

Second Corinthians 6:11–7:16

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

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I. Chapter 6:11–7:1

Chapter 6:11–7:16 forms the last section of the first main part of Second Corinthians (ch. 1–7). It consists of several subdivisions, all closely linked together among themselves and with the body of the entire first part, so that it often is most difficult to draw a clear line of demarcation, as well as to group various smaller parts into larger thought units.

A. Verses 11–13

Paul indicates in ch. 6:11 that he is beginning a new section by using the arresting expression: *Τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέωγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κορίνθιοι*, our mouth is open before you, Corinthians.

To what does Paul refer with these words? Are they an announcement of what he is now about to say, or do they indicate that the previous line of thought has now been completed? To answer this question a closer look at the tense of the verb may be helpful. The aorist of this verb is frequently used to mark the beginning of an address; e.g., in Mt. 5:2, *ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα... ἐδίδασκεν*, marks the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. Similarly the future is used in Mt. 13:35, *ἀνοίξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὸ στόμα μου*; also the present infinitive, Acts 18:14, *μέλλοντος τοῦ Παύλου ἀνοίγειν τὸ στόμα*. In cases of this kind it is clear that the opening of the mouth serves the purpose of uttering the words that are to follow. But in the passage under consideration we have a perfect tense; it is the second perfect active, used intransitively: the mouth has opened itself and now stands open. The act of opening lies in the past and is completed, the result of the action continues in the present. It is difficult to understand such a statement as referring to the beginning of an address. It rather seems to point to an address now completed. Roman orators would indicate that they had come to the end of their speech by saying *Dixi*, I have spoken. Similarly Paul here writes, *τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέωγεν*. The new Bauer *Wörterbuch* paraphrases: *Ich babe frei und offen geredet*; similarly already the old Schirlitz: *Wir haben freimütig zu euch gesprochen*; so also Thayer, We speak freely to you, we keep nothing back. (The last expression is a good rendition of Wilke-Grimm's *nihil reticemus, verschweigen*.)

Wir verschweigen nichts, we are keeping nothing back, that is a thought which fits the situation excellently. Some of the trouble in Corinth started from the fact that Paul had changed his travel plans; at least, his detractors made this change an excuse for questioning his sincerity, and then also for casting suspicion and doubt on his Gospel message. Paul did not brush this aside as too childish; he took up the charge, and in a very friendly way explained the matter. He does not make his plans in a careless way, nor does he, on the other hand, stubbornly stick to a plan once he has made it. He is serious in making his plans; but they are always subject to revision by God's overruling providence. In this case he had changed his plans out of consideration for the Corinthians, to spare them (and himself) some very embarrassing moments. Moreover, his personal plans have nothing whatsoever to do with the Gospel that he proclaims. The Gospel is the faithful word of the faithful God, resting on the unshakable foundation of Christ's redemption. —The fact that he changed his plans is only a minor point anyway; far greater weaknesses may be found in connection with his person. He is an earthen vessel; but this very fact will serve to set forth with all the more compelling force the divine power of the Gospel of Christ. —In bringing the Gospel to the people Paul does not, and does not have to, resort to trickery, he is not “selling” the Gospel for personal gain or glory; he is bringing it as healing balm to mortally wounded consciences. If it does not save them, that is their own fault, because they permitted the “god of this world” utterly to blind their hearts. But this will not induce Paul to change his methods or to supplement the Gospel message in some way in an endeavor to make it more palatable to the people: No, he does not grow weary—an

understatement—rather, all the more strenuous, under a constraining Christ-like love, will he labor untiringly that the glorious grace of God be not received in vain.

Is he holding back anything? Τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνεφγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

The statement receives additional appeal from the address by name, “Corinthians.” He is not using words like φίλοι or ἀγαπητοί or τέκνα. An address of that type would be in place if the point were to assure them of his good will toward them. But since he is assuring them of having made a frank statement of his case without keeping anything back, such designations might not seem quite appropriate; a name was in place which would call for their candid evaluation of the facts presented by Paul. The simple Κορινθιοί admirably achieves that purpose.

On the basis of these facts that Paul frankly discussed in his letter so far he can now say, ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτνται, our heart is wide (expanded, roomy). The Corinthians may have felt that Paul had little room for them in his heart, that other people came first and held the first place in his interest and in his affection; if the Corinthians wished to get into his heart at all they would find rather cramped conditions. But Paul assures them that there is “lots of room” for them in his heart. Οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν, you are not crowded in us. It simply is not true that you can barely squeeze into our heart, if indeed you can get in at all. The facts that Paul presented in the foregoing rather showed what a warm and vivid interest he took in the Corinthians. His concern for them not only let him plead with them not to receive the grace of God in vain; it not only made him postpone his visit in order not to cause an embarrassing situation, nor did it merely make him pass up a splendid mission opportunity in Troas. It also gave him the fullest confidence in them in the most difficult and serious case of discipline that they had on their hands: If ye forgive anyone, I am with you in the name of Jesus. —No, you are not cramped in our heart.

The shoe is on the other foot: στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν, you are cramped in your own feelings. You imagine that we lack interest in you because you yourselves have allowed other interests to occupy your heart, and thus to crowd the interest in the Gospel and therewith a correct evaluation of our work and of our concern for your welfare into some corner. In other words, our attitude towards you did not change, but your attitude toward the Gospel has become contaminated. You are receiving into your heart some elements that vitiate the Gospel and crowd it and its true messengers out of your heart.

Paul’s mouth is wide open; he is holding back nothing. His interest and concern for the welfare of the Corinthians is as fervent as ever. Now Paul asks them for a return favor. He motivates the expression by explaining that he is talking to them as to his children, ὡς τέκνοις λέγω. They are his spiritual children. He it was who through the Gospel affected a new birth in them. “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” (I Cor. 4:15). He is now speaking to them as his children in the language of children; and as children they will understand when he asks them for a return favor, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν. The word is ἀντιμισθία has so far been found only in ecclesiastical literature. In the New Testament it occurs, besides our passage, only in Rom. 1:27: “Men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that ἀντιμισθία of their error which was meet (ἔδει).” The second epistle of Clement speaks about the sufferings of Christ, and then asks the question, what ἀντιμισθία we shall give Him, or what *fruit* (καρπὸν) worthy of His gift (ch. 1, 3). In ch. 9:7, 8, Clement calls repentance from a sincere heart the proper ἀντιμισθία, which we should give to God who healed us. In ch. 1:5, Clement has the combination μισθὸς ἀντιμισθίας: “What praise, then, or what μισθὸς ἀντιμισθίας shall we give Him (Christ) in return for what we received?” This is the word which Paul here uses when asking his children for the fruit or return favor for what he has done for them. He adds the modifier τὴν αὐτὴν. Their ἀντιμισθία shall consist in this that they copy him and walk in his footsteps, that they conduct themselves over against him and his Gospel just as he conducted himself over against them. They were not cramped in his heart, crowded into some corner; so he asks them: πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς, just as ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτνται.

B. Verses 14–16a

In order to achieve this, namely, that Paul with his Gospel have an uncramped position in the hearts of the Corinthians, they will have to throw out some things which they have admitted to a greater or lesser degree by listening to Paul's detractors. Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις, do not become mismatched yoke-fellows with unbelievers. The word ἑτεροζυγοῦντες is easy to understand, but difficult to translate. Lenski's cumbersome rendering is: "heterogeneously yoked up with," while Beza has: *impari iugo copulari*. Wilke-Grimm suggests: *impar vel diversum iugum subire*. In my suggestion above I tried to express the idea of the present participle, which denotes the action of the verb as a characteristic quality of the subject, by translating *yoke-fellow*, while applying the idea of ἕτερος to the situation in the word *mismatched*. The RSV has simply *mismated* for the whole word, thus losing the idea of a yoke; while the Goodspeed Bible says: "Do not get into close and incongruous relations."

Paul takes the figure of a mismatched yoke-fellowship from one of the Old Testament ceremonial ordinances, Dt. 22:10: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." The ox was considered as clean, and its meat could be used for food, while the ass was forbidden as unclean. Paul here shows what ethical principle God tried to impress on the hearts and minds of His children by this ceremonial injunction. He will tolerate no unionism of any kind. In itself there may be no wrong in having an ox and an ass join their efforts under the same yoke, but since God had declared the one to be clean and the other unclean, this separation must in no way be ignored or obliterated.

If believers and unbelievers are yoked together in some common venture, it will always be at the expense of the truth. If the unbeliever would accept the truth, he would cease to be an unbeliever. He may vary the shade of his error, but no matter whether it is an error of the deepest dye, or whether it shows only faintly, it remains an error, which by its very nature is hostile to the truth.

