

# SECOND CORINTHIANS

[Chapters 10 to 13]

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## Introductory Remarks

Chapters 10 to 13 form the third and last part of Second Corinthians. The Epistle clearly falls into three main parts, each one dealing with a specific subject. The break between the second and third parts is especially marked, so sharp indeed that many critics consider the following chapters as a separate letter, or at least as a part of another letter. They call this part the “Four Chapter Epistle.” Yet, although the language and the tone of these chapters is very much different from that of the two preceding parts, they clearly belong to our present SECOND CORINTHIANS, as a part of which they appear in all old codices. “No abbreviated text has ever been discovered, to raise even the faintest question on this score, and no text with an omission or with omissions has ever been found” (Lenski).

Parts One and Two, though they treat their respective subjects with great clarity, still raise a number of questions which they leave unanswered. To mention a few: Why does Paul so elaborately explain that a change in his travel plans does not affect the unchanging truth of the Gospel message which he proclaims? Why does he maintain that his purpose in deferring his visit to Corinth to a later date was to spare the Corinthians? Why does he enlarge on the superiority of the New Testament over the Old, charging the Jews that they read their Old Testament with a veil over their heart? The collection for the needy Christians in Jerusalem, which a year ago the Corinthians had endorsed enthusiastically, had lagged seriously. Why? And why is Paul so extremely careful in explaining his sending of helpers to organize and speed up the gathering of funds?

Such and similar questions call for an answer, which is not given in Parts One and Two. The Corinthians, no doubt, knew the reason, but they needed instruction and guidance in dealing practically with the unhealthy situation. This instruction and guidance Paul now gives in the form of a personal defense. His person is involved, and for the sake of the Gospel he must vindicate himself. He does not relish the task, yet in the interest of the spiritual wellbeing of the Corinthian Church he considers it necessary. It is well to bear this in mind throughout the study of this section. According to the principle as Paul had expressed it in chap. 5:12: “For we commend not ourselves again to you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart”—according to this principle Paul is now defending himself against the accusations and insinuations which the troublemakers peddled in Corinth, and which the Corinthians failed, or were not able, to meet effectively—and by which their faith was greatly endangered.

Note. For a brief listing of the events during the year just prior to the writing of Second Corinthians see *Quartalschrift*, April, 1958, p. 124.

## I. Chapter 10:1–6

With a bold  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\grave{\epsilon}\ \epsilon\gamma\omega$  Paul announces that he is now taking up a personal matter. What he had written so far was on the whole a joint message from him and Timothy, with an occasional personal remark (cf. eg., chap. 1:23ff.). The section which now follows has to do directly with Paul only. An occasional “we” indicates that the derogatory remarks of the troublemakers had not spared his assistants; they had also been “smeared” (cf. e.g. v. 2).

Paul begins with a plea, παρακαλῶ. Παρακαλεῖν always denotes an appeal, with a wide range of form in which it may be issued, from mild to severe, from a gentle request to the sternest rebuke. —In the present case he bases his appeal on the meekness and gentleness of Christ, διὰ τῆς πραύτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The single article before the two nouns combines them into a compound unit. Meekness is the inner attitude of the heart, which manifests itself in gentleness when dealing with men. The word ἐπιεικής is never used of Jesus, except by Paul in the present passage, while πραύς is predicated of Him twice in the Gospel of St. Matthew. Jesus invited us to learn from Him ὅτι πραύς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ (Matt. 11:29). And about His entry into Jerusalem Matthew cited the prophecy of Zechariah to the effect that Zion's King is coming πραύς. His dealings with poor sinners was always from a heart filled with ἐπιείκεια and in a manner guided by πραύτης. But let no one get the idea that His ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης was a spineless nonchalance. Think of the stern woes which He uttered against all hypocrites; think of His purging of the temple.

He manifested His ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης by laying down His life for the world; and it is by His ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης alone that we live. The precious ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης of our Lord, which the Corinthians experienced in a rich measure when the Gospel was first proclaimed to them, and which they only recently experienced again in a special way when by its power they overcame their difficulties, should move them to guard this treasure most jealously. Paul leads them to consider that the real attack of the Judaizing troublemakers was directed against the ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης of the Lord, to rob the Corinthians of this treasured possession. Their life flowing from and resting in the ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης of the Lord is at stake. Hence Paul bases his appeal on this grace of Christ. The very ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης of the Lord is put out of commission for them by the errors of the false apostles. To the Galatians Paul expressed this truth with the words: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (chap. 5:4).

In form the attack of the troublemakers was directed against the person of Paul. Paul adds it in a relative clause, ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὸν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, who in my personal presence (am) humble indeed among you, but from a (safe) distance I dare to act boldly toward you. —The sentence apparently is not Paul's own, it reads like a quotation. If the words are not the identical ones which Paul's slanderers used, they at least reproduce very correctly the derogatory opinion which the troublemakers held concerning him, and which they foisted on the gullible members of the Corinthian congregation.

Paul was indeed "tapeinov". When the Lord's ἐπιείκεια and πραύτης overpowered him, he learned this attitude from his Master. Although he labored more than the other apostles, he considered himself as the least among them, not worthy to be called an apostle. In his Gospel work he practiced true sympathy. When dealing with the weak, he became as weak; to those under the Law as under the Law; to those without the Law as without the Law. He was gentle with the newly won Christians "even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (I Thess. 2:7). It may not always have been easy for Paul to practice this type of ταπεινοφροσύνη, since by nature he was quick, energetic, active. He gave sad evidence of his natural boldness during the time before his conversion by the way in which he carried on the persecution against the Christians. When he became a Christian, the natural traits of his character were not changed: they were sanctified and placed into the service of the Gospel. It was not cunning calculation when Paul in his Gospel work employed ταπεινοφροσύνη; he did it for the Gospel's sake. It was for him a way of growing in sanctification that he might be a partaker of the Gospel jointly with his hearers (cf. I Cor. 9:23)

This method of Paul in his work, which he had applied also in Corinth, his detractors deliberately misconstrued as personal cowardice. They knew better. Paul had met the fierce attacks of the Judaizers in Antioch after his return from his first mission journey. He had courageously defended the Law-free Gospel at the council in Jerusalem. Whether they had been present personally at these encounters or not, it was their group which had gone down in defeat before the undaunted Paul. Yet they did not blush to insinuate that Paul dared to put on a bold front only at a safe distance, but in his personal presence was an easy pushover.

What steps is Paul going to take to clear himself of these insinuations? He does not outline in detail the course which he will follow, but merely asserts that his opponents will get a taste of his boldness, which they

foolishly question; and he pleads with the Corinthians not to become personally involved. They should clearly dissociate themselves from the troublemakers.

Δέομαι δὲ τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι, I pray, however, that I may not (have to) be bold in my presence. As the personal object of δέομαι we readily supply ὑμᾶς from the first sentence where it is the object of the verb παρακαλῶ, and accordingly as the object of θαρρῆσαι we supply εἰς ὑμᾶς. It seems that the troublemakers were still present in Corinth, and Paul is planning some drastic action against them. He is now pleading with the Corinthians that it may not become necessary for him to use boldness against them also, something that would happen when he uses boldness against the troublemakers to such as have not dissociated themselves from them.

He is determined to spare no one, and trusting in the power of the Gospel he is confident that no one will be able to withstand. He is going to proceed τῇ πεποιθῆσει ἢ λογίζομαι πολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινάς, with that confidence with which I calculate to act boldly against certain ones. Πεποιθησις is a verbal noun denoting the action. Paul is persuaded, he has the sure confidence. This is not human boldness. It is not a reliance on his superior knowledge or ability. It is the confidence of faith, born out of the Gospel, which had overpowered his own fiercely resisting heart, and had been graciously confirmed to him by the many triumphs of the Gospel which he had been privileged to witness. In spite of opposition and persecution his mission work had been one glorious triumphal procession (cf. chap. 2:14).

In this confidence he now calculates to challenge the troublemakers. Τολμῆσαι he says. This is an aorist infinitive, thus stressing the action as such. No idea of duration, iteration, completion, or success is added. Paul realizes that there is no other way, he simply must attack the gainsayers; and attack them he will. His attack will result in the defeat of the opponents, he is confident of that. His only concern is that none of the Corinthians should become involved in his attack. If they cannot themselves shake off the intruders, they must at least avoid them. Else *mitgegangen* would result in *mitgefangen* and *mitgehangen*.

It is interesting to note how Paul describes the troublemakers. He does not mention them directly, he refers to them as τινάς, some ones, τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, who consider us as (people) walking according to (the) flesh. We have here in λογιζομένους a present participle of the verb λογίζομαι, which Paul used in the first part of this verse, with a slightly different shade of meaning. There Paul was considering and determining a course of action which he was to take; here the enemies of Paul are considering him and his associates, evaluating his principles and mode of procedure. They look at Paul and his associates as περιπατοῦντας, as walking about, as conducting themselves, as managing their affairs. In doing this they have no idea of the πρᾶυτης and ἐπιείκεια of Christ, which Paul learned from his Master. They have no understanding of this spiritual principle. They imagine that Paul is guided and determined in his actions by considerations of expediency, of human shrewdness—and by human weakness. It is κατὰ σάρκα ever to bear in mind that “discretion is the better part of valor” (or as the Irish soldier formulated it when he deserted the battle: “I would rather be a live coward for five minutes than a dead hero all the rest of my life.”). Paul’s detractors will soon find out that his ταπεινοφροσύνη is not something dictated by human considerations.

Yes, Paul is still living ἐν σαρκί, and by his flesh he is hampered very much in doing his work. He had to change his travel plans, to mention one example, because in his human limitations he could not foresee the inroads which the Judaizers would attempt in Corinth. He is, to use another figure, carrying the rich treasure of the Gospel in a weak earthen vessel. This is according to God’s plans, “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (chap. 4:7).

Although thus περιπατοῦντες ἐν σαρκί, οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, we are not campaigning according to the flesh. For a campaign considerable planning must be done, proper implements must be provided, enthusiasm must be instilled in the army. Apply this to the mission campaign of Paul. Human strength, human ingenuity, human enthusiasm had nothing to do with it. This mission campaign, both with its broad outlines and with its minutest details, lay completely in the hands of God. If this mission campaign were to be conducted κατὰ σαρκά it would be doomed to failure. Just as no man can by his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him, so likewise, no human reason or strength can lead any other man to faith or bring him to Jesus. No force of argument, no human inducement will avail. God alone can provide efficient implements.

Paul singles out the implements of operation: τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, for the weapons of our campaign are not fleshly, but mighty for God. The whole equipment which Paul and his associates need for their campaign is from God; above all, the weapons both for attack and for defense. In one word, their sole equipment is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Also the skill in using this implement is not produced by human training, but, according to the promise of Jesus, is provided by the Holy Spirit: When they hail you before their courts, “take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak” (Matt. 10:19).

Since Paul here opposes δυνατός to σαρκικός, it is evident that by thus speaking of the flesh he has chiefly its weakness in mind. Although he is living in weakness, he is not doing his work in weakness. His work is in the nature of a warfare, requiring powerful weapons, which no human flesh can provide. But the weapons which God supplies are powerful for God to achieve God’s purpose. —The dative τῷ θεῷ sounds a little strange. Many take it as qualifying the adjective δυνατά: divinely powerful. It expresses more. The weapons are to be used in God’s campaign, and they are qualified for just that purpose; they are mighty for God to achieve the victory for Him.

They are powerful πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, for the razing of fortresses. —A kingdom erects fortresses to protect its boundaries, and to prevent hostile inroads. The enemies of God and of His Gospel also constitute a well-organized kingdom with many mighty strongholds to ward off the Gospel. If the Gospel is to bring salvation to the world, it cannot by-pass these fortifications; it must be able to wreck them. To mention some of these strongholds we take a list from John’s First Epistle, where he describes the world as holding its own with “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (chap. 2:15–17). We know e.g. what a strong hold the pride of life had on Paul. It was not only the natural inborn idea of work-righteousness. It was that idea religiously fortified by a misunderstanding of God’s Law. Paul himself describes this zeal in Rom. 10:2f: “They (sc. of Israel) have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Yet the Gospel was strong enough to break down this apparently impregnable fortress and to make Paul a prisoner of war for itself.

Think of the strong hold which the lust of the flesh in its coarser forms has on some people, and what an insurmountable barrier it seems to offer to the Gospel. —Think of the pride of the Greeks in their achievements in philosophy, in poetry, in the arts of sculpture and architecture. Yet also these fortresses fell before the onsets of the Gospel. —The weapons of Paul’s warfare are indeed mighty for the wrecking of strongholds.

In order to impress the Corinthians still more with the divine power of the Gospel which he proclaims, Paul, still continuing the metaphor of warfare, partly translates the figurative language into direct statements. In an easy way he connects his new thought to the foregoing with a present participle. Case, number, and gender of this participle show that it refers to the subject of the main clause. We, the apostles, are λογισμοὺς καθαίροντες, wrecking thoughts and designs and calculations, etc. He retains the idea of wrecking, but he specifies the strongholds as thoughts and designs. He is therewith, of course, not referring to human plans in the fields of politics, or economics, etc., but to such in the religious field, such as the ideas underlying all the common forms of idol worship. Although coarse idolatry had at this time lost much of its appeal (cf. *Haruspex, cure haruspicem videt, rider.*), yet the basic ideas of work righteousness and of buying the favor of the gods with sacrifices had been developed scientifically by the various schools of philosophy. Thus the inborn *opinio legis* had been tremendously reenforced by the λογισμοί of the philosophers.

The word λογισμός refers both to the content and to the activity of our thinking. In the other passage of the New Testament in which the word occurs, Rom. 2:15, the λογισμοί are represented as accusing and excusing. Note the English words which the New Greek-English Lexicon lists: “calculation, reasoning, reflection, thought”—also “designs.” For our passage the Lexicon suggests: “sophistries.”

Paul had successfully stormed these fortresses of human λογισμοί. Think of his encounter with the leaders of the Stoics and Epicureans on Areopagus. They ridiculed him when he spoke of the resurrection, still “certain men clave to him and believed: among which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named

Damaris, and others with them” (Acts 17:34). The Gospel had succeeded in breaking down their philosophic fortification.

In the following verse Paul unfolds the picture in several directions. While so far he had mentioned strongholds in general, he now singles out the most formidable ones: καὶ πᾶν ὕψωμα ἐπαίρομενον, and every height that is being raised up. The most impregnable fortifications are erected on inaccessible heights of land, the more inaccessible the better. The natural difficulties of approach are elaborately developed and supplemented artificially. Satan fortifies his kingdom by developing the natural tendencies of the world (enumerated by John as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life) to their highest potential, by undergirding them with sophistry, making them appear as reasonable, as beneficial, as desirable, and their opposites as foolish. Yet Paul says that he in his Gospel work is battering down every height, without exception, no matter how elaborately it had been erected.

The participle ἐπαίρομενον not merely points to the ingenuity and the labor that goes into the building of these fortresses, it also points to the purpose which they are to serve. The phrase continues, erected against the knowledge of God. —What the knowledge of God is we may learn from Jer. 31:34: “They shall all know me ... for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sins no more.” The same truth is expressed by Zacharias in his Benedictus: “To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins” (Luke 1:77). This is the knowledge of God in which, according to Jesus’ words, eternal life consists: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). —This knowledge of God is not a mere intellectual acknowledgment that there is a God, Creator and supreme Ruler of the universe; it is not a mere admission that God is triune, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: it is a personal meeting of, and contact with God through the forgiveness of sins which He imparts to the heart, and the serene peace of conscience which accompanies that forgiveness as its fruit; all of which God announces to us through the Word of His Gospel and seals to us by means of His Sacraments. It is a personal contact which God establishes by kindling faith in our hearts through His afore-mentioned means, a faith which appropriates the proclaimed forgiveness. All of these different factors taken together constitute a unit blessing, which the Scriptures call the knowledge of God. Wherever this knowledge of God is established, there Satan suffered a defeat; a stronghold, a high fortress has been wrecked, and his kingdom begins to crumble. Paul’s Gospel warfare accomplished just that since the day that God commissioned him as His standard bearer in this campaign.

The second part of verse 5 introduces another term taken from warfare language: αἰχμαλωτίζοντες. The form is the present participle, plural masculine, nominative, agreeing with “we,” the subject since verse 3. The meaning of the word is: to take prisoners of war. —In speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem Jesus used the word: “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24). Prisoners of war were sold as slaves. In Rom. 7:23, Paul uses the verb metaphorically: “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and αἰχμαλωτίζοντα me to the law of sin.” The sense is the same, making me a slave, forcing me into service. The verb occurs once more in a metaphorical sense, II Tim. 3:6: “For of this sort are they which creep into houses αἰχμαλωτίζοντες silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”—The simple noun, αἰχμάλωτος, occurs in a quotation from the Old Testament in Luke 4:18, meaning a prisoner, a captive. Paul uses the compound αἰχμάλωτος twice (Rom. 16:7; Col. 4:10) to designate some one as a fellow laborer in the Gospel, being a fellow captive of Jesus.

This verb, αἰχμαλωτίζειν, Paul now introduces to describe the success of his Gospel campaign, καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, and taking captive every thought for the obedience of Christ. With the word νόημα Paul takes up the idea which in the previous verse he had expressed with λογισμός. He is referring to men whose thoughts and designs were formerly used as ramparts against the progress of the Gospel, but which are now taken captive by the Gospel and are forced to serve the Gospel. Paul never calls himself directly an αἰχμάλωτος of the Lord (only by implication, calling others his συναἰχμάλωτοι), yet his Christian career most impressively illustrates the meaning of αἰχμαλωτίζειν. Paul’s was a keen mind, a strong will, a firm character. All of these characteristics he originally developed and employed against the

Gospel. But in his conversion Christ took over the control of these same characteristics and made them work in the interest of the Gospel. Now what happened in Paul's case in a very spectacular way, happened (and happens) in every conversion to a greater or lesser degree.

This (as just outlined) is the power and method of Paul, as any one may readily see who follows his career as a missionary from Cyprus through Galatia and Macedonia and Achaia to Ephesus. Let not the Corinthians be deceived by derogatory remarks of his opponents. Paul will employ the same method with the same force on his announced arrival in Corinth.

With another present participle masculine plural nominative he continues: *καὶ ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ ἔχοντες*, and keeping (ourselves) in readiness. Our translation is a little too heavy, as is also Lenski's, who says: "and continuing in readiness." *ἔχειν* with an adverb really does not say more than *εἶναι* with an adjective; thus: being ready. That is all that Paul says. He is not making any special preparations to meet his opponents in Corinth, rather, in the same way in which he has always handled the Gospel he will also now apply it to the intruders in Corinth. He cannot add anything to the power of the Gospel, nor does it require any supplementing. Having the old Gospel he is ready.

Ready for what? *ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν*, to right every disobedience. *Ἐκδικεῖν* may have either a good or a bad connotation; it may mean either to avenge or to correct. When the widow pleaded with the unjust judge, she said, *με ἐκδίκησόν*, protect me in my rights (Luke 18:3). In his instruction to the Romans Paul warns: *μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες*, not avenging yourselves (Rom. 12:19). In chap. 7:11 of our present epistle we found the verbal noun *ἐκδικησις*, as the climax in a process of recovery in Corinth, a thorough righting of their mess. In the present case Paul aims at repentance—or else a "delivering unto Satan," of the disobedient. The details of this procedure will be mentioned in chap. 13:1ff.

In the meantime, so he hopes, the Corinthians will develop and strengthen their own *ὕπακοή*: *ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή*, when your own obedience shall have been fulfilled. *Ὅταν* anticipates that the action mentioned in the clause will come about. It is not as loose as "whenever" nor as rigid as "as soon as." The action is called *πληρωθῆ*. This verb stresses both the amount and the degree. When speaking of a filling—filling in, filling out, filling up—the specific meaning must be gathered from the existing situation. What is it that stands in need of filling? We know the conditions in Corinth. False apostles had invaded the church, had shaken the faith of the believers and infected them with error. A remedy for the disease was called for to begin a checking process. Under those conditions the sense of Paul's sentence is: when your obedience shall have been fully restored to its former normal health. This will not only mean that Paul then does not have to spend much labor on the Corinthians to bring them back to a sound faith, but can devote his attention entirely to the opponents; but much more, namely that the Corinthians themselves, having fully recovered from the error of their way, will rally to his support in dealing with the troublemakers.

This is Paul's program. For this he is trying to prepare the Corinthians in the following section of his epistle; and for this he has laid the ground work in the previous two sections: a thorough freeing of the hearts from the poison injected into them by the false apostles, and a strengthening of their spiritual life.

## II. Chapter 10:7–11

Paul had received the assurance from his associate, Titus, that the crisis in Corinth had passed, that the danger which threatened the life of the congregation from the false apostles had been checked, that the congregation was on the way to recovery. However, the Christians in Corinth still needed much tender care. The false apostles, apparently, had not left the city; at least, they still had some following in the congregation. This fact presented a constant menace to the progress of recovery, if not an actual danger of relapse for some members.

Paul announced in the introductory section to the third main part of his epistle that he was ready to come soon and to deal decisively with the troublemakers. His concern was that some of the faithful, yet weak members of the church might become implicated with the troublemakers, and would then have to be dealt with together with them. He therefore earnestly, yet tenderly, tries to help them extricate themselves completely from

any entanglement and to build them up in their faith. The beginning of this effort we have in the section now up for consideration.

The words of the first sentence admit of three different constructions. They read: Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. These words speak about looking at things right before one's eyes. The question is: are they to be read as a statement of fact? or as a command? or as a question? All three constructions are possible: You are (in the habit of) looking at things right under your eyes. —Or: Keep looking etc. —Or: Are you in the habit of looking etc.? Since the context alone can determine the sense, we shall defer a consideration of the problem till we have taken a look at the continuation.

Paul makes the evident fact that every member of the Corinthian congregation considered himself to be a true Christian the starting point of his appeal: εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἐαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι: if any one is convinced for himself to be Christ's. Πέποιθεν is a perfect tense of πείθω. This verb offers the translator considerable difficulties. The great number of expressions suggested in the lexicons merely shows their helplessness in finding a good one. The English word *persuade* comes close, but it includes the idea of success. The Greek verb expresses *suasion*, but not necessarily *persuasion*. To say *try to persuade* might lead one to assume that the verb form is conative. —As for the perfect tense, it is difficult to accustom ourselves to the fact that in this verb form the action itself (past and completed) is practically forgotten, only its lasting result is stressed. Thus in our present case Paul is not interested in the type of suasion which a man applied to himself. He stresses the fact that the man has reached a certain conviction, by which he is motivated in his decisions and actions.

That conviction in this case is: that he is Christ's, a redeemed of Christ, a believer in Christ, a follower of Christ, a servant of Christ. Being a lost and condemned sinner by nature, he is now saved, justified, sanctified by Christ. Being one without hope in the world, he is now a hopeful heir of eternal life, assured by Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice.

Since this conviction is the controlling factor in the addressed person's life, Paul directs him to draw an evident, yes, inescapable inference: τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ: let him consider (infer) this in turn concerning himself. Τοῦτο has the emphasis of position; in the following ὅτι clause Paul will explain to what he is referring. — Λογιζέσθω is the present imperative, thus not only indicating the action to be taken, but adding the idea that this should not be a passing thought held for a moment, but should be considered again and again — ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ, for himself, based on himself, on his condition as one who is a member of Christ's.

Now the content of the important consideration: ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς: that just as he (is) Christ's, just so (are) also we. —How does this follow? By using the present imperative, λογιζέσθω. Paul had pointed to a thorough process of consideration. Whomever Paul's admonition may concern, he should ask himself: You are a Christian, how did you become one? You were not born in a Christian community, your parents served idols, and so did you. You did not go out into the world, seeking for Christ. Strange missionaries came to town and proclaimed His Gospel. Many rejected it as foolish, you accepted it. You came to faith. The Gospel of Christ answers all your vexing questions for you, and in it you found peace for your sin-troubled conscience. How did you come to faith? It was the Gospel of Christ itself that worked its way into your heart and won your confidence.

Now consider that, if it had not been for those strange missionaries and their strange Gospel, you never would have become Christ's member. You are Christ's now because they were Christ's first. If they had not been Christ's, they never would have brought you the Gospel of Christ, and you never would have been joined to Christ.

The false apostles maintained that Paul was not a true apostle, that they themselves are far superior to him. Yet they never brought the Gospel to Corinth. They never brought the Gospel anywhere. They waited until the Church had been planted in a place, then they broke into the field, lured the people away from their missionaries, and exploited them.

If the Corinthians are Christ's, a little reflection will show them that Paul and his associates are also Christ's —or they never would have brought them the Gospel, which united them with Christ.

