the next short section, but God's comfort was sufficient to carry him through, and he is certain that, no matter how severe the afflictions of the Corinthians may be, that comfort will be effective in their case also. *Ἐν ὑπομονῇ τῶν αὐτῶν παθημάτων ὧν καὶ ἡμεῖς πάσχομεν*, in the endurance of the same sufferings which also we are suffering. They will be enabled by the consolation to bear up under the load, they will not be crushed. —Paul now sums up his thoughts and concludes the opening section of his epistle with the declaration: *καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς ἡμῶν βεβαία ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*, and our hope is firm concerning you, namely *εἰδότες ὅτι ὡς κοινωνοὶ ἐστε τῶν παθημάτων, οὕτως καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως*, knowing (for sure) that as you are partakers in the (our) sufferings, so also in our comfort.

This first short section has something mysterious hanging over it. What is all this about bitter afflictions and the sweet comfort which follows and in connection with them will bring forth rich fruit toward salvation, plus the broad hint that the Corinthians might expect tribulations which would place them in dire need of comfort? Were not the ailments in Corinth of an altogether different nature? One thing stands out most clearly in this section, viz., Paul's warm interest for the welfare of the Corinthian congregation. He is willing, yes

happy, to undergo tribulations, so that when God comforts him this places him in a position to pass on rich comfort, and powerful, to the Corinthians. But what particular thing he may have in mind is not immediately discernible. Nor does it become evident in the next short section.

B. Verses 8–11

It is apparent from the foregoing that a comfort gains in importance with the severity of the affliction it helps us to sustain. If the affliction is trivial, so will also the comfort be regarded that alleviates it. But should a comfort carry us through a very severe and dangerous affliction, then it would be appreciated accordingly and would be estimated most highly.

That is precisely Paul's case. His afflictions were not of the ordinary variety, they had been most harrowing.

Paul begins this section by saying, Οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, For, brethren, we do not want you to be ignorant.

We feel from this opening that Paul attaches great importance to the point which he is about to make. There is not only the special address of endearment, ἀδελφοί, but the negative οὐ and the infinitive ἀγνοεῖν, holding the two emphatic positions in the clause, make a very strong positive. We want you to understand well, to realize unmistakably. What? ὑπὲρ τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν τῆς γενομένης ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, about our tribulation which happened in Asia. What was it? ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὑπὲρ δύνάμιν ἐβαρήθημεν, that excessively above ability we were burdened. A heavy blow was landed on us. It hit us hard, above our ability to take it. We could not evade it, nor could we parry it. Ὑπὲρ δύνάμιν is a strong term in itself, but it seems too weak to Paul to describe the situation adequately, he adds καθ' ὑπερβολὴν, it was excessively over our ability, way beyond our strength.

How far it was beyond his strength Paul states in the following clause: ὥστε ἐξαπορηθῆναι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν, so that we despaired even of living. We gave up the hope of coming through alive. Note the aorist ἐξαπορηθῆναι, we were seized with despair; and the present infinitive ζῆν, to continue living. This negative statement Paul now turns into the positive: ἀλλὰ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχίκαμεν, yes, we ourselves had within ourselves the verdict of death. Ἀλλά is not really adversative, but rather heightening and intensifying the previous statement. The perfect ἐσχίκαμεν seems to be used here practically as the equivalent of a historical aorist (See Oct. 1955, p. 267), stating merely a past fact. If taken as a true perfect it would imply that Paul still felt traces of that gruesome experience when he carried the verdict of death in his heart.

To what event in his Ephesian ministry does Paul refer? Already in First Corinthians he mentioned the fact that he fought with wild animals. It is debatable whether this remark is to be understood in the literal sense, or figuratively; the latter being the more likely. That event, whatever it may have been, was past history about Easter time when Paul wrote his first letter. There he mentioned it merely to show by his own example that Christianity would be futile if there were to be no resurrection. Moreover, his remark leaves the impression that the event itself was well known to the Corinthians. In the present connection, where Paul is speaking about tribulations and God's relieving comfort, it would not serve his purpose any too well if he referred to an event of some distant past, an event with which the Corinthians were already familiar. The introduction, We want you to know, points to some event about which the Corinthians did not yet have full information. The event more likely happened after First Corinthians, at a fairly recent date.

The riot of the silversmith Demetrius seems to be the answer. True, there was no martyr's blood spilled on that occasion, there were not even scourgings or imprisonments; but it would be a mistake to discount the ferocity of that riot. The mob was unpredictable, the craftsmen were enraged because their business was falling off as a result of Paul's preaching, and the coming May festival of Diana threatened to be a flop financially. Ordinarily it was the main source of their income. The Asiarchs were perturbed by the attitude of the mob, and some sent word to Paul, warning him not to show himself in the theater. Nobody can tell what would have

happened if Paul had ventured out on the street. He was ready to do so without any regard for the possible consequences to himself, but was prevented by some of the brethren. Because of the quiet, almost tragicomic end of the riot, people may have soon forgotten the whole affair, and particularly the instigators may have been only too glad to have it so; but while it was going on it looked dangerous enough for Paul. And he wants the Corinthians to realize this.

The seriousness of the occasion will make the comfort stand out in bold relief. Paul does not immediately speak about the comfort itself, but about the lesson which the event with its accompanying comfort should inculcate, both negatively and positively. Negatively: ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς, that we might not be people who have set their confidence on themselves. Paul uses the periphrastic perfect, which brings out the tense idea more pointedly than does the regular perfect. The affliction was far beyond human ability to remedy it. No human resources, human strength or human ingenuity, were able to overcome it. Anyone having nothing but human means at his disposal was bound to incur dismal failure. Paul learned his lesson. He forgot all about self-reliance.

The positive lesson was: ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ἐγείροντι τοὺς νεκρούς, but (that we should have our confidence) in the God who is the one raising the dead. We note that Paul does not simply say that we should trust in God. That would be too general a statement. The relief that God provided demands a more specific designation for God. He calls Him the God whose outstanding characteristic it is that He raises the dead; He is the Raiser of the dead. Paul had given up hope that he would ever come out of the affair alive; he himself had pronounced the death sentence on himself. Humanly speaking, he was already as good as dead, and anyone who would rescue him out of that extreme situation would be doing a work which for all practical purposes amounted to a raising from death.

Paul learned his lesson, and he wants the Corinthians to remember ever that God is one who raises the dead; not only to say so occasionally, but to live that confidence in times of affliction.

Paul expresses his faith in these words: ὅς ἐκ πηλικούτου θανάτου ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς καὶ ῥύσεται, who rescued us out of so great a death and will (ever) rescue (us). With a simple future, ῥύσεται, Paul expresses the confidence that he had learned out of this incident. But that is only a part of the lesson. From every benefit that God bestows on us we should learn that He is able and willing to bestow ever-greater ones. For Paul to say that God will continue to rescue and preserve him is not enough. For that reason he adds, εἰς ὃν ἠλπικαμεν ὅτι καὶ ἔτι ῥύσεται, on whom we have placed our hope that He will even yet rescue us. Ἠλπικαμεν is a regular perfect with the ordinary meaning of that tense: we have placed our confidence on God and there it is anchored, there it rests. —Ἐτι, yet, is ordinarily used in the temporal sense of *again*; but since Paul in the previous part of the verse already referred to the future it would be tautological if he did so here again. Ἐτι may also refer to degree, in the sense of *more* or *higher*. God rescued Paul in a wonderful way out of a terrible situation; Paul has the confidence in God that He will rescue him even out of more dangerous situations in a more wonderful way.

What all of this has to do with the situation in Corinth is not indicated yet. We still wonder what Paul is driving at. In the first section, though he did not answer the question, he did show his intense love for the Corinthians and his concern for their wellbeing. He indicated that he feels himself as one with them. This feeling of oneness should be continuous. The Corinthians should cherish the same feeling toward Paul. By his suggestion in the following verse Paul tries to elicit in the Corinthians the consciousness that they really feel as one with Paul. He says that the expected increase in God's saving help will materialize συνυπουργούντων καὶ ὑμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῇ δεήσει, when also you assist (us) with your prayers for us. Paul thus points them to the power of prayer, particularly the prayer for others. In First Timothy he urges that Christians, in order to receive from God a "quiet and peaceable life," should include their government, "kings and all that are in authority," in their intercessions. Frequently he requests the prayers of his congregations for God's blessing on his work. Paul had experienced a wonderful help from God, but, he says, with the support of the Corinthians' prayers that help will be increased immeasurably. —And why should they not do that? They are interested in the work of the Gospel. By supporting Paul with their prayers they will help to spread the Gospel, for, as he later wrote to the Philippians, to him to live means working for Christ.

In our text he approaches the matter from another angle. He does not mention mission work as the purpose to be achieved, but the praise and glory of God, ἵνα ἐκ πολλῶν τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστηθῇ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, in order that the gift (coming) to us (as) from many persons may be thanked for by many on our behalf. Προώπων, face, is frequently used metonymically for person (*pars pro toto*). Frequently it is used so when a personal pronoun would suffice (cf. Col. 2:1; Luke 9:51, 53).

Paul calls the rescue which he has experienced, and which he is expecting in greater measure in answer to the Corinthians' prayers, a χάρισμα, a free gift of God's grace. He is conscious of the fact, and he wants the Corinthians also ever to remain conscious of it, that our prayer is not a meritorious work for which God owes us a reward; nor is it a sort of charm which forces God to do our bidding. It is an appeal to the love and mercy of God. The answer to our prayer is a χάρισμα, which as such will elicit our thanksgiving. The many who asked God for His gift will then also join in praising Him for it.

The answer to our question about Paul's aim in his peculiar approach has not yet appeared. Nor will it in the following section.