In speaking about unbelievers Paul has not in mind some weak brother. The minds of true believers may be tinged with deep and dangerous delusions, but since they are in all humility and prayerfully seeking the truth and willing to be instructed by the Word of God they are not unbelievers. The Corinthians knew what to do in the case of weak brethren; Paul had devoted several chapters in his First Epistle to this problem. Here he has in mind unbelievers, men who take a firm stand on some error of theirs.

Were they out-and-out unbelievers, who rejected the Gospel *in toto*? Paul will deal with the disturbers of the peace in Corinth at length in the last main part of this Epistle, ch. 10–13. Thus a more detailed investigation of their particular case must be deferred to some later time. One thing may be mentioned now. In comparing himself with them Paul points out that they claim to be "ministers of Christ" (ch. 11:23). Yes, in their own estimation their work for Christ was superior to that of Paul. Ironically Paul calls them superfine (ὑπὲρ λίσαν) apostles (ch. 11:5). They pretended to preach the Gospel in a more perfected form than Paul. But the warning which Paul addressed to his Galatian churches would apply in the present case also: they preached another (ἕτερον) Gospel which is not another (ἄλλο—Gal. 1:6, 7). Paul does not question their sincerity when they claim to preach Christ—they were deceivers who themselves had been deceived—nor does he question their general ability. He does not call them theological nincompoops, but because of the error with which they adulterated the pure Gospel he calls them unbelievers in spite of the fact that they professed allegiance to Christ.

We can well imagine how difficult it must have been for the Corinthians to swallow this pill. There had come to them men who were devout, who devoted themselves to the cause of the Gospel, who could present the Gospel in an attractive, fascinating way. They themselves felt that they had been greatly enriched spiritually and edified by the warm and eloquent presentation of these excellent apostles. And now Paul bluntly calls them unbelievers, and warns his readers against cooperation with them, not even making an exception for cooperation in externals. Of course, he is not speaking about business affairs, social, economic, or political projects. He is speaking about church work and things that have to do with church work, about which he had said in the previous section that, if offense is to be avoided, then, among others, it must be done in a holy spirit, with the word of truth, with the implements of righteousness. Hence, any cooperation with adulterators of the Gospel of justification or with violators of the Holy Spirit of the truth must be avoided. Not to do so would result in a mismatched yoke-fellowship with unbelievers.

That Paul is here not ranting against persons, but in holy indignation is denouncing the treacherous errors which they espouse, is clear from his statement of the reasons with which he motivates his warning, v. 14b–16a. We take them up one at a time.

Τίς γὰρ μετοχή δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνομία, what have righteousness and lawlessness in common? Μετοχή, from its etymology, indicates a share in some possession held jointly by several parties: to have something in common. The two states or conditions that, as Paul emphatically indicates by his rhetorical question, have absolutely nothing in common, are δικαιοσύνη and ἀνομία. The δικαιοσύνη is the same about which Paul has spoken repeatedly in his Epistle before. It is the righteousness that the New Testament brings us in contrast to the condemnation (κατακρισις) of the Law. It is the righteousness that we possess by God's imputing the righteousness of Christ to us, whom He has made to be sin for us. It is the righteousness which in God's estimation we acquired when in the person of Christ we suffered the agony of eternal death as a punishment for our sins, and yet, under those trying conditions, again in the person of Christ, preserved a perfect faith in God and love to Him. Christ is our righteousness without spot or blemish. There is not a speck of lawlessness or any violation of the Law in Him.

Ἀνομία is the direct opposite of Christ's righteousness. Christ with His blood-bought δικαιοσύνη came to abolish ἀνομία. Just as there is not a speck of ἀνομία where Christ's δικαιοσύνη holds the field, so there is not a trace of δικαιοσύνη in ἀνομία. They are mutually exclusive opposites, with nothing in common. If anyone attempts to establish a community between the two, he will only spoil Christ's δικαιοσύνη and increase the ἀνομία.

If anyone insists that the work of Christ must be supplemented in some way, be that, as the Judaizers insisted in the days of Paul, that Christians must submit to Mosaic circumcision in order to secure the righteousness of the Gospel, or be it, as some insist today, that faith must be present before justification can take place, that the requirement of faith, a totally God-created faith, must be met as a term for God to pronounce the forgiveness of our sins on us—he is an advocate of ἀνομία; he assumes that Christ's righteousness is not complete, that the declaration of our righteousness in Christ is not an accomplished fact, ready to be appropriated and enjoyed by us in faith, he insists that something, be it ever so little, is still lacking. Since God declared every sinner righteous in the resurrection of Christ, anyone who maintains that justification does not take place until the moment that faith is kindled, is an unbeliever, and is advocating unbelief, no matter how highly he may otherwise extol Christ.

This is the first point that Paul makes, the incompatibility of Christ's blood-bought δικαιοσύνη and ἀνομία. Inexhaustible patience, ὑπομονή, toward weak brethren, yes, but no mismatched yoke-fellowship with persistent exponents of even a scintilla of unbelief.

The second reason Paul mentions is: Τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος, what communion has light with respect to darkness? We notice a little change in the construction. The first question contained two subjects, both in the dative with εἶστιν supplied. The second question has only one subject so expressed, and instead of the second subject it has the prepositional phrase πρὸς σκότος, in the direction of, with respect to. The κοινωνία that light offers does not reach out to include darkness. If light reaches out toward darkness it will do so for battle only, to expel the darkness, but never to give it a share of itself, or to accept a share of it. In this direction there is no κοινωνία.

Light and darkness are metaphorical expressions for life, hope, and joy on the one hand, and death and despair on the other. Christ is the light of the world, and there is no darkness in Him. The devil is the prince of darkness, blinding the eyes of his victims so that even the bright light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who lives in an exquisite, unapproachable light, cannot even begin to dawn in them. He keeps his victims bound all their lifetime by the fear of death, dragging them down into outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

What communion, what sharing, either active or receptive, is there possible for light in the direction of darkness? The Christians through faith in Jesus Christ enjoy the light. And if anyone tells them that they themselves must supplement that light, and if it were only by an infinitesimal fraction of a candlepower, he is fusing darkness into their light. But since these are mutually exclusive opposites: light and darkness, life and

death, hope and despair, then by an attempt to combine the two the light will be put out and the darkness intensified. There is no yoke-fellowship possible.

As a third reason Paul poses this question: Τίς συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς βελιάρ, what harmonious speech of Christ is there toward Beliar? Paul retains the πρὸς phrase as in the second question, but instead of saying what συμφώνησις has Christ toward Beliar, he changes the dative case to a genitive, what συμφώνησις of Christ is there toward Beliar. The word here used as a name for the devil is a Hebrew word meaning literally *dominus silvae*.

Christ has a very definite φώνησις. He proclaims the Gospel of salvation. And though at times He sounds forth the Law in decisive, piercing tones, He does so in the interest of His Gospel, to reduce the haughty hearts and to prepare them so that His comforting, life-giving Gospel may enter. His word is the word of truth. He never spoke anything else, and even laid down His life in order to establish the Truth. Beliar, on the other hand, is a liar from the beginning. There is no truth in him. The lie is his invention, and when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own.

What harmonious speech is there possible between the two? Can the truth be adjusted to the lie without losing its very nature? If only the slightest ambiguity be introduced into the truth, the latter is thereby corrupted; its very nature is lost.

A yoke-fellowship between truth and error, between Gospel and legalism, would be thoroughly mismatched. No joint work is possible, not even joint speaking. There can be no harmony, only shrill dissonance.

Paul started out by denouncing an attempted yoke-fellowship of the Corinthians with confirmed representatives of any form of unbelief as a thoroughly mismatched association, and he supported his verdict so far by three very pointed questions. Now he takes the very concepts of faith and unbelief up into his next question: ἢ τίς μερίς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου ἢ, or what share does a believer hold together with an unbeliever? As citizens of this earth a believer and an unbeliever may hold many temporal blessings in common, may pursue many interests jointly, but when it comes to the blessings which are specifically apprehended by faith the situation changes: what faith possesses unbelief rejects, in whole or in part. What then about a yoke-fellowship under such conditions? If it is attempted, there will result a pulling in opposite directions, because the believer does not hold any share together with an unbeliever.

Paul concludes with the question: Τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων, what (approving) agreement has God's shrine with idols? Think of a shrine in which God dwells; think of the service that His people render to Him; think of the rules according to which He demands to be served, and which are in force in His temple. Imagine that people would try to serve the true God in the fashion as they served their idols. The Athenians tried it and erected an altar to the unknown God. Although Paul gave them credit that they were very religious, yet he denounced their attempted service as one of gross ignorance (Acts 17:23). When Israel in Old Testament times committed similar errors, the Lord rebuked them: "They (their celebrations) are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them" (Is. 1:14). —God's temple has no approving agreement with idols, it stands in irreconcilable condemning antithesis to them.

