BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK

STUDIES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS

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PREFACE

TO THE READER

These studies are the result of years of research and teaching in the Bible college and in church classes. My object in presenting them is to encourage the program of Bible study and to help meet the needs of the general Bible reader.

The analysis of each chapter is both an outline and, in many cases, a paraphrase of the Bible text. It is intended to be of help to the general reader and also to the teacher who may be leading a study group. The analyses and the charts will enable the reader to have a comprehensive view of First Corinthians at a glance.

The printed text is the American Standard Version of the New Testament. I urge you, however, to use your own Bible in these studies. *The commentary* should be of help regardless of the version you may use. Under no circumstances should comments be placed above the Bible text in importance. In some instances there are recognized differences of opinion; for example: (1) the question of re-marrying in chapter seven; (2) the matter of "authority" in chapter eleven; (3) the problems involved in the discussion of "tongues" in chapter fourteen. In all such cases, I ask that you do not accept my opinions. I urge you to study your own Bible and to do your own thinking that your conclusion may be your own. Every student should seek to learn what the Bible actually says and what it means.

The summary of each chapter will help the student to review the material covered in the commentary. *The questions at the end of each chapter* are designed to point out the significant issues of the chapter. For best results, the student should write out the answers to each question. Groups may find it profitable to use the *questions for discussion.* Discussion, however, need not be limited to these suggestions.

These studies have been tested in church study groups. While I was the minister of the First Church of Christ at San Fernando, California, I prepared a brief mimeographed series of studies on First Corinthians for our Bible study class. That material, completely rewritten and enlarged is presented in this book. I am indebted to the good people of that congregation for allowing me time in a busy ministry to study. I could wish that all churches might do the same

for their ministers and occasionally make it possible for them to return to college for refresher courses.

I am indebted to Don DeWelt, editor of the BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK series, with whom I served on the faculty of the San Jose Bible College, for his encouragement and assistance in preparing this work for publication.

It is my prayer that you may search the Scriptures as the Beroeans did and meditate on the meaning of God's Word day and night that you may translate it into life and share it with others.

Department of New Testament
Pacific Christian College
July, 1963

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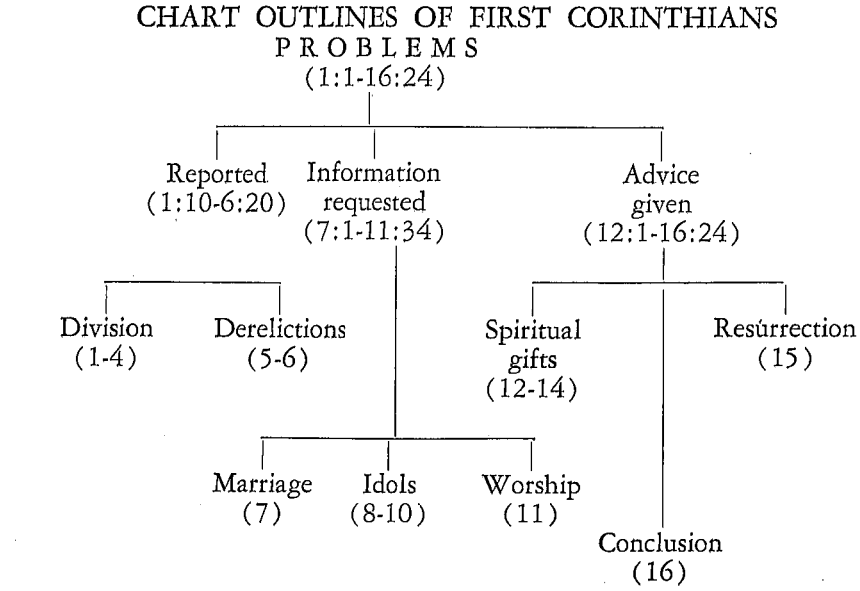

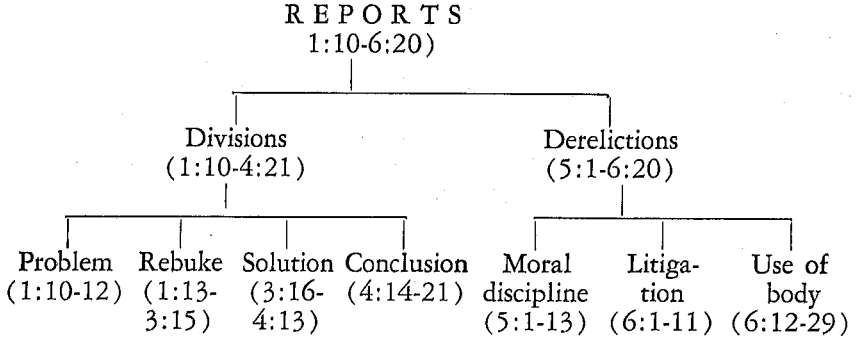

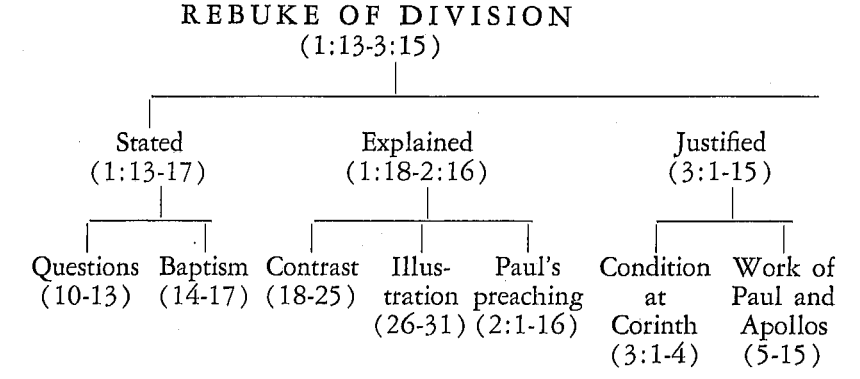

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Salutation and Thanksgiving (1-9)

Commentary

Text

1:1-9. Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; 5 that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge; 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; 8 who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unreprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul.—The life of this remarkable man will forever be an inspiration and a challenge to the followers of Christ. For some of the facts about his early life see Acts 22:3; 26:4-5; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-5.

He is first mentioned in the story of Christianity in connection with the stoning of Stephen. He is the "young man named Saul" at whose feet the witnesses laid down their garments (Acts 7:58). The

name *Saul* means *asked for.* Soon after he began his work as the apostle to the Gentiles, he became known by the name *Paul* (Acts 13:9). It would be a mistake, however, to assume that he got this name from his association with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7).

called apostle.—His conversion and appointment to the apostleship are of such importance as to be recorded in three chapters of Acts (9, 22, 26). He never forgot the terrible thing he did in the role of persecutor nor the grace of God that made him an apostle of Christ. He saw to it that this grace did not become an empty thing, for, in his own words, he "labored more abundantly than all the apostles" (I Cor. 15:10).

The word *called* suggests the kind of apostle he was. He was summoned by Christ and sent as an apostle to the Gentiles. The words "to be" do not occur in the Greek text. They are supplied by the translators in an effort to make the thought clear. In doing so, however, there is danger of loosing sight of the real meaning of the expression: Paul was an apostle summoned by Jesus Christ. Others have taken upon themselves to be apostles (II Cor. 11:13-15), but without divine appointment they could not rightly be called apostles of Christ. While he is an apostle of Jesus Christ, God is the agent in his call to the apostleship, for it was "through the will of God."

the will of God.—It was necessary for Paul to establish his authority at the outset, for he was to give the divine solution to the problems that plagued the church at Corinth. For the defense of his apostleship, see I Cor. 9:1-3. For the defense of the apostolic gospel which he proclaimed, see Gal. 1:11-24.

Sosthenes.—Who was this man, Sosthenes, who is called "brother"? He must have been a person who was well known to the Corinthians, as suggested by the prominent mention of him in the opening words of the letter. His name does not occur again in the epistle. The fact that he is mentioned in the salutation does not suggest that he shared in any way in giving the inspired directives that were designed to lift the church of Corinth out of its sorry plight. In Acts 18:12-17, mention is made of a ruler of the synagogue by the name of Sosthenes. It is not possible to prove that he is the same man mentioned in First Corinthians, but he could have been.

Paul was well aware of the strong opposition to him at Corinth. It may be that he mentioned Sosthenes to show that he had friends in Corinth who trusted his leadership as an apostle of Christ.

the church of God.—Paul addressed them as the church of God although they were splitting into various factions and proclaiming loyalty to various men. As God's church, they had been called into the fellowship of His Son. The disgraceful conduct that characterized so many of them was completely out of harmony with the thought of the name, church of God. But they were God's church, for the price of their redemption, the blood of Christ, had been paid for them as well as for any other congregation. Their mission, therefore, as the church of God, was to glorify God, not men.

The word *church* referred to the assembly of free citizens called out from the masses to exercise the privileges of citizenship and freedom. But when Paul used the term *church of God,* he lifted the word far above its ordinary meaning and put it in the realm of those who are separated from the world of sin by the blood of Christ and called through the gospel into the assembly of saints to enjoy the privileges of freedom in Christ and citizenship in the heavenly kingdom.

Almost every word in this greeting strikes a blow at the sinful practices that had crept into the church at Corinth.

sanctified.—The word means separated from sin, purified, or set apart for the service of God. The form of the word used here suggests that this separation had taken place in the past and that its effect had carried over to the present. It does not imply that they could no longer commit a sin; it does clearly imply that they were to live a life of consecration in harmony with the fact that they had been set apart to a pure life. This had been accomplished by the blood of Christ at the time of their baptism. "And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our Lord" (I Cor. 6:11). See also Heb. 9:13-14; I Pet. 1:2; II Thes. 2:13-14; Eph. 5:26-27.

What an awful violation of this principle is seen in the conduct of the Corinthians as reported in chapters five and six!

called saints.—The word *saint* is from the same root as the word *sanctify,* and it is related to the root word which means pure. In the O. T. it is applied to that which was set apart for the service of God. That which was set apart had to be free from blemish; the term, therefore, came to mean freedom from blemish, spot, or stain, first in the physical, and then in the moral realm. See I Cor. 6:19-20 for the appeal for the Corinthians to live a life of separation from sin.

call upon the name of the Lord.—The form of the expression indicates that it was in their own interest that they called upon the Lord. It was out of man's despair that he called upon God for help. How

strange that men who had called on God from this point of view should now be saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Cehpas."

The first reference to men who called on the name of the Lord is given in Gen. 4:26. Evidently, men realized that their only hope of survival was to turn away from the wickedness of Cain and turn to God who alone could save them. In the days of Joel, the prophet, a similar situation prevailed in the life of the nation of Israel (Joel 2:39). Israel was facing almost certain destruction, and Joel reminded them that "all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Peter quoted this prophecy on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:21) and showed that there is a sense in which it applies to the sinner whose only hope of salvation is in Christ. See Acts 4:12. Another example is found in Acts 22:16. Ananias had said to Saul, "Get yourself baptized and wash away your sins *because* you called upon His name." Saul, at last, had accepted the truth of Stephen's message; he could go no further in his opposition to Christ. Consequently, when Jesus spoke to him on the Damascus road, he said, 'What will you have me to do, Lord?" There was no other alternative; for him, it was "repent or perish." All Christians came to be spoken of as those who were calling on the Name of the Lord. He was their only hope.

This is far more than appropriating a name for themselves, or piously saying, "Lord, Lord" (Matt. 7:21); it was the desperate cry of the sinking sinner, "Lord, save me" (Matt. 14:30).

theirs and ours.—This, as the American Version indicates, is a reference to the word *Lord* which does not occur in the Greek in this phrase. It is possible that it may refer to *place,* and if so, it suggests that calling upon the name of the Lord was not limited to any one place; but men in every place, even where Paul was, were calling on His name.

Grace to you and peace.—This is something more than a mere salutation. It seems to breathe a prayer for the strife-torn congregation at Corinth: Let God's unmerited favor be with them; let His peace abide with them.

I thank my God always.—Knowing the conditions that existed in Corinth, one wonders how Paul found it possible to "thank God always concerning" them. He was thankful for God's grace that had enriched them so that they lacked no necessary instruction to enable them to prepare for the "revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." There was a solution for the problem of the Corinthian church. Note the reference to God's grace.

the grace of God which was given to you.—This is a reference to the unmerited favor of God that had supplied the Corinthians with the miraculous power (see chapters 12 through 14) through which divine instruction in righteousness had been given them. These miraculous gifts were necessary in the absence of the written Word. They, however, abused this favor, for they quarreled over the relative value of tongues over other spiritual gifts.

enriched in him.—This enrichment had to do with *utterance* and *knowledge* in connection with the confirmed testimony of Christ. *Utterance* is the word or message of wisdom (I Cor. 12:8). *Knowledge* is the ability to know or to understand the meaning of the divinely revealed message. The Corinthians knew and understood God's revealed will for them; nevertheless, they disregarded it. Consequently, it was necessary for Paul to write this letter to correct the many errors in their thinking and conduct.

testimony of Christ was confirmed.—Paul had preached to them the message about Christ. It had been established or confirmed by the miracles that accompanied the preaching. See Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4.

ye became behind in no gift.—The failures in Corinth were in no way caused by the lack of inspired instruction or its confirmation by miraculous demonstration. They had all the advantages of the other churches. Their disgraceful conduct, so unbecoming to a Christian, was entirely their own responsibility.

revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.—This refers to Christ's second coming.

confirm you unto the end.—The established message about Christ would establish the faithful in Christ. It was adequate to direct them in Christian character and conduct; there was no need for them to fail to enter the rewards of the saints in heaven. Those who were failing were doing so in spite of all that Christ was doing to present them before the Father as irreproachable.

unreprovable in the day of our Lord.—No one in the Day of Judgment will be able to lay anything to the charge of God's chosen ones, the ones who choose to obey His will and remain faithful unto death (Romans 8:33; Rev. 2:10). This is a strong reason why Christian people should strive to live a life that glorifies God in the body (I Cor. 6:20; Titus 2:11-12). The "day of our Lord" is the day of His coming to judge the world. The phrase "on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10) is not only different in form but in meaning also: it refers to the first day of the week.

fellowship.—This interesting word occurs many times in the New Testament in a variety of forms. The root idea is partnership, association, or participation. Those who are associated with Christ are to share with Him in the proclamation of the Word of the Cross and in the discharge of the other obligations of the saints of God.

Problem of Division (10-17)

Text

1:10-17. Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; 15 lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.

Commentary

through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—This earnest appeal to the Corinthian brethren in the name of Christ was designed to make them think seriously of the real problem they faced in connection with their divisions. They were Paul's brethren in Christ, even though they were doing many things contrary to the principles of Christianity. Accepting this basis of agreement meant that they could move on to the divine solution of their problems. Each word in the divine name has significance in relation to the problem in Corinth. *Lord* implies servants who are to obey; *Jesus* implies that sinners are to be saved by His grace; *Christ,* which means prophet, priest, and king, implies the necessity of believing His Word, accepting His sacrifice for sin, and obeying Him, for all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him (Matt. 28:18-29). He is the only one through whom men must be saved (Acts 4:12). The divine name is, in itself, a strong appeal to abandon the sectarian names of men who were leading the factions in Corinth.

all speak the same thing.—It is often said that no two people ever see a thing exactly alike. This is offered as an excuse for the sin of division. What if the rule were applied in the field of Mathematics? The Scriptures condemn division as one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). Division destroys the temple of God (I Cor. 3:16-17). It was possible for the Corinthians to say the same thing about Christ, as Paul clearly shows by the questions and their implied answers in verse 13.

be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.—This expression was used in political circles to urge groups to compose their differences. This, most likely, is the sense in which it is to be taken here. The expression is used throughout the N. T. with various applications. Fishermen used the term when they spoke of mending their nets, or preparing them for use. It was a medical term meaning to set a dislocated joint. Read Gal. 6:1 where it is translated "restore" with this in mind. It was used to describe the outfitting of a ship to get it ready for a voyage. It is rewarding to think of all these usages in relation to the problem in Corinth.

They were to have the same attitude of mind so that when they expressed an opinion all would say the same thing. This would prevent the divisions among them which were produced by one of them saying, "I am of Paul," while another said, "I am of Apollos." Composing their differences meant getting back to the position where they could be in the same frame of mind and all say the same thing when they expressed an opinion or judgment.

by them of Chloe.—Paul had received his information about conditions in Corinth from those who were in some way connected with Chloe. Were they servants in her household, or were they members of her family? We cannot answer these questions. Evidently, they were aware of the problems and believed that Paul should be informed. Their action is to be commended, for when problems arise in a congregation the correct thing to do is to turn to the inspired Word of God for the solution.

contentions.—The divisions (splits) in the church resulted from the strife over leaders. Some were saying that they belonged to Paul; some, to Apollos; some, to Cephas; some, to Christ. Is this last group composed of the true Christians in Corinth or to a wrangling party arrogating to itself the divine name? The context seems to imply the latter. It is possible to use the name of Christ in a sectarian manner.

Is Christ divided?—Certainly Christ is not divided. He alone died on

the cross to save the world. Only the sinless Lamb of God could become sin on our behalf (II Cor. 5:21). Certainly, Paul wasn't crucified for them; hence, there was no excuse for anyone of them to claim that he had been baptized in Paul's name.

A moment's reflection on these three questions shows how ridiculous the divisions in Corinth were. Two of them are so framed as to require a negative answer. Thus, all must speak the same thing in answering these questions.

I baptized none of you.—Why did Paul thank God that he had baptized none of the Corinthians, except the few mentioned? This does not suggest that he considered baptism of no importance. See Rom. 6:1-11; I Cor. 10:1-2; 12:13. The evident meaning is that he was thankful that he had personally baptized this limited number so as to avoid the very criticism that was being made that people were being baptized in his name. If he had not taught them to get themselves baptized, there never would have been a question about the one into whose name they had been baptized. All of them knew that they had been baptized into the name of Christ, for He was crucified for them.

Crippus, Gaius, Stephanas.—"Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). The identity of Gaius is not certain, but see Acts 20:4. Stephanas was the first convert of Achaia (I Cor. 16:15).

For Christ sent me not to baptize.—Careless reading of this statement might lead some to believe that Paul did not consider baptism important. A similar statement is found in John 4:1-2. "The Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John." John adds the explanation: "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples."

After Paul had baptized a few, they could have taken up the task of baptizing the rest while Paul continued to proclaim the good news. Baptism was a part of the proclamation of the gospel. See Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16. The facts of the gospel which deal with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are symbolized in the act of baptism, for baptism is a burial and a resurrection (Rom. 6:4).

lest the cross of Christ should be made void.—"Words of wisdom" that left out the sacrifice of Christ made the cross an empty thing. Paul's aim was to avoid the philosophical speculations of the day and to preach Christ in such a manner that men would desire to be baptized in His name. That gave meaning to the cross of Christ.

The Word of the Cross and the Wisdom of the World (18-31)

Text

1:18-31. For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. 22 Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; 24 but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; 28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: 29 that no flesh should glory before God. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: 31 that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Commentary

the word of the cross.—The divisions in the church at Corinth were being perpetuated by those who were putting "the wisdom of the world" above the gospel of Christ. By contrasting the two, Paul condemns the party spirit. The contrast is plain: it is between "them that perish" and those "who are saved"; it is between "foolishness" and "the power of God."

For it is written.—The quotation is from Isa. 29:14. It is freely applied by the apostle to the situation at hand. In the time of Isaiah, the wisdom of the worldly statesmen failed to protect Judah against the invasion of the Assyrians. The quotation is thus applied to the situ-

ation in Corinth: "the wisdom of the world" could not possibly save men from destruction in the spiritual realm. That can only be done through the word of the cross.

the power of God.—It is through the gospel that the power of God is channeled into the mind of those who hear the message. The force of the facts of the gospel (the life, death, and resurrection of Christ) changes unbelief into faith. The force of the motives of the gospel (the goodness of God, Rom. 2:4, godly sorrow for sin, II Cor. 7:10, and, among others, the consideration of the impending judgment, Acts 17:30-31) changes the will, and that change of the will is repentance. Submission to the command of the gospel to be baptized into Christ brings the penitent believer to the blood of Christ which washes away sin (Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 6:4; Acts 22:16; Heb. 9:14; 10:22).

This power of God to save the believer was demonstrated in the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 1:19-20). It is the same power that raises the one dead in trespasses and sin to the new life in Christ (Eph. 2:4-6). It is "the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20), that is, the power of the gospel to save and to equip the believer to "quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16).

the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world.—Paul calls upon the wise (the Greek) and the scribe (the Jew) and the debater of the world (both Greek and Jew) in such a manner as to show that none of them could offer anything to save man from his sin. The reason is clear: "the world in its wisdom did not know God."

the foolishness of preaching.—The word of the cross, although looked upon by those who were perishing as foolishness, was the power of God to save the believer. *Foolishness* does not refer to the act of preaching, but to the message that is proclaimed, that is, the word of the cross. While the basic facts of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the gospel is not limited to these facts, for it takes the whole Bible to tell the whole story of the whole counsel of God about salvation through His Son. In the O .T. it is seen in prophecy, promise, and type. In the N. T. it is seen in the facts of the life of Christ; in the history of conversion to Christ; in the explanation of the essentials of righteousness; in the applicaton of the gospel to daily life; and, finally, in the prophecy of the victory of Christ and of those who accept His gospel.

to save them that believe.—God reaches the mind of the unconverted sinner through the message of the cross. When God created man, He created him with the capacity to respond to His commands. It re-

quires no miracle of "illumination" to enable man to understand what God says in the Bible. That is why the word of the cross can save the believer. Followers of Christ are to proclaim it; sinners are to believe it; and God will save those who believe it. These three issues should be carefully noted: (1) God made foolish the wisdom of the world; (2) the world through its wisdom didn't know God; (3) in the wisdom of God, God was pleased to save the believer through the foolishness of the message that was preached.

Jews ask for signs.—See Matt. 12:38-40; John 2:18; 6:30; Matt. 27:42.

Greeks seek after wisdom.—See Acts 17:21; I Cor. 2:6-9.

unto Jews a stumbling block.—The Greek word which is translated *stumblingblock* referred to the trigger of a trap, and then to the trap or some means of causing one to stumble. The crucified Messiah was like this to the Jew. The Jewish concept of Messiah led them to think of an earthly kingdom such as existed in the days of David and Solomon. How could Christ crucified be their expected leader? They failed to understand that His kingdom was not of this world. They would have been glad to make Him their king in opposition to Caesar, but He refused the temporal crown. They turned against Him, and in the end they cried out, "We have no king but Caesar." See John 6:14-15; 19:15; Matt. 21:42-44.

unto Gentiles foolishness.—When Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection in Athens, the philosophers called him a "babbler"—one who had no real system of philosophy like theirs, but who was like the little birds seen in the marketplace picking up bits of food here and there. Compared to their systems of wisdom, this seemed like foolishness. (Acts 17:18).

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.—In contrast to the Jews and Greeks who rejected the message of the cross, Paul points out those—both Jews and Greeks—who accept Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God. Those who are called are the ones who respond to God's call through the gospel (I Thes. 2:13-14). Christ is the power of God, that is, He is the one who exercises God's power to save the believer. The gospel has a logical force, the force of the facts of the gospel to produce faith; it has an emotional force, the force of the motives of the gospel to produce repentance; it has a redemptive force, the force of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. Christ is the wisdom of God, that is, He is the one who has revealed the divine wisdom that has to do with salvation; in other words, what to do to be saved and how to live the Christian life. He

is the personal revelation of God, and through His office as prophet, He caused the written revelation of God, the Bible, to be written.

foolishness of God.—As the context indicates, this expresses man's attitude toward the things of God. But, as Paul indicates, what man deems foolish and weak in God's plan to save the sinner is wiser and stronger than man. David's conquest of Goliath illustrates the point.

behold your calling.—The words that follow explain Paul's reference to the "foolishness" and "weakness" of God. A glance at their own station in life was enough to show the Corinthians that the word of the cross had made its greatest appeal to those of the lower class. While it is true that the early church was made up largely of those from the lower classes, it does not follow that others were excluded. Crispus and Sosthenes were rulers of synagogues, and Dionysius, a convert at Athens, was known as the Areopagite, a member of the high court of Athens. It was not, however, until the fourth century that the world was to see a professed Christian—at least, one who favored Christianity—on the throne of the Roman Empire.

things that are not.—God chose the things that are spiritual—righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17)—rather than eating and drinking. He chose the Christian virtues rather than the Jewish practices. He chose righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (I Cor. 1:31) rather than wickedness, uncleanness, and slavery to sin—characteristics of Gentile conduct.

no flesh should glory before God.—No human being can boast of his accomplishments before God. Man cannot save himself; he can be saved only by God's grace through faith expressed in obedience. The Christian belongs to God because of his relation to Christ Jesus. By using what man calls weak and foolish, God has made it impossible for any man to boast that he could have performed Christ's redemptive work on the cross. Christ alone made that sacrifice.

wisdom from God.—Christ is the personal revelation of God; He is "the word made flesh." Through His office as prophet, He is the author of the written revelation. See I Cor. 2:6 for further comment on this wisdom.

righteousness.—This word is used in three ways in the N. T. It refers to the fact that God is right; to the standard of conduct that God demands of man; and to the status of one whom God considers right in His sight because his sins have been forgiven.

Christ is the righteousness of God in relation to all three conotations. He was without sin (John 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; II Cor. 5:21); in His conduct He always did the will of His Father (John

5:19); righteousness (remission of sins) is made possible through the blood of Christ (Rom. 3:21-25).

redemption.—Christ is our redemption, that is, He is the one who has provided our release from slavery to sin (Rom. 6:16-18). He is all that is needed. He alone by His Spirit through the apostles revealed the wisdom that is proclaimed in the message of the cross.

Summary

The interesting account of the beginning of the church in Corinth is given in Acts 18:1-17. Luke states in simplest terms that Paul left Athens and came to Corinth. There he found Aquilla and Priscilla who had recently come from Rome. The work began in the synagogue of the Jews, but Paul was soon forced to move to the house next door which belonged to a man by the named Titus Justus. Luke also records the conversion of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue. Encouraged by the vision from the Lord, Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and six months teaching the Word of God. Persecuting Jews brought Paul into the court of Gallio. His indifference to the quarrels of the Jews probably saved Paul from the beating which was given to another, Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue.

Paul visited Corinth a second time, during his third missionary tour (Acts 19:21; 20:2-3).

The problems that were faced in starting the work in Corinth set the pattern for its subsequent history. Corinth was destined to become a problem church. First Corinthians was written to straighten out their problems. There were problems of division and derelictions; there were problems of marriage and meats used in idolatrous worship; there were problems that related to women's costume in public and abuses of the Lord's supper; there were problems about spiritual gifts; there were problems connected with the doctrine of the resurrection. The problems at Corinth were very similar to the problems of the church today. First Corinthians, therefore, becomes an important book for those who seek to adjust present problems in the light of divine revelation.

Paul appropriately begins the epistle with a reference to his apostleship. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. He writes with the authority of one sent By Christ and upheld by the will of God. This assures his readers that they will find in this letter the divine solution to their problems. Paul lifts the solution of the problems of the church out of the hands of wrangling men and puts it where it belongs, within the limits of the authority of Jesus Christ as expressed in the writing of His inspired apostle.

Sosthenes, who must have been well known to the church at Corinth, is associated with Paul in the greeting to his fellow-Christians at Corinth.

Although they were guilty of conduct so unbecoming to a Christian, Paul addresses them as those who were sanctified and called saints. Thus, he upholds the ideals to which he attempts to lift them through his inspired instruction. The Corinthians were not the only ones who were sanctified and called saints, for with them Paul includes all those who, because they recognized their utter dependence on Christ for their salvation, called upon the name of Jesus Christ.

Paul's customary salutation of grace and peace sounds the deep spiritual tone of the letter.

Before taking up the problems that are to be discussed in the epistle, the apostle pauses to thank God for the spiritual enrichment of the Corinthians. God had supplied them with the information they needed as brethren in Christ and the ability to use this information when they spoke. They had received the established testimony about Christ so that they lacked nothing; they, therefore, did not need to turn to worldly wisdom for help as they awaited the day when Christ would be revealed. Such testimony would establish them to the very end as unreprovable followers of Christ. This assurance was furnished them by the faithful God who had called them through the gospel into close association with His Son.

As Paul takes up the problems which are to be discussed in the epistle, he mentions first the matters which had been reported to him by the household of Chloe. From this source he had learned of their divided state and their consequent derelictions in such matters as immorality, litigation and abuse of the body.

Paul approaches the problem of division with a view to securing his readers acceptance of the inspired solution which he presents: he exhorts them as "brethrens." He urges all of them to say the same thing, instead of saying, "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos." He urges them to settle their differences which had caused splits in the church. It was possible for all to say the same thing by adopting the same mental attitude and expressing the same opinion on such questions as these: Is Christ divided? Paul wasn't crucified for you, was he? You were not baptized into his name, were you? It was to avoid possible claim of being baptized into the name of Paul that he refrained from personally baptizing any of the Corinthians except Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephenas. Paul determined that the cross of Christ should not become an empty thing.

Having thus indicated the folly of their divisions, he continues to rebuke the sin of division as he contrasts the word of the cross with the wisdom of the world. Worldly wisdom was a contributing cause of their wrangling disputes, but Paul reminds them that the issue is salvation or destruction, as the Scriptures clearly stated. The world that followed the wise ones of that day did not know God, but God's plan was to save believers through the message of the cross. Both Jews and Greeks failed to see this. Those, however, who did see it discovered that Christ has revealed God's wisdom and exercises God's power to save.

This could easily be verified by looking at themselves. God had not called many of the wise of that day nor many of noble birth. He had chosen the humble and the weak that men might be taught not to boast in their own power, but to glory in Christ who exercises God's power to save. Christ who revealed the wisdom from God is the source of their forgiveness, cleansing, and freedom.

Questions

1. What is the history of the founding of the church at Corinth?
2. Why did Paul write the book?
3. What is the theme of First Corinthians?
4. What are its principal divisions?
5. What is said of Paul's call to apostleship?
6. What is meant by "called apostle"?
7. Who is Sosthenes? Why is he mentioned?
8. What does the word "church" mean?
9. Why is it called "the church of God"?
10. What is meant by "sanctified"? What is implied by this term as to the life of the Corinthian church?
11. How does the expression "called saints" relate to the problem at Corinth?
12. What is meant by "call upon the name of the Lord"? What bearing does this have on the problem?
13. How many times is the word "Lord" used in the first nine verses?
14. What effect would this have on the readers of the epistle?
15. In view of the situation at Corinth, well known to Paul, why speak of "grace and peace"?
16. Knowing these conditions, how could Paul say, "I thank my God"?
17. What was "the grace that had been given them"?
18. What had enriched them?
19. What is meant by "utterance" and "knowledge"?
20. How was the testimony confirmed?

21. Why did Paul say, "Ye came behind in no gift"?
22. What is meant by "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"?
23. What is meant by "confirm you unto the end"? How accomplished?
24. What is "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ"?
25. What is meant by "unreprovable"? What would its use suggest to the Corinthians?
26. What is meant by "called into the fellowship"?
27. What is meant by each word in the expression, "Lord Jesus Christ"?
28. What was Paul's purpose in appealing to the Corinthians in this name?
29. What is meant by "mind" and "judgment"?
30. What is meant by "perfected together"? How does this relate to the problem at Corinth?
31. What was the source of Paul's information about conditions in Corinth?
32. What was the nature of their divisions?
33. Why did Paul ask, "Is Christ divided?"
34. How account for Paul's remark about baptism?
35. Who were Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas?
36. How could the cross of Christ be made void?
37. What two views of the word of the cross does Paul show?
38. What two views of wisdom are given?
39. How does the power of God reach our lives?
40. What is meant by "the foolishness of preaching"?
41. How can the word of the cross save the believer?
42. In what were Jews and Greeks interested?
43. Why was Christ a stumbling block to Jews?
44. Why was the message of the gospel considered foolishness by the Greeks?
45. What is meant by the statement, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"?
46. What did Paul mean by "the foolishness of God"?
47. Why did Paul say, "beyond your calling"?
48. What is meant by "no flesh should glory before God"?
49. In what way are righteousness and redemption related to Christ?

For Discussion

1. In what ways are the divisions in the church today like those in Corinth?
2. How would the remedies for division which Paul presents in First Corinthians work today?

CHAPTER TWO

Analysis

A. Paul's preaching in Corinth (1-5).
   1. What he determined to do at Corinth (1-2).
      a) It was in accord with what he had just written about wisdom. Paul's own ministry illustrates the same issue as the lives of the Corinthian Christians.
      b) It was the thing he did when he first came to Corinth. It was an established pattern for his preaching everywhere.
      c) It was not with excellency of speech or wisdom, that is, not with exalted rhetoric or wisdom of man. It was the simple message of Christ and Him crucified; it was the gospel message which Christ revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.
   2. What his attitude was (3).
      a) It was one of weakness, fear, and trembling.
      b) Probably not fear of physical danger or what man might do to him, but fear lest he shoul fail to please his Lord Jesus Christ.
   3. What his preaching consisted in (4).
      a) Not persuasive words of wisdom such as characterized the speech of the wise men of Corinth.
      b) He said it was in demonstration of Spirit and of power, that is, it was in logically proven statements revealed by the Holy Spirit and supported by the miracles that accompanied his preaching.
   4. What his purpose was (5).
      His purpose was to preach in such a manner that the faith of his hearers should not be based on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

B. The apostles speak wisdom (6-16).
   1. The pronoun "we" suggests that he is speaking of himself and the other inspired apostles.
   2. It was wisdom for those who were fullgrown. Some who took great pride in their own wisdom looked upon the Gospel as foolishness, but Paul considered it to be wisdom for those who were mature enough to appreciate it.
   3. It was not "wisdom of the world or of the rulers of the world." Man's wisdom could not compare with the revealed wisdom spoken by the inspired apostles.
   4. Nature of this wisdom (7-9).

a) God's wisdom is in a mystery, that is, God's revealed wisdom would have remained a mystery forever if He had not made it known through the inspired apostles and prophets.
b) The rulers of the world, being uninspired, could not have known this wisdom by any means available to them.

5. How the apostles received this wisdom (10-12).
   a) God revealed it to them through the Holy Spirit who searches the deep things of God (10).
   b) This was the only way by which man could have known this mature wisdom (11-12).
      (1) The spirit of man knows about the things of man.
      (2) The Spirit of God knows about the things of God.
      (3) The inspired apostles received the Spirit which is from God in order that they might know about the things God graciously gave them.
6. The inspired apostles speak the words of this wisdom which the Spirit revealed to them (13-16).
   a) This is not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit taught the inspired apostles (13).
   b) The "natural" or uninspired man could not receive these things (14). Note: This does not say that man without the aid of the Holy Spirit could not *understand* the message revealed by the inspired apostles.
   c) They were foolishness to the uninspired man because they must be revealed through the inspired apostles who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, examine or investigate them and speak them so that they may be understood by all who read them (14).
   d) The inspired apostle (the spiritual one) investigates all things of the wisdom to be revealed through him, but no man passes on his qualifications to be an apostle (15).
   e) The reason for the apostles' ability to make known God's revealed wisdom is that they have the mind of Christ (16).

Paul's Preaching at Corinth (1-5)

Text

2:1-5. And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness,

and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Commentary

And I.—This expression requires the reader to think of what Paul had just said about the wisdom of the world. See 1:18, 21, 24, 30. In the closing paragraph of chapter one he calls on the Corinthians to think of their own situation as an illustration of his point about worldly wisdom in contrast to the word of the cross. As he begins chapter two, he refers to his ministry at Corinth to confirm his position that the word of the cross is the power of God to save the believer. It is most important to keep this in mind throughout the study of this chapter.

brethren.—This term should have helped the Corinthians recall the happy relation they had with the apostle and, indeed, among themselves when he first preached the gospel to them. It suggested the relationship between members of the family of the heavenly Father.

when I came.—As Paul was writing, he was looking back upon his whole ministry at Corinth with its problems, its successes, its discouragements, and its hopes. The history of his first ministry at Corinth is found in Acts 18:1-17. He had just concluded his work at Athens where some had believed his message about "Jesus and the resurrection." Among those who believed were "Dionysius the Areopagite and woman named Damaris, and others" (Acts 17:34). The expression "and others" is significant. How many were included in it is not known. Some have suggested that Paul failed at Athens. In the light of Luke's statement about the two people of great importance whose names he gives and the others who are not named, it would seem that there is no real ground for the supposed failure.

not with excellency of speech.—Paul did not depend on the devices of oratory to win support for his message. In II Cor. 11:16, he says, "But though I be rude in speech, yet I am not in knowledge." He may have been looked upon by the professional orator as lacking in skill, but this would not justify the supposition that he was without adequate training for his task. In Acts 22:3, he mentions his training under Gamaliel. In Gal 1:14, he tells of his education in the Jew's religion. Besides all this, he always depended upon the message that came to him "through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12).

the testimony of God.—This may mean either God's testimony or the testimony about God. Both views make good sense in the context. The message Paul preached was God's testimony; it was the word of the cross revealed by the Holy Spirit. Only God's revealed message can cope with the problem of saving the sinner.

But it could be the testimony about God, for Paul preached Christ and Him crucified. The inspired apostles were equipped to speak this message. See Matt. 10:19-20; Luke 21:14-15; John 16:13-14. Paul, of course, had all the rights and powers of an apostle (I Cor 9:1-2).

I determined not to know.—The supposed failure at Athens and the statement that "Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:5) have led some to believe that Paul changed his usual approach when he came to Corinth. But according to Acts 17:8 he did not deviate from his usual approach at Athens for there he "preached Jesus and the resurrection." The sermon about the "Unknown God" led to the conclusion that God "will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). The fact that he quoted some of their own poets does not mean that he was assuming the role of a Greek teacher by presenting his own system or way of life. As an educated man being used by the Holy Spirit, he made use of this opportunity to gain a favorable hearing for his message. But to mention their poets was enough. He proceeded to proclaim his message about the man God had ordained to judge the world. The message he preached at Corinth was exactly the same as the message he preached everywhere.

Jesus Christ and him crucified.—Despite the fact as stated in 1:23-24 that Greeks looked at the cross as foolishness and Jews found it to be a stumbling block, Paul determined to preach nothing but the message of the cross. His determination was based on the conviction that this message was the power of God to save the lost sinner; he was convinced that it had divine approval; he knew he had been called to proclaim that message. Immediately upon his conversion in Damascus, he began to "proclaim Jesus that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). There is no evidence that he ever deviated from this course. Paul was content to present "the Way" (Acts 24:14).

Let Greeks strive for excellence and skill in presenting their schemes to succeed in life, but Paul persisted in the proclamation of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. He did not need to enter into endless discussions with a view to discovering the truth as the Greeks did, for

he spoke the wisdom which God revealed to him through the Holy Spirit. This message of the cross is adequate to equip man for life here and hereafter. Paul was determined to remain true to the trust that had been committed to him. See I Tim. 1:12-17; II Tim. 1:12-14. As an inspired apostle, he was a steward of "the mysteries of God," and that required him to be faithful (I Cor. 4:1-2).

I was with you in weakness.—Paul often admitted his weakness and his dependence on God (II Cor. 12:9-10). His whole ministry was in accord with his remark in I Cor. 1:31, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

fear and trembling.—He was not afraid for his own safety. See II Cor. 11:24-32 which tells of the things he had suffered. For the Lord's assurance to him in the face of danger, see Acts 18:9-10. In II Tim. 1:12, he tells of his own confidence in face of suffering. It is quite possible that he uses the term "fear and trembling" in the sense in which it is used in Eph. 6:5 which speaks of the proper attitude of respect and obedience a servant should have toward his master. Paul certainly held this attitude toward his Lord, for, as he preached the word of the cross, his concern was not for the approval of men, but for the approval of the Lord (I Thes. 2:4).

faith stand in the power of God.—The faith of those who were being saved rested on the solid foundation of God's revealed wisdom. It could not rest on the sandy foundation of the wisdom of men, no the miracles wrought through the apostle, demonstrated the mes- matter how cleverly they might present it. God's power, exhibited in sage to be true. For the miracles wrought through Paul, see II Cor. 12:12; Acts 19:11-12.

By no stretch of the imagination could man have devised the scheme of redemption presented in the Bible. By the time the gospel was being preached in the first century, the world had been given ample time to try all of its schemes to save itself: pagan religion; animal and even human sacrifice; philosophies of some of the greatest thinkers the world had produced; and military force. All had failed. Surely the world was ready for the message of divine wisdom. Only God's power channeled into the lives of men through the gospel could save a world "dead in trespasses and sin." (Eph 2:1).

By this careful approach in verses 1-5, Paul has prepared his readers for the next thought of the chapter: Wisdom spoken through the inspired apostles.

The Apostles Speak Wisdom (6-16)

Text

2:6-16. We speak wisdom, however, among them that are full-grown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought: 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: 8 which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: 9 but as it is written,

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,
And which entered not into the heart of man,
Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.

10 But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. 12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. 14 Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself if judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But he have the mind of Christ.

Commentary

We.—It is important that we keep in mind the antecedent of this pronoun. In 2:1-5, it is clear that Paul is speaking of his own preaching as an inspired apostle. Beginning in verse 6, he includes all of the apostles in the statement, "We speak wisdom." He does not say "we" just to avoid the use of the first person singular. Note II Cor. 10:1 where he uses the expression, "I Paul myself." In the light of the context and the history of Pentecost (Acts 2), this could not possibly refer to all Christians. Only the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on that day. But the people, without miraculous aid, did understand what the Spirit said to them through the apostles. The only illumination they needed to realize that they were sinners of the worst sort was the light that fell on their minds through the inspired

message spoken through the apostle. The force of the facts about the life, death and resurrection of Christ led them to cry out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" It required no operation of the Spirit other than the command issued through the apostles to let them understand that they needed to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins.