After studying this major part of v. 7 we can return to the first part and answer the question about its proper construction. Paul is in the second part of the verse directing the Corinthians what to do. It is most

natural to understand the first part in the same way: Just look at the things before your eyes. A statement, You are looking at things right before your eyes, does not prepare for the directive to do some considering. To take the sentence as a question, Do you look at things plainly on the surface? would require us to supply: Well, then look at this one. (The KJV translates as a question; so does Luther.)

So far Paul merely said, We are Christ's. Is that all that he can say? He may say more, but he will not do so for the present. His detractors, as he had quoted them in v. 1, said about him that he was bold when he knew himself to be at a safe distance. If now he said more than just that he is Christ's, then they might distort his words and try to use them against him in support of their insinuations. However, Paul indicates that he will have more to say some time than just that he and his associates are Christ's as well as any one in Corinth.

He says, *ἐάν τε γάρ τε γὰρ περισσότερόν τι καυχθήσωμαι*: for if in addition I shall boast somewhat more. The postpositive *τε* connects the whole statement to the foregoing as adding a new thought, not only the conditional clause in which it is found. The conditional clause with *ἐάν* and subjunctive aorist expresses something to be anticipated: if I shall boast, as I expect to do. The boasting will pertain to something *περισσότερον*, something considerably more than merely that he is Christ's.

What this is he states in the words *περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν*: concerning our authority. The Judaizers and all troublemakers constantly questioned Paul's authority as an apostle. They did so in Galatia, and so they did in Corinth. Paul had not been with our Savior during His earthly career, as had Peter and the other apostles: How then can his Gospel be considered as authoritative? Over against the Galatians Paul emphatically declared that he was an apostle "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:1). In our verse he speaks about his authority, and in chap. 12:12 he will point to the "signs and miracles, and mighty deeds" done by him as his credentials which establish his apostleship.

What is his authority? First of all, it was a gift from God: *ἦς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος*. The aorist *ἔδωκεν* emphasizes the reality of the past act, while *κύριος* identifies the Giver as the Savior Himself. It was Jesus Christ who had Himself commissioned Paul.—But the main thing is: what powers did this authorization from the Lord confer on Paul? He says, *εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν*: for your building up, and not for your tearing down. *ὑμῶν* is naturally the objective genitive. Paul, who has received the authority, uses it on the Corinthians as the object. Tearing down what Paul had built, tearing down the faith of the Corinthians, that was what the false apostles were actually doing. The authority which Paul had received was also a wrecking machine, but for the strongholds and fortresses of Satan. It was no wrecking engine against the Corinthians. As far as the Corinthians were concerned, it was given to Paul for the sole purpose, and was used by Paul for the sole purpose of building them up, of creating, nourishing, preserving faith in their hearts.

What will happen if Paul, as he intends to do later, shall boast somewhat about this authority? Many a man has made himself ridiculous by his boasting. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta*, has brought many a braggart to fall. Paul does not fear this fate. He continues: *οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι*: I shall not be put to shame. The facts will bear him out.

This last remark is of great importance. He had used his God-given authority on the Corinthians. What was their experience? They had been down in the depths of sin, some in debauchery and vice, some in careless abandon, some in self-pride, some in despair. Paul with authority had built them up. By his preaching they had become new creatures. If Paul here should repeat his *λογιζέσθω* from v. 7, every one would have to testify that Paul had never broken him down spiritually, but had always strengthened and built up his faith. He had done so in a highly effective, yet very gentle and sympathetic way.

If the Corinthians remembered what blessed fruits the authority of Paul produced in them, will a reference to his authority then frighten them? The word authority may have a somewhat terrifying sound, but the Corinthians, when they think of their experience, must rather rejoice. Where would they be if it had not been for the authority of Paul?

If we keep this in mind, then the following *ἵνα* clause will not be so difficult, nor seem so unconnected with the foregoing: *ἵνα μὴ δόξω ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς*: that I may not appear as frightening you.

That was not his purpose, neither in his personal work nor in his letters. He was not meek in his personal presence, but bold and boastful in his letters. He adds: *διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν*. This was the third epistle which he



sent to the Corinthians. The first one we no longer possess; it is referred to in I Cor. 5:9. The second was the one which is called First Corinthians in our Bibles. In it Paul used some strong language, so that he himself feared for a time that he might have been too severe (cf. chap. 7:8 in our present epistle).—All the letters which we possess from Paul's pen are forceful and clear. In them he was always very tender while dealing with the difficulties that troubled the weak brethren; but he was also very outspoken and sharp in denouncing the errors of false teachers (e.g. Phil. 3:2, where he does not hesitate to call them dogs). Now compare with his letters the oral addresses of Paul which Luke has preserved for us in Acts, whether delivered in a synagogue, before philosophers, before governors and kings, or before a mob. These addresses are just as clear and just as forceful, suited to the occasion.

Yet the opponents of Paul pounced on his letters, and criticized them for their severity. They evidently made an impression on some of the believers in Corinth. In the following verse Paul quotes one person, whether one of the troublemakers or a member duped by them is not clear. and really makes no difference. The quotation illustrates the underhanded attacks that were made on Paul: ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησὶν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί: for the letters, indeed, he says, are weighty and strong. Some manuscripts have changed the singular φησὶν to the plural φασὶν; but since the next verse continues with the singular, both in the subject and in the verb, referring to the speaker of the present verse, the form φησὶν is preferable.—Although μὲν and δέ balance the two parts of the sentence, the μὲν is here more emphatic than in most cases. The speaker grants, and grants with some stress, that the letters of Paul are far from trivial both as to content and as to form. But he stresses this fact only for the purpose of belittling all the more, by way of contrast, the personal presence of Paul.

The sentence continues: ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος: but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible. Τοῦ σώματος is a qualifying genitive. It does not mean the presence of his body only, while the soul is absent, but simply denotes his bodily presence. When Paul is present, this man says, he does not make any impression on the people. Ἐξουθενημένος is passive perfect participle of ἐξουθενέω, to despise, to disdain. Jerome translates *contemptibilis*. This sentence sounds bad as it is, but when read on the background of the μὲν member, the disdain which it expresses stands out still more in bold relief.

But let no one be misled by such remarks. Paul continues: τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος: let the (fellow) of that type consider this. τοιοῦτος equals *such a one*, which is here preceded by the definite article: the man of this kind, or, to bring out a little more of the scorn expressed by the word here: the fellow of this type. — Λογιζέσθω is the same present imperative as in v. 7. Again τοῦτο is placed in the emphatic position at the head of the clause.

What is it that the deluded fellow should well consider ὅτι οἱ ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ: that just as we are by (our) word through letters in our absence, just such also in our presence with (our) work. The detractors of Paul imagined that they could see a great difference between a preaching Paul and a letter writing Paul, a present Paul and an absent Paul. But Paul calls attention to the fact that he is always the same, as his whole past career bears out. This is something for his detractors to think about. Let them trace his career as a missionary. Let them evaluate the opposition which he encountered in every city. Let them imagine, if they can, the persecutions which he suffered. And in every place where he preached he planted a church. If they honestly considered this, would they still insist that his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible? Let them consider how he met and routed the Judaizers in Antioch and Jerusalem. If Paul's word then was contemptible, what about the presence and speech of his opponents, the Judaizers? Let them consider this and repent before it is too late.—And let the Corinthians beware lest they become entangled with these false apostles.

### IIIa. Chapter 10:12–14

In these opening remarks of the third short part Paul launches an attack on the false apostles with stinging sarcasm: Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτούς: For we do not dare to classify or compare ourselves. Paul couples this part to the foregoing with γάρ, explaining and motivating his previous statement,—

although the words at first sight give the impression as though Paul were afraid that he had made too bold a statement, and was now ready to tone down his claim somewhat. He says, οὐ τολμῶμεν: we do not dare, we have not the courage, we consider it foolhardy. What they are not bold enough to do he states in two infinitives ἐγκρίναι and συγκρίναι: to count ourselves among, and to compare ourselves with. To judge ourselves and certain other people, and on the basis of such judgment to declare ourselves to belong to the same class, is the first act that Paul will not risk to do. The second is that he will not dare to examine himself and certain others, and then on the basis of such investigation to claim a certain similarity of himself to the others.

Who are these others for whom Paul seems to have such high regard? He describes them thus: τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων: with some of those who commend themselves. With these words he refers to the troublemakers in Corinth. They never tired of praising themselves, their ability, and their achievements. If you heard them, you might get the impression that Jesus could congratulate Himself on having such superfine apostles. Paul does not dare to count himself as belonging to their class, or even to have his work mentioned side by side with theirs.

What did they have to boast about? Paul describes their method in the following: αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοῦς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοῦς ἑαυτοῖς: measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves. Paul places the ἑαυτοῖς both times into the emphatic position, once at the head, then at the close of the phrase. By thus producing a schism he strengthens the emphasis on this word. The standard by which they gauge themselves, and the model with which they compare themselves is always themselves. No wonder that they always achieve a rating of one hundred per cent.

It is surprising that the Corinthians were deceived by such procedure. Now that Paul tactfully opened their eyes they must have felt ashamed of themselves, and, no doubt, they were greatly strengthened in their faith in the Gospel which Paul had proclaimed to them. They realized how ridiculous was the intruders' self-recommendation even before they read Paul's judgment in the two words, which form a litotes, οὐ συνιᾶσιν: they have no understanding, they lack common sense, they are making fools of themselves.

No wonder, Paul is afraid to classify himself, or even compare himself with that type of people.

What does Paul consider a sensible way of gauging an apostle's work, and by what standard does he want his own work to be evaluated?

First he answers the question negatively: ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα: but we shall not boast on unmeasurable (conditions). Ἄμετρος simply means something without measure. When the false apostles measure themselves by themselves, they are really not doing any measuring at all. Paul will not be caught doing that kind of boasting. That is what he says in these words. And that is really pronouncing a most devastating verdict on the procedure of the troublemakers. It is reading something into the text, and at the same time considerably weakening Paul's statement, when some translators render the clause: We will not boast beyond limits. What Paul says is that he will not, like some, be such a fool as to apply himself as a standard when rating himself.

He then continues positively: ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον: but according to the measure of the standard which God imparted to us as a measure. In measuring himself Paul will apply a certain fixed rule or standard, a κανὼν. By doing this the result will not be an ἄμετρον. Where does he get his standard? If he provided it himself, the result of his measurement would still be an ἄμετρον. It is God Himself who established the rule and who handed it to Paul. The word μερίζω originally means to divide. The genitive of the relative pronoun, οὗ, is by attraction to the genitive of the antecedent τοῦ κανόνος; it then draws the predicative noun into the same case, μέτρον.

What is this standard with which God Himself has provided Paul for gauging his own work? ἐφικέσθαι ἄρχι καὶ ὑμῶν: to come also as far as unto you. When Jesus called Paul to be His apostle, He did not appoint him to serve as pastor or teacher in some established congregation. He appointed him to do pioneer work, to carry the Gospel into places where it was not yet known. When Paul had planted the Church in any place, then God would in some way (usually by persecution) give him a signal that it was time to move. If we follow Paul in his mission work, we can readily see how strictly he adhered to this rule. By applying this standard he could correctly gauge his own work; and according to this rule he could boast before the Corinthians over against the

false apostles. It was he who brought the Gospel to Corinth, the false apostles were intruders who broke into his congregation. Why did they not carry the Gospel to virgin fields? The world was wide enough.

In the following verse Paul unfolds his rule a little, and shows its application to the present case: οὐ γὰρ ὡς μὴ ἐφικσούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς: for not like non-comers to you are we overreaching ourselves. The present participle, ἐφικσούμενοι, is here used to indicate a characteristic: non-comers. If we wish to stay closer to the participial form in our translation, we would have to change the tense to the perfect: people who have not come to you. In obeying the call from God Paul came also to Corinth to do pioneer work in the Gospel. He is not overreaching himself in making that claim. What about the troublemakers?

Paul not only came to Corinth with the Gospel, he was the first to do so: ἄχρι γὰρ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ: for even as far as to you we came first with the Gospel of Christ. Our KJ version misses the force of ἐφθάσαμεν; φθάνω means more than ἐφικνεύομαι. It means, according to the new Greek-English Lexicon, *to come before, to precede*. (Note the archaic “prevent” eg. in I Thess. 4:15.) Yes, Paul can say, We were the first to come all the way to you in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. This is the rigid standard by which Paul gauges his own work, and by which he requests the Corinthians to gauge it. It is a fair standard, no one will contest that. But what if it were to be applied to the activities of the false apostles? Once the attention of the Corinthians has been called to the very questionable methods of the troublemakers, when this standard is applied to their work, they will be strengthened in their determination to shed the contamination of the false Gospel and to return wholeheartedly to the genuine Gospel of Christ, as it was brought to them by Paul.

### IIIb. Chapter 10:15–16

Grammatically the verses 15 and 16 are a continuation of the sentence beginning in v. 14; but as to content, they are speaking of a new application of Paul’s standard: οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις: (we are) not boasting in unmeasurable things in connection with (on the basis of) other men’s labors. This part merely repeats in a brief summary the thought which Paul had presented and developed in the foregoing. It is here used in a concessive way: while we are not doing this. Although this is the unalterable rule of Paul’s conduct, yet it will not prevent him from working under it in a way not mentioned so far. The attention of the reader is aroused by this manner of approach. What are Paul’s plans which, though still strictly within the limits of his rule, yet indicate a modification of its application?

He continues: ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι: but entertaining (the) hope, as your faith continues to increase, to be made greater among (by) you. Here Paul uses two verbs, both of which contain the idea of increase: the passive of αὐξάνω and of μεγαλύνω. Jerome translates the former with *crescere*, the latter with *magnificari*, thereby indicating that the former has practically acquired the force of an intransitive verb, while in the latter the passivity of the subject is still felt. Of the faith of the Corinthians he says that it *grows*, while about himself, that he will *be made* greater.

The growth of the faith of the Corinthians is mentioned in a genitive absolute. The participle is present, thus denoting continued action: while the faith of the Corinthians keeps on growing. The function of this genitive absolute is not purely temporal, it is causal. The growth of faith is pre-supposed, the hope which Paul entertains is conditioned on it. Should that growth of faith cease, then Paul’s hopes would fail.

His hope is that he will become greater. He has already reached a certain measure according to his standard; he hopes to attain a greater measure. But in this he hopes to be helped by the Corinthians, as their faith increases. He mentions the people whose help he solicits with ἐν ὑμῖν. This ἐν is very wide in its application; it does not specify any particular form of support; it leaves room for that in many ways. We shall have to come back to this point after we have heard what plans Paul has in mind.

He first repeats that his plans lie strictly within the scope of the rule which God has given him: κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν: according to our rule. But he adds emphatically that he is looking for a great increase, εἰς περισσείαν: for abundance. The phrase, placed at the end for emphasis, modifies the infinitive μεγαλυνθῆναι: to be increased abundantly.

What he means by this increase he now states in an infinitive phrase: εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι: to carry the Gospel to the regions beyond you. What does Paul mean with “beyond”? He began his work in Antioch of Syria. While ministering there he was commissioned for Gospel work in the Gentile world, and he went west to Cyprus and Galatia. On his second journey he went still farther west to Macedonia and Achaia, reaching Corinth. On his third journey he made Ephesus in Asia his headquarters, covering the territory which by divine order he had by-passed on his second journey. But he then already had his sights set on Spain. Beyond Corinth, perhaps way beyond Corinth, refers to the countries west of Greece, as far as the Atlantic.

Paul plans to stop over in Rome. Rome lay within the field that had been assigned to him; but since there was a church in Rome already, which could take care of the mission opportunities in Italy, he did not plan to do any mission work there, he would confine himself to a strengthening of the brethren.—All this according to the rule which God had given him.

There were also the countries between Corinth and Rome, which Paul might have in mind with his ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν. But in his letter to the Romans, written from Corinth just a few months after Second Corinthians, he mentions that “from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum” he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ, and that he has “no more place in these parts” (Rom. 15:19, 23), so that we may safely assume that with the countries beyond Corinth he has Spain in mind.

To go to Spain, that would indeed be a great increase to his credit.

And it would be strictly according to the rule which God gave to Paul. In his epistle to the Romans he expresses this in chap. 15:18: “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient.” And again in v. 20: “Yes, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation.” In our text he continues: οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι: not to boast in another (man’s) rule on things (already) prepared. To boast about things which have already been prepared by some one else, where the Gospel has already been preached and a church founded, that is not Paul’s rule, that is not according to the rule which God Himself devised. That is a strange rule devised by the false apostles and applied by them in measuring themselves for self-praise. Paul will carefully avoid that.

Now we may take up the question in what sense the Corinthians can help Paul to increase his credit. He said ἐν ὑμῖν, which leaves the specification of the method open.

Paul’s hope presupposed the growing recovery of the faith of the Corinthians. As long as their faith was still endangered by the false apostles, it would not have been safe for Paul to proceed beyond Corinth. He would leave a ruined congregation behind, which would, moreover, serve the false apostles as a basis of operation. If Paul established the Gospel in any city to the west, then from Corinth, where they were entrenched, they would sally forth to wreck the new congregations which Paul had founded. His work would have been in vain. First the situation in Corinth must be cleared. Only then can Paul proceed to carry the Gospel to other parts. Thus, in a somewhat negative way, they would assist Paul in increasing his credit.

Another way is suggested by a comparison with v. 6. There Paul expressed the thought that his dealing with the false apostles would not only be simplified, but would also be greatly assisted, when the faith of the Corinthians was fully restored. So also now Corinth could serve as a basis for Paul’s future mission operations once it had been cleared of the wreckage which the false apostles had caused. Instead of being a basis for the enemy it could be one for him.—If in no other way, then, at least, fervent prayers would rise to God from the Corinthian Christians for the success of Paul’s Gospel work.

### IIIc. Chapter 10:17–18

The chief point still remains to be stated. The false apostles claimed credit where none was due them. Paul pointed out where, according to the proper standard, credit must go. But now he goes to the bottom of the whole matter. Where, ultimately, does all credit belong?

V. 17: Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω: Now he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. This statement says more than: Let him boast according to the Lord's standard. Paul worked according to God's standard; but how had he been enabled to do so? Was it his own achievement? Over against the false apostles he could maintain that his credit was earned honestly, while they stole theirs. But in spite of this fact Paul confesses that he really deserves no credit. Originally he destroyed the Gospel, which he now preached. At God's own time He had taken hold of him and had given him a new heart, or as he called this in v. 5 above, Jesus had made a war prisoner of him, so that now he used his natural endowments in the service of Christ. But what about those natural endowments of his? Where had they originally come from? They were a gift from God, which he, however, in the beginning had used against God. Paul could not boast of them as having produced them himself.

Moreover, who was it that sustained Paul in his work, in all his troubles, afflictions, persecutions to which he was subjected in his ministry? Again, it was the Lord of the Church Himself, who is seated at the right hand of the Father and rules even in the midst of His enemies.

Paul remembered all this and said, Now he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. "I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Cor. 15:10). This was something which the false apostles forgot entirely. They claimed credit for themselves where none was due them even according to human standards.

With the next verse Paul concludes the present point, and leads over to the following one, where he is to begin some real boasting.

The verse reads: οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκοῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλὰ ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν: For not the one commending himself, he is approved, but (he) whom the Lord commends.

Even according to popular sentiment self-praise has a bad odor. It is a sign of a very low spiritual life and insight to indulge in self-glorification. One who honestly confesses that he could not by his own reason or strength come to Jesus or believe in Him, cannot claim credit for anything that the Lord may do through him in His kingdom. He will always be conscious of his own inability, and will attribute his work and his success to the grace of the Lord alone. That is the reason why Paul is so reluctant to list any of his credits over against the troublemakers. He yields (under pressure) to the needs of the Corinthians.

#### **IV. Chapter 11:1-6**

St. Paul concluded the tenth chapter with the remark that self-recommendation does not mean anything. To be valid, a recommendation must come from the Lord, to whom all glory belongs. Paul observed this rule, we might say, automatically during his whole career. Think, e.g., of the physical ailment he suffered on his first mission journey, of his persecution in every city, of his stoning in Lystra, and of his strenuous efforts to preach the Gospel under such adverse circumstances. And then listen to his report on his return to Antioch, Acts 14:27, "They rehearsed all that God had done with them." Cf. also Acts 15:4; 21:19. In these reports Paul kept his own person completely in the background, he gave all glory to God.

If we bear this in mind we can begin to feel how unpalatable it was for Paul, how repulsive, to speak about himself, his efforts, his sacrifices, his achievements. He would much prefer to speak about his own weaknesses, so that the glory of God might shine forth in greater brilliance. Yet in order to deflate the shameless boasting of the trouble makers in Corinth, and to break the spell which they held over some of the Corinthian Christians, there was no better way than to let the Corinthians see the sham work of the false apostles on the background of the real Gospel work as Paul was performing it. Distasteful though it was to him, he is ready to yield to the necessity. When we hear him call it folly, or foolishness, let us remember that he means just that. But from the very outset his Corinthian readers must have gotten the feeling that if it is folly for Paul to engage in boasting, then what about the bragging of the false apostles?

#### **IVa. Chapter 11:1-4**

When Paul now begins by pleading for a little forbearance on the part of his readers, he again means just that. Self-praise never had a very pleasant odor. Paul really hates to impose on his Corinthian converts, but for the sake of the cause it simply is necessary.

Ὅφελον ἀνείχεσθε μου μικρόν τι ἀφροσύνης, Would that you would bear with me with regard to a little (excursion) of folly. —The origin of ὄφελον, as generally assumed, is a corruption of the second aorist of ὀφείλον (for ὄφελον). The meaning then would be: I owed, or, I was obligated. But it is difficult to see how that expression could develop into the use of a participle introducing an unattainable wish: O that, or Would that. Hence others take the word to have been a participle with ἔστιν to be supplied (Blass-Debrunner, #67, 2). It is used also to introduce attainable wishes. So in our case. The tense of the verb is then regularly the imperfect, to denote the present time.

Paul's request is that the Corinthians grant him a little ἀνέχειν, a little enduring, bearing with, putting up with. The person with whom one practices this consideration is expressed in the genitive, in our case μου, and the unpleasant thing which one tolerates for a while is stated in the accusative, in our case μικρόν τι, a little something. A little something of what? ἀφροσύνης. Paul is now in his letter going to digress for a little while and to a short distance from his sane and sober presentation of the Gospel, and from his direct invitations and exhortations to accept it and abide by it, and from his serious warnings against error. He is going to indulge in a little folly—and thus meet his opponents on their own ground.

He had never played this role before in his dealings with the Corinthians. For that reason he pleads for their patience, that they put up with this for a little while.

The interpretation of the added clause, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνέχεσθέ μου, hinges on the answer to two questions. The first is, to what does ἀλλὰ introduce a contrast? and the second, what is the mood of the verb ἀνέχεσθε? The two problems are closely connected. The answer to the first question is really decided by the understanding of ἀνέχεσθε. This may be either the indicative, you are bearing with me, or the imperative, do bear with me. If we read it as an indicative, then the translation would be: But that is precisely what you are doing already. If read as an imperative, the sense would be: I do not only entertain the wish, but expressly plead with you for your endurance of me (Blass-Debrunner, #448, Note 6). The following sentence, introduced with a motivating γάρ, seems to support the second alternative. Paul earnestly requests a little unusual consideration. Why?

Ζηλῶ γὰρ ὑμᾶς θεοῦ ζήλω, For I am deeply concerned about you with God's concern, or, I am zealously striving for you with God's zeal. Ζηλόω expresses an earnest striving to obtain and to hold. —The genitive θεοῦ is best taken as a real genitive of possession. Some understand it as a qualifying genitive, a divine zeal. But Paul's zeal in this case is not merely godly in quality; it is the very zeal of God Himself. God's zeal is stated in John 3:16; I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9; Ez. 33:11. This zeal had won Paul, and this same zeal now filled his heart. His plunge into a little foolishness is not prompted by levity; it is motivated by, and is an expression of, the deepest concern for the spiritual welfare of the Corinthians.

To illustrate the situation and to impress upon the Corinthians the delicacy and seriousness of the matter Paul compares his work of winning their souls for Christ to that of a man winning a bride for his friend: ἡρμοσάμην γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστῆσαι τῷ Χριστῷ, For I betrothed you to one as (your) husband to present (you) as a pure virgin to Christ. The verb, an aorist middle, contains the root from which we derived our English word to harmonize; very significant for the use which Paul here makes of the word.