We remember that Paul uses these sharp questions not against such people as stood in outright opposition to the Gospel, but against such who posed as especially devoted ministers of Christ.

The last question concerning the shrine of God and of idols serves Paul as a transition leading over to a positive statement of a Christian's position before God, Paul borrowing his language from some Old Testament prophets.

C. Verses 16b–18

Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς ἐσμὲν ζῶντος, for we are (the) living God's temple. Paul places a double emphasis on the pronoun *we*, first by adding the personal pronoun to the pronominal idea expressed in the verb ending, and then by placing this pronoun into the prominent position at the head of the statement: *We*, the believers in the Gospel, in marked contrast to all others, we, the believers as a separate class. There is nothing boastful about

this emphasis, as the enemies are wont to insinuate. By pride and boastfulness we would automatically drop out of the class. There is no merit or worthiness in us. We may not even claim that little credit as though we had suppressed our resistance to the Holy Spirit and kept it on the level of natural resistance, not permitting it to boil over into willful resistance. We did not go, as it were, into a neutral position by a proper use of the prevenient grace of God, thereby giving God a chance to see what He could do with us. The emphasis on the *we* is one of humility and gratitude. We are never to forget what God has made out of us in spite of ourselves, so that we carefully guard against defiling His handiwork.

Since God made us what we are through the Gospel, and since we are blessed as His new creation, can we in any form cooperate with unbelievers of any shade? Can we admit legalism in any degree? Can we toy with darkness, as though it would not destroy our light? Can we expect a symphony if we, even in the distance, admit a note from Beliar in the Gospel music of Christ? Belief and unbelief have no joint possession, and there is no common ground for God's temple and idols. We as believers are isolated. God has isolated us. We are not of the world because Jesus chose us out of the world.

Humbly and gratefully recognizing the miracle that Jesus performed on us, shall we not most carefully avoid every form of contamination? The very emphasis that Paul lays on the word *we* tends to make us humble and grateful.

What did God make of us? Paul answers with the word *ναός*, a shrine, a sanctuary. The tabernacle that Moses erected in the wilderness contained a part called the Holy of Holies, and Solomon's temple retained this arrangement. This part is the real *ναός*. In it Jehovah was enshrined (symbolically). It contained the Ark of the Covenant, covered by the mercy seat, on which stood the cherubim. There God resided for Israel. "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the cherubim" (Ex. 25:22). Now Paul says that we believers are the *ναός* of God, and adds, of the *living God*, who in contrast to the dumb idols, in contrast to all creatures, in contrast to heaven and earth, has life in Himself and is the only source of life, of all life.

With this statement Paul motivates the seriousness of the previous questions, and now substantiates it by referring to various passages of the Old Testament. He introduces them with the remark: *Καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεός*, exactly as God said. Paul quotes from different books of the Old Testament, but he does not mention the human authors as his witnesses: he ascribes their words to God. He it was who made those pronouncements, using the human authors to record them.

As we noted before, it is not one passage from the Old Testament that Paul quotes, but he weaves a number of them into his statement, adapting their form to the structure of his sentence. The first part is taken from Lev. 26:11, 12, which reads: "I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." This is part of an exhortation from God, in which He reminds His people that it was He who set them free from their bondage in Egypt, and on that basis promises them blessings and warns them of a curse if they violate His covenant. In using this promise Paul does not specifically mention the tabernacle, nor does he speak of God's pleasure in His people ("not abhor" is a litotes). Before Paul, already the great prophet Ezekiel had made use of the same thought in a similar connection: "My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (ch. 37:27, 28).

With a *διό*, accordingly, Paul connects his next quotation to the first one. If God dwells and walks in them, being their God, and they are His people, this fact must leave a definite mark on their conduct. Their conduct must reflect their intimate union and communion with their God. If it does not, if they are in the least careless in their mode of living, they will defile the gracious and glorious creation of God. The great promise of God will be lost and will be turned into its opposite.

Borrowing his expressions from Isaiah and Jeremiah Paul tells his readers some things that they must avoid. After prophesying the salvation of Zion in words like these: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our

God”—then the prophet continues: “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing. Go ye out of the midst of her, be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord” (ch. 52:9, 10–11). Paul abbreviates this exhortation into the form: Accordingly the Lord says, “Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” Again Paul stresses the absolute separation. He says, ἀφορίσθητε. This word may be easily checked. It occurs only ten times in the New Testament in nine different passages, among them Mt. 25:32, speaking about a separation as absolute as that between heaven and hell. The Judge will divide the people who are gathered before His tribunal and will separate (ἀφορίσει) them from one another as a shepherd separates (ἀφορίζει) the sheep from the goats. In connection with the parable of the net and the fishes Jesus said that at the end of the world the angels shall come forth and sever (ἀφοριουσιν) the wicked from among the just (Mt. 13:49). With this same word Paul now admonishes the Corinthians to separate themselves from the various unclean things that he had mentioned in v. 14–16a, no matter where such unclean thing may be found, or to what slight degree it may have contaminated the whole body.

In a similar way Jeremiah had warned the Israelites who were living as captives in Babylonia: “My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord” (ch. 51:45).

Paul’s chief thought in his motivation for the demand of separation is the truth of God’s overwhelming goodness. He placed it at the head of his quotations from the Old Testament, before he introduced a quotation that speaks about separation; and now he concludes the list with a reference to several Old Testament passages that proclaim God’s love.

The first is taken from Ez. 20:34, which reads in our King James version: “And I will bring you out from the people, *and will gather you* out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm and with fury poured out.” He selects only the second announcement in the words as the Septuagint had rendered it: Καγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς.

The second Paul adapts from the message of Nathan to David concerning his plan to build a temple. God there speaks about the Son of David, the Messiah. Paul applies the words to the Christians, changing the third person *his* to the second person plural ὑμῶν, and adding θυγατέρας (from Is. 43) to υἱούς. II Sam. 7:14 reads: “And I will be his father and he shall be my son.”—Not only is the Messiah our Substitute, representing us, so that we are made the righteousness of God in Him, and His blessings become ours, but there are numerous passages in the Old Testament which describe the relation between God and the redeemed believers as that between father and children. We list a few. Jer. 31:9: “For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.” Is. 43:6: “I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back; bring *my sons* from far and *my daughters* from the ends of the earth.” Hos. 1:10: “It shall come to pass that in the place Messiah, our Substitute, representing us, so that we are where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God.”

As Paul began these promises with a statement from Nathan’s message to David, so he concludes with an emphatic declaration from the same message (v. 8): “Thus saith the Lord of hosts,” which he quotes in the translation of the Septuagint: λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ.

D. Chapter 7:1

This verse is connected to the foregoing with οὖν, now then. It urges the Corinthians, whom Paul addresses with a winsome ἀγαπητοί, to ponder the rich promises and to join Paul and his co-laborers and all Christians in applying them in their daily life of sanctification.

Ταύτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί, having then these promises, friends. The stress is on *these* and *promises*.

Καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, let us concentrate on cleansing ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit. The verb is in the aorist, hence the stress is on the action as such. The stress is heightened by the emphatic position that the verb here holds at the head of the sentence. By saying σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος Paul means more than just “outside and inside.” Πνεῦμα refers to the spiritual life

of the Christians. Also this life may become spotted and stained. A defilement, which apparently affects only the flesh, cannot thus be localized; it will affect the spirit also and defile it. Hence, let us cleanse ourselves from every (παντος) defilement. Only in this way will progress in sanctification be possible.

Paul concludes: ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ, bringing sanctification to its goal in the fear of God. Ἐπιτελεῖν contains the root τέλος, end or goal. Our sanctification is never completed this side of the grave. It is a constant process, a strenuous struggle with many a setback. But keeping those wonderful promises of God in mind we shall not despair of our own sanctification, nor pounce on an erring, but struggling, brother. We shall continue our endeavors ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ, in *Gottesfurcht*.

II. Chapter 7:2–16

In ch. 6:11f. Paul had assured the Corinthians that they were not cramped in his heart, rather that he granted them much room. They hold a prominent place. He thinks highly of them, has a warm love for them, and a deep concern for their well-being. —He then asked them for a return favor, that they widen their hearts for him.

In ch. 7:2 he continues the theme: χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς, receive us.