Paul, of course, had all the power of the other apostles. It was necessary for him to include all of the apostles in this reference to the manner in which God revealed His wisdom.

Keeping this antecedent in mind will help determine who the "natural man" is and who is meant by the expression, "he that is spiritual." See notes on verses 14-15.

wisdom.—Once again, Paul points out the contrast between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God revealed by Christ through the inspired apostles. The rulers of this world who crucified the Lord of glory were not acting upon the instruction of the wisdom of God. But on the Day of Pentecost, the three thousand who had been deceived by them reversed the decision they had made when they cried out for Jesus to be crucified, and they got themselves baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38-39).

It is evident that man could have understood what God had revealed in the Old Testament concerning the Christ. God evidently intended that His revealed wisdom should guide the thinking of men, not some supposed inner direction of the Spirit.

God's wisdom in a mystery.—"Mystery" in the New Testament refers to that which would have forever remained unknowable if God had not revealed it through the inspired apostles and prophets. But since it has been revealed, we are not to assume that it takes additional illumination or miraculous effort of the Spirit to enable us to understand it. Paul clearly showed the Ephesians that God had made this mystery known through him, and that the Ephesians could know of his understanding when they read what he had written (Eph. 2:1-4).

A few simple rules will help us when we read the Bible: (1) Scripture must be understood in the light of its context. An important illustration of this is found in I Cor. 2:9. Popular interpretation makes this verse refer to heaven, "things which God prepared for them that loved him." But the context clearly shows that it has to do with the wonderful things revealed for us in the Bible. Scripture is always more helpful when taken in the sense intended by the inspired writers. Context refers to what goes immediately before and what follows immediately after a particular verse. It also suggests the

necessity of keeping the text and its immediate context in line with the whole thought or theme of the book. In studying First Corinthians (or any other book of the Bible) it is well to read the whole book frequently, keeping in mind the progress of thought at all times. Help in doing this will be had by reference to the charts that picture the development of the theme of the book. (2) Some other rules that will help are these: Know who is speaking and to whom the message is spoken. Note carefully the purpose of the statement, the meaning of words, the antecedents of pronouns, and all other grammatical and syntactical matters. (3) A very important rule to remember is this: The New Testament interprets the Old Testament; the epistles, which were written within the framework of the history given in Acts, interprets the gospels; literal language explains the figurative; plain teaching explains the symbolic. (See Carnel, *A Case For Orthodox Theology,* p. 53; The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.) (4) One who seeks to understand the Bible must determine first what the particular passage says and then what is meant by the statement. After this is done one can make application of the verse to the particular problem at hand. (See Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* p. 5; The Macmillan Company, N. Y., 1941).

know.—None of the rulers of the world has known the wisdom of God. Verse 14 states that the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God. But according to verse 12, the inspired apostles did know the things that were graciously given them from God.

The problem involved in these statements hinges on the meaning of the two Greek words which are here translated by the one word "know." The first of these words, which Paul uses in connection with the inability of the natural man and the rulers of the world to know the wisdom of God, means to become aware of through experience or observation. It may also mean to understand. In the light of the context, which of the meanings best fits this passage? Are we to say that the natural or uninspired man cannot understand the message revealed by the Holy Spirit? Some do take this position. But are we to say that God who created man, an intelligent being capable of communicating his thoughts through language, could not speak to His creature in a manner so as to be understood? What is the purpose of God's revealed wisdom if it cannot be understood? But, of course, man by his own experience and observation could never know God's mind. The only way he could know it was by the revelation through the apostles and prophets. See II Pet. 1:17-21; Heb. 1:1-2.

The other word which is translated "know" means to know by mental insight, reflection, or by information being given. The revealed wisdom of God clearly falls into this category. That is why Paul uses this word when he says that the Spirit was given to the apostles that they might know (as a result of information given them by the Holy Spirit) the things that God graciously gave to them.

While it is true that these two words are often used synonymously, it will be enlightening to keep the distinction in mind in studying this chapter. The uninspired man could never have produced the Bible; but an intelligent person can, by using the rules that apply to the understanding and interpretation of all language, understand the Bible.

A good example of the meaning of both of these words is found in John 14:7. Jesus said, "If you had known me, ye would have known my Father." The first word for *know* is the one that means to recognize, to know by experience; the second is the word for *know,* meaning to know by information given. The distinction does not appear in our English translations, but according to the Greek text, what Jesus said was this: "If you had recognized me, you would have known the Father I am revealing to you."

But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God.—The spirit of the world is that spirit of the rulers of this age which resulted from ignorance of God's will. It was the spirit that led them to crucify the Lord of glory. But the Spirit which the inspired apostles had received was the Holy Spirit which Christ promised to them (Acts 1:8) and which they received when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). That is why Paul says, "we (the inspired apostles) received the Spirit (not spirit) from God in order that we might know (by revelation) the things of God."

"The spirit which is from God" surely refers to the Holy Spirit. The word should be capitalized when referring to the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit which is from God" is the same as "the Spirit" referred to in verse 10. There the word is capitalized as it should be.

we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.—"We" refers to the inspired apostles, not to Christians in general. The apostles did not speak a message taught by human wisdom. It was divinely revealed through the Holy Spirit. See James 3:15-17 for a similar contrast between the reasoning of man and the wisdom from God.

combining spiritual things with spiritual.—There are many different

interpretations of this statement. The American Standard Version supplies "words" in italics since it is not in the Greek in this phrase. It is in the immediate context and may be correctly implied in this phrase also. In the footnote, they suggest this possibility: "interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men." While there is merit in the reading in the body of the text, there is little merit to the view given by the footnote. Chrystom, who lived in the fourth century, suggest that the spiritual things revealed through the apostles are combined with the spiritual things already revealed through the testimonies, types, and demonstrations of the Old Testament. He points out that we are utterly dependent on revelation to understand God's mysteries. It is easy to see that Paul in this very chapter combines the revelation given by him with that which had been written. See verse 9. Those who hold to the "verbal inspiration" theory will find little support in the Greek text of this verse. It does, however, clearly support the view of revelation through the inspired apostles.

Now the natural man.—Traditional theology makes it difficult for some to see what Paul is saying here. It is contended that no unsaved man can understand the deep things of the Word of God, and that even dedicated scholars are unable to use the Word successfully without illumination of the mind provided miraculously by the Holy Spirit. (See Wuest, *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament,* p. 149; Moody Press, Chicago). If this is true, how can the believer be saved through the message of the cross which Paul preached? (I Cor. 1:21) While the natural man can not know the mysteries of God's wisdom by his own reasoning, he can understand the word revealed by the inspired apostles. It would be foolishness indeed if none but the inspired could understand the message after it had been revealed. If it takes miraculous illumination on the part of man to understand the Bible, then the Bible itself is superfluous.

The word translated "natural man" refers to man as an earthly being limited in his knowledge to what he can know by his own mental powers. It contemplates man as an earthly creature without miraculous powers given through the Holy Spirit. It is man by himself without the aid of divine revelation.

The context makes it clear that the natural man is the same as the rulers of this world mentioned in verse 6, that is, man to whom the mysteries of God had not been revealed. The natural man is contrasted with the "one that is spiritual." The "one who is spiritual" is the inspired apostle or prophet. The natural man, then, is the uninspired man.

It should be remembered that while in chapter 2 the contrast is between natural and spiritual, in chapter 3 it is between carnal and spiritual. In chapter 2 the inspired apostle is contrasted with the natural man such as the rulers of this age. In chapter 3, however, the contrast is between the one who is undeveloped in Christian character and what they should have been as ones whose lives were dominated by the message revealed through the Holy Spirit. In this connection see Gal. 5:16-24 where the thought of being led by what is spirit is contrasted with what is flesh. The works of the flesh are contrasted with the fruit of the spirit. The fruit of the spirit is the Christian character of the one who permits his spirit to respond to the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the Word.

foolishness to him.—See 1:25. Foolish things have no meaning. Likewise, the mysteries of God before they were revealed to man had no meaning to him.

he cannot know them.—Paul has explained in 11-12 that no man can know what is in the mind of another except, of course, as it is told to him. So man cannot know what is in the mind of God except through the revelation by the Spirit through the apostles and prophets.

spiritually judged.—The word "judged" in this verse means to sift, examine, investigate. This particular Greek word translated "judge" in our Bible is found in the following verses of First Corinthians: 2:14, 15; 4:3, 4; 9:3; 10:25, 27; 14:24. It will be rewarding to read these in the light of the above definition.

The word is often used to describe a preliminary examination or investigation before a decision is rendered. Such investigations may have to do with (1) sifting evidence to be presented at a trial, or (2) investigating the qualifications of one who is to be a witness or who is to sit as judge. It is the word used to describe Pilate's preliminary investigation of charges against Jesus before he pronounced Him innocent. It is used to denote the action of the inspired apostle who by the Holy Spirit investigated the "deep things of God" and then spoke in language that could be understood by their hearers.

he himself is judged of no man.—Since the word "judge" is used with reference to the investigation of one's qualifications for a task, it is appropriate to say of the "one who is spiritual" that he is "judged" of no man. Of course, God passed on the qualifications of His apostles. The Corinthians were not qualified to pass on Paul's fitness to be an apostle, for only the Lord could do that (I Cor. 4:3-4).

The "spiritual one" is judged by no man. The context makes it clear that this is the inspired apostle, but this does not mean that the

apostles were above criticism for mistakes in personal conduct. Peter's action at Antioch for which he was rebuked by Paul answers this objection (Gal. 2:11-12). Paul does not say that the world cannot judge the actions of a Christian. Jesus said that men were to see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). The investigation, however, of the fitness of one to be an apostle of Christ is not the right of any man; only the Lord can do this (I Cor. 4:3-4). Thus the inspired apostle, by the power of the Holy Spirit, investigates the deep things of God before he speaks them in Spirit-taught words, but no man passes on his qualifications to be an apostle.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord?—This is the same word for "know" as in verse 14. The question is: Who, by his own reasoning power and without revelation from God, has known the mind of the Lord? This is the same thing that was said of the "natural man" and the rulers of this world. No man could know the mind of the Lord apart from His revealed message. This same thing was made clear in verses 10-13 which deal with the revelation of God's message through the inspired apostles.

But we have the mind of Christ.—"We" has the same antecedent throughout this section (6-16). It cannot refer to all Christians; context requires us to relate it to the inspired apostles and prophets. They had the "mind of Christ" because the Holy Spirit revealed it to them (see verses 10 and 12). How thankful we should be that God created us with a mind capable of reading and understanding the message revealed through the inspired apostles of Christ.

Summary

Chapter two continues the contrast of worldly wisdom and the word of the cross. It presents Paul's own explanation of the nature of his preaching in Corinth. He came to Corinth just after his experience in preaching "Jesus and the resurrection" in Athens. Although Corinth was a city of the worldly wise, he was determined to do exactly what he had been doing from the moment of his conversion: preach Christ and Him crucified. This is what he did at Damascus, at Athens, at Corinth, and ultimately at Rome, for even there he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

The Greeks loved to indulge in long and involved argumentation, not so much with a view to discovering truth as with a display of oratorical skill that enabled them to win the argument. Paul, however, was not concerned with their methods; he was convinced that he had the revealed truth of the gospel and was content to preach that alone. He freely recognized his own weakness and depended on God for the

revealed wisdom he preached. Like a slave who feared to disobey his master, Paul preached the word of the cross with fear and trembling lest he fail to do so in a manner pleasing to his Lord. His message was not in persuasive words of the wisdom of man, but in the truth of the gospel which was supported by the divine approval of the miracles that accompanied the preaching of the apostles. Thus the faith of the Corinthians had a solid foundation in the revealed wisdom of God rather than a sandy foundation of human speculation.

Lest some might be led to assume that the message of the cross was inferior to worldly wisdom, Paul explained that it was wisdom among the mature, implying a state of arrested mental development on the part of those who followed the wisdom of that age. No one who has followed the cogent reasoning of Paul in his epistles can doubt the validity of his claim. The conduct of the rulers of the world and the quotations from the Scriptures prove his statement. The mysteries of God which were hidden through the ages would have remained hidden forever if God had not chosen to reveal them through the inspired apostles and prophets. Just as one man can not know the mind of another except he be told, so man cannot know the mind of God except through the revelation God made by the Holy Spirit. The apostles spoke the truth of the gospel in clear and understandable language. The salvation of the sinner depends on his believing that message.

The rules of interpreting all language apply to the Bible also. Man does not need to have some miraculous illumination of his mind by the Holy Spirit to read and understand the Bible any more than a book of history. God created man with a mind which is capable of understanding and responding to His directives for life here and hereafter as they are given in the Bible. While there are things in the Bible that will challenge the greatest of minds, it is evident that it can be understood and followed as easily as Adam understood what God told him to do in the Garden. We cannot safely claim that the sin of Adam so corrupted the mind of man that he cannot understand and obey the truth God revealed in the Bible.

What then is the natural man? Paul's own example of what he meant by this phrase is the reference to the rulers of the world who crucified the Lord of glory. They had no means of knowing about God's wisdom until it has been revealed by the inspired servants of God. Natural man is simply man left to himself without the benefit of inspired revelation to direct his way of life. The natural man is contrasted with the inspired apostles. God selected them. No man

passed on their qualifications to be apostles of Christ. And because they were the inspired apostles of Christ, Paul could say "we have the mind of Christ."

In this way Paul led to the subject matter of the third chapter. He is now ready to rebuke them for failure to heed what he had taught them; the result of that failure was the sin of division.

Questions

1. What is the relation between the subject matter of this chapter and chapter one?
2. How does Paul's work at Corinth prove the same point which he illustrates by calling attention to the status of the Corinthians in chapter one?
3. Why does Paul address them as "brethren" as he begins this chapter?
4. What is known about the history of Paul's first ministry at Corinth?
5. What had been doing immediately prior to his coming to Corinth?
6. What can be said to refute the charge that Paul failed at Athens?
7. Why did Paul say that he did not come "with excellency of speech"?
8. What did he mean by his remark about "rude of speech"?
9. What is known about the academic training of Paul before he was commissioned by Christ as the apostle to the Gentiles?
10. In what two ways may we understand the expression "testimony of God"? Explain how each may fit the context of verse 1.
11. How explain Paul's determination "not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified" in the light of his educational background?
12. On what was his determination based?
13. What evidence is there to prove that Paul, from the beginning of his ministry to its close without exception, preached Christ and him crucified?
14. In what way does the preaching of Paul stand in striking contrast to the method of the Greek teachers of his day?
15. How did Paul regard his responsibility in relation to "the mysteries of God"?
16. Why did Paul mention his weakness? What did he mean by it?
17. What is known of the dangers Paul faced in his ministry?
18. Is there any evidence to support the theory that he feared for his personal safety?

19. What assurance did the Lord give him in face of danger?
20. What is a probable meaning of his remark about "fear and trembling"?
21. What kind of foundation for faith did Paul present to the Corinthians?
22. How did God demonstrate that the message of the apostles was true?
23. Why is it impossible for men to have produced the revelation of God's mind which we have in the Bible?
24. In what way was the world ready for this final revelation of God's will which was preached by the inspired apostles?
25. How did Paul prepare his readers for the discussion of wisdom for the mature?
26. What is the antecedent of the pronoun "we" in verses 6-16?
27. Why is it impossible to refer it to all Christians?
28. What is implied by the statement, "Wisdom among the fullgrown?"
29. How is this wisdom contrasted with the wisdom of the world or of the rulers of this age?
30. What evidence that uninspired man without the aid of miraculous illumination can and did understand the message revealed by the Holy Spirit and spoken through the apostles?
31. What is meant in the New Testament by "mystery"?
32. What proof is given in Ephesians that the ordinary reader can understand the Bible?
33. What are some rules that will help us to understand the Bible? See Eph. 3:4; Acts 17:11; Psa. 1:2; II Tim. 3:14.
34. What is meant by the two Greek words translated "know" in this chapter?
35. In what connection does Paul use each of them?
36. How do the remarks of Jesus in John 14:7 illustrate the meaning of these two words?
37. To whom did Paul refer when he said "We received the Spirit which is from God"?
38. When should the word "spirit" be capitalized in the Bible?
39. What bearing does this have on the meaning of verse 12?
40. What enabled the apostles to speak "the things of God"?
41. What is the source of the words spoken by the apostles?
42. What does James say about the two-fold classification of wisdom?
43. What bearing does this have on Paul's statement to the Corinthians?

44. How did Chrysostom understand the statement, "combining spiritual things with spiritual"?
45. What other explanations are there for this expression?
46. What bearing does it have on "verbal inspiration"?
47. What does traditional theology say about "the natural man"?
48. With what does Paul contrast the "natural man"?
49. What is the "natural man"?
50. What evidence that Paul means the same thing by "natural man" and "the rulers of this age"?
51. Who is the "one who is spiritual"?
52. What is the difference between the way the word "spiritual" is used in chapter two and in chapter three?
53. Why are the "mysteries of God" foolishness to the natural man?
54. What is meant by the expression, "he cannot know them"?
55. What is the definition of the word "know" in this expression?
56. What is meant by "judged" in verses 14 and 15?
57. How can this word be used to explain the apostles' ability to reveal the truth of the gospel?
58. What is meant by saying that the one who is spiritual is judged of no man?
59. Is this world capable of judging the acts of Christians?
60. To whom does Paul refer when he says "we have the mind of Christ"?

For Discussion

1. What place should education have in training today's ministers?
2. What place should Bible training have in preparing men to preach?
3. What would happen if all preachers today limited their preaching to the subject, "Christ and him crucified"?

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis

A. The apostle turns his attention to the spiritually immature converts to Christianity at Corinth (1-4).
   1. He addresses them as 'brethren." By so doing he prepares them to accept the correction he is about to give.
   2. The problem he faced when he was at Corinth (1-2a).
      a) He could not speak to them as to spiritual, that is, mature Christians.
      b) He had to speak to them as unto carnal (made of flesh).
      c) They were babes in Christ, that is, just barely beginning their Christian life.
      d) He fed them with milk, not meat. He taught them the elementary things of the gospel, but they were not able to advance to the more mature things of the Christian life.
   3. They were in the same state as he writes to them in this letter (2b-4).
      a) "Ye are not yet able," that is, to accept the advanced teaching. They were still like babes after all the time that had elapsed since their conversion.
      b) Evidence that supports this charge (3).
         (1) They were still carnal (belonged to flesh) as shown by the jealousy and strife among them.
         (2) They were conducting themselves as mere men, not like spiritual beings, that is, "new creatures in Christ."
      c) An illustration of what he meant by this charge is suggested by his question, "When one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?"

B. He explains the relation of himself and Apollos to the brethen at Corinth (5-9).
   1. The questions that were designed to make them think: "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul?" They knew, of course, who they were, but they needed to be reminded of what they were.
   2. The answer to the question:
      a) As to the church, they were ministers (literally, deacons) through whom they had believed on Christ.
      b) As to the Lord, each was doing the task the Lord gave to him: Paul planted, Apollos watered.
      c) As to God, it was He who gave the increase.
      d) As to each other, they are one thing, that is, servants of

God. Each of them shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. This dispels any notion that Paul or Apollos approved their saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos."

3. A summary of these relationships shows the reason for what he has just said (9).
   a) Paul and Apollos are fellow-workers who belong to God.
   b) The church at Corinth is God's field to be cultivated and God's building which He builds through His servants, one of whom lays the foundation (Paul) and another (such as Apollos) builds on it.

C. He calls their attention to a very significant fact: The church is the temple of God (10-17).
   1. Laying the foundation and building on it (10-11).
      a) As a wise master builder, Paul laid the foundation. He did this by preaching the word of the cross.
      b) Another (such as Apollos or some other faithful teacher of the Word) builds on the foundation.
      c) A word of caution to each who builds on the foundation:
         (1) "Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon."
         (2) The reason for the warning: There is no problem about laying the foundation, for that foundation is Christ; there is no other. The problem had to do with the kind of disciples each teacher had.
   2. Paul explains what he has just said about building on the foundation (12-15).
      a) There are two kinds of building materials: gold, silver, costly stones; and wood, hay, stubble. One is fire-proof; the other will burn. These building materials represent the disciples that teachers like Apollos will have—some will be faithful, some will not.
      b) The test that will show which one of these two classes will represent each man's work will be:
         (1) The day in which each man's disciples face the trials of the Christian life.
         (2) The trials are like fire that can destroy the wood, hay, and stubble; but not the gold, silver, and costly stones.
         (3) The fiery trials will show just what sort each teacher's work is, that is, whether his pupils will stand the test or fail.

c) The effect of the result of these trials on the teacher (faithful men like Apollos).

(1) If his works remains, that is, if his disciples prove faithful, he will receive the reward of work well done. That will be the joy of seeing those whom he taught remaining faithful to the Lord.

(2) If any man's work burns, that is, if his disciples fail in the fiery trials of the Christian life, the teacher suffers loss. His effort is wasted; he has only grief over those who did not remain faithful to the Lord.

(3) The teacher, that is, the faithful one like Apollos who teaches the truth of the gospel, shall be saved. If he is faithful, he does not go down with his unfaithful disciples. But he has to endure the same tests in his life as a Christian that his disciples face, that is, "as through fire."

3. Paul asks the question that compels the Corinthians to see that all this applies to them (16).

a) The two-fold question: Don't you know that you are God's temple? Don't you know that God's Spirit dwells in you?

4. Then he points out the fate of the one who destroys God's temple, the church (17).

a) God will destroy that one.

b) He will do so because God's temple is holy, and "such (that is, holy persons) are ye."

D. His earnest exhortation (3:18-23).

1. Let no man deceive himself about the question of wisdom (18-20).

a) This is directed to the one who thinks he is wise in this age: Let him become a fool, that he may become wise, that is, let him accept the wisdom God has revealed through the inspired apostles and prophets.

b) The wisdom of this world, that is, of the people who live in it, is foolishness with God. He is able to cope with their craftiness; the Lord knows their reasonings are vain.

2. Let no one glory in men (21-23).

a) The reason for this exhortation: "All things are yours."

b) This includes:

(1) Men in whom they were boasting, whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas.

(2) The world with its supposed wisdom.
(2) Life and death.
(4) Things present and things to come.

c) A most important matter which they were evidently forgetting: "You are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

His Spiritually Immature Converts (1-4)

Text

3:1-4. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able; 3 for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men? 4 For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?

Commentary

And I brethren.—Paul continues his rebuke of the sin of division. When he was at Corinth, he found some who were more interested in their own wisdom than in the word of the cross. Some of his converts were spiritually immature. They were divided over loyalties to men. They had evidently failed to heed the plain message of God's wisdom which Paul preached to them. But he calls them "brethren" for they were in Christ even though they were only "babes" so far as development was concerned.

not spiritual, but carnal.—"Spiritual" implies inadequate appreciation of what it means to be a new creature in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). It is not to be equated with mere emotionalism. It begins with an intelligent grasp of the facts of the gospel as proclaimed by the inspired apostles. It is conviction and determination to act in accord with the teaching of Christ. It also implies the stirring of the deepest emotions of which the human heart is capable, that is, Christian love, joy, and peace. See Rom. 14:17.

"Carnal" in this context refers not to the man of the world but to the spiritually immature "babes in Christ." There are two words translated "carnal" in this section. In verse two, the word means "made of flesh." In verse three, it means "belonging to flesh." The distinction is interesting. Think of Christians who should live in the realm of spirit being made of flesh and belonging to flesh. This was the result of following the teaching of men rather than the word of the cross.

Neither of these terms suggests the depravity of human nature inherited from Adam. Both "made of flesh" and "belonging to flesh" are used with reference to the state of arrested development which characterized those who failed to make progress in the Christian life.

A similar situation is described in Heb. 5:11-6:8. Some had been Christians long enough that they should have become teachers, but they needed some one to teach them the A B C's of the gospel. They were like babes who had to be fed on milk, not solid food. They were without experience in the word of righteousness. There is solid food in the gospel for the mature Christian, but the people at Corinth were not able to appreciate it.

In chapter two Paul contrasts "the natural man" with "the one who is spiritual." The context shows that this distinction referred to the uninspired man in contrast to the inspired apostles. In chapter three, however, the contrast is between the one who belongs to flesh and the one who is spiritually mature. It is the contrast between arrested development and normal growth in Christians. To equate "carnal" with "natural" and to assume that all men by nature are incapable of responding to the teaching of the Holy Spirit which was revealed through the apostles is to completely ignore the context in which the two terms are found.

Paul proves his charge that they are carnal by reminding them of their jealousy and strife. This is the very opposite of love which, if followed, will overcome strife, faction, division, pride, and jealousy in the church (I Cor. 13:1-13).

babes in Christ.—According to Heb. 5:13, the one who is inexperienced in the word of righteousness is a babe. He is the one who is fed on milk, that is, who is to be taught the elementary things of the gospel. Solid food is for the mature Christian. It includes such things as the teaching about Christ our high priest; the necessity of pressing on to perfection; the issues of faith, repentance, and the possession of the promises of God. See Heb. 6:1-12.

Every new Christian is in a sense, a babe in Christ. Some, of course, begin this experience with greater understanding and appreciation of what it means than others. But all start with the basic elements of the gospel—belief in Christ based on the resurrection (Rom. 10:9-10); a determination to forsake sin and to live for Christ (repentance); entering into the agreement with Christ to acknowledge Him as prophet, priest, and king (the good confession); and, as the culminating act of being born into the family of God, being immersed in water in the name of Christ for the remission of sins (bap-

tism). How well one grasps the significance of these things may well determine the rate of his spiritual growth in Christ.

The writer of Hebrews chides his readers for still being babes when they had been Christians long enough to have become teachers. Although this condition at Corinth had been produced by jealousy and strife, it is possible that some spiritual immaturity today may arise from other causes. It may be produced by a failure to provide an adequate program of Bible instruction for the whole church. It may be the result of indifference and lack of a real desire to know the rich things of the Word. Too often people have assumed that all the Bible should be as simple as kindergarten lessons. If that were true, it is doubtful if there would ever be such a thing as a fullgrown Christian. Probably one of the greatest causes of spiritual immaturity is the failure of the leadership in the church to provide opportunities for all to share in the Lord's work. Merely attending worship services and training classes will never do it. Each one, if he is to become a mature servant of the Lord, must be led to share in spreading the gospel by at least making friendly, Christian calls that will demonstrate that the church is interested in others. The very finest of diet without exercise will produce weaklings. There is a crying need today for programs that will help people take an active part in spreading the gospel. The usual Sunday morning scolding which the church receives for not doing this will only make the situation worse. Those who can make calls should take the inexperienced along until they too have learned the value and blessing of actually doing something for the Lord. Putting money into the church treasury to hire a paid caller won't accomplish the desired end. There are millions of Christians who have never been directly responsible for the conversion of one soul to Christ. I believe this is largely because they have not been shown how and what to do. It will take some organization, planning, and specific information about when, where, why, and on whom the calls are to be made. With adequate Bible teaching and actual work in sharing the gospel with others, there is no reason why churches cannot be filled with mature Christians.

not yet able.—It was bad enough that Paul encountered them as spiritual dwarfs; it is a worse tragedy that they remained like that. In view of what is said about them in First Corinthians, it would be necessary for them to get rid of their divisions, immorality, lawsuits before pagan judges, factions that prevented them having the Lord's supper, and all other things contrary to the gospel before they could be looked upon as mature in Christ.

I am of Paul.—In spite of all the effort Paul made to exalt Christ, it is strange that some were saying, "I belong to Paul." This is the sort of thing that one would expect in the realm of politics, not the church. But because these things were present, the apostle asks, "Are ye not men?" Evidently the Christian who has God's revealed wisdom in the Bible should stop conducting himself according to the standards of men. If they were Christians of the sort they should be, that is, proving by their lives that they really belonged to Christ, they would be "glorifying God in the body" (I Cor. 6:20).

The Relation of Paul and Apollos to the Church (5-9)

Text

3:5-9. What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. 6 I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building.

Commentary

What then is Apollos?—The Corinthians had made men (Apollos and Paul are mentioned to illustrate the point) heads of the parties that divided the church. But what had God intended men to be in relation to His church? "Ministers through whom ye believed." There is no possible suggestion in this term that God approved the claim of the Corinthians to belong to Apollos or to Paul or to any other man. The human tendency is to strive for greatness by exalting one man above another. Christ, however, showed that the way to true greatness is the way of humility and service. He said, "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45). The word which He uses in this statement is the verb form of the word *deacon.* For Paul and Apollos to be called ministers or deacons of Christ was all the honor a faithful servant of Christ could ask for. *Brethren* expresses the relation between members of the church; *deacon* expresses the relation to Christ of those who are engaged in performing a service under His direction.

It should be noted that Apollos who was not an apostle was called

a minister (deacon) just as Paul was. The tendency of some to make a distinction of rank between the elder and the deacon violates this principle. Both of these terms refer to functions to be performed under the Lord and not to rank. Note that the apostle Peter, in addressing the elders, calls himself a fellow-elder (I. Pet. 5:1).

God gave the increase.—As God servants, men are under obligation to do His will, but it is God who gives the increase to their efforts. God gives the increase when the Word is planted by faithful preaching and teaching. Paul, who first preached the gospel at Corinth, is likened to the one who sows the seed. Apollos, who followed him and taught the new converts, is likened to the one who did the irrigating. Each did the work the Lord gave him to do, and God gave the increase. There is, therefore, no occasion for strife, jealousy, and division over any man. Let the glory be given to God; let Christ and His Word be exalted in the church; then will the sin of division that is causing the church to be like "babes in Christ" be overcome.

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one.—That is, they are one thing: ministers or deacons of Christ. And as ministers, each is to receive the reward for faithfulness to the Lord.

For we are God's fellow-workers.—Paul and Apollos were fellow-workers who belonged to God. Since they were partners, there was no reason for anyone to say, "I belong to Paul" or "I belong to Apollos."

ye are God's husbandry, God's building.—The field and the building are God's. The church belongs to God, not men. Since the workers also belong to God, why divide the church over them?

The Church is the Temple of God (10-17)

Text

3:10-17. According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire. 16 Know

ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.

Commentary

According to the grace of God.—Paul looked upon his ministry as a favor God had extended to him. His attitude was one of humility. His example would have helped the church to see the error of dividing the body of Christ through exalting one leader above another.

a wise masterbuilder.—Paul had spoken of himself in relation to the church as a minister (deacon) of Christ. In 4:15, he refers to himself as a teacher and father. The figure of masterbuilder fits this context since the church is presented as a temple. But he is a wise masterbuilder. As the apostle of Christ, he spoke the revealed wisdom of God rather than the wisdom of men. The foundation of the temple of God could not be laid in any other way, for it was God who was building the church through His workers.

I laid a foundation.—The Corinthians are reminded that the foundation of their Christian life was laid by one who knew how to lay a proper foundation. Their spiritual immaturity could not be blamed on the foundation or the one who laid it. Paul laid the foundation by preaching Christ and Him crucified (2:2); by showing that it was necessary to believe the word of the cross in order to be saved (1:21); by instructing the believer to be baptized, not in his but in the name of Christ (1:14; 10:1-2; 12:13).

another buildeth thereon.—This is a reference to Apollos and other faithful teachers like him who instructed the new converts at Corinth. It has nothing to do with false teachers or to building on a false foundation.

let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon.—It was just as important for the builder of the superstructure to exercise every care in his work as it was for the one who laid the foundation. The foundation that Paul laid was the true foundation. That, however, did not guarantee the success of the building that was to be erected upon it. Consequently, the apostle warns other faithful teachers to take heed as to kind of building materials (disciples) they use.

foundation . . . is Jesus Christ.—The temple of God can have only one foundation, Jesus Christ. The rock upon which Jesus said He would build His church is the truth that He is the Christ, the Son of

the living God. Peter's own statement should be considered when interpreting what Jesus said to him (Matt. 16:18). He speaks of the Lord as "a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God, elect, precious" (I Peter 2:4-8). See also Isa. 28:16 and Psa. 118:22 from which Peter quotes. In the light of these remarks, it is difficult to see how Peter could be considered as the foundation of the church. The reference to the foundation of the apostles and prophets in Eph. 2:20 is to the foundation which they laid by preaching the Word.

gold, silver, costly stones; wood, hay, stubble.—These are the two classes of building materials. One is fireproof, the other will burn; one is costly, the other is relatively inexpensive. The point of the apostles' concern, however, is their ability to withstand fire. These building materials represent two classes of disciples a teacher may have. Some are like fireproof materials for they will withstand the fiery trials through which they are to pass. Others are like wood that can be destroyed by fire. They will not stand the trials that come upon them to prove them (I Pet. 4:12-13).

the day will declare it.—Of course, each one will face the Day of Judgment and give account of the deeds done in the body (II Cor. 5:10). But in all probability, the day to which Paul is referring is the Christian life with its fiery trials. In Paul's time, many were called upon to give their lives for their faith in Christ. Some were burned at the stake; some were tortured to death; some fought with wild beasts in the arena to the amusement of heartless spectators. The ancient martyrs, of course, were not the only ones to face persecution for the sake of Christ. The test that comes to most Christians today is the test, not of dying, but of living for Christ. We are reminded of the trials of Israel in the wilderness that caused many of them to fail to enter the Promised Land (I Cor. 10:5-10). For a list of the sufferings of Paul, see II Cor. 11:24-28 and I Cor. 4:9-13.

the fire will prove each man's work.—The trials of the Christian life will demonstrate what sort the teacher's disciples are. Will they be destroyed like wood, hay and stubble, or will they withstand the fiery trials like gold, silver and costly stones? This was the problem at Corinth. The foundation had been laid by Paul. Apollos and others like him had continued to instruct the new converts. But they had not grown to maturity; they were filled with jealousy and strife; they were a disappointment to their teachers; they were not standing the test.

if any man's work shall abide.—The task of the faithful teacher is not

completely discouraging. Apollos and others like him could look with confidence to the faithful endurance of trials by some of those who had been instructed in the gospel by them.

God's Word is complete in matters pertaining to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3). It tells how to become a Christian and how to live the Christian life. It furnishes the Christian with "the whole armor of God" that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11). It equips him with the shield of faith with which he is able to "quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16). Paul warns against overconfidence, but he also shows that the way of escape has been provided that the man of faith may be able to endure the trials of the Christian life (I Cor. 10:12-13). Peter points out the course to follow to make sure of entering the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:5-11).

he shall receive a reward.—The reward that the faithful teacher receives is the joy of knowing that he has been faithful to the Lord and the joy of seeing those whom he has instructed serving Christ, remaining true to Him through the trials of life (Phil. 4:1).

if any man's work shall be burned.—Even faithful teachers cannot be sure that those whom they instruct will withstand the "fiery trials." Jesus faced this in His ministry. Judas betrayed Him; Peter denied Him. At one time, the crowds who had been fed on the loaves and fishes deserted Him to such an extent that He said to the apostles who remained with Him, "You wouldn't go away also, would you?" (John 6:66-69) Paul wrote with an evident note of sadness of Demas who had forsaken him because he loved this present age (II Tim. 4:10). The writer of Hebrews warns of the peril of those who were once enlightened and then fell away (Heb. 6:4-8).

he shall suffer loss.—The teacher should do everything possible to help those whom he instructs to stand the trials of the Christian life. Nothing short of declaring "the whole counsel of God" will accomplish this (Acts 20:27).

Perhaps teachers should ask themselves if they are like the father Jesus mentioned who, when his son asked for bread, gave him a stone (Matt. 7:9-10). But the teacher will suffer loss if the pupils fail. That loss may be the grief over the unfaithful one as opposed to the joy over those who remain true; it may be the loss of time and effort that could have been spent on others who might have responded more favorably. It is a hard thing for a teacher to know when to apply the rule Jesus gave when He said, "Give not that which is holy

unto the dogs; neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under foot and turn and rend you" (Matt. 7:6).

he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.—The teacher's own his own faithfulness to Christ. He too faces trials and hardships, dissalvation does not depend on the faithfulness of his disciples, but on courageements and heartaches. Thus he is to be "saved as through fire" just as anyone else.

ye are a temple of God.—All that the apostle had said about builders, foundations, and buildings is suddenly focused on the Corinthians themselves. "Don't you know that you are God's temple?" Evidently they were not aware of it. The church to them was more like an ordinary political assembly. They had failed to see that it was the assembly of those who had been called out of the world of sinners by the preaching of the gospel to enjoy the rights and privileges of free citizens of the kingdom of heaven. How could they have missed this when they had been taught the revealed wisdom of God by His inspired apostle? But they did.

This rebuke is probably the strongest blow the apostle strikes against the sin of division. What an awful thing that they should desecrate the spiritual temple of God! The desecration of the Jew's temple by Antiochus Epiphanes is one of the outstanding atrocities visited upon ancient Israel. See I Mac. 1:1-64. This pagan ruler dared to change the laws of God pertaining to worship and sacrifice. It was especially insulting to the Jews and to their God for him to order them to use swine's flesh in their sacrifices. The cleansing and rededication of the temple following this incident was commemorated by the Jews in the feast of dedication (John 10:22).

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus went to Jerusalem for the passover feast. There He found that men had turned the sacred area of the temple into a place of merchandise (John 2:13-16). He cleansed the temple and reminded the people that they were not to make His Father's house a house of merchandise. But in three short years it had again been put to the same use. Jesus cleansed the temple again and said to the money-changers, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Matt. 21:12-12).

Wicked as all these sinful deeds were, they did not compare with the sin of division that was destroying God's temple, the church. The solution to the problem of division in Corinth begins with the correct view of the church as God's temple. Paul speaks of it as the temple where the Spirit of God dwells. To profane this temple is to deserve the destruction that will surely come to the guilty ones.

the Spirit of God dwells in you.—It will help us to understand this expression if we look at the camp of Israel with the tabernacle in its midst. The tabernacle was called the "tent of meeting" because God met His people there, and through His appointed servant, Moses, He spoke to them, giving direction for conduct that would let the nations about them know that He was the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel. The ark of the covenant which was kept in the holy of holies further emphasizes the presence of God in the midst of His people. Within the ark, among other things, the tables of the law were kept. Through the law Israel was taught that they should love God with all the heart, soul, and mind, and that they should also love their neighbors as themselves (Matt. 22:37-40).

When Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem that took the place of the tabernacle, he made it a thing of splendor, fitting, within the limits of human endeavor, as a house of God. But long after that, Stephen said, "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands" for "heaven is His throne and the earth His footstool" (Acts 7:48-49).

The church that honors God by exalting Christ; that obeys His Word rather than the doctrines of men; that is transformed by the renewing of the mind so that the members approve the will of God, the thing that is good, complete, and acceptable to Him (Rom. 12:1-2) can truly say that God is in its midst. See comment on 6:19-20 where the body of the believer is called the temple of the Holy Spirit.

If any man destroyeth the temple of God.—In a sense, the church cannot be destroyed because it is divine. Paul said he made havoc of the church, that is, he was attempting to do so by persecuting the church (Gal. 1:13). But it is true that the effectiveness of the church can be destroyed by the sin of division. The sin of division dishonors Christ, the head of the church; it dims the glory of the church, the bride of Christ; it tends to neutralize the message of the church, the gospel of Christ; it weakens the believers who are members of the body of Christ.

him shall God destroy.—For the fate of the Israelites who displeased God, see I Cor. 10:5-10. For the fate of those who trample under foot the Son of God, see Heb. 10:28-31. For the punishment of the sin of Nadab and Abihu, see Lev. 10:1-3. For the punishment of Uzzah who acted with every good intention when he touched the ark in violation of God's law, see II Sam. 6:6-7. For the story of Uzziah the presumptious king who understook to perform the task of the priest

contrary to God's law and was punished by being stricken with leprosy unto the day of his death, see II Chron. 26:16-21.

Paul declares that God will destroy those who attempt to destroy His temple, the church. This should make the promoters of division stop and think. God has never permitted man to desecrate holy things and go unpunished.

such are ye.—What an exalted view of the church this is—ye are the temple of God! But how could the apostle refer to people who were so far from the ideal of Christ as the temple of God? Perhaps it was to remind them of what God intended them to be, that is, new creatures washed in the blood of Christ (I Cor. 6:11). Perhaps it also expressed the hope of the apostle that they would respond to the instruction for overcoming their spiritual immaturity.

As to a practical application of this important point, think of the church today with its many divisions often warring against each other rather than carrying on the "good fight of the faith" (I Tim. 6:12). But concerned men are doing much to lead the church toward the goal for which Christ prayed when all who believe on Him through the word of the apostles may be one (John 17:21). Men who have caught the vision of the church as the temple of God are pleading for the restoration of the church that is described in the New Testament in its doctrine, its ordinances, and in its life. A return to "the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (II Cor. 11:3) would present the church, even today, as the glorious church Christ intended it to be.

The Apostles Earnest Exhortation (3:18-23)

Text

3:18-23. Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness: 20 and again, The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise, that they are in vain. 21 Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Commentary

Let no man deceive himself.—The rebuke for the sin of division has been clearly stated. The remedy for the condition is apparent: Make

the church what God intended it to be, His holy temple wherein dwells His Spirit.

This appeal is three-fold: (1) "Let no man deceive himself" (18); (2) "Let no one glory in men" (21); and (3) "Let a man account of as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (4:1).