Paul is not the first one to use the comparison. John the Baptist did the same. In his case the application was different. If he was trying to win followers for Jesus, should he feel jealous when he saw the multitudes turning to the person to whom he himself directed them? Just as little as the friend of the bridegroom when he sees the success of his negotiations. —Paul here makes a different application. He brought the people of Corinth to Christ. He is as deeply concerned about their undivided loyalty to Christ as is the friend of the bridegroom concerning the fidelity of the bride whom he secured for his friend.

According to his own testimony Paul on his arrival in Corinth had determined “not to know anything ... save Jesus Christ and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2). He proclaimed Jesus Christ to the Corinthians as the Savior whom God sent into the world, as the God-Man who humbled Himself and assumed the form of a slave, becoming obedient unto death, the death of the cross; and who thereby redeemed them that were under the curse

of the Law, and won for them the adoption of sons. By this proclamation Paul kindled faith in the hearts of his hearers. He filled their hearts with the truth that though their sins had been as scarlet; they had been washed away completely by the blood of Jesus Christ. Through his preaching a new spirit had been created in the hearts of the people, a spirit which recognized its own inability to do or think anything of any spiritual value, but rejoiced in the forgiveness and freedom secured by Jesus. That is the relation which Paul had established between the Corinthians and Christ, their Savior.

Now he is concerned that no foreign thoughts or desires enter into their hearts. It would spoil the union between Christ and the Corinthians if they began to trust in their own merits, if they tried to add, e.g., their circumcision or their observance of the Jewish food and festival laws in order to supplement Christ's redemption or to make it more secure. It would also spoil their relation to Christ if they began to despise the suitor whom He had sent to them in the person of Paul. More of similar things might be mentioned. Paul's is a delicate position, and he is as deeply concerned about the sincerity of the congregation which he had led to Christ as is a suitor about the bride whom he has led to one man to be her husband.—Take ἐνί as the indirect object of ἡρμოსάμην, and add ἀνδρί to it as predicative.

So far Paul spoke about his deep concern for the purity of the Corinthians' faith. Now he adds a suspicion which had turned his concern into anxiety: φοβοῦμαι δὲ μή πως ὡς ὄφις ἐξηπάτησεν Εὐάν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ, But I fear that in some way, as the serpent utterly deceived Eve with his trickery, etc. (The Greek negative μή after words of fear corresponds to the English positive *that*. In the English a substantive clause follows verbs of fear, while the Greek, in a clause of purpose, express their desire—which, of course, is the opposite of what they fear.) From the beginning there existed the correct relation between Eve and her God. It was a union of pure faith and love. She stood in wonderment and admiration before the world which God had created for her service, to provide her with food and comfort. She was perfectly happy in receiving these blessings from the hand of the Lord, warm gratitude filled her heart, till the serpent came and with great cunning and trickery suggested that greater happiness was to be found if she broke away from God. Then her pristine purity was gone. —Paul is for the present interested merely in the fact that this happened. He does not, at this point, make anything of the fact that the real instigator operating through the serpent was the devil, nor does he mention the dire consequences of Eve's aberration. But the fact stands out in bold relief that Eve lost her purity.

Things that have happened may happen again. The devil is still going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Hence Paul fears—he fears for the purity of the Corinthians: φθαρῆ τὰ σοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγνότητος τῆς εἰς Χριστόν, (that) your thoughts be corrupted (away) from the single-mindedness and the purity respecting Christ. —Here the word ἀπλότης occurs again, which Paul had used with telling force in connection with the collection for the needy Christians in Jerusalem. There it was that the collection should be a manifestation of the Christians' single-mindedness, here it is the single-mindedness itself which is at stake, that their devotion to Jesus in faith and love might be disturbed by foreign influences and interests.

In passing we note that here the meaning of “liberality,” which some try to foist on ἀπλότης in the chapters about the collection, would completely wreck the force of Paul's comparison. A groom is very much interested in the singleness of thought and devotion of his bride, and he would deeply resent too great a “liberality” on her part. A bride is married to one man as her husband.

Paul is afraid that such single-mindedness and purity of heart toward Christ may have suffered already in Corinth. He uses the strong word φθείρω, to ruin, to destroy. For if a Christian permits only a slight foreign interest to creep into his relation to Christ, then that relation is not only contaminated, it has been ruined. Whoever is not entirely for Christ is against Him.

This fear of Paul implies a serious indictment against the Corinthian Christians. How can Paul entertain such fears without violating the Eighth Commandment, not to mention brotherly love, which unites him with all Christians? Paul might be assailed by misgivings of that nature, but he would never permit them to lodge in his heart without compelling reasons. He has such, and he hastens to mention them.

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν κηρύσσει ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν, For if the one coming (to you) palpably heralds another Jesus, whom we did not herald, etc. The conditional clause is one of reality. It assumes

that some one did come and did preach. The μέν, standing alone, without a following δέ, serves the purpose of emphasis, which it is difficult to reproduce in English. We might use “indeed.” I used the word palpably. The matter is so evident that no one can question it. Paul does not have to adduce any further evidence. The recent disturbances are sufficient evidence of the nefarious work done by the recently arrived false apostles, and of the impact they made on the Corinthian believers. Μέν emphasizes that his presupposition, on which his suspicion rests, is a definite, incontrovertible fact.

Ἄλλος does not necessarily mean a different, or a second person. The false apostles did not question the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. They spoke about the same person as Paul had done, and as did all the apostles. Yet the Jesus whom they proclaimed was an ἄλλος. Just as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were one and the same person physically, yet each one was an ἄλλος, the one a respectable citizen, the other a vicious criminal. So was the Jesus whom the false apostles preached an ἄλλος, different from the real Jesus. The real Jesus proclaimed the unconditional promise that He would give rest to every one coming to Him with his burdens, that He would give His flesh and lay down His life as a ransom for the world, that any one who believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is an entirely ἄλλος Jesus if anyone pictures Him as a wise teacher who informed us how we might work out our salvation, or as a model man who left us an example to follow. A Jesus who teaches us what *we* should do and how *we* should live, who in His life provides a pattern for us to copy as best we can, or who epitomizes His message in the Golden Rule—he is not the Jesus in whom we believe by invitation of the Gospel. He is an ἄλλος.

The substantivised participle in the singular does not necessarily mean that only one false apostle came to trouble the Corinthians. The participle is descriptive, and the definite article generic. In the very next verse, v. 5, Paul speaks about the false apostles in the plural.

In our present verse he adds two more of the effects of their nefarious work, which make him uneasy concerning the spiritual purity of the Corinthians. He continues: ἢ πνεῦμα ὑπερον λαμβάνετε ὃ οὐκ ἐλάβετε, or if you receive a different spirit which you did not receive. We notice at first sight that Paul uses a new word for “other,” ἕτερος. While ἄλλος may refer to the same person, only presenting it under a different aspect, ἕτερος presupposes an essentially different individual, one not only different in quality.

The purpose of Christ is to bestow a new spirit on the world, to give men a new heart. So it was foretold in the Old Testament, e.g., in Ezekiel 11:19, “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.” This new spirit is born of the Holy Ghost of God, whom the Father sends into our hearts, crying, and teaching us to cry, “Abba, Father.” It is a spirit which delights in the Word of God, which relishes the grace of God, and produces fruits of a new obedience. This was the spirit which the Corinthians received when Paul brought them the message of Jesus Christ.

Now they have received, and are still receiving and nourishing a different spirit, not a modification of the Christ-given spirit, but one completely crowding out and replacing their former spirit. It is not a spirit of adoption by grace, it is a spirit which reckons with its own works. —What then about the Corinthians’ purity as the bride of Christ?

Paul adds a third symptom: ἢ εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε or another Gospel which you did not accept. —Paul repeats the word ἕτερος. There is only one Gospel. If any one tries to modify this Gospel by additions, by omissions, by alterations of any kind, he simply destroys the Gospel, and substitutes a counterfeit. The Judaizers brought a ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον to the Galatians, but Paul told them that this was not an ἄλλο Gospel, neither superior nor inferior to the one which they had received. It simply is no Gospel at all; and Paul pronounces a solemn curse on anyone who presumes to preach such a “gospel” (Gal. 1:6–9).

Now the Corinthians received another Gospel which was *toto coelo* different from the one they had learned from Paul. And they accepted it. Paul uses a new verb, ἐδέξασθε. The verb λαμβάνειν usually makes the recipient somewhat passive, something is being given to him; whereas δέξεσθαι points to the readiness of the recipient, he accepts. Thus when Paul brought the genuine Gospel to the Corinthians, they not merely received it, they absorbed it and made it their own. They were imbued with the Gospel truths.



We take notice of the fact that Paul so far did not stress his own person. Only once did he mention himself and his associates, and then only in the pronominal ending of the verb, ὃν ἐκηρύξαμεν —without an additional ἡμεῖς. In speaking of their reception of the Gospel and of the spirit, he does not even mention himself as the carrier. The contrast here is not between Paul and the false apostles; it is between the different work which they did and the results which they produced for the Corinthians, the different effect on their hearts. The Jesus as He was portrayed before their eyes, the spirit which He instilled into their hearts through the Gospel as it had been proclaimed to them should have prepared them so that they would—instantly—reject any falsification. Did they?

With a sad heart Paul continues: καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε, you bear with it (or him) well. Ἀνέχεσθαι, that is what Paul had requested for himself (v. 1), and that is what they are according to the intruders and to their harmful activity. And they are doing it καλῶς, in a very accommodating way, they are receiving them with open arms. —Whether we read ἀνέχεσθε, the present tense, or ἀνείχεσθε, the imperfect, makes no material difference. The former, the Nestle reading, states that that is what they are doing as a matter of habit, while the latter would say that whenever an intruder came to them they would welcome him.

It is evident that Paul is here speaking about actual conditions in Corinth. He is not speaking about possibilities, nor is he offering suggestions. Both the King James and the Luther Bible do not do justice to the text. Both seem to take the conditional clause as expressing a possibility (or an irreality), and then translate the apodosis as containing a piece of advice: “ye might well bear with him”—*so vertrueget ihr’s billig*. Both also make the adverbial modifier καλῶς the main predicate of the statement, in the sense of: If anyone brought you an advancement in the Gospel, you would do well if you bore with him. But Paul is not speaking of possibilities, he states it as a fact that the Corinthians are bearing with the apostles of error, and are doing it καλῶς, in grand style.

#### IVb. Chapter 11:5–6

On the basis of the facts as just outlined Paul is justified in his fears about the spiritual purity of the Corinthian congregation. What is he going to do about it? He attacks the intruders at their most vulnerable spot. They boasted of their superiority as Christ’s apostles. Paul thoroughly demolishes their claim. But in doing so he must of necessity now draw in his own person, and show up the imaginary greatness of the intruders on the background of his own achievements, as established by a strict application of God’s standard described in the previous section.

Paul begins with an understatement: λογίζομαι γὰρ μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, For I reckon to be lower (to have come behind) in nothing than the superfine apostles. In comparing himself with the intruders Paul is not thinking of his personal qualifications, but rather of the work which he did, its quality, and of the blessings which he brought to the Corinthians and the manner in which he brought them. He says, λογίζομαι; he is calculating, taking inventory, comparing both the credit and the debit side of his ledger. He compares the result with the much vaunted excellence of his opponents. He states it in the word μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι, he did not fall short in anything, and hence does not hold an inferior position. Ὑστερηκέναι is a perfect infinitive, which denotes the continuing result of a past complete action. In nothing does he find an inferiority in his work, no, not in the least. The meaning of this litotes is that his work is, rather, far superior to that of the intruders.

He calls them ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι; ὑπερλίαν is really an adverb, meaning exceedingly, here by position functioning as an adjective modifier: the superfine apostles, as they consider themselves. —The King James translates: “the very chiefest apostles” and seems to be thinking of the original Twelve. But Paul is not referring to them, he is dealing with the troublemakers in Corinth, who claimed great superiority for themselves over against Paul. He is not inferior to them, though they consider themselves as super-apostles in comparison with him.

Some of the early copyists (e.g., the Vatican codex) were troubled by the connective γάρ; they substituted the adversative δέ. Yet γάρ is in place. Paul connects the thought of v. 5 not only to the directly

preceding one, but to the entire complex situation which he discussed in the whole paragraph. He charged the Corinthians that by admitting the false apostles they had jeopardized their purity of heart in which he had presented them to Christ as their spiritual groom. He would not dare to have voiced the suspicion if his work were really inferior to that of his opponents. This he does not admit, why? The reason is stated in v. 6, and thus the γάρ is in place.

In this connection we may recall a word found in chap. 5:12. There Paul called attention to the tendency of some people to boast about superficial advantages, and not to go down to the heart of the matter (ἐν προώσπῳ and not ἐν καρδίᾳ). When his opponents belittled his work, they used external things only as their criteria. For the sake of argument Paul is ready to grant that in a certain sense they may be right, he is not going to contest the point. That point has no bearing on the main question at issue. He introduces it: εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδῶντες τῷ λόγῳ, But granted that I am only a layman (a nonprofessional) in my speech. The opponents evidently boasted that they were masters of rhetoric, professionals in oratory.

We possess a number of letters from the pen of Paul, and are thus in a position to judge his style. It is not the most elegant; Luke and the author of Hebrews were superior to Paul in this respect. Yet Paul's style is always very lucid and forceful. He knows how to get his thoughts across to his readers. His opponents were ready to admit as much with respect to his letters: "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful" (chap. 10:10). But they denied this as far as his oral delivery was concerned: "but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." How does this charge comport with the unbroken chain of successes which Paul registered in his mission work? Paul referred to this in chap. 10:4–5. But we do not merely have to infer from Paul's successes that his speeches must have been as powerful as were his letters. We can study the style of his speeches directly from the samples which Luke preserved for us in Acts. To mention some: there is the address in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia, his off-the-cuff remarks in Lystra, his address on Areopagus, his unprepared speech before the lynch mob in Jerusalem, his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, his defense before the governor Felix, his defense before King Agrippa and Governor Festus—sufficient material to evaluate the style of Paul as a public speaker, and sufficient to show that Paul's addresses were very forceful.

Why did his opponents question his ability in this respect? Whom would they on their part consider as a master of oratory? Fortunately Luke preserved a speech for us that was prepared by a professional according to the rules of rhetoric. It is the speech in which Tertullus presented the charges against Paul before Felix, the Roman governor. Tertullus was an "orator," being an attorney; and since the Jewish leaders engaged him we may well assume that he had a good reputation as orator. We need not study his whole speech; it will suffice for our purposes to look at the introduction. Acts 24:2, 3 (according to Moffat's translation): "Your excellency, as it is owing to you that we enjoy unbroken peace, and as it is owing to your wise care that the state of this nation has been improved in every way and everywhere, we acknowledge all this with profound gratitude."—What has all this to do with the charges against Paul? It is flattery, and rather hollow at that. Look at the three points which he mentions. The first is "unbroken peace." Josephus reports: "The affairs of the Jews grew worse and worse continually, for the country was again filled with robbers and imposters who deluded the multitude." Felix put to death some of the robbers, but had himself also the high priest Jonathan murdered by the *sicarii*, and in general "did the violence of the seditions prevail over all right and justice." Then when Nero deposed Felix and replaced him with Festus, the leaders of the Jews went to Rome to prefer formal accusations against Felix. Yet here Tertullus suggests that he really deserves the much-coveted epithet of *pacator provinciae*.—Secondly Tertullus refers to "improvements" and reforms, of which there is otherwise no record.—Lastly he mentions "wise care." The Greek word πρόσοια is the equivalent of a Latin word found on many coins in connection with the name Caesar: *providentia Caesaris*. Tertullus suggests that Felix had the qualifications for becoming the next Emperor. Almost nauseating flattery—with no bearing whatsoever on the case in hand.

This is a sample of the rhetoric in vogue at the time, of the rhetoric with reference to which the false apostles claimed that Paul was a layman, a rhetoric which most likely they employed in luring people away from the pure Gospel. Paul alluded to this type of rhetoric when in chapter 2 he spoke of καπηλεύειν and in chap. 4 of δουλοῦν τὸν λόγον. Paul was happy to admit that he was a non-professional in this art.

Paul concentrated on the truth which he was to proclaim. He tried to penetrate ever deeper into an understanding of the truth and to become ever more “expert” in presenting it forcefully. In chapter 2 he said that he spoke as from sincerity, as from God, in the presence of God; and in chap. 4, that he spoke, by the publishing of the truth appealing, and thus commending himself, to every man’s conscience. Now he says, Granted that I am a non-professional with respect to λόγος, what of it, ἀλλ’ οὐ τη γνώσει, but (I am not a layman) with reference to (the) knowledge.

How skillfully Paul could present facts in a convincing and winning way, we may learn from his reply to the charges of Tertullus. When Felix gave him the nod, he said (again according to Moffat’s translation): “As I know you have administered justice in this nation for a number of years, I feel encouraged to make my defense” (Acts 24:10). Since Felix had served as a judge among the Jews for many years, he had the opportunity to familiarize himself with their customs and manners. Paul does not have to make lengthy explanations to be understood. All he has to do is to present the pertinent facts, and Felix will be in a position to evaluate them properly. Hence Paul is not afraid to make his defense. He will get a fair hearing, and expects a fair verdict. — Very complimentary, but far from Tertullus’ hollow flattery. Moreover, every word has a bearing on the case. — That is a sample of Paul’s rhetoric, which he calls being an expert in knowledge.

The Corinthians knew this, not from hearsay but from personal experience. Paul concludes this little paragraph: ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς, but in every way having in all things demonstrated (it, the truth) to (among) you. Paul’s work was to bring the truth to light among people where it was unknown. He performed this task over against the Corinthians. And he did so both ἐν παντὶ and ἐν πᾶσιν, in every way and in all things. In his farewell address to the Ephesian elders he stated twice, “I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you” (Acts 20:20) And again, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (v. 27). The same he had done in Corinth, so that he can truthfully say ἐν παντὶ. In Acts 20:20 he adds, “and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.” In I Thess. 2:11 he wrote: “Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you.” Yes, ἐν παντὶ, in every way, in every respect he brought the Gospel to light. The Corinthians knew. They had the evidence before their eyes. In chap. 10:7 he had directed them: Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. In our present verse he refers to it with φανερώσαντες εἰς ὑμᾶς.

If in spite of the wonderful change which they had witnessed in the lives and conduct of a goodly number of their fellow citizens, and the wonderful new life that had been created in their own hearts, all as a result of Paul’s preaching, they permit themselves to be “taken in” by the intruders with their hollow rhetoric: is it any wonder that Paul is worried about them? Can anyone charge him with being unduly suspicious? or that in violation of the Eighth Commandment he is judging their hearts, and is thinking evil of them?

It is God’s zeal with which he is jealous of them. Their virgin purity and singleness of purpose toward Christ is under a cloud.

## V. Chapter 11:7–11

When Paul at the close of the previous section declared emphatically that in every way in all things he had given evidence to the Corinthians that in γνώσις he was anything but an ἰδιώτης, he paved the way for the introduction of a possible objection. He takes it up in v. 7, introducing it with ἢ, or. If this objection could be upheld it would prove a serious deficiency in Paul’s handling of the Gospel. But, on the other hand, if it can be shown to be baseless, it will shed new light on Paul’s thorough work.

The objection is Ἡ ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἐμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, Or did I commit a sin humbling myself in order that you might be exalted? What Paul means by “humbling” himself, he goes on to explain in a ὅτι clause: ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, in that I proclaimed the Gospel of God to you without charge.

When the Corinthians listened to the false apostles they may not have thought of Paul’s work in their midst as producing an exaltation for them. Yet only a moment’s reflection must impress upon them how fittingly the word which Paul chose describes both the nature and the result of his labors. Before Paul came to them, they had been lost in the depths of sin and despair. They may not have fully realized it at the time, they

may even have resented his approach; but now, after their eyes had been opened through his message, they were aware of their former lost condition.

Nor could they fail to recognize the glory of their estate to which Paul elevated them. They had the forgiveness of their sins, they were united to God as His dear children, they had the hope of eternal life in heaven. Although for a time some of them had questioned the coming resurrection, yet Paul had given the blessed assurance that death has been completely swallowed up in victory. —Yes, Paul had exalted them.

But had he adopted the proper mode of procedure? In his efforts to bring about their exaltation he had humbled himself, so much so that his opponents ridiculed his personal presence as weak and his speech as contemptible. Ought he not, in order to underscore the exalting nature of his message, have shown in his bearing a consciousness of his high position, and evinced a dignity and commanded a respect conformable to his high calling? Did he not by his humility degrade the message which he was carrying? —In asking this question Paul does not use the simple verb, “Did I sin?” he says, “Did I perpetrate a sin?”

In speaking about his self-humiliation Paul hastens to limit the expression. He did not conduct himself unseemly in a general way. The Corinthians well knew that his conduct always was above reproach. His self-humiliation consisted in this that he demanded no compensation for his work. He places the word δωρεάν, free, gratis, without charge, into the emphatic position at the head of the clause: that is the idea to which he wishes to draw the attention of the Corinthians.

About his message he speaks in glowing terms. He not only calls it the Gospel, he calls it God’s Gospel, which God Himself prepared, which God is sending forth into all the world as His final word to mankind, which God backs up with all His majesty. He repeats the idea of Gospel in the verb, literally, I gossiped the Gospel of God to you. The Corinthians must recall how pure and unadulterated was his proclamation of God’s forgiving grace in Christ, with no terms or conditions attached, no if’s or but’s. It was Gospel from beginning to end. —The Corinthians will also remember how stern was his rebuke when the Jews contradicted and blasphemed. “He shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 18:6). Paul preached the Gospel and permitted no tampering with it. In adding that it was God’s Gospel he indicates that he is well aware of the fact that he is God’s messenger, that he has to represent God’s majesty and, on the other hand, that God’s majesty was fully backing him up. But he did his work absolutely δωρεάν, just as God justifies the sinner δωρεάν (Rom. 3:24).

It should not have escaped the notice of the Corinthians, and we also do well to pay attention to the fact, that in describing his method Paul uses terms which he otherwise employs in speaking about the two states of Christ (cf. Phil. 2:8, 9). Only with reference to the exaltation of Christ he uses a compound verb ὑπερύψωσεν, while about the Corinthians he uses the simple verb ὑψωθήτε. From the Philippians passage we may gather that this was Paul’s customary way of speaking about the two states of Christ. —As Christ had humbled Himself that we might be exalted, so also did His messenger.

**V. 8.** —In the following verse Paul describes how it was possible for him to preach the Gospel to the Corinthians free of charge. He does not mention that he worked with his own hands day and night to support himself and his co-laborers. The Corinthians remembered that he had found employment in the shop of Aquila, the tentmaker. He does not have to mention that now, but he does say that other Christians with their gifts had enabled him to go to Corinth and begin his Gospel work there: ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, Other churches I robbed, receiving support (from them) for the ministry to you. Ὀψώνιον, originally the pay of mercenary soldiers, came to be used in a general way for pay, sustenance, support, etc. John the Baptist told the soldiers who came to hear him that they as a fruit of their repentance must be content with their ὀψώνια. In First Corinthians Paul, speaking about the salary due to ministers of the Gospel, says that no one ever goes to war on his own ὀψώνιον (chap. 9:7). Death is the ὀψώνια of sin (Rom. 6:23).

From whom did Paul receive his support in the present case? He may be thinking of the Berean Christians. When the Jews of Thessalonica started a persecution against Paul in Berea, the brethren “sent him away” to the sea and then “conducted him unto Athens” (Acts 17:14, 15). Who paid the fare? Is it too much to assume that they who conducted him did so?

Yet, here Paul is most likely thinking of somebody else, the Philippians. In his letter to this church he mentions with warm approval that they had held “fellowship in the gospel from the first day unto now” (chap. 1:5). This general, all-inclusive term he, in a later part of the same epistle, describes as meaning also that they manifested a keen interest in Gospel work and co-operated actively in its spread (chap. 4). From his prison cell (most likely in Rome) he thanked them for having remembered him with a gift to support him in his work. In this connection he mentions that they had tried to come to his aid much sooner, but had “lacked opportunity” (v. 10). He remembers with thanks that, when he was working in Thessalonica after leaving Philippi, they had twice sent a contribution for his support (v. 16).

We remember two things—and this demonstration by the Philippians of their interest in the spreading of the Gospel will impress them on us with still greater force. The first is that Paul was permitted to stay in Thessalonica for “three Sabbath days” only (Acts 17:2). In so short a time the Philippians twice sent him a gift.—The second point to remember is that the Philippians were not a wealthy congregation. In our present epistle to the Corinthians Paul refers to their “deep poverty” (chap. 8:2), in spite of which they contributed “to their power,” yes “beyond their power” to the collection which he was taking up for the needy saints in Jerusalem (v. 3).