Before we take up a study of the special angle of approach from which Paul here treats the relation between himself and the Corinthian congregation, we must take a look at the function which the previous section, ch. 6:14–7:1, has in the presentation of his argument. If this section were omitted altogether, and our present verse, ch. 7:2, were joined directly to ch. 6:13, there would be no apparent break in the continuity of the argument. One might feel, perhaps, that χωρήσατε of our verse is somewhat weak after the strong term πλατυνθητε in ch. 6:13, but otherwise the progression would seem quite natural.—This has induced some exegetes to consider ch. 6:14–7:1 as a later insertion.

They try to strengthen their theory by pointing to an apparent incongruity. They say that since Paul in the larger section is pleading for understanding and harmony, it is difficult to see how he can in a very unconciliatory, condemning way speak about certain disagreements. Therefore they feel the section must be dropped as an interpolation.

In order to grasp more clearly the propriety of Paul's warning at this place most sternly against certain forms of "harmony," we bear in mind that he is not pleading for peace and unity as such, as do the unionists of all ages; nor is he pleading for harmony as a personal favor to himself and his associates. We remember that he emphatically told his readers that he is not preaching himself to them, but is only and always preaching Christ to them as the Savior. Thus in asking for a roomy place in their hearts Paul has himself and his assistants in mind only in so far as their Gospel message is concerned. He is pleading for Christ.

As far as Christ is concerned it is always either all, or nothing. Christ wants the whole heart, He will not share it with Beliar, nor with any idol. Christ, who came to destroy the works of the devil, will not, and cannot, admit any part of the devil's works to occupy the same heart with Himself. To admit Christ into one's heart means a death struggle against the devil, and all his works and all his ways. Hence the section about the mismatched yoke fellowship of believers with unbelievers is not misplaced. Nor is the case merely such that it may be tolerated where we find it—it is essential. The truth about the unity would not have been set forth with full force and clarity without this antithesis against false unionism, which includes every defilement of flesh and spirit.

A. Chapter 7:2–7

Paul resumes the subject which he discussed in the previous section with the plea: χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς, receive us. We bear in mind that this is not a request for a personal favor; it is a plea for receiving his message; in fact, a plea for receiving Christ.

The verb χωρεῖν occurs in the New Testament as an intransitive in several shades of meaning (cf. Mt. 15:17; Mark 2:2; John 8:37; II Pet. 3:9). In our passages it has a direct personal object. We briefly list the other

passages in which a direct object is found. Mt. 19:11: οὐ πάντες χόρουσιν τὸν λόγον τοῦτον, ἀλλ' οἷς δέδοται. Christ is here speaking of a Christian's self-control with regard to the sex impulse. It is a special gift of sanctification. He concludes: ὁ δυνάμενος χωρεῖν χωρεῖτω. Here χωρεῖν is clearly used in a figurative sense (metaphor). —A second passage uses the verb in the literal sense, John 2:6, where, speaking about the water jugs, John says they were χωροῦσαι ἀνὰ μετρητὰς δύο ἢ τρεῖς, they *held* about so much. —In a sense hanging somewhere between the strictly literal and the metaphorical, John uses the verb in ch. 21:25 of his Gospel. If all things that Jesus did were to be written, then not even the world would be able itself χωρήσειν τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία (contain and absorb).

This is the verb that Paul uses in his plea to the Corinthians: χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς. He uses the aorist, thus laying stress on the action as such. They simply must receive his Gospel into their spiritual system. In this they must not let anybody or anything stand in their way. What does *receive* mean? The thought is about the same as the one expressed by Jesus in another figure with the word “to eat.” He told the Jews, You must eat Me, eat My flesh and drink My blood, else you will have no life in you. My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. In the same sense Paul asks the Corinthians to absorb his Gospel message. Let us enter your heart, as food enters your physical system. (Matt. 15:17 the verb is used of this physiological process.)

Naturally, Paul and his Gospel message cannot be separated. Paul not only proclaimed the Gospel by word of mouth, he lived the Gospel before the eyes of the Corinthians. Hence, instead of merely saying, Receive the Gospel, Paul can say, Receive *us*. And in pointing out the benefits that the Gospel brought the Corinthians, Paul can say that he and his associates brought them these blessings. He reminds the Corinthians of these blessings in the following.

Three points Paul enumerates: οὐδένα ἠδικήσαμεν, οὐδένα ἐφθείραμεν, οὐδένα ἐπλεονεκτήσαμεν, we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we overreached no one, —these are understatement, the double negative in each case making a very strong positive statement, to which the Corinthians will agree on the basis of their experience.

We have wronged no one; have done no one any injustice. The Corinthians had the incest case in their congregation. Paul used some very strong language in the matter, both regarding the one who had committed the sin and regarding the congregation, which failed to take steps in order to rescue the erring brother. He roused the congregation to action, to deliver the sinner to Satan. Did he thereby commit an injustice to anyone, or lead the congregation to commit an injustice? The sinner was induced to repent, and in the members of the church faith and love were deepened and strengthened.

It need not be assumed that anyone in Corinth felt as though Paul had wronged them, felt so whether he raised the charge openly or only in his heart considered Paul's action as an injustice. Paul is not defending himself against any false accusation. He is supporting his plea to the Corinthians for receiving him by reminding them of the treatment which they had received from him, which always had been anything but an injustice.

We have corrupted no one. Against Socrates the Athenians raised the charge that he had corrupted the morals of their youth—and he had to drink the hemlock. Paul's work in Corinth had had no corrupting or damaging influence on any one. Far from it. The Corinthians, even many outside the congregation, well realized what an uplifting in heart and spirit, and in conduct the believers had all experienced from Paul's preaching.

We have overreached no one, have not taken an undue advantage of any one. Paul pointed out to the Corinthians what honor and what financial support they owed to them who ministered the Gospel in their midst. It is the Lord's arrangement that a laborer is to be considered worthy of his hire, and that they who serve the altar also live off the altar. But Paul personally had never availed himself of this rule of God. He had sought neither honor nor financial gain. He had devoted himself to serving them for Christ's sake without remuneration.

On the basis of such experience should they not be willing to receive Paul and his associates, receive them with open arms, with an open roomy heart?

Paul's effort would be frustrated if anyone in Corinth understood the motivation of his plea as a veiled accusation, that the Corinthians had falsely raised such charges against him, or even had merely suspected him

of such dealings. He wards off such misunderstanding of his words by assuring the Corinthians: πρὸς κατάκρισιν οὐ λέγω, I am not speaking (this) for the purpose of condemnation. If Paul finds anything to criticize he will do so frankly and openly, without recourse to underhanded insinuations. Both his plea and its motivation are completely above board; they are to be taken in their natural sense, without reading anything between the lines. He is not condemning the Corinthians, which by way of a litotes means that he is trying to help them, encouraging them.

The real meaning of this litotes Paul points out by referring to something which he already said and which still stands: προέφηκα γάρ. *Pro* shows that this is something which Paul has said already at an earlier time; the perfect tense implies that what he said then is still exactly what he means now. In order not to misunderstand his plea as a covert accusation they merely have to remember his former statements.

He now summarizes: ὅτι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε, that you are in our hearts. Yes, we have you in our hearts, and there you occupy a prominent place; you are not crowded into some corner, as it were. —Think of what he had said in ch. 1:6: “Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation...or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” Think of his worry in Troas, which prevented him from taking advantage of some splendid mission opportunities (ch. 2:12ff.). Think of ch. 4:12 and 15: “So then death worketh in us, but life in you... For all things are for your sakes.” And of the last concise statement: “Our heart is enlarged, ye are not straitened in us” (ch. 6:11, 12). Paul’s heart is filled with love for the Corinthians, with sympathy for their difficulties, with admiration for the Spirit’s work in their midst.

You are in our hearts; and this union is a most intimate one: εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν, in a joint death and joint living. Here we have to take note of two things, one pertaining to the forms, the other to the position. Συζῆν is the present infinitive, which connotes duration; the joint living is a continued process, over against the aorist συναποθανεῖν, which merely denotes death as something which takes place, or has taken place, without any reference to duration or to result. Thus death is a momentary, a transitory act, while living is a permanent process. But in both, the momentary act and the continuing process, Paul says, we are inseparably joined together. —The second point that we note is that death precedes life. Our joint death has taken place already; our joint life is still going on. We have died with Christ. When the one Christ died for us all, then we all died. By believing in Christ’s substitutionary death our old self has passed away; we have become new creatures, who are now leading a new life in Christ.

Can any union be closer and more intimate than this union that our common death and our common life in Christ has produced in us? This union is not a beautiful idea only; it is a very real and powerful actuality.

Above, in ch. 6:14, Paul had warned against a mismatched yoke fellowship with unbelievers. A yoke fellowship brings two animals very closely together, both as far as their bodily presence is concerned and their efforts in a joint endeavor. Yet in spite of all that, the union remains an external one; here, however, we have a union that begins with a death that is not merely simultaneous, but essentially identical, and which continues in an identical life. We are all one body, Paul says in another place.