The first is an appeal for clear thinking about the world's wisdom in contrast to the message of the cross. The word of the cross is wisdom for the mature. God is able to adequately cope with the cleverness of the crafty, worldly-wise man. God knows the futility of the thoughts of men when compared with His thoughts.

all things are yours.—This is the reason for the second appeal: "Let no one glory in men." Some had been saying, "I belong to Paul," others, "I belong to Cephas." But the truth was that Paul and Apollos and Cephas were theirs, that is, they were their ministers through whom they had believed (3:5). But more than that, the world was theirs too. God created it for man and placed in it all the things needful for his welfare. The world was theirs as their sphere of activity for God, not a thing to conquer them and make them slaves of sin. Even life and death belonged to them. Life was theirs to be lived for Christ, not to be wasted in endless discussions of man's wisdom and the sinful practices that grew out of them. To the Christian, the apostle said, "Death is yours." It is true that he calls death an enemy to be abolished (I Cor. 15:26). But death belongs to the Christian as a means of release from the trials of life and of entrance into the presence of Christ (Phil. 1:21; II Cor. 4:16-5:1). Both the present and the future are yours in which to serve Christ and praise Him. The apostle rebukes those who had been practicing division in the church and claiming to belong to Paul or Apollos. To whom did they belong? "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Thus the word of God presents the solution to the problem of division.

Summary

The Corinthians were more interested in their own wisdom than in the wisdom of God. They looked upon the message of the cross as foolishness. It is not surprising that some of Paul's converts failed to reach spiritual maturity.

When he was with them, he had spoken to them about the elementary things of the gospel because they were not able to appreciate the things that belong to the mature Christian life. Even as he was writing to them, he realized that they were still unable. His teaching had been like milk for those whom he calls "babes in Christ." Some

of them were saying, "I belong to Paul" and "I belong to Apollos." Their jealousy and strife clearly shows that they were acting as men and not as new creatures in Christ.

Paul turns now to the corrective measures that were designed to lift the church out of this condition. There are three steps in his plan to correct the sin of division. The first step shows the correct relationship leaders to the church. The apostle asks, "What is Paul and what is Apollos?" "They are ministers through whom you believed." They are not masters; they are not heads of political groups; they are the Lord's servants performing a task for the sake of His Body, the church. They were fellow-workers who belonged to God. Their task was to work in God's field and to build God's building.

The second step in the apostles' plan to overcome division is this: The church is the temple of God. Leaders, of course, have their place in relation to the temple. Paul says, "I laid a foundation and another built on it." After he had started the work at Corinth, another teacher such as Apollos had followed him. His task was to instruct the new converts. He was building on the foundation Paul had laid. That foundation was Christ; there could be no other foundation for the temple of God.

Paul solemnly warns the teachers to exercise care as to the kind of disciples they may teach. This is not a warning to false teachers, but to faithful teachers like Apollos who built on the foundation which Paul had laid. Some of their disciples would be like gold, silver, and precious stones. They would stand the fiery trials of the Christian life. Others would be like wood, hay, and stubble. They would be destroyed in the same fiery trials, and the teacher would lose the reward for his efforts. These are the carnal, factious, jealous ones who remained as "babes" when they should have been mature Christians. The faithful teacher does not share the fate of those who refuse to heed his message of truth, that is, if he conforms to the gospel standard of character and conduct.

After discussing the relation of the leaders to the church as the the temple of God, Paul reminds the brethren that they are the temple of God. Its sacredness is indicated by the fact that the Spirit of God dwells in His temple. Paul warns that God will destroy anyone, leader or follower, who through faction or division or other sin, destroys God's temple.

A third corrective step is given in the closing exhortation of the chapter: Avoid being deceived by leaders and their pretended wisdom. Those who think they are wise are urged to become fools by

rejecting their own wisdom and accepting the word of the cross. Let no one boast in men, for all things belong to the faithful Christian. Instead of saying, "I am of Paul" or "I am of Cephas," they are to remember that Paul and Apollos and Cephas belong to them as the Lord's servants through whom they believed. The world is theirs, for God made it to be used by His people and not that they should become slaves of the world of sin. Even life and death are theirs. But (and here is a thing they were forgetting) they belong to Christ, and Christ to God.

Questions

1. Why does Paul address his readers as "brethren" since he calls them "carnal"?
2. What does he mean by "carnal"?
3. With what does he contrast "carnal" in this context?
4. What is meant by "spiritual"?
5. How does his use of "spiritual" in this chapter differ from his use of this term in chapter two? To whom does it refer in each case?
6. What is implied by the expression "babes in Christ"?
7. How was Paul forced to conclude that they were "babes"?
8. What is meant by "milk" and "meat" in this connection?
9. What is the mark of spiritual maturity?
10. How long should the "brethren" remain as "babes in Christ"?
11. What is the mark of the carnal Christian?
12. How does Paul's use of "carnal" differ from his use of "natural" in chapter two?
13. What does it mean "to walk after the manner of men"?
14. What does Paul mean by the question, "are ye not men"?
15. What was the relation of Paul and Apollos to the Corinthians?
16. What is the word that is translated "minister" in this connection?
17. What bearing does this have on the party spirit in Corinth?
18. What division of labor did Paul and Apollos observe?
19. What was the important thing to remember about their efforts?
20. What is meant by statement, "he that planteth and he that watereth are one"?
21. What is meant by the statement, "we are God's fellow-workers"?
22. What bearing does the remark, "ye are God's husbandry (tilled field) and God's building," have on the problem of division?
23. To what did Paul attribute the privilege he had of serving as an apostle of Christ?

24. What qualification did he have to work in connection with God's building?
25. How did Paul lay the foundation?
26. What is the foundation of the church?
27. How does this correct the problem of division in Corinth?
28. What evidence is there to show that Jesus Christ is the only possible foundation of the church?
29. To whom does Paul refer when he says, "another buildeth thereon"?
30. Why the warning about building on the foundation Paul laid?
31. What are the two classes of building materials and their characteristics?
32. What has this to do with the warning to the teachers?
33. What is the day that shows what sort each man's work is?
34. In what ways was the early Christian's faith tried?
35. What are some things which try one's faith today?
36. What is the relation of the day of trial to the Day of Judgment?
37. Why does Paul speak of fire as that which will show what sort each man's work is?
38. When he refers to "each man's work" is he speaking of the teacher or of his disciple?
39. On what foundation is this work built?
40. How long must it abide for him to receive a reward?
41. What is the reward of the faithful teacher?
42. Why may the faithful teacher suffer loss?
43. What will that loss be?
44. How can he be saved if his work is burned?
45. What is meant by the remark, "as through fire"?
46. Why does Paul ask, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God?"
47. What are some of the facts of the history of the Jewish temple?
48. How does this help to understand that God dwells in the temple, His church?
49. What were the Corinthians doing that was destroying the temple of God?
50. What is the history of the desecration of the Jewish temple, and how did that compare with what the Corinthians were doing to the church?
51. What are the characteristics of the church of which it may be said, "the Spirit of God dwells in you"?
52. What is the fate of the one who destroys the temple of God?

53. How could Paul say to the church at Corinth, "The temple of God is holy, and such are ye"?
54. Why did Paul say, "Let no man deceive himself" (3:18)?
55. How is one to become wise?
56. What is God's view of the wisdom of the world?
57. Why did Paul say, "Let no one glory in men" (3:21)?
58. In what sense did Paul, Apollos, and Cephas belong to the Corinthians?
59. What bearing did this have on the problem of division?
60. What important relationship were they missing by practicing division?

For Discussion

1. What are some of the causes of spiritual immaturity in the churches today?
2. What can you suggest as a practical remedy for lack of spiritual growth?

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis

A. Paul pleads for a correct attitude toward the apostles (1-5).
   1. He asks that they be looked upon as (1) servants, that is, assistants who serve their Master, Christ; and (2) stewards, that is, administrators of the mysteries of God—His revealed wisdom (1).
   2. He shows that the one thing required of a steward is that he be found faithful to his master (2).
   3. He indicates the correct standard by which the Lord's servants are judged (3-4).
      a) He is not concerned about the Corinthians passing on his his qualifications to be an apostle or about human standards which they may use.
      b) He does not pass on his own qualfiications.
      c) It is the Lord who examines and approves His servants.
         (1) Paul does not know anything against himself, but this has no bearing on his appointment as an apostle.
         (2) The one who passes on his qualifications and approves him as an apostle is the Lord.
   4. He points out the necessity of refraining from passing judgment (5).
      a) Stop passing judgment before the time of judgment, that is, before the Lord comes.
      b) He tells what the Lord will do in the matter when He comes.
         (1) He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.
         (2) He will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.
         (3) When this is done, the praise that may come to each one will be from God, not man.

B. Paul gives his readers a much needed lesson on humility (6-13).
   1. He explains why he has been using his name and that of Apollos (6-7).
      a) It was for their sakes—probably to spare them the embarrassment of being mentioned by their names.
      b) By so doing, he wanted them to learn not to go beyond the things which are written, that is, the things of the Old Testament which he has just quoted in the epistle against pride and arrogance of men.

c) His purpose was to keep one from favoring a certain leader and being puffed up against another.

2. He raises questions that emphasize the lesson (7).
   a) Who made you to differ, that is, in possession of gifts, in responsibilities, or in other matters?
   b) What do you have that you did not receive?
   c) Then he asks the question that brings the first two to bear on the problem: If you received them, why boast as though you didn't, that is, as though they were yours in your own right?
3. He reveals their lack of humility (8-13).
   a) As to the Corinthians, he ironically says, "You are already filled (having partaken of heaven's banquet); already you are rich (having received heaven's riches); already you have come to reign (in heaven with life's battles over).
   b) As to himself, he expresses his fervent wish (1) that this were really true of them, and (2) that the apostles were also rejoicing with them in heaven.
   c) As to the apostles, he shows what was happening to them for Christ's sake.
      (1) God had set them forth as men doomed to death.
      (2) They were a spectacle to the world for men and angels to behold.
   d) He emphasizes the lesson by pointing out the contrast between the apostles and the Corinthians (10).
      (1) The apostles are fools for Christ's sake, but the Corinthians are wise in Christ.
      (2) The apostles are weak, but the Corinthians are strong.
      (3) The Corinthians have glory, but the apostles have dishonor.
   e) He shows what the apostles suffer and how they react to trials (11-13).
      (1) They are hungry, thirsty, persecuted, unsettled, and have to toil with their hands for a living.
      (2) Being insulted, they bless; persecuted, they endure; defamed, they console; they are like refuse or the offscouring of all things.

C. Paul admonishes the Corinthians as beloved children (14-21).
1. His purpose in writing is not to shame them but to admonish them (14).
2. He is their father in the gospel even though they may claim

ten thousand tutors. And because he is their father, he urges them to imitate him (15-16).

3. He explains why he sent Timothy to them (17).
   a) Timothy is his beloved and faithful child in the Lord.
   b) Timothy was to tell them of Paul's ways in Christ as he taught in every church.
4. He tells them of his proposed journey to Corinth (19-20).
   a) Some were puffed up, saying he would not come.
   b) He assures them that he will come if the Lord will.
   c) When he does, he will know about the arogant ones, that is, he will find out not just what they are saying, but what they really are.
   d) He explains this attitude: The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.
   e) A serious question about his coming visit: Shall I come to punish—with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Attitude Toward the Apostles (1-5)

Text

4:1-5. Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

Commentary

Let a man account of us.—This chapter brings to a close the discussion of the subject of division which had been reported to Paul by members of the household of Chloe. Up to this point, Paul has mentioned the problem of wisdom in contrast to the word of the cross which was the revealed wisdom of God. He has shown the correct view of men in relation to the church as a means of overcoming the party spirit that lay at the root of the problem of division. He has raised the appreciation of all for the things of God by reminding them that they were the temple of God and that the Spirit of God was dwelling in them.

He now pleads for a correct view of the apostles as the ones through whom the Corinthians had believed and who had continued to instruct them in the Christian life.

He uses a significant word with which all were familiar in presenting this plea. "Account" suggests the bookkeeper's term for entries in his ledger. Paul is suggesting that they enter this in their ledger to his credit. They are to set it down in their minds so as to make the accounts balance. He is asking them to look upon the apostles in their relation to this problem in a way that will bring to bear all that has been said by him upon the subject of division. The use of the plural pronoun does take in all the inspired teachers, apostles in particular, as the ones through whom God carried out the project of building the church and caring for it as one would cultivate his field.

as of ministers of Christ.—The apostles are Christ's servants; they are not to be thought of as ones to divide the body of Christ. In chapter 3:21-23, Paul has explained that he and Apollos and the other leaders really belong to the church as their servants. There is a sense, however, in which they also belong to Christ. This is of primary importance in the solution of the problem before them. They were ministers (literally, deacons) who were to perform a service for the church under the direction of the Lord. He uses another word that is translated "minister" in this context. It means a subordinate or an attendant. Originally, it referred to the galley slave who was chained to his oar. But this idea is not to be read into the New Testament usage. There it refers to the one who has a subordinate position that requires absolute devotion to his superior. It is the word that describes the temple guards who were subordinates of the ruling body of the Jews. Paul considered himself as such a servant of Christ. He is a subordinate whose sole duty is to please the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the church is Christ's and the appointed servants are Christ's, there is no reason for dividing the church over loyalty to any man. Christ demands absolute priority in the lives not only of teachers but also of all other members of His body, the church. See Col. 1:18.

and stewards.—This important word also enforces the lesson of relationship between teachers and Christ. It means "household servant." Joseph was such a slave in the house of Potiphar. His task was to manage the affairs of his master and to look after his property. He was strictly accountable to the master for the proper discharge of his duties. This accurately describes the inspired apostle's relation to Christ. They were not appointed by men and not accountable to them. Christ appointed them and equipped them to do the task He

had for them, and He held them accountable as stewards who were watching over "the mysteries of God."

the mysteries of God.—Arndt and Gingrich in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* define "mystery" as a secret. See my comment on 2:6-9. These are not mystical things or mysterious things. They are those things in God's plan to save the believer in Christ that would have remained forever hidden to man had not God revealed them through the inspired apostles and prophets. Essentially then, the term refers to the Bible as the revealed will of God. The apostles were to watch over, guard, and protect that which belonged to God. Paul's appeal to Timothy emphasizes this important truth: "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (I Tim. 6:20-21).

that a man be found faithful.—This seems to be the most important qualification of a steward—faithfulness to his master. Jesus' story of the steward who was accused of wasting his master's goods illustrates the attitude toward unfaithful servants (Lk. 16:1-20). So far as the apostles were concerned, their responsibility was that they be faithful to Christ. They were not to gather men about them for their own glory and thereby divide and destroy the church. Thus the descriptive terms that refer to the apostles and the necessity remaining faithful to the Lord all show the wickedness of the divided state of the church.

that I should be judged of you.—Having laid down the basic principles that govern his relation to the church and to the Lord, Paul proceeds to state that it is an inconsequential matter that some of them were presuming to pass on his qualifications to be an apostle. The word for "judge" in this context means to examine one's qualifications for office. See comment on 2:14-15. The one who is spiritual (the inspired apostle) is judged (examined as to his fitness for the task) by no man. Man didn't appoint the apostles of Christ; He did. No man, therefore, has the right to pass on their fitness for the work Christ had for them to do. Why then should one say, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Cephas"? Who were they to approve one apostle above another? This is the party spirit that was causing splits in the church at Corinth. Paul let them know that it was a very small thing to him that some were attempting to disqualify him as an apostle of Christ by appealing to human standards or verdicts handed down by men.

I judge not mine own self.—That is, Paul did not pass on his own qualifications to be an apostle, and surely the Corinthians were less qualified to do so. "Judge" in this context is still the word for passing on one's qualifications for office.

I know nothing against myself.—This remark, like everything else, must be taken in the light of its context. Paul is saying that he did not know anything against himself that would disqualify him as an apostle. Of course, he knew that at one time he had been a persecutor of the church. By his conduct, he had insulted God. See I Tim. 1:12-13. He had even consented to the death of Stephen. But this did not prevent his being appointed to God's service for by God's grace he had obtained mercy because of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus who appeared to him on the Damascus way appointed him a minister and witness both in the things he had seen and in the things that would be shown to him (Acts 26:16). He sent Ananias to him saying, "Get up and get yourself baptized and wash away your sins because you have called on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

not hereby justified.—"Justify," "justification," and "righteousness" are usually used in the New Testament with the meaning that has to do with God's forgiveness of sin or His looking upon the one who is justified as being right in His sight because of faith in Christ who shed His blood for the remission of sins (Rom. 3:21-26). But it may also be used in its ordinary sense as in this case. Paul is saying, "I know nothing against myself, but that does not justify me in assuming that I am qualified to be an apostle of Christ. It is the Lord who passes on my qualifications and approves me as His apostle."

judge nothing before the time.—This word is accurately rendered "judge" in this instance. It refers to the act of weighing evidence, making decisions, and handing down verdicts as a judge on the bench would do. The Corinthians were doing exactly this thing when they said, "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos." They were not qualified to do this for they did not have full information and did not know the hearts of men. This is very similar to Jesus' statement, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). He was forbidding hypocritical judging. He, of course, made allowance for the fact that men are capable of recognizing false prophets, for He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:16). It would seem that by this standard the Corinthians should have been able to see through the false teachers who were promoting division in their midst.

In handing down verdicts that glorified one man and dishonored

another, they were violating another principle, that is, the time God has set for judgment—the coming of the Lord.

bring to light the hidden things.—All men face the judgment day before the Lord (Rev. 20:11-15). The one who sits on the throne knows the hidden things that are in darkness. They may not all be evil, for that matter. But God who knows the hearts of all men (Acts 1:24) will judge with righteousness. The light of His truth will illumine the secrets of men's hearts and make manifest their plans, thoughts, and desires (Rom. 2:16).

then shall each man have his praise from God.—Praise from God! This should satisfy the need of any man. Why then should they seek the praise from men and in so doing divide the church of God? "Well done, good and faithful servant" from God is more than all the praise from men.

A Much Needed Lesson on Humility (6-13)

Text

4:6-13. Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other. 7 For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? 8 Already are ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have come to reign without us: yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. 9 For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, both to angels and men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye have glory, but we have dishonor. 11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; 12 and we toil, working with our hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now.

Commentary

transferred to my self and Apollos for your sakes.—Paul simply named himself and Apollos instead of naming the ones who were causing the strife in the church. He is teaching a lesson on the correct relation of men to the church. He might have used the names of the

guilty parties, but for their sakes—perhaps to spare them the embarrassment with the hope that they might change their ways—he didn't. There are times when evil doers have to be pointed out by name. Paul didn't hesitate to do it in the case of Alexander and Hymenaeus (I Tim. 2:20). See John's reference to Diotrephes (III John 9).

It is doubtful if this can refer to the splits in Corinth that are mentioned in 1:2. There it seems that leaders were gathering others about them and forming parties in the church by calling attention to their own preference to Paul or Cephus, or Apollos.

that ye might learn.—The lesson is one on humility. He wanted them to learn it as he spoke of himself and Apollos.

beyond the things which are written.—This is a reference to the quotations from the Old Testament which Paul has used in 1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19. Taken together, they are a strong protest against the conceit that was causing men to boast of their own wisdom. Paul tried to get the Corinthians to see that real wisdom for the mature mind was the wisdom revealed in the word of the cross as it was spoken by the inspired teachers.

puffed up for the one against the other.—This refers to the pride and conceit of the leaders who were causing so much havoc in the church. People were for one leader and against another. With arrogant pride, they were alligning themselves with a favorite leader and looking with disdain on others. Some favored Apollos and assumed an arrogant attitude toward Paul—the names of Apollos and Paul were substituted for the names of the real party leaders.

For who maketh thee to differ?—They needed to learn the lesson of humility to offset the pride and arrogance that was destroying the fellowship between brethren in Christ. Paul raises three questions in order to make them see the point. (1) Who maketh thee to differ? Does this acknowledge a distinction or suggest that all are members of the same body, even though they may have different functions? See 12:12. It seems that Paul is reminding them that no one is elevated above another in Christ's plan for the church. He is supreme, and every believer has the same honored position as a member of His body. (2) What hast thou that thou that thou didst not receive? Whatever anyone had by way of natural talent or acquired skill or spiritual gift such as those mentioned in 12:8-10. it was not his to boast about to the disparagement of others in the church. Man as the creature of God has received so many gifts from Him. For example, he has received physical strength necessary for his responsibilities;

he has received a mind that enables him to think and to make choices. These are some of the things that make him different from the animal. Whatever he had in "spiritual gifts" (miraculous powers) were given by the Spirit as He determined. There was nothing in all this to cause them to be proud as if others had not received the same gifts. (3) Why dost thou glory as if thou didst not receive it? The basic error indicated by this question seems to be their disregard for God. If they received their gifts from God, there is no excuse for the state of division that existed among them.

Already ye are filled.—Because of their arrogant attitude toward him as God's servant, Paul ironically presents the Corinthians as having already arrived at the goal of the Christian life—heaven with all of its blessings. He sees them sitting at the heavenly feast enjoying the riches of heaven, but he and the teachers like him are still struggling under the humiliating experiences that he suffered for their sakes.

I would that ye did reign.—Although Paul had spoken ironically, he could wish that what he said of them were really true, that is, that they were in heaven as victors over all the trials of life. It is no wonder that one who had suffered so much for others should long for the time when the victory for all the faithful, including himself, would be won. He told the Philippians of this longing: "I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake" (Phil. 1:23-24).

as men doomed to death.—The figure is a familiar one of that day. It represents condemned men awaiting the hour when they would be torn to pieces by wild animals before the eyes of the pleasure mad crowds. The condemned men are the apostles—not because they are criminals, but because God knew that they would give their lives in His service. Jesus told Peter some things that were to happen to him, "signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God" (John 21:19). Peter was aware of this and wrote that "the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me" (II Pet. 1:14). See also Paul's statement to Timothy (II Tim 4:6-8).

a spectacle unto the world.—The pageant in which the apostles are being led to their death is performed before the eyes of the world. The world in this instance is the whole universe—men and angels behold the spectacle. Not all the men who beheld the spectacle were evil, for many who witnessed the faithful apostles were convinced by their lives that the gospel they preached was the truth. See Acts

5:33-42. Stephen's Christlike attitude in death must have made a very great impression on the "young man Saul." But angels also were watching the dedicated men as they went to their death. Peter mentions their interest in the scheme of redemption (I Pet. 1:11-12). Some more light is thrown on their interest in men who suffer for Christ by the writer of *Hebrews,* for he asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb 1:14)

fools for Christ's sake. Another touch of irony. They were willing to be looked upon by the world as fools for the sake of Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. Actually, they were men of mature wisdom as Paul had shown in chapter two. The Corinthians, on the other hand, were not wise. They thought they were, however, as a result of their own thinking. Those who accepted the revealed wisdom of God could, of course, be called wise. But their problem was that too many of them were only "babes in Christ." The contrasts in this verse are designed to produce humility in the hearts of the readers of the epistle.

we are weak.—Paul freely acknowledged his weakness, that is, without Christ he was weak. Concerning the "thorn in the flesh"—whatever that was, we do not know except that it was given him to keep him from being "over much exalted"—the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul adds, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weakness, that the power of Christ may rest in me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Cor. 12:8-10). The strength of the Corinthians also lay in their relation to Christ, but in all probability the apostle is speaking ironically again —they were claiming to be strong.

ye have glory.—More irony, perhaps. Actually, they were receiving glory from men. But from the same men, the apostles were receiving dishonor. The nature of that dishonor is seen in the long list of things they were suffering for Christ. This dishonor was going on "even until now"—the time of writing the epistle. By that time they should have been acknowledged for their real worth as servants of Christ.

filth of the world.—The degradation of these faithful servants of the Lord reaches it climax in this term. They were like dirt that could be swept up from the floor or like an incrustation of filth that had to be scraped off of things to which it had clung.

Admonition to Beloved Children (14-21)

Text

4:14-21. I write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel. 16 I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me. 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church. 18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power. 20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. 21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Commentary

I write not these things to shame you.—The ironical touch of the scolding just administered probably did shame them, but Paul's purpose was not this as an end in itself. He wanted them to do something about their problem. For this reason he wrote to them as to beloved children. The tenderness of Paul was like that of Jesus. Of Him it is said, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and a smoking flax shall he not quench, Till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles hope" (Matt. 12:20-21). But no one should presume upon the gentleness of either Jesus or Paul, for when it became necessary, each was capable of administering the severest kind of rebuke. Admonition and chastisement were marks of a good father (Heb. 12:7-13). Paul's tender care for the Corinthians is always breaking through the dark clouds of severe condemnation of conduct unbecoming to a Christian. Paul really loved his children in the Lord.

ten thousand tutors in Christ.—Regardless of the number of tutors they might have, one fact remains: they have only one father in Christ. False teachers dogged the steps of Paul wherever he went, trying to upset the faith of his converts. See II Cor 11:13-15. But there were the faithful teachers like Apollos also. Whether good or bad, the fact remained that Paul was first to preach the gospel to

them. It was through their obedience to the word of the cross which he proclaimed that they had become Christians.

The word "tutor" was a familiar one to the Corinthians. It described the trusted slave or some other parson who watched over the welfare of boys for their father. It was often the duty of this person to take the children to school and get them home safely. There was a difference, however, between the tutor and the teacher. Others might be likened to the tutor, but Paul was the teacher.

in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.—The power to bring the new creature in Christ into being was in the gospel which Paul preached. Since he preached it and they believed and acted upon it, he could refer to himself as the one who had begotten them in Christ.

James uses a similar expression to explain the cause of the Christian life: "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). Peter uses the same figure: "having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God which liveth and abideth" (I Pet. 1:23). Although there are some who do not agree, it is possible that John refers to the same thing when he says, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (I John 3:9). All this seems to be in agreement with what Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Except one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The Spirit's part has to do with the preaching of the inspired Word. Water, in connection with the instruction of the Word, has a place in the new birth. Washing away of one's sins in baptism is accomplished because of it's connection with the Word (Eph. 5:26). The cleansing power is in the blood of Christ to which the sinner comes when he is "buried with Christ through baptism into death" (Rom 6:4).

It will be helpful in this connection to consider the following uses of water in connection with the process of becoming a Christian. (1) Water is used in relation to regeneration. "According to his great mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration"—an act that brings about the new birth—"and renewing of the Holy Spirit" —the act of the Holy Spirit that makes one new. (Titus 3:5) The Holy Spirit's part is in the use of the Word which the inspired apostles proclaimed. (2) Water is used in relation to separation from sin. "Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Cor. 10:1-2). (3) Water is used in purification from sin. "Having

our bodies washed in pure water"—water that purifies because God said to use it in this connection (Heb. 10:22). (4) Water is used in relation to salvation from sin. "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God" (I Pet. 3:21). According to this passage, baptism is the act by which the believer asks God for a good conscience, for in baptism the blood of Christ washes away sins (Acts 22:16).

The Corinthians as "babes in Christ" had experienced the new birth for they had been baptized into Christ. This is a mark of the beginning of the Christian life. It is not a sign of Christian maturity.

be imitators of me.—In 11:1, he adds the words, "even as I also am of Christ." One wonders how many teachers or preachers today would dare to say this; yet every one who is qualified to teach should set the example for his pupils to follow. The Christian teacher should, of course, be an imitator of Christ. Since Paul was their spiritual father, they were under obligation to imitate him. It is natural for the child to imitate the parent. As to the Corinthians, they were to imitate Paul by translating into life the lessons he taught them.

I sent unto you Timothy.—Timothy was a young man of "unfeigned faith." Both his grandmother and his mother were believers in Christ (II Tim. 1:5). Paul pays high tribute to Timothy when writing to the Philippians. He said, "I have no man likeminded, who will truly care for your state" (Phil. 2:30). He was often sent on important missions such as this one to Corinth. He was to remind them of Paul's ways in every church.

some are puffed up.—Some assumed that Paul was not coming to visit them again. Perhaps they were saying that he was afraid to do so, and that he was sending Timothy instead. He quickly dispels their doubts by saying, "I will come shortly, if the Lord will."

not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power.—Paul was not concerned about the arrogant boasting of some who were against him; he wanted to test their real force. Was there anything to them other that high sounding words?

the kingdom of God.—Just as they had failed to recognize the church as the temple of God, so they also failed to recognize the true nature of the kingdom of God. It was to be found not in words but in power vested in the inspired apostle to deal with sinners. Upon his arrival, all the arrogant boasting of the enemies of the kingdom would be put to the test.

rod or spirit of gentleness.—Paul put the issue up to them. They could change their ways before he got there. He evidently hoped for this, for they were his beloved children. But as their spiritual father and teacher in Christ he had an obligation to chastise them when they needed it. The symbol of chastisement was the rod. For a suggestion as to the possible outcome of the matter, see II Cor 7:8-10.

Summary

Chapter four brings to a close the discussion of the subject of division by correcting the thinking of the Corinthians about human leadership.

Paul asks them to look upon him as one who served them as the Lord's subordinate accountable to Him. Since the emphasis is on the relation of the leader to the Lord, it was of little consequence to him that they were attempting to pass on his qualifications to be an apostle. He didn't even do this himself. The Lord who appointed him to the apostleship examined him as to his fitness for the task. For this reason, the Corinthians were commanded to stop expressing opinions as to the superiority of one leader over another. They could not know the hidden facts necessary to make such judgments. This judgment belonged to the Lord and must await his coming.

Paul explained why he used his name and that of Apollos in discussing the work and responsibility of leaders. In chapter three, he had told how he had planted and Apollos had watered. He had laid the foundation, and another had built upon it. These leaders were servants (deacons), but the Corinthians needed to be reminded that it was God who gave the increase. In chapter four, he uses his name and that of Apollos as examples of teachers who were faithful to the Lord in order to show the Corinthians that they were not to go beyond the things that are written, that is, things written in the Old Testament and quoted in his letter that still have meaning to his readers. These references constitute a solemn warning against the inflated egotism of men. While they did differ in the gifts they had received, there was no reason for them assuming an arrogant attitude toward brethren in Christ. Any gift they had was given to them. Why then be puffed up as if it were their by their own right?

To further deflate their egotism, he addresses them in terms of irony. He represents them as being already in heaven sitting at the heavenly feasts and enjoying the riches of heaven. If they had been, Paul would have been there too. But he hastened to tell them about the humble state of the apostles. The Corinthians were made strong and wise through the gospel, but the apostles were considered to be

fools and weaklings by some. They faced the hard lot of doing good to those who despitefully used them.

Paul did not write these things to shame them, but to admonish them as his beloved children. They may have had many teachers, but he was their spiritual father, for they had heard the gospel from him. As his children in the gospel, he urged them to imitate him. He reminded them of the coming visit of Timothy who would call their attention to the things he was teaching in all the churches.

Lest some mistake Paul's tenderness for weakness, he closes this position of his letter with just a suggestion of harshness. It has to do with his intended return trip to Corinth. To set them at rest on the issue, he said "I will come, if the Lord will." Whether his coming would be in joy and peace or in correction would be for them to decide. Undoubtedly, his fond hope was that they would listen to him, correct their errors, and be ready to receive him as one who loved them as a father.

Questions

1. What points has Paul made in his program to correct the sin of division as he led to the discussion of chapter four?
2. What is the figure back of the word "account"?
3. What does it suggest as to the course of action for the Corinthians in their attitude toward the apostles?
4. What is the significance of the use of the plural pronoun in this connection?
5. What is the literal meaning of the word translated "ministers"?
6. How does this differ from the word translated "minister" in 3:5?
7. What bearing does the use of these two terms have on the problem of the correct view of men in relation to the church?
8. What is the meaning of the word "steward" in this chapter?
9. How does the position of Joseph in Potiphar's house illustrate the relation of the inspired apostles to the church?
10. As stewards, what was the task of the apostles?
11. What are "the mysteries of God"?
12. What was the most important qualification of a steward?
13. What bearing does this have on the problem of the correct view of the apostles in relation to the church?
14. What is the meaning of the word "judge" in the phrase, "that I should be judged of you"?
15. What bearing does this have on the claim of men who said, "I belong to Paul" or "I belong to Cephas"?

16. Why was Paul not concerned about being judged by the Corinthians?
17. What did Paul mean when he said, "I judge not myself"?
18. How harmonize his statement, "I know nothing against myself" with the known facts of his life before becoming a Christian?
19. What is the meaning of the word "justify" as Paul uses it in this chapter?
20. What is the special sense in which it is usually used in the New Testament?
21. In the sentence, "judge nothing before the time," what is meant by "judge"?
22. How does this differ from the other word translated "judge" in this context?
23. Why were the Corinthians incapable of judging?
24. What is the time of judgment?
25. What are the hidden things of darkness?
26. What did Jesus have to say about judging?
27. How does the reference to "praise from God" help solve the problem of the correct view toward men in the church?
28. Why did Paul use his own name and that of Apollos in his discussion of the sin of division?
29. Why did Paul in other circumstances mention by name those who were causing trouble in the church?
30. What did John say about Diotrephes?
31. What lesson is Paul teaching in this connection?
32. What is meant by the phrase, "beyond the things which are written"?
33. What does "puffed up" mean?
34. What were the Corinthians doing as suggested by the expression, "for the one against the other"?
35. Why did Paul ask, "Who maketh thee to differ?"
36. Why did he ask, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"
37. What things had they received?
38. What basic error is suggested by the question, "Why dost thou glory as if thou didst not receive it?"
39. What bearing do these questions have on the problem of division?
40. Why say that Paul speaks ironically when he says, "already ye are filled"?
41. To what did he refer by "filled" and "rich"?
42. Why did he say, "I would that ye did reign"?

43. What did Paul write to the Philippians about his desire for heaven?
44. What is the figure presented in the phrase, "men doomed to die"?
45. What did Jesus reveal to Peter about his death?
46. What did Paul write to Timothy about his anticipated death?
47. What effect on the Corinthians did Paul expect his remarks about suffering to have?
48. What is meant by "spectacle unto the world"?
49. What did angels have to do with it?
50. What is meant by "fools for christ's sake"?
51. Why did he say, "we are weak"?
52. To what weakness did he refer?
53. What did Paul imply when he said, "ye have glory"?
54. What is the meaning of Paul's remark about "filth of the world"?
55. What was Paul's purpose in writing this rebuke?
56. What term shows his great love for those who became Christians under his preaching?
57. What was the work of the tutor?
58. How does it explain the position of the teachers in Corinth?
59. What term describes Paul's relation to the Corinthian Christians in contrast to "tutor"?
60. What does he mean by, "I begat you through the gospel?"
61. What does the New Testament say about the use of water in connection with becoming a Christian?
62. Why were the Corinthians to imitate Paul?
63. What did Paul think of Timothy?
64. Why did he send him to Corinth?
65. Why did he say, "some are puffed up"?
66. What did he plan to learn about the leaders in Corinth if the Lord should permit him to visit them?
67. What did he mean by saying, "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power"?
68. What choice did he leave to the Corinthians as to his intended visit?

For Discussion

1. What is the place of example in the learning process?
2. What effect would a correct example have on the problem of "splits" in a local congregation?

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis

A. Paul now considers the dereliction of the church in the matter of moral discipline (1-8).

1. He expresses amazement at the shocking condition that was allowed to go unrebuked in the church (1-2).

a) He presents the details of the case.

(1) Fornication was actually heard and generally known to be present among them.

(2) The existing immorality was of such a nature that even the pagans around them would not tolerate it.

(3) The shameful conduct was this: A certain one—Paul did not name him, but they surely knew who he was—had his father's wife, living with her as his own.

b) He shows his attitude toward their failure to act.

(1) They were puffed up—their pride prevented them from being aware of their duty to deal with this situation.

(2) They did not mourn, but that is what they should have done in such shameful situations.

(3) They had failed to see that the one who had done such a thing was taken away from among them.

2. He gives the inspired directive for dealing with this thing which they had neglected to handle (3-5).

a) He shows just how he had arrived at the decision.

(1) Although he was absent in body, he was present in spirit, that is, he was actually taking part in the case.

(2) His judgment on the guilty party.

(a) He had already passed sentence on the guilty one just as if he were present.

(b) He did this in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, by the Lord's authority exercised through the inspired apostle.

(c) He was present in spirit when they gathered together to hear this verdict.

b) He points out the effective power and purpose of this action.

(1) The power to execute the sentence was the power of the Lord Jesus.

(2) The sentence was to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.
(3) The purpose of the decision was in the hope that the spirit of the one judged may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

3. He rebukes them for their pride which caused them to fail to take action in this situation (6-8).
   a) Their boasting was not good, that is, their pride in position of leadership was not good for it had caused them to neglect their duty in this case.
   b) He asks them a revealing question: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" The whole church was in danger of being corrupted because of the immoral conduct of one man which they had neglected to correct.
   c) He indicates the course of action they were to take.
      (1) They were to purge out the old leaven, that is, they were to remove the sinful condition from their midst.
      (2) The purpose of this action was that they might become what they were designed to be, a new lump, that is, a body of clean-living Christians.
      (3) The reason for this is seen in the fact that Christ, our passover lamb, has already been sacrificed.
      (4) They were therefore to keep the whole Christian life free from malice and wickedness by filling it with sincerity and truth.

B. Paul explains the instructions he has given for handling cases such as the one that existed in their midst (9-13).
   1. He wrote in his epistle that they were to have no company with fornicators (9).
   2. He explains what he meant by this remark (10-11).
      a) It did not refer to the people of the world who were fornicators, covetous persons, and idolators.
      b) This would require them to go out of the world, an evident impossibility.
      c) But he did write to them that they were not to keep company with a brother in Christ if that one was a fornicator, or a covetous person, or a drunkard, or an extortioner.
      d) They were not to eat with such a person—no social functions that implied approval of sinners in the church.

3. The reason for this standard of conduct (12-13a).
   a) He had nothing to do with judging those who are outside of the church.
   b) But they did have a responsibility to act in such matters where brethren were concerned.
   c) They were reminded that God will judge the outsiders.
4. As a final statement about the action they were to take, he said: "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (13b).

The Matter of Moral Discipline (1-8)

Text

5:1-8. It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, 4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: 8 wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Commentary

It is acutally reported.—The problem of division in the church at Corinth had been reported to Paul by those of the household of Chloe. It is possible, although we cannot be certain about it, that his information about certain derelictions in the church came from the same source. The church had failed to take proper action in at least three issues, moral discipling, litigation, and use of the body. Bad as the sin of division was, these three additional sins coupled with the failure of the church to do anything about them constituted an even worse condition. There is little wonder that the apostle expresses amazement at the shocking condition of the church.

there is fornication among you.—Immoral conduct stands high on the list of sins that degrade man and rob him of the privilege of maintaining family relations within the limits of the purity that God intended him to observe. The apostle condemns the sin and also implies that the failure of the responsible leaders to discipline the guilty part is equally serious.

not even among Gentiles.—This is a remarkable statement in view of the fact that Corinth was known for its luxury and licentiousness. There were limits to things that even pagans tolerated. God's divine plan for the home given at the time of creation of man (Gen. 2:23-24) and upheld by Our Lord (Matt. 19:4-6) should have been restored to its proper place in the life of the church. It is true that poligamy was known among pagans and practiced by some of the believers in God in Old Testament times, but the case of incest in the church at Corinth could not be justified by either pagan or Jew or Christian who held to the divine standard for the home.

his father's wife.—Poligamy was practiced and concubinage was approved in the culture of that day, but this thing was shocking to all whose moral sense was not dulled by selfish pride and desire to receive praise from men. This one—whoever he was we do not know for Paul does not name him—was probably living with one of the wives of his father, certainly not with his mother. Nothing said about the father, but in all probability he was dead.

With the church tolerating such conduct, how could they hope to win pagans to Christ? Pagan standards, it would seem, were higher than those of the church at Corinth. No effective presentation of the cause of Christ can be made unless it is supported by the transformed lives of the members of the church.

And ye are puffed up.—Once again Paul hurls this charge at the Corinthians. They were guilty of being self-centered and arrogant. This came from the situation that resulted in the divided state of the church. Their cliques, where men received glory from men, were the cause of their failure to act in these cases that required disciplinary action. It does not seem that they were proud of the immoral conduct on the part of this brother, but their sin lay in the fact that they failed to do their duty and remove the immoral one from their midst.

did not rather mourn.—They had lost their sense of shame. The fact that such a sin existed in their midst should have caused them to mourn as a sign of disapproval. Instead, they were carrying on their efforts to promote one leader above another as if totally unaware of

the presence of sin in their midst. The whole church was being put to shame in the eyes of the pagans, but they were unaware of it.

he that had done this deed.—Paul did not name him. There was no need to do so for he must have been well known to the church and to the pagan community. Perhaps the name was withheld with the hope of helping the guilty brother. Remedial action was called for. The final judgment, of course, would take care of those who would not heed the admonition of the gospel. The man mentioned in II Cor. 2:5-11 could be the same as the one mentioned here, although most commentators doubt it. If it is true, then it is evident that the effort Paul put forth to correct the situation in Corinth was not in vain. At any rate, the principle of forgiveness would apply in the event the man, whether the same one or not, did repent and show evidence of it by a changed life.

taken away from among you.—Paul had stated that "fornication is among you." Now the one who did the deed must "be taken away from you." Immorality and all other violations of God's law for His people simply cannot remain in the church without destroying the church. Better to remove the diseased member than to loose the whole body. But the analogy ends here, for the removed one could be saved in the end if he should repent and ask God for forgiveness. This should be the end in view in all such cases. To condone sin, however, is to virtually seal the doom of the sinner. To take him away from the other members is the only possible hope of saving him. The problem is, How shall this be done? This Paul proceeds to show in detail.