The fellowship of the Philippians in the Gospel manifested itself in so great a measure that Paul, in speaking about it, borrows some terms from bookkeeping (receipts and disbursements): “Now ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning *giving* and *receiving*, but ye only” (Phil. 4:15).

When Paul left Macedonia he went to Athens, and then to Corinth. The contributions which he had received from the Philippians helped to tide him over during the beginning of his stay in Achaia, and supplemented his income after he found employment in the shop of Aquila.

It may be assumed that the Corinthians were familiar, at least to some extent, with the conditions as just outlined. They must have sensed the peculiar flavor of one word which Paul here used: “I *robbed*.” Accepting support from so poor a congregation made Paul feel guilty, as though it bordered on robbery.

**V. 9.** That is not all. Not only did the Philippians help him get a start in Corinth; even later, during his 18 months’ stay in that city they came to his assistance: καὶ παρὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεὶς οὐ κατενάρκησα, and while present with you and having come behind I did not burden anyone. Paul was not always able to make ends meet. Though working day and night (I Thess. 2:9), so that, pointing to his calloused hands, he later could say to the Ephesian elders: “Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me” (Acts 20:34), yet it would happen that his funds became exhausted. Did he then appeal to the Corinthians for help? He had a perfect right to do so. “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?” (I Cor. 9:11). Paul did not avail himself of this right. He did not burden anyone. The verb which he here uses he repeats also in chap. 12:13, 14, where v. 13 contains the same form which we have in our present verse, while in v. 14 the future tense appears. The meaning is the same in all three instances, yet Jerome uses three different expressions in his translation. In our verse he has *onerosum esse*; in 12:13, *gravare*; and in 12:14, *gravem esse*. He treats the verb as intransitive, while there are indications that in classical Greek it was used as transitive in the sense of “stupefy” or “disable.” The new *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* offers two English words: “burden” and “be a burden.” The German words are more expressive: *zur Last fallen, beschwerlich werden*.

By the choice of this word Paul indicates how careful he was to preach the Gospel without charge to the Corinthians, and how much importance he attached to that fact.

So far his statement was purely negative, he became a burden to no one. Yet his admission that there were times when he failed to meet his financial obligations from his own earnings raises a question which demands an answer. Paul continues with a positive statement: τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, for my shortage the brethren coming from Macedonia helped to fill up.

In referring to a visit by Macedonian brethren Paul is telling the Corinthians nothing new. They remembered. Paul says “*the* brethren” with the definite article of previous reference. Incidentally this gives us a

glimpse of the close contact which the early congregations kept up among themselves. Already in chap. 9:4 Paul had stated that he expected some Macedonians to accompany him on his visit to Corinth. Here we learn that during his 18 months' stay in that city they had visited him and the young congregation which he had founded.

It happened that just at the time of their visit he was in arrears with his payments. Then they προσανεπλήρυσαν his shortage. This is the same verb which he had applied to the collection which he gathered for the needy saints in Jerusalem: It was helping to fill up their want. So now the brethren from Macedonia helped to fill up Paul's want.

Paul repeats emphatically καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω, and in every way unburdensome I did keep myself, and shall keep myself to you. The stress is on the idea "in every way unburdensome." The new thought is that Paul intends to continue his method in the future as in the past, stressing that this is a set policy with him.

**V. 10.** This raises the question: Why? What may be Paul's reason? Paul gives the answer in the words: ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, There is Christ's truth in me.

This statement is understood by many as an asseveration, a solemn declaration, a mild form of oath. Jerome's translation is non-committal: *Est veritas Christi in me*, followed by a *quoniam* clause. But the King James says, "As the truth of Christ is in me." So also the RSV. Luther: *So gewiss die Wahrheit Christi in mir ist*. Phillips in his "Letters to Young Churches" uses even a stronger form: "By the truth of Christ within me." We grant that Paul might have chosen a plain statement like the present to express a solemn affirmation—as in the very next verse he says, "God knows," and as in I Thess. 2:5, he says, "God is witness;" yet more frequently he indicates it by his phraseology when he wants his words to be understood as an emphatic affirmation of the truth. Compare in this same chapter verse 31: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not." Compare also chap. 1:23, "Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul." Yet though the form does not decide anything either one way or the other, and since it does not rule out the assumption of a mild oath, the question remains, which of Paul's statements, either because of its importance or because it was questioned by some one, calls for such a solemn re-enforcement? The translations which treat the statement as a solemn affirmation apply it to the immediately following ὅτι clause. Here is the whole verse in Phillips' translation: "By the truth of Christ within me, no one shall stop my being proud of my independence through all Achaia." In the original the clause reads: ἡ καύχησις αὐτησου φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας, this boasting shall not be blocked for me in the regions of Achaia.

Paul connects this clause to the foregoing with the conjunction ὅτι. Jerome translated this with *quoniam*: because, since, seeing that. Lenski takes ὅτι here to be consecutive: so that. It is not necessary to ascribe to ὅτι any such specific meaning. This conjunction had a wide range of uses, and frequently is impossible of translation. (Compare e.g., the so-called ὅτι *recitativum* before direct quotations.) We may in this connection think of the peculiar use of ὅτι in I Tim. 6:7, "For we brought nothing into this world, ὅτι we can carry nothing out." Moffat, Goodspeed, the RSV substitute a simple "and" for ὅτι in this Timothy passage. A similar connection seems indicated in our Corinthians passage.

Καύχησις is the act of boasting, not, as Phillips translates, "being proud." The fact that Paul adds the demonstrative αὐτή forces us to look for this act of boasting somewhere in the near vicinity of the present verse. Does he mean what Phillips calls "independence"? Was it a spirit of "independence" that prompted Paul to preach the Gospel to the Corinthians free of charge? to refuse taking remuneration? Paul feels that someone might even consider it as a sin, and he himself called it a self-humiliation. In the following he even indicates that by some his method was interpreted as evincing a lack of love.

The boasting which Paul had done was contained in v. 7, namely, that he had "gospelled the Gospel of God," and that he had done this in full γνῶσις, and had given unmistakable evidence of his γνῶσις of the Gospel before the Corinthians in all things and in every way (v. 6). This boasting is based on fact, it stands on a firm rock, and no efforts of the false apostles will be able to shake it. Paul could repeat without fear of contradiction:

There is Christ's truth in me. The intruders may try, but they will never succeed in blocking Paul's boasting. Rather, by attacking him they will merely show that their own "gospel" is false.

This is Paul's boasting, which shall not be blocked for him in Achaia. Would Paul appeal to the truth of Christ within him to corroborate his statement? Does that seem quite appropriate? By the truth of Christ within me, no one will effectively dam up my act of boasting on me? If he had said, I call upon God, or, God is my witness, that this boasting shall not be blocked, that would be understandable; but an appeal to the truth of Christ within him seems odd. It seems indicated that we should look for some other understanding of the words, "Christ's truth is in me."

We have above already briefly indicated how we understand them. They are a summary statement of his claim that he is a true preacher of the true Gospel. —We take a little closer look at the statement. We note that ἔστιν is in the emphatic position. Paul stresses the fact that what he says in this clause is really so, unmistakably so. Christ's truth actually is in him. That fact stands out in bold relief. No matter what the false apostles may proclaim as Christ's truth, no matter what they may say against Paul's message, no matter whether Paul is a professional or a layman in rhetoric, no matter how often Paul may have to change his travel plans: all this in no way affects Christ's truth which he proclaims. This is something which the Corinthians should remember: The truth *is* in Paul.

We note further that Paul states the fact in an arresting manner: Christ's truth *is in me*. He had summarized Christ's truth in chap. 5:19 and 21: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. . . . For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This truth of God's unmerited, boundless saving grace is in Paul, not only in the message which he proclaims, but also in the method in which he does so. He not only announces the truth, but in his announcement lives the truth, so that his very life becomes an illustration of the way in which God deals with lost sinners: granting them free pardon. We may go a step farther. Paul is so anxious to proclaim God's grace in all its splendor because he himself is an outstanding example of its free saving power. When stressing in I Tim. 1:15 that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he adds significantly, "of whom I am chief." When in I Cor. 15 he mentions the fact that the risen Christ was seen also by him, he describes himself as "one born out of due time" (i.e., an abortion). He is an example of Christ's truth; now he proclaims Christ's truth, he illustrates Christ's truth by proclaiming it δωρεάν .

We may add a little more. Not only is Paul's message the Gospel of free justification and salvation by grace alone; not only does Paul by his method of proclaiming the Gospel without charge illustrate its nature: Paul in his very person is an outstanding example. In his youth he had persecuted the Gospel. He was not an ordinary opponent, he forged ahead of the other members of his group: "above many my equals (in age) in mine own nation" (Gal. 1:14). He was "exceedingly mad against them (the believers) and persecuted them even unto strange cities." He did this from conviction: "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:11 and 9).

What happened to this Paul? In his first letter to Timothy he calls himself the chief of sinners, and then adds: "Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern" (chap. 1:16). He came to faith as "one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:8). How did this happen? The answer is: "It pleased God" (Gal. 1:15). Without merit or worthiness, out of pure grace, without charge, δωρεάν. Thus Paul in his very person is a classical case in point; he is an outstanding example of the Gospel which he proclaims.

Yes, the truth of Christ is in him. He assures the Corinthians that this boasting shall not be blocked for him in the regions of Achaia.

The last remark has a peculiar ring. Why does he use that expression in referring to Corinth? Is he "sore"? Is he scolding the Corinthians? Is he angry at them? It is true, false apostles had tried to "smear" Paul. They had tried to undermine his reputation. And the Corinthians had not met their slanderous remarks properly. They had, in part at least, accepted them. Their hearts had turned away from Paul, had to some extent turned against him. It would have been only human if he had somewhat been embittered.

Paul himself now asks the question *διὰ τί*, why? Why does he speak in this way? Why will he not permit his boasting to be blocked in the regions of Achaia? He assumes that some one might interpret his words and his actions as evincing a lack of love, a certain bitterness: *ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς*, (Is it) that I do not love you? —A person cannot read this epistle to the Corinthians without being impressed by its spirit of warm love and affection, which it breathes on every page. A deep interest in their affairs, a tender concern for their wellbeing: all this goes to show that Paul loved the Corinthians as fervently as ever. But if he were called upon to prove it that he loved the Corinthians, that in spite of his sharp rebuke he loved them, yes, that even his stern words were prompted by his love—it would have been impossible to do so. The false apostles, who boasted of outward things only and never went to the heart of a matter, would have been quick to suggest that his words and actions were incontrovertible evidence of resentment. Realizing this, Paul appeals to God as witness: *ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν*, God knows.—Here we have a strong affirmation in the nature of an oath.

This should be sufficient. It would have been if Paul were interested only in clearing his good name. But he is interested in strengthening the faith of the Corinthians. They were impressed by the slanders against him, spread by the false apostles. Their faith had become shaky. Paul seeks to brace it, and to lead them back to a more healthy condition.

In the last few remarks we have already indicated that Paul's question, "Why this?" is not to be limited to the last point, namely his preaching the Gospel to the Corinthians without charge. That point was only a part of a wider complex of arguments, the center of which was Paul's doubts about the Corinthians' sincerity and fidelity to Christ. Without mincing words he pointed to their questionable attitude toward the carriers of a false Gospel, and with unusual stress he pointed to the truth of Christ which he by word and example had brought to them. Why this uncomplimentary reminder and this sharp rebuke? —Paul appeals to God's omniscience that it was nothing but fervent love which motivated him.

## VI. Chapter 11:12–15

In the conclusion of the previous section Paul appealed to the omniscience of God in support of his claim that the motive for his somewhat, harsh treatment of the Corinthians was nothing but loving concern for their spiritual wellbeing. He now points out a special purpose which he is trying to achieve by calling attention to the special manner in which he proclaimed the Gospel.

He takes up the thought by saying, *ὃ δὲ ποιῶ καὶ ποιήσω*: The thing that I am doing and will continue to do. This is the way Luther translates the relative clause: *Was ich aber tue und tun will*; while the KJV treats the *καὶ ποιήσω* as a main clause: "But what I do that I will do." Thus the KJV drops the *καὶ* altogether. If the *καὶ ποιήσω* is to be elevated to the rank of a main clause, then the translation will have to be: That I *also* will do. That would mean a stressing of Paul's plan to continue his mode of procedure. Such stress does not seem in place now. Already in v. 9 Paul had emphatically declared: "In all things have I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, *and so will I keep myself*." Now he is referring to that announcement. That makes it seem advisable to follow Luther's example and to take the second verb into the relative clause. —This construction, however, makes it necessary to supply a thought; as also Luther does: *das tue ich datum*. In reading the Greek text it is not necessary to insert these words, a pause after the relative clause will achieve the purpose.

We note that Paul is not speaking about his conduct in general, he refers specifically to his method of preaching the Gospel without charge to the Corinthians. He indicates this by using the singular of the relative pronoun. If he were speaking about his general conduct, the plural would have been required. In the Greek it is clear at once that he is referring to some specific thing. This is not so clear in either the German or the English translation.

What particular purpose is Paul trying to achieve by his method of preaching the Gospel free of charge? His general purpose he stated above, but what is his specific purpose in the present situation? his purpose over against the boastful false apostles? We remember that he stressed emphatically: "Christ's truth is in me," and that also his method of preaching the Gospel without remuneration served the purpose of underscoring the unmerited and unrepayable nature of God's grace and of our redemption. Teachers of philosophy in those days



were wont to collect fees from their pupils. If Paul had done the same he thereby might have created the impression that his Gospel was on a level with the various systems of philosophy, so that people would imagine themselves to have a choice between Stoicism and Epicureanism or the Gospel. In order to impress on all minds the uniqueness of the Gospel he, as a matter of principle, refrained from taking remuneration.

Now with respect to this particular thing which he had done and plans to continue to do he says that it will serve a special purpose in his clash with the false apostles. We may paraphrase the relative clause somewhat like this: Now as to the thing which I am doing, and shall continue to do, the specific purpose is this: ἵνα ἐκκόψω τὴν ἀφορμὴν τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμὴν, in order that I may cut off the occasion of those who (just) want (or, are looking for) an occasion. Ἀφορμὴ is literally a starting point, a springboard; then a base of operation; a pretext; an occasion, an inducement; also food for argument, material or subject for discussion; in a very special sense: the capital of a banker. —In our case no special coloring seems to attach to the term, and we take it in its general metaphorical sense of “occasion.” Paul wants to cut off, once and for all, the occasion for those who are eagerly looking for just some occasion. Note that ἐκκόψω is the aorist, thus stressing merely the action as such, without any suggestion of duration or lasting result. —It is clear that with the expression: “those who want an occasion,” he is referring to the false apostles. Although they preached a Christ who was totally different from the historical Christ; although their message conveyed a spirit which was the very opposite of the spirit which Paul’s message carried; although thus their Gospel was a counterfeit; yet they pretended to be, and demanded to be acknowledged as, true apostles of Christ. They claimed to be more efficient apostles, and to bring the Corinthians a better grade of Gospel. Yet they were eagerly looking for an occasion to create the appearance as though in a way they were like Paul. Therefore Paul has deliberately pursued a certain course, and will continue to pursue that course, for the purpose of cutting off the desired occasion, namely, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καυχόνται εὐρεθῶσιν καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς: in order that in the thing in which they boast they may be found just as also we (are). If they are really penitent believers in Christ, if they are grateful disciples, if they are solicitous apostles, eager to win souls for Christ: then let them show it in self-sacrificing service, as Paul did. But what about it? They are interested in remuneration more than in the welfare of souls. To preach the Gospel without charge is beyond them. Here, thus, is the point where they may be tested, here is where their true nature appears. The Gospel does not mean enough for them to forego their pay. They use their Gospel work as a convenient source of income.

They looked for an occasion to be found just like the true apostles. Paul effectively cuts off that occasion for them. They now stand exposed as what they are. Paul does not mince words: οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι ψευδαπόστολοι: for men of that type (are) pseudo-apostles.

The Greek text does not contain the copula; it must be supplied somewhere. Luther places it before the participle a little farther on in the sentence, and uses pseudo-apostles (together with “evil workers”) as the subject of the resulting periphrastic verb form: they “are transforming—or disguising—themselves.” It seems preferable, however, to follow the lead of the KJ version, which supplies the copula before pseudo-apostles. Paul has spoken about “superfine apostles,” who had come to Corinth proclaiming a different Jesus and conveying another spirit, and, in short, representing a Gospel which had nothing in common with the true Gospel except the name. He had said about them that they were seeking an occasion to appear like Paul and his associates. Now he brands them as pseudo-apostles. They pretend to be messengers of Christ, but the content of their message, its effect, and the manner in which they conducted themselves while posing as Christ’s apostles, shows clearly that they are not messengers of the Gospel of Christ. Christ did not send them. They have no divine commission to do what they are doing. They are like the false prophets whom God described to Jeremiah: “The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart” (chap. 14:14). For the same reason Paul’s opponents are pseudo-apostles.

Fictitious as is their commission, so is also the work which they do, and the results which they produce. They are ἐργάται δόλιοι, fraudulent workers. The effect of their dishonest work was evident among the Corinthians: a Jesus in an unrecognizable guise, a spirit of an altogether different stripe, a counterfeit Gospel. They do this μετασηματιζόμενοι εἰς ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ: changing their appearance into (that like) apostles

of Christ. —Paul, of course, is not referring to the physical appearance of the false apostles, but to their pious talk, to their pious admonitions, to their insinuating manners, to their glorious promises. But pity the Christians who let themselves be deceived by this mask. Only the true Gospel of Christ is a power of God unto salvation. An adulterated Gospel, which is no Gospel at all, leads to destruction, no matter how cunningly it may be camouflaged to resemble the original.

Where do the false apostles learn their tricks?

Paul continues, καὶ οὐ θαῦμα, αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ σατανᾶς μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός: And no wonder: for Satan himself transforms (disguises) himself into an angel of light. In v. 3 Paul compared the recent happenings in Corinth to the tragedy in the Garden of Eden. In Eden it was a serpent (manipulated by Satan) who deceived Eve with its trickery. Now similar things were going on in Corinth with similar results. In v. 3 only the similarity of the two events themselves was pointed out, no causal connection between them was predicated. Now Paul indicates that everything is clear if we realize that the false apostles, just like the serpent in Eden, are in the employ of Satan. As in Eden Satan exploited a serpent, so he is now engaging the false apostles in his murderous work. And just as in Eden he did not show his hoofs and horns, but appeared as a harbinger of a more abundant life, so now he deceived the Corinthians by pretending to be an apostle of Christ. —Note the present tense of the verb: such trickery is his regular mode of procedure. “Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight.”

Satan, the father of lies, resorts to disguise for success. It is to be expected that he will teach his agents the same method of procedure. Above, Paul had used the word “no marvel,” now he expresses the same idea in a somewhat milder term. He says, οὐ μέγα οὖν: It is, then, not a great thing—rather it is to be expected. What? εἰ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι αὐτοῦ μετασχηματίζονται ὡς διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης: if also his servants transform (disguise) themselves as ministers of righteousness. Paul uses the word διάκονον, not δοῦλος. The latter would be in place if the point were to stress the fact that these men take their orders from Satan. That certainly is true, but it is not the point which Paul here wants us to note. These men are agents of Satan, engaged in carrying out Satan’s designs. They are his administrators, promoting his affairs. He is the one who sinned from the beginning. He introduced sin into the world by tempting man to disobey God. His business is to perpetuate sin in the world by leading men into temptation and causing them to fall, so that they must die. Since Christ came into the world and as the Lamb of God took away sin by His vicarious suffering and death, the specific design of Satan is to prevent people from accepting Christ and His righteousness in simple faith. And yet, while engaged in perpetuating sin he teaches his agents to pose as administrators of righteousness, i.e., of the righteousness which Christ won for us by being made sin for us, and which He administers by proclaiming free justification to men, and sending His Holy Spirit to create faith in their hearts. He gave to us the message of reconciliation and established among us the blessed ministry of reconciliation. It is not a great thing that Satan, the liar from the beginning and the father of lies, in order to deceive the people so much the more easily, teaches his agents to assume the pose as ministers of righteousness, and to use this guise for spreading unrighteousness all the more effectively.

As a warning Paul concludes this part with the announcement: ὃν τὸ τέλος ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν: whose (i.e., but their) end will be according to their works. The relative pronoun serves merely to connect this clause to the foregoing. Such mode of connection is extremely rare in English. We substitute a demonstrative, usually together with some coordinating conjunction. In our case, the relation being slightly adversative, we use “but.” The false apostles do make a great show, but their work is sham. The bubble will burst. Their works will be made manifest in their true nature. They will not stand up in the judgment of the Lord. Being exposed as works of unrighteousness they will bring down damnation on the heads of Satan’s agents. And all who permitted themselves to be misled by them will share their fate.

With this warning Paul concludes the part begun in v. 2, where he remarked that he is zealous about the Corinthians with the very zeal of God. He is going to indulge in a little foolishness, but not in trifling flippancy; it is extremely serious business for him. Life and death is at stake, righteousness and unrighteousness, eternal salvation or damnation.

## VIIa. Chapter 11:16–21

In v. 1 of this chapter Paul had asked for the indulgence of his readers if he engaged in some foolishness. Having now demonstrated what a serious matter his request concerns, he repeats the original appeal in a modified form in v. 16. He asks, Πάλιν λέγω, μή τις με δόξη ἄφρονα εἶναι: Again I say, let not any one think that I (really) am a fool. With πάλιν referring back to the wish expressed in v. 1, Paul now pleads that no one misunderstand his method. His talk will sound like a fool's, but it will not be done in the spirit of a fool. Fools boast for self-glorification. They will speak about themselves, their qualifications, their efforts, their achievements. When they are present, no one else will have a chance to get a word in edgewise. They will conveniently forget about their own shortcomings. Oh, yes, they may condescendingly say, "We all make mistakes. That's why we have erasers on our pencils." But that is not to be taken too seriously. —In their boasting they will also exaggerate.

In a boastful way Paul is now going to speak about his own work and that of the intruders. Of course, he will abstain from untruthful exaggeration; but his words might be misconstrued in that sense by unfriendly critics. For that reason he pleads with his readers not to assume that he is actually a fool.

But if his boasting should sound too realistic, if his readers cannot quite come up to his request, then, he pleads, they should at least listen to him: εἰ δὲ μή γε: but if not, i.e., if you do not grant my request. Paul adds the emphatic particle γε for a stress which it is difficult to reproduce in English. Words like *even, indeed, at least*, etc., are a little too heavy. The new *Gr.-Engl. Lex. of the NT* suggests for our passage: *otherwise at least*. The KJ has simply "if otherwise," while Luther renders it: *wo abet nicht*. If the Corinthians find it utterly impossible to grant his request, then what? Paul continues, κὰν ὡς ἄφρονα δέξασθέ με: even if as a fool, receive me. With δέξασθέ Paul not only asks his readers to listen to him carefully, but also to consider well what he has to say. In form his words may be like a fool's talk, but the content will be of the utmost importance. Hence, δέξασθέ, listen and absorb. ἵνα κάγω μικρόν τι καυχῆσωαμι: that also I may do a little bit of boasting. Thus Paul repeats his request of v. 1, that the Corinthians should bear with him in a little folly.

Before he begins his boasting Paul inserts another explanation, we might call it an excuse, for this manner of procedure in proclaiming the Gospel and instructing believers. He says, ὁ λαλῶ οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ: What (i.e., the thing that) I am saying, not in the Lord's manner am I saying (it), but as in folly. We must not overlook the fact that Paul uses the singular of the relative pronoun. He is not referring to his manner of teaching in general, he is speaking specifically of the request which he is making, that the Corinthians permit him to do a little boasting. In boasting like a fool he is palpably deviating from the manner in which the Lord proclaimed His Gospel and instructed His hearers. There was no occasion, and there could not arise a situation during our Lord's earthly career, that would call for a manner of procedure as Paul now plans to follow. Some one might object that since the Lord never employed this method, it was a clear indication that the method itself was improper, and that Paul really stood self-condemned by stooping to employ it. Ordinarily Paul would not think of using it, and he shows considerable uneasiness now that he decided to try it. He appears quite uncomfortable in the role he is about to play.

