

CHAP. 2

THE apostle, in this chapter, goes on to give reasons of his not coming, as yet, to Corinth; and removes the charge of severity, which some might think him guilty of, in what he had written in his former epistle concerning the incestuous person, who having repented of his sin, he would now have comforted, and the censure laid on him by the church taken off; after which he gives an account of the success of the Gospel in several parts, of its power and purity, and of the faithful dispensation of it by himself and others: in ver. 1 he assigns this as a reason why he had determined with himself not to come to Corinth as yet, and why he deferred his coming, that when he came he might not be sorrowful himself, nor make others sorrowful, which necessarily involve each other; for if he made others sorrowful by his sharp rebukes, which as things had been he could not but in faithfulness give, he must be in sorrow himself, since there would be none to make him cheerful, but such whom he made sorrowful, ver. 2 wherefore to meet together under such circumstances must be uncomfortable; and hence he chose to put off his coming until things took another turn; and this was the reason of his writing with so much seeming severity concerning the incestuous person, in the former epistle, to bring him and them to repentance, and

so prevent that sorrow which he otherwise must have had, had he in person come to them whilst they were unconcerned about that affair; and that he might have that joy, which he was confident of every one was desirous he should have, ver. 3 and he was so far from being of a cruel and uncompassionate disposition, that it was with an aching heart, and with flowing eyes, that he wrote that letter to them; nor was it written with that view merely to grieve them, but to let them know the tender and affectionate concern he had for their welfare, ver. 4. Besides, this affair of the incestuous person was not only matter of grief to the apostle, but to them all; or he was not the only person he was grieved with, but with them all, and therefore it was necessary to use greater severity and roughness, ver. 5. However, inasmuch as the end he had in view was answered, the humbling of the delinquent, and bringing him to repentance, nothing more was to be done, the punishment of excommunication was sufficient, ver. 6 and that ought now to be removed, and the man forgiven, and comforted, lest he should be overwhelmed with sorrow, and be reduced to despair, ver. 7. Wherefore the apostle entreats them to give some fresh assurances of their love to the repenting brother, and signify it by their hearty reception of him into communion again, ver. 8 in doing which they would give proof of their obedience to him the apos-

tle, which was an end he had in writing to them before, concerning the excommunication of the same person, ver. 9 and which he urges them to from his own example, who was ready to join with them in forgiving him, out of love to them, and in the name of Christ, ver. 10 and the rather it became them to do so, lest Satan should get an advantage of them, and establish a bad principle and practice among them, that such as fall into sin, though they repent, should not be restored to the communion of the church, of whose devices in different forms and shapes, to do mischief to the churches of Christ, and particular believers, the apostle and others were not ignorant, ver. 11. Moreover, what had took up his time, and had prevented him from coming to Corinth as yet, was his being called to, and employed in the preaching of the Gospel elsewhere, particularly at Troas, where he was the rather inclined to stay, and there was a necessity of it, because there was a door opened for it, ver. 12 and yet not finding Titus, there, as he expected, he was uneasy, and departed thence into Macedonia, in quest of him, ver. 13 where, as in other places, he preached the Gospel with success, which he ascribes to God, and gives him thanks for it, ver. 14 which success he illustrates by dividing the persons to whom he preached the Gospel, into two classes, they that are saved, and they that perish, ver. 15 on whom it had different effects,

diffusing death, and adding death to death in the one, and communicating life, and adding life to life in the other: and lest he should be thought to arrogate too much to himself, and other ministers of the word, of whom he speaks, he acknowledges his and their insufficiency to preach the Gospel, and make it effectual; and that all fitness for it, and all the virtue and efficacy of it, were from the Lord, ver. 16 and then gives the reason why he, and the rest of the faithful ministers of the Gospel, were a sweet savour to Christ, as he had asserted, because they did not, as others, corrupt this box of ointment, but faithfully and sincerely poured it out, without mixing and adulterating it; and this they did as being in the view of the omniscient God, to whom they could appeal for their integrity and honesty, ver. 17.