For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit.—It did not require the physical presence of the apostle to settle this matter. God knows the hearts of all men, and His inspired Word is sufficient to direct the course of action designed to remedy all such cases. It is possible that the Corinthians felt there was nothing they could do since the apostle was not present. They may not have reckoned on the information reaching him. Perhaps they were too smug in their exalted positions within the cliques in the church to care much about his absence or their duty in the matter. But this situation demanded action, and Paul tells them what to do about it.

have already as though I were present judged him.—This is like a case being tried before a judge. Paul as the inspired apostle of Christ hands down the verdict. The heart of this involved sentence is this: "I have already decided to hand him over to Satan." There was no call for a formal assembly to try the case. This had already been done by

one competent to do so, for he was directed in his action as an apostle by the Holy Spirit. All that was left for the church was to carry out the order of the judge—hand over such a one to Satan. This order was just as binding as if Paul had been there in person to pronounce sentence.

that hath wrought this thing.—There was no need to repeat the sordid details; they had been given and were well known to the church. Note Paul's remark to the Ephesians, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph. 5:3). But such a sin had to be removed.

in the name of our Lord Jesus.—That is, by His authority. As an apostle of Christ, Paul is acting for Christ. This could only be so because he was being directed by the Holy Spirit. Note Jesus' words to the apostles during one of His appearances after the resurrection, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:22-23). A similar word was spoken to the apostles at an earlier time, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these he shall speak: and he shall declare unto the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and declare it unto you" (John 16:13-14). Upon still another occasion Jesus said to the twelve, "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). There is no doubt that Paul had same authority as all the other apostles. The decision of one judge is the decision of the whole group. The decision which he made in this case is the divine decision, and it had to be carried out as an act of obedience to God.

ye being gathered together, and my spirit.—This shows the conditions under which the judgment of the apostle was to be carried out. The church was to assemble with the apostle's presence represented by his inspired epistle which gave direction for their action. The directive was just as authoratative as if Paul were actually present. The absence of living apostles today does not justify the church in disregarding the instruction of the Word in such matters if they should occur.

This was not a trial as if the church were attempting to arrive at a solution of the problem. The facts were too well known; they were rumored everywhere. The decision was that of the inspired apostle. The church had only one thing to do: let it be known that they were

acting on the orders of the Lord through His apostle. The church, the one who had done this deed, and the community in which it occurred were all to know that they were no longer to be mixed up with the one guilty of immoral conduct.

with the power of the Lord Jesus.—It is the Lord's power functioning through His inspired Word through an obedient church that actually hands over the guilty one to Satan. Christ alone can exclude one from His body just as the Lord alone can add to His body those who are being saved. But He accomplishes both through the church as it complies with His instructions.

There are numerous examples of the exercise of divine power to punish the wicked. Some of them have been exhibited in miraculous demonstrations. Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). They, of course, thought they were dealing with the apostle Peter when they misrepresented their generousity. Not every one who lies is immediately stricken dead, but the judgment of the Lord is against the liar (Rev. 21:8). Elymas the sorcerer was stricken blind for interfering with the effort of Paul to present the gospel to Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:9-12).

The miracle of a transformed life faithfully demonstrated in the daily conduct of the church would have just as great effect on the unsaved as these miracles in the physical realm. The Corinthian brethren could yet impress the pagan community that the Lord was real to them by excluding sin from their midst. The church that actually abides by the instruction of the Lord in His Word can effectively show a wilful sinner that no one approves his deeds but Satan.

to deliver such a one unto Satan.—The Lord was to do this through His obedient church. But how? Note the clear statements of the course of action that was to be taken as set forth in this context: (1) "taken away from among you" (v. 1); (2) "deliver such a one to Satan" (v. 5); (3) "purge out the old leaven (v. 7); (4) "have no company with fornicators" (v. 9); (5) "put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (v. 13).

Note that no formal trial is indicated. It was not a question of the church trying to decide one's guilt; the apostle had already made that decision. It was simply a matter of the church complying with the Lord's instruction through His inspired apostle. In other words, the church is to follow the standard of daily conduct revealed in the Word of God. That forbids getting mixed up with immoral

persons so as to imply approval of their conduct. Where the Word is faithfully preached and effectively backed up by the lives of all concerned, there will be no doubt as to the position of the church on matters such as faced the church at Corinth. When the church shows by its conduct that it does not approve immoral conduct, the only one left to do so is Satan and his slaves to sin.

Should such a person be permitted to attend church services? While this is a matter of opinion, it seems that if the Word is faithfully preached and the church is faithfully living it, this would be the ideal place for sinners of all sorts to hear what to do to be saved from sins. But under no circumstances should they be put into positions of leadership and responsibility in the church. No action of the church should be such as to lead the one at variance with the truth of the gospel to imply approval of his life.

for the destruction of the flesh.—Paul has spoken of the members of the Corinthian congregation as "made of flesh" and "belonging to flesh." That was a reference to their spiritual immaturity. But "flesh" in this context refers to the sinful practice that was the outgrowth of perversion of powers inherent in the physical body. For a list of such sins which Paul calls the "works of the flesh" see Gal. 5:19-21.

The destruction of the flesh then does not imply bodily harm as in the cases of Ananias and Elymas. It does suggest the conquering of those desires that arise out of physical impulses such as led to the shocking state of affairs in Corinth.

that the spirit may be saved.—Man is a two-fold being—a spirit dwelling in a physical body. Much of what becomes sin in his life is a perversion of those things which are connected with his physical being. The physical body dies, but it will be raised in the resurrection of the dead at the last day. Paul declares, "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). Speaking of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus said, "the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29).

It was with this hope in mind that Paul gave instruction to the church to deliver the guilty one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. He hoped that the guilty one would repent and change his ways and be saved. Now we see why such peremptory action is commanded. It isn't kind to condone sin and encourage one to go on in sinful activity

that can lead only to his being lost. Deliver him to Satan; let him know by teaching and action that he has only Satan's approval, and it might bring him to his senses. Of course, a Christian attitude toward all such individuals at all times is necessary. The church should show a willingness to forgive at the least sign of repentance. See II Cor. 5:5-11; II Thes. 3:14.

Your glorying is not good.—Their glorying over men and being puffed up with pride while a sinful situation was being disregarded to the disgrace of the whole church and the inevitable loss of the sinner was not praiseworthy. As leprosy destroys the beauty of the body, so sin destroys the attractiveness of the church.

a little leaven leavens the whole lump.—Were some saying that this was an isolated case that did not necessarily affect the whole church? Paul is not saying that the whole church was practicing such sin. But the whole body was in danger of being affected by the sin of one member. The effectiveness of the church in preaching Christ was ruined by this one example that even pagans could not approve. Just as a small amount of the leavening agent spreads through all the dough, so this evil thing would spread to the whole church. That's why they had to get rid of it in the manner prescribed by the inspired apostle.

purge out the old leaven.—At the passover feast, the Jews were to remove all leaven from their midst. Leaven in this instance stands for sin. It is associated with the old life before one becomes a Christian. The church is to get rid of sinful conduct that belongs to its former life. Paul made this clear in the Roman letter: "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we might walk in the newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away so that we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Rom. 6:4-6). See also Col. 3:5-11 where Paul declares that the members on earth which are involved in sin such as fornication and the like are to be put to death.

that ye may be a new lump.—The Christian life is completely new. The Christian is a new creature (II Cor 5:17). He has a new name (Acts 11:26). He has a new master (Rom. 6:16-18). He has a new hope (Heb. 6:18-20). He has a new destiny (II Pet. 3:11-13). With all this, he certainly should be living the new life (Rom. 6:1-5; 12:1-2).

even as ye are unleavened.—God set the Christian free in Christ. The church is, in His sight, sanctified or separated from sin. Since that is what they are in God's eternal purpose, church members are to conduct themselves accordingly. The church is not to be like ancient Israel that was delivered from bondage in Egypt but continually longed to go back to their former state and were forever doing the things that brought disgrace upon themselves and their God who redeemed them.

For our passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ.—See Ex. 12:1-51 for the account of the passover. The lamb represents Christ. John the Baptist called Him "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Paul says, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). The point is this, Christ has already died for our sins. We are under obligation to live the life separated from sin (Rom. 6:1-2).

let us keep the feast.—The whole Christian life is likened to the passover feast. Just as leaven which represented sin was to be excluded during the feast so sin is to be put away from the whole Christian life. The Christian is to live the life of separation from sin seven days a week for as long as life lasts. It is not for just one day a week, but for the duration of life (Rev. 2:10). This earnest exhortation expresses the apostle's hope that the church at Corinth will put this sinful person with his immoral conduct out of their midst.

old leaven.—The leaven that represents sin and that belonged to the old life before becoming a Christian.

unleavened bread.—The new life in Christ is to be characterized by sincerity and truth. The Corinthian church was guilty of living a life of hypocracy and falsehood. They were preaching remission of sins through the blood of the Lamb, but living in sin and lending approval to others who were doing so. Pagans could not be won to the Lord by such conduct. The gospel which is the word of truth must be supported by a life of sincerity and truth in Christ.

Paul Explains the Instruction he has Given (9-13)

Text

5:9-13. I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; 10 not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: 11 but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or

covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. 12 For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

Commentary

I wrote to you in my epistle.—Literally, "in the epistle." See the reference to Sosthenes who is called "our" brother, although it is literally "the" brother (1:1). This often presents a problem in translation, for the article could be used in a number of different ways. In this case, it could refer to the epistle which the Corinthians were reading (our First Corinthians).

The tense of the verb also presents a translation problem. Normally it would indicate action occuring in past time just as our English text says, "I wrote." But the Greeks also used this tense with another meaning. For example, Paul could be thinking of his readers in such a manner as to suppose that he was actually with them when they were reading the letter. If this is true, he would be saying, "In this letter, I wrote to have no company with fornicators." This, in substance, is what he did write in 1-9. Note verse 2, "he that had done this thing might be taken away from you," and "Purge out the old leaven" (5:7). In other words, he could be explaining in greater detail what he had just written. All are agreed that this is the sense in which "I wrote" is verse eleven is to be taken.

While some of the early commentators take this view about verse nine, most of the later ones think of it as a reference to an epistle which he wrote prior to our First Corinthians. It is, according to this view, "the lost epistle" of Paul's. While we must concede that this is possible, the fact remains that it is not a proven fact and that it does make sense to take "I wrote" as suggested above. While all this is interesting and should be taken into consideration, it does not change the import of this passage in the slightest. We still have the inspired instruction about such cases of misconduct in the church and the explanation as given in this sention (9-13).

no company with fornicators.—Literally, "not mixed up with." Do not mingle or associate with those guilty of immoral conduct such as this one who had his father's wife.

not at all meaning with fornicators of this world.—What the apostle had said on this subject in this epistle—or in the so-called "lost epistle"—was not to be understood as saying that church people were

never to associate with people of the world. Of course, they were not to mingle with them in such a manner as to become one like them and lend approval to sinful practice. The Pharisees attempted to discredit Jesus by insinuating that His presence at social functions of His day where tax collectors and sinners were present was lending approval to sinful practice. Jesus' answer to this charge was this, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9:12). Christian people cannot afford to associate with the world and partake of its sinful practices, but they must make contact in such a manner as to help the lost sinner of the world to find the Savior.

for then must ye needs go out of the world.—Paul was afraid that they might misunderstand what he had written on this subject. Was it a former epistle or the one he was just writing? This, of course, was no problem to the Corinthians. If they had received an earlier epistle, this language would be clear to them. If, on the other hand, all he had written was this letter, then it would be equally intelligible to them. But this need not trouble us, for the meaning is the same whether written in some earlier epistle or in the earlier paragraph.

Christian people are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. It is not possible to go out of the world, and if it were, it would be contrary to God's plan to save the believer to do so. God's plan calls for the preaching of the word of the cross by the faithful church that men might hear and believe and be saved.

if any man that is named a brother.—What Paul wrote concerned the church composed of brethren in Christ. The church is in the world but not of it, just as Jesus said of the apostles (John 17:11-14). Living in the world where sinners lives does not mean that Christians approve the sinful things of the world. To condone sin in the church, however, does mean that the church is lending approval to sin. This idea is completely out of harmony with the terms by which Paul had addressed the church in the opening words of this epistle. There he called them "sanctified" and "saints" which implied separation from the world of sin.

covetous.—People are sometimes known by the company they keep. This is true of words also, for the other terms with which a word may be associated tend to influence its meaning. Immoral conduct was abhorent to God and should also be to godly people. But how often do we think of "covetousness" as being in the same category? Paul says that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). In this context he lists

it with the fornicator, the idolater, the reviler, the drunkard, and the extortioner.

with such a one no, not to eat.—So what he writes is not limited to one particular sin such as fornication. The whole list is condemned. Christians are not to try to go on living in sin of any sort.

"Not to eat" does not refer to the Lord's supper. It is rather a reference to what has just been said about not getting mixed up with sinners in such a manner as to lend approval to sinful conduct. Paul indicates in 10:27 that it would not be wrong for a Christian to eat with a non-Christian provided it did not involve a compromise of Christian principles.

judging them that are without.—Paul's responsibility was clearly with the church, not outsiders. He pronounced inspired judgment on those who were in the body of Christ. The world was in another category. The gospel was to be preached to all the world that they might believe and be baptized and so be saved (Mk. 16:15-16). Until men of the world get this done, they are not under the standard of conduct that governs the Christian.

God judgeth.—God will judge the sinner of the world in the day of the Lord. This warning should cause sinners within and without to repent (Acts 17:30-31). Therefore Paul says, "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves."

Summary

As was to be expected, a divided church that was more interested in promoting a party spirit than in becoming a living demonstration of the power of the word of the cross to transform a life had neglected its duty toward its own members. For example, one who wore the name of "brother" was guilty of the sin of having his father's wife; others were going to law before pagan judges to the disgrace of the church in the eyes of the gentile world; still others were guilty of sinning "against the body" that God intended to be a temple of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle severely condemns the revolting sin of immoral conduct. But the attitude of the whole church toward this sin and their failure to do their duty in correcting the condition are even more severely criticized by Paul in this chapter.

Even the Gentiles would not tolerate such a sin as a man having his father's wife, but the church had neglected to act in the case of a "brother" practicing this disgraceful thing. They were "puffed up" over divisions among them and had entirely neglected to consider the

enormity of the sin that should have caused the deepest sense of shame and sorrow to the whole church.

Paul, although absent from them, had made up his mind what should be done. He told them of his decision which stood just as if he were actually present. The church should gather together and be aware of his presence "in spirit" because of the letter he was writing to them. The church could then act in the name of Christ, doing what Christ Himself would do, and deliver this one to Satan. The power to do this belonged to the Lord and was exercised through the inspired instruction of the apostle in connection with the obedience of the church. The action prescribed was designed to show the guilty one that Satan was the only one left to approve his guilty conduct. Pagans would then see that such a one was completely discredited as a representative of anything belonging to Christ and His church.

The purpose of this action was the destruction of the "flesh"—the source of the sinful conduct that led to this violation of God's law of righteous conduct. That it is remedial in intent is evident from the expressed hope that the "spirit" might be saved in the day of the Lord.

They could not escape the meaning of the solemn decree which Paul as the Lord's inspired spokesmen sent to them in writing: "For I, although absent in body, but present in spirit, have already passed judgment (decided the case), as if I were present, on the one who did such a thing—that is, in the name of the Lord Jesus, when you and my spirit have gathered together, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to hand such a one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."

Their boasting over the superiority of one leader to the disparagement of another was not a very pretty thing. It had caused the church to be discredited in the eyes of the Gentile community. How then could they hope to win pagans to Christ? Didn't they know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? The whole church was condemned because it condoned the sin of one who was known as a "brother."

Following the analogy of the passover feast during which all leaven was excluded form the homes of God's people, Israel, Paul commands the church to rid itself of this sin for Christ their passover had already been slain. They had been separated from sin when they became Christians; they should continue, not in sin, but in the new life with Christ.

Paul explains that he had written—in the preceeding paragraph or in "the lost epistle"—that they were not to get mixed up with

sinners. He did not mean that they were to get off the earth to avoid contact with evil. He had written to say that they should not get mixed up with an immoral person, or a covetous man, or an idol worshipper, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner who may bear the name of "brother." No social contact that implied approval of such sinners was permitted.

As to the outsider, Paul said, "It is not for me to judge him." God will judge sinners in the day of the Lord, but the church is responsible for carrying out the directives of the Lord with respect to the sinful conduct of its members. Paul's final word left no doubt about what they were to do. They were to remove the evil one from their midst and do it immediately. The nature of the sin demanded peremptory action by the whole church.

Questions

1. How had Paul learned about the sinful situation in the church?
2. In what way was the whole church guilty?
3. What was the nature of the sin?
4. In what other sins that tended to discredit the church before the pagan community had they failed to take proper action?
5. What was Paul's attitude toward the failure of the church to act in these cases?
6. What kind of a reputation did Corinth have in regard to moral standards?
7. What was their attitude toward this sin?
8. Explain how this one could have his father's wife.
9. What did this sin which was allowed to go unreproved by the church do to their effectiveness in preaching Christ and Him crucified?
10. What was the church puffed up about?
11. What should have been their reaction to this situation?
12. Why didn't Paul name the one who had done this thing?
13. What should the attitude of the church be toward a member who repents of his sin and desires to change his way of living?
14. What order did the apostle give the church in the case of the brother who was living in sin?
15. Is it better to remove a diseased member of the body than to let the whole body die?
16. What, in all probability, will become of the sinner if the church condones his sin?
17. What will become of the whole church that fails to rebuke those

of its members who habitually practice conduct unbecoming to a Christian?

18. Why was the physical presence of Paul unnecessary in order for the church to act in this case?
19. How was his presence represented?
20. What was implied by the fact that Paul had already decided the case against the wicked man?
21. By what authority did he make the decision?
22. What was the sentence of the Lord's inspired apostle?
23. What is meant by taking this action "in the name of our Lord Jesus"?
24. How could the apostles be trusted to act in His name?
25. What of Paul's authority in relation to that of the other apostles?
26. Where was the apostolic decree against the guilty man to be made known?
27. When the church assembled on this occasion what were they to remember about the absence of Paul?
28. Why was the church not to hold a trial in this case?
29. What are some of the examples of physical punishment visited on outstanding sinners?
30. How can the church have just as great effect on the unsaved sinner as the demonstrations of such physical punishment?
31. Who was to deliver the sinner to Satan?
32. What was the part of the church in carrying out the sentence?
33. What are the various expressions that show exactly how this was to be done?
34. Should a condemned "brother" such as the one at Corinth be allowed to attend church?
35. What should a church refuse to do until he repents?
36. What should they do when he repents?
37. What was the purpose of the sentence against the wicked one?
38. What was the church glorying about?
39. Why did Paul say that it was not good?
40. Why did Paul say that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
41. What are the facts of the passover feast as presented in Exodus?
42. What bearing did this have on the situation at Corinth?
43. In what ways is the Christian life completely new?
44. What did Paul imply by the remark, "even as ye are unleavened"?
45. In what way is Christ our passover lamb?
46. What is the relation of the passover feast to the whole Christian life?

47. What does the old leaven represent?
48. What was to be done with it?
49. How does this apply to the case of the immoral man in the Corinthian church?
50. What does the unleavened bread stand for?
51. What are the two ways to understand Paul's statement: "I wrote to you in my epistle?"
52. If there should be a "lost epistle" of Paul to the Corinthians, what bearing would it have on our understanding of First Corinthians?
53. What is the literal meaning of the expression, "no company with fornicators?"
54. What limit did Paul place on the church in regard to social contacts?
55. What did Jesus say about the relation of His disciples to the world?
56. Why did Paul say, "then ye must needs go out of the world"?
57. To whom did Paul's directive apply?
58. How does Jesus' statement about the apostles in relation to the world illustrate that of the church?
59. What other sins besides immorality did Paul include in this decision?
60. What is said about judging the world?

For Discussion

1. How can the church have an effective voice in upholding the Christian standards of morality in our society?
2. What do you think about sermons on hell and the judgment?

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis

A. Paul shows the shame involved in brethren going to court before pagan judges (1-11).

1. He asks a series of questions to get them to consider their sinful practice (1-4).

a) He indicates that such a thing was all but unbelievable by asking, "Would any one you dare to do this thing?"

(1) It was a fact that one of them had a matter against another (his neighbor) in the family of God.

(2) It was a fact that they were actually taking their differences before pagan judges to have them settled.

(3) It was also a fact that they could have gone to a wise brother to get help when differences arose.

b) He raises further questions to prove the issue that they could have settled their differences by laying them before wise brethren in the church.

(1) The question was designed to lift their thoughts from their petty problems to an exalted view of the church: "Don't you know that the saints shall judge the world?"

(a) He assumes that they should have known this.

(b) He asks, "If this is so, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters (the little differences that arise among brethren)?"

(2) Another question points to an even greater responsibility of the saints, "Don't you know that we shall judge angels?"

(a) In asking the question, he assumes they should known this.

(b) "How much more easily can you judge things pertaining to this life (such as the differences between you)?"

c) He brings all the forces of these questions to bear on the problem before them:

(1) He assumes that they must also accept the responsibility of deciding matters pertaining to this life.

(2) He asks, "Are you going to set one up as judge who has no standing in the church (one who is a pagan and an outsider)?"

2. He answers the problem raised by the questions (5-6).
   a) He told them his purpose in the questions; it was to shame them for the thing they were doing.
   b) The shame of this thing is indicated by another question:
      (1) "Isn't there one wise man among you who can decide a problem between brethren?"
      (2) Apparently they were ignoring this possibility for brother was going to law with brother.
      (3) The shocking thing about it was this: they were displaying this weakness before unbelievers.
3. He shows why all this was wrong (7-11).
   a) Lawsuits with one another defeat the purpose of the church.
   b) Two questions suggest the better way:
      (1) Why not rather take wrong?
      (2) Why not rather be defrauded?
   c) He raises the question that suggests the importance of the saints' real possession in contrast to the petty things over which they were going to court before the pagan unbelievers.
      (1) He assumes that they did know about their inheritance in the kingdom of God.
      (2) He makes it clear that the sinners of all categories will not inherit the kingdom of God. This seems to imply that if they stooped to such practices as going to law before pagans to the shame of the church they would not inherit the kingdom of God.
         (a) He lists the kinds of sinners he had in mind: immoral persons, idolaters, adulterers, sensual persons, sodomites, thieves, covetous persons, and robbers.
         (b) He reminds them that some of them had been in these categories.
         (c) He shows them how they had escaped: "They got themselves washed, they were sanctified, they were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." This should have reminded them that this sin of going to law to the disgrace of God's saints was not to be tolerated.

B. Paul shows them that they were to flee from the sins against the body which is a temple of the Holy Spirit (12-20).
   1. He presents the principles upon which he bases his argument for the correct use of the body (12-17).
      a) He appeals to the law of expediency (12-14).
         (1) He states the law and its limitations:
            (a) All things have a lawful purpose in God's plan for His creatures.
            (b) They may not, however, be used to enslave one.
         (2) He gives an example to show what he means:
            (a) Food is for the belly; the belly is equipped to handle food.
            (b) But both of them will God bring to naught—they, in other words, have only a temporary value.
         (3) He applies the principle to their immoral conduct:
            (a) The body was not made to serve fornication; it was made to serve the Lord.
            (b) The Lord will care for the body for God who raised Christ will raise us up through His power.
      b) His second principle is based on the law of marriage, "the two become one flesh" (15-20).
         (1) He uses another series of questions to cause them to think on the problem:
            (a) "Don't you know that your bodies are members of Christ?" That is, they are members of the body of Christ, the church.
            (b) An utterly abhorrent thought is expressed in the next question, "Shall I take the members of Christ's body and make them members of a prostitute?"
            (c) The application of the principle of unity: one body (with the prostitute); one spirit (with the Lord).
   2. He gives instruction for overcoming the misuse of the body (18-20).
      a) He says, "Flee from fornication."
      b) He tells why he says this:
         (1) All sins are without the body except the sin of fornication which is a sin against the body.

(2) The all important reason: The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

c) Therefore you are to glorify God in the body because you are not your own for you were bought with a price.

Going to Court Before Pagan Judges (1-11)

Text

6:1-11. Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church? 5 I say this to move you to shame. What, cannot there be found among you one wise man who shall be able to decide between his brethren, 6 but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? 7 Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded? 8 Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. 9 Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Commentary

Dare any of you.—Paul had expressed surprise that church people neglect their duty remove the immoral person from their midst (5:1-2). But when it came to the matter of brethren actually taking their differences before pagan judges to the disgrace of the whole church, he suggested that such a thing was all but unbelievable. Had they so forgotten the divine nature and purpose of the church? He had clearly pointed this out in the opening statements of this epistle. They were the church of God, but one would never know by what they were now doing.

having a matter against his neighbor.—Literally, against another; but the context shows that it is another in the family of God, for brother

was going to court against brother. Our translation supplies the word "neighbor" to bring out this idea. Difference could be expected to arise even between brethren. Many differences that do arise, however, could be avoided by the simple practice of the principles of Christianity. Selfishness and a desire to get what does not belong to one are often at the root of such differences. The principle of forgiveness and recognition of the rights of others will often settle such differences. Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "forgive our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Perhaps greed and covetousness had led them to forget such practice.

go to law before the unrighteous.—The pagan judge was looked upon, and rightly so, as being unrighteous. It was probably difficult, though not impossible, to obtain justice in such courts. Jesus tells of one such judge who "feared not God, nor regarded man" (Lk. 18:4). Pilate was another such judge. He had examined the charges against Jesus and found Him innocent, but for fear of what the Jews might do, he consented to the crucifixion of our Lord. Before the multitudes, he took water and washed his hands saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man." Then he scourged Jesus and delivered Him to be crucified (Matt. 27:24). Paul found the same situation when he was brought before Gallio in Corinth (Acts 18:15) and later before Festus (Acts 25:9-11). Certainly, the Corinthian brethren were aware of this, but they disgraced themselves and the whole church by taking their differences before these unjust judges.

not before the saints.—Jesus had given the rule to follow in cases of difference between brethren (Matt. 18:15-35). The first thing was to go to the brother alone with a view to gaining the brother. If this failed he was to take one or two others with him in an effort to bring about a reconciliation. If this also failed, he was to tell it to the church. There was no suggestion here that would permit brethren to go to court before pagans. The saints should be able to settle their problems between themselves if they had proper regard for each other and for the sacredness and divine purpose of the church.

the saints shall judge the world.—Paul had just asked the question, "What have I to do with judging them that are without?" It was not his business to regulate the conduct of those who were outside the church; God was judging them. How then shall the saints judge the world? Through the preaching of the gospel the saints do share in Christ's rule in this age. "And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the

potter are broken to shivers" (Rev. 2:26-27). "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne (Rev. 3:21). Jesus indicated that the apostles would sit on twelve thrones in the time when men were being made new creatures—"the regeneration"—judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). While this has to do with the work of the apostles in which the saints also share through their part in preaching the gospel, it is possible that it may suggest that this rule may extend to all the world since the gospel is to be preached in all the world. This, it must be admitted, is only a possible fulfillment of Paul's statement about the saints ruling the world.

The conduct of saints is regularly expected to judge (by comparison) the conduct of the world. If some men can do what Christ requires, others can also. No man, then, can say that he is doing the sinful thing because he can't help it. Peter makes it clear that the good behavior of the saints, which the Gentiles behold, will answer the charges against them in the day of judgment (I Pet. 2:11-12). This can probably apply to situations of this life as well.

The point that Paul is making is this: Since your daily conduct will judge that of the world, why attempt to reverse the process by going to the unbelievers to decide your cases?

are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?—Two different courts are under consideration. In one, the saints are acting as judges in the highest courts as they judge the world and angels through the preaching of the gospel. In the other, brethren are to handle cases pertaining to this life such as differences among themselves. If the saints are to sit in the higher courts, are they unworthy to sit in the courts that handle things of this life? Must those who are destined to act as judges in courts pertaining to angels seek a settlement of differences between brethren in the courts that are presided over by the unjust pagans who are not even counted among the believers.

we shall judge angels.—Not only will saints judge the world, but they will also judge angels. Paul indicates that this will be true but does not state when or how it is to be done. This suggests that we should exercise caution in attempting to answer the problem.

All men will come before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10). Will this be true also of angels? What of angels that sinned who are committed to pits of darkness until the judgment (II Pet. 2:4)? An interesting suggestion that may have some bearing on the issue is found in Paul's statement that the manifold wisdom of God

will be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places through the church (Eph. 3:10). The passage is difficult to understand. Who are the principalities and powers? They may be the heavenly hosts that surround the throne of God (Eph. 1:20-21), or they may be—and this is probably correct—the forces of wickedness that oppose Christ (Eph. 6:12). If the latter is true, then the church is God's means of demonstrating to the angels that rebelled against His authority that some men will serve Him out of their love for Him. The church is made up of those who deliberately choose to do God's will and refuse to do the bidding of Satan. If men can do this, angels certainly could have done so. The character and conduct of the saints then become a means of judging angels that sinned.

The point to remember, of course, is that saints will be exalted to this highest responsibility and should therefore be able to take care of such little things as the differences that may arise among them.

no account in the church.—Since they are to take care of matters that pertain to their own members, who is to act in the capacity of judge? Is it to be some unjust pagan? The very thought should have shamed the brethren who were doing this thing. Men who were not even members of the church were being asked to decide the problems of brethren.

It does not seem that this could be a reference to the least esteemed member of the church as if they were excusing themselves for going to the pagan judges by saying that they had no confidence in their own members.

one wise man.—Surely there was one wise man among them who could decide these matters. Ordinarily, it would be the task of an elder or the minister. The point is, he is to be a wise man, one who is well trained in the Word and experienced in such life situations.

This does not prohibit the Christian from defending himself against attacks of those who are not brethren. At Philippi, Paul was unjustly treated, but he demanded that he be given his rights as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). When he failed to get justice before Festus, he exercised his right as a Roman and appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:10).

a defect in you.—More accurately, defeat. Actually the church had already been defeated when it turned from brethren to pagans to settle its differences. They were defeated in their responsibility to judge the world and angels, for how could they act as judges in the higher courts if they couldn't settle matters of this life. They were defeated

in their reputation in the community, for quarreling brethren would have no standing even among pagans. They were defeated in their mission, for they were to win men to Christ, but how could they do so when they practiced things that caused the outsiders to look down on them? They were defeated in their stand against Satan when they permitted such things to arise, for strife and division are not of Christ.

Why not rather take wrong?—Rather than cause the church to be disgraced before the pagan community, a better way would be to take wrong or be defrauded. No personal injury or material loss could possibly justify an injury to the church which is a temple of God. Do the brethren count themselves and their possessions of more value than Christ and His church? Rather than let the church be defeated in its mission to bring men to Christ, why not suffer a personal injury or loss? Viewed from the standpoint of their inheritance in the kingdom of God, the things men quarrel over are trivial indeed. One stands to loose his inheritance by such quarrels.

Be not deceived.—They were being led astray by the supposed importance of the things of this life. Paul calls them back to reality and truth by reminding them that no unrighteous person, inside or outside of the church, is to inherit the kingdom of God. He presents a long list of sinners to prove his point. It includes sins that were commonly associated with idolatrous worship. Adulterers, sensual persons, and homosexuals were guilty of sinning against the body. Drunkenness and abusive language often accompanied such sins. Thieves, covetous persons, and robbers had no lot in God's kingdom. Were covetousness and a desire to get what did not belong to them motivating brethren to go to pagan courts?

such were some of you.—The apostle does not say that all of them had been guilty of these sins before becoming Christians. Some of them had been. What they were now doing meant that they were going back to the state from which they had been rescued by the gospel of Christ. Peter has a word to say about such a thing: "It were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire" (II Pet. 2:21-22).

ye were washed, ye were sanctified, ye were justified.—All three take place in the one act of baptism. Baptism is a washing, not just in water, but in the blood of Christ. Ananias told Saul to get himself bap-

tized and wash away his sins because he had called on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16). Water, of course, has power to cleanse "the filth of the flesh" (I Pet. 3:21), but God also assigns it a place in His plan to purify the soul by the blood of the Lamb (Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:22). The blood of Christ blots out sin (Rom. 3:25), and cleanses the conscience (Heb. 9:13-14). The sinner reaches the blood of Christ when he is baptized into his death (Rom. 6:3-5; Rev. 7:14).

Sanctification is separation from sin and consecration to the service of the Lord. It is accomplished by obedience to the command of Christ that brings the sinner to His blood which separates him from his sin. Peter says that you have purified your souls in obedience to the truth (I Pet. 1:22). But you were redeemed from the vain manner of your life with precious blood, as of a lamb, even the blood of Christ (I Pet. 1:18-19). John says, "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Justification means acquittal or pardon. It is the pardon granted by the merciful heavenly Father to the sinner who has committed himself to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith that is expressed in obedience to His Word. "Much more then, being justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him" (Rom. 5:9). In baptism, the blood of Christ washes away the sin and separates the sinner from his past life. Because of this, God pardons the sinner and removes his guilt. "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). God says, "I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12). Pardon, of course, does not remove the fact that the believer has sinned. John says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10).

After listing various classes of sinners, Paul says, "That's what some of you used to be." Now that they have been washed, sanctified, and justified, they are to act accordingly .They should not permit covetousness nor any other sin to cause them to bring the church into disgrace by going to law before pagan judges.

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.—The washing, sanctifying, and pardoning were done in the name of Christ, that is, by His authority. These things were also done within the limits set by the Spirit of our God—the Holy Spirit. The apostles spoke under the direction of the Holy Spirit when they stated the terms of pardon (John 20:21-23); Acts 2:4, 37-39). There is no acquittal from sins outside the limits prescribed by the Spirit of God as revealed in the Word.

Sins Against the Body (12-20)

Text

6:12-20. All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall bring to nought both it and them. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body: 14 and God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us through his power. 15 Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid. 16 Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for, The twain, saith he, shall become one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornicaion sinneth against his own body. 19 Or know ye no that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; 20 for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

Commentary

All things are lawful for me.—"All things" must be understood in the light of the context in which it is used. It cannot be assumed that Paul is suggesting that there is a place for such a thing as fornication. This and all other sins are proscribed by divine edict. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, I assume that Paul means that there is a lawful purpose for all things which God created, and that purpose is not to be perverted through sin. That's why Paul declares that he will not be brought under the authority of anything. For example, there is a purpose for the appetite for food, but that appetite is not to be allowed to degenerate into the sin of gluttony. There is a divine purpose in sex, but the desire related to it is not to be perverted into the sins of fornication and adultery. God intended man to follow His instruction as to the purpose and use of food, sex, and all other powers with which man is endowed. Clear and specific regulations on all these matters are given in the Word of God for man's own good. *God shall bring to naught both it and them.*—Some things have a time limit set for their usefulness. Food and the stomach have such a limit, that is, they are limited to this life. The body has an eternal purpose, however, for in it we are to serve and glorify the Lord in this

life, and in the end He will raise up our mortal bodies which shall be changed into the likeness of the body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:20-21). This subject is discussed at length in chapter fifteen.

not for fornication, but for the Lord.—God intended that man should have a family and that children should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But the sins of immorality defeat the purpose of the Lord. We can glorify God in the body here by acting as Christians, and, in the glorified body of the resurrection, we can serve Him eternally.

the Lord is for the body.—The Lord provided for all the needs of man in the beginning. He provided food, work, mental and spiritual activity, and gave him woman as his counterpart in every regard. The Lord set wonderful powers in the body. He created it with remarkable recuperative powers when disease strikes, and many other things too numerous to mention. The Lord is also for the body so far as its eternal destiny is concerned. In the grace of God, there is provision to conquer death, "for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

your bodies are members of Christ.—This is a spiritual relationship, for "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (v. 17). By using the facts of the marriage relationship, the apostle is pointing out the nature of the sin of immorality. "The twain shall become one flesh." The rule applied as well to immoral relationships of which some of them were guilty. "Shall I take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot?" An utterly abhorrent thought. Yet this is exactly what some of them were doing. What an awful sin to so pervert the divine purpose of the body and destroy its relationship to the Lord. Therefore, Paul says, "Flee fornication."

he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.—There are two ways as indicated in this context in which this is done. The sin of fornication takes the body that belongs to Christ and makes it a member of the harlot. That is a sin against the body for, although it will raised from death, it will not be made to conform to the body of His glory—a wonderful promise for saints only. Fornication is also a sin against the body because it is intended to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this can not be while the body is given over to sin.

Paul is not discussing the fact that sin can bring disease and death to the body. Bad as this is, the greater sin against the body is severing it from its holy purpose in relation to Christ and the Holy Spirit. Other sins—for example, idolatry—could destroy this relationship

too, but they are outside of the body, that is, they do not affect the body in the same way.

your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.—The fact that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit dwells in the saints is clearly taught in the Bible. God is said to abide in them who keep His commandments. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). "No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 4:12-13). We know that God is in us because of what He has revealed through His Spirit in the inspired Word.

Paul speaks of Christ living in him. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). The Holy Spirit strengthens the inward man through equipping him with the whole armor of God so that Christ may dwell in the heart of the Christian through faith (Eph. 3:16-17).

A number of passages mention the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11).

The real problem is to determine what is meant by the facts so clearly stated that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit dwell in the Christian. One needs to be on guard here, for many fantastic claims that cannot be substantiated by Scripture or practical reason have been made through the ages since the Bible was written. Whatever may be implied, it does not mean power to perform miracles, for this power was given to the apostles when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit and to those upon whom they laid hands. It does not mean illumination that enables one to understand the Word, for God created man with the capacity to understand thought in speech and writing. God spoke through the apostles and caused them to write in a manner that can be understood without any further aid of divine illumination. By this understandable Word, of course, He sheds light on many things we need to know. But we must observe the correct rules of interpretation in order to benefit from the light of the Word (Psa. 119:105). It is clearly implied in every instance where it is mentioned that the one in whom the Spirit dwells is under obligation to live such a life of purity as to reflect glory on God. It implies the necessity of keeping God's commands to love one another, to be crucified

to the world, to overcome Satan by using the armor of God, and to flee from fornication which is a sin against the body. In other words, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit calls for a holy life before God.

The apostle is using metaphorical language when he says, "Your body is a temple." A temple was a dwelling place for God. Pagans made a literal thing of this by making idols and setting them up in their temples. God's presence in the midst of ancient Israel was represented by the cloud that covered the tent of meeting and filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35). Metaphorical language, it should be remembered, does not lessen the importance of the lesson that Christians are to conduct themselves in a manner that shows their awareness of the presence of God at all times. What a difference this would make in the life of the church today!

We may get some help in understanding indwelling by an interesting explanation Paul presents in Rom. 7:15-20. He describes himself before he became a Christian by saying that he found himself doing things that he despised. Many a sinner has done the same thing. What caused him to do it? He says it was "sin that dwelleth in me." Sin became the tyrant that caused him to obey its will. He, of course, was responsible for letting sin have such control. But the point is, he was doing what Satan wanted him to do. That is what "indwelling" meant in that case.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then, may mean the intelligent, willing, loving submission to what God says by the Holy Spirit in the revealed Word so that what one thinks, determines, and feels is under the direction of the Spirit through the Word. That, of course, will require the Christian to read and search the Bible to know what it actually says and to conduct himself in accordance with the divine instruction. It is the Word that was revealed to the apostles through the Holy Spirit that is to direct the life of the follower of Christ—nothing mystical about this, but it is practical and understandable.

ye were bought with a price.—That price is the blood of Christ (I Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 1:6; Rom. 3:25). Then the Christian belongs to God and is under obligation to serve Him.

glorify God therefore in your body.—Instead of serving sin and sinning against the body by robbing it of its rightful place in God's plan for His creatures, you are to prove by your conduct that you belong to God and that His Spirit dwells in you.

Summary

The Corinthian church had failed to settle the problems between themselves; they were guilty of bringing their differences before non-

Christian courts with the result that the church was brought into disrepute.

The apostle's amazement at such conduct is expressed in his question, "Dare any of you who has a case against another take it to court before the unjust instead of settling it before the saints?" That they were qualified to settle matters that belong to this life—that is, things that belong to "the lowest courts"—is indicated by the fact that the saints are destined to judge not only the world but also angels. Since this is so, why should they go before those who are not even a part of the church but are a part of the group to be judged by the church to have such completely discredited persons settle their differences? They should have been ashamed. Surely there was some wise person among them who was capable of deciding between brethren so that brethren wouldn't have to go to court before unbelievers.

This meant just one thing: The church was suffering defeat in its purpose and mission. It would have been better for them to suffer wrong or be defrauded. Actually they were being unjust and were defrauding their brethren. Paul reminds them that the unjust—and it seems that this takes in both those in the church and those outside as well—shall not inherit the kingdom of God. In order that they might understand exactly what he meant, Paul presented a list of various types of sinners who will inherit the heavenly kingdom. Then he adds, "Some of you used to be such sinners." As Christians, their conduct should be different. Therefore, he says, "But you got yourselves washed, you were sanctified, you were justified." They had submitted to baptism and had gotten their sins washed away in the blood of Christ. As a result, the Lord had separated them from their sins and God, the Judge, had pardoned their guilt. The pardon was granted in the name of Christ within the limits set by the Spirit of God. Christ removes the guilt; the Holy Spirit, through the inspired apostles, reveals the terms of pardon.

Continuing the discussion of their failures in duty, Paul now considers the "law of expediency" in relation to the use of the body. Instead of glorifying God in the body, some were using the body as an instrument of sin. There is a limit placed on things that are called lawful. God's lawful purpose of things He created and powers He gave man can be abused. Paul argues that there is a lawful purpose for food and leaves the reader to imply the very evident conclusion that gluttony and drunkenness are sinful since they bring one under the power of food and drink. Hastening to the real issue, he says that immorality is an abuse of the body which was made for the service of

the Lord. Since your bodies are members of Christ, it is unthinkable that you should make them members of a harlot. The law that makes "the two one flesh" applies in such a case also, but the one who serves the Lord becomes one spirit in relation to Him.

The urgent command is given: "Flee immorality." Always assume the attitude of one running away from this sin because fornication is a sin against the body which God intended to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Since Christians are bought with the price of the blood of Christ, they are to glorify God in the body. Indwelling of the Spirit in relation to the Christian implies the necessity of living a holy life —one separated from sin.