C. Verses 12–14

Paul introduces this section with *gar*, thus offering it by way of explanation, motivation, or further elucidation. His explanation he reinforces with an appeal to the testimony of his conscience, including Timothy and his conscience, τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν, (such is) the testimony of our conscience. Men do not know our conscience, only God does. And He will judge us if we disregard our conscience or falsify its testimony. An appeal to conscience is an appeal to the court of God. What, then, is the matter which Paul here affirms so solemnly? He calls it a boasting, ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν. It is this ὅτι ἐν ἀγιοτητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ... ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, that we have conducted ourselves in holiness and sincerity of God in the world.

Ἀναστρέφω literally means to turn up (upside down), to turn over; then to turn hither and thither, to walk, to conduct oneself. (Compare the German *wandeln*, literally to change, then, to conduct oneself.) Εἰλικρινεία is purity sincerity, without hypocrisy, without ulterior motives, without deceit. In ch. 2:17 Paul uses the word with reference to his handling of the Word of God: he handles it ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας. In our text he presents it as a special manifestation of ἀγιοτος, holiness. Holiness is the general concept, of which εἰλικρινεία is the aspect pertinent in the specific case of Paul's conduct in the world. He calls it holiness and sincerity τοῦ θεοῦ. In ch. 2:17 he parallels ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας with the phrase ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ, and underscores this with another phrase, κατεναντι θεοῦ, in the presence of God. This suggests that the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ is to be understood as qualifying, a holiness and purity which will pass the inspection of God, which God demands, and which He supplies (ἐκ).

Paul emphasizes the fact that it is truly a God-given holiness and purity by adding, both negatively and positively, the connection in which it came to him and is practiced by him: οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ ἀλλ' ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, not in human (fleshly) wisdom but in God's grace. Human wisdom dictates a certain holiness and purity. Think of the Scout Oath and Law about being "reverent" and doing one's "duty to God." Or think of the common saying that "honesty is the best policy." At best this demand for holiness and purity is an outgrowth of the natural knowledge of God, which in the case of natural man is inextricably wrapped up in and intertwined with the *opinio legis*. Paul will have none of that. His holiness and purity is inseparably connected with the grace of God procured for us by the redemptive work of our Savior. Only in connection with that grace was it given to him, and only in connection with that grace does he practice it.

Paul conducted himself with God-given holiness and sincerity in the world in general. He is now writing to the Corinthians. How did he conduct himself in their midst? With his outward conduct they themselves were thoroughly familiar. As Paul could invoke the testimony of the people in Jerusalem for his conduct in his youth, which he spent in their city, so he could also assume that the Corinthians knew his conduct in their home city. Whether that conduct was a sincere expression of his heart, or was a sham, put on for a purpose, was beyond their ken. Because of that, Paul from the very beginning appealed to the testimony of his conscience. He now adds, περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, more abundantly so, however, over against you. Περισσοτέρως is an adverb

in the comparative degree, derived from the same root as the verb περισσεύω, which means to abound. Paul was exceptionally careful to practice holiness and purity in their midst. Not for a moment did he lose sight of it. He seems to find it necessary to stress this point; and therein we may have a first hint of what was on his mind, and why he made so much of affliction and comfort, and his resulting ability to pass on the comfort to others. — More will follow later.

For the present Paul takes up a particular point, by way of explanation, as the conjunction γὰρ indicates. Οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε, For we are not writing other things to you but either what you read or also understand. —The accents in the Nestle edition indicate that the second ἀλλ' is not, as Lenski thinks, a pleonastic repetition of the first ἄλλα. Ἄλλα with the accent on the first syllable is the indefinite pronoun, neuter plural: other (things), while the ἀλλ' with the accent on the (elided) second syllable is the adversative conjunction *but*. So in the Nestle text.

When Paul here refers to his letters (γράφομεν) and the treatment which they apparently received in Corinth, he evidently has the matter in mind which he corrected in I Cor. 5:9–11. He had written to the congregation in a letter that we no longer possess that they should not συναναμίγνυσθαι πορνοῖς, into which the Corinthians read more than the expression could mean. Paul corrects their misunderstanding, telling them that, if their interpretation would stand, then Christians would have no other alternative but ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελθεῖν. What he wrote meant no more and no less than a suspension of church fellowship. —In our present text he uses this incident as an illustration that in all his dealings with them he used holiness and sincerity, also in his letters.

To this statement Paul attaches a sort of regulative for reading his letters, a principle that should govern all our Scripture reading. He says, Do not try to read between the lines or even behind the lines, but read just as it is written. The words have been chosen with holiness and sincerity. The *Wortlaut* is decisive. Then he adds a second directive, ἢ (ἃ) καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε. Ἐπιγινώσκειν, in distinction from the simple stem γινώσκειν, denotes a thorough understanding. The Corinthians had received a thorough instruction from Paul in the Gospel truths. The eighteen months which he spent in their midst gave him the opportunity to deepen and to broaden their understanding, and to develop in them the ability to recognize the truth and to distinguish it from error. This stock of knowledge Paul could presuppose in his letters. If anything in his letters was not immediately clear to them, they knew at least that Paul would not contradict anything that he had taught them orally. To the Thessalonians he wrote that they should hold fast whatever doctrine had been delivered to them εἴτε διὰ λογοῦ εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν. Similarly he says here ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε.

The appeal to his conscience Paul now supplements with a reference to the final judgment. Ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε, But I hope that you will completely understand. Paul will immediately mention a truth which he hopes that the Corinthians will never allow to slip out of their hearts. Ἐως τέλους, till the end, means fully or completely. Thus there is room for improvement in the Corinthians' understanding, it is at best a partial knowledge (cf. I Cor. 13). Καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μέρους, (May you fully understand) as you have also understood us in part. Now the main thing. What is it that they should fully grasp and ever hold fast in their hearts? Ὅτι καύχημα ὑμῶν ἐσμεν καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν, that we are your (chief and only) cause of boasting, just as also you (are) ours. Paul is saying this with specific reference to the final judgment: ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, on the day of our Lord Jesus.

The ὅτι in this case is not a causal conjunction, *because*, but introduces a dependent declaratory clause, stating the content of their understanding. The καύχημα stands emphatically forward. If on that great day you expect to have any cause for boasting, it is this. But this is a real cause, one that will avail even in the most severe trial and secure a verdict of *Not guilty*. Your one and only cause for boasting are ἡμεῖς. What were you before we brought you the Gospel? Only with fear and trembling could you look forward to that day. Your philosophers might try to tell you otherwise, that such a day will never come, but your conscience persisted in its accusations, telling you that there is no escape. How is it that now you can look calmly, yes cheerfully, forward to that day? We are your καύχημα. We brought you the announcement of the forgiveness of all your sins for Christ's sake. —Likewise you are our καύχημα. We were commissioned to preach the Gospel, and you are proof of the fact that we did as we were commanded. In view of your faith the Lord will say to us: Well done, good and faithful servants. You have been faithful over a little thing. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

D. Verses 12–22

In this section we have the answer to the question that puzzles a reader during the previous part of ch. 1. Paul touches the sore spot, something which did not really cause the difficulty, but which was seized upon by Paul's opponents as affording them a convenient excuse for casting suspicion on his work. In itself the matter might be considered as quite trivial, and it should not have caused the least difficulty or friction. That it was "blown up" all out of proportion clearly reveals the character of Paul's enemies. But when we see how tactfully, under God's guidance, Paul handled the situation, that, instead of sharply exposing his critics at once and setting the Corinthians right, he turned the difficulty into an occasion for presenting an unsurpassed discussion of the glory of the New Testament ministry, we admire Paul and thank God for having given us in him a model of dealing with Christians troubled by errorists and their devices.

Paul connects this section to the foregoing with a simple *καί*, and. By the fact that this is a very unusual way of beginning a paragraph the simple connective arrests the reader's attention: and, now to come to the point.

With *ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει*, in this confidence, Paul reaches back to the previous section. There he had spoken about the witness of his conscience to the holiness and sincerity of his conduct in the world in general, and particularly over against the Corinthians; he had expressed the hope that, as they had understood him in part, they would also understand him completely, namely, that he through the Gospel had entirely changed their prospects regarding the future judgment of God. That was his confidence, and in this confidence he had acted. Would the Corinthians take the blame if this confidence deceived him? Should it be said that Paul had misplaced his confidence in them?

What had Paul done in his confidence? We take a look at the various components of his action. First, he says, *ἔβουλόμην πρότερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν*, first I was planning to come to you. *Ἐβουλόμην*, being an imperfect, indicates that Paul weighed various possibilities very carefully, that thereby he came to consider one plan as suiting his purposes, that he then reached a decision to which he held and for the execution of which he was getting ready. The verb does not, like *θέλω*, stress determination, but rather deliberation. In one of the following verses he lifts out this factor by using the verb *βουλεύεσθαι*, to deliberate, to take counsel. The comparative *πρότερον* is in place because only two plans of Paul's came into consideration, the one which he now presents, and the second, modified plan, which he later carried out. The idea of *πρότερον* is expressed by the English "first".

Thus the first step in his first plan was *πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν*. He planned to sail across the Aegean Sea from Ephesus directly to Corinth, for the purpose *ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε*, that you might receive a second grace. It is not necessary to modify the regular meaning of *χάρις*. To be sure, it would have to be considered as a favor that he was conferring on the Corinthian congregation by paying them a visit; but it would be a favor only because he would be bringing them again the proclamation of God's grace in Christ Jesus, deepening and widening their understanding of this grace. When he lived and labored in their midst for 18 months, he brought to them the first grace; the planned visit would mean a continuation, a second grace. —The aorist *σχῆτε* connotes the ingressive idea, receive.

