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An Appeal for Reconciliation

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **August 24, 2014**

2 Corinthians 6:1-13; 7:2

Introduction: THIS chapter, closely connected in sense with the preceding, is designed as an address to the Corinthian Christians, exhorting them to **act worthily** of their **calling**, and of their situation under such a ministry as they had enjoyed. In the previous chapters, Paul had discoursed at length of the design and of the labours of the ministry. The main drift of all this was to show them the nature of **reconciliation** and the obligation to turn to God, and to live to him. This idea is pursued in this chapter; and in view of the labours and self-denials of the ministry, Paul urges on the Corinthian Christians the **duty** of coming out from the world, and of separating themselves entirely from all evil. (Source: Barnes' Notes on the New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bnn/)

2 Corinthians 6:1, We then, as **workers together** WITH him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in VAIN.

NOTE: The words WITH HIM are **italicized** in the English Revised Version (1885), indicating that they are not a part of the Greek text; and, as often in such additions, the meaning is obscured rather than clarified. The thought is that Paul himself was working together with **both** God and the Corinthians, which work was necessary even for an apostle, that he might not have received the grace of God in vain. He entreated them also to observe the same diligent activity on behalf of the gospel that he was demonstrating in his own life. GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN
No apostle could have **warned** against such a **possibility** if it never existed; and the words of Olshausen (quoted by Hughes) on this passage are true. He said: Paul unquestionably considers the possibility of grace received by the individual being again lost ... the dangerous error of **predestination**, which asserts that grace cannot be lost, is **unknown** to Scripture.

In fairness to Hughes, it should be noted that he rejected this, declaring that Olshausen's opinion "can only have been dictated by prejudice ... the doctrine of predestination is certainly not unknown in Scripture." Such a rebuttal to **obvious truth**, however, is typical; but it is not prejudice to read the Holy Scriptures exactly as they are written; and, while it is true enough that predestination is taught in the Scriptures (as regards the body of Christ, and not as it regards individuals), it is not predestination which is denied, but the **ERROR OF IT** (as Olshausen said) which interprets the doctrine as teaching that a true Christian CANNOT fall from grace and be **eternally lost**. The **POSSIBILITY** is plainly inferred in the strongest possible manner by Paul in this very verse.

Receiving God's grace in vain was a fate with which the Corinthians were flirting in a most dangerous manner through their close association with the pagan society around them; and McGarvey accurately viewed this verse as "an introduction" to the stern

admonitions beginning in 2 Cor 6:14; but "Before giving the warning (2 Cor. 6:14ff), he paused to establish his character, influence and authority among them." (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

1 Timothy 4:1, Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **SOME** shall DEPART from **the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines** of devils...

Romans 11:18-22, Boast not against the **branches**. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were **broken off**, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of **unbelief** they were broken off, and thou **standest** by **FAITH**. Be not highminded, but FEAR: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare **not** thee. Behold therefore the **goodness** and **SEVERITY** (harshness, strictness) of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, **IF** thou **CONTINUE** in his goodness: **otherwise** thou also shalt be **CUT OFF**.

Hebrews 3:12-14, Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief**, in departing FROM the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called **To day**; lest any of you be **hardened** through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, **IF** we hold the beginning of our **confidence** (FAITH) stedfast unto the end...

Revelation 3:5, He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not **blot out (ERASE)** his name **OUT of** the **book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

2 Corinthians 6:2 ...*(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time **accepted**, and in the day of salvation have I **succoured (relieve:--help)** thee: behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation.)*

NOTE: The passage in Isaiah from which this comes is: Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I **helped thee**: I will preserve thee and give thee for a **covenant** of the people, to establish the earth (Isaiah 49:8). This passage was addressed "To the Servant of Jehovah, the type primarily of Christ, and then of all who are IN Christ." Thus it is clear that in his appeal to this scripture, Paul was referring to the gospel age as "the day of salvation" and the "acceptable time." However, Paul at once added some inspired comment of his own making the application personal and immediate. **Now is the acceptable time ... now is the day of salvation ...** The urgency of immediate acceptance of the gospel was also stressed by the author of Hebrews (Hebrews 3:7, 8,13), and for discussion of this subject, see my Commentary on Hebrews, pp. 74-75. **Now ...** It should be noted that this tightens the urgency even beyond the passage of Hebrews. There, the message is "**TODAY** ... harden not your hearts"; here it is "**NOW** is the day of salvation." (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Hebrews 3:6-9, But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house **are we**, **IF** we hold fast the **confidence (FAITH)** and the rejoicing of the **hope** firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, **To day** if ye will hear his voice, **Harden not your hearts (MIND)**, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

