

CHAP. 13

IN this chapter the apostle continues his resolution to come to the Corinthians, and to threaten with severity the incorrigible among them, giving the reasons of it; prays to God that they might so behave, that there might be no occasion for the exercise of it; and concludes the epistle with very useful exhortations, and hearty wishes of good things to them. He intimates to them again, that he intended this third time to come unto them, when he would not spare them, as they might expect he would not; partly because they had such repeated warnings, reproofs, and admonitions from him, ver. 1 and partly because many of them had sinned before, and were stubborn and obstinate, and had not repented, ver. 2 as also because they had tempted him, and demanded a proof of his power and authority, and of Christ speaking in him, ver. 3 and whereas this sprung from the outward appearance of the apostle, whose bodily presence was weak, he observes to them the instance of Christ himself in human nature, who was crucified through weakness, and yet lives by the power of God; and so he and his fellow-ministers were weak like Christ, and for his sake, and yet lived, and should live by the power of God; so that their outward appearance was no proof of their want of the power of Christ in them, ver. 4

besides, he directs them to themselves for a proof of it; who upon examination would find, that they were in the faith, and Christ was in them; which was owing to the ministry of the apostle, as a means and instrument; and so they had a proof in themselves of Christ's speaking in the apostle, and being mighty in, and towards them, or else they must be reprobate, injudicious, and disapproved persons, ver. 5 but whether they were such persons or no, he was confident that he would not be found such, but would appear to be in the faith, to have Christ in him, and to have power and authority from him, ver. 6 however, the apostle's hearty prayer for them was, that they might be kept from evil; and that they might do that which is good, and so be approved of God and men; and there be no occasion to use any severity with them, when he should come among them, ver. 7 otherwise he could do nothing against the truth, could not connive at error and sin, but must use the power and authority he had to crush every thing of that kind, and defend truth, ver. 8 and so far was he from glorying in his power, and priding himself with it, that it was a pleasure to him to have no occasion to make use of it, by which it might seem as if he was without it; and it rejoiced him, when they stood fast in the faith, and walked as became the Gospel, and so needed not the rod of reproof and correction; nay, he could even wish, that they

were wholly perfect, and free, from all blame, and every kind of charge, ver. 9 and the end he had in the writing in the manner he did, being absent from them, was, lest when he should come among them; he should be obliged to make use of his power he had from Christ for edification, and not destruction; to prevent which, he wrote and admonished them, in order to bring them to repentance, that so he might have no occasion to use severity and sharpness, ver. 10 and then he takes his farewell of them, by giving them some exhortations to harmony, unity, peace, and love among themselves, ver. 11, 12 gives the salutations of all the saints unto them, ver. 13 and then his own, with which he concludes the epistle, which is a wish of all the blessings of grace from all the three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, ver. 14.