That was only the first step in his original plan. The second was *καὶ δι' ὑμῶν διελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν*, and to pass through you on to Macedonia. Evidently he did not plan a long stay in Corinth. Referring to this matter in First Corinthians he calls it a seeing them "now by the way" (*ἐν παροδῷ*). But even a visit of only a few days would have greatly enriched the Corinthians—had the conditions been different. Paul had written First Corinthians after having been informed by a letter and by a delegation (I Cor. 7:1; 16:17) of serious abuses which threatened, and to some extent had already infected, the congregation. In his letter he counseled them how to remedy the situation. Following with a brief visit might have greatly strengthened the forces for good. Paul took these matters into consideration and made his plans accordingly. But already before writing his first epistle he had again abandoned them. Very definitely he wrote: "Now I will come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia; for I do pass through Macedonia" (I Cor. 16:5).

He had to see the Macedonians. In ch. 7 of our present epistle he describes the conditions in that province as such that they resulted for him in ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι, “without were rightings, within were fears.” What the difficulties were in Macedonia, we are not told. In speaking about the collection for the needy brethren in Jerusalem, Paul has nothing but praise for the zeal of the Macedonians (See ch. 8), yet for the present he decided to visit those regions before going to Corinth. Luke, in recording this visit, uses the expression παρακαλέσας αὐτοὺς λόγῳ πολλῶ (Acts 20:2).

In his original plan the next step was this: καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, and to return from Macedonia to you. Πάλιν...ἐλθεῖν, to come again, or to come back, may conveniently be rendered with *return*. After this return he planned a longer stay in Corinth, lasting probably through the winter. He expressed the hope to spend χρόνον τινα with them: τυχὸν καταμενῶ ἢ καὶ παραχειμάσω, he wrote: “It may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you” (I Cor. 16:6).

The final step was: καὶ ὑφ’ ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν, and by you to be brought on my way to Judea. The word προπεμπεῖν is elegant in the Greek, but rather difficult to render into English. The latest attempt of the RSV is “have you send me on my way.” Goodspeed has: “have you send me off”; and Moffat translates: “to be sped by you on my journey.” Jerome’s *deduci* says more than the Greek word, as would the English *accompany*, or the German *geleiten*. Since no neat translation, apparently, can be found, it seems best to retain the wording of the King James: “to be brought on my way.” Lenski’s “to be sent on forward” distorts the picture. The Corinthians were not to do any “sending,” but merely, to use a colloquial expression, to “see Paul off,” to escort in departure, or assist him in his departure.

In Second Corinthians Paul is more definite about his destination than in First Corinthians. He says εἰς Ἰουδαίαν, while in his first letter he spoke rather vaguely, οὐ ἐὰν πορεύωμαι, “withersoever I go.” Since Second Corinthians followed about six months after First Corinthians the progress of the collection for Jerusalem could be estimated more accurately, and success was practically assured at the time of its writing.—At the time of First Corinthians it had not yet definitely been decided whether the collection should be delivered by delegates of the congregations without Paul, or whether Paul should accompany them (I Cor. 16:3). That question seems to have been settled in the mean time.

Thus Paul outlines his first plans, which he later revised by dropping the short stopover in Corinth on his way to Macedonia, and rearranging his route so as to strike Macedonia first. This change of plan was seized on by the troublemakers in Corinth to discredit Paul. From Paul’s reply we can gather what their insinuations were.

He asks, οὐν βουλόμενος μήτι ἄρα τῇ ἐλαφρίᾳ ἐχρησάμην? In making this plan, did I perchance use lightness? Μη introduces a question to which the expected answer is no. Μη in our case is reinforced with τι and ἄρα. The word “perchance” does not reproduce the thought precisely; the German *etwa* would. The question is, Do you really think that I perhaps etc.? I do not suspect you of so preposterous an idea. The definite article in τῇ ἐλαφρίᾳ is idiomatic. The thought is: that thing which is known as levity. Before abstract concepts of that sort the English usually omits the article.

The thought that Paul is trying to impress positively on the minds of the Corinthians by his negative statement that in making his plans he does not proceed lightheartedly is that, rather, he is very careful, that he seriously weighs all pertinent factors which are known to him. If he changes his plans, this is no indication that in making them in the first place he carelessly overlooked anything that, if it had been duly taken into consideration, would have at once directed his thoughts into other channels. To charge him with fickleness, or to cast suspicion on his sincerity, is doing him a gross injustice.

But if Paul so carefully considers all circumstances in making his plans, should he then not abide by his first decision, once he has announced it? Paul takes up this question next, formulating it so that the question itself carries its own condemnation: ἢ ἃ βουλεύομαι κατὰ σάρκα βουλεύομαι? or what I resolve, do I resolve it according to the flesh? While so far Paul had used the verb βουλεύομαι (which Jerome renders with the corresponding form of *velle*) he now uses βουλεύομαι (Jerome: *cogitare*). While the former centers on the final outcome of the planning process, the plan itself, the latter names the process of planning. Thus by the two verbs the attention is focused on two different aspects of the same act. Here Paul calls attention to this that while considering all pertinent factors, he bars all fleshly motives. A fleshly motive suggested by the criticism of his

opponents would be: ἵνα ἢ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ, so that with me the yes might be yes, and the no no. He stresses the copula ἐμ by placing it into the emphatic position at the head of the clause. To bring out the stress I suggest the auxiliary verb “must.” There are people who insist that to change a plan once announced would show a lack of character. Does it? Most frequently the unwillingness to yield to changed circumstances or to better judgment is a sign of stubbornness. Paul was not stubborn. Such attitude he condemns with the phrase κατὰ σάρκα.

Paul frequently had to change his most thoroughly considered plans. When on his second journey he looked upon Ephesus as a most inviting field, he and his companions “were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6). The same thing happened with respect to Bithynia (v. 7). When after his leave the young congregation in Thessalonica faced overwhelming difficulties, Paul planned to hurry to their assistance “once and again”—“but Satan hindered us” (I Th. 2:18).

But does Paul’s willingness to adapt himself to circumstances and to alter his course of procedure cast doubt on the reliability of his message? Not at all. His plans are his own, always subject to revision. The Gospel that he proclaims is God’s. And God is unchangeable, and His Word endures forever. Πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, Paul says, faithful and trustworthy is God, particularly in this respect ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ, that our message to you is not yes and no.

The message which God sent to the Corinthians through Paul and his associates has an unshakable foundation in Christ: ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ γὰρ υἱὸς Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν δι’ ἡμῶν κηρυχθεὶς, for God’s Son Christ Jesus, proclaimed among you by us. Note the peculiar position of the explanatory connective *gar*. Ordinarily it would follow immediately after the definite article ὁ; but here the genitive noun τοῦ θεοῦ is advanced to that position and made to precede the *gar*. This lays a great stress on τοῦ θεοῦ. Jesus Christ is the Son of the true God, the very God who sent His message to the Corinthians. That message is not subject to revision because God is faithful, and the message rests on His own Son, who is the very εἰκὼν and express *χαρακτηρ* (imprint) of His Father, yes, who is truth personified, the way, the truth, and the life (John 15:6).

The name of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, sums up the whole message which Paul brought to the Corinthians. He “determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2).

Paul came to Corinth alone, but he did not work among them alone for a long time. Soon after his arrival he was joined by two of his associates. Hence Paul now can write that Jesus was proclaimed among the Corinthians δι’ ἡμῶν. With the aorist κηρυχθεὶς. Paul stresses the act of the proclamation as such. He does not say anything about the result, nor does he refer to the continuation of the proclaiming by others. Paul next mentions the very names of his associates, δι’ ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου, by me and Silvanus and Timothy. The great solemnity of this remark is evident from the way the name of the first associate is spelled out. He was commonly known as Silas, but here Paul uses the full official form Silvanus. All three men proclaimed the same Jesus, there was no wavering between yes and no. In age and training and personal characteristics these three ambassadors of Christ may have differed widely, but they all proclaimed the same Christ, the Son of the true God. Now this Christ, the Son of God, preached by Paul and his associates, οὐκ ἐγένετο ναὶ καὶ οὐ ἀλλὰ ναὶ ἐν αὐτῷ γέγονεν, He did not turn out to be yes and no, but yes stands (unshaken) in Him.

The verbs demand our attention, ἐγένετο and γέγονεν; they are the middle aorist and the second form perfect active of the verb γίνομαι, to become. From the fact that the new *Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, devotes exactly five columns (two and one half pages) to a discussion of this verb it will be readily gathered how frequently this verb is used and how varied may be its application. Quite frequently it denotes a coming into existence, or a change in the inner structure of a thing. There are many instances, however, where an inner change is not indicated, but where some present, though latent, inner quality becomes active and manifests itself in operation. That seems to be the case in Paul’s present statement about Christ. Christ Himself did not undergo any change in His nature, but His nature manifested itself in a certain performance. The aorist may be taken in the constative sense: Christ’s action showed no wavering between yes and no. The perfect form γέγονεν is a true perfect, expressing a lasting condition: in Christ the yes stands firm and unshaken.

What does Paul mean by this? He explains: γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναί, as countless as the promises of God (may be) in Him is the yes. God, whose unwavering faithfulness Paul had stressed before (πιστὸς ὁ θεός), He has given the world many promises, too numerous to be counted, yet He did not leave one of them unfulfilled. What is more, all of these promises point to Christ, and in sending Christ, His Son, God has redeemed them all. In Christ they have become reality, all the promised blessings are found in Him, and through Him are handed to us. There is only one thing left, that in faith we accept and enjoy them. And this vital point is also given with Christ, as Paul indicates in the following clause: διὸ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀμήν, accordingly, likewise through Him (there is) the amen.