This is evident also from the explanatory remark which he adds, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει τῆς καυχήσεως: in this venture of the (my) boasting. He calls his boasting a ὑπόστασις. This word literally means a basis, a foundation, and, used metonymically, it may designate the building erected on a foundation. Metaphorically, it denotes the basis on which some assumption rests, and then, metonymically, that assumption itself. Thus in Heb. 11:1, our faith is called the ὑπόστασις of things hoped for; and in the same verse in the synonymous parallel member the word ἔλεγχος: conviction, is used to express the same idea. —In our present case Paul is undertaking something new, something which makes him feel rather uncomfortable, yet something which he is convinced is proper and will be effective. To express these ideas I used the English word "venture." (Moffat and Phillips simply say "business;" while Goodspeed has "reckless way.")—By the way, when Paul in this verse says that he is not speaking κατὰ κύριον, he is not referring to inspiration. He does not mean to say that the Lord has nothing to do with the matter and is not giving him the very words by His Spirit, as the RSV, Moffat, and Phillips seem to imply—RSV: "I say not with the Lord's authority," Moffat: "What I am now going to say is

not inspired by the Lord,” Phillips: “I am not now speaking as the Lord commands me,”—he is simply referring to his method of speaking in the given situation.

This still leaves the question unanswered, Why did Paul choose this method of boasting? The next verse mentions the occasion, but only hints in a very veiled way at the real reason.

V. 18. Ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται κατὰ τὴν σάρκα κάγω καυχῆσομαι: Since many are boasting according to the flesh, also I shall boast. The desire to boast is very common and is in agreement with the flesh. “Flesh” is here, of course, not to be taken in the sense of sinful nature. Paul would never deliberately boast in a sinful manner. It merely refers to a certain inclination of all human nature. It is human to feel the urge for boasting, and, on the other hand, just as human to grow weary of listening to some one else’s boasting. To this common trait of human nature Paul refers when he says that many indulge in boasting. It is a very common practice. “Everybody’s doing it.”

While making this general observation Paul naturally keeps the situation in Corinth in mind. The Corinthians have recently been exposed to very much boasting. They should really be “fed up.” But that does not seem to be the case. Hence Paul will fall in line, he also will engage in boasting. The Corinthians should not grow weary of it; rather, on the basis of their past behavior over against the false apostles, they might be expected to enjoy it. At least, it seems to Paul to be an avenue of approach to the Corinthians’ heart worth trying. —The irony of the next verse is designed to blast the last road block.

V. 19. Ἡδέως γὰρ ἀνέχεσθε τῶν ἀφρόνων: For with joy you endure the fools. Note the contradiction in terms between the verb and its adverb modifier: ἀνέχεσθαι means to endure, to put up with. Now, persons will endure something with dull resignation or with silent patience. But never will such endurance be the source of joy and happiness. In the case of the Corinthians things were different. They had to put up with fools, but they were happy doing it. They enjoyed it, and never did they seem more elated than in the company of those fools.

Paul will have more details to add to this statement later on, in v. 20. For the present he motivates the peculiar conduct of the Corinthians in a participial phrase: φρόνιμοι ὄντες: (you do this) being intelligent people. Do intelligent people enjoy the prating and bragging of fools? By being pleased and delighted with the treatment which they received from the intruders the Corinthians clearly show that they are anything but intelligent people.

Is Paul justified in speaking to the Corinthians with such bitter, biting irony? In support of his charge he points out to them what their acceptance of the intruders really means. He may be speaking as a fool, but the matter is serious and he is in dead earnest about it. He continues with an explanatory γὰρ, and presents the meaning of the Corinthians’ reaction to the false apostles from five different angles.

The first is: ἀνέχεσθε εἴ τις ὑμᾶς καταδουλοῖ: You endure it if some one reduces you to slavery. Paul had brought them the truth of the Gospel, the truth which according to Christ’s promise made them free. The intruders brought them another Christ, a counterfeit Gospel, and a heterogeneous spirit, whereby they re-subjected them to the yoke of bondage. By accepting additions of Law elements to the Gospel the Corinthians had lost Christ and had fallen from grace. They had become entangled again in the bondage of the weak and beggarly elements of this world. —This is what the intruders had done to them, and they took it with a smile. They enjoyed it.

Looked at from a different angle the action of the intruders on the Corinthians can be described as: εἴ τις κατεσθίει: if some one devours you. The intruders not only robbed the Corinthians of their spiritual liberty and made slaves of them, they also charged heavy fees and collected exorbitant payment. —Again the Corinthians did not resent it. They complied most willingly.

In a way that is similar to the first statement, yet going slightly beyond it, the third εἰ clause says: εἴ τις λαμβάνει: if any one takes you (i.e., takes possession of you, captures you). Paul does not say, takes *from* you, or robs you, but, takes you personally, so that you become his slaves and he your master. Paul had emphatically declined such a position for himself. “Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy” (chap. 1:24). That is in full agreement with the attitude which Peter enjoined on all bishops: “Neither as

being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Pet. 5:3). Peter had learned this from the Lord Himself: "Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ" (Matth. 23:10). And Paul had warned the Corinthians: "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." And again: "Ye are bought with a price: be ye not the servants of men" (I Cor. 6:20; 7:23).—Yet the Corinthians permitted themselves to be taken captive by men. They let men lord it over them—and seemed to enjoy it.

A fourth way of expressing it is closely related to the third: εἴ τις ἐπαίρεται: if any one is presumptuous (Luther: *so jemand euch trotzet*). This attitude of the intruders stands in sharp contrast to Paul's "meekness and gentleness" which he had learned from Christ, and at which the intruders sneered that his personal presence was weak and his speech contemptible. Yes, Paul had even "abased" himself that they might be exalted. —Then the intruders came, putting on airs, acting presumptuously, and even becoming abusive. And the Corinthians took it meekly, they even gloried in it.

Lastly Paul says that they bear it εἴ τις εἰς πρόσωπον ὑμᾶς δέρει: if some one slaps you in the face. The Corinthians had learned from Paul to rejoice in the Gospel of the free forgiveness of their sins, of their adoption into God's family. Now they were told by the intruders that they had been duped by Paul, and that the Gospel which they had accepted was a very inferior brand. That was like a slap in the face. —Yet the Corinthians meekly and joyfully submitted. They felt honored.

Such was the treatment which the Corinthians had received, as it appears when viewed in the light of the facts. How was it possible that they submitted?

V. 21. Paul answers: κατὰ ἀτιμίαν λέγω: I am speaking according to disgrace. The picture which Paul sketched in a few bold lines certainly is a disgraceful one; and Paul is actually ashamed to present it. On whom does the disgrace fall? On the intruders for doing such shameful things? On the Corinthians for submitting to such treatment, shameful for themselves and for their Savior, who is thereby crowded out of His rightful place? Paul feels that the shame falls on himself and his co-laborers: ὡς ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἡσθενήκαμεν: namely, that *we* (now) stand there as weaklings.

The combination ὡς ὅτι occurs three times in Paul's letters: in II Thess. 2:2; and in our present Epistle in chapter 5:19, besides the verse under consideration. We discussed it briefly in connection with chapter 5:19. Some grammars do not explain it at all; some as *Blass-Debrunner*, simply equate it with plain ὅτι. Jerome has two different translations. In our passage and in II Thess. 2:2 he says *quasi*, as though; but in II Cor. 5:19 he translates *quoniam quidem*, because or that indeed. ὡς, the relative adverb of manner, is best changed to a demonstrative according to the English idiom, and the ὅτι clause explains what is meant. Paul is speaking by way of disgrace, namely, because "we now stand there as weaklings."

Paul had brought the Gospel to Corinth. He had instructed the Corinthians in the faith. Through his service they had learned to know their Savior and had received the Spirit. Then when the false apostles came, they received them with open arms, and readily accepted their false gospel in the manner as Paul just outlined summarily: They took it with a smile when they were made slaves, etc.

Paul now says: That reflects on our work. When the Galatians permitted themselves to be taken in by the Judaizers, Paul wrote: I am surprised, I cannot understand "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you" (Gal. 1:6). Here he says: We must be weaklings, we must have done a very poor job, seeing that "fools" can so easily shake you and win you over to their error, and treat you as the intruders did—and you even feel happy and proud about it.

The Corinthians well remembered how thorough Paul had been in his work. All the more they must now feel ashamed of themselves, having permitted themselves to be duped so easily.

Now Paul is ready to begin his own boasting.

## VIIb. Chapter 11:21–29

The ground has now been well prepared. Paul has warned the Corinthians that he believes to have reason to suspect them of a lack of singleness of purpose and purity of heart in their relation to Christ. The warm reception which they accorded the false apostles shows their instability. In spite of the fact that the false apostles brought them a different Jesus, another Spirit, and another Gospel, they readily accepted the counterfeit. Paul, though not in excellency of speech and in rhetorical eloquence, yet with rich understanding and in sincere modesty, had raised them out of the depths of darkness and despair and exalted them to peace and joy in the Lord. Yet apparently with no difficulty at all the false apostles by their boasting had destroyed the work of Paul. The Corinthians even seemed to relish the boasting and the boasters, although it meant spiritual enslavement for them. Now, Paul says, that points a possible way of approach for him to their hearts. It may not be the Christ-like way, it may be loathsome to Paul personally, yet he is willing to try it, he also will resort to boasting. He will not exaggerate. He will present facts, and let the facts speak for themselves.

**V. 21b.** The false apostles had indulged in some tall boasting. Paul will match them point for point: ἐν ᾧ δ' ἂν τις τολμᾷ, but in whatsoever anyone is daring. The δέ is slightly adversative. In the previous part of the verse Paul had spoken about his own “disgrace.” Since his work in Corinth had been so quickly overthrown by the intruders, does that not reflect unfavorably on the nature of his work? Does it not show that he had done a very “poor job”? If he had been more efficient, ought not then the Corinthians have stood more firm? Ought they not to have resisted the false apostles? Yet though this may be the first impression which an observer gets, Paul will not concede the point, rather, in whatsoever any one dares to claim something, Paul is ready to call the bluff. Note the very wide scope of the relative pronoun. Paul asks for no exceptions. He leaves it to the opponent to bring in any challenge he chooses.

Before writing the apodosis Paul once more expresses his aversion to this type of procedure. He remarks parenthetically, ἐν ἀφοροσύνῃ, I am speaking in folly. The false apostles were in earnest when they boasted about themselves. They were very much concerned about their own honor and their own pocketbooks. If Paul now starts to boast, the Corinthians might get the impression that he is similarly concerned—something which would defeat the very purpose of Paul, who is concerned about one thing only: viz., that “Christ be formed” in them (cf. Gal. 4:19).

If the Corinthians keep Paul’s aversion to boasting in mind, then he will now take up the gauntlet which the opponents had thrown at his feet: τολμῶ κάγω, daring am also I—with no fear of being bested.

Paul said that he would meet the boasting intruders on their own ground. Whatever claim they may advance, he will take it up and match it. They boasted in outward things, without going to the heart of the matter. This fact we must bear in mind when Paul now mentions some of their claims.

He takes up three of their vaunted excellences, which he maintains he can easily duplicate, but which for him had a different meaning than for the false apostles. Ἑβραῖοί εἰσιν; They are Hebrews? —Ἰσραηλιταί εἰσιν; They are Israelites? —σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ εἰσιν; They are Abraham’s seed?—In each case he can say, κάγω, So am I. For the intruders these three terms meant merely outward membership in God’s chosen nation. In that sense already Paul could say, I too. As far as nationality is concerned he could say more. He was not only an ordinary Hebrew, but, as he says in Phil. 3:5, he was “an Hebrew of the Hebrews,” a purebred Hebrew in descent, in customs, in language, without any foreign admixture.

Israel was the name given by God to Jacob on his return from Mesopotamia, when Jacob in faith and prayer wrestled with God for the promised blessing: “For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Gen 32:28). The opponents of Paul were Israelites only outwardly, Paul was one in the true sense of the word. “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Rom. 9:6). The same applies to the name “seed of Abraham.” Abraham is the father of believers: “They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Gal. 3:7). —Paul does not stress this important distinction here; he is meeting his opponents on their own ground of externalism.

**V. 23.** The same applies to the next point, διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν: Are they ministers of Christ? —Paul calls himself a δοῦλος Χριστοῦ, one who takes all his orders from Christ, one who has no interests of his own

but is completely absorbed in the business of his Master (e.g. Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). He does not use that word here. —He also calls himself a ὑπηρέτης of Christ (I Cor. 4:1), an underling, a “performer of any strong and hard labor,” an “inferior minister to perform certain defined functions” (Trench). He does not use that word here. Here he speaks of διάκονοι. This word, according to Trench, “represents the servant in his activity for the work”—or in the words of Cremer: *die Ruecksicht auf die einem anderen zu gute kommende Arbeit*.

When comparing his work done for the Gospel and his service rendered to the Lord with that of the false apostles, Paul can say, ὑπὲρ ἐγώ. In this respect he is way “above” them. But he inserts, παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, I am talking as one beside himself. His words may sound silly, but he is really ministering to Christ in a manner which the false apostles never even approach. When he works for the Lord he actually toils and labors strenuously: ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, in labors excessively. The Corinthians knew how Paul labored in his ministry among them, proclaiming the Gospel publicly in the house of one Titus Justus, and instructing, admonishing, warning, rebuking individuals privately. At the same time he labored with his hands in the shop of Aquila, in order to support himself and his associates. How much did the false apostles labor, who came into the ready congregation and posed as lords? —περισσοτέρως is not meant to compare the unusually great amount of Paul’s labors with a comparatively small amount of that done by his opponents, but is to be taken in the absolute sense: great by comparison with an ordinary or regular amount of work, by comparison with what might reasonably be expected.

The last paraphrase naturally does not apply to the next expression: ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, in prisons excessively. A law-abiding citizen does not expect to be cast into prison; but in the administration of the Gospel, which is “unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness,” such treatment may await the faithful minister. Whether Paul was ever cast into prison while in Corinth is not recorded in Acts. He came pretty close to it when the Jews dragged him before the tribunal of Gallio; and he had been in prison in Philippi shortly before he came to Corinth. —Were the false apostles ever arrested for their ministry of the Gospel? or threatened with imprisonment?

These two points would be sufficient to support Paul’s ὑπὲρ, but they are mild in comparison with what he can say in addition: ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, in beatings superabundantly. These were not beatings by some excited rioting mob, they were beatings ordered and administered by some Jewish or Roman court. Paul will speak about them more specifically in the following verse. —There is very little difference, if any, between περισσοτέρως and ὑπερβαλλόντως. Both express the idea of excess, of far more than enough.

Ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις, in deaths often. His work in the Gospel ministry often brought Paul to death’s door: in his dangerous travels by land and by sea, from unruly mobs, from unreasonable court orders.

This is what it meant for Paul to be a minister of Christ. How many badges of this type could the false apostles produce? Could they say like Paul, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal. 6:17)? He was ὑπὲρ them with regard to labors excessively, with regard to imprisonments also excessively, with regard to stripes superabundantly, yes, he had faced death not only once or twice, but often.

**V. 24–25.** In these two verses Paul explains in some detail what he means by facing death: ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσαράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον, From Jews I five times received forty less one. In the case when a criminal was sentenced to a beating the Jewish judge was limited by law to forty stripes (Dt. 25:3). In order to guard against the error of a miscount the Jews stopped every beating at thirty-nine. This was not done out of any consideration of pity for the convict, but purely out of a mechanical interpretation and treatment of the law. The criminal was beaten unmercifully, and far less than thirty-nine stripes might cause death or permanent deformity. Paul received the limit five times, and every time faced the possibility of death. —When and where these beatings by the Jews took place is not recorded.

These were not the only beatings: τρις ἔρραβδίσθην three times was I beaten with rods, i.e., by the Roman lictors. Luke records one of these beatings in Acts 16:22–23. In this case the procedure was illegal, as the judges learned to their consternation and humiliation on the next day, since Paul was a Roman citizen. But in the confusion caused by the mob they had failed to hear Paul’s protest, or had ignored it, taking for granted that Paul stood outside the protection of the pertinent statutes. When the other two scourgings before Roman

courts occurred is not recorded. They were severe. Even Pilate was moved to exclaim, “Behold the man,” when he saw Jesus after His scourging.

Paul came even closer to death, than by these scourgings, on four other occasions. One was a stoning: ἄπαξ ἐλιθάσθην. This happened in Lystra (Acts 14:19). It must be considered as a special miracle of God that Paul survived this ordeal.

Three shipwrecks brought Paul face to face with death, one case being especially grueling, when he was forced to spend twenty-four hours, a night and a day, in the deep, clinging to some wreckage of the ship most likely. τρις ἐνανάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα. The last verb is a perfect tense, thus not historical, merely recording the fact, but indicating that this shipwreck left its marks either on the body or in the mind of Paul. He is a man who once was adrift on the sea for a night and a day. —On his mission journeys Paul crossed parts of the Mediterranean and of the Aegean Seas on several occasions. Just when the shipwrecks occurred is not recorded by Luke.

**V. 26.** All of these near-deaths threatened Paul because he was a minister of Christ. They happened on his journeys in the interest of the Gospel. Was he deterred? No, he was a minister of Christ, called to cover a certain territory; so he must travel, no matter what the dangers. He was on journeys often, ὁδοιπορίας πολλάκις, facing eight different kinds of danger. Paul is here still demonstrating in what respect he as a minister of Christ is way ὑπέρ the false apostles. It is by his mission travels. That explains the first dative, ὁδοιπορίας. The following datives denote the manner in which these mission travels were carried out, namely, with perils of rivers, with perils of robbers—with perils from (my) race, with perils from Gentiles—with perils in a city, with perils in a solitude, with perils on sea—with perils among false brethren. The first pair uses the subjective genitive, rivers and robbers causing the perils which threatened Paul. The second pair has the preposition ἐκ, thus indicating the source from which the perils arose, both from Paul’s own kin and from Gentiles. The next group (three members) point to the places where Paul met his dangers: with the preposition ἐν. —The last phrase has a single word: false brethren, who pretend to be brethren, but in reality are traitors. Ἐν means in their midst.

No further comment is required. Traveling was dangerous in those days. Though the Romans had done much to improve the highways and to clear the land of robbers and the sea of pirates, they succeeded only in part. The story of the Good Samaritan, which happened not far from Jerusalem, was taken from life. In the interest of the Gospel Paul never hesitated to undertake any journey by land or by sea in spite of the concomitant dangers.

**V. 27.** From his extensive journeys in the interest of the Gospel, all connected with trying perils of various kinds, Paul now turns to his labors for the Lord. He began the previous paragraph with a dative of reference. He was way ὑπέρ the false apostles ὁδοιπορίας, with his perilous travels; similarly he now says that he is way ὑπέρ them κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ, with toil and exertion. κόπος (from κόπτω, to strike, to smite) indicates difficulty, troublesome and exhausting labor. μόχθος (from μοχθέω, to be weary, to be sore distressed) is a synonym, meaning hardship or distress. Paul’s work as a minister of Christ was a daily grind, a never ending ordeal. With four ἐν phrases he mentions some of the grueling circumstances.

The first is ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, in sleeplessnesses often. Time and again it would happen that Paul could not refresh his tired body and his weary mind with a little sleep. He kept many not self-chosen but inflicted vigils, imposed by the labor he was performing as a minister of Christ.

The second ἐν phrase mentions two distressing experiences, which form a pair: ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψει, in hunger and thirst. Many a time he had to skip a meal because his service of Christ demanded his attention; often he may have financially not been in a position to pay for a meal. And since he would not be burdensome to any one, he went without food and drink. He thus did his difficult work for Christ on many occasions ἐν νηστείας πολλάκις, in involuntary fastings. The Pharisee in the temple boasted of fasting twice in a week. Paul was ὑπέρ in point of number; only he did not count his fastings as meritorious works, for which he would demand a reward, but as necessary adjuncts incidental to the ministry for Christ.



Lastly he mentions ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι, in cold and nakedness. On his many travels for the Gospel Paul may frequently have been caught unprepared for a sudden drop in the temperature from day to night. —His ministry for Christ, in itself taxing a man’s ability to the breaking point, was made unusually difficult by these grueling accompaniments. Yet Paul considered them as comparatively insignificant—aside the real burden of his work.

**V. 28.** He calls them little “extras,” χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτός, apart from these secondary matters. To us the list of dangers and privations incidental to Paul’s ministry of the Gospel may seem very impressive, Paul rates these things as minor matters. The really weighty part of the ministry he calls ἡ ἐπίστασις μοι ἡ καθ’ ἡμέραν, the daily pressure on me. The word ἐπίστασις occurs, besides in our passage, only in Acts 24:12. There Paul in his defense before Felix points out that during the scanty twelve days which he had spent in Jerusalem nobody had found him in the temple arguing with anyone, nor causing an ἐπίστασις of the crowd (a *concursum*, Jerome translates), nor in the synagogues, nor anywhere in the city. In this reference there is a hint of violence in ἐπίστασις. In our present passage, where the ἐπίστασις is directed at Paul, a certain pressure seems to be indicated, which the crowd daily exerted on him. Physical violence is not indicated. To this he adds ἡ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, the worry for all the congregations. The genitive ἐκκλησιῶν is objective. Besides the pressure of the problems of the local group among whom Paul is working to establish a church there are the problems of the congregations already in existence elsewhere. We learn that they wrote letters and sent delegations to Paul, e.g., the Corinthian congregation, also the churches in Galatia, in Colosse. Paul revisited his churches to “see how they do,” e.g., the churches in Galatia. He sent some of his assistants, and wrote letters. In all of these letters we see how deeply he was concerned about the welfare of those churches. There was heart-taxing μέριμνα. That was the heavy burden of his ministry, in comparison with which all the before mentioned perils and hardships pale into insignificance. —What do the false apostles in their ways ever get to feel of such ἐπίστασις and μέριμνα?

**V. 29.** All this adds up to immense weakness and pain for Paul. He poses two questions to drive home this point: τίς ἀσθενεῖ καὶ οὐκ ἀσθενῶ: Who is weak, and I am not weak? Paul does not use the personal pronoun ἐγώ. There is no special emphasis on his person. He is not comparing himself with others in respect to weakness, he is comparing weakness with weakness. Does anyone think he is overburdened? Just let him look at my load, if he wants to see a real burden. All this because Paul is carrying the combined load of weakness of all churches.

The second question contains the pronoun ἐγώ. Thus Paul is here comparing himself with others: τίς σκανδαλίζεται, καὶ οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι; Who is caught in a death trap, and I (on my part) am not being burned? This is figurative language. If anyone has to suffer trials and temptations that threaten his very faith, his spiritual life, let him look at me, who am assailed from without and within with most devastating attacks. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24).

That is what the ministry of Christ meant for Paul, a load under which he would break down were he to bear it in his own strength. That it would be so had been announced to him when he received his call. Jesus instructed Ananias to “show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). And this was one of the first experiences which he had in his newly received ministry, as he will tell us in the following short section.

### VIIc. Chapter 11:30–33

In the previous section Paul started out with boastful defiance. He challenged his opponents to mention any of their excellences or merits, and he would match them. He wound up by speaking of his own weakness and painful deathly “burning.”

Paul is not inconsistent, he is not veering, he is not losing sight of his aim. He is still pointing out that regarding the ministry of Christ he is far ὑπέρ his boasting opponents. The ministry of Christ entails labor and

perils. The opponents may think that the ministry of Christ means an easy life of honor and quasi-luxury. They do not realize that with ideas of that type they are actually disqualifying themselves for any part of Christ's ministry. —He continued to point out that the excessive labor under perils and sufferings required of Christ's ministers is not carried out with their own strength. Paul feels the pain, he realizes his own weakness. He of himself is not equal to the task. If the opponents do not realize their own insufficiency, that is no sign of superiority, they merely reveal thereby again that they are actually not qualified for the service of Christ. They are pretenders and deceivers.

Although Paul here introduces this fact over against the boasting of the opponents, it is not the first time that he mentioned it. After speaking about the glory of the New Testament ministry in chapter 3 he continued in chapter 4: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (v. 7), and supported this statement with a reference to various aspects of the apostles' weakness (v. 8–12). This is so, not by accident. The purpose is that the power of God may shine forth in all its glory (v. 7). —Consciousness of one's personal weakness and unworthiness is a necessary prerequisite in the make-up of every minister of Christ.

This is the reason why Paul in his venture of boasting led over to his "weakness" and "burning."

**V. 30.** He adds the summary statement that, if any boasting at all has to be done, he will forget everything else and will concentrate on his weakness. Boasting was necessary for Paul in this case. It was provoked by the baseless boasting of his opponents. His words are: εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, if to boast is necessary, as it is in this case, then τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι, then I will boast (boastfully mention) the things of my weakness.

The kingdom of Christ is the very opposite of the kingdoms of this world. In the kingdoms of this world it is power that counts. Not so in Christ's kingdom. The disciples of Jesus argued on several occasions, who of them should be the greatest in His kingdom; two even requested the distinction of being seated one on the right hand and the other on the left of Jesus in His kingdom, while the other ten resented that these two had thus tried to "steal a march" on them.