Since Paul and the Corinthians thus are one mind, one spirit, Paul does not have to use veiled language, in fact, to do so would violate the community of death and life that unites him with the Corinthians. He continues: πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς, I use much (complete) frankness toward you. To use veiled language would indicate a lack of confidence on the part of Paul, he, in spite of all protestation to the contrary, would show that he does not feel safe in telling them openly what he thinks, that he fears that both praise and warning or rebuke might be misunderstood; and on the other hand, the use of veiled language would arouse suspicion in the hearts of the Corinthians. Where there is a common spiritual life in a common faith and mutual love, there complete frankness is in place; and only there is it possible. Thus Paul asserts and strengthens the community of spiritual life, which he shares with the Corinthians and they with him, by calling attention to the complete frankness that he uses in speaking to them.

When we preface something that we are about to say with the remark that we will be frank, we usually mean to prepare our hearer for something unpleasant, and that our words will have a rather sharp and cutting edge. We sometimes add the adverbial modifier *brutally* frank. Not so Paul. His heart is filled with joy over the fruits of the Gospel in Corinth. Just at present, as these lines were being written, fruits of a signal Gospel victory

were maturing in Corinth, as the whole previous part of the letter up to this point indicates. Paul still has some sharp words to say about the trouble makers, but the congregation has come to its senses, its spirit has been stirred up to a righting of conditions, as Paul will carry out in the following brief section of the first main part of this letter. His heart is filled with joy, which he cannot hold back from breaking forth in strains of triumph.

He says, πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, I have rich occasion to boast about you, and I am doing much boasting. This boasting naturally concerns the fruits that the Gospel has produced in Corinth, and it is elicited from Paul by the comfort and joy which the recent report by Titus had brought to his heart. — Καύχησις is a verbal noun denoting action. It does not stress the cause for boasting or the content of the boasting (καύχημα) but the act of boasting as such. Paul sees so many wonderful fruits which the Gospel has produced in Corinth far above his fondest hopes, so that he simply cannot help himself, he must speak about them. He speaks about them before God in his prayers of thanksgiving and before the brethren for their joy and encouragement.

What motivates him in this ceaseless boasting Paul states in the following: πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει, I am filled (to overflowing) with the comfort. Πεπλήρωμαι is a perfect tense, thus stressing the present condition of his heart. There are no empty spaces left in his heart, as it were, waiting to receive some comfort, no, the comfort which Titus brought to him was so rich and plentiful that his heart is saturated. — Since Paul before the arrival of Titus had been troubled by great anxiety and fear, παρακλησις is here best translated with comfort and encouragement.

Paul adds a sentence, in which he uses the word χαρά, joy: ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν, I abound beyond measure in the (my) joy above all our tribulation. The simple verb περισσεύω already expresses the idea of exceeding a certain measure. The compound with ὑπερ re-enforces the idea. What a joy it must have been that filled Paul's heart, a joy so overwhelming that only a verb like the compound ὑπερπερισσεύω seemed capable of conveying an approximately adequate idea.

Paul speaks about θλίψις. Remember what he said about it in ch. 1, a θλίψις so severe that “we were pressed out of measure, above strength, in so much that we despaired even of life; but we had the sentence of death in ourselves” (vs. 8, 9). There must have been various things that troubled Paul and his co-laborers, but they were all linked together and formed an unbroken chain, so that Paul here sums everything up in the comprehensive expression πᾶσα ἡ θλίψις. His life, outwardly considered, was one line of never ceasing tribulations. Remember the section on the “earthen vessels.” But the joy caused by the good news from Corinth by far outweighs the tribulation.

With complete frankness Paul in the following verse states the most recent tribulation that he experienced Καὶ γὰρ ἐλθόντων ἡμῶν εἰς Μακεδονίαν οὐδεμίαν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν, For when we came to Macedonia our flesh found (had) no rest whatever. Καὶ γὰρ is explanatory. Paul left Troas when he failed to find Titus there. His concern for Corinth drove him out. But coming to Macedonia brought no immediate relief. Apparently Titus had not yet arrived with news from Corinth, and conditions in Macedonia do not seem to have been quite satisfactory. Paul does not mention any details in his brief reference to his arrival, but states summarily that his flesh had no rest.

Note. About the form ἔσχηκεν I am not quite clear. It is a perfect tense, which ordinarily denotes that the action was completed in the past, but that the result of the completed action continues in the present. But it does not seem to be the implied sense in this passage that Paul is still trembling from the shock that he experienced on his arrival in Macedonia. Some manuscripts read the aorist, ἔσχεν, which would fit better. — However, there are other cases where the perfect of ἔχω seems to be used as a historical tense, e.g., ch. 1:9; 2:13.—Blass-Debrunner #343, 1.2, calls the ἔσχηκα in ch. 2:13 historical, but thinks that the forms in ch. 7:5 and 1:9 may be explained as true perfects.—Also commentators differ.

Paul had used “our flesh” as the grammatical subject, which, for all practical purposes, means the same as the pronoun “we.” He continues the sentence as though he had written “we”: ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ παντὶ θλιβόμενοι, ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι, but being troubled in every respect, battles without, fears within. What these “battles” were is impossible to say. In writing about the collection for the needy brethren in Jerusalem (ch. 8f.) Paul merely mentions the bottomless poverty of the Macedonians. Luke, reporting on Paul's visit to Macedonia (Acts 20) sums up his activity in the brief statement that he gave them “much exhortation” (παρακαλεσας

αὐτοὺς λογῶ πολλῶ), but we are left in the dark as to the specific occasion, and the nature of the situation. In the verse now under discussion Paul uses the strong word μάχαι.

Paul had left Troas greatly perturbed. He found no immediate relief upon his arrival in Macedonia. His fears continued unabated; if anything, they became more intense, ἔσωθεν φόβοι. There was hardly room for anything else in his heart but fears, fears of the worst kind about conditions in Corinth. We bear in mind that, when Paul went to Macedonia from Troas, his first stop would naturally be in Philippi. That was the first city of Europe in which the Church had been planted. Paul had suffered severe beatings from the Roman lictors and then painful imprisonment in the innermost dungeon. In this city he had also achieved most wonderful victories by his Gospel work. Typical and prophetic was the casting out of the spirit of divination from a maiden. There was the assurance of God's presence in the peculiar earthquake. There was above all the warm reception of the Gospel by Lydia and by the jailor and his house. The relation between Paul and the Philippian congregation had been most intimate from the beginning. This little Church was very close to his heart. One might be inclined to think that in such congenial surroundings and company Paul would soon forget his worries about Corinth. No, on his arrival in Macedonia: ἔσωθεν φόβοι. —From these remarks the Corinthians must realize Paul's deep concern for their welfare. What a strong support for his plea: "Receive us."

Paul's fears were soon to be dissipated. God Himself did it: ἀλλ' ὁ παρακαλῶν τοὺς ταπεινοὺς παρεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός, but God, the comforter of the lowly, comforted us. Comforting the lowly is a characteristic of God. —Oh, that we would always remember! —In the Greek the present participle is used to express the same idea, as does the English noun formation in *-er*: ὁ παρακαλῶν is the Comforter. —By the peculiar arrangement of his words Paul stresses both ideas, on the one hand, that God is the only true comforter, there is no comfort outside of Him; and on the other, that it is characteristic of Him to dispense comfort. He will not leave His children comfortless, but will pour real effective comfort into their hearts. He is ὁ παρακαλῶν ὁ θεός.

To show how intense was his anxiety Paul speaks about two stages in God's comforting act. First he mentions ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου, in the arrival of Titus. The very fact that Titus finally arrived was in itself a source of comfort for Paul. It meant a relief from the high unbearable tension of uncertainty. If things went wrong in Corinth, Paul now at least would get the facts. To know the worst would be a relief compared with the torture of hanging in doubt.

But the arrival of Titus was only the first step and, by comparison with the following, a rather minor and insignificant one. Οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει ἢ παρακλήθη ἐφ' ὑμῖν, but not only in his arrival, rather also in the comfort with which he had been comforted concerning you. Ἐπί with the dative, in the transferred sense, very commonly denotes the basis on which something rests. In our sentence the pronoun ὑμῖν is not limited to a mere designation of the persons as such, as distinguished from other persons (you, not they or someone else), but includes particularly their attitude, their response to the evangelical admonition of Paul, supplemented by the work of Titus. The reaction of the Corinthians had been a very favorable one. They with their expressions of repentance and faith, which came from their lips and were confirmed by their conduct, were a rich source of comfort for Titus, and at the same time a secure basis on which his comfort rested. He was comforted concerning them, because of them.