The connective διο expresses a causal relation, not necessarily in the strict sense of cause and effect, but often in a somewhat looser sense of correspondence. All the promises of God are made with the understanding that He will also induce us to accept them, something that we of ourselves are unable and unwilling to do. God understood our condition when He made His promises. He did not make His promises *pro forma*, He wants us to receive the blessings. Hence the very promises imply that He will put us into the proper frame of mind for receiving them, and the promises themselves carry also the power to do so.

He will do this καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ (Χριστοῦ), also or likewise through Him (Christ), who is the fulfillment of God's promises.

The two expressions: ἐν Χριστῷ τὸ ναί and διὰ Χριστοῦ τὸ ἀμήν are by some taken to be synonymous; yet the different prepositions indicate a change in the meaning of the statements. Ἐν is local, διὰ instrumental. In Christ, in His person and His work, we find the ναί. All things in heaven and on earth come to a head in Him (cf. the ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι of Eph. 1:10); but the amen is not presented as being found *in* Him, but rather as being effected *by* Him. From I Cor. 14:16 we learn that in the services of that congregation it was customary for the hearers to voice their agreement to an εὐλογία spoken by the leaders by responding with amen. Apply this to God's promises. The amen denotes our believing response, our grateful acceptance. This amen was produced in the hearts of the Corinthians *by* the same Christ *in* whom they had found God's blessings.

Paul ends the sentence with a significant δι' ἡμῶν, through our service. —Here is the nub. God had chosen Paul and his associates to bring the message of Christ to Corinth. It may be assumed that the Corinthians remembered how Paul had come to their city some five years earlier. He had not planned it so. He had planned to work in Ephesus. The Holy Spirit had forbidden him. He planned to go to Bithynia. God again intervened and called him to Philippi. Through persecution he was forced out of Philippi, then out of Thessalonica, then out of Berea. Thus God had directed Paul's way till he came to Corinth. Through Paul the Corinthians had heard the message of Christ, through Paul, who always took his orders from God and carried them out as God demanded. Do they now listen to defamers of Paul, who question his sincerity, and the reliability of his message, because he changed his plans of travel? Though they may not understand his action, they must at least recognize that he showed great firmness in bringing them the Gospel. He had always been ready to follow God's guidance, and was not dismayed when he met with fierce opposition and persecution on the very way that God led him.

Paul does not seek credit for his unwavering firmness in carrying out God's assignment. He gives all credit to God: Ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς...θεός, the one who makes us firm ... is God. Paul is firm; he is neither fickle nor stubborn. But that is not his own achievement; it is a gift from God. It is also God who is preserving the gift for him.

This gift of firmness, however, includes much more than a personal blessing for Paul and his associates; it includes much more than the strengthening of their human character, human will power. To ἡμᾶς, the men who brought Christ to the Corinthians, he adds σὺν ὑμῖν, in connection with you. Paul and the Corinthians simply belong together. Separate them, and nothing remains. Neither Paul nor the Corinthians mean anything alone and by themselves. Paul was sent to preach the Gospel; the Corinthians were blessed to hear it. Jointly they enjoyed its blessings. Paul touched on this intimate association when he spoke about his tribulations and God's comfort which he then experienced, the comfort which he thereby was prepared to pass on to the Corinthians when tribulations, as was to be expected, would strike them. He spoke very emphatically about it when he said that on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ he (Paul) was the boast of the Corinthians and they his. Here again he refers to that union with the preposition σὺν.

This union is not of a type with other associations on earth, it is εἰς Χριστόν, directed to Christ. Paul had stated just a little while ago what Christ meant both for him and for the Corinthians, namely the *nai* to all of God's promises. He need not repeat. He can say summarily εἰς Χριστόν, their union is in the direction of Christ and rests in the enjoyment of His blessings.

The name Χριστόν with its etymology suggests a new and very specific approach, which Paul takes up with the phrase καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς, and the one who anointed us. —Since Paul in the beginning of the verse joined himself and his associates together with the Corinthians (ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν), the ἡμᾶς at the end of the verse naturally refers to this entire group, the Corinthian congregation as well as Paul and his assistants, and vice versa. The *kai* connects the participle χρίσας with the other participle ὁ Βεβαίων. Both participles are made definite and are substantivised by the same article ὁ, the confirmer and anointer. Both actions belong closely together as phases of the same activity; the difference is that the confirming continues (present participle) while the anointing was a single act (aorist participle). How could Paul have expressed our union with Christ, and thereby among one another, more vividly than by using the word χρίω? God anointed Christ with the Holy Spirit and with power. Now we are included in that anointment. We are made a royal priesthood that we should show forth the virtue of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Our fellowship that we have among ourselves truly is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The Father has anointed us together with His Son and given us the same Spirit.

Who can grasp the full meaning of this blessing? Paul lifts the veil a little in the following by adding two participial modifiers to the subject of his sentence, θεός, both of which are again united in one by a single article: ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς, who also did seal us for Himself. The definite article is missing in some manuscripts, but is well enough attested to be retained. The one who is strengthening us and has anointed us is God, the one who also did the following. God's activity of blessing us in Christ is so rich that one or two verbs are not enough to express it adequately. With *kai* Paul adds a third and fourth verb.

The first addition is the middle aorist participle σφραγισάμενος. God affixed a seal to us, thereby marking us as His own. The middle voice shows the intense personal interest that God has for us. The seal is a clear “Hands off!” to our enemies: Touch not My saints, I am protecting them, and I will avenge any harm that is done to them. The seal is to us an authorization and encouragement to realize and live our exalted position. God has sealed us. Do not fear any enemy; do not listen to any seducers; love God and trust in Him, and love and trust those whom He has sealed jointly with you.

The second addition is again an aorist participle, but this time in the active voice, καὶ δοῦς... ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, and (who) gave in our hearts. The heart is the organ that controls our life. Also in the transferred sense the heart signifies the center of our spiritual life. Out of the heart are the issues of life. If the heart remains in its natural state, then evil thoughts, words, and actions proceed out of it. When it is reborn, then, in spite of the fact that the old nature has not yet been completely eliminated, the heart produces a rich and beautiful garland of holy, God-pleasing thoughts and deeds. It is the heart into which God has poured His gift. What is it?

Paul calls it τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος, He gave us a pledge which is the Holy Ghost. The word ἄρραβῶν (which seems to be derived from a Hebrew root אָרָב—cf. Gen. 38:17–20—but occurs as a business term also in Greek and Latin) is defined by Thayer as “an earnest, i.e., money which in purchases is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid.” The genitive τοῦ πνεύματος is expegetical, explaining in what the ἄρραβῶν consists, namely in nothing less than the Holy Spirit of God Himself. In this way God has anointed us, in this way He is confirming us, in this way He has sealed us unto Himself: that He has given us His Holy Spirit into our hearts as a down payment, caution money (*Kaufschilling, Haftpfennig*)—as though it were not enough that He is πιστός, that He has given His own Son, in whom we have the *vai* to the countless promises of God, He gives us also His Spirit as a pledge of fidelity. The Spirit will do His work in our hearts, strengthening and preserving the new life of faith that He Himself has created, bringing fruit to perfection.

E. Verses 1:23–2:4

Verses 23 and 24 are transitional, leading over to the new thought which Paul will present and develop in the next chapter. As such they also put some finishing touches on the matter treated in the previous section.

In the foregoing Paul assured the Corinthians that he made his plans not without thorough consideration nor, on the other hand, with such rigidity that stubbornly he would insist on going through with them, and that, when he changed his plans, he did so for valid reasons. Now he divulges to them one consideration which, far from showing indifference on his part toward the Corinthians, rather was born of the most tender concern for their welfare.

Things had not been going in Corinth as they should. Think, e.g., of the way they had neglected the incest case. In his first letter Paul had given them the necessary instruction, and then he had sent some of his co-workers, Timothy and Titus, to counsel them. What would have happened if Paul had appeared personally on the scene before the corrective work was finished, or at least well on the way toward completion? We can easily imagine the uncomfortable feelings on all sides. Paul took this into consideration, and he now speaks about it.

He says, Ἐγὼ δὲ μάρτυρα τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν, I call upon God as witness in addition to my own soul. Paul is speaking for himself only. Otherwise he always spoke in the plural, *we*, including his associates with himself, in v. 19 even mentioning their names. Now he says emphatically I, excluding even Timothy, the co-author of the letter. He does not include anyone else, nor can he, since this concerns a matter that he decided before his God alone. On God he calls as a witness in addition to his own soul. God is the only one, besides Paul, who knows about this phase of his planning. Paul could not discuss it even with Timothy, it was too delicate.

What was it? ὅτι φειδόμενος ὑμῶν οὐκέτι ἤλθον εἰς Κόρινθον, that sparing you I did not yet come to Corinth. In First Corinthians he had written, “What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” (ch. 4:21). The conditions in Corinth still, more or less, called for a painful application of the “rod.” By changing his plans and bypassing Corinth for the present Paul actually spared the Corinthians some considerable embarrassment. If he postponed his visit, that would give them an opportunity to complete the work of setting their own house in order.

Paul does not even now like to speak about the matter because of the danger of being misunderstood. If he may wield the rod, and if he shows leniency by avoiding the opportunity to apply it: is he then not acting as an autocrat? Does he not degrade them to the level of slaves? Any such desire is far from his heart. It would be the ruin of his work. He hurries to ward off the misunderstanding: οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως, not that we have lordship over your faith. To claim rule over faith is really a contradiction in terms. Faith spells freedom, indeed not licentiousness, but real freedom. “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:35). “Ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). What then does it mean to come with the rod? What does it mean to spare them by laying the rod aside for a while?