Questions

1. What was Paul's attitude toward those in the church who were taking their differences to pagan judges for settlement?
2. How does the context explain "neighbor" as a reference to the brethren in the church and not pagan neighbors?
3. Is it possible for brethren to avoid differences between themselves at all times?
4. What are some of the causes of differences?
5. What principle did Jesus present to help prevent such differences?
6. What was the general opinion about pagan judges as to the possibility of obtaining justice in their courts?
7. Why were they called unrighteous?
8. What experience did Paul have with such judges?
9. What procedure did Jesus suggest to settle problems between brethren?
10. Before whom should the cases that arise between brethren be presented for settlement?
11. How are saints to judge the world?
12. What does Peter say about the good conduct of the saints in relation to the false charges of gentiles?
13. In what way were the church members reversing the procedure involved in their responsibility to judge the world?
14. What is meant by judging the smallest matters?
15. How are we to understand the fact that the saints will judge angels?
16. What happened to the angels that sinned?
17. Who are "the principalities and powers" mentioned in Ephesians?
18. In what way does the godly life of the church prove that Satan is wrong in opposing God who created man capable of choosing between right and wrong?

19. How does the reference to judging angels prove that it was wrong to go before pagan judges to have the problems of brethren settled?
20. Who are meant by the expression, "those who are of no account in the church"?
21. What kind of persons should be sought out to help decide problems between brethren?
22. In what way should he be wise?
23. Do these regulations about court action prevent church members from defending themselves in court against outsiders?
24. What is the more accurate translation of the word rendered "defect"?
25. How was the church being defeated by going to court before pagan judges?
26. Why better to take wrong or be defrauded?
27. Does this suggest that the Christian is to follow the way of passive non-resistance?
28. Why did Paul say, "Be not deceived"?
29. How does the saint's lot in the kingdom of God help to conquer the desire to get what may not belong to him in this life?
30. Why are the brethren reminded that there are some who will not inherit the kingdom of God?
31. What sins had some of them been guilty of before they became Christians?
32. Why does Paul call this to their attention?
33. How are sins washed away in baptism?
34. What does "sanctified" mean?
35. What bearing does this have on their problem?
36. What does "justified" mean?
37. What bearing does it have on the problem of going before pagan judges?
38. What is meant by, "in the name of the Lord"?
39. What part does the Holy Spirit have in the acts of washing, sanctification, and justification?
40. How are we to understand what is implied by the expression, "All things"?
41. How does Paul apply the law of expediency to the issue of fornication in the church at Corinth?
42. How does Paul show that God has an eternal purpose for the body of man?
43. How has the Lord provided for the needs of the body?

44. What is meant by the statement that your bodies are members of Christ?
45. How does Paul use the law of marriage to explain his point about the sin of immorality?
46. What order did the apostle issue regarding fornication?
47. How does fornication become a sin against the body?
48. Do other sins affect the body? How?
49. What is said about God's presence in those who keep His word?
50. What did Paul say about Christ living in him?
51. Through what does Christ dwell in the heart of the Christian?
52. What is said about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
53. Does "indwelling" imply miraculous powers?
54. How does "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit call for a holy life before God?
55. What Old Testament teaching helps to understand the expression, "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit"?
56. How does Paul's reference to "Sin that dwelleth in me" by way of contrast help to understand what is meant by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
57. What is required by way of character and conduct of the one in whom the Spirit dwells?
58. What price was paid for those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells?

For Discussion

1. Is the church of which you are a member actually glorifying God before the community?
2. If not, in what particulars is it failing to do so?
3. What practical suggestion can you make to correct any failure in this regard?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Analysis

A. Paul now turns his attention to a matter about which the church had written (7:1-9).
   1. Their first question was about the advisability of remaining unmarried. It may have been framed like this: Is it better to remain unmarried than to assume the responsibilities of marriage?
   2. The apostle answers the question, recognizing that there are two sides to the problem (1-6).
      a) He says, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman, that is, the unmarried state is commendable (1). This is not to say that it is superior or to imply that marriage is in any way wrong.
      b) Low moral standards with which they were perfectly familiar and about which he had written in chapters five and six form a basis for considering the advisability of marriage (2-6).
         (1) Because of fornication which reflects the generally low state of morals in Corinth, a man is to have his own wife, and a woman is to have her own husband. This in no way overlooks the very high regard with which he viewed marriage, but it does consider the problem as Christians faced it at Corinth.
         (2) Each man is to have his wife, and each woman her own husband. Thus marriage, in accord with the original plan for the home, was a safeguard against the temptations involved in their society.
         (3) Husband and wife have mutual obligations.
            (a) The husband is to give the wife what is due her.
            (b) The wife is to give the husband what is due him.
         (4) This involves the principle of the right over the body:
            (a) The wife does not have the right over her own body; that belongs to the husband.
            (b) The husband does not have the right over his own body; that belongs to his wife.
         (5) A possible exception to this principle:
            (a) The general practice: Do not defraud one another.

(b) Exception: By mutual consent for a limited time for a holy purpose such as a season of prayer, they may separate and then be together again.
(c) The reason for this restriction: That Satan not tempt them because of incontinency.
(d) This temporary separation is a matter of permission, not commandment.

3. Returning to the main problem about marriage, the apostle expresses his personal preference, yet recognizes that all are *not alike in this matter* (6-7).
   a) I wish that all were as myself—unmarried. This must be understood in the light of the peculiar problem at Corinth and his own self-control which he recognizes is a gift from God, but all do not possess it.
   b) Each one has his own gift from God; Paul's enabled him to withstand temptation in the midst of low moral conditions; another's enabled him to assume the responsibilities of family life in times of distress.
4. He sums up what he has said in answer to their question: Addressing both those who have never married and widows who may be eligible to remarry he says,
   a) It is good for them to abide unmarried just as he is.
   b) If they lack continency, it is better for them to marry than to suffer uncontrollable desires.

B. He now turns his attention to those who are already married (10-24).
1. The married state is not to be set aside (10-16).
   a) He gives an order that is in accord with what the Lord had already said (10-11).
      (1) The wife is not to depart from her husband.
      (2) What to do if she should depart: Remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband—no suggestion here that God sanctions her being joined to another.
      (3) The same rule is for the husband: He is not to leave his wife.
   b) As an inspired apostle, he gives additional instruction to those who are married (12-16).
      (1) He considers what must have been a very real problem to them—a Christian married to an unbeliever.

(a) If a brother has an unbeliever for a wife—this is assumed as a real possibility—and she is willing to live with him, he is not to leave her.

(b) If a Christian woman has a husband who is not a believer—this also is assumed as a real possibility—she is not to leave him.

(c) The reason for this instruction is seen in the fact that the sacredness of the marriage relation is guaranteed in the one who is a believer; otherwise, the children would also be unclean.

(2) What if the unbeliever should depart? That is also considered as a real possibility. The answer: Let him depart.

(a) The brother or sister is not under obligation to maintain a home under such conditions.

(b) God intended that there should be peace in the home.

(3) After discussing these real possibilities, he returns to his original instruction not to set aside the marriage relationship and presents a great challenge to the believer (16).

(a) How do you know whether or not you may save your husband?

(b) How do you know whether or not you may save your wife?

2. He sets forth the rule that he follows in all the churches (17-24).

a) Whatever one's state may be, as the Lord distributed His gifts and God has extended His call, live in it.

b) Its application to circumcision.

(1) Status as to circumcision or uncircumcision is not to be changed.

(2) The thing that matters is keeping the commandments of God.

c) Its application to slavery.

(1) Status as to slavery or freedom not to be changed unless freedom should be possible.

(2) The principle involved: the slave becomes the Lord's freedman.

(3) Don't become slaves of men.

d) Let each man abide with God in the state in which he was called.

C. Paul's judgment as an inspired apostle concerning the unmarried (25-40).

1. It is good—he doesn't say that this is the only thing or that it is required or that it is the superior way—for a man to be as he is (25-28).
   a) This is not a commandment; it is the advice of one who has obtained the mercy of the Lord to be an apostle and who is trustworthy.
   b) This does not set aside the marriage relationship except in the situation which they were facing—"the distress that is upon us."
   c) He advises the married to remain married and the unmarried not to seek a wife.
   d) Marriage, however, is not a sin, but it will be accompanied with distress.
2. He would have them free from cares involved in marriage (29-35).
   a) The fashion of the world is changing—marriage according to the divine plan is limited to this life (28-31).
   b) He would have them free from domestic cares that they might be free to attend to the things of the Lord (32-34).
   c) He is not forbidding marriage lest by so doing he might cause them to sin (35).
3. His advice to fathers concerning their daughters of marriageable age (36-38).
   a) Marriage is not a sin; if he so determines, let them marry.
   b) It may be better, if he does not give her in marriage.
4. His advice as one who has the Spirit of God to direct him as to the remarriage of a widow (39-40).
   a) The wife is bound to the husband as long as he lives.
   b) If he is dead, she is free to marry, only in the Lord.
   c) In his opinion, she is happier if she abides as she is.
   d) This he says as one who has the Spirit of God—it is the inspired directive on the subject of marriage.

Text

7:1-9. Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency. 6 But this I say by way of concession, not of commandment. 7 Yet I would that all men were even as I myself. Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8 But I say to the unmarried and to widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

Things About Which They had Written (1-9)

Commentary

Now concerning things whereof ye wrote.—Up to this point Paul had been writing about things that had been reported to him by those of the house of Chloe. These things were division, neglect of duty in relation to moral issues, going to court before pagan judges, and the abuse of the body which the Lord intended to be a temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Corinthians, evidently desiring additional information on certain matters, had written to the apostle. Was this in response to what he had taught in the "lost epistle" or was it because they felt a need for more information than they had received when he was present with them? There is no good way for us to answer these thought provoking questions. Interpretation of his answers does not depend on our knowledge of what prompted them to ask for the information.

They were concerned about the problem of marriage. We can not be sure just what other questions were asked, but it may be that the rest of the book is given over to the answer of their questions. It is possible, of course, that their only question was about marriage. The rest of the book, then, is additional help which he knew they needed as they faced the problems of their day. We might also ask if chapters twelve through fifteen come under the heading of things about which they had written? In all probability they do, but we cannot be sure. The expression, "now concerning" is an indication that all this section may have been written in response to their letter. See 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1.

The topics discussed in this section pertain to marriage, idolatry, worship, the Lord's supper, spiritual gifts, the resurrection, and the collection for the saints.

It is good for a man not to touch a woman.—The question back of this answer was something like this: Is it commendable for a Christian not to marry? Or it may have been framed like this: Is it better to remain unmarried than to assume the responsibilities of marriage in this time of distress. The answer is: It is commendable for a man not to touch a woman. This is to those who had never married. It simply states that the unmarried state is commendable. It does not say that the unmarried state is superior to the married state or that there is anything wrong about marriage, for "marriage is honorable" (Heb. 13:4).

But, because of fornication.—The low state of morals in Corinth was well known. Paul's answer takes this into consideration as well as what he had just written in chapters five and six on the subject. This is not to say that the only reason for getting married is to avoid immoral relationships. Some have taken this as an indication of Paul's low estimate of marriage. On the contrary, we should remember what he wrote to the Ephesians on the subject (Eph. 5:22-23). See also II Cor. 11:1-3. The relation of husband to wife is like that of Christ to the church. The husband is to love his wife, and the wife is to be faithful to her own husband. No one has ever glorified marriage more than the apostle Paul.

Two things were faced by the church at Corinth that led to Paul's answer: (1) the prevalence of the sin of fornication, and (2) the fact that some of them did not have the gift of continence such as he had.

each man his own wife, each woman her own husband.—Paul upholds the original standard for the home as seen in Gen. 2:18-25. He most assuredly forbids immoral conduct. Faithfulness to the marriage vows is required of both husband and wife—nothing one-sided about this. Each one has an obligation to the other. The husband is to give to the wife what he owes her, and the wife is to give to the husband what she owes to him. This regulation points to the cause of so much marital trouble—selfishness on the part of husband or of wife. While Paul is speaking in this context about sex, the problem is far greater than that one issue. It involves every relationship of husband and wife. "In lowliness of mind each counting other better than self" is a principle that would save many a marriage (Phil 2:3). When each partner is

concerned about the other more than self, the problems of married life are greatly reduced.

power over her own body, power over his own body.—How many think about this when they enter into the marriage contract? As to the Christian's body, Paul said, "you are not your own." The body is the Lord's. As to partners in marriage, neither husband nor wife can say, "I have the right over my own body." That right, Paul declares, belongs to the other partner—the wife over the husband's body and the husband over the wife's body. With selfishness excluded and love serving as the guiding principle of married life, this is an ideal arrangement. It cannot be safely ignored except at the peril of the marriage itself. Paul adds, "Defraud not one another." Do some husbands or some wives cheat in this matter? Check the divorce records for the answer.

except it be by consent for a season.—An exception to the principle just announced is granted. This exception, however, is under rigid regulations. It must be by mutual consent and for a holy purpose, and it can be for a limited time only. Selfishness is ruled out. This can't be a whim of either partner; both are to agree to it. Where love for each other and unselfishness govern the actions of husband and wife, such agreement should not be difficult to arrange.

that ye may give yourselves unto prayer.—Just what situation would make it desirable for husband or wife to be relieved of the home responsibilities in order to give one's self to prayer is not stated. It may be entirely personal, for the Lord must come before even the dearest one in the earthly relationship. But the need to be alone in prayer is not to be prolonged indefinitely; it is for a limited time only. It would be quite easy for a selfish person to pretend that his desire to attend to religious duties is adequate reason for avoiding responsibilities that belong to the home life. God ordained both the home and the church relationship, and it is not necessary to neglect one to care for the other except, as Paul indicates, for a brief season.

Prayer in the home by both husband and wife is essential to the best relationship in the home. Children should be reared in the atmosphere of prayer. They should learn that prayer is the holy privilege which God gives to His children to talk to Him at any time about anything anywhere. This puts a grave responsibility on parents to conduct themselves and their families in such a manner that they can really pray together. A quarreling family, a nagging wife, or an abusive husband will make it utterly impossible to maintain an atmosphere of prayer about the home.

There are times when each person needs to be alone with his God. Jesus often withdrew alone to a quiet place to pray. If Our Lord needed this quiet time for meditation and prayer, how much more do we need it? Paul recognized such a need, but he reminded the church that this did not free them from other responsibilities within the family. After the brief time that was mutually agreed upon, husband and wife were to be together again.

that Satan tempt you not.—Satan's power to temp either husband or wife is an important factor in all that Paul has said on the expediency of marriage. Lack of self-control in sexual matters is Satan's invitation to attack. The wise husband or the wise wife will guard the one he or she loves to prevent this from happening. Sex can become the most degrading thing in the experience of man and woman, but when it is controlled by Christian love and an unselfish spirit, it can became a beautiful relationship which God has granted to husband and wife.

concession, not commandment.—What Paul has said about agreement as to a time of prayer is not be taken as a command. It is permissive. It is left to the intelligence of husband and wife. Perhaps no two people are alike in their ability to exercise self-control in these matters. No general command could be given to regulate such periods of devotion to prayer. Therefore the apostles says that this suggestion is a matter of concession, not commandment.

I would that all men were even as I myself.—Paul evidently is referring to his gift of continence which was a gift from God. This in no way condemns another who may not possess such a gift. Each one has his own gift from God; for one it may be the gift of continence; for another it may be the ability to bear patiently and lovingly the responsibilities of the home with Christian consideration for the other partner.

Jesus mentioned those who make "themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12). This is undoubtedly the same gift that Paul possessed. He was content to give all his time and concern to the preaching of the word of the cross. He in no way, however, leaves room for one to assume that he was not entirely in favor of marriage within the regulations of the Lord.

This passage is sometimes used to raise the question about Paul's marital status. Was Paul a married man when he wrote this? Had he ever been married? We have no good answer to these questions. Some assume that his remark about giving his consent to the death of Stephen (Acts 22:20) meant that he was a member of the Sanhedrin and that would require him to be a married man. There is no real

evidence that he was ever a member of that body. He could have agreed to what was being done without being an official. He mentions his "right to lead about a wife that is a believer" (I Cor 9:5), but this does not indicate that he was or ever had been married. It seems quite certain that he was not accompanied by a wife at the time of his writing to the Corinthians.

Paul's great love for Timothy (I Tim. 1:2) and his beautiful tribute to Timothy's home background show something of the esteem with which he looked upon home ties.

Whether he was married or not makes no difference in what he teaches on the subject for he writes as the apostle of Christ. Hence what he says is Christ's teaching given through His inspired apostle.

to the unmarried and to widows.—This returns to the question about which they had written: Is it commendable not to marry? The answer, given after explaining regulations for marriage, is "yes." Later in this chapter he discusses the situation which the Corinthians faced that had a bearing on his answer. They were living in times of distress. If, however, they did not possess the God-given gift of continence, he says, "Let them marry." In other words, they are not to assume that there is something superior about refraining from marriage; marriage is commendable and so also is the unmarried state.

better to marry than to burn.—The burning desire of one who does not possess the gift of continence is to be quenched within the God-given regulations for husband and wife, not in the sinful practice of fornication. See notes on 6:16.

Text

7:10-24. But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband 11 (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife. 12 But to the rest say I, not the Lord: If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. 13 And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace. 16 For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 17 Only, as the Lord hath distributed to each

man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches. 18 Was any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any been called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. 21 Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it: nay, even if thou canst become free, use it rather. 22 For he that was called in the Lord being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bondservant. 23 Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men. 24 Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God.

Directions for the Married (10-24)

Commentary

Unto the married, I give charge.—Paul, speaking as an apostle of Christ, gives direction to those who are already married. It is in complete agreement—how could it be assumed to be otherwise since he is writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit—with what the Lord had said. This is a good answer to those who assume that the "red letter" sections of the New Testament are superior to the words of the apostles. Actually, their words are the words of Christ as He spoke them by His Spirit through the apostles (John 16:14).

but the Lord.—The apostle gives us the inspired interpretation of what Jesus said on this matter as recorded in Matt. 19:3-9. Jesus spoke to men who were under the jurisdiction of the law of Moses. He reminded them that the marriage law that had been in force since the beginning was still in force. Moses had made certain exceptions because of the hardness of their hearts, but this did not annul the original law of marriage. Jesus reminded them that the one who put away his wife except for fornication and married another committed adultery, that is, the wife so put away was stigmatized by his act as an adulteress. See Rom. 7:3. The one who married a wife put away in this manner also committed adultery.

This inevitably raises the question of the right of the "innocent" party to remarry. To refuse the "innocent" one the right to marry again, it is said, is "unfair." Perhaps this is true, but who is to decide the question of innocence? What did the inspired apostle say as he interpreted the word of Our Lord on this subject? The answer is given in just two places in the New Testament. Paul discusses it in the Roman letter. There he says that a woman is bound to the husband

while he lives (Rom. 7:2). To make the matter clear beyond the possibility of misunderstanding, he adds, "if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband." The only other reference to the duration of the binding effect of marriage is in First Corinthians chapter seven. The same law is upheld, "A wife is bound so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married (I Cor. 7:39).

Many commentators assume that the innocent one is given the right to marry again. Every one acting on such opinion should for his own sake weigh carefully what Paul has said on the matter. Consider this also: The nineteenth chapter of Matthew which gives Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce also tells what He said to the rich young ruler about eternal life. Because they were living under the law of Moss, Jesus told him to keep that law. When the people on the Day of Pentecost—the beginning of the Christian age—asked what to do to be saved, they were told by the inspired apostles to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 3:28). Now if we do not go to Matthew nineteen for the answer to the important question about what to do to be saved, why should we do so to the neglect of the apostle's inspired interpretation of what Jesus said on the matter of marriage and divorce? This seems to be avalid argument, and it should be considered by those who would interpret Matthew nineteen as permitting remarriage under the gospel covenant.

That the wife depart not from her husband.—No exception allowed by this categorical statement! The same rule applies to husband: "that the husband leave not his wife." I understand this to say clearly that remarriage is not permitted under the regulations of the New Covenant. The law that was ordained in the beginning and upheld by Jesus is in force in the Christian age.

This presents a real problem on which the apostle did not write. What is one to do who may have divorced and remarried without knowing what the New Testament teaches on the subject? What I say here can only be expressed as an opinion based on what the Bible says in general about forgiveness of sin. Suppose that divorce and remarriage is a violation of the law of God. It then become a sin to do so. And if this is true, there is only one thing to do about it: "repent and pray God if perchance the thought of the heart may be forgiven" (Acts 8:22). This would, of course, require baptism in the case of those who have not been baptized (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

John says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Since there is a question about the matter, the conscientious Christian couple who may be involved, it would seem, should determine not to repeat the mistake and ask God to forgive if they have violated His law.

Should such couples separate? This is another problem on which we do not have Scriptural teaching. In so many cases, it would be impossible to do so. The sin—if it is a sin—is in the divorcing and remarrying. Perhaps it would be better not to try to return to the former partners, since in so many cases it could not be done anyway.

The alarming problem of divorce with its effects on the children of the nation should cause Christian people to avoid the appearance of approving it. The church should hold before its young people, by teaching and by the example of elders and deacons, the ideal marriage relations as ordained by God in the beginning.

if she should depart.—This directive is clear enough. She is to remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. This is in accord with the above interpretation of remarriage. It is not permitted by the inspired teaching of the New Testament. The wife who leaves her husband is not free to marry another man while her husband lives, only if he is dead. The same rule applies to the husband; he is not to leave his wife.

But to the rest say I, not the Lord.—Some have assumed that Paul is giving his private opinion which is not substantiated by the Lord. On the contrary, he is speaking as the Lord's inspired apostle. The Lord through His inspired apostle is giving additional information to guide those who find themselves in a situation which did not exist during His personal ministry. The church was not established until the day of Pentecost. Now a situation arises that calls for inspired instruction. What is the Christian to do who finds himself married to an unbeliever? If the unbelieving partner—husband or wife—is willing to maintain the home, the Christian is not to leave husband or wife. This answers the contention of some who say that marriage is not valid before the Lord unless both parties are Christians. The facts are that the law of marriage was given in the beginning and was upheld by the Lord in His teaching to the Jews and is, undoubtedly, to be looked upon as valid for all—Christian and non-Christian.

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife.—The rule applies to either party, husband or wife. Marriage is holy, and the unbelieving partner in this holy relationship is sanctified in the believer,

that is, the marriage relationship is sacred because of the one partner that belongs to the Lord. If this were not so, the children of such marriages would be unclean, but now they are holy. That is to say, the marriage is in accord with the holy regulations of the Lord; the children of such marriages are not to be considered as being born out of wedlock.

A word of caution must be given here: This matter of sanctification has to do with the sanctity of the marriage relationship. It does not say that an unbeliever who is married to a Christian is saved from his sins just because he is married to a believer. Salvation and sanctification in respect to sin are, after all, personal issues. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," said Jesus (Mark 16:15-16). When we remember that Paul was speaking about the sacredness of the marriage relationship and not personal salvation, there is no problem.

Yet if the unbelieving departeth.—This action is on the part of the one who has not submitted to the law of Christ. The Christian is not to initiate the action and—although it is not so stated in this context—is surely not to be the cause of the unbeliever departing. Who but the Lord can really know whether or not the believer may be guilty of such conduct or attitude as to actually cause the unbeliever to depart? The Christian is under obligation to conduct himself in accord with the obligations involved in the marriage contract even if he is married to an unbeliever (vs. 3-5). This may often present a very difficult problem to the Christian; but, if he really wants to honor his Lord, he can find grace to cope with the situation.

not under bondage in such.—Some assume that this frees the believer to remarry. However, the rule is plainly stated without exceptions in verse 39: "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married." In verse eleven, Paul had said that the one who departs is to remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. Some, of course, will argue that these rules do not apply to the case in hand. But when the whole body of instruction for marriage is considered, it is difficult to find a valid reason for assuming that remarriage is permitted except when one partner is dead.

What, then, is meant by "not under bondage"? No one is bound to maintain an impossible situation. An unbeliever who will not submit to the law of Christ will do as he pleases. Even the most loving Christian wife or husband may not be able to maintain the home if the unbeliever decides to leave. Let him depart; that may well be all one can do.

but God hath called us in peace.—This is a difficult passage. Does it mean that the believer is not under obligation to live with an unbelieving husband or wife unless there can be peace in the home? Surely it is hard to have a home without peace. Or does it mean that the believer is under obligation to maintain peace in the home if at all possible? Probably the latter, because of the reason suggested in the next sentence.

For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband.—This, of course, applies also to a husband who is a believer The whole issue is just this: Are you really interested in the salvation of the unbeliever? Too often the interest is in getting rid of the other partner, using his unbelief as a pretext. Taken with the statement about peace, this would seem to say that the Christian is to maintain peace in the home with a view to winning his unbelieving partner to the Lord. Unless one can live as a real Christian under such trying conditions, there is little reason to expect the unbeliever to change.

And so I ordain in all the churches.—The rule applies to all the churches, Corinth included. Each was to live in the state in which he was called, that is, in whatever state one found himself on becoming a Christian, let him be content with it and live as a Christian without disrupting such things as marriage, bondage, status as Jew or gentile. This rule is given to those who may have assumed that they were freed from the marriage vows by becoming Christians.

Circumcision.—The meaning of circumcision is to be taken from its use in the case of Abraham who was found righteous because of his faith in God before he was commanded to be circumcised (Romans 4:9-12). Circumcision become a mark that indicated that God acknowledged his righteousness. To many, this became a mark of acceptance by the Lord regardless of their actual status before Him. In itself, then, circumcision counted for nothing. The real question was the attitude of the heart (Rom. 2:28-29). Since this was true, the Christian was not to be concerned about such outward marks.

Wast thou called being a bondservant?—One did not need to change even slavery in order to become a Christian. But see the beautiful story of Onesimus, the runaway slave who became a Christian (Philemon 1-11). What does Paul mean by saying, "use it rather"? Some suggest that he is saying that a slave is to use his slavery to the credit of the cause of Christ (Eph. 6:5-6). On the other hand, it is more likely that he is saying if the opportunity to become free presents itself, use it. Human bondage cannot long endure where there is an

atmosphere of Christian freedom. If the truth as Christ taught it were actually accepted by men everywhere, freedom would spread to all human relationships. The only true freedom is found in being "Christ's bondservant."

Ye were bought with a price.—This is the second time that Paul has reminded his readers of this. See 6:20. Actually they belonged to the Lord, for He bought them with His precious blood. They were not to be slaves to the sin of immorality. Even if they were in human bondage, they were the Lord's freedmen.

become not bondservants of men.—The Christian is not to have his conduct regulated by human masters. Christ has given him direction through the inspired apostle whether he is a slave or a free man. No human bondage is to supersede this divine relationship.

therein abide with God.—Heaven is the Christian's home. He should learn to live with that thought in mind. On earth he has a work to do, glorifying God in the body. The thought of abiding with God in this life helps to bear the trials and hardships that come to His children.

Text

7:25-40. Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy. 26 I think therefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, namely, that it is good for a man to be as he is. 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28 But shouldest thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Yet such shall have tribulation in the flesh: and I would spare you. 29 But this I say, brethren, the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none; 30 and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy, as though they possesed not; 31 and those that use the world, as not using it to the full: for the fashion of this world passeth away. 32 But I would have you to be free from cares. He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 but he that is married is careful for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, 34 and is divided. So also the woman that is unmarried and the virgin is careful for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married is careful for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 And this I say for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is seemly, and that ye may at-

tend upon the Lord without distraction. 36 But if any man thinketh that he behaveth himself unseemly toward his virgin daughter, if she be past the flower of her age, and if need so requireth, let him do what he will; he sinneth not; let them marry. 37 But he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power as touching his own will, and hath determined this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, shall do well. 38 So then both he that giveth his own virgin daughter in marriage doeth well; and he that giveth her not in marriage shall do better. 39 A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment: and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

Concerning the Unmarried (25-40)

Commentary

Now concerning virgins.—Up to this point Paul has answered the questions about the expediency of marriage and has given direction to those who are already married. His third topic deals with unmarried daughters who are still under the direction of their fathers. A closing statement on marriage gives his inspired advice to widows whose husbands are dead and who might want to remarry.

The term "virgin" is both masculine and feminine in Greek. It is used with reference to men in Rev. 14:4. The consensus of commentators is that the term in this context refers to unmarried daughters.

no command of the Lord.—Once again he must remind his readers that the Lord had not spoken on this matter but that He is now doing so through His inspired apostle.

I give my judgment.—The apostle expresses his inspired opinion based on accurate knowledge. He certainly does not set up his "opinion" as a mere man against the command of God. He is speaking as one "who has obtained mercy of the Lord." It was by the mercy of the Lord that he received his apostleship (I Rim. 1:12-14). The expressed opinion or judgment of the apostle is therefore equal in authority to the "command" of the Lord, since it is delivered by the Lord through His trustworthy servant.

by reason of the distress that is upon us.—Many assume that Paul was thinking of the end of the world and the second coming of Christ when he wrote these verses, but there is no good reason to do so. It is a fact that the apostles along with the other disciples of Jesus thought that He was to set up a temporal kingdom while He was

on earth. Some came to take Him by force and make Him their King after the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:15). Even James and John who may have been cousins of Jesus sent their mother to ask that one of them might sit on the right hand and the other on the left in His kingdom (Matt. 20:20-28). They undoubtedly thought of the kingdom as an earthly one that would restore the glory to Israel which had been known in the days of David and Solomon. Jesus could not grant such a request for the position of honor in the kingdom—the spiritual one—was for those for whom it had been prepared by the Father, that is, the humble who like Jesus were great because they were servants. The Emmaus disciples had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel from Roman bondage (Lk. 24:21). The apostles persisted in this concept of the kingdom until Jesus, after the resurrection, corrected their views (Acts 1:6). After Pentecost, when the kingdom had come in truth and Jesus had been declared to be at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33), no apostle is on record as assuming that Christ was to come in his life time. Despite this fact, commentators persist in saying that the apostles expected Him to return in their day. It is true that some of the church people had misunderstood Paul on the matter and that he had written to the Thessalonians to correct their misunderstanding (II Thes. 2:1-5). To say that he wrote what was not true is to question his inspiration.

What then did Paul mean by the distress that was upon the Corinthians? The distress was not impending, but present. We know for one thing that Christian people were being subjected to persecution of various sorts. See the history of persecution in the book of Acts. Paul had met Priscilla and Aquila when he was at Corinth. They had recently come from Rome because Caludius had commanded all Jews to leave Rome (Acts 18:1-3). Wars, depressions, responsibilities of caring for a home—all these might have been in the apostle's mind when he mentioned the distress that they faced. Our own history during times of war and depression proves the correctness of the point Paul was making, for many marriages failed that were entered into in those times of distress. Good sound advice is offered in these circumstances: If one is married, he is not to be loosed from the marriage bond; if one does not have a wife, he is not to seek one.

But shouldst thou marry.—This is to men and unmaried women. If in face of distress they should marry, they have not sinned. The apostle is writing to spare them inevitable pressures that attend the establishment and maintenance of a home.

the time is short.—Some read into this expression the assumption that

Paul was speaking of the end of the world and second coming of Christ. I disagree. He is stating a fact that all of us should be aware of at all times—life in this world is transitory. The time that anyone may have at any period is indeed brief. The whole concept of time as it relates to man's existence on this earth is limited. Peter reminds us that one day as the Lord looks upon it is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (II Pet. 3:8).

those that have wives may be as though they had none.—Marriage is for this life, not for eternity. Jesus said, "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven" (Matt. 22:30). The point is that the length of time that one is married is short at best, for it is temporal, limited to this life. The time in which we are to serve the Lord is also short, and one must not, in this brief time of service, love father or mother or wife or children more than the Lord (Lk. 14:26).

those that weep, as though they wept not.—The apostle moves from the subject of marriage to other transitory situations of this life. Weeping and rejoicing will not go on forever for the child of God. In heaven there is no mourning nor crying nor pain any more (Rev. 22:4). One cannot use to the fullest the things he possesses in this life—food, shelter, and things for bodily comfort are used on a day to day basis. See Jesus' remarks about such things in Matt. 5:25-34.

the fashion of this world passeth away.—Commentators in general assume that Paul is speaking about the second coming of our Lord. Not necessarily so. He is pointing to a well known fact that this world with its customs is transitory. Marriage is for this life. Why then be overly concerned about getting married? Not that marriage is wrong, but that Paul is concerned that the brethren who face some unusual distress be spared the added burden of family cares. Note what Jesus said about those with families at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (24:19). All who know anything of the pressures of war or economic depression know how hard these situations are on those with families. The very young and the very old often suffer beyond measure in such times of distress. Paul's concern was that they be free from added cares.

unmarried, married.—All that has been said on this subject is now applied to the two classes, whether the unmarried be unmarried men or unmarried women. The simple facts are that married people must give some time to family cares; the unmarried may have no such problems. They are free to give their time to the Lord's work without distraction.

not that I may cast a snare upon you.—Once again, the apostle is careful to remind the reader that marriage is not wrong even in times of distress. He is not setting it aside and thereby setting a snare to catch some in sin because of incontinency. This he had already explained (7:2-5).

unseemly toward his virgin.—The marriage of daughters was in that culture under the control of the father. This is, therefore, advice to fathers about letting their daughters marry. Any other construction of the meaning of the passage is open to serious question. Plummer reminds us that it is wholly improbable that this refers to the prospective bridegroom or to some kind of spiritual betrothal between unmarried persons (I. C. C., *First Corinthians*, p. 159).

the flower of her age.—That is, if she is a mature young woman of marriageable age.

if need so requireth.—There may have been many reasons why it might have been advisable for the father to grant his consent to the marriage of a grown daughter. It might well be that he was unable to support her and that she would, therefore, be happier if she were permitted to establish her own home. Under such circumstances it was not a sin for the father to let the young couple marry.

On the other hand, the father who did not find it necessary to give such consent and who was able to exercise his will in the matter did well to keep his virgin daughter at home. This is in accord with what has been said about the advisability of remaining unmarried during times of great distress. It also assumes that the father had the right to exercise his will in the matter. Perhaps some were slaves and couldn't do so. We must read these instructions in the light of the culture under which they were given, not of our own. Paul put his approval on the one who gives his daughter in marriage, and adds that the one who does not give his daughter in marriage—under the circumstances he has just described—shall do better.

A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth.—Paul has discussed the unmarried man and the unmarried woman. He has also discussed the duties and responsibilities of the father of the unmarried daughter. There remains one more class, the woman whose husband had died and who might want to marry again. He now gives instruction to those in this situation. He reminds the reader that this applies to the one whose husband is dead since the marriage vow is in force while the husband lives. "Dead" means physically dead, not spiritually dead. Some have imagined that if the husband is not a Christian and

therefore spiritually dead, the wife is freed from the marriage vow. This seems absurd in the light of verse 14.

only in the Lord.—This may mean that she is free to marry one who is in the Lord, that is, a baptized believer. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" (II Cor. 6:14) does not necessarily refer to marriage. Christian people will be far better off in their desire to serve the Lord if they do have Christian partners, but Paul has indicated that the believer who is married to the unbeliever may use that situation to win the unbeliever to Christ (7:16).

A second possible meaning, though less likely, is that she is to remember that marriage is to be in accord with the regulations of the Lord for this sacred institution.

she is happier.—Remarriage, even though one may have a Scriptural right, does not always solve the problems of loneliness or other issues that may cause one to seek remarriage. This seems to be particularly true of those who are older. The apostle's advice is that greater happiness will accompany the unmarried state. The case of younger widows is different. "When they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry" (I Tim. 5:11). Some of these become not only idle but tattlers and busybodies. Paul adds, "I desire therefore that younger widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling: for already some are turned aside after Satan" (I Tim. 5:13-15).

I think I also have the Spirit of God.—This does not imply any doubt in the apostles mind as to his inspiration. On the contrary, he is sure that he has the Spirit of God directing him. Others might have been claiming it, but the apostle of Christ could say, "I think that I also have the Spirit of God."

Summary

In this chapter Paul begins to answer the quesions which the Corinthians raised in their letter to him. The questions were about (1) marriage, (2) things sacrificed to idols, (3) matters of public worship, and perhaps (4) the other topics discussed in the rest of the letter: spiritual gifts, the resurrection, and the collection for the saints.

Paul approaches the problem of marriage from the background of the loose moral condition that prevailed in Corinth and from his discussion of the sins of fornication and abuse of the body in the preceding chapters. The unmarried state is excellent, or honorable. Nevertheless, because it may present temptation to those who do not have the gift of continence, he recommends the married state also. The mutual obligations of husbands and wife are not to be set aside

except by mutual consent, and that only for a time, that Satan tempt them not. Paul wished that all had this gift, but he recognized that all are not alike in this respect. His instruction about marriage is to be considered in relation to the individual case. It applies equally to the unmarried and to widows. It does not set aside the law of marriage, although the unmarried state is recommended for those who are able to accept this advice because of the peculiar distress which the people of Corinth were facing.

Married couples are given specific instructions: They are to remember the command of the Lord that the wife is not to depart from her husband. In accord with the instruction which the Lord had given, she is reminded that if she should depart she is to remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband.

With the general statement about marriage, Paul turns to the case of a believer being married to an unbeliever. Is separation permitted in this case? The answer is clear: the believer is not to leave the unbeliever. The marriage is made holy in the believer, and there is no reason for dissolving it. If, however, the unbeliever should depart, he is to be allowed to do so. The law of marriage does not imply that the brother or sister is placed under obligation to go along with the one who leaves. Neither does it say that the believer is free to remarry. Such freedom is brought about by the death of husband or wife. But God called them in peace. Every effort should be made to preserve the home, but if the unbeliever insists he is to be allowed to leave. The believer must consider, however, the possibility of saving his unbelieving partner by refusing to take the initiative in breaking up the home. This may call for great Christian grace, but it is worth it if one soul can be saved.

Becoming a Christian is no reason for seeking separation from an unbelieving husband or wife. For example, the one who is called in circumcision or even in slavery is advised not to let his status as Jew or even slave matter. It is his relation to Christ that counts. Of course, if a slave can obtain freedom, it is well to do so, but it is not essential to his becoming a Christian.

The purpose of Paul's advice was to spare them unnecessary anxiety under the peculiar circumstances of their day. This should not be regarded as a great hardship since the fashion of the world is changing and will some day give place to the permanent state in eternity where they neither marry nor are given in marriage. This instruction was not intended to prevent marriage, but to make it possible for them to serve the Lord without distraction.

Two possible attitudes of a father toward his unmarried daughter are given. If the daughter is old enough to be married and he is disposed to consent to her marriage, let him so do; it is no sin. On the other hand, if he is in position to exercise his will in the matter—something denied to many who were slaves—and he is disposed to keep his daughter at home, let him do so. So the one who gives his daughter in marriage does well, but the one who does not give his daughter in marriage does better, for he spares her the anxiety of homemaking in troublous times.

Concluding the discussion, Paul says that a wife is bound to her husband as long as the husband lives, but if he should die she is free to marry, only in the Lord. The law of the Lord regulating marriage applies at all times. Some assume that this means she is free only to marry one who is in the Lord.

This instruction is so important that Paul closes it with the reminder to his readers that he has been directed by the Spirit of God in writing it.

Questions

1. How did Paul happen to write on the subject of marriage?
2. What expression does Paul repeatedly use to show possible connection between topics in this part of the letter?
3. What are the topics which he discusses?
4. What may have been the question of the Corinthians that called forth Paul's answer?
5. What was Paul's answer to their question?
6. Simply stated, what is meant by the answers?
7. Is there anything in his answer that could possibly be construed to say that the unmarried state is superior to the married?
8. What is the background against which Paul advised them to marry?
9. What can be said of Paul's high regard for marriage?
10. What are the obligations of each partner in marriage?
11. What principle given by Paul in the Philippian letter is there that would save many marriages?
12. To whom does the right over the body of wife or husband belong?
13. What guiding principle must be observed here?
14. On what condition and for what purpose does Paul say that there may be separation of husband and wife?
15. How does the example of Jesus show that there may be times when one needs to be entirely alone with God?

16. What danger do some people face from Satan?
17. Why does Paul say, "by concession, not commandment"?
18. Why did Paul wish all men were as himself?
19. What can we safely conclude about Paul's marital status?
20. What about his love for the family? How does he show it?
21. Under what circumstances is it better to marry?
22. What is the relation of Paul's instruction to what had been said by the Lord?
23. What did Jesus teach about marriage?
24. How long is the marriage contract in force?
25. Why did Moses permit the Jews to divorce their wives?
26. What can be said about the "innocent" party in divorce cases?
27. What principle of interpretation is violated in going to Matthew nineteen rather than First Corinthians seven for instruction about marriage for Christians?
28. What should Christian people do who find themselves divorced and remarried without knowing what the Word of God said about it?
29. Should such couples separate?
30. How does the divorce rate in this country affect the problem of juvenile delinquency?
31. What rule is given for the one who is married to an unbeliever?
32. How are we to understand Paul's statement, "to the rest say I, not the Lord"?
33. How are we to understand the remark, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife"?
34. Does this have anything to do with the personal salvation of the unbelieving husband?
35. What should be the hope of the believer who is married to an unbeliever?

36. What is meant by "not under bondage in such cases"?
37. What rule did Paul give for all the churches to follow?
38. What bearing does the fact that God called us in peace have on our obligation to preserve the marriage?
39. What was the Christian slave to do about his situation?
40. Why did Paul remind them that they had been bought with a price?
41. Why did Paul say he had no command of the Lord about virgins?
42. How are we to regard his opinion?
43. To what distress did Paul refer when he advised the Corinthians to put off getting married?
44. What had the disciples thought about the kingdom before Pentecost?
45. What about the view of some that the apostles expected the return of Christ in their lifetime?
46. What distress did the Corinthians face?
47. Is it wrong for young people to marry during times of war or depression?
48. How does Paul's teaching help those who remain unmarried?
49. What did he mean by "fashion of this world"?
50. What was the duty of fathers toward unmarried daughters?
51. For how long is a wife bound to her husband?
52. Under what conditions did the inspired apostle indicate that she was free to remarry?