On each of these occasions Jesus rebuked His disciples sharply. "It shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:26–28).

Paul had been initiated to this nature of Christ's kingdom from the very beginning of his apostleship. Ananias had announced to him that he must suffer many things for the name of Jesus. And Paul did not have to wait long before he got a taste of persecution.

Yet to boast of one's weakness seems such an unusual, abnormal procedure that Paul sees fit to add a special assurance to his plain statement of v. 30. He wants those words to be taken at full face value. He does not want them to be toned down as though he were jesting or exaggerating. God knows that he is stating plain facts in plain language.

**V. 31.** The point of this verse is, ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, that I am not lying. The point which Paul is trying to get across to his readers is of utmost importance, and yet very difficult to realize even for believers. Paul appeals to God's infallible knowledge. He says, ὁ θεὸς...οἶδεν, God knows.—He is, however, speaking of God not e.g. as the wise Creator or Ruler of the universe. He calls Him πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, the Father of the Lord Jesus. —In the work of Jesus God demonstrated the truth: *per aspera ad astra*, the way to the crown leads through the cross. In encouraging the Corinthians to participate cheerfully and according to ability in the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem Paul referred to the poverty of our Savior, that being rich He became poor for our sakes, in this way to make us rich. In his letter to the Philippians a few years later he spoke specifically about the two states of Christ. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews formulates it thus: "Jesus ... for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (12:2).

Paul adds, ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, He who is blessed forever. We must join in the praises of our God, first of all, by accepting for our salvation wholeheartedly His principle which is so offensive to our

flesh; and we must learn to live and to regulate our life by that principle. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake” (Ps. 115:1).

**V. 32.** “In Damascus the ethnarch of King Aretas was guarding the city of the Damascenes to arrest me.”

This statement of Paul raises a number of questions which cannot be answered definitely. Was Damascus under Arabian rule at this time? In connection with this: Was the ethnarch of King Aretas governing the city itself, or was he perhaps some Arabian sheik near the city? Why does Paul call it the city of the Damascenes? Does he mean to hint some form of home rule? Was the control by Aretas only nominal, even non-existent though claimed by him?

Josephus speaks about King Aretas quite extensively. This king seems to have ruled approximately from 9 B.C. to A.D. 40. He was the father of the first wife of Herod Antipas, who divorced her in order to marry Herodias, his niece, the wife of his brother Philip. When the daughter of Aretas learned of her husband’s plans, before he knew that she had been informed, she escaped to her father via the fortress Machaerus. In the war which Aretas then waged against Herod to avenge the honor of his daughter and about some border disputes, Herod’s army was utterly routed. The Jews interpreted this as a judgment of God on Herod for the murder of John the Baptist.

Herod appealed to Rome; and Vitellius, at this time proconsul of Syria, was sent to make war on Aretas and to deliver him to the emperor dead or alive. While Vitellius was on the march the report reached him of the death of the Emperor, Tiberius (March 16, A.D. 37). The expedition was discontinued. The next Emperor, Caligula, was rather favorably disposed toward Aretas, and the Arabian affairs were settled peaceably in 39. Whether he turned Damascus over to Aretas is not stated. Perhaps Aretas, during the time of confusion, arrogated some authority to himself.

While Paul says that the ethnarch of King Aretas guarded the city to arrest him, St. Luke records that the Jews instigated this persecution. They evidently were the prime movers, and the ethnarch was a tool in their hands. —Paul’s escape was not a heroic, glorious affair. *Διὰ θυρίδος ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους*, Through a door in a basket was I lowered through the wall. The door was a small opening in the wall. It must have been very inconspicuous, so that, while they were carefully guarding the gates, nobody seems to have thought of this door. It was a round (*στυρίς*, Acts 9:25) plaited basket in which Paul was lowered to the ground. — *καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ*, and (thus) I made my escape from his hands.—Thus began the career of the Apostle who brought to Corinth the Gospel of Christ, filled with “the power of God unto salvation.”

## VIII. Chapter 12:1–5

In the previous chapter Paul had dared the false apostles to present their claims, and had announced that he would match them point for point. He did so, but soon came to a pass where he could declare that as far as the real ministry of Christ is concerned he is way beyond them. Then in v. 30 he had touched on the question if it is really necessary to engage in boasting. The only boasting that will serve to provide a proper background for setting off the superabundant saving power of the Gospel is a boasting about one’s own weakness. This procedure, of course, is something utterly foreign to the false apostles’ way of thinking. They may misinterpret this turn in the argument in their favor, namely, that Paul, because he is aware of his weakness, knowing that he has no personal excellences, now tries to make the most of a bad case by turning a deficiency into a virtue. Paul is ready to meet them.

**V. 1.** *Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ*, It is necessary to boast (to keep on boasting) about oneself. —There are many variant readings of this verse, showing what difficulty the copyists had in grasping Paul’s meaning. It seems that the reading adopted by Nestle is the best, except for the punctuation. The brief sentence listed above should be followed by a period. It is as though Paul meant to say: Boasting (about oneself—middle voice) is necessary, but so far we have barely scratched the surface. Let us proceed and mention some truly outstanding matters. He

prefaces his statement with a clause marked as concessive by the particle μέν: οὐ συμφέρον μὲν, It may not be an aid (to your faith). Yet: ἐλεύσομαι δὲ εἰς ὄπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου, I will proceed to visions and revelations of the Lord.

Paul calls his supernatural experiences “visions and revelations.” By using the plural he indicates that he had several experiences of this nature. He will, however, mention only one. —These experiences were granted to Paul for a personal strengthening of his faith. In his ministry of the Gospel he had many most grueling experiences, which severely taxed his powers of resistance. In order that he might not lose courage and that his faith might not break down under the strain, God granted him also exceptional experiences of glory. They were meant to serve Paul personally. And Paul realized that to mention them to others, to such as had not been exposed to similar excruciating afflictions as had struck him, might create a wrong impression. They were no aid to the Corinthians’ faith, and Paul now reluctantly decides to mention them only because forced by the necessity of boasting.

Οἶδα ἄνθρωπον ἐν Χριστῷ, I know a man in Christ. Paul is speaking about himself, naturally. The progression of the argument and the use of the middle voice of the verb for boasting demand this assumption; and the contents of his statements corroborate it. Yet Paul avoids the use of the personal pronoun, first person singular; he speaks about himself in the third person. He maintains only that he has incontestable knowledge of the case. —He calls himself merely a man, a human being, ἐν Χριστῷ seems to belong to ἄνθρωπον. It can hardly be explained as modifying the verb. Paul is not qualifying the nature of his knowledge of the man as being mediated by Christ: it was the man who was united with Christ. Prepositional phrases used as adjectival modifiers are ordinarily limited to abstract nouns of verbal derivation. Here we have a concrete noun, a man, which would really require the definite article before the prepositional modifier. However, since ἄνθρωπος is anarthrous, the modifier must be left without the article also.

The vision happened more than fourteen years ago, πρὸ ἐτῶν δεκατεσσάρων. Since Paul wrote Second Corinthians in 57, these 14 years will carry us back to 43, or perhaps 42. That was several years after his inglorious escape from Damascus. It must have been during his stay in Tarsus after his visit in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:21), perhaps shortly before Barnabas called him to Antioch (Acts 11:25, 26).

Before relating the vision itself Paul cuts off several curious questions that might be raised by someone, a discussion of which would detract from the main point. He does not know whether he was bodily carried to heaven or without his body: on both points he says οὐκ οἶδα. It is enough that God knows these details.

The experience itself Paul relates in the words: ἀρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ, (he knows) the man just described as having been snatched up to the third heaven. —With τοιοῦτον Paul calls special attention to the character and position of the man (*scil.* himself). The man had no merits to show, the vision was pure grace. It consisted in this that he was “snatched up”—suddenly, rapidly. Unexpectedly he found himself in the “third heaven.” As Paul indicates in the parallel repetition of the statement, he understands the third heaven to be the heaven of the blessed. He calls it “paradise.” It may be assumed that he counted the clouds and the starry skies as first and second heavens; or, perhaps, he did not count at all, and used the numeral merely to denote eminence.

**V. 3.** Paul repeats that he is sure about the experience. He says, καὶ οἶδα τὸν τοιοῦτον, and I know the man, the such-a-one. By repeating that he does not know anything about the manner, but leaves this entirely to God, he sets forth with great emphasis that about the reality of the main fact there can be not the least doubt.

**V. 4.** For the participle of verse 2 Paul now substitutes a ὅτι clause, without affecting the meaning, and for the “third heaven” he substitutes “paradise.”

Then he relates the experience which he had during the vision: καὶ ἤκουσεν ἄρρητα ῥήματα, and he heard unutterable utterances. With the peculiar combination ἄρρητα ῥήματα Paul indicates, on the one hand, that he heard real, meaningful words, but, on the other, that it is impossible for him to reproduce them. He does not say anything about the contents, but evidently the words were such as fit the glory of heaven, the opposite of the “wailing and gnashing of teeth” in the outer darkness. They were strengthening and cheering. Paul had a real

foretaste of eternal life. —He might like to pass the joy on to others, but that is not possible. He adds, ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι, which is impossible for a man to voice. The verb ἕξει usually means that something is proper or permitted; but both the German Bauer and the New Greek-English Lexicon list also the meaning: it is possible. Since ἄρρητος suggests impossibility rather than impropriety, it seems best to understand ἐξὸν here as: it is impossible. The human organs of speech are not constituted to reproduce even the sounds of the words which Paul heard in heaven, let alone that any human being should be able to express the heavenly ideas.

It was a glorious, strengthening experience for Paul.

**V. 5.** Ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου καυχῆσομαι, about such a one I will boast. This boasting of Paul is the same as singing praises to God. The man was just a man, a creature of God, a sinner. He was in Christ. By the grace of God, on the basis of the redemption of Christ, without any merit or worthiness of his own he had become a child of God, living in communion with his heavenly Father. This grand vision was nothing but pure grace. Thus boasting in it means glorifying God.

By way of contrast Paul continues: ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι εἰ μὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, but concerning myself I shall not boast except in (my) weaknesses.

## IX. Chapter 12:6–10

Although all glory belonged to God in these wonderful experiences, and although all boasting would naturally proclaim His praises, yet, due to the presence of the Old Adam there was the danger that Paul might develop a feeling of pride for having been granted such exceptional revelations. Paul received an antidote, a painful reminder, to keep him humble.

He envisions the possibility that on some occasion he might consider personal boasting to be indicated. He actually did so in the previous chapter. He presented a number of points in which he was the equal of the false apostles; he mentioned others in which he was ahead of them. Yes, even earlier (chap. 11:6) he had protested his superior γνώσις. Was this boasting wrong?

**V. 6.** Paul says, εἰ ἂν θελήσω καυχῆσασθαι, for if (as is possible) I shall (at some time) decide to boast. — εἰ ἂν with the aorist subjunctive implies a certain expectancy. This thought is introduced by way of explanation, γάρ. He said in v. 5 that in boasting of himself he will always take into due consideration his weaknesses, and will boast of them. If he did otherwise, his boasting would not be true, and he would become a fool. The weaknesses are a fact, and any boasting which would overlook or ignore them would be untrue. Hence Paul now says that whenever he might want to boast: οὐκ ἔσομαι ἄφρων, ἀλήθειαν γὰρ ἐρῶ, I will not be a fool, for I shall speak (the) truth. Yet he says, φείδομαι δέ, but I refrain, even from truthful boasting, boasting which gives due attention to the weaknesses. Why? It might create a wrong impression. The danger he wants to avoid, is: μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσηται ὑπὲρ ὃ βλέπει με ἢ ἀκούει ἐξ ἐμοῦ, lest anyone consider about me above what he sees (in) me or hears from me.

**V. 7.** Paul refrains from boasting because it might be misunderstood. There is also a personal danger lurking for him in boasting about the visions. He might become proud because of this preferential treatment.

There are two peculiarities in this verse which it would seem best to dispose of first. One is the position of the dative noun τῇ ὑπερβολῇ. For the purpose of emphasis it has been placed forward, even ahead of the conjunction introducing the clause. The second difficulty arises from the use of διό. What thought connection does it express? The manuscript evidence for and against this inferential conjunction is of about equal authority. Being derived from διὰ ὃ, διό literally means wherefore. Yet it does not always indicate a very strong causal connection. In our ease both Goodspeed and Moffatt use a simple “so.” διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίωμαι, so in order that I may not be unduly elated (with pride), τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων, by the grandeur of the revelations. Since the verb is in the middle voice the dative is not strictly instrumental. The grandeur of the revelation, rather, would serve as the occasion for unwarranted pride. Paul was human, by nature somewhat inclined to

pride (compare his ambition to exceed his pals at school, Gal. 1:14). In this case God Himself provided a powerful antitoxin, to counteract and neutralize any inclination to undue pride Paul might have been tempted with: ἐδόθε μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, there was given to me a thorn for the flesh. This is, of course, metaphorical language, pointing to some very painful physical condition. Paul considered it as a “gift” from God. It did not come to him by accident. It was not a natural result of his labors and of his enforced mode of living. It was directly imposed by God. Just when this happened to Paul, cannot be determined. The revelation which he described occurred 14 years ago. It is hardly probable that the “thorn” came simultaneously with it, not even that it came very soon thereafter. It was one revelation that he was granted 14 years ago; in our verse he speaks of revelations in the plural. It is possible, but not necessarily so, that other revelations had preceded this particular one, and that this one formed a certain climax. It is just as possible that this particular revelation marked the beginning, to be followed by others from time to time. —Since Paul did not deem it necessary to indicate the time since when he had been troubled with that “thorn” in his flesh, it would be idle for us to speculate. The purpose of the “thorn” is the important thing.

Paul stated it in the ordinary way in this part of v. 7, placing the emphasis on the grandeur of the revelations, which might occasion an undue elation on his part. He calls special attention to it at the end of the verse by repeating: ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

Paul explains the nature of his suffering by saying that it was an ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, a messenger of Satan, who was sent ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, in order to maul me. This is again a figurative description. It is not to be assumed that the messenger of Satan appeared in visible form and struck Paul with his fists physically. The verb κολαφίζω is used in the literal sense in Matt. 26:67, where the members of the Sanhedrin, after declaring Jesus to be guilty of death, spit in His face and ἐκολάφισαν αὐτόν. Peter uses the verb for the punishment of slaves (I Pet. 2:20). In our present passage, however, Paul is evidently speaking figuratively.

In what the plague consisted cannot be determined. (We may safely disregard the half column which the New. Gr.-Eng. Lex. devotes to a listing of seven guesses on the nature of Paul’s sufferings.) The use of the expression “thorn” and of the present subjunctive κολαφίζῃ suggest a continuing sharp and nagging pain, which greatly hampered Paul in his work.

The special visions and revelations, which were granted to Paul for strengthening his faith in the exceptional tribulations which marked his ministry of Christ, might become the occasion of pride for the Old Adam in Paul. God provided an antidote, a messenger of Satan was sent to plague him.

As Paul was willing to bear his tribulations, labors, wants, persecutions, imprisonments, perils of death, so he also took this special “thorn in the flesh” without complaint. Yet, because it seemed to hamper him in his work of proclaiming the Gospel, he prayed the Lord to relieve him.

**V. 8.** —Paul reports: ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα Concerning this (matter) I three times (urgently) entreated the Lord. —What is the antecedent of τούτου? We might be inclined to refer the demonstrative to ἄγγελος σατανᾶ. But since the messenger of Satan is mentioned merely as the instrument for inflicting the special ailment on Paul, it is more likely that τούτου refers to the entire matter, the ailment itself and the manner in which it was inflicted. In other words, we take τούτου to be neuter, not masculine. It was so understood by Jerome, who translated: *Propter quod ter Dominum rogavi.*

Paul does not tell us when this ailment began and just how it affected him. Yet the expressions he uses seem to point to a continuing sharp and nagging pain, rather than to intermittent attacks, with alternating periods of comparative relief. If that is correct, then the three specific prayers which Paul mentions cannot be understood as referring to three specific attacks, probably the first three. It seems, rather, that while the malady continued Paul on three different occasions of his regular prayers made special mention of his concern. Also the following verb, ἀποστῆ (Jerome: *decederet*), seems to presuppose a continuing ailment.

Paul describes his prayer as παρεκάλεσα. This verb denotes an earnest appeal, the nature of which must be determined from the context (Jerome uses eight different Latin verbs: *rogare, orare, consolare, deprecari, obsecrare, hortari, adhortari, exhortari.*)

The apostle's urgent request was: ἵνα ἀποστῇ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, that it might go away from me. —While we use a substantive clause after verbs of petition to denote the content of our request, the Greek states the content as the purpose to be achieved by our request. In the Koine, however ἵνα lost much of its final meaning. Cessation of the ailment is what Paul desired.

**V. 9.** —καὶ εἶρηκεν μοι, and (the Lord) said to me.—We have no smooth expression in English to bring out the full force of the perfect tense in εἶρηκεν. The manner in which the Lord's answer came to Paul, whether in a dream, in a vision, in a revelation, in an oral address, is immaterial. The important point is that it was definite and final. The Lord's words are still ringing in Paul's ears and glowing in his heart. It was an answer which cleared his mind, tempered his feelings, steeled his will. This answer stood ever before him in bold relief. It was: ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, sufficient for thee is my grace. The verb ἀρκεῖ as an answer to Paul's request reveals to us the ideas that had motivated him in his petition. He was called to preach the Gospel, to preach it under the most grueling difficulties. Such work required strength. The ailment weakened him, hampered him in his efforts, obstructed his work. In the interest of the Gospel, he thought, it should be removed. The verb ἀρκεῖ over-rules all of Paul's scruples. The grace of God is spreading the Gospel. Just as the grace of God alone achieved our redemption, without the necessity of any supplementary efforts on our part, so the grace of God alone is spreading the good news, and the grace of God alone is making the Gospel effective, creating faith thereby in the hearts of sinners *ubi et quando visum est Deo*; and our physical strength or mental ability cannot add one ounce of effectiveness to its power.

The grace of God, however, is not meant to be an easy pillow of indolence for any God-appointed messenger of the Gospel. No one may say, If it is the grace of God that does the work and achieves the results, then I can take it easy. The Lord's answer said σοί, sufficient *for thee*. The grace of God had chosen Paul as a tool for its operation. It did not operate outside of Paul, but through Paul. It activated him. It took possession of his physical vigor and permeated his mental faculties. The grace of God reached distant countries through Paul's physical travels, and touched hearts through Paul's clear, vigorous, warm appeals. But it was, after all, only the grace of God which produced the results.

Grace is sufficient for Paul; to be rid of his serious ailment is not necessary for his work. Yes, there is even a great advantage in it. The Lord added a statement to explain this seeming paradox, introducing it with γάρ. He says, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται, Before we translate this sentence we must get clear on a few terms. The Lord is speaking about δύναμις, power. Since He uses the definite article, He is speaking, not of force in general, but of some very definite power. What power? Some manuscripts add μου, My power. In the last analysis it is the Lord's power, as Paul indicates in the last part of this verse, ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Yet the reading without the μου seems to be the better attested. Then the close connection with the statement about the sufficiency of grace for Paul's work would suggest that it is the power of grace to which God refers: *its* power. —The verb in the sentence, τελεῖται, means to bring to the end, to finish, to complete. Our K.J. version: "is made perfect," presupposes the reading τελειοῦται. What the Lord meant to say is that the power of grace is fully unfolded and comes to full view when it works through means that are hampered in their operation by some palpable weakness. The N.T. *Woerterbuch* of Schierlitz more than 50 years ago suggested the translation for our passage: *sie zeigt sich am kraeftigsten, wirksamsten*. Paul unfolded the truth which he here learned from the Lord in answer to his prayer already in chapter 4 of this epistle: "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (v. 7). Yes, the power (of grace) is most fully unfolded in (the) weakness (of the instrument with which it operates).

Once before, in chap. 11:30, and again in 12:5, Paul had stated it as his rule to boast in his own weakness. It seemed a rather odd way of boasting, especially over against the claims of superiority raised by the false apostles. But it is a procedure in line with the principles laid down by the Lord Himself; and the false apostles are marked by their very boasting as men who subvert the ways of the Lord and of His Gospel.

We now readily grasp Paul's resolution: ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις, Most gladly, then, will I rather boast in my weaknesses. The future καυχῆσομαι is volitive, rather than temporal: I will do my boasting, I will continue to boast. The function of μᾶλλον is not quite clear. Jerome left it

untranslated. The translation “rather” could put the continued boasting of Paul in contrast to his former praying for relief. It would also make good sense if we combine it as a modifier with *καυχῆσομαι*, all the more will I boast.

ἵνα ἐκισκηνώσῃ ἐπ’ ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ, in order that the power of Christ may spread its tent over me (so Lenski). Jerome’s translation is impossible: *inhabitet in me virtus Christi*. The preposition ἐπὶ does not allow the idea of *in-dwelling*.

The purpose, expressed in this clause, is not one to be realized at some time in the future, rather, the overshadowing of Paul by the power of Christ is the primary factor which produced also this correct evaluation of his own strength in the work of the Lord. This overshadowing by the power of Christ would be greatly disturbed if he engaged in boasting about his own achievements and failed to give all glory to Christ. This is something which Paul will avoid by all means. Once and for all the power of Christ must spread its tent over him. Hence the aorist ἐπισκηνώσῃ. Paul will glory in his own infirmities, so that this relation to the power of Christ may not be upset.

With a διό clause Paul sums up the thoughts developed in this section, and makes a practical application. διὸ εὐδοκῶ, accordingly I rejoice. διό, from δι’ ὃ, because of which, states a causal relation but not always in a strict and sharp sense. It corresponds somewhat to our English “accordingly.” εὐδοκέω, literally “to consider as good” or “to consent to,” may also mean “to be well pleased with” or “to take delight in.” Under the conditions as outlined above Paul agrees to, yes, takes delight in and rejoices—in what? ἐν ἀσθενείαις (weaknesses), ἐν ὕβρεσιν (insults), ἐν ἀνάγκαις (necessities), ἐν διωγμοῖς (persecutions), ἐν στενοχωρίαις (difficulties; German: *Klemme*), provided they are ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, for Christ’s sake.

## X. Chap. 12:11–13

**V. 11.** —With jubilant tones Paul concluded the previous section. Upon further reflection he continues: γέγονα ἄφρων, I have become a fool. γέγονα, a perfect tense, is very vivid: I am a fool, here I stand as a fool. Why did I permit myself to slip into this awkward position? ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε, You (were the ones that) forced me (into it).

The Corinthians compelled Paul to boast, not by any form of violence, but by their unappreciative attitude toward his Gospel, and by their fawning servility before boastful and showy deceivers. Their faith and salvation were in danger. Paul could not stand idly by. He must do something to avert disaster, and, disagreeable though it was to him, he must resort to boasting, since that method of procedure held out some promise of success.

It was a comparatively simple thing to diagnose the danger which threatened the Corinthians. If they had stood firm in the Gospel which Paul had brought to them, what would have been their reaction to the inroads of the false apostles? It would have been, as Paul tersely states it in the second part of our present verse: ἐγὼ γὰρ ὄφειλον ὑφ’ ὑμῶν συνίστασθαι, for I ought to be commended by you. By using the personal pronoun ἐγὼ Paul stresses his own importance over against the false apostles, not because of his personal qualifications, but because he was the representative of the true, saving Gospel, which the false apostles adulterated. ὄφειλον, imperfect tense: it was your solemn obligation. Your faith, if it was genuine, should have, and would have, spoken up in defense of the Gospel which I had brought to you. Sad to say, you failed, and compelled me to become a fool.

Οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑστέρησα τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, for in nothing was I inferior to those superfine apostles. I was “not inferior” is a litotes. Paul was in every respect superior, way ahead of the intruders: in his understanding (γνώσις), his labors, his sufferings, his visions and revelations. He admits: εἰ καὶ οὐδὲν εἰμι, even though I am nothing. Where does that leave the false apostles? Paul nothing, and they way below him!

Paul personally was nothing, but the grace of God was with him in full power, and his apostleship was irrefutably confirmed in the presence of the Corinthians. Paul reminds them: τὰ μὲνσημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατεργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν, the signs of an apostle were performed among you. The ability to perform supernatural acts was promised to the apostles of Jesus to serve as their credentials and to corroborate the message which



they were proclaiming. Such wonder-works were performed by Paul also in Corinth. The definite article before ἀποστόλου is generic. The word is here not applied to some individual who served as an apostle, but to the class as such. This use of the definite article is rather limited in the English language, where usually the indefinite article is preferred. The verb κατειργάσθη has the perfective κατά. The works were real, they could not be denied, nor explained away, nor brushed aside. All the more reprehensible it was that the Corinthians had not heeded this testimony of the Lord. The difference between Paul and the false apostles was too obvious.