Paul answers, ἀλλὰ συνεργοὶ ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν, on the contrary, we are helpers of your joy. The joy of faith may require assistance in various ways. Under conditions as they happened to obtain in Corinth, where their joy in the Lord was threatened by inroads of worldly-mindedness of various shades, their joy could be saved only by a painful application of the rod. But it would be far less unpleasant if they practiced self-discipline and submitted to self-chastisement than if Paul had to come and apply the rod.

Were they capable of self-discipline? Paul says, τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε, for you are standing in the faith. Their faith was threatened, it had already suffered and become weak, but it had not been extinguished. If they were now driven to exercise their faith in self-discipline, their faith would emerge purified and strengthened without the unpleasantness connected with having Paul apply the chastising rod.

So would also their joy be purified and increased.

E. Verses 1:23–2:4

In ch. 2:1 we have Paul’s decision, which he reached before God alone, without consulting with his associates, or even informing them about his deliberations. He alone bears the responsibility; to his assistants he announced his plans only after he had made the decision to change his route of travel. Ἐκρίνα δὲ ἑμαυτῷ τοῦτο,

Now I decided this for myself. The general motivation for this change he stated in vv. 23 and 24 of the previous chapter. Now he speaks more specifically about the *χαρα*, how it would have been affected adversely by a premature visit on his part.

He calls his visit a *πάλιν...ἐλθεῖν*, the same expression which he had used in ch. 1:16. Here he substantivizes the infinitive by prefixing the definite article *το*. He thus places the substantivized infinitive in apposition to *τοῦτο*, I decided this, namely *τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν*, the not-returning-to-you-in-grief. He wanted this visit to be one of pure *χαρα*, undampened by any trace of *λύπη*.

From First Corinthians we know that there were many things awry in the congregation of Corinth, things which could not be corrected on short order. Paul sent Timothy to help the Corinthians do this work (I Cor. 16:10). He had sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to Macedonia (Acts 19:22), instructing Timothy to proceed from there to Achaia. Then he had sent also Titus, apparently after Timothy's return. Timothy was with Paul when he wrote Second Corinthians (ch. 1:1); but he was on his way somewhere—Paul evidently did not know exactly where—when he wrote First Corinthians. Now Paul anxiously awaited the return—and the report—of Titus (II Cor. 2:13). —From the fact that Paul deliberately postponed his own visit—even at the risk of being misunderstood—and from the further facts that he wrote two lengthy letters, that he sent two of his most trusted co-laborers, we can see how Paul tried to train his congregations to stand on their own feet, to meet dangers that threatened their well-being themselves, and to correct errors that had infected some of their members. He thus turned the difficulties that confronted the Corinthians into an opportunity for training them in self-discipline. He could have gone there himself, and by virtue of his apostolic authority have given orders. That, no doubt, would have brought quicker results, but it would have retarded the spiritual growth of the congregation. They would have remained babes, clinging to the apron strings of mama.

We have taken the *πάλιν...ἐλθεῖν* simply in the sense of coming back, returning. Paul had been in Corinth for 18 months on his second mission journey, when he founded the congregation. That was some five years ago. He had written them a letter—now lost—before he wrote First Corinthians (cf. I Cor. 5:9). He had also made a short visit to Corinth from Ephesus. In our present epistle he speaks about coming to them now for the third time (cf. ch. 13:1).

When was that second visit? We do not know. Luke does not mention it in Acts, and Paul himself says no more about it than that he had visited the congregation some time after founding it. It was a visit, but it has no bearing on interpreting either First or Second Corinthians. It must have been made some time before First Corinthians was written. The arrangements which we know from First and Second Corinthians, namely, that Paul sent Timothy to Corinth, that Timothy returned before Second Corinthians, that Paul in the meantime sent Titus, leave no room for a personal visit between the two letters.

But now people pounce on the word *πάλιν* in our verse. Although Paul very definitely calls it *the* coming back, a visit about which the Corinthians knew, which had been planned, announced, and then postponed, still some people think that *πάλιν* must refer to time, that Paul had visited Corinth recently, and now was planning to come once more. Then these interpreters talk about the *λύπη*. Drawing on their imagination they paint a lurid picture of what they think happened at Paul's recent visit. He was a sick man, and was rather irritable. He could not have his way, and was openly insulted. In disgust he cut his visit short, a defeated man. —The various arrangements mentioned definitely in the two epistles leave no room for a visit by Paul between them. To stretch the time from six months to a year and six months also does violence to the record of these arrangements as contained both in the two letters and in the Book of Acts.

Paul is not complaining that a recent visit—which in fact did not take place—was marred by *λύπη*, but he is postponing a planned visit, so that he might not, due to the unsettled disturbances in Corinth, have to come with a heavy heart, might not have to come “with the rod,” might not have to treat them sharply. That is the meaning of *τὸ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν*. Although himself grieved by the conditions, on the planned visit it would be chiefly Paul who would be meting out *λύπη*. He would hurt the Corinthians' feelings. He would have to.

This is evident from the next sentence, which is connected to the foregoing with an explanatory *γὰρ*. *Εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ λυπῶ ὑμᾶς*, For if I on my part grieve or hurt you. The person of the subject is indicated not only in the

verb ending, the personal pronoun itself is used, thus laying great emphasis on Paul as the acting one: yes, he, he on his part, would be the one causing the λύπη. Paul offers no excuses, as if thereby he would be overstepping the bounds of propriety. He takes it for granted that under the circumstances he simply could not do otherwise. He speaks about this in such a matter-of-fact way, it is clear he assumed that everybody, including the Corinthians, would readily understand his actions, even expect them. For if I on my part cause you grief—that is the self-evident thing for him to do under the circumstances.

But that is not a very pleasant thing to do, neither for the Corinthians nor for Paul himself: καὶ τίς ὁ εὐφραίνων με, and who then (will be there as) the one to gladden me? Corinth was a city of pleasures and amusements. But the Corinthians, not only the Christians but the outsiders as well, will know that these held no attraction for Paul. He was interested in just one thing: to bring sinners to faith in their crucified Savior. “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” If they slumped in their faith, then there was nothing, and no one, in all of Corinth to cheer up Paul. Would they want things in their midst to be in such a mess that Paul would be forced to use stern words and apply stern measures? They should rather thank Paul for postponing his visit, thus giving them more time to clean up their mess themselves before his arrival.

Paul therefore answers his own question with εἰ μὴ ὁ λυπούμενος ἐξ ἑμοῦ, except the very one who is being grieved by me. Paul here does not use the regular ὑπό of agent with the passive, he substitutes ἐξ. He would be the apparent source, or the channel, out of which their grief would come; the real agent inflicting the pain would be some one else. But it would be conveyed to them by Paul. Let them realize that Paul is merely performing a painful, though necessary, part of his office in causing them pain.

Καί ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ ἀφ’ ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν, And I am writing for this very purpose that I might not at my arrival receive grief (from them) from whom I ought to be rejoicing. —It may be questioned whether ἔγραψα here is the epistolary or the historical aorist. It is true, Paul had reached his decision not to see the Corinthians in passing, ἐν παραδῶ, but to postpone his visit, before he even wrote First Corinthians; he had also mentioned it in that letter, so that with ἔγραψα he might now be referring to I Cor. 16:5. But that had been misunderstood by the Corinthians, or rather, had been twisted all out of shape by Paul’s detractors in Corinth, so that now he had to explain the real motive for his change of traveling plans. If he had not written the present letter, the mistrust and suspicions of the Corinthians would hardly have been allayed. This is the point which (to me) Paul seems to have in mind with this ἔγραψα. With what he is now writing he wants to remove the last cause for embarrassment before he arrived. The aorist is epistolary.

When he says ἔδει, thus using an indicative of fact where we prefer the subjunctive, he follows the Greek idiom. The necessity as such is not supposed, but real. There was no one outside the Christian congregation in Corinth to gladden the heart of Paul. If he was to experience joy, it must come from them. And, furthermore, have they any reason to withhold that joy from Paul? He will rejoice if he finds them sound in the faith. If they fail to warm his heart with that joy, then there is something wrong with them: they are the losers, the sufferers. In order to give them an opportunity to correct all remaining flaws, Paul postponed his visit, and is now writing this explanation.

He is doing this in full confidence that they will understand, and will act accordingly: πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ὑμῶν ἐστίν, having this confidence toward you all that my joy is (that) of you all. —We take notice of the stress that Paul puts on *all*. Twice he uses the word in this participial phrase with its dependent clause. Paul is not biased toward any member of the churches to which he is writing. There are, of course, differences in spiritual understanding among them. There are differences in their progress of sanctification. But whether any one is weak in one respect or another, Paul has confidence in every one of them. The confidence that he has he states in very wide terms. It is difficult to reproduce this inclusiveness in a simple translation. The genitive πάντων ὑμῶν can express the thought: My joy is the *concern* of all, i.e., you are all interested in gladdening my heart. Or it may mean: My joy is your joy, i.e., it makes you happy to see me happy. Or it may mean that your joy and mine are of exactly the same kind. My joy is Jesus Christ, and so do you seek no other joy than that which is found in union with our Savior. The Greek phrase expresses all these

shades of meaning. Paul here in this way repeats the thought that he has voiced in various ways before: his union with the Corinthians, the spiritual communion of all believers.

Who are the “all” whom Paul is here addressing? We must look for the answer in the salutation of the letter: “the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints which are in all Achaia.” There was a congregation in Corinth, there was a congregation in Cenchrea (cf. Rom. 16:1), there was a group of Christians in Athens (cf. Acts 17:34), and there may have been others, of whom we have no record (cf. Acts 18:27, 28). Paul indicates that what he is saying now, and what he still may have to say in this connection, concerns them all: all will have to reach a conclusion, all will have to take the proper action. Paul has full confidence in them all, whether they are members of the Corinthian congregation or of that in Cenchrea, or whether they belong to some of the smaller groups of Christians in Achaia.