For Discussion

1. How can prayer and Bible study be used to keep the home together?
2. How can the Christian ideal for the home be best presented to the young people of the church?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Analysis

A. Paul now considers the second question which the Corinthians had asked in their letter: The question of using meats that had been sacrificed to idols (1-3).
   1. Since such meats were sold in the markets, their question may have been, "Can we as Christians use this meat?" Or they may have put it in a declarative form, "We know that we all have knowledge about this matter."
   2. The apostle's answer indicates an important distinction between knowledge and love.
      a) The principle involved:
         (1) Knowledge puffs up.
         (2) Love builds up.
      b) The application of the principle to their problem:
         (1) The one who may suppose that he has correct knowledge about such meats does not know all that he should know, that is, that knowledge is to be regulated by love.
         (2) If one loves God, he is known by Him. To be known by God is more important than to know about meats, especially, when the guiding principle of love for fellow man is forgotten.

B. Paul explains the truth about idols and about God (4-6).
   1. What we know about idols and about God (4).
      a) Nothing is an idol in this world.
      b) No one is God except One, that is, there is only one true God.
   2. He explains what he meant by the remark about idols and about God (5-6).
      a) He acknowledges that there are those that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth.
      b) Consequently, there are in the thinking of some, "gods many and lords many."
      c) It is different, however, with the Christian.
         (1) For us, there is one God, the Father.
            (a) He is the creator of all things.
            (b) We, as new creatures, are created for His glory.
         (2) For us, there is one Lord, Jesus Christ.

(a) Through Him all things are created.
(b) And we are made new creatures through Him.

C. He discusses the problem of those who do not have this knowledge (7-12).
1. It raises the problem of conscience (7).
a) Some, because of what they have been accustomed to think and because they do not have this knowledge, will, in eating this meat, consider it a sacrifice to an idol—that is, idol worship.
b) By thus doing what they believe to be wrong, their weak conscience is defiled.
2. He points out the truth about food (8).
a) Eating food does not commend us to God.
b) If we eat it, we are no worse off; if we do not eat it, we are no better off.
3. This right to eat food sacrificed to idols is limited (9-11).
a) He gives a warning about using this liberty which might become a stumblingblock to the weak.
b) He explains what he has in mind:
(1) He points to a situation in which a weak man may see someone eating in an idol's temple but who knows that he is not worshiping an idol in doing so.
(2) He raises the question: Will not the weak one be emboldened to eat the meat and in doing so believe that he is actually worshiping the idol?
c) He points out the tragedy that is involved in this lack of consideration for the weak brother.
(1) The weak brother for whom Christ died is led to sin against his conscience and, as a result, he perishes.
(2) By thus sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

D. The principle of limitation of Christian liberty (13).
1. The condition: If meat causes my brother to stumble.
2. The resolution: I will eat no flesh forever.
3. The reason: That I cause not my brother to stumble.

Text

8:1-3. Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. 2 If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know; 3 but if any man loveth God, the same is known by him.

Things Sacrificed to Idols (1-3)

Commentary

Now concerning.—This phrase is taken as an indication of the fact that Paul continues to answer questions posed by the letter which he had received from the brethren in Corinth.

things sacrificed to idols.—Some of the meats that were sold in public markets had been previously used as offerings to idols. Those who ate this food were in the habit of considering it a participation in idolatrous worship—if, indeed, they thought about its significance at all. The Christian was confronted with a very real problem: Should he continue to do according to his custom before becoming a Christian? There must have been some who did object to doing so, for they wrote to the apostle for further information on the subject.

idols.—Luke describes Athens, the neighboring city of the Corinthians, as being a city "full of idols" (Acts 17:16). They even had an altar "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." This gives us a glimpse of the religious background of the early church with some of its converts coming from pagan backgrounds.

Idolatry was an inexcusable sin (Rom. 1:20-21). Even the dim light that came from creation was sufficient to let men see something of the power and divinity of God. The vanity of man's own reasoning filled his heart with darkness. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:22-23). The sin of idolatry consisted not only in worshipping an image of some god man had created but also in the sins that accompanied such idolatrous worship. For a description of the unspeakable things that men practiced when they refused to have the knowledge of God in their minds, see Paul's discussion of the subject in Romans 1:24-32.

Idolatry was the very opposite of Christianity. It was the worship of a god made by the hands of man, rather than the worship of the true God who created man. Idolatry was a system of worship of countless gods, rather than the worship of the one God as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was accompanied by the most shocking sins, indicating the depth of degradation of man; rather than faith expressed in obedience to the gospel, indicating the heights to which man can go in his desire to glorify God, or, as Paul put it, to let their bodies be a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19-20). Idolatry called for the offering of virtually every known thing—even human beings—

as sacrifices to a god made by the hands of men, rather than presenting the body "as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1). Idolatry had its oracles—pretended revelations from its gods—and the writings of those who considered themselves to be wise, rather than the gospel that came "through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12). Idolatry had its many theories about the status of man after death, rather than the clear revelation of the Word of God as to the hell that will be suffered by those who refuse to obey the gospel (II Thes. 1:8-10) and the heaven that is prepared for those who love the Lord (II Tim. 4:8). It is little wonder that the conference at Jerusalem warned, "abstain from the pollution of idols" (Acts 15:20), and John earnestly appealed to the church, "My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21).

In offering sacrifices to an idol, it is possible that some considered this as an expression of their own needs. For example, they brought food as an offering to a god because they realized their own need of food and in some way believed that the god could supply this need. In all probability, however, the average one who worshipped idols went through the ancient forms handed down from generation to generation without thinking anything about the meaning of his actions. The Jews who had the revelation from God—the law—that was to govern their worship soon reached the point where external ceremony without any consideration of the meaning their acts became the mark of their religion. See Matt. 23:1-36; Rom. 2:17-29. We might ask, "Do we as Christians ever find ourselves simply going through forms without letting the truth of the Gospel affect our lives?" Perhaps we should not condemn the idolator for merely going through forms of worship—false worship though it was—while recognizing our own inability at times to avoid this pitfall as we worship God through the Lord Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth.

We know that we all have knowledge.—Commentators are in agreement that this was the declaration of the Corinthians as they wrote to Paul. In other words, as they faced the problem of food offered to idols as a sacrifice, they were confident that they had the knowledge they needed on the subject. It is possible, however, that some conscientious ones among them who thought of their background in pagan religions were really asking for information on the subject. It is possible that they had been discussing such a question as this: "Can we as Christians eat this meat that we find in our markets knowing that it has been used in a pagan worship service to some idol?" If this was their question, then Paul's answer is a clear statement that "we

all have knowledge" about idols and the meats used in their worship. But if the Corinthians had made this statement as their own declaration and not as a question, it may imply that their knowledge was imperfect and that it had a tendency to cause them to assume an arrogant attitude toward those who did not understand the issues involved. Hence Paul's remarks about knowledge.

Knowledge puffs up.—There is an arrogance about all knowledge. That individual or even nation that has knowledge about something that none other has tends to look with disdain upon the one who does not have that knowledge. This pride tends to create ill will, suspicion, and even hate. That is apparently what happened in the church at Corinth.

love edifieth.—Knowledge needs to be regulated by love. Love, the opposite of arrogance, pride, and hate was necessary in order to prevent the brother who didn't have this knowledge from being led to sin and destruction. Love, rather than destroying, led to the building up of the weak brother in Christ until he too had the correct understanding of this problem of food that had been used in idolatrous worship.

he knoweth not yet as he ought to know.—Even the one who thought that he possessed all knowledge about this problem was limited. The apostle points this out in order to overcome the spirit of arrogance. Knowledge without due consideration for those who did not have it could not be perfect.

if any man loveth God.—To love God is to be known by Him. This is the knowledge that is needed. To be known by God requires one to love his brethren. John's statement has a bearing on this matter: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (I John 4:20).

Love of the brethren requires proper concern for their lack of understanding of such things as the use of food that had been sacrificed to idols. Knowledge without love could do great harm. It is love that makes one think of the brother who is not fully instructed. Love builds up the body of Christ rather than destroying it by sinning against the weak member. The important thing is to be known by God, and that depends on loving Him and expressing that love in a proper regard for the brother who is weak.

Text

8:4-6. Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no

God but one. 5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; 6 yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.

The Truth About Idols and About God (4-6)

Commentary

Concerning therefore eating things sacrificed to idols.—After discussing love as the principle that is to regulate knowledge, the apostle comes to grips with the real issue about idols and the use of food that has been sacrificed to them. His remark tends to support the suggestion that the Corinthians had arrogantly stated their position on the matter rather than asking for information.

we know that no idol is anything in the world.—The Greek, literally rendered, is as follows: We know that nothing idol in world. Obviously we must supply the verb and two articles to make sense in English: We know that nothing is an idol in the world. But the thought is clear: Nothing in the world is an object of worship. A tree is not an object of worship, nor a stream, nor a mountain, nor the heavenly bodies. And if these things are not gods, certainly no idol made by man's hands is to be considered as an object of worship. Paul declared in his speech at Athens that "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man" (Acts 17:29). "The God that made the worlds and all things therein, he being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: neither is he served by men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24-25).

The idol, then, does not represent any real god. It is the projection, in some way, of man's own concept of God. It is perhaps the expression of what man needs from God. Idolatry expressed this largely, though not exclusively, as materialistic needs.

there is no God but one.—This is the basic issue of Christian theology. It is clearly stated in the Old Testament and upheld in the New Testament. "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:4-5). Jesus upheld this view on various occasions. See Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27. Speaking to the Samaritan woman, He said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). John's prologue gives us three basic thoughts on this issue: (1) "In

the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; (2) "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth"; and (3) "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Paul wrote to the Colossians, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily" (Col. 2:9). Perhaps the clearest explanation of the Christian doctrine of the Godhead is given by Paul in his letter to the Philippians: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself as a man, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:5-11).

This knowledge is essential to the understanding of the problem faced by the church at Corinth. To love God and to be known by Him is to be considerate of the brother who has not fully comprehended the doctrine of the Godhead.

For though there be that are called gods.—In his teaching about the one true God, Paul is not unaware of the fact that many people believed there were many gods and many lords. As a matter of fact, almost everything was a god to the pagan. His was a religion of fear and works by which he hoped to gain favor with his god. Christianity, on the other hand, is the religion of grace and faith—faith expressed in obedience to the revealed will of Christ. Paul recognized the problem: What was the man who did not know the truth about God but thought that his idols were gods to do about such things as eating food that had been used in connection with the worship of idols?

to us there is one God.—To the Christian, there is only one God, the Father. It is not surprising that many new converts from paganism did not fully understand this truth. Consequently, he did not understand about eating food sacrificed to idols. He had been used to thinking of almost everything in the heavens and on the earth as gods. It was difficult to grasp the essential teaching of Christianity about the only God.

of whom are all things, and we unto him.—God, the Father, is the creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. How is it possible for man to imagine that he can make a god?

God had a purpose in the creation of man: Man was created to glorify Him. As to the Christian, Paul declared that in Christ, God "chose us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:4-6). God chose the believer in Christ; the believer—and that means all who will, Jew or Greek—chooses God the Father as He is revealed in Christ.

one Lord, Jesus Christ.—The word "Lord" was used by the Jews instead of "Jehovah," a name that refers to the eternal, living God. New Testament quotations from the Old Testament are usually from the Septuagint version, which accounts for the fact that the word "Lord" is found in the New Testament instead of "Jehovah" which is found in the Old. So when Paul calls Jesus Christ "Lord," he is affirming in the most positive manner possible the deity of Jesus the Christ.

through whom are all things, and we through him.—Christ is presented as the agent of creation, and the Father as the source of all things. "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3). The same idea is given by the writer of Hebrews as he speaks of the Son through whom God made the worlds (Heb. 1:2). Paul speaks of Him in the Colossian letter as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist" (Col. 1:15-17).

We Christians are made new creatures through Him. Note Paul's remark to the Ephesians: "Even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4:21-24).

Text

8:7-12. Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol;

and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8 But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak. 10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ.

Not All Have This Knowledge (7-12)

Commentary

there is not in all men that knowledge.—The complete revelation of all things that pertain to life and godliness is given in the Bible. But we are not all on the same level in the comprehension of that knowledge. Try to imagine the situation of those who had the background of idolatry with its attendant sins. It must have been a difficult adjustment for those to make who had been used to thinking that they were worshipping idols when they ate the meats that were sold in the markets.

their conscience being weak is defiled.—Our word "conscience" is derived from the Latin and has the same root meaning as the Greek term. The prefix signifies "with" or "together." The root word means "to know." This suggests that conscience is the awareness of an act together with its moral implications, that is, the thing that is right or wrong about it. Conscience condemns us for doing what is wrong or commends us for doing what is right according to our accepted standard. For the Christian, that standard is the Bible.

The Christian whose background was pagan and who had been used to eating food that had been sacrificed to idols was aware that he was still using such food. His question was, "Is it right for a Christian to do so?" In many cases the answer was "No" for he did not have the knowledge that "nothing is an idol in this world." His guilt, though not based on truth, was, nevertheless, real to him. The person who persists in doing what he believes to be wrong, even though it might not be wrong, is in danger of reaching the state in which his conscience no longer functions as a warning against wrongdoing. In this way the conscience is stained or defiled. The stain that sin leaves on the conscience can only be removed by the blood of the Lamb (Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 1:22-23).

A weak conscience is one that is not fully instructed. It permits one to do what he believes to be wrong. The weak conscience can be strengthened by the truth and by training it to function correctly. The trained conscience that has the truth to guide it will condemn what is wrong and commend what is right.

But food will not commend us to God.—Literally, does not present us to God. The thought is that food, whether we eat it or not, is not the thing that presents us to God in a favorable light. The thing that does commend us to God is the proper consideration for the weak brother lest we cause him to sin.

Jesus had a word to say on this matter of defilement: "Not that which entereth into the mouth defiles the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man" (Matt. 15:11). "But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man" (Matt. 15:18-20).

this liberty of yours.—The apostle sounds a warning to those who have knowledge about food that had been sacrificed to idols. They are to consider the brother with a weak conscience, lest by their action he be led to sin.

The word translated "liberty" is usually translated "authority" in the New Testament. But there are places where it clearly means "right" as in this context and in I Cor. 9:5 and perhaps also 11:10. In this sense it is closely related to "freedom"—"liberty" as in 10:29.

The basic idea of the word is right to choose or liberty of action. It can mean authority, power, or right. See John 10:18 where Jesus speaks of His power or right to lay down His life. He had the right to do so for He had received the command from the Father. In John 1:12 He tells of the right—certainly not the power—to become children of God which was given to the believer in Christ.

There was no question about one's right to eat the food that had been used in the worship of idols. There were, however, some things that did limit this right. No one had a right to cast a stumblingblock before his brother.

For if a man see thee who hast knowledge.—Paul supposes a possible situation to illustrate what he means. He thinks of the man who knows that meat sacrificed to an idol may be eaten by a Christian without his participation in the worship of an idol. But what of the brother with a weak conscience who sees you doing this? Will he not

be encouraged by your example to do what he believes to be wrong?
the brother for whose sake Christ died.—A Christian's conduct can cancel the cross of Christ. Christ died for the weak brother as well as for the strong. But should one who has knowledge do a thing that causes another for whom Christ died to be lost? We should think of this side of the matter when we face similar situations today.
sinning against the brethren.—This was being done thoughtlessly. Undoubtedly, the strong Christian said to himself that there was nothing wrong in what he was doing, but he was not considering it's effect on the one who did not know about idols.
wounding their conscience.—This thing struck a blow that left a wound on the conscience of the weak brother. Even though it was right in itself, it became a sin, for it caused a brother to be lost.
ye sin against Christ.—Were they really aware of this before Paul pointed it out? This is the real reason why a Christian should limit his personal liberty, for sinning against a brother is sinning against Christ. As Paul was writing this, was he remembering the voice he had heard on the Damascus road? "Why persecutest thou me?" Jesus takes an injury done to "one of these least" as an injury to Himself (Matt. 25:40).

Text

8:12-13. And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble.

The Limitation of Christian Liberty (13)

Commentary

Wherefore.—The apostle is ready for the conclusion of this part of his argument about meats sacrificed to idols. Christian love may cause one to give up a right for the sake of a brother in Christ. We may have a perfect right to do a thing, but if in doing so we wound another our right must be given up. This principle will solve many problems about what is right or wrong for the Christian.
if meat causeth my brother to stumble.—Paul states a condition that is real. He does not say "If some one should be found at some future time," making the condition general. He is saying what he would do when he faced the real problem. He has indicated all along that it was not wrong in itself to eat the meat that had been sacrificed to an idol. The whole problem had to do with causing a brother for whom Christ died to stumble. That he would never do.
I will eat no flesh forever.—This did not bind Paul to become a vege-

tarian. It was only in the case of offending a brother. There is no particular point in his using "flesh" instead of "food" except that it is specific, referring to the flesh of the animal that had been sacrificed. *that I cause not my brother to stumble.*—This is the real reason for the course he had chosen and which he had recommended to the church. Do we really think of others as "brothers" in the family of God? Are we really concerned lest they stumble? Jesus died for them; Paul was unwilling to cause them to stumble and perish.

Summary

The eighth chapter which begins with the discussion of "Things sacrificed to idols" raises the question of the limitation of Christian liberty. This topic contnues through chapter ten.

Meats used in idol worship were not only eaten in the feasts connected with idol worship, but were commonly sold in the markets. Thus the Christian was confronted with a serious problem: Was he participating in idol worship by using such food?

Paul says, "We know that we all have knowledge." It is possible that this was an opinion of the Corinthians. More probably, it was Paul's estimate of the situation in general. All know certain things about idolatry: there is really no such thing as a god represented by an idol.

If, however, one assumes that this is complete knowledge, he is reminded that such knowledge only "puffs up" while love for God expressed in proper consideration for those who are not fully informed about idolatry builds up the church. The particular knowledge that God created all things and that we are to serve Him through Christ is not shared by some. The custom of eating at idol feasts caused some to believe that they were worshiping the idol. The conscience was defiled because it was weak. A strong conscience would have forbidden such eating by one who believed it to be idolatry.

While Paul recognized that eating such food in reality neither commended nor condemned one, nevertheless, it was wrong to set an example that would lead a brother to do this who supposed that he was actually worshiping the idol. The one whose conscience isn't strong enough to keep him from doing what he believes to be wrong is destroyed by your knowledge. He is the brother for whom Christ died. Thus sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

Relationship to Christ is the controlling principle that limits one's liberty. Therefore Paul says, "If food is causing my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh forever."

Questions

1. What is the significance of the phrase, "Now concerning"?
2. What was done with the meats after they had been sacrificed to idols?
3. How had the converts from paganism been accustomed to think about the use of such meats?
4. Why was this a real problem to some Christians?
5. What information does Luke give about idolatry in Athens?
6. Why was idolatry an inexcusable sin?
7. What does man do to the glory of the incorruptible God by making idols?
8. What does Paul say about the sins that accompanied idol worship?
9. What are some of the points of contrast between idolatry and Christianity?
10. What may have been in the mind of those who offered sacrifices to idols?
11. What suggests that the idolater may not have considered the reason for his offerings to idols?
12. Do Christians always think of the meaning of their acts of worship?
13. What are the two views as to the authorship of the statement, "we know that we all have knowledge"?
14. What is meant by the expression, "Knowledge puffeth up"?
15. How must knowledge be controlled?
16. How does love build up the body of Christ?
17. How was the knowledge of the one who knew that there was nothing to an idol inadequate?
18. What is the relation between loving God and knowledge?
19. What bearing did this have on the problem of the Corinthians?
20. How are we to understand the expression, "no idol is anything in the world"?
21. What are some of the things in creation that men have been known to worship?
22. What did Paul say to the men of Athens about making idols of gold?
23. Why is an idol really nothing?
24. What is the basic issue of Christian theology?
25. What had the Jews been taught about God?
26. What does the New Testament teach about the deity of Jesus?
27. What was the pagan view as to the number of gods and lords?

28. What term describes the one true God of the Christians?
29. What bearing does the fact that God created all things have on the folly of man who makes an idol?
30. What was God's purpose in creating man?
31. How does the word "Lord" indicate the deity of Jesus?
32. What is the function of Christ in Creation?
33. What is God's purpose in bringing into being the "new creature" in Christ?
34. What difference in the level of comprehension of revealed knowl edge must be recognized?
35. What is the meaning of the word "conscience"?
36. What is the function of conscience?
37. What is the standard by which the Christian's conscience is to be guided?
38. What of the sense of guilt on the part of the one who believes he had done wrong even though no wrong was actually done?
39. How is conscience defiled?
40. What is a weak conscience? How can it be strengthened?
41. Since food in itself does not commend us to God, what attitude toward others may do so?
42. What did Jesus say about the things that defile a man?
43. What is the basic idea in the word translated "liberty" in this chapter?
44. What limit did Paul put on the liberty of the one who possessed knowledge about idols?
45. Why should a Christian be concerned about the weak brother?
46. Against whom do we sin when we sin against a weak brother?
47. How were they wounding the conscience of the weak brother?
48. How did Paul sum up his teaching on meats sacrificed to idols?
49. Did Paul say that he would eat meat under no condition?
50. What was his principal concern in this matter?

For Discussion

1. The power of example in teaching.
2. Some things Christians should forego today.

CHAPTER NINE

Analysis

A. Paul presents his own rights as an apostle in relation to the principle of Christian liberty (1-12a).
   1. In a series of questions which require affirmative answers, he presents his rights as a Christian and as an apostle (1-3).
      a) He asks the question about his rights as a Christian: I am free, am I not? That is, free to abstain from food that might cause a brother to stumble.
      b) He asks questions that show his right as an apostle:
         (1) I am an apostle, am I not? The questions that follow prove that he was.
         (2) I have seen our Lord Jesus, have I not?
         (3) You are my work in the Lord, are you not?
      c) He shows why the Corinthians cannot deny that he is an apostle.
         (1) Others might deny it.
         (2) The Corinthians cannot for they are his converts and the seal of his apostleship in the Lord.
         (3) This is his defense to those who question his apostleship.
   2. In another series of questions he proves his right to support while preaching the gospel (2-12a).
      a) He asks questions that indicate some of his rights.
         (1) It isn't that we do not have a right to food and drink, is it? Negative answer is implied.
         (2) It isn't that we do not have a right to be accompanied by a wife—a sister in Christ, that is, a Christian wife —is it? Negative answer implied.
         (3) He has this right even as the other apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas, has he not?
         (4) Or is it only Paul and Barnabas who do not have the right to be supported by their work.
      b) He raises questions that show that workers do receive support from their tasks.
         (1) The questions on the human level.
            (a) What soldier serves at his own charges?
            (b) Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof?

(c) Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

(2) The Scriptures say the same thing.

(a) He indicates this by a question.

(b) He quotes from the Law of Moses, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." See also Deut. 25:4.

c) He asks questions that show how this Scripture applies to him.

(1) Is it for the oxen that God careth, or does He say it for our sake?

(2) He shows why it applies to him as a gospel preacher.

(a) He that ploweth ought to plow in hope.

(b) He that thresheth ought to thresh in hope of partaking of the harvest.

d) He raises questions about sharing of spiritual and carnal things.

(1) If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter that we reap your carnal (material) things?

(2) If others have this right over you, do not we yet more?

B. Paul shows why he did not make use of his right to receive support from preaching the gospel (12b-18).

1. He did not use this right, but endured all things (12b-14).

a) The reason he didn't was that he might cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

b) He adds additional proof, however, that he did have the right to support.

(1) Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the temple?

(2) And they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar?

(3) In the same manner, the Lord ordained that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.

2. He did not use his right, neither was he writing that it might be done in his case (15-18).

a) He declares that he would rather die than let any man make his glorying void.

(b) He explains his glorying in relation to the gospel.

(1) He did not glory over the fact of his preaching the gospel, for it was necessary for him to do so and, he adds, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."
(2) He could look at his preaching in two ways:
(a) If he preached the gospel of his own will he had a reward.
(b) If he did not do so of his own will, he had a stewardship entrusted to him.
(3) His reward, then, was preaching the gospel without charge. In so doing, however, he was not using his right in the gospel to the full.

C. Paul explains that his purpose in preaching the gospel is not to receive support, but to win some (19-27).
1. Although he is free from all men, he made himself a slave to all that he might gain more converts to Christ (19-22).
a) To the Jews, he became as a Jew to gain Jews.
b) To them under the law, as under the law, although he was not himself under the law, that he might gain them that are under the law.
c) To them that are without law, he was as without law; but this does not mean that he was without law to God, for he was under law to Christ. This was for the purpose of winning them that were without law.
d) To the weak, he became weak that he might win the weak.
e) He became all things to all men that by all means he might win some.
2. He explains that he was doing all things for the gospel's sake (23-27).
a) His purpose was that he might share in the blessings promised in the gospel (23).
b) He illustrates his purpose by reference to the athletic games (24-27).
(1) He reminds them that those who strive in the games exercise self control in all things.
(2) Their goal was to receive a corruptible crown.
(3) In contrast, the Christian's goal was an incorruptible crown.
(4) Consequently, he was not running uncertainly (without a goal) or boxing as one who beats the air.
(5) His aim was to conquer the body, lest after having preached to others he should be rejected.

Text

9:1-12a. Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. 3 My defence to them that examine me is this. 4 Have we no right to eat and to drink? 5 Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working? 7 What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8 Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, 10 or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking. 11 If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? 12 If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more?

Paul's Rights as an Apostle (1-12a)

Commentary

Am I not free?—This chapter must be read in the light of what the apostle had just written in chapter eight. A Christian had a right to eat the meats that had been sacrificed to idols because he knew the truth about idols. This right—translated "liberty" in the American Standard Version—was not to be used in such a manner as to cause the weak brother to stumble.

Paul was just as free as any other Christian to exercise his judgment about eating this kind of food, for the truth of Christ had set him free from all rules and regulations and superstitions of men. It had, indeed, set him free from the bondage of the Jewish law. It had set him free from the bondage of sin. See John 8:32 and Rom. 6:22. It was for freedom that Christ had set him free, and he was not becoming entangled again in any yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1). But what he had recommended to others about the limitation of Christian liberty, he was free to observe for himself (8:13).

am I not an apostle?—All this group of questions are so framed as to suggest affirmative answers. "I am an apostle, am I not?" The question of his freedom and of his apostleship could only be answered by "yes." The question as to his apostleship lays the ground for his argument that he has the right to expect material support from

those to whom he preached the gospel—a right which he was to forgo.

have I not seen Jesus Our Lord?—Again, the affirmative answer is suggested. "I have seen Jesus Our Lord, have I not?" This was an essential qualification of an apostle. Their task was to be witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:22). It is true that others of the apostles had been eyewitnesses of the things that occurred during the ministry of the Lord (Lk 1:2; II Pet. 1:16; Heb. 2:3-4), but the essential thing was that they should be witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 2:32).

This was so important in the life and ministry of Paul that Luke who records the story of his conversion mentions it three times, twice in Paul's own words (Acts 9:3-6; 22:5-11; 26:12-20). In the list of appearances of Our Lord, Paul gives this humble but significant testimony: "and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also (I Cor. 15:8).

are not ye my work in the Lord?—We can show that an affirmative answer is implied by stating in this way: "You are my work in the Lord, are you not?" No one of them could deny it. They had heard the gospel from the lips of the apostle. Their faith in Christ depended upon it. Their very hope of eternal life in Him was based on the gospel Paul preached. When they admitted this, they also had to admit that he was an apostle and that he was free in the Lord.

If to others I am not an apostle.—Paul had his critics at Corinth, but it is doubtful if the members of the church were in the group that denied his apostleship. Some were for Cephas, some for Apollos, and some for Paul. But this seems to be a matter of leaders and not a question as to Paul's apostleship. Then who were they who were denying that he was an apostle? In all probability, the Judaizers. These, whom he calls false brethren, had disrupted the liberty of the churches of Galatia and had attempted to do so in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:4-5). Paul mentions these critics in II Cor 10:7-11. "If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also are we. For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning the authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not casting you down), I shall not be put to shame: that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. For his letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account. Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such are we also in deed when we are present." He speaks of

them ironically as "the very chiefest apostles" (II Cor 11:15). He says that "such are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ" (II Cor 11:13).

yet at least I am with you.—The Corinthians of all people could scarcely afford to deny his apostleship for they had become Christians through his preaching. This reminder also lays the ground for his claim to the right to support from them which he develops later in the chapter. "He could not prove to any one that he had seen the Lord; but the Corinthians at any rate had no need of such evidence to convince them that he was an Apostle. He seems to be glancing at the rival teachers who questioned his claim to the title (Plummer, I C C, *First Corinthians,* p. 178)

for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.—A seal stamped on a document certified that it was genuine and that it was trustworthy. The Christian life of the Corinthians was the seal that certified that Paul was a genuine apostle of Christ and that he was to be trusted. He adds, "My defense to them that examine me is this." Some commentators take this statement to refer to what follows, but it makes good sense to take it with what goes before, for it really completes his statement about the defense he had made for his apostleship.

Have we no right to eat and drink?—This question containing a double negative is so framed as to imply a negative answer: It isn't that we do not have a right to eat and drink, is it?" Who could deny him the right to food and drink as a result of his work? Having established, at least to the Corinthians, that he was an apostle, he began a series of arguments to establish his right to support.

right to lead about a wife that is a believer.—His question is about his right to be accompanied on his missionary journeys by a wife who is a Christian. This had nothing to do with whether or not he was married. See chapter seven for the discussion of this point. He is merely arguing his right to do so, not stating as a fact that he is being accompanied by a wife. This, it seems, is another of his rights which he had given up for the sake of his work in the gospel.

The word translated "believer" is actually "sister." The misunderstanding of this text that was used by some at a later time to support the practice of entering into some kind of "spiritual" marriage has no support in the correct interpretation of the passage. "Sister" must mean that the wife was to be a Christian. His question was: "It isn't that we do not have a right to be accompanied on our journeys by a Christian wife, is it?" Who could deny him the right?

the rest of the apostles.—Paul had the same right as the rest of the apostles to claim support for himself and a family. We have nothing in Scripture to show that any of them were married except Cephas. One of the outstanding miracles of Jesus' ministry was the healing of Peter's wife's mother (Lk 4:38). But the absence of evidence does not prove that the others were not married, and Paul seems to imply that they were .

and the brethern of the Lord.—When Jesus came into His own country and entered the synagogue and taught the people, they were astonished at His wisdom and said, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joseph, and Simon? And his sisters, are they not all with us (Matt. 13:55-56)? It would seem that those who knew the family of Jesus understood that His brethren were the children of Joseph and Mary. This is the natural thing to suppose, although some have suggested that these whom Matthew calls brothers were cousins or the children of Joseph by some former marriage. Such inventions of the imagination are not necessary in the light of the plain statement of Matthew (Mat. 1:25). After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary reared a family who are known as "the brethren of the Lord."

John records that "even his brethren did not believe on him" during His ministry (John 7:5). But this does not indicate that they joined with the Jews who hated Him and sought to kill Him (John 7:1). Some of His friends at one time thought that "he was beside himself" (Mark 3:21), and came to rescue Him from the crowds that gathered about Him to the extent that "they could not so much as eat bread" (Mark 3:20). It was at this time that His mother and His brethren came and standing outside the circle of the crowd sent unto Him asking Him to go home with them (Mark 3:31). This certainly indicates that His family held Him in high esteem even though they did not at the time recognize Him as Messiah. It was not until they were compelled to do so by the force of the evidence of His resurrection that they were found in the company of believers (Acts 1:14). It is interesting to note that James, the author of he epistle that bears his name and (we suppose) the brother of Jesus, calls himself "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1). This is one of the strongest statements of the deity of Jesus that we have. His brother had known Him as the oldest one of the family and surely as a wonderful brother, and, when all the evidence was in, they too accepted Him as their Lord. Paul mentions "James the Lord's brother" as one of those whom he saw when he went to Jerusalem to visit Cephas (Gal. 1:19).

We have no record in Scripture as to the marital status of these brethren of Our Lord, but we can safely assume that Paul did know about them and that this information was generally known. His point in mentioning them in exactly the same as in mentioning the right of the apostles to receive support for their families.

and Cephas?—The prominence of Cephas (Peter) justified Paul in mentioning him, although everyone knew that he was one of the apostles. His prominence led some to ascribe preeminence to Peter, something that is in no way supported in Scriptures. Paul mentions him because he must have been well known to the Corinthians (1:12; 3:22). His point is that he had just as much right as Cephas to receive his support from those to whom he preached the gospel.

Or I only and Barnabas.—It is interesting that Paul should mention Barnabas, his associate at Antioch and companion on the first missionary journey (Acts 11:22-26; 13:1-3). They had parted company over John Mark just before starting the second journey that finally led Paul to Corinth (Acts 15:2, 25-26, 31-41). The reference to Mark in Col. 4:10 and II Tim. 4:11 and this one to Barnabas suggest that the "sharp contention" between them was a matter of policy and not a personal quarrel unbecoming to Christian brethren.

Were Paul and Barnabas, for some strange reason, to be excluded from this right to refrain from working for their living in order that their whole time might be given to the preaching of the gospel? Paul is only arguing for the right. The Corinthians were well aware of the fact that when he came to Corinth he made his own living, at least in part, by tentmaking (Acts 18:1-3). But tentmaking, it seems, was only temporary, for other churches sent support to him from time to time. "Ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need" (Phil. 4:15-16). Paul called the attention of the Corinthians to this later. He asked, "Did I commit a sin a abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God for naught? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you; and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want; and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself" (II Cor. 11:7-9).

Do I speak these things after the manner of men?—In arguing his right to receive support, Paul turns to some everyday examples to prove his point. The soldier doesn't provide his own rations; the one who plants a vineyard expects to eat the fruit it produces; the one who feeds a flock expects to use the milk of the flock for food. All of these are supported by the work they do.

or saith not the law the same thing?—He appealed to the higher authority of the law of Moses to further emphasize his right. The law said, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut. 25:4). It was necessary, of course, for Paul to show how this rule applied to him. He asks, "is it for the oxen that God careth?" While it is true that the original provision was for the protection of the oxen, Paul is suggesting that it was not only for them that God cares. Certainly God who provided that the ox should be fed from the work he was doing would have even more concern that His apostles receive support from their work of preaching His gospel. He adds, "For our sakes it was written." Two more examples are used to enforce this application: The man who plows the field ought to plow in hope of having a share in the crop he is going to raise. The man who threshes ought to do so with the hope of partaking of the harvest.

If we sowed unto you spiritual things.—This is the real issue: He had shared the gospel message with them; they believed the word of the cross which he preached; they believed it and got themselves baptized, and thus they were washed, they were sanctified, they were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our Lord (1 Cor. 6:11). These were the spiritual things they received as a result of his labors among them.

is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?—The argument is clear enough. He did have an indisputable right to receive support from them. In reality, this was a small matter in comparison to the blessing they had received through his efforts in their behalf.

By "carnal things" he refers to material things such as food and drink. He had used the word "carnal" in a different sense in 3:1-3. See notes on these verses.

Robertson, in *Word Pictures,* Vol. IV, page 145, assumes that Paul teaches the same lesson in Gal. 6:6. It is highly probable, however, that that passage suggests the mutual obligation of teacher and those who are taught to actually share in the good things of the gospel message.

If others partake of this right over you.—This is apparently a reference to those same men who were questioning Paul's apostleship. They, in all probability, had been taking support from the Corinthians. Paul refused to do so that he might show what sort they were (II Cor 11:12).

But for the sake of argument, he contends that if others had this right the apostles were more entitled to it then they.

Text

9:12b-18. Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 13 Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? 14 Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel. 15 But I have used none of these things: and I write not these things that it may be so done in my case; for it were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel. 17 For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me. 18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel.

Why He Did Not Make Use of His Right (12b-18)

Commentary

Nevertheless we did not use this right.—At this point, as we read the letter, we might expect him to say that he now expects them to make this support available to him also. The Corinthians, of course, knew that he had not taken support from them. They may have been unprepared for the turn of thought, but it was clear to them that although he had proved his right he was not taking advantage of it. He endured all the hardships that had come to him at Corinth; he worked with his own hands at one time to support himself; he had waited until the brethren from Macedonia arrived with support. Surely he knew "how to be abased, and how also to abound: in everything and in all things he had learned the secret both to be filled and to be in want" (Phil. 4:12).

that we cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.—Under no circumstances was Paul going to let personal needs hinder his dedication to Christ and his determination to preach the word of the cross.

Lack of adequate support for the ministry has often hindered the progress of the gospel of Christ. Those who argue that Paul recommended "tentmaking" as a proper way to support the ministry fail to see the underlying reason for his attitude toward receiving support from the Corinthians. No minister, Paul is particular, can do his best in presenting the gospel if he has to give too much time to the task of making a living, or, as it often happens, to living on what he makes. On the other hand, no man should enter the ministry as a means of gaining a livelihood. When churches awake to their opportunities and privileges, the minister and the missionary will be more adequately supported.

they that minister about sacred things.—Lest anyone should misunderstand what Paul had just said, he adds two more arguments to support his position that the gospel minister has a right to be supported by his work. First, those who ministered about sacred things and those who waited upon the altar ate of the things of the temple and had their portion with the altar. He had pointed out that the principle of support from work was well known in ordinary human experience and that it was also supported by Scripture. Now he turns to sacred things to indicate that the same thing is true in that area also. Second, he calls attention to the fact that the Lord had ordained that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.

The law on this point, so far as the Jewish temple is concerned, is found in a number of places (Lev. 6:16, 26; 7:31-38; Num. 18:8). It was sadly abused by some as in the case of the sons of Eli (I Sam. 2:12-17, 27-36). The priests were accustomed to share in the meats that the people offered as sacrifices. While the meat was boiling, they would take a three-pronged fork and thrust it into the meat, taking for their portion all that clung to the fork. But these young men, Hophni and Phinehas, treated the offering of the Lord with contempt and demanded that they be given raw meat to roast before any of it was offered to the Lord. They greedily looked upon the sacrifices of the people and demanded the choicest parts for themselves. It is barely possible that some ministers and missionaries today with extravagant tastes have hindered the cause of the gospel by demanding more for themselves than they have any right to receive or than people are able to supply. But this was the exception in Old Testament times and today also if it does exist.

Even so did the Lord ordain.—God gave orders that the priests of the temple should be supported; so also did Jesus ordain that the gospel minister shoud be supported. These are the words of the Lord as reported by Matthew and Luke: "The laborer is worthy of his food" (Matt. 10:10); "And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). Paul has an additional word to say on the subject: "Let elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire" (I Tim. 5:17-18).

There is no reference to the tithe in this passage unless it be assumed that the offerings were a part of the tithe. Even if such were the case, it cannot be used as a valid argument for or against tithing today.

Some argue from the fact that Abraham gave a tenth of the chief spoils to Melchizeded—and through him even Levi paid tithes—that the Christian is under obligation by the law of the tithe to give a tenth of his income to the church. The only valid conclusion that can be drawn from this incident is that Christ, the high priest after the order of Melchiaedek, is superior to the Levitical priests.

It is a well known fact that the Jews did greatly abuse the matter of tithing. Malachi said, "And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polutted bread upon mine altar. And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of Jehovah is contemptible. And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil! Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased" (Mal. 1:6-8)? The prophet's challenge is: Try to pay your taxes with the things you bring to the Lord and see if your government will accept them.

But the fact that some abused their privilege in making an offering to the Lord does not prove that the Christian is by law obligated to pay a tithe to the church. What then is the basis of giving for the support of the gospel? (1) Proportionate giving, "as he may prosper" (I Cor 16:2); (2) Not commandment but love (II Cor 8:8); (3) Readiness, for "if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath and not according as he hath not" (II Cor. 8:12); (4) equality (II Cor 8:14); (5) Willing gift, not of necessity (II Cor 9:5, 7); (6) "As each hath purposed in his heart" (II Cor. 9:7; (7) A cheerful gift, for God loveth a cheeful giver" (II Cor 9:7).

Tithing is a good basis for a Christian to adopt as a beginning point, but it cannot be argued from Scripture that it is "an eternal principle of giving." The only point being made here is that tithing is not a requirement of the New Testament, but this should not be used as an excuse for not giving. There is certainly nothing against adopting the principle of the tithe if one should care to do so, but love for Christ should lead one to do far more than he would as a matter of law. It is my conviction that love for the Lord and the privilege of participating in the spread of the gospel will bring more money into the church than all the arguments for tithing as a law of giving.

And I write not.—So strong had been the argument for the support of the gospel minister that the apostle felt the need to state again that he did not use this right and that he was not writing to give the impression that he wanted to use it now. Far from it!

good for me rather to die.—The apostle's deep feeling on this issue is seen in the structure of the sentence. He says, "I would rather die than—," but the alternative is not stated even though it is clearly implied—"than have such a thing happen in my case and destroy my boasting in preaching the gospel without charge." He seemed to be in a hurry to add, "No one shall make my boasting void." This boasting was his reward, that is, boasting in the fact that he could preach the gospel without charge.

necessity is laid upon me.—He could not boast that he was preaching the gospel. Unseemly vanity is sometimes seen in preachers and missionaries who boast of their sacrifice in preaching the gospel. But Paul considered that he was under obligation to "Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish" to share the gospel with them. The very possession of the gospel makes us debtors to those who do not know of the redeeming love of Christ.

Paul was compelled to preach the gospel of Christ. He said, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." Christ had commissioned him (Acts 26:16-18); the Holy Spirit had given orders for the church at Antioch to set him aside for the task (Acts 13:1-3). Therefore, he was under obligation to preach the word of the cross, for he was like the household slave who was under obligation to care for his master's affairs (Lk 17:10; I Cor 4:1-2).