Titus reported about the comfort that he had experienced in Corinth. He evidently could not say all he had on his mind and in his heart in one session. His heart was filled to the overflowing. He reported about his happy experience, but there was always more to add. Paul uses the present participle, which always denotes repeated or continued action (compare above on God as ὁ παρακαλῶν). Titus was ἀναγγέλλων, reporting. It was not a cold formal report, purely factual; it was the heart of Titus that was doing the reporting; it was a report saturated with joy and bubbling over with joy. —The nominative of the participle need not trouble us. It is a *constructio ad sensum*, much more vivid, and much more correct than if the participle had been stiffly joined to the genitive αὐτοῦ.

Three points stand out in Titus' report: first τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν, your longing. —After what the false apostles had done in Corinth, the disparaging rumors they had spread about Paul, after the sharp letter which he had written to the Corinthians, Paul could fear that the Corinthians would, at least, be rather cool towards him

and his announced visit. No, Titus reports, the opposite is true. They are anxiously awaiting his coming. They were ashamed of their gullibility over against his detractors, and they realize that with his warm interest for their spiritual welfare he will give them what they need most. They are now eagerly looking forward to the opportunity of seeing him again. —This was, indeed, comforting, encouraging news for Paul. He was not catering to anyone for personal popularity. The fact that some of the Corinthians called themselves after his name, he had branded as evidence of fleshly-mindedness (I Cor. 3:3, 4). Their longing for him now was a spiritual longing, a desire for the Gospel which he represented, and which they had belittled in maligning his person.

Titus secondly reported ὑμῶν ὀδυρμόν, your lamentation. Ὀδυρμός is used by Matthew in conjunction with κλαυθμός in quoting Jeremiah's prophecy concerning Rachel's wailing about her lost children (Matt. 2:18), while, according to the Nestle text, he omits the third synonym which Jeremiah used in this connection, θρηνοῦς. —Deep grief was felt and was given free expression by the Corinthians about their insulting attitude over against Paul—and, inseparably connected therewith, the loss of the Gospel, a loss which was happily, though narrowly, averted for them by the untiring efforts of the same Paul's self-sacrificing love. —Paul will have more to say about their grief in the next section.

The third point that stands out conspicuously in Titus' report is: τὸν ὑμῶν ζῆλον ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, your zeal on my behalf. Ζῆλος in itself is neutral. It may denote an eagerness either in the direction of good or of evil. To illustrate the latter use we look at Phil. 3:6, where Paul says of himself: “concerning zeal, persecuting the church.” Picture Paul to yourself, dragging Christians before the Jewish Sanhedrin, traveling to distant cities to accomplish his purpose of forcing them to renounce their faith and to blaspheme. There we feel the impetuous zeal of Paul's implacable hatred toward the Gospel. —To visualize zeal in the good direction we picture to ourselves Christ as He cleansed the temple, which act vividly reminded the disciples of a word in the Psalms: “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (John 2:17). —With their emotions stirred to their deepest depths the Corinthians concentrated on giving Paul a hearty welcome at his arrival. The Galatians once showed a zeal for Paul when he brought them the Gospel. They were ready to pluck out their eyes for him (Gal. 4:15). The Corinthians now matched the Galatians' zeal.

These are reports that Paul heard time and again from Titus. Did he grow tired of listening to them? Or does their effect gradually begin to wear off? Perhaps at first he listened eagerly, but gradually he merely listened—politely, and eventually he became bored? Not at all. Every day he hears the reports with the same rapt attention and joy. The same? No, with increased joy. Ὡστε με μᾶλλον χαρῆναι, so that I rejoice the more.

Ὡστε with an infinitive in the time of the Koine expressed not only a conceived, a possible result, but a result actually produced. Thus Paul here says more than that Titus' report was of such a nature that joy might follow; he says that it actually produced joy in Paul's heart. And he adds μᾶλλον, more. The comparative degree points to an increase in the joy. The oftener Paul heard the report, the greater grew his joy. He heard the report with increasing joy.

Will the Corinthians hesitate to receive Paul and his Gospel into their hearts? Will they grant him only a cramped position? Will they expect him to share their hearts with unbelievers? Will they not, just as Paul's heart is wide open for them, in turn open their hearts wide to him?

It seems that Paul is ready to close this part of his letter. But no, he has not yet reached the climax. He has one more point to discuss, before he will wind up.

B. Chapter 7:8–13a

The content of this section might be summed up under the head:

A painful grief leading to refreshing joy

Here many questions are raised by commentators as to the nature of the case and the time when it happened. To any one who is at all familiar with First Corinthians the incest case treated in ch. 5 will readily come to mind. But this does not satisfy a certain type of commentators. A number of them assume a visit of

Paul in Corinth some time after he had written his first letter to the Corinthians. They assume that in a meeting during this visit some member of the Corinthian congregation had become exceptionally insulting and abusive toward Paul. This, they say, is the case to which Paul here refers, and to which he had already referred in ch. 2.

This assumption is a pure guess. Nothing of such an incident is recorded in the Book of Acts, nor is there anything mentioned in Paul's letters. Moreover, the sponsors of this assumption do not agree among themselves, so that frequently the hypothesis of one cancels out that of another.

The theory does not affect the exegesis of our passage very seriously, since neither the person nor his offence are mentioned directly, but it does derange the time schedule. If this special visit actually took place, then the six months from Easter (the time of First Corinthians) till the fall of the year (Paul's arrival in Corinth) will hardly be sufficient for all the events that must be crowded into them. Hence the half-year is stretched into a year and a half, a procedure that raises more questions than it is proposed to solve. —Instead of accepting unproven guesses it will be safer to abide by the assured facts as given in Acts and in Paul's letters.

In v. 7 Paul closed with a note of increasing joy at the report of Titus. Is that joy now to be marred by a reference to a very unpleasant event that had caused great grief all around? No, even this unpleasant event in its fruitful development and with its happy ending will serve to increase and secure the joy of the apostle.

Ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι, εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην: For if I also grieved you in my letter, I do not feel bad about it, although I even was feeling bad.

Paul had rebuked the Corinthians very severely for the way they had acted in the incest case. Instead of grieving over a sin that was frowned upon even by Gentiles, they had been puffed up and had gloried boastfully. Instead of trying to help the sinner to overcome his fault by true repentance, they miserably failed in their Christian duty of love. Paul had told them bluntly: "Your glorying (your boast, *καυχῆμα*) is not good"—with a strong emphasis on the "not good."

This rebuke hurt the Corinthians' feelings. Paul says, ἐλύπησα. Had he been too severe? Had he, as he expresses it in ch. 5:13, overstepped the bounds of propriety (ἐξέστημεν)? For a time he felt rather uneasy about the tone of his letter, μεταμελόμην. This imperfect is a real imperfect denoting duration. Although it occurs in the prothesis of a conditional clause, it is not the imperfect of unreality. Nowhere does Paul state what would happen if he were still regretting his letter. What he wants to convey to the Corinthians is the fact that his heart is at the moment filled with joy, although he must admit that for a time he was troubled about his letter. Οὐ μεταμέλομαι he says; and then repeats the statement with νῦν χαίρω.

How does this statement agree with the doctrine of inspiration? If Paul wrote what he wrote, and in the manner in which he wrote it, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, why should he feel worried about it? If inspiration consisted in this that Paul mechanically took down a dictation from the Holy Ghost, then Paul's worries would have been uncalled for. But Paul's case illustrates the fact that also under inspiration the apostles never ceased to be what Jesus called them, namely *witnesses* of Him, who were ever to testify the things which they had experienced themselves. They were, as Peter expressed it, φερομενοι ὑπο πνεύματος ἁγίου. The Holy Spirit took them as they were, with all their limitations, with their peculiar vocabulary and grammar, with their knowledge and with their feelings, and thus carried them along to deliver His message. Although the Holy Spirit was the true author of Paul's letters, Paul himself felt fully responsible—and rightly so—for every word he wrote and for the manner in which he wrote it. —Inspiration is a supernatural process that escapes our intelligence and analysis.

Paul continues: βλέπω (γὰρ) ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς, For I see that that epistle grieved you, even though only for a moment. —The γὰρ is not found in all manuscripts, but the thought evidently demands it, as is indicated in other manuscripts which changed the βλέπω into a participle, βλέπων. Paul states the reason why his letter had made him feel bad for a time. He is realizing that with that letter he grieved them. It had been only a momentary grief, yet in that moment the welfare of the Corinthian congregation, yes, the future success of Paul's mission work hung, as it were, in a balance. Had Paul's letter been too severe, perhaps just a little too severe, so as to tip the scales on the wrong side? Severity was called for in the case, if the Corinthians were to be brought to their senses, but the danger was that, instead of repenting, they might resent Paul's admonition and become hardened. The admonition was taken in the proper spirit and

produced the result at which Paul had aimed, produced it in such abundant measure that the nasty case, which had caused all the anxiety, was turned into a source of increased joy.