In the following Paul mentions much tribulation and anguish of heart in connection with his letter. That can hardly refer to the present letter. He is writing from Macedonia. Titus has returned to him from Corinth and brought a very good report, which he never grew tired to repeat, so that Paul was richly comforted and filled with great joy. His tears, as far as Corinth was concerned, had been dried; they were a thing of the past. When he now mentions afflictions and grief in connection with his writing a letter, that must refer to First Corinthians.

He connects with an explanatory *γάρ*: Ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων, For I wrote to you out of deep affliction and anguish of heart with many tears.

The situation in Corinth grieved him—and that pertained also to the other Christians in Achaia—their factionalism, which cropped out even in connection with the Lord’s Supper, their laxity in connection with the incest case, looseness of morals in general, their offensive action over against weak brethren, their wavering with reference to the doctrine of resurrection (to mention only a few) were symptoms which let Paul fear the worst. Even before First Corinthians he sent Timothy, and later Titus. He felt downcast when he wrote First Corinthians, fear choked him, and many a tear trickled down his furrowed cheek.

Especially the incest case weighed heavily on his heart, not so much the foul deed itself as the fact that the Corinthians were not concerned about it, did not in brotherly love rush to the rescue of the offender, but rather gloated over the matter, boasting of their Christian liberty. Paul used sharp words in condemning their attitude: “Your glorying is not good” (I Cor. 5:6).

What was Paul’s purpose in using sharp language? Was it that his temper, his grief, ran away with him? Did he use words that he would not have used had it not been for his grief, and which perhaps now he regretted? No, those words were not dictated by rancor, but by love; and their purpose was not to hurt the Corinthians. Paul assures them, οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε, not in order that you might suffer pain. Pain was inevitable, but it was not an end in itself. If Paul could have achieved his purpose in some other way, without inflicting pain, he would have been only too happy to choose that course. But there was no other way. His purpose was: ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἦν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς, but in order that you might recognize the love which I have in a special measure for you. Ἀλλὰ is strongly adversative. Inflict pain? The very opposite was Paul’s aim. He uses a clause of purpose, but for the sake of emphasis he places the object, τὴν ἀγάπην, even ahead of the conjunction ἵνα. He loves the Corinthians; he knows them. He understands their weaknesses, understands their faults, and they hurt him—but he is ready to do anything, to bring any sacrifice, in order to help them. He does not like, does not approve many things that they did, but by that very fact he is driven on to put forth every effort for helping them. Yes, he has ἀγάπη for them even περισσοτέρως, in an exceptional measure. That love motivated him when he used the sharp language which he did. That love he now emphasizes with all rhetorical means at his disposal. That love—he wanted the Corinthians to get a taste of it, to recognize it.

Such recognition does not come automatically. The Old Adam, with which the Corinthians also were burdened, resents the manifestations of ἀγάπη such as Paul had given them. It may take a Christian a long time and a strenuous struggle before he overcomes the resentment of his Old Adam at being rebuked for his faults, and before he really appreciates the love which motivated his benefactor in rebuking him. That was part of the reason why Paul postponed his visit to Corinth. He was sure that, once the Corinthians recognized his motive of love, they would understand and thank him all the more.

It remains true, as he had stated at the beginning of this section, that because he was sparing them, he had not yet come to them.

F. Verses 5–11

It was the incest case that the Corinthians had at first so badly bungled. Later they had taken Paul's admonition to heart. They had proceeded properly in the matter. They had in ever increasing numbers recognized the error of their laxity, and brought the offending young man to acknowledge and rue his fall. Now there was danger that they might make the mistake of going to extremes in the other direction. Paul warns them and instructs them how to proceed.

Let them recognize where the greatest danger lies in the case. *Εἰ δὲ τις λελύπηκεν*, Now if any one is guilty of having caused grief. With a simple *δε* Paul connects this to the foregoing. It is not adversative, but merely serves the purpose of taking up the case that, as every one realized, was on Paul's mind in the previous section. By saying *εἰ*, if, Paul does not cast doubt on the correctness of the report which he had received about the case. He knows that the young man's sin is a fact, and *εἰ* merely furnishes a convenient way of referring to it. He uses the perfect tense, *λελύπηκεν*, thereby stressing the result of the action: the young man committed the sin, and now he is burdened with the guilt of it. But what is the guilt? Whom did he hurt? *Οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν*, he is not guilty of having hurt me. Here some commentators allow their imagination a field day. They forget about the grievous incest case. They assume that Paul's visit had taken place recently, and that he is now referring to it. They assume a congregational meeting in Corinth. They assume that Paul is present, ill of health and irritable in disposition. They assume that he uses provocative language in correcting the congregation's shortcomings. They assume that some member answers Paul in an especially insulting way, so that Paul leaves in a huff and sails back to Ephesus. They assume that Paul is now trying to gloss over the breach. —All fancy! —without a single fact on record to support it—and ignoring the facts so plainly set forth in the records.

Paul is speaking about the incest case and its significance. To be sure, it had caused Paul bitter heartache. But now he says that that is not the point to be considered. *Οὐκ ἐμὲ λελύπηκεν*. What then? *ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ μέρους, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιβαρῶ, πάντας ὑμᾶς*, but in part, lest I make an overstatement, you all.—Here we have the same "all" who were mentioned twice in v. 3. Paul is not sure that they were all involved; hence, in order not to make an overstatement, he adds *ἀπὸ μέρους*, in part. That was something that they had not realized. They had not been aware of the close spiritual bonds that unite the believers, so that, if one member suffers, they all suffer. But they had taken Paul's admonition to heart, and had acted on it.

Now Paul continues, *ἰκανὸν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἢ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων*, sufficient for this (such a) one is this punishment (inflicted) by ever increasing numbers. *Ἐπιτιμία* is punishment in the sense of rebuke or reproof. Paul says that this was administered to the sinner *ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων*. This comparative often means the *majority*, the greater part of a group. But in this case that meaning would hardly harmonize with the *παντες* about whom Paul spoke (though with a slight reservation). This comparative can also indicate that the number was increasing: first some, perhaps only a few, then ever more and more. —Yes, the congregation had taken the proper steps, not all at once, but in ever increasing numbers.

The admonition that they administered had borne fruit. The sinner, such as he was, had been brought to repentance. *Ἰκανὸν*, Paul says. *Ἰκανὸν* cannot strictly be considered as the predicate adjective with the subject *ἐπιτιμία*; the gender does not agree. It has the nature of an adverb: in a sufficient way for the such-a-one was the *ἐπιτιμία* applied. The goal had been reached. Now what next? Paul continues with *ὥστε*, literally, and thus. The statement that follows contains an inference or a conclusion, the result of the situation presented in the previous part of the sentence. What is it that now follows from the fact that the sinner yielded to the admonition of his brethren and came to repentance?

Ὡστε τουναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, so that contrariwise you rather forgive and comfort (him). *Τουναντίον* is a contraction of *τὸ ἐναντίον*. The accusative is used adverbially. The rebuking about the man's sin must now cease; the directly opposite procedure must begin. That will not consist in belittling the sin or in pointing the man to some good deeds in his behavior otherwise. No, the sin remains the

same, and its damnableness remains the same. But the guilt has been wiped out by the sacrifice of Christ. Hence, comfort the sinner by announcing to him the forgiveness of his sin. Paul uses two aorist infinitives—the tense which stresses the action as such. He thus tells them that just this is the thing to do. He does not say anything else, neither by the verb form nor in some other way, either about the method or duration of the new procedure. He just stresses the forgiving and comforting, pure and simple. The danger is ever present that we give the sinner who is down and out an extra kick. Our Old Adam tries to meddle in the affairs that lie strictly in the field of the Gospel. No, when a man is struck by the *terrores conscientiae*, the grace of God must be proclaimed to him; the unadulterated Gospel is the only word to apply to him, without any ifs and buts, without any conditions or reservations, without any admixtures of any kind.

Paul next points out the danger, if the Corinthians should fail to adopt this procedure: μή πως τῆ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ καταποθῆ ὁ τοιοῦτος, lest in some way the such-a-one be swallowed up by his (the) excessive grief. Paul places the subject of the sentence, ὁ τοιοῦτος, into the unusual position at the very end of the sentence. Thereby, in addition to the word which he uses, he calls special attention to the spiritual condition of the man, such a one as he was, burdened with his guilt, ashamed of his sin, grieved about the offence which he had caused. He apparently was bordering on the brink of despair, doubting whether his sin might ever be forgiven. In him you could see an illustration of the 38th Psalm. He stood in danger of being drowned in his excessive grief. Therefore, so Paul urges the Corinthians, comfort him with the assurance of forgiveness.

Paul adds some practical advice on the mode of procedure: διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην, accordingly I urge you to ratify (your) love to him. —Paul here uses the verb κυρῶω, which he uses also in Gal. 3:15; and then in its compound form, προκυρῶω, in Gal. 3:17. There he speaks of a man's testament as κεκυρωμενη, and then applies it to God's promises, calling them προκεκυρωμενα. The verb means to confirm solemnly and officially. A man's testament is probated, and God's promises were probated in advance. In our text the verb suggests the idea of confirming by solemn resolution, ratifying.

When Paul was informed that incest had been committed by a member of the congregation he formulated a resolution to be adopted by the brethren in their meeting: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ... to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:4, 5). The purpose of destroying the man's flesh had now been achieved. He repented in deep sorrow. Now a different resolution was in place: the congregation must solemnly confirm love to the repentant sinner. —This pertains not only to the local congregation in Corinth, but, as Paul had emphatically declared repeatedly above, he is speaking to all the addressees of his letter, to each and every one. It concerns them all; they all must act.