The signs which Paul performed in Corinth were not monotonously uniform. There was variation. Paul mentions three groups: σημεῖοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν, both in signs and wonders and power-works. σημεῖον indicates that the miracles were not mere “stunts,” they were meaningful, significant deeds; τέρας denotes that they were awe-inspiring; δύναμις, that they gave evidence of supernatural power.

Such miracles happened not on rare occasions, few and far between. Paul says, ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, in all endurance, or perseverance. St. Luke does not record any of these miracles from Paul’s stay in Corinth, but he does say something about Paul’s activity along these lines in Ephesus (cf. Act. 19:11–12). On the basis of Paul’s present remark we may safely assume that similar things happened in Corinth.

Before going on to the next verse we take notice of a solitary μέν in this verse: τὰ μὲνσημεῖα, no δέ following. This particle serves the purpose of re-enforcing the statement; it is approximately the equivalent of our English “indeed.” It indicates the importance which Paul attached to the fact that he could refer to his miracles as his credentials, as incontestable evidence of his apostleship.

**V. 13.** —The γάρ with which Paul introduces this verse does not indicate a motivation of the foregoing statements, nor is it explanatory; it is mildly inferential: “well, then,” or “now, then,” or, simply, “then.”

Τί γάρ ἐστίν, What, then, is it? ὃ ἡσσώθητε ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκκλησίας, in which you were slighted beyond the other churches? ὃ is the adverbial accusative. ἡσσώθητε (from ἑσσομαι, a secondary form for ἡττάομαι) contains a comparative idea, ἡσσων, inferior, weaker. The question thus is: In what respect were you accorded an inferior treatment? ὑπὲρ then is the ὑπὲρ of comparison, in place of ἢ or the genitive (cf. Luke 16:8; Heb. 4:12). Jerome in our verse translates with *prae*. The Corinthians have no reason to assume that they were slighted in anything.

In one respect, Paul admits, they did receive differential treatment, εἰ μὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ οὐ κατενάρκησα ὑμῶν, except that I on my part did not burden you. Paul discussed this matter more fully in chap. 11:7ff. and there stated his reasons. He now asks them to forgive him this “injustice,” χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην.

The rest of the chapter and chapter 13, still dealing with the intruders, are devoted to his impending visit, which he has been planning for some time.

## XI. Paul’s Coming Visit

### 1. Chap. 12:14–18

**V. 14.** —With ἰδοὺ Paul calls attention to a change in his discussion. The general topic will remain the same: he is still concerned with the havoc the intruders caused in Corinth, but he will discontinue his “foolish” boasting.

Ἴδου τρίτον τοῦτο ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Behold, I am ready to come to you this third time. Paul is speaking about his announced but delayed visit, his travel plans having been changed even before First Corinthians was written. The route was changed, the visit was delayed but not canceled. Paul is on his way, and at the present moment is ready to set sail for Corinth soon. He calls it his third visit. Luke in Acts so far recorded only one visit of Paul to Corinth. That was when he founded the congregation and spent 18 months in the city. We discussed his second visit in connection with the collection which was to be taken up for the needy saints in Jerusalem. It took place about a year before Second Corinthians was written.

On his coming third visit Paul will not change his conduct as far as remuneration or sustenance is concerned: καὶ οὐ καταναρκήσω, and I will not be a burden (to any of you). He states the reason in the words: οὐ γὰρ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλὰ ὑμᾶς for I am not seeking your possessions but you. One might ask the question if

these two things really are mutually exclusive. Does the accepting of financial support prevent, or at least hamper, the winning of souls? Paul accepted support from the church at Philippi with no harm to their spiritual well-being. But Corinth was different. It was a commercial city, in which financial matters played a great role. The principle which Paul urged on the new mission fields in Crete certainly applied also to Corinth, but here had to be handled in a special way, owing to the just mentioned special conditions. When Paul urged Titus to “bring Zenas and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them,” he added the instruction, “And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful” (Tit. 3:13–14). In Corinth Paul applied this part of Christian training by instructing them about their obligation toward the needy Christians in Jerusalem. But if he had taken personal support, that might easily have been misunderstood and misconstrued. By his example he impressed upon the Corinthians the proper attitude toward earthly possessions.

Paul is the spiritual father of the Corinthians, and as such he is ever concerned about enriching his children spiritually. In a most fatherly, friendly way he adds, οὐ γὰρ ὀφείλει τὰ τέκνα τοῖς γονεῦσιν θησαυρίζειν, ἀλλὰ οἱ γονεῖς τοῖς τέκνοις, for the children ought not store up treasures for their parents, rather the parents for the children. Paul had told the Corinthians in his First Epistle, “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (chap. 4:15). The statement that Paul as spiritual father of the Corinthians is following the general custom that parents lay up treasures for their children, not vice versa, must be understood in the connection in which Paul made it, and must not be stretched beyond his own application. Any attempt to draw from it general rules regulating the financial relations between parents and children is mere quibbling; thus e.g. when some miser uses the words as a pretext to cover the hoarding of his goods.

**V. 15.** —Paul’s is a genuine care for his spiritual children: ἐγὼ δὲ ἥδιστα δαπανήσω καὶ ἐκδαπανηθήσομαι ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, but I on my part will most gladly spend, yes, be spent for your souls. The welfare of their souls is at stake. And in the interest of their souls Paul on his part will with the greatest of pleasure spend. He names no object, none is necessary; he will not shrink from spending all that he has, his health, his strength, his convenience, his love. He will risk and spend all, and will do it gladly. More than this. He is ready to be himself completely spent—ἐκ is prefixed for stress—as he also stated his willingness in Phil. 2:17: “Yes, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.” After a life of service and self-sacrifice then to be made a bloody sacrifice on the altar of martyrdom will be a joy to him. So it was in the case of the Philippians, so in the case of the Corinthians.

So great is his devotion to his calling as an apostle, and so great is his love toward his “children.” How do they respond to it? εἰ περισσοτέρως ὑμᾶς ἀγαπῶ, ἤσσον ἀγαπῶμαι; If I love you more fervently, am I being loved the less? Paul is not pleading for personal appreciation from the Corinthians, nor for their personal affection; nor is he complaining about its lack. He is pleading for their spiritual understanding and appreciation of the Gospel which he had brought to them and of the Savior whom he had proclaimed. The greater this spiritual appreciation, the greater will also be the esteem in which the apostle of this Gospel is held. The lack of reverence for the messenger reflects unfavorably on the Corinthians’ love and appreciation of the Gospel and of the Savior. It is a searching question for the Corinthians: “Am I being loved the less?”

But may not Paul’s apparently selfless devotion have been mere sham? May it not have been a ruse to cover up insidious greed and foul play? It seems that the intruders had put some such construction on his conduct.

**V. 16.** —Paul begins this verse with a concession, ἔστω δέ, but granted. The question, however, remains, Who is making what concessions? It might be that Paul is referring to his question in v. 15 about his being loved less the more he practices love. It might be that he wants to say, Now let that be as it may. Let us drop that matter. Yet, in that case the connection with the following statement would not be clear. Some connective would be required. As it stands, the sentence, ἐγὼ οὐ κατεβάρησα ὑμᾶς, I on my part did not burden you—stands in close relation to ἔστω δέ, expressing the conceded point. It seems that Paul, though not quoting

directly, is referring to some derogatory statement of his opponents in which they granted that he personally did not burden the Corinthians, but insisted that that proved nothing concerning his alleged unselfishness.

They put an altogether different construction on his action: ἀλλὰ ὑπάρχων πανουργος δόλω ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον, but being a (dyed-in-the-wool) trickster I took you by guile. πανουργος (literally, “ready to do anything,” German: *zu allem faehig*—together with the abstract noun πανουργία) is, although neutral in itself, like its German equivalent commonly used with a bad connotation. ὑπάρχω is similar in meaning to ὄν but stronger. It is Paul’s habitual method, they say, to employ crooked means in order to attain his evil ends unsuspected and undetected. So also his simulated modesty is only a dirty trick.

**V. 17.**—Paul answers the charge with a question about the Corinthians’ past experience: μή τινα ὄν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐπλεονέκτησα ὑμᾶς; did any one of those whom I sent to you—did I through him take advantage of you? The accusative τινά, placed forward for emphasis, has nothing on which it depends, neither verb nor preposition (Compare the German Volkslied: *Den liebsten Buhlen, den i han, der liegt beim Wirt im Keller.*) It is taken up again with δι’ αὐτοῦ. Paul challenges the Corinthians to scrutinize the records of any one and every one who came to them as his representative (That is the force of the perfect ἀπέσταλκα). Did Paul defraud them by any one of his assistants? Could they find any trace of even only doubtful dealings?

**V. 18.**—Together with this letter Paul is sending two men to Corinth to assist the congregation in gathering their gifts for Jerusalem. Titus is coming at Paul’s request, and with him he is sending a brother as he had mentioned previously in the letter: παρεκάλεσα Τίτον καὶ συναπέστειλα τὸν ἀδελφόν.

Titus is well known in Corinth. He had been there just a few weeks before to help them find the way out of the mess which the false apostles had caused. μήτι ἐπλεονέκτησεν ὑμᾶς Τίτος; you do not mean to say that Titus took advantage of you, do you?—Since Titus heads the present delegation, it is sufficient to inquire about him and his record. The other brother, being an associate to Titus, will naturally conform to his guiding. Moreover, it seems that he had never been in Corinth before. The record of Titus was clear.

A double question concludes this section. What does a comparison of Paul’s record and that of Titus show? Was Paul a rogue who, while he himself posed as a very modest, unselfish, yes, self-sacrificing man, fleeced his victims through his accomplices whom he sent to them? οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι περιεπατήσαμεν; οὐ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν did we not walk in the same spirit? yes, in the very same tracks? The perfect agreement between Paul and his representatives, the fact that no member of the Corinthian congregation could point to a single instance where either Paul or one of his messengers had solicited a penny for personal use, was conclusive evidence of the established policy of Paul—and of the malicious nature of the opponents’ slanderous remarks.

## 2. Chap. 12:19–21

Titus had spent some time in Corinth as Paul’s assistant, helping the congregation to recover from the attack by the false apostles and to undo the damage which they had done. God had blessed his efforts with success. The congregation as a whole had seen the error of its way. The members in general had recognized the true nature of the intruders and had learned to avoid them. When Titus returned to Paul, he brought a glowing report of improvement achieved in Corinth. He never tired of repeating his report and of adding new incidents to complete the picture. And when the lagging collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem made special assistance advisable, Titus was more than willing to return to render the extra help. He had full confidence in the sincerity of the Corinthians.

This does not mean that conditions were perfect, that everything was running smoothly, that there were no old sores that smarted occasionally, that there were no more dangers lurking here and there. Basically the congregation had recovered, but there were still many details that had to be adjusted.

We must remember that even before the false apostles came to Corinth, there were divisions and cliques in the congregation, such as marred also the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Paul’s first letter did much to

allay these difficulties, but we dare not assume that the restored harmony was perfect in every respect. It had been gained in principle, but traces of the old divisions were bound to show up from time to time and needed constant watching and care. The inroads of the false apostles at this juncture did not help matters in this respect; rather it may be assumed that the old dissensions were stirred up anew by them, and, in part at least, explain the easy success of their efforts.

So far we have spoken of the congregation as a whole. We must remember, however, that every congregation is made up of members no two of whom are completely alike: some are strong, some are weak; some are quick, some are slow; some have a deep understanding, some are superficial; and so on. Thus the reaction of the individual members to the work of Titus and to the epistles of Paul will not have been equally favorable.

If we keep this picture of the situation in mind, it will help us to understand the present and the following sections of Paul's discussion of his coming visit.

**V. 19.** —The sentence with which Paul opens this section does not have the form of a question, but in its sense it approaches a question very closely. He states what he assumes might be expected as the Corinthians' reaction to his explanation and vindication of his apostleship over against the spurious claims and the disparaging remarks of the false apostles. *πάλαι δοκεῖτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα*, All this while you are assuming that we are defending ourselves before you. *πάλαι* (cf. *παλαιός*, old) refers to the past, usually to the remote past. Here it points back to the beginning of the section in which Paul spoke about his apostleship. All the while that the Corinthians were reading it, listening to it, considering it, they were under a certain impression, perhaps increasingly so, which Paul expresses in the clause *ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα*. Both the verb and the dative object have a certain stress, and belong closely together, which, in a way, modifies also the sense of the verb. It is true, Paul was vindicating his apostleship, but his act is not to be understood as an attempt at clearing himself in the manner of a defense in court. It was not an *ἀπολογία* in that sense, least of all ὑμῖν, as though the Corinthians were the legitimate judges when Paul's apostleship was on trial.

Was not Paul violating brotherly love by assuming this arrogant attitude on the part of the Corinthians? Paul knew the Corinthians and their weaknesses. Had they not been sitting in judgment on his apostleship long ago, when one said, I am a Paul man, another, I am an Apollos man, and a third, I am a Cephas man? Paul had rebuked them then, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment... Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come" (I Cor. 4:3, 5). And had they not recently listened to the judgment of the false apostles and to a certain extent joined them in it and made it their own, that Paul was a rather inferior apostle? Well might he tell them to their face that he could not escape the assumption that they might be posing even now as judges who were considering his vindication of his apostleship as an attempt to clear himself in their court.

His "defense" has an altogether different meaning, and different purpose. His speech belongs to an altogether different category. Paul continues, *κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν*, Before God in Christ we are speaking. This clause has a familiar ring: with precisely the same words and in the same order it occurs in chapter 2:17. There Paul is glorying in the fact that God always granted him a triumph while proclaiming the Gospel: "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life" (vs. 15–16). Then in answer to the question whence this ability ("Who is sufficient for these things?") he emphasizes that it is from the Word of God, without additions or adulterations, which he by the grace of God is proclaiming, *κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν*.

The phrase in our present verse must be viewed with chapter 2:14–17 as a background, and in the light of that passage. Even when describing and vindicating his apostleship in the form of foolish boasting Paul is carrying out his assignment of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

And the purpose? *τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς*, and all this, friends, for your edification. There is no contrast between the thoughts which Paul expresses; there is a contrast between the way the Corinthians view Paul's action and its real meaning. To express this relation, "but" (or any other

conjunction denoting antithesis) would be a little too heavy; “and” is sufficient, δέ here merely connects this part of the sentence to the foregoing. —Addressing his readers here with ἀγαπητοί adds a plea to the thought, the plea that the Corinthians, getting to feel Paul’s warm concern, should take notice and give due consideration. Also this part of Paul’s work concerns their “edification,” their spiritual advancement, their strengthening in faith and in sanctification. If they remember their earlier and their most recent fumbings, remember how rather shamefully they acted towards Paul, they will realize how much they stand in need of edification, and will appreciate the fact that the much maligned Paul takes such a warm interest in aiding their edification.

An important part of edification is the battle against, and the victory over, pet lusts. But this involves a painful procedure, especially if the apostles, in order to achieve it in their hearers, will have to apply warning, rebuking, castigating, and the like. It is less painful, yes, it will afford a certain spiritual “thrill,” if the Christians can achieve their own edification before the apostle applies the “rod” (cf. I Cor. 4:21).—Let the Corinthians make good use also of Paul’s foolish boasting for this purpose. It will be more pleasant for every one concerned.

**V. 20.** —Paul knows the conditions in Corinth. In spite of the fact that the damage which the false apostles had caused had been overcome in principle, there was still much awry, and some members evidently were not concerned as zealously about correcting their error as they should have been. Paul begins this verse with φοβοῦμαι γάρ, for I am afraid. This verb is here followed by three clauses beginning with μή, stating of what Paul is afraid. Twice the clause is modified with an enclitic πως, perhaps.

The first is: μή πως ἐλθὼν οὐχ οἷους θέλω εὔρω ὑμᾶς κάγω εὔρεθῶ ὑμῖν οἶον οὐ θέλετε, lest perhaps on my arrival I find you not as such as I wish, and I on my part will be found of you as you do not want (me). This terse statement calls for no further explanation. It strikes home with telling force. There are two matters to which attention may be called. The first is the dative ὑμῖν. In the Latin the dative is used with the passive to denote the agent only in connection with the gerundive; in the Greek this use is found also in connection with other passive verb forms. In the sentence under discussion the agent in the first parallel member is ἐγώ (in the verb ending). Over against this, the second parallel member dare not remain without naming the agent in some way. This consideration suggests that the dative ὑμῖν should not be considered as the *dativus commodi*, but as the dative of agent. Hence not: I should be found *for* you, but *by* you. —The second is the different position of the negative: I may find you not exactly as I would like to see you; but you will find me as you definitely do not want me.

The second clause reads: μή πως ἔρις, ζήλος, θυμοί, ἐριθεΐαι, καταλαλιαί, ψιθυρισμοί, φησιώσεις, ἀκαταστασίαι, lest there perhaps be strife, jealousy, (acts of) anger, (of) rivalry, (of) backbiting, (of) whispering, (of) self-conceit, (of) disorder. The first two nouns in this list are in the singular, the rest in the plural. The plural of these abstract nouns denotes manifestations of the moral deformities they mention. We translate “acts of.”

One of the words, the fourth in the list, calls for a little investigation; ἐριθεία, though often treated as being derived from ἔρις, does not seem to be etymologically connected with this word. It goes back to ἐριθος (both masculine and feminine) meaning a wage earner; ἐριθεία is derived from this noun, as the accent indicates, not directly, but via the verb ἐριθεύειν. Aristotle uses the word for the “self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means.” It occurs in several passages of the New Testament. The clearest light on the meaning is probably found in James 3:14, 16, where it is used as synonymous with πικρὸν ζήλος. It denotes *Lohnsucht*, and the dubious and unfair practices that go with it, as “chiseling,” rivalry, and the like.

We readily realize that all the sins which Paul enumerates are concomitants of the factionalism which plagued the Corinthian congregation earlier, and had been fanned into more violent outbursts by the recent doings of the intruders. —This, then, is the point where the edification of the Corinthians must begin: true repentance over these sins and an earnest effort to curb them. If they neglect this phase, then all other apparent progress will be but sham.

**V. 21.** —Paul devotes an entire verse to his third fear, nor does he soften the clause with a modifying *πως*. He states this fear with two verbs, the one being more general, the second specific, explaining the general term.

We take the general expression first. *μη̄ παλιν̄ ἐλθόντος μου ταπεινώση με ὁ θεός τρὸς ὑμᾶς*, (I fear) lest, when I come again, my God humble me in your presence. The *παλιν* will ordinarily be connected with the participle immediately following, but the commentators who assume that Paul's second visit to Corinth took place between First and Second Corinthians and that Paul on this occasion suffered some very humiliating treatment from the congregation, so that he left in a huff, ignore this natural connection and maintain that the adverb modifies the main verb of the clause. While Paul is speaking about his announced new visit, they try to make him speak about a repeated humiliation. —We have discussed the chronology on a previous occasion.

Paul calls it a humiliation for himself if things in Corinth are not as they should be. But would not this humiliation rather fall first of all on the Corinthian Christians themselves? It would. But Paul is aware of his responsibility for his congregations so keenly that he feels their shame as his own. What makes the matter more painful for him is that this humiliation will take place in their presence, before their very eyes. In an earlier section Paul had expressed the hope that his next visit would be marked with joy all around (chap. 2:1ff.). Will it? Paul now expresses grave misgivings, he fears that God will humiliate him.

He pinpoints his fears: *καὶ πενθήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μη̄ μετανοησάντων*, and I (must) mourn for many of those laden with the guilt of former sins, and not having repented. Paul who was hoping for joy on his near visit to Corinth fears that he will experience grief, humiliating grief, in stead. There are people in the Corinthian congregation who committed sins some time ago (*προ-*) and are still burdened with the guilt of it (The perfect tense stresses the lasting result of the completed action.) since no repentance took place (note the aorist) to remove the stain. These are not isolated cases, Paul fears that there are many.

These unrepented sins reach back farther than to the recent disturbances. Paul lists: *ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελείᾳ ἧ̄ ἔπραξαν*, for the uncleanness and fornication and licentiousness which they have committed.

From First Corinthians we learn that the attitude of the congregation over against sex sins was rather lax. When the incest case happened, the members were not shocked. Paul writes, “Ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned” (chap. 5:2). That ease had been settled. The “punishment (censure) which was inflicted of many” on the sinner had led him to acknowledge his wrong and to grieve over it even to such a degree that he stood in danger of being “swallowed up with over-much sorrow” (II Cor. 2:6–7).

This was not the only case. There was great carelessness, if not laxity, of the members with respect to idol festivities (cf. I Cor. 8–9). Note furthermore the list of excesses which Paul assembled in I Cor. 6:9–10, adding in v. 11: “and such were some of you.” Also to sex sins they applied the axiom: “All things are lawful,” and placed the gratification of the sex drive on a par with eating and drinking. Paul had to set them straight: Yes, “all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.... Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.” So far the axiom is valid. Now Paul continues: “Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.... Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot?” (I Cor. 6:12ff.).

The fleshly mind of the Corinthians expressed itself in other ways. Even in connection with the Lord's Supper, where the agape was degraded to a gourmand's feast (I Cor. 11:21).

By stating expressly, *μη̄ μετανοησάντων*, Paul indicates that those people refused to repent and kept on defending their actions. They ceased to be weak brethren, who had lapsed into sin. They persisted. It was clear that all admonition was to no further avail.

### 3a. Chap. 13:1–2

In these two verses Paul outlines the course of procedure which he plans to follow. They thus, in a way, form the conclusion of the previous section, chapter 12:19–21. In the main, however, they serve as an introduction to the next section, which speaks of the power of Christ in weakness. We examine it briefly.

**V. 1.**—Paul repeats with some emphasis that he is coming to Corinth. The carrying out of his promise that he would visit Corinth was important. In I Cor. 4:18ff. he complained that some questioned his sincerity in this respect: “Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.... What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?”

In the Second Epistle he commented on a change in his travel plans. It did not mean that he had abandoned them, forgetting his promise and canceling his visit. Much less did it mean that his Gospel message was unreliable. It meant simply that he intended thus to spare the Corinthians some very unpleasant embarrassment (chap. 1:15ff.).

It seems that some die-hards refused to be convinced. Hence Paul here emphatically repeats, τρίτον τοῦτο ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Now for this third time I am on my way to you. He says ἔρχομαι. He may have touched Troas recently; he may have stopped off for some time in Philippi and Thessalonica: but those places do not mark the end of his present journey, they are merely stopping stations. His real aim on this journey is Corinth. That is the destination for which he set out. He is on his way. This circuitous route was chosen in order to give the Corinthians time for cleaning up their mess themselves, before Paul would arrive. His third visit is not forgotten. He is coming. They may expect him soon.—And he will attend to business.

He says, ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα, On the mouth of two witnesses and three shall every case be established. This contains a reference to Deuteronomy 19:15: “One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.” Compare also Deuteronomy 17:6; Numbers 35:30. To convict a man of a crime with which he was charged the testimony of a least two unimpeachable witnesses was required. Their testimony must cover the same case, and must agree. On the other hand, if there was the agreeing testimony of two unimpeachable witnesses, it must be accepted. Even the death penalty could be pronounced and executed on the strength of it.

It might be asked, however, why Paul should appeal to that Old Testament regulation. Was not the sin of the respective members in Corinth manifest before the eyes of all? And was not also their refusal to repent public knowledge? That may have been true in a number of cases, and than a formal investigation would seem superfluous. To conduct one nevertheless might make the whole procedure look ridiculous, and would blunt the divinely intended effect.

In verse 20 of the previous chapter, however, Paul had referred to backbitings and whisperings. Some brethren may have been maligned innocently. That also must be stopped. No one will be dealt with on mere rumor. If any one voices a charge against a brother, he must be able to produce the evidence, or he himself will become guilty of what God denounced in the Mosaic law. “If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him” (Deut. 19:16), then the court shall carefully investigate, and if they find that his testimony was false, “then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother” (vs. 19). “So shalt thou put the evil away from among you.”