But there was a place for him to exercise his freedom in the matter: he could preach the gospel without charge. This was his reward, and he would not allow anyone to take it from him.

Text

9:19-27. For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. 20 And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. 23 And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. 24 Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. 25 And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: 27 but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

Paul Preached to Win (19-27)

Commentary

For though I was free.—He had laid this principle down in the beginning of the discussion of his right to receive support. He was not bound by the customs, regulations, and practices of others. He was free to forgo accepting support that the gospel of Christ be not hindered.

under bondage to all.—He was a slave to all in that he had a service to perform in their behalf. By preaching without charge he was able to win more than he would have done if he had accepted support. Why? Evidently there were some at Corinth who were constantly looking for opportunities to discredit him by saying that he was working for money. He removed the possibility completely, and in so doing was able to win more for Christ. Moreover, he was also able to gain much more satisfaction from his work in this way (this is not stated in the text).

to the Jews I became as a Jew.—Paul used his right as a Jew to go into the synagogues on the sabbath day and, when called upon, go speak to them. God providentially provided for the propogation of the gospel through the scattering of the Jews over the known world before the Day of Pentecost. "For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath" (Acts 15:21). When Paul came to Antioch of Pisidia,

he entered the synagogue on the sabbath and sat down. After the reading of the law, he was invited to speak. He stood up and with characteristic gesture urged those present to hear his message. Carefully and skillfully, he led the audience through the familiar but ever interesting story of God's dealings with the Jews. Then he declared that God had fulfilled His promise given through the prophets in the resurrection of Jesus through whom he proclaimed the remission of sins. When the meeting was over, many of those present urged Paul to speak to them again the next Sabbath. See Acts 13:13-52.

When Paul selected Timothy to travel with him, he had him circumcised because of the Jews that were in that part of the country. Timothy's mother was a Jewess, but His father was a Greek. See Acts 16:1-2. In the case of Titus, however, on whom some tried to force the law of circumcision, Paul refused to be bound by the opinions of men, since Titus was a Greek. See Gal. 2:1-3.

not being myself under the law.—Paul did not carry this matter of conformity to the point of keeping the law in every instance. Indeed, he had been freed from the power of the law by becoming a Christian (Gal. 2:19-22). As a Jew, however, he could approve of circumcision, keep the vows of his Jewish background (Acts 18:18), and even go into the temple with offerings along with other Jewish brethren (Acts 21:17-26).

to them that are without law.—Paul associated with Gentiles as if he were one of them. He defended his right publically when Peter refused any longer to eat with the Gentiles because of his fear of the Jews (Gal. 2:11-21). This whole course of action reminds us of Jesus who associated with publicans and sinners, not as one of them, but as the Good Physician who came to minister to the sick and the lost. Paul was always careful to conform to God's law, for he was under the law of Christ, just as he said to the Galatians, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

To the Weak I became weak.—This is what he wrote about it in the second letter to the Corinthians: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is caused to stumble, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness" (II Cor. 11:29-30). He fully understood and appreciated the problem of the man who was weak—that is, who did not have the information he should have had about idols and who, by the wrong example, might have been led to violate his conscience and so perish. An excellent example of the meaning of "empathy."

that I may by all means save some.—He was concerned about the salvation of all men—the Jew and the Gentile, the weak and the strong. He used every possible means to win them to Christ. At that, only some responded to the gospel invitation.

that I may be a joint partaker.—When Jesus was on the cross there were some who taunted Him saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." How true! But how many Christians have caught the point of Paul's remark? He did all things for the gospel's sake in order that he might become a partaker also in its blessings. Does he not suggest that there is some real doubt about participating in the joy of heaven if we fail to participate in the spreading of the gospel?

they that run a race.—Two illustrations taken from the athletic games illustrate what he has just said about the necessity of doing all things for the sake of the gospel that he might become a partaker of its blessings. They also illustrate the great principle which he had been discussing: the limitation of Christian liberty. In the tenth chapter, he adds another illustration to shown what happens in the case of the one who fails to observe this principle.

In the race, there were many runners, but the prize was for one. Paul says, "Even so, run that ye may attain." All of you are to run so that you may receive the prize of eternal life.

exercise self-control in all things.—Here is the principle of limitation of liberty. The athlete had to observe the rules of training if he expected to win the prize. There were some things that he had to give up. Just so, there were some things that the Christian had to give up, such as liberty to eat food used in idolatrous worship—if he was to win the weak brother. This is, of course, just one of the many applications of the principle of limiting liberty for the sake of others. The rules of the game are given in the Bible. For a summary of them see II Pet. 1:5-11 and Gal. 5:22-24.

Crown.—This is the wreath that symbolized victory, not the diadem of kingly authority. But for the Christian, it was a thing that did not perish. It is the inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away" (I Pet. 1:3-5). It is the crown of righteousness which the Lord will give to those who have loved His appearing (II Tim. 4:8). It is the crown of life for the victor over temptation and sin which the Lord promised to those who are faithful to the end (James 1:8; Rev. 2:10). It is the crown of glory that fades not away which the chief Shepherd will give to those who have cared for the flock when He comes (I Pet. 5:4).

I therefore run, as not uncertainly.—Paul's purpose in preaching was to win some to Christ; his goal was life eternal. Too many are like the Israelites who lost sight of their goal—the promised land. Perhaps there is too much pointless preaching, too much aimless holding of services, too much organization for the sake of organization. The aim of church activity should be to evangelize and to educate. "Make disciples, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and of equal importance, "teaching them to observe all thing whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). And we must organize to evangelize as well as to educate. There is just as much need for a permanent director of evangelism in every congregation as there is for a director of education. Both are necessary! Without them, we are likely to be found running without a goal.

The writer of *Hebrews* sounds a timely warning to all on this issue: "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). And again, "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11).

I buffet my body.—Literally, strike under the eye. Paul takes this figure from the boxing match. He was in the fight to win. He landed blows where they counted. He gave his opponent—his body—a black eye, the knockout blow. Those who interpret Romans 7:14-27 to mean that Paul constantly fought a losing battle with sin need to consider his remarks in this verse. He did face constant opposition from Satan, but he was equipped to conquer and that he did (Eph. 6:12-18). In this life, we too have a struggle with Satan, but there is no need to let him win; there is no need for us to fight as one beating the air; there is every reason why we must overcome.

I myself be rejected.—No man can safely say until the good fight is finished that he has gained the victor's crown. See I Cor. 10:12. The word translated "rejected" means rejected after a test has been made. It is the assayer's term for that which did not stand the test or meet with approval. It is used in Romans 1:28 where it is translated "reprobate." Those who rejected God were given up to a "reprobate mind"—that is, considered to be utterly worthless. It describes the one who may be disqualified in a race. This was Paul's great problem. He proclaimed the message of Christ in such a manner that he would not be disqualified, that is, be lost. He was careful to observe the rules of the game and to keep the goal in mind so as not to become disqualified after preaching to save others.

CHAPTER NINE

Summary

The principle of the limitation of Christian liberty which was introduced in chapter eight is applied to Paul's rights as a Christian and an apostle in this chapter. He begins with a series of questions that called for affirmative answers. As one who is free and who qualifies as an apostle of Christ, he has certain rights. He cites as proof of his apostleship the fact that he had seen the Lord. Others might deny that he was an apostle, but the Corinthians could not for their position in Christ depended on their belief of the word of the cross which they had heard from Paul. Since he is an apostle, he has a right to be supported by the preaching of the gospel. Other rights are mentioned which the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas enjoyed, but the main issue in the discussion is the right to support. The reason for it is seen in the possibility that others were exercising this right over the Corinthians, a thing that Paul was determined to forgo in order not to hinder the gospel, that is, to prevent some from saying that he was preaching just for the sake of making a living.

He proves his right to support by reference to the soldier, the keeper of the vineyard, the shepherd, and all who worked with the hope of partaking of the results of their labors. These examples are not limited to human experience, for the law said, "You shall not muzzle the ox while it is treading the grain on the threshing floor." This principle is seen in the work of the farmer who plows the field in hope of enjoying the fruit of his labor and threshes the grain in hope of eating the bread that is made from it.

But Paul refused to use his right for the sake of the gospel of Christ. He insisted, however, that he had a right to be supported, for he called attention to those who served in the temple and waited upon the altar. They were supported by the work they did. Then he added, "Just so, the Lord ordained that they that preach the gospel should get their living from their work."

Nevertheless, he was not writing in order to receive support at that time or at any future time, for he declared that he would rather die than have anyone make void his glorying in the fact that he was free to preach the gospel without charge. Preaching the gospel was a necessity. He was a servant of the Lord and was bound to be faithful in the task assigned to him. But he was free to praech it without receiving support for so doing. His purpose was to avoid doing anything or letting others do anything to discredit the gospel. He endeavored by becoming all things to all men to win some to Christ and be-

come a fellow-partaker in the blessing of the gospel, that is, be saved himself. Just as the athlete must exercise self-control in all things, so Paul was willing to renounce some of his rights as an apostle to make sure of winning the race and conquering his body so that he would not be rejected after he had preached to save others.

Questions

1. What is the relation between the subject matter of this chapter and chapter eight?
2. What freedom was Paul claiming by his question, "Am I not free"?
3. What other aspects of Christian freedom are explained in the New Testament?
4. Why did Paul frame some of his questions in this chapter so as to suggest an affirmative answer?
5. Why did he ask, "am I not an apostle"?
6. Why did he ask, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord"?
7. What place in the preaching of the apostles did the resurrection of Jesus have?
8. What distinction is there between the witness of Paul and the other apostles?
9. How is the importance of the appearance of Jesus to Paul shown by Luke?
10. How did Paul describe the appearance of Jesus to him in this letter to the Corinthians?
11. Our text frames the questions this way: "are not ye my work in the Lord?" How can it be framed so as to show that an affirmative answer was suggested by Paul?
12. Why did he ask the question?
13. Did the Corinthians deny his apostleship?
14. Who, in all probability, did deny it?
15. What is the connection between the fact of Paul's apostleship and his freedom?
16. What defense did Paul make of his apostleship in II Corinthians?
17. Who were those whom Paul called "the very chiefest apostles?"
18. Why does Paul suggest that the Corinthians couldn't afford to deny that he was an apostle?
19. What did he mean when he said, "You are the seal of my apostleship?"
20. To what does the expression, "My defense is this" refer?
21. Why did Paul ask this question which implied a negative answer: "Have we no right to eat and drink"?

22. Why did he mention his right to be accompanied on his missionary journeys by a Christian wife?
23. How are we to understand that the words of the text mean "a Christian wife"?
24. Why did he mention the rights of the rest of the apostles?
25. What of their marital status?
26. Why were the names of the brothers of Jesus?
27. What suggestion does Scripture give to show that they were the children of Joseph and Mary?
28. What was the attitude of Jesus' brothers toward Him during His ministry?
29. What finally convinced them that He was the Lord?
30. Why did Paul mention Cephas in addition to the apostles?
31. What is the history of the relation of the work of Barnabas to Paul's?
32. What did his question suggest as to the limitation of their rights?
33. What examples form everyday life did Paul present to support his view that he had a right to receive support from his preaching the gospel?
34. What evidence did he present from Scripture to prove the same thing?
35. What did he mean by sowing spiritual things and reaping carnal things?
36. In what sense did he use "carnal things" in 3:1-3?
37. To whom did he refer by the statement "If others partake of this right over you"?
38. Why did he mention them?
39. How was Paul supported at Corinth?
40. Is "tentmaking" to be desired as a means of supporting the minister?
41. Why, then, did Paul resort to it?
42. What are the two additional arguments which Paul presented to prove his right to receive support?
43. Why was it necessary to mention them?
44. How did the sons of Eli abuse the law regarding the priest's portion of the sacrifice?
45. Where is the order of the Lord concerning support of the gospel worker found?
46. What else did Paul say about it?
47. What is the history of the teaching of the Bible on the matter of tithing?

48. What are some of the principles regulating Christian giving?
49. If we assume that tithing is not presented as a command in the New Testament, can we safely use this as an excuse for giving less to the support of the Lord's work?
50. Why was it necessary for Paul to say that he was not writing that he might receive support?
51. How deeply did Paul feel on the matter of preaching the gospel without charge?
52. Why was he determined to do it this way?
53. What did he mean by saying ,"necessity is laid upon me"?
54. Why did he say, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel"?
55. What was his reward in preaching as he did?
56. In what sense was he under bondage to all?
57. How did he use his Jewish background to gain Jews?
58. What limit did he place on the matter of compliance with Jewish customs?
59. How is this illustrated by the cases of Timothy and Titus?
60. As a Christian, what law was Paul under?
61. Since he was a Jew, how did he approach Gentiles?
62. How did he approach those who were weak?
63. What was his two-fold concern in preaching the gospel?
64. What lesson did he teach from the figure of the race?
65. Where are the rules of the race of life found?
66. What kind of crown is the Christian to strive for?
67. How is it described?
68. What was Paul's attitude toward running the race of life?
69. What is the goal of church activity?
70. How did Paul show that he had assumed the role of victor in this life's struggle against sin?
71. Why did he say, "lest I myself be rejected"?

For Discussion

1. Methods of Evangelism to make the church effective today.
2. How can the educational program in your church be improved to make it effective in producing strong Christians.
3. What can you do to make sure that you are living a victorious life for Christ?

CHAPTER TEN

Analysis

A. Paul wanted the brethren to know that the remark he had just made about being rejected was illustrated by the experience of the fathers (1-13).

1. He reminds them of the things of that experience which illustrated the possibility of successfully running the race (1-4).
   a) Things that were related to the beginning of the race.
      (1) All were under the cloud.
      (2) All passed through the sea (thus escaping from Egypt.)
      (3) All were baptized unto Moses (submitting to his divinely appointed leadership) in the cloud and in the sea.
   b) Things that were related to the running of the race.
      (1) All ate the same spiritual food.
      (2) All drank the same spiritual drink.
      (3) That is, they kept drinking from a spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.
2. He reminds them also of their tragic failure in the wilderness journey (5).
   a) With most of them (all but two) God was not well pleased.
   b) They were overthrown in the wilderness (because they lost sight of their goal, the promised land).
3. He points out that these things were examples for the Christians (6-11).
   a) They were examples to keep the Christians from the longing desire for things that were evil (6-10).
      (1) Idolatry and its attendant sins (7).
      (2) Fornication that some committed which resulted in the fall of 23,000 of them.
      (3) Making trial of the Lord that caused them to perish by the plague of serpents.
      (4) Murmuring (grumbling against God's program for them) that caused them to perish by the destroyer.
   b) These were examples written to admonish the Christians upon whom the ends of the ages are come (11).

4. In the light of this, he presents a solemn exhortation (12-13).
   a) He indicates that what happened to Israel can happen to the Christian for he says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
   b) He shows, however, that one need not fall if he observes these principles:
      (1) Temptations are on the human level.
      (2) God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your ability to withstand trial.
      (3) He will make the way of escape that you may be able to endure it (God does His part; you must do yours).

B. Paul presents a strong plea for his beloved fellow-Christians to flee from idolatry (14-22).
   1. He appeals to them as men who are capable of thinking to decide for themselves the merits of what he is saying (14-18).
      a) He points out the significance of the cup and the bread.
         (1) As to the cup which he calls a cup of blessing and which we bless, he asks, "It is a sharing in the blood of Christ, is it not?"
         (2) As to the bread which we break, he asks, "It is a sharing in the body of Christ, is it not?"
            (a) This means that we are many are one body as represented by the one loaf.
            (b) That this is true is indicated by the fact that we all partake of the loaf.
      b) He cites the example of Israel and asks, "The one eating the sacrifices are sharers in the altar, are they not?"
   2. He shows what is implied by this reasoning (19-22).
      a) He asks, "Is the thing sacrificed to the idol anything, or is the idol anything?"
      b) He answers by showing what is wrong with this practice:
         (1) Pagans do sacrifice to demons and not to God.
         (2) He does not want his brethren to become sharers with demons.
      c) He proceeds to point out the impossibility of a Christian sharing in two completely opposite forms of worship.
         (1) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and of demons.
         (2) You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.
         (3) By two questions, he shows the folly of attempting to do so.

(a) Are we provoking the Lord to jealousy (by such conduct)?
(b) We are not stronger than He, are we?

C. Paul cites the law of expediency to indicate the rule of conduct for one who might be involved in eating meat sacrificed to idols (23-33).
1. The principle involved in the law of expediency (22-24).
a) What is lawful should also build up the body of Christ: "All things are lawful; but not all things build up."
b) What is lawful should also benefit one's neighbor: "Let no man seek his own, but his neighbor's good."
2. The principle applied to food sold in the markets (25-30).
a) Where no investigation is necessary:
(1) No need to investigate it's source for the sake of conscience.
(2) Why this is so: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."
b) Where there is no reason to refuse an invitation to dine with one who is not a believer:
(1) If you are invited and you are so disposed, go.
(2) No need to investigate the source of food set before you for the sake of conscience.
c) Where it might be necessary to forgo eating in the event it is pointed out that the food had been used in idol worship.
(1) The reason why this might apply:
(a) For the sake of the one who reveals the source of the food.
(b) For the sake of conscience.
(2) Paul explains the matter of conscience in such a case:
(a) It is not the conscience of the believer who understands about idolatry.
(b) But it is for the sake of the other's conscience who does not understand.
(3) He explains how the principle of limitation of liberty applies to such cases:
(a) Forgo eating, for why is my liberty judged (condemned) by another's conscience—that is of one who does not understand about idols?
(b) He gives thanks for the food, and asks, "Why am I evil spoken of when I eat?" This too can be avoided by forgoing the right to eat.

3. His concluding statement of principles governing the matter of eating meats sacrificed to idols (31-33).
   a) In eating and drinking, "Do all things to the glory of God."
   b) Give no occasion of stumbling to Jews, Greeks, or to the church of God.
   c) Do not act selfishly, but for the good of the many just as Paul does.
   d) The goal to keep in mind: "That they may be saved."

Text

10:1-13. For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and did all eat the same spiritual food; 4 and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. 5 Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

Lesson From the Experience of the Fathers (1-13)

Commentary

For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant.—The closing thought of chapter nine about being rejected is continued in this chapter as the word "for" indicates. It is well to watch for these connecting terms in order to keep in mind the progress of the apostle's thinking. Too often we neglect these little words, especially when we come to the chapter division and as a result neglect to see the close connection between the chapters.

Paul is fond of the use of the term "brethren" because of his deep love and concern for all the members of the family of God. This word gives him an opportunity to show his concern particularly when he must rebuke them for failures or solemnly warn them of the perils that beset their way.

The word translated "ignorant" just as our own word simply means without knowledge. But our word seems to be harsher than the term Paul used. This may be the result of the way we use it or what we imply by it. Paul certainly was not chiding them when he said, "I would not have you ignorant." We are accustomed to a positive expression of this thought. We would prefer to say—and in doing so, more nearly express Paul's thought and spirit—"I do not want you to be without knowledge," or better, "I want you to know." He was concerned that they know the lessons taught by the experience of their fathers in the faith.

our fathers.—How could Paul take an example from the Old Testament Scriptures and use it with reference to a Gentile congregation? How could he speak of the ancient Jews as their fathers? We are aware of the fact that the church at Corinth was made up of Gentiles, perhaps for the most part, but there were Jews in it also. The Jew with his background of Old Testament history could be expected to understand such an illustration. Gentiles also could appreciate these Old Testament backgrounds just as we do today. God's kingdom is made up of believers in Christ whose spiritual heritage goes back to the faithful Abraham and to the nation that owes its origin to him. Paul argues in *Romans* that Abraham was the father of us all, not just the Jews who believed but the believing Gentiles also (Rom. 4:11, 16-17). This is the reason, then, for calling their attention to the fathers. The church recognizes no such distinctions Jews or Gentiles (Gal. 3:28).

Paul used the experience of Israel as they escaped from Egypt to show that the mere possession of rights, liberties, and blessings did not in itself guarantee victory. The Isrealites had freedom, adequate leadership, and divinely provided sustenance but failed to enter the promised land. Their failure illustrates in a negative way what Paul had presented in a positive form in his illustration of the one who wins the race because he exercises self-control in all things.

all under the cloud.—God guided Israel through the trackless wilderness and protected them from the burning heat by day and gave them light by night (Ex. 13:21-22).

Panic struck the fleeing Israelites as they came to the Red Sea. Pharoah and the Egyptian armies closed in on them as they camped by the sea. There was no possible way to go around the sea. There was no way to retreat. They murmured in their fright and wished they had died in Egypt. But "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah" (Ex. 14:13). They could see the Egyptians in close pursuit, but Moses said they were to see them no more. "The angel of God who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them: and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel" (Ex: 14:19-20). As the children of Israel went through the sea on dry land, the Lord looked forth from the pillar of fire and of cloud and caused the Egyptians to be thrown into confusion as they saw that their chariots were becoming hard to move. Then Moses, at the command of the Lord, stretched forth his staff over the sea and the Egyptian armies drowned in the same sea through which the Israelites had passed in safety to the other shore (Ex. 14:15-31).

The cloud, then, represents the blessing of guidance and protection. Paul wanted the Christians to remember this as he urged them to follow the rules of self-control so that they would not be disqualified in the race for the crown of life.

all passed through the sea.—Various attempts have been made to discredit this statement. But the evidence of history as given in *Exodus* is sufficient to justify Paul in saying that they all passed through the sea. The assumption that they went through some shallow water to the north will not fit the description of the event as presented by Moses. To those who believe in God and His power, there is no problem in accepting what Moses said about it. God who made the universe and called the nation of Israel into existence was able to roll back the waters of the sea and let His people pass through on dry land.

were all baptized.—We have no clearer example showing that in baptism the sinner is separated from his sins. Israel was separated from the enemy in the Red Sea where the Egyptian army drowned. The Corinthians were to remember that they had been baptized, sanctified, and justified through the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. They were to enjoy the blessing of separation from sin by following the rules of life's race that led to the crown of life.

This incident also shows the action of baptism. There was a wall of water on either side of the people as they passed through the seas and the cloud was over them. They were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, not just the sea. It took both to complete the figure. The Egyptians were, of course, drowned in the sea, but this was not the figure of baptism, for baptism represents the way of escape from the bondage in sin.

unto Moses.—The preposition translated "unto" indicates progress toward some goal. It is motion whether in space or thought realm. It can be translated "into" or "for" or even "in" according to some scholars. The latter is evidently true in the later development of the language. But direction toward a goal or entrance into something or purpose seems to fit most of the cases in which it is used in the New Testament. Their baptism did bring them into the state of submission to his leadership. It was for the purpose of separation from Egypt and coming into the relationship that recognized Moses and their leader that they were baptized.

Baptism for the Christian means separation from sin and acceptance of the leadership of Christ who has all authority in heaven and on earth. He is both Lord and Christ. He saves, but He also requires the Christian to acknowledge His authority. How else can the Christian hope to run successfully the race and win the crown of life?

did all eat the same spiritual food.—Israel, cut off from all source of supply, was fed by the manna that God provided as they journeyed from Sinai to the promised land. The manna ceased on the day after the Israelites encamped at Gilgal where from that time on they were to eat the fruit of the land. See Joshua 5:10-12. Long before that time, however, Israel grew sick of the food that came from heaven. They said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread" (Num. 21:5). But many generations later, the group that ate the loaves and fish that Jesus miraculously supplied for them suggested that Moses had done a superior thing in giving their fathers the manna. Jesus had to remind them that it was God, not Moses, who gave the manna in the wilderness (John 6:31-32).

The manna represents the blessing of sustenance enjoyed by Israel. Thus it reminds the church at Corinth that they were being sustained by the blessings that came from Christ.

did all drink the same spiritual drink.—According to the record, water flowed from the rock only twice to quench the thrist of the children of Israel. The first time was at Rephedim where the thirsty

people cried to Moses to give them water to drink. They murmured against the Lord and charged Him with bringing them into the wilderness to die of thirst. God said to Moses that He would stand before him upon the rock in Horeb. Moses was told to strike the rock. Water gushed out when he did it. See Ex. 17:1-7.

The second time was at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin where Miriam died. The people were again without water and again the grumbling complaint arose when they said, "Would that we had died when our brethren died before Jehovah" (Num. 20:3). They neither remembered the time when God gave them water from the rock nor were they aware of the privileges that they were enjoying of drinking from the spiritual rock that accompanied them. But once again, the Lord told Moses to take the rod and assemble the people and speak to the rock and bring forth to them water from the rock. Moses said, "Hear now, ye rebels, shall we bring forth water out of this rock" (Num. 20:11)? He struck the rock twice and water came flowing from it to give the congregation and their cattle a drink. But Moses failed to give glory to God for the water. The Lord said to him, "Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12).

The expression "all did eat" considers the whole experience of Israel during the time that the manna was supplied. In the same way, the expression "all did drink" takes into consideration the whole time during which the Lord provided water for their wilderness journey. Twice on the journey, they drank from the water that came from the rock, and they also drank from the streams and pools to which the Lord led them.

spiritual.—Why does Paul describe the food and drink of the Israelites as spiritual? Some suggest that it was because God gave the food from heaven and the water from the rock. But Paul says that they continued to drink of the spiritual rock that accompanied them. A possible solution the problem is suggested by his remarks about the spiritual things he shared with the Corinthians in contrast to the material things which he had a right to expect them to share with him. That spiritual thing was the word of the cross that brought spiritual life to them. He says that Israel continued to drink of a spiritual rock that accompanied them and that rock was Christ. This is not to say that the literal rock from which the water flowed was a type of Christ, but that there was a spiritual rock from which

a life-giving stream flowed and that was Christ. A suggestion as to the spiritual food they enjoyed in the wilderness is given in Moses' words just before they went over into the promised land: "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live" (Deut. 8:3). Did Christ provide through Moses some spiritual food and drink for the children of Israel? His teaching did point to Christ (Deut. 18:15). Jesus said that Moses wrote about Him (John 5:46). The real significance of the manna is pointed out by Jesus in His discourse on the bread of life which He delivered just after the miracle of feeding the five thousand (John 6:31-35). It is possible that Paul is saying that Christ was present with His people all along the wilderness journey and that He was sustaining them spiritually by every word that proceeded out of His mouth for their direction, protection, and encouragement. For the New Testament teaching about water as a symbol of Christ, the source of eternal life, John 4:14 and 7:37-39. The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles who believed on Christ and from them He sent forth the message of eternal life that was like a flood of life-giving water. On the Day of Pentecost, men received this message of life and repented of their sins and were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

with most of them God was not well pleased.—This is the point in the illustration: Paul had certain rights and liberties as a Christian and as an apostle, but he was willing to forgo his rights in order to make sure of winning the crown of life and not be disqualified in the race. The fathers had blessings, but were not willing to exercise self-control in all things. Therefore they were overthrown in the wilderness. They failed because they forgot their goal, the promised land.

Paul says that with most of them God was not well pleased. In fact, this included all of them of responsible age except Joshua and Caleb. The spies who had been sent in to the land came back with glowing reports of a land flowing with milk and honey, but they also said that there were giants in the land. The people were filled with fear and wanted to return to Egypt. Joshua and Caleb urged them to go up and possess the land. They said, "If Jehovah delight in us then will he bring us into this land and give it unto us" (Num. 14:8). Because they would not listen to the plea of these who had confidence in God, the Lord said to them, "As I live, saith Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of

you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, that have murmured against me, surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware that I would make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephuneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Num. 14:28-30).

This tragic failure, the details of which are given in the specific cases that follow, is a solemn warning to the church at Corinth not to follow their example. They were, however, well on their way to do so as Paul plainly indicates.

these things were our examples.—We are indebted to the fathers for so many things. The priesthood of the Old Testament time helps us to appreciate our relation to Christ as high priest. The writer of *Hebrews* helps us to see this as well as the lesson of the system of worship in connection with the tabernacle. But in practical living, the example of the Israelites from the time of their escape from Egypt until they finally were located in the promised land is one filled with both warnings and encouragements for the faithful follower of Christ.

we should not lust after evil things.—The word translated "lust" simply means strong desire. That desire may be for what is good. In that case it may be rendered "desire." For example, Jesus said that the prophets desired to see the things which His disciples were permitted to see (Matt. 13:17). The word is found again in its intensified form in Jesus's statement about His desire to eat the passover before His suffering (Lk 22:15). But when John speaks of the strong desire for the things of evil, we translate this word as "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life" (I John 2:16). For an example of the use of the term in both the good and bad sense, see Gal. 5:17.

Paul's evident purpose in his strong admonition in this chapter is to have the Corinthians have their hearts set on the things of Christ rather than on the things of evil.

Neither be ye idolaters.—The experience of the fathers had a particular application to the problem of idolatry in Corinth. Just as Israel pretended to worship God while partaking of idolatrous feasts so some of the Corinthians were attempting to worship Christ and at the same time participate in pagan worship. The incident to which Paul refers is the sin of Israel at Sinai when they made the golden calf and proclaimed a feast and said that these are the gods that led us out of Egypt. See Ex. 32:7-8.

rose up to play.—This word was used to describe the activity of children at play; but it was also used to describe the actions of the children of Israel in their worship of the idols. It is even used to describe David's expression of joy when the ark was brought up to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:14). It is sometimes translated "dance" but with no reference to the modern dance which may often be described more accurately as "works of the flesh." See Gal. 5:19-21.

Neither let us commit fornication.—See comment on chapter five and six for the situation that existed in the church at Corinth. Paul was not dealing in mere hypothetical situations; he was facing the problem that actually existed at Corinth. The incident in the experience of the fathers to which he referred was their immoral conduct with the daughters of Moab. See Num. 25:1-18. Balaam had attempted to pronounce a curse on Israel but had been unable to do so. They involved themselves, however, in a curse by their immoral conduct that brought death to twenty-three thousand of them.

Neither let us make trial of the Lord.—This incident is described in Num. 21:4-9. The people complained about the things the Lord was doing for them. They were tired of the manna; they wanted to go back to Egypt. The Lord sent fiery serpents among them to punish them. Finally they acknowledged their sin and begged for relief. Moses was instructed to make the bronze serpent and lift it up so that those who were bitten could look at it and live. For further history of this bronze serpent see II Kings 18:4. Recall also Jesus' words to Nicodemus based on this incident of lifting up the serpent (John 3:14-15).

This incident had a definite bearing on the situation at Corinth. In their eagerness to exalt men to the place of leadership in the church, they had forgotten that the church was the temple of God and that their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit which were not to be used for immoral purposes. See chapter six.

Neither murmur ye.—The word "murmur" suggests the gutteral sound one makes when he grumbles about things that cause displeasure. It describes the complaint of the fathers against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Actually their complaint was against the Lord for He had appointed these men to serve the people. The grumblers perished when the earth opened up and destroyed them. See Num. 16:3, 31-35.

But Paul had in mind the camplainers at Corinth. Some of them had contended that he was not an apostle. The whole issue of apostolic preaching became the subject of criticism of envious men who

wanted to have authority over the church. See chapter nine for his defense of his apostleship and his rights as an apostle and as a Christian.

for our admonition.—Will the admonition go unheeded in the church today? The modern church faces virtually every problem that the church at Corinth faced. There is a serious question whether or not it will accept the admonition of the Lord through His apostle. If it fails, destruction is as inevitable now as it was then.

upon whom the ends of the ages are come.—The context seems to indicate that this is a reference to the climax of the history of the fathers with its lessons for those in the Christian age. We can reap the benefit of the examples of their failures as well as their successes.

him that thinketh he standeth.—Were there some in Corinth who believed that they could not sin? The most dangerous position one can possibly occupy is the place of the self-satisfied one who assumes that he cannot be overcome by Satan in this life. The whole history of the fathers points out the folly of this assumption. Peter also boasted that he of all the apostles would never forsake Jesus. He said that he was willing to go to prison and to death with Him. Apparently, he was sincere about it; but he failed to reckon with the situation in which was soon to find himself that led him to deny that he had ever known such a person as Jesus.

no temptation but such as man can bear.—To those who would complain that the experiences of the fathers were different and couldn't possibly have a bearing on the trials through which they were going, the apostle had this reminder: the trials of the Christian were only human trials, that is, exactly as they were in the days of the fathers. God does not permit them to suffer trials that would be for angels or others above the human level. See the story of Job for the limit God placed on the activity of Satan as he tested the faith of God's servant.

John points out that there are just three things that make up all that is in the world of evil: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the reckless disregard for God in this life. All three of them were present in the temptation of man in Eden. We can easily identify them in the Wilderness temptation of Our Lord. Adam fell in the Garden, but Jesus endured all of Satan's efforts to cause Him to sin, yet without sin. Moreover, He showed that it was not necessary for any man to be overcome by the factors of Satanic temptation, for He used the Word of God to defeat the tempter. That same Word is

available to man for the same purpose. Let no one say that He defeated Satan as the Son of God. He was the Son of God, but He was also man. James says that God cannot be tempted (Jas. 1:13). Jesus' temptations were all on the human level just as ours are. We have the whole armor of God with which to withstand the devil. The shield of faith is sufficient to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. See Eph. 6:16. It certainly behooves the Christian to know God's Word and to trust Him, and to be on guard against the attacks of Satan at all times.

Text

10:14-22. Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? 17 seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they that eat the sacrifices communion with the altar? 19 What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons. 21 Ye cannot dring the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Flee From Idolatry (14-22)

Commentary

All that the apostle has said on the subject of idolatry in answer to the question of the Corinthians is now brought to focus on his concluding exhortation.

In itself, he has indicated, there is nothing to an idol. Therefore, meats used in idol worship are not affected as items of food. But the Christian has an obligation to his brother in Christ who may not possess this knowledge. Love builds up; Paul pleads the cause of love as he urges his beloved fellow-members of the body of Christ to flee from idolatry.

Flee from idolatry.—Idolatry is like a plague; it is a fearful evil; in it lurks a hidden danger. If the fathers were overcome by the sins that accompanied idolatry, how could the church hope to escape a like fate except by fleeing from this evil?

I speak as to wise men.—That is, to men who were able to think. This is not the same word translated "wise" in 1:26 where Paul says that there were not many among them who were wise according to

human standards. Greeks were worshippers of wisdom, but theirs was a wisdom of the immature as opposed to the mature wisdom which Paul preached in the message of the cross.

But these brethren were capable of using the minds God had given them. Paul appeals to them to do so in this matter of idolatry. He gives them concrete cases dealing with the subject that will help them as thinking men to make the right decision.

The cup of blessing which we bless.—Since he has discussed idolatry and its feasts, it is appropriate that he call their attention to the church and its worship of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

When the supper was instituted, Jesus took the cup and said, "This is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you" (Lk 22:20). In so doing He set it aside for a holy purpose, that is, blessed it by pointing out it's meaning. Matthew says that "He took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and He gave to the disciples, and said, Take eat; this is my body" (Matt 26:26). The act of blessing was in the consecration of the cup to serve as the reminder of the blessing which Christ brought to His followers through His death.

The cup was not only blessed, it also contained the symbol of the blessing of remission of sins which Christ provided for us through His blood.

Christ also gave thanks for the bread and the cup (Lk 22:17; II Cor. 11:24). So we also give thanks for the cup, and, in doing so, we should remember that it was set aside for the holy purpose of reminding us of the blessing of remission of sins through the blood of Christ. Thus, we both give thanks and bless (consecrate) the cup in the Lord's supper.

is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?—This is said to show the thinking men among them that they cannot be idolaters and at the same time partake of the Lord's table. "Communion" means fellowship, or participation in a thing. Its root is a close synonym of the word "partake" which is found in verses 17 and 21. To say that the cup is a communion in the blood of Christ is to say that it is a means by which the Christian has a share in the blessing that comes from the pouring out of the blood of Christ, that is, remission of sins.

is it not a communion of the body of Christ?—What is true about the share we have in the cup is equally true of the bread. The bread is a symbol of the body of Christ. In His discourse on the Bread

of Life, Jesus explained His relation to His followers as the source life. As the fathers ate the manna—the only food available to them at the time—so the believers are to eat the living bread that came down out of heaven, that is, belive on Him to have life. He said, "the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (John 6:51). The bread of the Lord's supper is a symbol of our participation or sharing in the blessing of eternal life. See John 6:40, 51, 53.

one bread, one body.—Not only do we as Christians participate in the life that is given through Christ, but we also have a relation to each other which is suggested by the one body of which we are members. There is only one bread which represents the one body which is the church. There are many members, but only one body. This is an important lesson on the unity of the members of the church and particularly so for the Corinthians in view of their divisions. In this context, the lesson is clearly one that shows the impossibility of being members of the body of Christ and at the same time being members of the demon that was worshiped in idolatry. All of us share in the blessings that come from the one loaf, the symbol of the unity of the body of Christ.

"One bread" means one kind of bread, not just one piece of bread. The bread Jesus used in the institution of the Lord's supper was the unleavened bread of the passover feast. It is altogether fitting that we should use only unleavened bread in the Lord's supper. The very principle of excluding leaven from the feast of passover suggests the necessity of the church excluding sin from its life. See I Cor. 5:6-7. To force this phrase to mean one piece of bread is to go beyond the requirements of the symbolism. There are congregations that are too large to be served by one piece of bread. But the one kind, unleavened bread, serves to remind them that they are one in Christ.

Behold Israel after the flesh.—The church as the spiritual Israel of God is to take a lesson from the history of the fathers. They who had a share in the sacrifice offered on the altar were in fellowship (partnersip) with God. The worshiper shares in the sacrifice and becomes a partner of the deity who is thus worshiped. That is true whether they worshiped God or some demon represented by an idol.

to demons, not God.—The apostle has carefully laid the ground for the main thrust of his argument against Christians participating in idolatrous feasts. He did not say that the meat used in such feasts was thereby made unfit for food, nor did he say that an idol was anything in itself. But there is more to idolatry than appears in the external

ceremony of worshiping it: Gentiles sacrifice to demons and not to God.

communion with demons.—Christians should have fellowship or partnership with Christ, not demons. The enemies of Jesus attempted to discredit Him before the multitudes by saying that He was in league with Beelzebub, the prince of demons or Satan. See Matt. 12:24-30. Jesus easily refuted their charge by (1) showing that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and (2) indicating that the pretended work of the Jewish exorcists was clearly counterfeit, and (3) presenting the illustration of the strong man's house. But no doubt there were some who did believe the false charge in spite of His defense.

Paul had the same difficulty at Philippi (Acts 16:11-18). He had to reject the testimony of the soothsaying girl who followed him saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God." This, of course, was true, but the apostle could not afford to have it said that he was an associate of demons.

This was the problem faced by the church at Corinth. If Satan could make some believe that the Christians were actually worshiping demons, then he would be able to discredit the church in the eyes of the pagans. Therefore, Paul said, "I would not that ye should have communion with demons."

Ye cannot.—There are some things that are impossible. To attempt to do two things that are absolutely opposite to each other such as drinking the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons simply results in demon worship. The worship of Christ is nullified. Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). God will not tolerate the worshiper who owns allegiance to demons.

Or do we provoke the Lord?—The reference is to the history of Israel as suggested in Deut. 32:21. Israel was continually going astray by worshiping idols. Like a husband who is made jealous because of an unfaithful wife, God is said to be jealous because Israel worshiped what was a "no-god." This was an insult to God. Were the Corinthians trying to make Christ jealous by paying homage to demons—evil spirits under the control of Satan?

are we stronger than he?—The quotation in Deuteronomy suggests that the Lord would provoke Israel that worshiped the "no-god" by giving consideration to those who were no people—that is, to those who had no standing in their eyes, the Gentiles. Did the Corinthians suppose that they could safely provoke the Lord by worshiping de-

mons? Did they assume that they were strong enough to keep Him from rejecting them and turning to others who would be faithful to Him?

Text

10:23-33. All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify. 24 Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good. 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake; 26 for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. 27 If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast, and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake: 29 conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? 31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: 33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved.

Limitations of Christian Liberty (23-33)

Commentary

All things are lawful.—This principle was used in 6:12 with reference to the use of the body. It seems to mean that there is a lawful purpose for everything God created, but it certainly does not imply that anything evil is lawful. Perversion of God's intended purpose results in evil. The principle is applied to meats that had been used in idolatrous worship. Such use did not harm them as food, but it might not be expedient to use them. Why? They might cause offense to the weak brother who did not understand this. In which case, it would be better to forgo the right (liberty) to eat. Selfishness leads one to insist on his right, but Christian consideration for others may often cause one to give up his right.

Let no one seek his own.—This principle can apply to many other things than meats. The lowliness of mind that causes each to look to the things of others rather than of self would solve much of the difficulty that occurs between brethren in the church, and perhaps in all the world as well. See Phil. 2:1-5.

asking no questions.—That is, do not conduct an investigation to discover the source of the food that may be set before you. Even if it

had been used in pagan worship, it was still good for food. One need not let it bother his conscience for the earth is the Lord's and all that fills it.

if one of them that believe not.—It was wrong for a Christian to be found eating in a temple of an idol, for his example might cause some one who did not understand to be led into idolatry. But the apostle is now considering another situation. In the event of a Christian being invited to the home of one who is not a Christian it is all right to go if one is so disposed. He need not trouble his conscience over the food since he knows that even if it had been used in idol worship it was good for food.

But if any man say unto you.—This was the thing to be concerned about. If one should say that the food had been used in the sacrifice to an idol, the Christian was to refrain from eating it.

for conscience' sake.—That is, for the sake of the conscience of the one who revealed the source of the food. Do not allow your liberty to be condemned by the scruples of another. But how can this be prevented? By forgoing the right to eat the meat when the weak brother reveals that it has been used in an idol's feast.