The Corinthians had blundered seriously in many respects. Their conduct was an offence to the church universal. It is important for themselves and for the whole church that they give unmistakable evidence of their unequivocal submission to the Gospel. Their action in the incest matter is a case in point. Εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα ἵνα γνῶ τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν, εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοι ἐστε, For this was also a purpose of my writing that I might get to know your proof, if you are obedient in all things. Δοκιμή is a test successfully passed, a proof (German, *Bewahrung*). Their obedience, which the test was to show, is not personal obedience to Paul—he had emphatically declined lordship over their faith (ch. 1:24)—it is obedience to the Gospel, something which had been dangerously dwindling in Corinth.

As Paul had so far always stressed the close bonds that united him with the Corinthians, so he does here again. Ὡς δὲ τι χαρίζεσθε, καγώ, and to whom you forgive anything, I also. Such full confidence Paul has in the Christian faith and judgment of the Corinthians that he practically hands them a blank check to fill in as they please. If they announce to an excommunicated sinner that he has been reinstated, Paul will go along with them. Not only will he raise no objections, he will rejoice with them in their action. Such is the tie that binds Christian hearts together. When they excommunicate, and when they re-instate, they do this as brethren and as representatives of Christ, in His name, as people who have been entrusted with the keys by Him. Paul states this principle by explaining how he exercises it personally: καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὁ κεχάρισμαι, εἴ τι κεχάρισμαι, δι' ὑμᾶς ἐν προώσῳ Χριστοῦ, For also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, (it was) because of you in the person of Christ.

The matter was very serious in Corinth, and is serious in every case of disciplinary action by a church body. Both the admonition and the announcement of forgiveness must be carried out in the spirit of Christ. The devil is always busy, trying to worm his way into the deal. Paul says, ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτηθῶμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ, that we may not become the victims of Satan's wiles, that Satan may not take advantage of some weakness in our Christian armor.

This is something that the Corinthians had overlooked in their dealings with the incest case. The devil had "his fingers in the pie." Paul had reminded them of this when in I Cor. 5 he suggested a resolution delivering the offender to Satan; he reminds them of it again now. It is something every congregation must remember. When they neglect to admonish a sinner, Satan is winning a victory. When they admonish a sinner in a legalistic way, Satan again is reaping the benefits. And when they refuse to proclaim forgiveness to a repentant sinner, Satan celebrates a triumph. —Do not let him get an advantage.

Paul concludes this section with a remark, the full meaning of which will not become apparent till we reach the third main part of the Epistle. Οὐ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν, For we are not ignorant of his devices. —What were the schemes of the devil, of which Paul was well aware? Paul does not say. We must leave the question open for the present. We shall return to it later.

G. Verses 2:12–17*

In the previous parts of chapters 1 and 2 Paul had time and again voiced his great interest in the Corinthian congregation, and had expressed his deep concern for their welfare. In the last verse of the previous section he had also referred to the schemes of Satan, of which he maintained that he was well aware. He did not reveal what the deadly designs of Satan are, but left that for some later discussion. —In our present section, in vv. 12 and 13, he cites an incident from his stay in Troas that illustrates his deep concern for the Corinthians, pointing out what effect it had on the apostle's mission activities.

Elthōn de eis tēn Trōada, Now, having come to Troas. *De* merely continues the narrative. There is no contrast between the present statement and the foregoing. The important thing is his stay in Troas. Paul is on his way to Corinth via Macedonia. The time is probably the end of May or the beginning of June, since he left Ephesus immediately after the riot of Demetrius, which took place in connection with the May festivals in honor of Diana. Troas was his last stopping place in Asia. From Troas he had set sail for Macedonia on his second mission journey, about 5 or 6 years ago. As we see from chap. 7:5 his presence was required in Macedonia, the Gospel work needed his personal attention, but the situation was not really pressing. Paul planned to spend some time first in Troas. He came there εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, in connection with the Gospel of Christ.

We have no record of the Gospel work in Troas. It may be assumed that Paul preached there during his stop on his second mission journey before receiving the call to Macedonia, which came to him in a vision. On his journey to Jerusalem to deliver the collection that he was even now in the process of gathering, then, after he had visited Corinth, he preached to a large gathering in an upper room (Acts 20:7ff.). There was a congregation in Troas at that time. —Paul mentions the place again in the last letter which we have from his pen, II Tim. 4:13.

En route to Corinth via Macedonia Paul came to Troas in the interest of the Gospel of Christ, evidently planning to spend some time in the city. The opportunity for preaching the Gospel was very good. He says, Καὶ θύρας μοι ἀνεωγμένης ἐν κυρίῳ, and a door standing open before me in the Lord. *Ἀνεωγμένη* is the perfect tense, thus denoting a condition resulting from some completed action, the nature of which (punctiliar, repeated, durative) is of no further interest. The fact to be noted is that the door stood wide open, ready for Paul to walk in. This was the case ἐν κυρίῳ. The arrangement of the situation was clearly of the Lord's doing, and promised rich blessings from the Lord.

* This is the last section of the text that was discussed by the Conference on the basis of mere notes. The continuation, beginning with chap. 3, was prepared in essay form, and was read to the Conference. The series of studies appeared in the Theol. Quartalschrift, beginning with the July issue of 1953.

Why did Paul not seize upon this golden opportunity? Paul answers, οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματι μου, I had no rest in my spirit. —In ἔσχηκα we have another case of a perfect tense which apparently lost its specific perfect tense meaning and degenerated into a mere statement of historical fact. It does not seem to mean that Paul still was feeling the effects of a certain disappointment that he experienced in Troas, but it seems to register merely the fact that Paul did experience a disappointment.

There was something about the situation in Troas that troubled his πνεύμα. Are we going too far, or are we reading something into the word, if we assume that Paul was not only mentally upset, but that he actually felt a disturbance in his spiritual life, in his faith, as an apostle of Jesus Christ? Physically he seems to have been well taken care of in Troas, and in view of the “open door” his mind might have felt very much satisfied. Yet his spirit was disturbed.

By what? and in what respect? —Paul answers, τῷ μὴ εὐρεῖν με Τίτον τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, by not finding Titus, my brother. —Titus was to meet him in Troas, to bring a report from Corinth. He did not arrive on time. What had happened? What had delayed Titus, so that he did not keep his appointment? Had his mission to Corinth been a failure? Were conditions in Corinth deteriorating? Were they improving, but too slowly? so that Titus’ presence was still required? Were things turning hopeless? No wonder Paul was uneasy, since he might fear the worst. The uncertainty robbed his spirit of its rest. To know the worst would have been more tolerable than this suspense.

It was not ordinary curiosity, or purely human concern that troubled Paul. If it had been, then he might have felt more than compensated by the splendid mission opportunity that he found in Troas. But Paul seemed to think that if matters did not improve in Corinth, then that loss would by far outweigh any gains that he might make in Troas. From his experience in his mission work in general and in Corinth in particular, and from the Lord’s announcement that He had much people in that city, Paul had learned to recognize Corinth as a key city in his work. As long as conditions in Corinth remained unsettled, he could not proceed beyond. He was entertaining plans to go west, to visit Rome and to bring the Gospel to Spain. But with Corinth lost, there would not only be a basis of operation missing, rather, the city would have been turned into a stronghold for the enemy. The loss of Corinth might also have its repercussions on congregations in the east, the churches in Macedonia, in Asia Minor, in Galatia. The Judaizers and other detractors of Paul’s work would be encouraged and strengthened by their success in that key city. —Paul had no rest in his spirit. He left for Macedonia.

What impression would this procedure of Paul make on the Corinthians? It made them aware of the deep concern that Paul had for their wellbeing. He not only said so, but now they could see that this concern determined his decisions and actions; it had a far-reaching influence on his mission work. Healthy conditions in their midst would strengthen the hands of Paul, but by their default they would dampen his spirit and hamstring his efforts. By thus getting to feel Paul’s deep concern they were reminded of their own responsibility.

Paul departed from Troas: ἀλλὰ ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς ἐξῆλθον εἰς Μακεδονίαν, but taking my leave from them I departed for Macedonia. Ἀποτάσσεσθαι, literally to set oneself away from, to separate oneself, to withdraw from, is frequently, as in this case, used for formal leave taking, bidding farewell. If we take Paul’s farewell address to the Ephesian elders, which St. Luke records in Acts 20:17ff., as a pattern, we can easily imagine what Paul may have said to the brethren on this occasion, encouraging them to go through that “open door,” something which he, because of circumstances, could not do; warning them to be on the alert against trouble makers who would come to them from without, and against ambitious teachers who might arise in their own midst; and commending them to the Lord and to the word of His grace.

It certainly was not easy for Paul to take leave under such circumstances; but his concern for Corinth made it necessary.

Let us not get the idea that Paul was suffering from defeatism. Far from it. He was firmly convinced that the Gospel would come out victorious in any event, even though the Corinthians might squander its blessings for themselves. Both as a warning to the Corinthians, and at the same time as an encouragement for timid believers, he compared the course of the Gospel to a triumphal procession.

Τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ πάντοτε θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, But thanks (be) to God, who always grants us a triumph in Christ. Θριαμβεύω occurs but twice in the New Testament, besides our passage only in

Col. 2:15. It is not used in the same sense in both cases. In the Colossians' passage it is applied to the defeated enemies. God, having stripped the princes and rulers of darkness of their armor through Christ Jesus, through Him also made a public show of them, leading them in a triumphal procession. In our passage the θριαμβεύειν is applied to Paul as the victorious general, meaning that he was granted a triumphal procession in recognition of his successful campaign. In fact, his whole mission work was one continuous triumph.

