

Chapter 12

He telleth of his incomparable visions, 5. but for humilitie liketh better to talke of his infirmities: 11. putting the fault in the Corinthians for that he is faine thus to rehearse his owne commendations. 13. Where againe he reasoneth the matter with them like a father, why they should preferre those false Apostles before him. 20. And feareth lest at his coming he shal be compelled to excommunicate many of them.

If I muſt glorie (it is not expedient indeed) but I wil come to the ¹visions & reuelatiōs of our Lord. ²I know a man in Chriſt aboute fourteen yeares agoe (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not: God doth know) ſuch a one ^arapt euen to the third Heauē. ³And I know ſuch a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not; God doth know) ⁴that he was rapt into Paradife; & heard ſecret words, which it is not lawful for a man to ſpeake. ⁵For ſuch an one I wil glorie: but for my ſelf I wil glorie nothing, ſauing in my infirmities. ⁶For and if I wil glorie, I ſhal not be fooliſh: for I ſhal ſay truth. But I ſpare, leſt any man ſhould eſteem me aboute that which he ſeeth in me, or heareth any thing of me. ⁷And leſt the greatnes of the reuelatiōs might extol me, there was giuē me a prick of my fleſh, an Angel of Satã, to buffet me. ⁸For the which thing thriſe I befought our Lord, that it might depart frō me. ⁹And he ſaid to me: My grace ſufficeth thee, for power is perſited in infirmitie. Gladly therefore wil I glorie in mine infirmitie, that the power of Chriſt may dwel in me. ¹⁰For the which cauſe I pleaſe myſelf in infirmities, in cōtumelies, in neceſſities, in perfecutions,

^a By this we may proue that it is neither impoſſible, incredible, nor vndeſcent, that is reported by the ancient Fathers of ſome that haue been rauiſhed or rapt (whether in body or out of body God knoweth) & brought to ſee the ſtate of the next life, as wel of the ſaued as damned.

in distreffes for Chrif. For when I am weake, then am I mightie.

¹¹ I am become foolifh: you haue cōpelled me. For I ought to haue been cōmended of you: for I haue been nothing leffe then they that are ♦aboue meafure Apoftles: although I am nothing. ¹² Yet the fignes of my Apoftleship haue beē done vpō you in al patiēce, ♦in fignes & wōders & mighty deeds. ¹³ For what is there that you haue had leffe thē the other Churches; but that I my felf haue not burdned you? Pardō me this iniurie. ¹⁴ Behold, now the third time I am ready to come to you; & I wil not be burdenous vnto you. For I feeke not the things that are yours, but you. For neither ought the children lay vp treafures for the parents, but the parents for the childrē. ¹⁵ But I moft gladly wil beftow & wil my felf moreouer be beftowed for your foules: although louing you more, I am loued leffe.

¹⁶ But be it fo: I haue not burdened you: but being craftie, I tooke you by guile. ¹⁷ Haue I circumented you by any of them whom I fent to you? ¹⁸ I requested Titus, and I fent with him a brother. Did Titus circumuēt you? walked we not with one fpirit? not in the felf-fame fteps? ¹⁹ ‘Of old’ thinke you that we excufe ourfelues to you? Before God in Chrif we fpeake: but al things (my Deareft) for your edifying. ²⁰ For I feare left perhaps when I come, I find you not fuch as I would: and I be found of you fuch an one as you would not. Left perhaps cōtentions, emulations, ftomakings, diffenfions, de-tractiōs, whifperings, fwellings, feditions be among you. ²¹ Left againe when I come, God humble me among you: & I mourne many of them that finned before, & ^a) haue not done penance for the vncleannes & fornication and incontinecie that they haue committed.

Againe

τῶν μὴ μετα-
νοησάντων

^a Which S. Auguftin faith (*Ep. 108.*) is fpoken here of doing great penance for heinous finnes, as *Pœnitentes* did in the primitiue Church. So that it is not only to repent or to amend their liues, as the Proteftants tranflate it.

ANNOTATIONS

1 Vifions.) S. Cyprian (*ep. 69. nu. 4.*) complaineth that the Aduerfaries of Gods Church and Priefts, giue no credit to vifions. But their incredulitie is much more in our daies that condemne al fuch reuelations, though they be reported and recorded for moft certaine, of holy S. Gregorie, S. Bede, or who-els foeuer. Yea they are fo wicked in this cafe, that the vifion which the holy Author of the Booke of Machabees calleth *fide dignum*, worthy of credit, is one caufe why they deny the whole booke to be Canonical: and as wel might they for this vifion deny al S. Pauls Epiftles, and for the like, the Actes of the Apoftles *Act. 9. 10. 11. 12. 27.* And the Ghofpel it-felf, *Matth. 1, 10 2, 13, 19.*

Vifions haue no credit with heretikes.

2. Mac. 15, 11.

11 Aboue meafure Apoftles.) Though al were in that they were Apoftles, of one and the fame order, yet we may fee that fome had maruelous great preeminence and priuilege aboue others in the fame office: fpecially S. Peter and S. Iohn, whom S. Paul often calleth *great Apoftles, aboue meafure or pafsing Apoftles, the pillars, &c. 2. Cor. 11, 5. 12, 11. Gal. 2, 9.*

The Apoftles fome greater then others.

12 In finnes.) Miracles be neceffarie, and be great finnes of truth, when it is firft newly taught. And therefore let al Catholike men hold faft that faith which was firft preached & cōfirmed by miracles. As in England by S. Auguftin, & in other Nations by holy Apoftolike men. And let the Heretikes that preach extraordinarily, newly and otherwife then we receiued at our firft conuerfion, fhew their calling and doctrine by miracles, or els let them be taken for falfe Apoftles as they be.

We muft ftick to the faith firft planted by miracles.