2 Corinthians 6:3, Giving **no offence** in any thing, that the **ministry** be not **blamed**:

NOTE: Hillyer has a quotation which catches the background of Paul's thought in this

place. "There are people who will be glad of an excuse not to listen to the gospel or to take it seriously, and they will **look for** such **an excuse** in the **conduct** of its **ministers.**" It was precisely to avoid giving anyone such an excuse that Paul so strenuously defended his own **reputation.** No minister can be careless of the **opinion** that others may hold concerning his LIFE and CONDUCT. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Proverbs 22:1, A **good name** is rather to be **chosen** than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

Titus 2:7-8, In all things shewing thyself a **pattern** of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be **ashamed**, having **NO EVIL** thing to say of you.

Titus 3:8, This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou **affirm constantly, confirm** (SETTLE) **thoroughly by words**), that they which have believed in God might be careful to MAINTAIN good works.

1 Timothy 4:12, Let no man **despise** (hate with disrespect) thy **youth**; but be thou an **example** of the believers, in **word (something said)**, in **conversation (behavior)**, in **charity (love)**, in spirit [frame of mind], in FAITH (faithfulness; performance of obligations), in **purity.**

Acts 24:16, And herein do I exercise myself, to have **always** a **conscience** void of offence toward God, and toward men.

2 Corinthians 6:4, But in all things **approving** (show true, PROVE) ourselves as the **MINISTERS** of God, in much **patience (cheerful or hopeful endurance, patient waiting)**, in afflictions, in **necessities**, in **distresses (calamity [any great misfortune, or cause of misery])**...

NOTE: Commending ourselves ... refers to the exhibition and demonstration in Paul's life of the utmost integrity (moral purity; uprightness; HONESTY) of character which was daily exemplified in all of the patterns of his total behavior. **Ministers of God ...** Paul included other apostles with himself in this, as "ministers of God"; but he also called himself the **"servant of Christ"**. In this, of course, he could not have meant that he was the servant of two masters, because Jesus had flatly declared that "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). The meaning is plain. Paul considered God and Christ as **ONE** (in AGREEMENT). (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Thought 1. Jesus' words after he rose from the dead make clear he and his Father Are TWO separate persons who both are Gods, the Father being the "highest."

John 20:17, Jesus saith... Touch me not; for I am **not** yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto **MY Father**, and your Father; and to **MY God**, and your God.

Ephesians 4:4, 6, There is... **ONE God (supreme** (Highest in authority, Highest **Divinity**) and **Father** of ALL, who is above (higher in place, greater, exceeding) all, and through all, and IN you all.

1 John 5:7, For there are **THREE** that bear record in heaven, the **Father**, (that's Yahweh), the **Word** (that's Jesus), and the **Holy Ghost**: and these **THREE** are **ONE** (in AGREEMENT or concord [HARMONY]).

2 Corinthians 6:5-7, *In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults (commotion, confusion), in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by LOVE unfeigned (sincere, without hypocrisy), By the WORD of truth, by the POWER of God, by the ARMOUR of righteousness on the right hand and on the left...*

NOTE: *In the power of God ...* God had worked with Paul, as in the case of all the other apostles, enabling him to perform **signs** and **wonders** and **mighty deeds**, thus "**confirming the word**" (Mark 16:20). This, of course, was one of the secret springs of his power and endurance. *By the armor of righteousness ...* Paul loved this figure and developed it fully in Eph. 6:13-17. Every item in the whole panoply (complete armor or defense) answers finally for identification as "the word of God." This mention of the right hand and left hand refers to offensive weapons (like the sword in the right hand), and defensive weapons (like the shield borne by the left hand), as more fully evident in Ephesians. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Mark 16:20, And they went forth, and **preached** every where, the Lord **working** WITH them, and **CONFIRMING** the word with SIGNS following.

Confirming defined 950, confirm (prove to be true: 1. to verify the truth or validity of something thought to be true or valid 2. to give new assurance of the truth or validity of), **establish** (prove or make acceptable beyond a reasonable doubt).