It is not pride when Paul compares his success in the Gospel to a triumphal procession. He did not merit it by his own skill and ingenuity. With due modesty, yet true to fact, he adds ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ. It is Christ's victory and Christ's triumph, not Paul's. Paul was Christ's minister, but God granted him the triumph in and through Christ.

Having introduced the figure of a triumph, Paul now speaks about the successful work of the Gospel in terms borrowed from a triumphal procession, with which his readers were well acquainted. In a triumph garlands of flowers decorated the victors and their chariots, and quantities of incense were burned. There was a strong sweet odor tickling the olfactory nerves of all, participants and spectators, the victors as well as the defeated victims, in such a procession. Paul applies this aspect to his Gospel work in the following participial phrase: καὶ τὴν ὄσμην τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, (God) who brings forth into the open the odor of His knowledge through us in every place. The course of the Gospel in the world is like a triumph because in it God spreads His sweet odor, namely a knowledge of Him. Remember how Jesus in His high-priestly prayer connected the knowledge of God with eternal life: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). That knowledge is a sweet odor that God spreads through the Gospel in every place where it is proclaimed.

The odor in a triumphal procession was sweet to the participants and spectators only. To the victims, who were led in chains along the triumph, to be executed at its close—to them that same odor was a terrible one; for them it meant shame and certain death. The odor was the same in both cases. Just so it is with the Gospel: Ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμὲν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, For Christ's sweet odor we are to God in those being saved and in those perishing. Christ's sweet odor remains unchanged, though its appreciation by different people varies immensely. Οἷς μὲν ὄσμη ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὄσμη ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν, to the ones an odor from death to death, to the others an odor from life to life. The Gospel always triumphs; it is never put to shame. In the case of those that are saved it appears as the glorious power of God unto salvation. No one is ever lost too deeply in sin, the Gospel is able to rescue him, and does rescue him ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν; there is complete life, vigorous life, a happy life all along the line, with no trace left of death or weakness. But the Gospel is just as triumphant in the case of them that are lost. Why are they lost? Because they refused to accept the Gospel. They would not have it, they relied on their own efforts. And now what have they? Perdition, ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον. The Gospel triumphs again. It stood ready with its salvation for all, also for the ones that rejected it. Outside of the Gospel there is no salvation. Those that declined the salvation of the Gospel imagined they could have salvation without it; they relied on their own record. Their attempt was a complete failure. By their very failure the Gospel stands vindicated as the only power unto salvation.

Paul mentioned above that God grants *us* a triumph, and spreads the sweet odor of His knowledge *through us*, that *we* are the sweet odor of Christ. What have *we* to do with the matter? The matter seems too stupendous for our poor power.

Therefore he now asks the question: καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἰκανός; and who is sufficient for these things? This is a real question, not a rhetorical one. Paul wants his readers to start thinking about the qualifications required to produce such results. This was necessary particularly over against his detractors, who posed as apostles far superior to Paul; who insinuated that Paul's Gospel could not be trusted because he had changed his travel plans. Now Paul said that his Gospel preaching is one grand triumphal procession, that his Gospel preaching means complete life to some of his hearers and inevitable death to the others. What qualifications can he show which enable him to produce such results? Yes, who is sufficient for these things?

Paul answers: οὐ γὰρ ἐσμὲν, for we are not. Γὰρ introduces a motivation. Before this motivation a thought must be supplied. The answer to the question "Who is sufficient?" assumes and presupposes the thought that *we are*; then the answer continues, for we are not, etc. This thought that *we*, Paul and his associates, are

sufficient is not foreign to the context, in fact the context demands it. Had not Paul in the immediately preceding sentence spoken about himself and his associates as enjoying a constant triumphal procession, as being instrumental in spreading the odor of God's knowledge, yes, as being themselves Christ's sweet odor with its tremendous effect? The question "*Who* is sufficient?" thus actually amounts to this: How is it that we, yes, we much maligned weak servants, can achieve such results? The answer now, in the first place, is negative, because we are not so and so, because we avoid a certain mistake.

Paul is sorry to say that the mistake is a very common one. We are not ὡς οἱ πολλοί, as the many, as the common run of false apostles. —The Corinthians were at this very moment being disturbed in their individual as well as in their congregational faith-life by trouble makers who posed as superior apostles. Their methods were not exceptional, they have a certain appeal, and they entrap many. These same alluring errors are surrounding us today, and threaten to ruin our Gospel work. We do well to let ourselves be put on guard by Paul's οἱ πολλοί, and to pay close attention to his description of their ruinous ways.

He uses the expression, καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. Here the pivotal word καπηλεύω demands our attention. It is derived from καπηλος, an innkeeper, a petty retailer, a huckster, a peddler. Καπηλεια occurs in contrast to ἐμπορία, from which our English word emporium is derived. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, lists as meanings of the verb: *to be a retailer, to peddle; to make money by selling anything, to get sordid gain by dealing in anything, to do a thing for base gain; also to corrupt, to adulterate*—the last particularly because of the habit of some tavern keepers to dilute their wine with water. Compare Paul's parallel phrase in chap. 4:2, δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. Thus καπηλευεῖν το εὐαγγέλιον means to regard the Gospel as a commodity, to try to "sell" the Gospel, usually with the connotation of some "shady" dealings.

The abuse may assume different forms. The Judaizers of Paul's day did it by adding the observance of the Old Testament ceremonial law to the Gospel. To submit to circumcision and to observe the Jewish festival calendar and clean-food regulations was presented as an aid to making the blessings of the Gospel secure. In that sense people, particularly Jews, were more ready to accept the Gospel, seeing that thereby some credit accrued also to themselves for their salvation. —The troublemakers in Corinth tried to sell their Gospel on a competitive basis, considering Paul as their rival, and denouncing his Gospel as inferior. —Others may practice the abuse of καπηλευεῖν by offering inducements together with the Gospel. Paul hints at such tactics when in I Cor. 2:1 he says that he did not come "with excellency of speech or of wisdom."

All such and similar practices fall under the general head of καπηλευεῖν. They are not harmless tricks of trade, but they affect the Gospel itself and corrupt it. Regarding the Judaizers' procedure Paul says expressly in Gal. 1:6, 7 that they are bringing another Gospel, which may not be considered as just another brand, but which is no Gospel at all. — Καπηλευεῖν in any form deactivates and ruins the Gospel. Any one who wishes to see the Gospel produce its divinely intended fruit must abstain from καπηλευεῖν, otherwise he cannot qualify as ἱκανός.

After having stated, negatively, the abuse that must be avoided, Paul with a strong ἀλλά turns to a positive statement of the requirements. He lists four points. He says first of all λαλοῦμεν, we speak, ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας, as from sincerity. —The most commonly accepted etymology of εἰλικρινής is interesting. The second part clearly contains the stem κρίνω, to examine, to evaluate. The first part is from εἶλη, the bright sun light. In order to be εἰλικρινής, able to pass the testing of the bright sun light, the preaching of the Gospel must be done in perfect accord with its nature. According to Rom. 1:17 the Gospel reveals the "righteousness of God." It addresses itself to a sin-laden world, assuring every guilty conscience that God Himself in Christ prepared a valid righteousness for every sinner, that in the resurrection of Christ He already proclaimed all sins of the world forgiven, and then in the Gospel invites the trembling conscience to accept His gracious gift in faith. Εἰλικρινεῖα demands of the preacher that he present the Gospel just so, without additions, or subtractions, or alterations.

The second point that Paul stresses is that the preachers of the Gospel speak ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ, as from God. He prefixes this with a second ἀλλά, used by way of intensifying the thought: not only ordinary human εἰλικρινεῖα, but such as has its origin in God. The ὡς naturally does not mean *as if*, but has a causal connotation. —With the prepositional phrase ἐκ θεοῦ Paul places himself and his assistants completely at the disposal of

God. They speak only when and what God would have them speak, and are silent when God is silent. Their message is God's message; as Peter expressed it, they speak ὡς λόγια θεοῦ (I Pet. 4:11).

They speak, thirdly, κατέναντι θεοῦ, in the presence of God. This not merely refers to God's supervision: God has appointed us to preach, He has given us the message to deliver, and now He is ever with us, supervising our work to see that we carry out our assignment as He would have us. That is true, but κατέναντι θεοῦ means much more. Remember Jesus' last promise to His disciples: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Remember what Paul said to Agrippa in Caesarea: "Having therefore obtained *help of God*, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22). A proof of God's ever-present help Paul had mentioned in chap. 1:9, 10: "That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." In the presence of God Paul performed his apostleship, trusting alone in His aid and protection.

Closely connected with the preceding, practically embracing them all and giving meaning to them, is Paul's last prepositional phrase: We speak ἐν Χριστῷ. Paul's message is absolutely Christ-centered. Whatever Christ means to the world, that he will proclaim in full, and nothing but that; whatever is foreign to Christ, he will eliminate from his words. Christ is not a mere man, He is the Son of God: So Paul will proclaim Him. Christ was crucified for the sins of the world. Though this is a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, Paul proclaims Christ crucified as the only One in whom we have redemption, and justification, and sanctification. He proclaims Christ as the One in whom our life is hidden. He proclaims Christ as the God-appointed judge of the world. And he pronounces an anathema on any and every endeavor to mingle human works with Christ's righteousness. They are dung and a loss. Thus Paul speaks ἐν Χριστῷ, having determined not to know anything in his work as an apostle save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

That is his answer to the question "Who is sufficient for these things?" That was the proper answer in his day; it is the only proper answer in our day. It breathes the spirit of εἰλικρινεία and insures the purity of doctrine. It is not our own achievement, but is the spirit ἐκ θεοῦ. That spirit won the victory over character assassins and Judaizers in Paul's day; it will insure the triumph of the Gospel over unionism, over *Pro deo et patria* awards, and what have you, today.