In passing we mention a curious toying with the words by some of the commentators, who try to identify the three visits of Paul with the three witnesses required by the Law. Even Bachmann in Zahn’s *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* says: *Darum nehmen wir an, Paulus habe sich, indem er sein τρίτον τοῦτο schrieb, in innerer Bewegung vergegenwärtigt, wie damit in eigentümlicher Weise ein alttestamentlicher Rechtssatz sich erfülle. Er kommt sich, indem er jetzt zum zweiten, bezw. zum dritten Male nach Korinth geht, vor, wie wenn er 2 bis 3 Zeugen den Korinthern gegenüberstelle, die ihr Zeugnis über und in diesem Falle wider sich ablegen.*

**V. 2.**—This second verse contains a phrase which greatly puzzles the commentators: ὡς παρὼν τὸ δεῦτερον καὶ ἄπὼν νῦν, The question is: to what do παρὼν and ἄπὼν refer? The present absence seems clear,

but to what does the second presence refer, to what time and what event? Paul uses a similar expression in I Corinthians 5:3: “as absent in body, but present in spirit.” In that case it is clear that presence and absence coincide; they denote the same time and condition, viewed from two different angles. The case is similar in Colossians 2:5: “For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit.” The case is different in verse 10 of our present chapter: “I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness.” Here two different times and conditions are being contrasted as one following the other. A contrast is evident also in Philippians 1:27: “Whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of you.”

It seems that in our present verse *vōn* modifies not merely the *ἀρῶν*, but rather the entire phrase. Paul is now both present and absent. Then *τὸ δεύτερον* would also refer to both conditions. It is now happening for the second time that Paul is both present and absent as far as the Corinthian congregation is concerned. It happened for the first time when the incest case had to be handled, and it happens now again when there are many unrepentant members to be dealt with.

Paul says *προεῖρηκα καὶ προλέγω*. Considering the tenses we may transcribe Paul’s thought: I have warned you in advance, and that warning stands; and I repeat (it). When Paul was both absent and present for the first time, he wrote: “I will come to you shortly.... What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” That was his advance warning, which he gave them then, and which still stands. Now being both absent and present for the second time he merely repeats—still in advance. He did so in v. 1.

Whom does his advance warning concern? He says, *τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν*, to those who still have their former sins on their conscience, and to all the rest. With the word: they “which heretofore have sinned” he refers to those whom he described in chapter 12:21 as unrepentant. His words to them were a call to repentance—in the First Epistle, and are so now again. If they take the warning to heart, no one will be happier than Paul. He will speak about this a little farther down.

Paul’s warnings are addressed also to all the rest. The sins of any member concern and affect the whole group. The Church is the spiritual body of Christ. “Whether one member suffer, all members suffer with it” (I Cor. 12:26). One little toothache can upset the whole system. Hence when one church member falls into sin or becomes entangled in error, the whole Church must get into action in an attempt to rescue the infected member, in order to disentangle him and bring him to repentance. Jesus outlined the mode of procedure in Matthew 18. If the affected member persists in his sin, he must be excommunicated as a publican and heathen man; if he persists in his error, he must be excluded. How his spiritual life is affected by his error will depend on the nature of his error. An unrepentant sinner cannot be tolerated in the Church without endangering the spiritual life, the faith and sanctification, of every member. And if a persistent errorist is tolerated and permitted to make propaganda for his false views, then purity of doctrine cannot be maintained.

When Paul here urges action against the unrepentant sinners, he is not advocating undue haste. The congregation must take a firm stand, and must act with a firm hand. But firmness is not the same as haste. There are people who confuse the two—to the great harm of the Church. True firmness must be coupled with love, and can afford to be patient. For proper dealing with sinners and men caught in error Paul always insisted on patience. But when unrepentance of sin and persistence in error become manifest, then love demands decisive action.

In Corinth the dealings with the incest case had been carried out, dealings with other still unrepentant sinners seem to have lagged. Hence Paul’s advance warning to all the rest. He hopes that they will be aroused to take the proper steps.

If they do, and even if their manner is weak and perhaps clumsy, Paul will be happy. But if not, his warning is, *ὅτι ἐὰν ἔλθω εἰς τὸ πάλιν φείσομαι*, If (and when) I come again, I will not spare.—Paul, of course, will not employ any kind of force outside that of the Spirit, but he will not put on “kid gloves,” he will not mince words. He will not deal gently with their shortcomings, but will expose them unsparingly. He will pronounce God’s judgment on their delinquency in straightforward and unequivocal terms.

This brings to a close the matter of dealing with unrepentant sinners; at the same time it opens the way for a brief discussion of Christ’s and His apostle’s power in weakness.



### 3b. Chap. 13:3–6

In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter Paul announced that on his coming visit, the third one which he would make to the Corinthian congregation, he would take care of the pending cases of discipline, whether they called for excommunication of impenitent sinners or for “avoiding” of manifest makers of divisions and offenses. In unmistakable terms he added that he would not “spare.”

**V. 3.**—In the opening words of our present section he adduces a rather startling reason: ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ, since you are seeking (or demanding) a proof of the Christ speaking in me.—We might ask, what is the connection between the disciplinary action of the congregation and their demand for a proof of Christ’s presence in Paul’s work? Do not the cases of discipline stand on their own merits? Does not the congregation in those cases have to base its action on the factors which it observes? If the sinner manifests impenitence by refusing to listen to the admonitions of the congregation, is then not excommunication called for? If any one is observed to be causing offenses and divisions contrary to the doctrine of the Church, is he then not simply to be avoided? Must not in that case all formal connections be severed and all exercise of church fellowship be suspended? What has the demand for a proof of Christ as speaking in Paul to do with the manner of handling those cases?

Yet Paul introduces the present clause with ἐπεὶ, because, since. His pre-announced action will be influenced by their (expressed or implied) demand. We see that Paul regards cases of discipline not as isolated matters, where we simply follow a certain mode of procedure according to the nature of the case as we observe it. No, it is not as simple as that. Discipline is an integral part of the Church’s activity.—No member of the Church is perfect in this life. Every one must continue to grow; every one is subject to the danger of falling away; every one is exposed to attacks from the enemy. As a result the life of a congregation becomes very complex; it embraces mutual encouragement, mutual strengthening, mutual warning, mutual admonition. This activity, especially the last named phase, assumes special forms when a brother becomes entangled in a sin, or is seduced by some error. Then admonition and rebuke become very prominent, which, if rejected by the brother, will lead to excommunication or to severance of fellowship, as the case may be.

Since discipline is an integral part of the life of a church body, many factors come into consideration in carrying out the individual cases—as Paul here indicates by referring to a demand of the Corinthian congregation. Christian discipline presupposes not only a thorough familiarity with the “rules” that Christ gave us, it taxes above all our spiritual judgment. There is nothing mechanical, or simple, about it. The demand of the Corinthian congregation for a certain proof on the part of Paul—unreasonable though it was—had to be considered by him in planning his dealing with the cases in Corinth. In the present instance, for example, this demand made it impossible for Paul to “spare.”

All along Paul had taken various factors into consideration. Before the troubles arose in Corinth he had planned an earlier return to the congregation. But then he changed his travel plans. He considered it as better for the congregation if he advised them through one of his assistants, and gave them the opportunity to straighten out the matter by themselves before his arrival. He took the risk that his change of plans might be misunderstood and misconstrued to his disadvantage—as it actually happened. We heard his correction of this misunderstanding in chapter 1.—He used his judgment in staying away from Corinth for the time being. He himself calls it a judgment (ἔκρινα), and even emphasizes the word by placing it at the head of the sentence (chap. 2:1). He reported a part of his deliberations in that chapter.

But the “sparing” which Paul considered as proper then was now no longer in place. That peculiar “demand” of the Corinthians made a sterner step necessary.

For the “demand” Paul uses the word ζητεῖτε, you seek. Most likely it was not expressed in the form of a demand. It may have taken the form of a complaint about the absence of “proof,” or the form of a question, what proof can he present for his claims? The intruders maintained—and apparently many of the Corinthians accepted their word—that Paul’s letters were weighty and strong indeed, but that his speech was contemptible;

that in his absence he used big words, but when present would not live up to his claims. All this implied the demand for a demonstration. If it is really Christ who is speaking through Paul, then Paul should not disgrace Christ by his humble conduct. He must assert his authority and demand recognition. Since Paul did not even take remuneration for his services, how could they recognize him as an apostle of the glorified Savior who is at the right hand of God, all power having been given to Him in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and angels and principalities having been made subject to Him? In all this there was implied the demand for a proof, a demonstration.

Paul says that they will get a proof in the “unsparing” way in which he will handle their cases of discipline; perhaps the people who complained the loudest about Paul’s weakness will hear the sharpest reproof for their own slovenly, inadequate way, their own inaction in the serious matter on hand.

The demand is really out of place, and shows a deplorable lack of understanding. Paul says of Christ, ὃς εἰς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, who is not weak on you, but is powerful among you. They want a proof of the power of Christ. They have it right before their eyes, and do not see it. Let Paul be as weak as he may, yes, the weaker the better. The weaker Paul, the clearer can the power of Christ be seen. How is it that there is a Christian congregation in Corinth? Who brought about the radical change in the hearts of its members? Natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit, they are foolishness unto him: how come that the Corinthians accepted the foolish preaching by the weak preacher Paul? It was Christ who was not ineffective on them, but was and is present with them in all His might and glory.—Recently men had come to them with enticing, seductive words, and caused great havoc in the Church. How come, the congregation survived and now is on the way to recovery? It was Christ’s work. What better proof of Christ’s power do they want? Or do these things mean nothing to them? Is their spiritual mind so obtuse?

**V. 4.**—Why are they disturbed by Paul’s meekness, the absence of any show of power? Why do they let Paul’s meekness lead them to overlook the mighty work which Christ’s power performed on them when He made new creatures of them by the word of reconciliation which Paul preached to them? They evidently do not understand the real nature of Christ’s power and its operation.—Paul begins both parts of verse 4 with καὶ γάρ. This combination of conjunctions always introduces an explanatory remark. The explanation may be mild in nature, something like one introduced by our English “namely.” Sometimes it may be pretty sharp, implying even a rebuke for the ignorance of the reader: he ought to know better, and he would have known better, had he only considered the following explanation. That is the case here in verse 4. The Corinthians should have known better about the power of Christ than to be misled by Paul’s meekness to demanding a proof.

The truth of which the Corinthians had lost sight is ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῆ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ, (Christ) was crucified out of weakness, but He is living out of God’s power. In order to perform His stupendous task of redeeming the sin-lost world, Christ entered into the state of exinanition. Though He was in the form of God, He did not deem this something to be displayed continually by living on an equal level with God. But He voluntarily emptied Himself of the heavenly mode of living and took on the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He was crucified from voluntarily assumed weakness.—Was He weak? Did He lose?

By His work in extreme lowliness He achieved the tremendous, glorious result that the sin-laden world now stands reconciled before God. He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

And now He lives to dispense this treasure to the world. The pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand. He is at the right hand of God, directing the affairs in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. God gave Him the name which is above every name, that at His name all knees must bow of the dwellers in heaven, the dwellers on earth, and those under the earth. He lives by the power of God.

If this is the method which Christ applied effectively in procuring the salvation of the world, is it a cause to make us question the presence of Christ’s power when His ministers come to us in meekness? Does not the demand for a proof actually reveal an abysmal, unpardonable ignorance? With an emphatic καὶ γάρ Paul continues: ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς, we are weak in

Him, but we shall live jointly with Him by God's power on you. As Christ performed His work in weakness, so we on our part, who are in connection with Him, are also weak with Him.

In the apodosis we take notice of a few special points. Paul uses the future, ζήσομεν. This is not to be taken in the temporal sense: at some time in the future we shall live with Him. Then the εἰς ὑμᾶς would not make good sense, no matter whether we combine it with δύναμις or with ζήσομεν. The εἰς ὑμᾶς takes the Corinthians as they are now living under the Gospel of Christ. ζήσομεν refers to the present conditions. Hence it is logical rather than temporal. If Christ after His labors in weakness now is living vigorously by the power of God, then it is to be expected that He will lead His apostles over the same road: outwardly weak, but effectively proclaiming the Gospel of salvation.

Paul stresses that we are joined to Christ. We are not only in the company of Christ—μετά would express that idea—we are σὺν αὐτῷ, united with Him, specifically in that we are doing His work. “Lo, I am with you,” He said. Our work is His work.

With εἰς ὑμᾶς Paul indicates that the Corinthians are the recipients and beneficiaries of this work. With this thought he leads over to the following verse.

**V. 5**—In verse 3 Paul mentioned the fact that the Corinthians are demanding a “proof,” δοκιμή. He now takes up this term and applies it in different ways, not only in the last remarks of the present section but also in the beginning of the next one. δοκιμή may be applied in different ways to different situations, and will then show different shades of meaning.

The Corinthians were demanding a δοκιμή from Paul. By calling attention to the fact that his work had been done on them, εἰς ὑμᾶς, Paul charges that their request is misdirected. A tree is known by its fruit, and a man's ability is gauged and determined by the work which he produces. If the Corinthians are seeking a test and a proof of the Christ speaking in Paul, then they ought to examine themselves; for Paul's work was done among them, and his words were directed to them. ἑαυτοὺς πειράζετε, examine yourselves. The ἑαυτοὺς has the emphatic position in the sentence.

In what respect are they to examine themselves? Paul came to Corinth preaching the Gospel of salvation through Christ. His aim was to lead his hearers to faith in Christ as their Savior. So that is the point where they must apply the test: εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει, if you are in the faith.—Paul is here repeating an argument which he had used in chapter 10:7. There he had said, Look at the things right before you. If any one considers himself to be a believer in Christ, where did he get it? Did not we bring Christ to you? Realize, then, that we also are in Christ. Here he repeats, If you are in the faith, living by the faith, hoping for eternal salvation as the goal of your faith: why then ask for a proof of Christ's speaking in us? You have it in your very faith! It was Christ's power, and His power alone, that could kindle a spark of faith in your dead hearts. It did, and the mere fact that faith is now present in you is sufficient proof, and incontrovertible proof, of Christ's power in my words.

But the fact that the Corinthians were demanding a proof from Paul was a sign of danger, a symptom of some spiritual ailment. It indicated that they were working with standards foreign to the Gospel. Their faith seemed to have absorbed some earthly elements. Hence Paul, who is concerned about building up their faith, about strengthening and purifying it, repeats emphatically, ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε, prove yourselves. Yes, you yourselves are the ones who need attention, you yourselves need testing, watching, guarding, and improving.

Paul now expresses the same thought in another form. He begins with ἦ, or i.e., to put it another way. οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκετε ἑαυτοὺς, do you really not know your own selves? Namely, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, that Jesus Christ is in you?

The meaning of this expression, “Jesus Christ in you,” is best set forth by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. Speaking of himself and Christ's living in him, he says: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (chap. 2:20). Do the Corinthians not realize that Christ crucified is the dominating power of their life? Their life may be hampered by the flesh, as was Paul's, but they resist the temptations of their flesh, and follow the lead of Christ's Spirit. That is invariably the case when Christ occupies a heart, and only then when He does.

If that is not the case with the Corinthians, if Christ does not rule in their hearts, what then? εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε, unless you simply are failures, εἰ μήτι according to the new Gr.-E. Lex. of the NT means “unless perhaps” or “unless indeed.” The idea of δοκιμή here turns up in the negative δόκιμος, meaning that they did not pass the test which was applied to them, they failed.—These are the two alternatives: either Jesus Christ is in them as indicated above, or else they are failures.—Hence, in stead of demanding a proof from Paul they should keep watch over themselves. Paul still hopes that a check will bring to light the first alternative.

**V. 6**—In this sense we understand verse 6. Ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι, But I hope that you will recognize that we (on our part) are not failures. This is the result of the Corinthians’ self-examination which Paul hopes for. He hopes that they will find themselves standing in the faith of Jesus Christ. He expresses the thought as though he were concerned about his own credit; but that is only a polite and startling way of saying it. If the Corinthians proved to be failures, that would be considered and recognized as casting a shadow on Paul, namely, that his work was not adequate. If Paul’s work was successful, the result will show in the faith of the Corinthians. Thus for the Corinthians’ sake Paul hopes that their test will demonstrate that he was not a failure. That this it is what was on his mind comes out clearly in the following section.

#### 4. Chapter 13:7–10

**V. 7**.—This verse is devoted entirely to an elucidation of the last expression used in verse 6. εὐχόμεθα δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν μὴ ποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς κακὸν μηδέν, Now we are praying to God that you may not do anything bad. A Christian’s hope is always accompanied by prayer. Thus Paul here simply substitutes prayer for the word hope which he had used in the previous verse. Paul’s (and his associates’) prayer is that God may keep the Corinthians from doing anything wrong, without pointing out any wrong specifically. He indicates by implication that all good things come from God, that it is also God alone who can and will preserve us in our Christian faith, and protect us from taking a false step or making a wrong move. Thus when Paul said that he hoped to come out of the Corinthians’ self-examination as fully approved, he did not mean that any credit was due him. No, all honor belongs to God. With these suggestions he paved the way for the following protest.

Οὐχ ἵνα ἡμεῖς δόκιμοι φανῶμεν, not in the sense that we might appear approved.—We take notice of a new verb. In the previous verse the reading was simply ἐσμὲν (οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀδόκιμοι), here Paul substitutes φανῶμεν, that we may appear, i.e., that people may see and acclaim us as the great men of God, as the powerful preachers of the Gospel. That is not Paul’s purpose in his prayers for the Corinthians, rather (ἀλλ’): ἵνα ὑμεῖς τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε, that you yourselves be doing the proper thing. That is the one concern of Paul: that the Corinthians stay on the right track, that they do so, under God, on their own initiative, without constraint, or coaxing and steering from Paul. He was their teacher, but now he would like to see them able to stand on their own feet. (We are reminded of a humorous definition of the aim of a good teacher; it is: to make himself superfluous. Paul’s aim was just that.)—But what will that do to Paul? and particularly to the proof demanded of him by the Corinthians?

Paul adds: ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἀδόκιμοι ὄμεν, but (that) we be, so to say, unproved. Paul used the word ἀδόκιμος twice before in the sense of “failure.” Here he uses it in the purely negative sense: without a test, and hence without proof. Since the faith of the Corinthians is the only proof which Paul has for the efficiency of his work, then if the Corinthians learn to stand on their own feet and to follow the proper course on their own initiative, then his only proof is taken away. He will have nothing to show up for his efforts, he is ἀ-δόκιμος — But, Paul says, that does not worry him. He will be glad to stand there without proof; if only the Corinthians keep on doing the proper thing. That is his one concern.

**V. 8**.—The situation gives Paul an opportunity to repeat his warning against the false apostles, and to point out the nefarious nature of their work. When they came to Corinth, they found a flourishing congregation. They could not claim credit for founding it. But they did aim to acquire the credit of being superior apostles. What did they do? They began to criticise Paul and to belittle his work. They criticized his Gospel as being

insufficient and inferior. Though he had preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. they found fault with it. They began to wreck the work which Paul with great labor and patience had performed. They showed their “superiority” in tearing down.

Such methods are simply out of the question for Paul. οὐ γὰρ δυνάμεθά τι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, for we are unable (to do) anything against the truth. To uproot the truth, that is the work of the Old Serpent and its trickery; it is the work of Satan, who is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lying. That type of work, says Paul, we on our part are utterly unable to do. We can work only in the interest of the truth. Paul had mentioned before (chap. 11:23ff.) what it meant for him to be a minister of Christ and thus to work for the truth which no man by nature wants to hear. Now he simply says, ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας.

**V. 9.**—He does not, however, regret that he Cannot demonstrate his strength by wrecking the truth. He has been taken completely captive by the truth, he has embraced the truth, and the truth of Christ is the very element by which he lives. Whenever and wherever he meets the truth he rejoices, no matter whether it means strength and honor for him or weakness and disgrace (cf. chap. 6:8). χαίρομεν γὰρ ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενῶμεν, ὑμεῖς δὲ δυνατοὶ ᾗτε, For we rejoice whenever we on our part are weak but you on your part are strong; whenever we see you do the proper thing by yourselves without our assistance or prodding, we are happy. In an earlier part of the letter he stated the motivation for this peculiar joy as follows: For we are not proclaiming ourselves as the savior, but Jesus Christ, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake (cf. chap. 4:5).

All the thoughts thus carried out by Paul are in line with the great truth referred to in verse 4, viz., that Christ performed His work of redemption, not in the full luster of His heavenly glory, but in a state of deep humiliation; and that in a similar way also His ministers proclaim His salvation in weakness and humility.

When Paul ends this verse with the remark, τοῦτο καὶ εὐχόμεθα, τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν, he is not adding a new item. The καὶ is not copulative, it might be considered as explicative or even ascensive. He had mentioned his prayer before. In verse 7 he said that he prayed to God to keep the Corinthians from doing evil, but rather to help them do the proper thing. Here again he speaks of his prayer, connecting his statement to the rest of the sentence with καὶ, thus indicating that he is repeating his thought in a somewhat specialized form. We may paraphrase: and this is the very thing which we are praying for, your complete restoration. καταρτίζω means to put in order properly; figuratively it means to put into proper condition. κατάρτισις is a verbal noun denoting this process. The restoration of Christians is never completed in this life. It is never an accomplished fact, an attained state or condition. It is a continuing process. The prayer of Paul is that this process may keep on going in the Corinthian congregation in spite of obstructions and interruptions.

**V. 10.**—The same is also the purpose of the present letter. διὰ τοῦτο, because of this his earnest desire before God, ταῦτα ἀπὸν γράφω, I am writing these things while yet absent. When he comes he would like to find them strong, doing the proper thing, in full progress of restoration. Otherwise he might experience λύπη and cause λύπη, as he said in chapter 2. Here he expresses the unpleasant experience which he would like to avoid, and for the avoiding of which he is writing this letter, in these words, ἵνα παρὼν μὴ ἀποτόμως χρήσωμαι. We must supply ὑμῖν as the object of the verb: in order that when present I may not have to treat you sharply. The time for gentle and sparing treatment is past. They have had time and opportunity enough for making some headway in their house cleaning. If they have allowed the time to slip by, and if they failed to make proper use of the assistance which Paul sent them in the person of Titus and his companions, then Paul will now have to take matters firmly into his own hands, and that may mean that he will have to be curt and treat them sharply. This letter, written very shortly before his planned arrival, is his last warning.

Yet if he does treat them curtly, it will not be to harm them or to tear down their congregation. It will be κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν κύριος ἔδωκεν μοι εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν, according to the authority which the Lord has given to me for building up, and not for tearing down. The power of the Gospel which Paul wields is indeed a strong power for wrecking the strongholds of the enemy (cf. chap. 10), but Paul does not consider the Corinthians as enemies of Christ. They are being troubled by the enemies, and they may have allowed themselves unduly to become entangled with the enemies. Therefore, although they are not to be

considered as enemies themselves, yet sharp measures will be necessary to sever such alliances, and that will hurt. Some members may even have been infected with the ideas of the enemy and may not be willing to give them up. Paul (in chap. 12:21) referred to some people who thus far have refused to repent. Excommunication or severance may be called for (as the Latin poet phrased it: *Erase recidendum est, ne pars sincera trahatur*). That will be extremely painful. Such painful operation may be necessary to achieve the building up of the congregation.

If such painful disciplinary action can be avoided at Paul's visit, if the Corinthians take care of these matters themselves, they will spare both Paul and themselves some embarrassing moments.

## XII. Conclusion, Chap. 13:11–13

**V. 11.**—*Finally, brethren, farewell.* We note that he calls them brethren, and considers them as such in spite of all the bad things he had to say to them and about them. χαίρετε, literally, rejoice, is best rendered with “farewell” at the close of a letter.

There follow two passive imperatives, καταρτίζεσθε παρακαλεῖσθε. Paul tried to restore them to proper condition: they should let his efforts take effect. He admonished them: now they should willingly accept the admonition.—Two active imperatives follow, which are closely connected in meaning, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, εἰρηνεύετε, be united in your (Christian) mind, have peace among yourselves.—Doing these things they will thereby show that Christ is still in them. And the promise still applies to them, καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ’ ὑμῶν, and the God of the (true) love and peace will be with you—with His help and with His blessing.

**V. 12.**—There is church fellowship among the Christians in Corinth, and with the whole Christian Church on earth. Consider this fellowship most highly and seal it in a solemn formal way, ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἁγίῳ φιλήματι, greet one another with a holy kiss. Note the aorist of simple action in ἀσπάσασθε, indicating that that is the proper thing to do. We may well imagine that some members on account of the recent disturbances felt doubtful if it was proper to keep up the custom still. Paul says it is.—On the kiss of peace compare also I Corinthians 16:20; Romans 16:16.

The fellowship extends farther than the boundaries of the Corinthian congregation. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες, all the saints salute you. Note the present tense. They are sending their (fraternal) greetings. By their greetings they show their sympathy. They are with the Corinthians in spirit, supporting them before the throne of God with their prayers. In spirit they are standing shoulder to shoulder with them in their struggles against the forces of evil.

**V. 13.**—Paul concludes his epistle with what has become known as the apostolic blessing: ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

We refrain from commenting. Let the blessing stand in its simple pristine beauty.