2 Corinthians 6:8-10, *By honour (GLORY) and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as POOR, yet making many RICH; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

NOTE: The uninhibited nature of Paul's letter shines here. In the case of "glory and dishonor," it is the good which is mentioned first; but in the next pairing, it is the evil which is first mentioned. All of these expressions have the weight of declaring Paul's **fidelity** (LOYALTY) to the faith and constant prosecution of his labors as an apostle regardless of all circumstances. *As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed.* To Paul's enemies, especially among the hierarchy in Jerusalem, he had become a "**nobody**"; he was **dead**, the custom of having a **funeral** for **defectors** from **Judaism** having in all probability been observed in regard to Paul; and no less than five times they had **beaten him unmercifully**. But, actually, far from being a nobody, Paul became the most famous man of ALL ages, other than the Christ himself. And as for his being dead, the funeral for Paul (if they had one) was premature. At Lystra they stoned him and dragged him out of the city; but he rose up to claim Timothy from that environment and to make his letters to him a part of the word of God for twenty centuries! *Sorrowful ... rejoicing ...* This dual quality of the Christian life pertains to all believers, and not merely to Paul. In a world of sin, mortality, and many frustrations, "sorrow" is inevitable; but the distinguishing characteristic of **faith in Christ** is **JOY**. Paul exemplified this as did no other. In his Philippian letter, for example, written from a **dungeon** in **Rome**, the words, "Rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice" are almost a litany throughout it. How marvelous are the JOYS in Christ! The knowledge of the Savior's love, the consciousness of sins forgiven, the confident hope of everlasting life, and the present possession of the blessed Holy Spirit within – such things surcharge (supersaturate) the soul with JOY unspeakable. "Solid joys and lasting pleasures only Zion's children know." **Poor ... many rich** This must be reckoned among the most astounding comments ever made on a passage of

scripture; and, despite the fact that it focuses on a secular meaning that Paul never intended, it is nothing but blunt, unequivocal truth; and the lives of countless thousands of people have dramatically demonstrated it. It must be admitted, however, that Paul was not speaking of **material riches** at all, but of the **unsearchable riches** in Christ Jesus. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic. studylight.org/com/bcc/)

2 Corinthians 6:11-13, O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our **heart (feeling [affection])** is enlarged (expand). Ye are not **straitened (cramp [restrain])** in us, but ye are **straitened (cramp [restrain])** in your own BOWELS (inward affection). Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged (expand).

NOTE: This shows how a literal translation sometimes fails to carry the true meaning to people whose manner of speech is so different from that which prevailed in the first century.

Therefore, despite our deep mistrust of all **paraphrases**, we shall attempt one for these three verses: Paraphrase: We have spoken fully and frankly to you, O Corinthians, and our heart goes out to you and takes you in. Our love for you is not diminished, but rather increased; but you do not love me as you should (otherwise, you would do a better job of defending me against my enemies). Now, why do you not repay me with the kind of love I have lavished upon you? I am speaking to you as my own children. Let your love for me, therefore, be multiplied, even as mine is for you.

It is the plaintive (unhappy) note in the meaning here which probably colored to some extent what Paul was about to say; and the realization, as he spoke these words, that the **false teachers** at **Corinth** had succeeded in stealing the **affections** of the Corinthians away from Paul (at least to some extent) - that sudden realization triggered the devastating attack he now delivered against those sons of the devil in Corinth. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic. studylight.org/com/bcc/)

2 Corinthians 6:14-16, Be ye NOT **unequally yoked together** with **unbelievers**: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath **light** with **darkness**? And what concord hath Christ with **Belial** (synonym for Satan)? Or what part hath he that **believeth** with an **infidel (disbelieving)**? And what **agreement** hath the temple of God with idols? for YE ARE the **temple** of the living God; as God hath said, I will **dwell** IN them, and **walk** IN them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

NOTE: This is the basis of Paul's demand that no compromise whatever be made with paganism. He had developed that metaphor extensively in the first letter; but he reinforced it here with the quotation from Exo. 29:45, deriving from it the principle that "wherever God dwells is the **true temple** of God." As Tasker expressed it, "There is still a temple of God, but it consists of the whole company of **Christian believers**." Not only did Paul view the church as God's true temple as contrasted with the idol temples of Corinth, but it was also God's true temple with respect to the **great temple** of the **Jews** in **Jerusalem**. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic. studylight.org/com/bcc/)

2 Corinthians 6:17-18, Wherefore **come out** from among them, and be ye **separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be **MY sons** and **daughters**, saith the Lord **Almighty**.

2 Corinthians 7:2, Receive us; we have **wronged** **NO MAN**, we have corrupted no man, we have **defrauded** (CHEAT) no man.