The proper punctuation causes some difficulty. Some publishers enclose the clause βλέπω γὰρ... ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς in parentheses. Yet it seems to belong more directly into Paul's line of thought. The colon that the Nestle text has seems to separate the conditional clause εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην too much from the main statement, which it appears to modify. Does the first statement come to an end with the ὑμᾶς, which would be the case if the conditional clause is joined to the preceding μεταμέλομαι? Then νῦν χαίρω would stand there without any connective; and an asyndeton sounds a little harsh. Yet on closer inspection it may appear to be the most satisfactory arrangement of the various statements. The thoughts presented in v. 8 are grouped about the οὐ μεταμέλομαι as their center. They form a complete unit, and a period should be placed after ὑμᾶς. Then Paul begins a new statement asyndetically. The νῦν χαίρω in a positive way takes up the thought expressed negatively in οὐ μεταμέλομαι. The Greek asyndeton has about the force of our English "I say." Now then, I say, I rejoice. —Then follows the explanation: Why does Paul not regret that he grieved the Corinthians? Why does he rejoice?

Οὐχ ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν, Not because of the fact that grief was inflicted on you, but because grief was inflicted on you towards repentance.

We must pay close attention to the tense of ἐλυπήθητε. It is the aorist, which always stresses the action as such, without any reference to duration or result. In the previous verse we had the statement that Paul's letter caused grief to the Corinthians. Here the active statement of the previous verse is turned into the passive, again with the action as such receiving the attention: grief was inflicted on you. The person who inflicted the grief is clear from the previous verse: it was Paul with his letter. Thus it is not the *grief in itself* about which Paul is writing, but the *inflicting* of the grief. —That inflicting of pain had to be done, but it was not done for its own sake, it was not an end in itself; it was done by Paul with an ulterior purpose in mind. That purpose was to lead the Corinthians to repentance, to open their eyes, to bring them to a recognition of the grievous sin into which they had been entrapped, and to extricate them from the snare of the devil.

Now Paul was happy that his method, which is God's method, had not miscarried, neither by a refusal of the Corinthians to be corrected, nor by any inept handling of the case on his part. Repentance had been achieved.

In reading the next remarks of Paul in explanation of his procedure this fact must be kept in mind that he started with a stress *on the act* of inflicting pain, not on the state or condition of pain, *on the motive* that prompted the act, not on the nature of the resultant pain. This will help us to get a clearer focus on the expressions that Paul uses, and on the lesson that he would inculcate.

Ἐλυπήθητε γὰρ κατὰ θεόν, ἵνα ἐν μηδενὶ ζημιωθῆτε ἐξ ἡμῶν, For you were grieved in God's fashion, so that you might suffer loss in no respect from us.

By mentioning the active subject of ζημιωθῆτε expressly, ἐξ ἡμῶν, Paul reminds his readers who the acting subject is also of ζημιωθῆτε. Paul and his associates inflicted pain on them, but in such a way that no harm or loss might result. Pain, yes, but no damage. When Paul inflicted pain on the Corinthians he did so in the spirit and manner of God. In the next verse he will explain what he means by this. Here he merely introduces the new idea with κατὰ θεόν, according to, along the lines of God. The chief feature of God's fashion of inflicting pain is the fact that any idea of harm or damage is completely absent. The double negative may be read as an emphatic affirmative: the sole purpose is to rescue them from damage and to safeguard their wellbeing.

What is ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεόν λύπη, specifically, what is the meaning of λύπη in this connection? Γὰρ shows that this statement is made by way of explanation. That presupposes that the idea stated in the foregoing, to which an explanation is now to be added, is taken over exactly in the sense in which it was used in the foregoing. Any alteration of the concept itself would spoil the explanation. It would be misleading. Now in the previous verse we have ἐλύπησα, I caused grief, ἐλύπησεν, my letter caused grief, and three times ἐλυπήθητε, you suffered the inflicting of grief. The action stood in the foreground in bold relief. This is the idea that Paul now takes up with the noun λύπη. From the previous verse he also takes over the prepositional modifier. He had

spoken about inflicting pain κατὰ θεόν, now he speaks about that κατὰ θεόν λύπη. Λύπη then does not mean a state or condition of the heart of the Corinthians, it refers to an act performed by Paul, its manner, its motivation.

About this manner of inflicting mental pain Paul now says μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται, it works to produce an unregrettable repentance toward salvation. Soreness and anguish is not the final aim toward which an inflicting of pain in divine fashion works, though it is a necessary step in attaining it. The aim is repentance, a change of heart, in the direction of salvation. True repentance over a sin, especially a sin such as burned the conscience of the Corinthians, cannot be achieved without grief over the sin. The pain itself has no positive value. When Paul was not sure whether his efforts had perhaps resulted in nothing but pain, he was troubled in his mind. But when the pain is followed by true repentance, then every cause for regret has been removed, ματάνοια is ἀμεταμέλητος.

There is another way of inflicting pain, which is ἡ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη, the grief of the world. While in the previous statement Paul had described the λύπη as being κατὰ θεόν, he now shortens the expression to a plain genitive, τοῦ κόσμου. The meaning remains the same, the λύπη of the world is the λύπη inflicted in the fashion of the world. The world inflicts pain for the sake of pain. Hence that sort of λύπη —θάνατον κατεργάζεται, it effects death. Note that Paul here uses a compound of ἐγάζεσθαι, formed by prefixing the perfective κατά.

The results of the λύπη κατὰ θεόν, which Paul so far had sketched in very general terms, he now pictures in detail, as they stood out in the action of the Corinthians. He calls attention to the importance of the development, which in the excitement might have been overlooked by the Corinthians. He introduces his remarks with an emphatic ἰδοὺ γάρ, for see and consider.

In enumerating the various phases of the process he connects the several terms with ἀλλὰ. This word here does not express a contrast, but denotes progress. In English we may express the idea with *yes*. The next mentioned result is always greater and more important than the preceding one. For look, αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ κατὰ θεόν λυπηθῆναι, this very fact of having been grieved in a godly fashion, πόσῃν κατειργάσατο ὑμῖν σπουδῆν, what great earnestness it has effected for you. You were at first very slack in the incest case, now you have dealt earnestly in the matter. Ἀλλὰ ἀπολογίαν, *yes*, defense. You have cleared yourselves in the matter. Ἀλλὰ ἀγανάκτησιν, *yes*, indignation, which now replaces your former unconcern and inattention. Ἀλλὰ φόβον, *yes*, fear, whether you had now done the proper thing properly. Ἀλλὰ ἐπιπόθησιν, *yes*, longing, a true spiritual longing for Paul, to help you if you should happen to be still deficient in some respect. Ἀλλὰ ζῆλον, *yes*, zeal, renewed zeal to hear and live the Gospel. —We notice that the first three steps, earnestness, defence, and indignation, belong together; and so do the second three, fear, longing, and zeal. These two groups of three members each Paul now brings to a head in a seventh step: ἀλλὰ ἐκδίκησιν, *yes*, rectifying. The things in which the Corinthians were remiss before, have now been set right; i.e., not merely amended or corrected, but actually righted in every way.

What Paul means to say by ἐκδίκησιν and the six terms that precede he now sums up in the following statement: ἐν παντὶ συνεστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀγνοῦς εἶναι τῷ πράγματι, in every respect you have established yourselves to be pure with regard to the case. Ἀγνοῦς is usually followed by a genitive, τοῦ πράγματος, pure or clean of the case. But that is not the thought that Paul here wishes to express. They were all involved in the incest case in one way or another. Now that case has been settled completely and properly. The situation is not so much this that they are clean of the case, but rather this that they have become clean with respect to it. Hence the dative τῷ πράγματι. —Their handling of the case, after Paul had inflicted some severe pain on them, was highly commendatory: συνεστήσατε ὑμᾶς, you have commended yourselves. Your action recommends you as true followers of Christ, since you have so satisfactorily cleared yourselves with respect to that disgraceful case.

From the foregoing Paul now draws a conclusion, introducing it with ἄρα. In classical Greek this illative particle is post-positive, as a rule. In the New Testament several instances are found where it is placed at the beginning of a sentence. Our passage is one such. The meaning is *so then, accordingly, consequently*. Ἄρα εἰ καὶ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, so then, although I wrote to you. This ἔγραψα is not the epistolary aorist, but refers to the letter which was mentioned in v. 8, and earlier in ch. 2:3. The reference is to the chapter dealing with the incest case and the failure of the congregation to handle it properly in the spirit of the Gospel.

Paul states the purpose of that sharp chapter, first negatively. The Corinthians might think that Paul's chief concern had been either with the guilty offender in the case, or the innocent sufferer, that the one be made to atone for his tort and the other receive some recompense. Paul says, No, that was not his chief concern. Naturally Paul had an interest in bringing the offender to repentance and in adjusting the claims of the one who had been wronged. But these are comparatively minor considerations, far greater stakes were involved: οὐχ ἕνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος οὐδὲ ἕνεκεν τοῦ ἀδικηθέντος, not (chiefly) because of the offender, nor because of the offended one. —What, then, was his main purpose in writing that stern letter, which caused such painful feelings? Ἄλλ' ἕνεκεν τοῦ φανερωθῆναι τὴν σπουδὴν, but that your eagerness be brought out into the open. Paul assumes that in reality the Corinthians are, and always were, very eager in the Gospel spirit, but that this is not as public as it should be. In what terms he is thinking of this matter will become evident immediately as we hear him explain to what eagerness he is referring, and to whom it should be made manifest. He says, your eagerness τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, your eagerness for us. Paul is, of course, not looking for a personal partisanship on the part of the Corinthians, in fact, he took them sharply to task when the first traces of that type of “eagerness” appeared in their midst. “Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (I Cor. 1:13). He is speaking of their eagerness to hear and live the Gospel, which Paul preached.

It is somewhat startling to read to whom that eagerness of theirs was to be shown. Paul says πρὸς ὑμᾶς, to yourselves. This is so startling a statement that some manuscripts transpose the ὑμῶν and ἡμῶν above. Instead of reading “your zeal for us” they read “our zeal for you.” Yet it is as the Nestle text has it: your zeal for us should become known to you yourselves. In their disturbances and squabbles the Corinthians themselves lost sight of the zeal which in the bottom of their heart was still aglow for the Gospel. It seemed overgrown and stifled by their various entanglements. Paul's sharp letter roused them to their senses so that they became aware of where their true interests lay. If Paul had not written as sternly as he did, they might have kept on in their fumbling, bungling ways until it was too late to make amends. Now they had been set straight, and that ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, before God.

Paul can conclude this section with the jubilant assertion, διὰ τοῦτο παρακεκλήμεθα, for that reason we stand comforted. With the report of Titus about the present attitude of the Corinthians Paul's anxiety was completely relieved, the tension of his heart eased. His fears had given place to a serene peace of heart. —Here recall what Paul said in ch. 1:3–7, about παρακλησις.

C. Chapter 7:13b–16

The climax has not yet been reached with the παρακεκλήμεθα. Another factor must be mentioned, which even heightens Paul's joy still more Ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ παρακλήσει ἡμῶν, in addition to our comfort, over and above this comfort.

Paul connects this paragraph to the foregoing with a simple *de*, which, however, is not adversative, nor merely progressive. It introduces a thought that is different from the foregoing in degree. Great was the experience of Paul's heart as presented in the foregoing, but now a still more inspiring aspect of the case must be mentioned, one which carries the afore mentioned παρακλήσις to still greater heights.

It is this, περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον ἐχάρημεν ἐπὶ τῇ χαρᾷ Τίτου, more exceedingly (still) we were cheered at the cheer of Titus. The report of Titus was comforting in itself. But to hear him make his report, to feel the warmth with which he spoke, greatly added to the comfort. Titus did not report in a calm matter-of-fact way. His heart was in his report. His report bubbled over with the joy that filled his heart and with which he was able to deliver it. Although the content of Titus' report was cheering in itself, the cheer with which he delivered his report added immensely to Paul's cheer, περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον. There is a double comparative in this phrase: περισσοτέρως in itself denotes an unusually great degree, which is here reinforced by another comparative μᾶλλον, exceeding great by far. —Paul is not exaggerating. His heart was filled with joy, and these apparently hyperbolic expressions just flow naturally into his pen.

He adds a remark about the attitude of Titus: ὅτι ἀναπέπαιται τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ πάντων ὑμῶν, for his spirit is completely at rest from (with respect to) you all. About himself Paul had said that, when he came to

Macedonia, his *σαρξ* had no rest; regarding Titus he now mentions his *πνεῦμα*. The conditions in Corinth had deeply affected the spiritual life of Titus. Is the Gospel really the power of God unto salvation? Did the Corinthians so soon harden themselves against the Gospel? Had God rejected the Corinthians and abandoned them to error because they did not receive the love of the truth? His own faith, his spiritual life had received a jolt. But now his spirit was completely at ease. This peace of mind came to him from the Corinthians, from what he had seen and heard and experienced in their midst. *Ἀπό* indicates the source of Titus' joy, while we prefer to say "with reference to."

Now Paul with a peculiarly tactful turn takes the minds of the Corinthians off their past failures, and thus strengthens them in their present return to sound Christian life. *Ὅτι εἶ τι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κεκαύχημαι, οὐ κατησχύνθην*, For if I have boasted in anything to him about you, I have not been put to shame. Paul had given Titus the assurance that the Corinthians at heart were sound in their faith, and in spite of their momentary disturbance would without great difficulty find their way back. Paul had said such things, and, naturally, could be held responsible for his remarks. That is the thought that he expresses by using the perfect tense, *κεκαύχημαι*. Now the report of Titus fully vindicated him, *οὐ κατησχύνθην*, I was not put to shame. This has the force of a litotes: I have been fully vindicated.

The form of a negative statement, which Paul had employed, gives him an opportunity to continue with an *ἀλλά*, and at the same time to expand the thought. *Ἄλλ' ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐλαλήσαμεν ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Τίτου ἀλήθεια ἐγενήθη*, But just as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus turned out to be true.

Two formal matters must be mentioned here: *γίνομαι* often does not refer to an inner change in the nature of a thing, but rather to its outward behavior or appearance, meaning: to conduct oneself. What Paul had said to Titus about the Corinthians did not change its nature from error to truth, but on the basis of the developments in Corinth it manifested itself as the truth. —*Ἐπὶ* is used with the genitive *Τίτου*. This makes a judge of Titus. The preposition in such cases means: before the court of.

Paul had preached the Gospel to the Corinthians. All that he ever said to them centered in Christ crucified. The false apostles, who had of late come to Corinth, made disparaging remarks about Paul's Gospel as though it were not trustworthy. Paul can now emphatically say that all of it, every word of it, was spoken in truth. And almost as by way of additional evidence he can refer to his boasting before Titus, which had turned out to be true.

Another thing Paul adds to indicate the complete joy of Titus. *Καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐστίν*, and his heart is (goes out) to you exceedingly. —Here is that *περισσοτέρως* again. For the general term *σπλάγχνα*, intestines, the English language prefers the more specific *heart*. The heart of Titus goes out, longs for, and rejoices in the Corinthians, *ἀναμνησκομένου τὴν πάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακοήν*, as he remembers the obedience of you all. —The obedience of the Corinthians to which Paul refers is their obedience to the Gospel, not submission to Titus (or Paul) ally. It means the faith of the Corinthians. *Ὑπακοή* is by itself a neutral term which receives its specific meaning in the individual case from the object to which the *ὑπακοή* is directed. If it is to a commandment, then *ὑπακοή* means doing what the commandment prescribes; if it is a promise, then it means accepting in faith what the promise offers. *Ὑπακοή τοῦ εὐαγγελίου* is faith in the Gospel message.

The faith of the Corinthians is very sincere. Titus remembered *ὡς μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐδέξασθε αὐτόν*, how with fear and trembling you received him. This was not a cringing before the person of Titus, it was the qualms of conscience because of their recent conduct over against the Gospel. It showed the sincerity of their repentance.

Now Paul is ready for the conclusion. *Χαίρω ὅτι ἐν παντὶ θαρρῶ ἐν ὑμῖν*, I rejoice that in every respect I have confidence in you. He does not say, that I *can* have confidence in you, he says, that *I have*. Confidence is the basic tie that binds hearts together. Where confidence lacks, there is alienation of hearts. Without confidence true love is impossible.

This confidence fills Paul's heart with joy.

We bear in mind that this is not a natural confidence in man, in his innate or established goodness and reliability. It is a spiritual confidence resting on the power of the Gospel and on God's promise concerning the

effectiveness of the Gospel. It is a confidence resting on the faith of people that the Holy Ghost effects, and is itself a gift of the Holy Ghost through the Gospel. Without this confidence all Gospel work would be tedious drudgery indeed, but with this confidence it becomes the source of exquisite joy.

Again: I rejoice that in every respect I have confidence in you.