If I partake with thankfulness.—The Old Testament gave certain regulations as to clean and unclean animals, but Paul, in his letter to Timothy, says, "nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (I Tim. 4:4-5). But the problem at Corinth was somewhat different. Would the fact that one thanked God for his food be sufficient to satisfy the conscience of the brother who believed that he was worshiping an idol if he ate food that had been sacrificed to the idol? Paul's question is: "If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced?" Actually there was no reason why he should let this happen for he could forgo his right to eat the food and avoid the criticism. This is in accord with the principle of limitation of liberty which he has used as the solution of the problem throughout his discussion. No mere saying of thanks over food could change the mind of a weak brother who believed that eating the sacrifice would constitute worship of the demon. His sense of right and wrong is offended; for that reason one should refrain from eating even though he had given thanks for the food.

do all to the glory of God.—This is another principle regulating the conduct of the Christian. This like the principle of limiting liberty requires one to forgo certain rights for the sake of others. Do not offend Jews, or Greeks, or the church of God:

as I please all men.—See comment on 9:20-22. The apostle had set the example which he calls upon the Corinthians to follow. The goal he had in mind for himself and for them was the winning of some to Christ that they might be saved.

Summary

The closing remark of chapter nine, "lest I myself be rejected," is explained in chapter ten. The abuse of rights can result in one being rejected. Take the case of Israel: they escaped from Egypt, but most of them did not reach the promised land for they perished in the wilderness. Among the many sins that caused them to fall was the sin of idolatry, the very thing about which Paul warned the Corinthians. Concern over being rejected is no idle thing. Israel fell, and the one who thinks he stands must take care lest he also fall.

The experience of the fathers had many lessons for the brethren at Corinth. Their escape from Egypt through the cloud and through the sea was like baptism. The fathers were sustained by food and water that was miraculously given to them. Paul speaks of their spiritual food and drink, for they continued to drink from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Just so, Paul warns the Corinthians not to lust for the things of evil. He warned against the sin of idolatry, and cited the example of Israel's worship of the golden calf at Sinai. Sin caused twenty-three thousand of them to fall in one day. Fiery serpents caused the complainers to perish. These things were written to admonish the Christians not to enter into such sinful practices. In view of this evidence, no one was to imagine that he could not But it is not necessary to be overcome in temptation, for God will not permit a trial to befall one which man cannot endure. God is faithful and will along with the temptation provide the way out that it may be endured.

Summing up the whole argument about idolatry which began in chapter eight, Paul says, "Flee from idolatry." Then he turns to the Lord's supper to enforce his appeal. It is impossible to eat at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons also. Idolatry in reality is demon worship. The cup which we bless as we speak of its significance is a sharing of the blood of Christ. The bread which we break is a sharing of the body of Christ. Because there is one bread, we are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Israel became partakers of the altar when they ate the sacrifice that was offered on it. This

does not say that there is anything to idolatry, but it is mentioned to call attention to the fact that idolatry is actually demon worship. Paul did not want them to be partakers of the demons who were worshiped in idolatry. The Lord would not permit one who is an associate of demons to be a partner with Him by eating at His table.

The closing word in answer to the question about meats sacrificed to idols brings up the law of expediency. There is a limit to the thing that is lawful, for not all things build up the body of Christ. Therefore, let no one seek his own welfare, but that of others.

As to the meats sold in the markets, eat them without inquiring into the source of supply for conscience' sake. The Lord created the earth and all that fills it. So, if some unbeliever invites you into his home, and you wish to go, eat the food set before you without asking about its source. But if one should say to you that it had been used in idol worship, don't eat it. You are to refrain for the sake of the conscience of him who called it to your attention. Why is liberty limited by the conscience of another? To keep him from stumbling, for Paul said, "If meat causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no more meat" (8:13). The Christian is to do all things for the glory of the Lord. Cause no one to stumble, neither Jew, nor Greek, nor the church of God. Be imitators of Paul as he imitated Christ and gave up his rights to win some to Christ that they might be saved.

Questions

1. What is the connection between the thought of chapter ten and the closing thought of chapter nine?
2. Why did Paul use the word "brethren" in this chapter?
3. What was Paul's purpose in using the word "ignorant"?
4. How can we express the thought and spirit of the apostle on this matter?
5. How could Paul effectively use the examples of the Old Testament in discussing the problems of Gentile Christians?
6. How could he speak of the ancient Israelites as "our fathers" when writing to the Gentiles?
7. What are some of the things God provided for the fathers as they left Egypt?
8. How does their failure to enter the promised land illustrate the necessity of exercising self-control?
9. What is the history of the cloud that appeared to Israel during their journey from Egypt to the promised land?

10. What was the situation of the Israelites as they came to the Red Sea?
11. How did God protect them?
12. What blessings are represented by the cloud?
13. What has been said in an attempt to discredit Moses' account of the crossing of the Red Sea?
14. What did Moses say about it?
15. What evidence is there to support his account?
16. What relation does the crossing of the Red Sea have to baptism?
17. What is meant by saying that they were baptized unto Moses?
18. What is the history of the manna?
19. What is the history of God's providing water for Israel on their journey through the wilderness?
20. What was the attitude of the fathers toward the mana?
21. How did the people in Jesus' time regard it?
22. Why does Paul say that they ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink?
23. What is meant by the statement that a spiritual rock followed them?
24. What is meant by the statement that the rock was Christ?
25. How does God provide spiritual food for His people?
26. How did the Holy Spirit provide the life-giving stream of truth for sinful men on the Day of Pentecost?
27. Why did Paul say that God was not well pleased with the fathers?
28. What is the history of the refusal of the fathers to enter the promised land?
29. In what way were the failures of the fathers examples for us?
30. What is the meaning of "lust"?
31. What is the history of the idolatry which the fathers practiced at Sinai?
32. What is meant by the statement "rose up to play"
33. How did the fathers make trial of the Lord ?
34. What use did Jesus make of the incident of the fiery serpents?
35. What bearing did this have on the situation in the church at Corinth?
36. What are some of the occasions of murmuring of the children of Israel?
37. How did the complaints of the fathers explain the problem which was present at Corinth?
38. Why were the failures of the fathers written in the Old Testament?

39. What position in history does the church occupy?

40. What may be the most dangerous position for a Christian to occupy?

41. What evidence have we that God expects His people to be victorious over temptation?

42. What provision did He make for their victory?

43. Why did Paul say, "Flee from idolatry"?

44. What is the difference between the references to wise men in 10:15 and 1:26?

45. What did Paul want the Corinthians as wise men to do?

46. Why is the cup called "the cup of blessing"?

47. What does "communion" mean?

48. What is the significance of the one bread?

49. How did the experience of Israel as they brought the sacrifices to God reveal to the Corinthians the evil of idolatry?

50. What was the reality back of the idol which the pagans worshiped?

51. Why did the enemies of Jesus attempt to show that He cast out demons by Beelzebub?

52. What are some of the impossible things for the Christian?

53. What did Paul mean by the question, "Do we provoke the Lord?"

54. What did he mean by the question, "Are we stronger than he?"

55. How does the law of expediency apply to the matter of meats sacrificed to idols?
56. What other rule did Paul give for this situation?
57. What did he mean by "ask no questions"?
58. Was it ever right for the Christian to be found in a pagan temple partaking of the idolatrous feast?
59. Under what circumstances did Paul say a Christian might eat meat that had been sacrificed to an idol without investigating its source?
60. What should he do in the event some one called attention to the fact that the food had been used as a sacrifice to idols?
61. Whose conscience is to be considered in exercising one's liberty?
62. What is the place of thinksgiving in relation to eating food?
63. What is the meaning of Paul's question, "If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced?"
64. How could such a criticism be avoided?
65. What should be the purpose of the Christian in all his activity?

For Discussion

1. What bearing does the faithfulness of the Christian in partaking of the Lord's supper have on a victorious life?
2. What are some things that your group could do to increase its effectiveness in winning some to Christ?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Analysis

A. The apostle gives instructions to be observed by man or woman when praying or prophesying (1-16).

1. He requests them to imitate him (1). Note: This, in all probability, belongs to the thought of chapter ten. The apostle sets the example of "limitation of Christian liberty" and urges the Corinthians to follow it as he is following the example of Christ.
2. He approaches this new problem with words of praise for remembering him and the oral messages he had delivered to them (2).
3. He gives additional instruction about covering the head when praying or prophesying (3-10).
   a) He wants them to know the principle that is involved (3).
      (1) The head of every man is Christ;
      (2) The head of woman is man;
      (3) The head of Christ is God.
   b) He points out the result of failing to observe this principle (4-6).
      (1) Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.
      (2) Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.
         (a) It would be the same thing as if she were shaven, for if a woman is not veiled, he says, "Let her be shorn."
         (b) But since it a shameful thing for a woman to be shorn or shaven, he says, "Let her be veiled."
   c) He then shows why a man ought not to have his head veiled (7).
      (1) He is the image and glory of God.
      (2) Woman, on the other hand, is the glory of man.
   d) He appeals to the origin of man and woman and God's purpose in creating them to support his position (8-9).
      (1) Their origin:
         (a) Man is not of woman.
         (b) Woman is of man.

(2) God's purpose in creating them:
(a) Man was not created for woman.
(b) Woman was created for man.

e) He presents his conclusion based on this reasoning (10).
(1) Woman should have on her head the veil which is a symbol of her right and dignity as woman.
(2) This is to be observed because of the angels.

4. He indicates other factors that have to do with the relationship of man and woman in order to avoid misunderstanding of what he had just said (11-16).
a) He reminds them that neither man nor woman is independent of the other (11).
b) He recalls the facts of creation and birth (12).
(1) The woman was created for the man.
(2) The man is born of the woman.
(3) All things are of God—a thing to remember as to the distinction between man and woman.
c) He appeals to their own judgment in the matter: Is it proper for a woman to pray unto God with her head uncovered (13)?
d) He appeals to nature to support his position (14-15).
(1) If a man has long hair (which makes him appear to be a woman) it dishonors him, does it not?
(2) On the other hand, if a woman has long hair (which points out her womanly dignity) it is a glory to her, for her hair was given her for a covering.
e) He indicates to those who might still want to argue the point that what he has said is the custom that is observed by the churches of God (16).

B. He turns his attention to the problems which they faced in connection with observing the Lord's supper (17-34).
1. He refused to commend them because of these conditions which made it impossible for them to eat the Lord's supper (17-22).
a) Their coming together was not for the better but for the worse (17).
b) He points out that divisions existed among them (18-19).
(1) He had heard that divisions existed among them when they assembled and had reason to believe that such was true with part of them (18).

(2) He pointed out that divisions were accompanied with factions that resulted in the approved among them being manifested (19).

c) He indicated the tragic result of this situation: It was not possible for them to eat the Lord's supper, for each one of them ate his own which resulted in some going hungry while others were drunken (20-21).

d) He severely rebuked them for this by asking a series of questions (22).

(1) You have houses to eat and drink in, do you not?

(2) Do you despise the church of God and put to shame those who have nothing?

(3) As if puzzled about what to do, he asks, "What shall I say to you?"

(4) Shall I praise you? His answer: In this I praise you not.

2. He explained the purpose of the Lord's supper as he had received it from the Lord and delivered it to them (23-26).

a) He points out the source of his information which he had passed on to them.

b) He points out what the Lord did and said about the loaf and the cup.

(1) Time: It was on the night of His betrayal.

(2) The bread: He took bread, gave thanks for it, and broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you: this do in remembrance of me."

(3) The cup:

(a) This was after the supper.

(b) He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."

(c) He said, "This do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

c) The apostle adds this inspired information: As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

3. He points out the penalty for failing to decide correctly the issues involved in the Lord's supper (27-34a)

a) As to eating the bread and drinking the cup.

(1) Doing it in unworthy manner results in being guilty of mishandling the body and blood of Christ.

(2) Let a man examine himself and so let him eat.

b) As to correctly judging the body.

(1) Failure to do so results in eating judgment to oneself.

(2) Failure to do so resulted in many of them being weak, sickly, and not a few were dead.

c) How to avoid such judgment:

(1) By correctly judging themselves.

(2) By remembering that the chastening of the Lord keeps His people from being condemned with the world.

(3) Wait one for another and let the hungry eat at home.

4. He reminds them that he will attend to the rest of the problems when he comes. (34b).

When praying or Prophesying (1-16)

Text

11:1-16 Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ. 2 Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you. 3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. 5 But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. 6 For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn; but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled. 7 For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: 9 for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man: 10 for this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God. 13 Judge ye in yourselves: is it seemly that a woman pray unto God unveiled? 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Commentary

Be ye imitators of me.—This verse is, in all probability, the apostle's concluding statement about limiting Christian liberty. He had said n the beginning of the discussion of the subject that if meat caused his brother to stumble he would eat "no flesh for evermore." Now he urges his readers to follow his example and refrain from anything that would cause offense to anyone whether Jew or Greek or the church of God, for he was following the example of Christ. The object of such conduct was to save some. See Phil. 2:5-11 for his explanation of what Christ did in order to save sinners.

Now I praise you.—In this letter, the purpose of which was to rebuke those practicing sin and offer corrective measures to overcome such practices, the apostle is careful to praise his readers whenever possible. He had addressed them as the church of God and reminded them that they were his brethren and that he was their spiritual father. But when he did rebuke them, it was for the purpose of rescuing them from their sinful practices in the hope that they would follow Christ and be saved through obedience to Him. He seems at this point to be glad to say, "I praise you."

ye remember me in all things.—That the Corinthians did remember Paul and think of his instructions when questions arose among them is indicated by the fact that they wrote to him for further information about such matters as marriage, meats and other things that had to do with their worship of the Lord.

He commended them for holding to the instruction which he had given them even though they may have failed to remember all that he had said. There seemed to be a disposition on their part to abide by his teaching. Otherwise, why would they have written to him? Of course, he wouldn't commend them on all things, for in matters such as the Lord's supper they were not acting in accord with Christian principles. In this, he didn't hesitate to say, "I commend you not."

It is evident that his praise was not mere flattery, for it was freely given when merited. It seems that in doing so he was helping them to see that it was with equal sincerity and concern for their welfare that he rebuked them when had to do so.

the traditions.—Traditions, as they are mentioned in the New Testament, are in two classes. First, there are the traditions of the Jews which, Jesus said, were causing them to transgress the commandment of God (Matt. 15:3). These were customs that had grown up without divine sanction and transmitted from generation to generation.

They became an evil thing since people soon put these traditions above the word of God. Second, the word as used by Paul simply means the oral instructions he had delivered to them as an inspired apostle. They were, of course, on a par with the written instructions he had given to them. It is this orally transmitted message that they were observing that called forth his expression of praise.

But I would have you to know.—When it came to the problem of a man or a woman praying or prophesying, he wanted them to know the principle that governed this matter. This was the principle of headship. As it applied to their situation it was given in a three-fold relationship: "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Failure to grasp the significance of this principle led some of them, it would seem, to faulty conclusions.

the head of every man is Christ.—The word "head" is used both literally and figuratively in this context. Literally, it means the head of the human body. But what does it mean figuratively? There is no question that in some instances it means supremacy and authority. But is that what it means here? While I do not find any other clear cut example except this one in the New Testament, it is possible that in this context it refers to source or origin. There is abundant evidence to support this meaning when used with reference to things. For example, the head of a river is its source or point of origin. The origin of man and woman is the basis of Paul's argument in this context. See verses 7-9. Verse twelve also clearly refers to the Genesis account of the origin of man and woman. And, Paul adds, "all things are from God."

The lesson of the paragraph is clear enough: man is to dress in a manner that marks him, according to the culture of Paul's day, as a man. To do otherwise is to disregard the fact that God created him a man. Woman also is to maintain her position as a woman and not attempt to become a man by forsaking the customary dress that marked her as a woman according to the culture of that day.

There is nothing in the context, as I see it, that suggests that man is superior to woman or has authority over her. Headship as it relates to man and woman is explained by the fact that man is the image and glory of God, but woman is man's glory. Origin or source makes good sense in this context.

The head of every man is Christ. Some would limit this to the man who is a Christian, but the facts are that Christ is the creator of all. God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 2:26). John says

of the Word that "all things were made through him" (John 1:1-2). Paul, speaking of Christ, says that "in him were all things created" (Col. 1:15-16).

the head of woman is the man.—This is a reference to the creation of man and woman, not to husband and wife. The latter relationship is discussed by Paul in Eph. 5:23. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. The church is the body of Christ, and without it He would be incomplete (Eph. 1:22). There can't be such a relationship as wife without husband. Subjection implies the necessity of faithfulness to her own husband, that is, a proper relationship between husband and wife just as the members of the church are to be in subjection one to another (Eph. 5:21).

Christ's authority over His church is clearly indicated in many passages. See Matt. 28:18-20 for His own statement as to His authority. But there is a serious question about implying it in the figure of headship.

The problem that Paul is discussing in this context is that of distinctive dress that marks man and woman while praying or prophesying. It is true that the word translated "man" may also be rendered "husband." But in this context there is no reason to do so. The fact that Paul uses the definite article with "man" in the statement, "the head of woman is *the* man" does not make it signify "husband." It is logical to suppose that whatever "head" means in one of these three statements, it means in the others: Of every man, the head is Christ; and head of woman is the man; and head of Christ, God. The origin of man is Christ; of woman is the man; of Christ is God. Man was created by Christ; woman created from man; Christ sent from God.

Every man praying or prophesying.—Praying is speaking to God; prophesying is speaking for God. In the early church, much of the prophesying (preaching) was done of necessity under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. See discussion on this point in chapter twelve. The issue is just this: Man speaking to God or speaking for God is to dress as a man, for he was created in the image of God and is the glory of God. To do otherwise is to dishonor his head. If he covers his head he appears to be a woman—according to the culture of that day.

every woman praying or prophesying.—Not wife, but woman. The activity is the same as in the case of man: praying or preaching. This does not overlook the fact that there are limitations placed on the activity of women. Woman is "not to teach, nor have dominion over

man, but to be in quietness" (I Tim. 2:12). This regulation stems from the facts of creation of woman and the entrance of sin into the world (I Tim. 2:13-14). It seems quite evident that the men did the preaching in the general assembly where both men and women were present. Most godly women agree that this is proper in our society today. But it will be remembered that Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:19). Priscilla, as well as her husband Aquila, was instrumental in instructing Apollos in the way of God (Acts 18:24-28). Women, it will be generally agreed, are superior teachers of children. Note also Paul's statement about aged women who are to be "reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5). There is work for man and there is work for woman to do in the church; and, when it comes to the matter of salvation in the Lord, there is no distinction as to male and female, bond and free, since all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

her head unveiled.—Man was not to have his head covered, but woman was to have her head veiled while praying or prophesying. Why? If a woman assumes the position of man by dressing like a man and thus losing her womanly dignity, she disgraces her head by denying that God created man first and then woman to be his counterpart (Gen. 2:18-24). It dishonors God for either man or woman to attempt to remove this distinction. At no time is it more true than when one is praying to God or prophesying for God. To inject the thought of authority of husband over wife into this context is to forget that Paul is speaking about maintaining the relationship of man and woman as seen in the order of their creation; but priority is not superority.

if a woman is not veiled.—Cutting the hair and shaving were marks by which to identify a man. If a woman left off the veil which was a distinctive mark of a woman, she had just as well go farther and cut her hair and be shaved. If it was disgraceful to cut the hair—assumed as true, since this was the distinctive mark of man—let her keep the recognized mark of womanly dignity, the veil.

Should this custom be observed today? Without doubt, the principle of maintaining womanly and manly dignity is to be observed. Since the use of the veil would not necessarily show respect for the

principle, it would seem that its use is not called for where custom does not require it. It would be artificial to create the custom to support the principle. The principle can be supported by the distinctive marks of our culture just as it was by the requirements of Paul's day.

the woman to have a sign of authority on her head.—What are we to understand about this verse in the light of the foregoing discussion? In the first place, let it be observed that the words "sign of" are in italics which means that they are not in the Greek text. They are inserted by translators in order to make the text clear. They become, in fact, matters of interpretation, not translation. This is often necessary in bringing thought from one language into another.

For the meaning of the word "authority" see notes on 8:9 and 9:4. Should it be translated "authority" in this context? There is no good reason to do so since the apostle is speaking of the issue of honor which man is to show toward his head and woman toward hers. This amounts to respect for the fact that God created man and that He created woman for man. This distinction is to be maintained when a man or a woman is praying or prophesying. "Right" is a better term to express this thought in this context. The veil was the distinctive mark of the right and dignity of woman. There is no reference in this context to husband and wife, nor a suggestion that a wife should wear a sign of the authority of her husband on her head. The wife, by divine injunction, is to be faithful to her own husband and to respect her husband. By the same divine instruction, the husband is to love and cherish his wife even as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:22-23). But in this context, Paul is speaking of the necessity of woman maintaining her honor and dignity as a woman. She is not, therefore, to give the impression that she is a man.

because of the angels.—Woman is to keep the place for which God created her just as man is to keep his place. Angels who left their proper place were punished. This is a warning to women who try to be men or to men who try to pose as women. It is thought by some that the reference is to angels who do service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). If this is so, the question is: How could they assist in the worship of those who dishonor God by disregarding the facts of creation?

neither is the woman without the man.—Lest what Paul has been saying should cause difficulty between man and woman in the church, the apostle reminds each that he is dependent on the other. It is true that God made woman from man; but it is also true that in His divine providence and wisdom He decreed that man should be born

into this world through woman. No man who properly respects his God and who honors his mother would be likely to mistreat the woman who is to be the mother of his children. For some men, however, there is neither respect for God nor honor for his mother or the mother of his children.

all things are of God.—Both man and woman are reminded that God in His wisdom provided for the human race in every way. Neither man nor woman should seek to change His plan, and that is especially true of those who pray to God or who speak for Him.

Judge ye in yourselves.—Paul puts the question up to the good judgment of his readers. Most people who understand the divine arrangement will gladly agree with it.

even nature itself.—Paul has appealed to the facts of creation and to the good judgment of his readers. His last appeal is to nature. The long hair which woman has by nature proves his point. God gave her this covering as a sign of her womanly right and dignity. To cut it or to try to make it appear that she is a man is to dishonor God and nature. Most modern hair styles do not, it seems to me, violate the principle involved in the apostle's directive. Some will disagree on his point. Long hair on a man makes him appear effeminate and is contrary to the divine principle under consideration.

we have no such custom.—Apparently there were those in Corinth who were contending that the natural distinction between man and woman was removed by baptism into the church. It is true that there is no such thing as male and female when it comes to the matter of personal salvation, but this does not say that all such distinctions are to be disregarded for the facts of creation and of nature are not thus removed. The apostles had no such custom, neither did the churches of God. Since he has based his argument on the fact that God in creation and nature made this distinction, it is fitting that he should remind them that the church is the church of God.

Text

11:17-34. But in giving you this charge, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper: 21 for in your eating each one taketh

before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I praise you not. 23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said. This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment upon himself, if he discern not the body. 30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep. 31 But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another. 34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest I will set in order whensoever I come.

Observing the Lord's Supper (17-34)

Commentary

I praise you not.—Paul had praised them for remembering him and for holding fast the traditions he had delivered to them. But there were some things connected with their worship for which he did not praise them. Some may not have been observing his advice about the use of the veil when praying or prophesying. In the matter of eating the Lord's supper, he could not praise them because of the conditions that prevailed in their assembly for which they were entirely responsible. He severely rebuked them because their coming together was not for the better but for the worse.

when ye come togeher in the church.—We tend to identify the building where the church people meet with the church, but "church" refers to the people who are called out from the general group to be the people of God. It also strongly suggests "assembly" since the

church is to come together for worship. They were not to neglect the assembling of themselves together (Heb 10:25). The thing that was happening in their assembly was the object of Paul's criticism.

divisions exist among you.—Perhaps at no place did the sectarian spirit of the Corinthians show up in all its sinful nature more clearly than at the assembly when the Lord's supper was to be eaten. Leaders got together wth their own supporters around their own food while others were allowed to go hungry. Paul certainly could not praise them for this.

Neither the splits nor the factions had reached the proportions to which they later developed, but there were cliques in the local congregations. The sin of division is just as real on the local level as it is when it reaches the stage of separate organizations. Paul indicates that he believed this condition was true with part of the church at Corinth.

I partly believe it.—This does not indicate doubt as to the situation, but rather as to the extent to which it had gone. There were those who were not mixed up in it.

there must be factions among you.—Some were choosing sides over loyalty to a leader or over some other rallying point. Groups were formed that excluded all others who did not support the particular issue of the group. Such splits were accompanied by the "factions" that caused them.

they that are approved.—The apostle is not saying that factions are necessary in order that those who are approved of God may be manifested. Surely God's people need no such sinful background for them to be known. But cliques in the church do result in the manifestation of the approved who refuse to join the clique.

when ye come together.—One of the things for which they came together was eating the Lord's supper. This was by no means the only reason for the assembly nor does the Bible indicate that it was the primary reason. It is true that Acts 20:7 states that they came to break bread, but the expression "primary reason" does not occur in the text. It would seem that Paul's preaching was equally important since he was acting under the commission of Christ to preach the word. Collections were made on a weekly basis—evidently when they came together—to obviate the necessity of making the collection at the time of the apostle's visit (I Cor. 16:1-2).

The practice of eating the common meal had defeated this other important matter, eating the Lord's supper. Cliques that had plenty

ate their own food while others who had nothing went hungry. How could the Lord's supper which taught the lessons of remission of sins and the unity of the body of Christ be eaten in such an atmosphere? *have ye not houses to eat and drink in?*—Since the common meal was the occasion for the cliques to form, it was to be discontinued. This is not to say that churches where such conditions do not exist are forbidden the privilege of coming together in the church buildings to eat. But if Corinth could get into trouble over this matter it might be well for elders to watch the flock lest similar situations develop in congregations today. Sitting at the table with brethren in Christ can be a heavenly experience and it can also lead to things that disgrace the church and her Lord.

In this I praise you not.—Paul was generous with his praise whenever possible. But he made sure that they understood that he did not praise them for practicing things that made it impossible to eat the Lord's supper.

I received of the Lord.—The sacredness of the Lord's supper is indicated in a number of ways. The instruction for its observance came from the Lord Himself. It was delivered to the church by His inspired apostle. It was to be in memory of the Lord's death. It speaks of His coming again. Since it was a memorial to the fact that the blood of Christ was poured out for the remission of sins, the sins of which the Corinthians were guilty could not be tolerated where the Lord's supper was to be eaten.

the new covenant in my blood.—The old covenant was the ten commandments. See. Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13. Although it was unilaterally promulgated it was, nevertheless, a covenant because the people agreed to its terms and promised to keep them. See Ex. 24:3-4. But the people broke the covenant, and the Lord declared that He would make a new covenant that would be written, not on tables of stone, but on the hearts of the people. See Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-13. God also dictated the terms of this covenant. But what about the pledge of the people to keep it? This is done when one makes the good confession which is an acknowledgement that Jesus is our prophet, priest, and king. Eating the Lord's supper should remind the worshipper of his covenant with Christ.

till he come.—One thing that must always be remembered by the Christian is the death of Christ through which he is delivered from the guilt and power of sin. An equally important thing to remember is that He is coming again for those who wait for Him unto salvation (Heb. 9:27). At the time of His ascension, angels said to the apostles that "this Jesus who was received up from you into heaven, shall so

come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven" (Acts 1:11). See also I Thes. 4:13-18 and II Thes. 1:8-10. "Behold he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. 1:7) "He who testifies these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Evidently the Corinthians had forgotten this great hope of the Christian. But are we doing any better than they?

unworthy manner.—Perhaps no one is really worthy to take the Lord's supper. People who refrain from eating the Lord's supper because of a sense of guilt that makes them feel unworthy often use this verse as the basis of their views. But Paul was speaking of the unworthy manner in which the church at Corinth conducted itself that made it impossible to eat the Lord's supper. The guilt that accompanies the violation of God's will can be overcome by repentance and confession of the sin to the Lord. See Acts 9:22-24; I John 1:6-2:2.

But God has never tolerated careless handling of sacred things. To treat the Lord's supper as something less than a common meal, as the Corinthians were doing, is to be guilty of mishandling the body and blood of the Lord. The penalty for this was clear: "many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep."

But let a man prove himself.—This suggests the process of testing by which the assayer finds the pure gold in the ore. It should be done in the light of the meaning of the loaf and the cup. One should ask himself, "Is my life in harmony with the principles of unity of the body of Christ, and the remission of sins which Christ has provided, and of the fact that He is coming again?" This makes the Lord's supper a serious experience for the true worshipper. To do otherwise is to eat and drink judgment to oneself. It is to be involved in the same condemnation that came upon these who crucified the Lord.

discern the body.—In eating the Lord's supper, it is necessary to decide correctly the issues involved. It is necessary to distinguish between the splits and factions and the true body of Christ. It is necessary to distinguish between the loaf and the bread of a common meal.

discerned ourselves.—If the Corinthians had decided correctly the issue of belonging to the Lord as opposed to becoming members of the parties that followed men, they would not have been judged guilty of mishandling the body and blood of the Lord.

weak, sickly.—It is possible to view this as spiritual sickness and death. But it may be physical, for they were eating and drinking to

excess. Some of them had died from the effects of this kind of abuse.
chastened of the Lord.—God punishes His people as a good parent punishes his child. See. Heb. 12:3-13. The object is to avoid condemnation with the world. Paul's advice was to eliminate the custom of eating together since this was the thing that had gotten them into trouble. They could eat at home; then, when they came together, they could eat the Lord's supper.
And the rest.—There were other problems that demanded his personal attention. These he would attend to when he visited them the next time. But the great principles set forth in this letter corrected the major ills of the Corinthian church and will, if applied, do so for the church today. First Corinthians is the most up-to-date treatise on church problems available today. The Corinthians church could make use of Paul's advice while waiting for his personal visit; the church of today must use the same inspired advice while waiting for the coming of the Lord. Dare we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus"?

Summary

The Corinthians had written to Paul about the perplexing problem of the use of the veil while praying or prophesying in public. Praying is speaking to God; prophesying is speaking for God. In the early church it was done under the immediate direction and power of the Holy Spirit. The ancients had various customs of worship, depending on their backgrounds, some Jewish, some Roman, and some Grecian.

To settle the problem, Paul called attention to this basic principle: the head of every man is Christ; the head of woman is man; and the head of Christ is God. A woman dishonored her head by praying or prophesying without a veil. It was the same thing as having the head shaved or the hair cut. These were distinguishing marks of man, not woman. It was a shame for a woman to attempt to be a man; therefore, Paul said, "Let a woman wear the veil." She was to dress in a manner that would enable her to be recognized as a woman. Man, on the other hand, is not to have his head covered because he is the image and glory of God. Woman was to wear the veil as a symbol of her womanly right and dignity because of the angels.

Neither man nor woman is complete apart from the other. The facts of creation and of birth prove the point. All things are from God, that is, God determined the distinctions between man and woman. They were not to be disregarded in the church. Nature and good judgment suport the views of the apostle. By nature,

woman's hair grows long, but man's short. It was good sense for a woman to dress as a woman and a man as a man. There is no time when this is more appropriate than when praying or prophesying. The apostle reminds anyone who would oppose this view that the churches of God had no other custom.

Paul had commended them for keeping the oral instructions which he had transmitted to them, but he could not commend them for their conduct in connection with the Lord's supper. Division and faction existed among them when they met in the assembly. Not all of them were guilty, but the conduct of the guilty ones resulted in the approved of God being manifested by their refusal to be parties to such conduct. The practice of eating a meal at the assembly was to be discontinued because it resulted in the church being disgraced and these who had nothing being humiliated.

Paul faithfully declared to them what the Lord had revealed to him. The Lord said, "This is my body." How could men use the assembly of God as a place to practice division and faction? The Lord said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." He was faithful to His part of the agreement providing remission of sins to the believer. But how could they drink the cup and still practice the sin of division? If they had remembered Him and not their own selfish desires for prominence and power, they would not have split into factions to the disgrace of the body of Christ. Christ died to save man from sin. As often as we eat the bread and drink the cup we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

His coming suggests a time of reckoning. Paul warned the Corinthians about the unworthy manner in which they were approaching the Lord's supper. They were guilty of mishandling the body and blood of the Lord. A man should test himself to see that his life is in accord with the principles taught by the loaf and the cup. If it isn't, he eats and drinks judgment to himself by failing to decide correctly concerning the body and blood of Christ. Some of the Corinthians did fail and as a result were weak and sick and some of them had died. But if we decide correctly the members of the body of Christ as distinguishing from members of a party or faction, we shall not be condemned. The Lord judges His people for the purpose of chastening them that they may not be condemned with the world.

Other things were to be cared for when Paul arrived.

Questions

1. What is the subject of this chapter?
2. What did Paul have in mind when he asked the Corinthians to imitate him?
3. Why could he do this?
4. What can be said of Paul's expression of praise for his readers?
5. What are some of the complimentary things that Paul said about the church at Corinth?
6. What evidence is there that they remembered what he taught?
7. What is meant by "traditions"?
8. What two classes of traditions may be found in the New Testament?
9. What is the three-fold statement of the principle of headship which Paul wanted them to understand?
10. How is the word "head" used in this context?
11. What are the possible meanings of the term?
12. What is the clearly indicated lesson of this paragraph?
13. Does the Bible say that man is superior to woman?
14. What lesson does Paul teach in Ephesians as to the relation of husband and wife?
15. What may be said about the view that he is discussing the same relationship in this context?
16. What is the difference between praying and prophesying?
17. Under what influence did men and women prophesy in the early church?
18. What is the issue involved in the discussion in this chapter?
19. What limitation is placed on the activity of woman according to Paul's teaching in I Tim. 2:12?
20. What was the reason for this limitation?
21. What evidence is given in the New Testament to show that woman prophesied?
22. What did Paul say about the task of aged women?
23. Where is all distinction such as male and female, bond and free removed?
24. What was wrong about a woman praying with her head uncovered?

25. What lesson does the apostle draw from the fact that man was created first and then woman?
26. Why did he say that a woman who left off the veil had just as well cut her hair and be shaved?
27. Should this custom be observed today?
28. What are the various view of the expression, "for this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head?"
29. What did this have to do with the angels?
30. Why did Paul call attention to the birth of man as well as to the fact of his creation?
31. Why did he say, "All things are of God"?
32. What lesson did nature teach that had a bearing on the subject of this chapter?
33. Why did he say, "we have no such custom"?
34. Why did Paul withhold his praise in the matter of eating the Lord's supper?
35. To what does the word "church" refer?
36. What was taking place in the assembly that Paul condemned?
37. What did Paul mean when he said, "I partly believe it"?
38. What may also be expected when divisions are present in the church?
39. Who are the approved in the church?
40. What caused them to be manifested in the church at Corinth?
41. When was the church to come together?
42. What was to be done at that time?
43. What was the custom at Corinth that led to the neglect of the Lord's supper?
44. Is it wrong to eat in the church building?
45. Why did Paul remind them that he received from the Lord the instructions which he gave them?
46. What was the old covenant?
47. Why was it necessary to make a new covenant?
48. What is the new covenant?
49. What does the Lord's supper call upon the worshiper to remember?
50. What do the Scriptures teach about the coming of Christ?

51. Should one refrain from taking the Lord's supper because of a feeling of unworthiness?
52. To what does "unworthy manner" refer?
53. What should be done about the awareness of guilt as one approaches the Lord's supper?
54. What is meant by "discern the body"?
55. What is meant by "discerned ourselves"?
56. What chastisement had befallen the church at Corinth?
57. Why does the Lord chasten His people?
58. What would Paul need to do upon his next visit to Corinth?

For Discussion

1. What effect should the proper observance of the Lord's supper have on the life of the church?
2. What effect should the awareness of the coming of Christ have on the life and work of the church?
3. What can be done to make these great issues effective in the life of the church?

CHAPTER TWELVE

Analysis

A. Paul explains the basic principles of spiritual gifts (1-11).
   1. He shows how the Corinthians were to determine when one was speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God (1-3).
      a) He did not want them to be without knowledge about these things. Evidently this was because of the confusion and division in the church over these gifts.
      b) He reminds them of their experience when they were led away to the dumb idols. They had been led to believe that they were receiving divine direction from their pagan gods.
      c) He makes known to them the test by which they were to know when one was speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God:
         (1) No one while he was speaking under the power of the Spirit of God could say ANATHEMA JESUS.
         (2) No one could say LORD JESUS except under the direction of the Holy Spirit. God did not permit the "unclean spirit" to say LORD JESUS.
   2. He explains the variety, manifestations, and classification of the gifts (4-11).
      a) The various things of spirit are related to the Spirit, the Lord, and to God.
         (1) There are various gifts, but the same Spirit.
         (2) There are various services, but the same Lord.
         (3) There are various workings, but the same God.
      b) These manifestations of the Spirit are for the benefit of all.
      c) Nine gifts are mentioned. They fall logically into three groups:
         (1) Those referring to the revealed truth:
            (a) The word of wisdom.
            (b) The word of knowledge.
         (2) Those referring to the confirmation of the revealed truth:
            (a) Faith, in the same Spirit.
            (b) Gifts of healing, in the one Spirit.
            (c) Working of miracles.
         (3) Those referring to methods of proclaiming the Word:
            (a) Prophecy.

(b) Discerning of spirits.
(c) Tongues (languages).
(d) Interpretation of tongues.

d) The one Spirit distributes these gifts as He wills.

B. Paul explains the necessity of maintaining the unity of the church, the body of Christ, although the many members of the body possess different spiritual gifts (12-31).

1. He explains this oneness by referring to the human body with its many members (12-26).

a) He lays down the basic principle of unity (12-13).

(1) He declares that the principle of the oneness of the body applies to Christ, that is, to His body which is the church (12).

(2) He explains how they became one in the church (13).

(a) The oneness was the result of all—whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free—being baptized in one spirit into one body.

(b) In so doing, all were made to drink of (participate in) one spirit.

b) He explains the necessity for the many members in the one body (14-19).

(1) He indicates that the distinction between the foot and the hand and between the ear and the eye does not remove the fact that each member is a necessary part of the body (14-16).

(2) He asks questions that point out the same thing: What if the whole body were one member, as an eye or an ear, where would the body be? (17-19).

c) He explains certain principles that must be observed in order to prevent schism in the body (20-26).

(1) The principle of dependence: each one needs the other (20-21).

(2) The principle of honor: the relation of the honorable to the less honorable parts of the body (22-24).

(3) The principle of divine arrangement: God is the author of the arrangement that promotes mutual concern and allows no schism in the body (25-26).

2. He applies these principles to the church (27-31).

a) He reminds his readers of this important fact: We are the body of Christ, and each member is a part of the body, but not the whole body (27).

b) He reminds them that God set the following in the church:
   (1) Persons: First, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers.
   (2) Gifts: Miracles, healings, governments, tongues.
c) He asks a series of questions implying negative answers to show how the principles apply to the situation at Corinth (29-30).
d) He concludes with a two-fold suggestion (31).
   (1) Desire earnestly the greater gifts.
   (2) Follow a most excellent way which he is about to show them.

Text

12:1-11. Now concerning spiritual gifts. brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led. 3 Wherefore I make known unto you, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: 9 to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; 10 and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits: to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.

Commentary

Basic Principles of Spiritual Gifts (1-11)

Now concerning spiritual gifts.—For the expression, "Now concerning" see comment on 7:1. We should remember that the italicized word "gifts" is supplied by the translators. Since Paul is discussing services and workings as well as gifts, there seems to be no good reason for adopting the word "gifts" to cover the whole subject. Up to this point in the epistle Paul has discussed such things as marriage,

meats, idolatry, and worship. He now turns to the things that belong to spirit—the miraculous powers which were present in the early church and the subject of the resurrection of the dead. He wanted them to know the truth about these things because certain abuses and misunderstandings had caused strife and division in the church. This was true in particular of the gift of tongues.

Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away.—The section form chapter twelve through chapter fourteen should be studied as a unit. Paul presents basic principles in chapter twelve that must be kept in mind when reading chapter fourteen. It is possible to get a different view of the subject of tongues if we begin with chapter fourteen instead of starting with chapter twelve where this gift is listed among the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Again, chapter thirteen should not be taken out of context and used only as a lesson of the great theme of love, for it is an essential part of the discussion of the issue of tongues that confronted the church at Corinth.

Before the Corinthians became Christian they were accustomed to being led away to speechless idols. Paul is now to point out the conrast between the pagan oracle and the divine revelation given to the church through the Spirit of God. He had explained in chapter two how the apostles were enabled to reveal the Word of God: they were under the control of the Holy Spirit. Converts from paganism would remember that their priests had claimed to give divine direction from the pagan gods. They had been carried away by popular belief and custom like so many prisoners to their execution. It was like being carried away by some irresistible flood. False doctrine does the same thing today. Many are being swept off their feet by the pressures of popular religious movements which claim to have the power of the Holy Spirit just as the apostles and the early church did.

The problem faced by the church at Corinth was: How could they know that those who had the gifts were actually speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit? How could they know that it was not deception just as that to which they had been accustomed under paganism? The issue was clear: Under the Spirit of God one could not say ANATHEMA JESUS. Why? Because the Holy Spirit which Jesus called the Spirit of truth would not permit one under His direction to utter a falsehood. Note the case of Balaam whom God did not permit to pronounce a curse on His people (Num. 24:11-13). On the other hand, no one could say LORD JESUS under the direction of a spirit except the Holy Spirit. Pagan pretenders did not confess Jesus

as Lord. Of course, anyone might utter these phrases, but one did not need to assume that such a person was under divine direction in doing so. The test was for those who claimed to speak under the power of God's Spirit. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He shall glorify me" (John 16:13). It must not be assumed that the utterance of pious words and references to the Holy Spirit and claims to be led by the Spirit today are valid proofs that one is speaking under the power of the Spirit. Certainly God's Spirit, the Spirit of truth, will not lead one to say things today that are contrary to that which He caused to be written in the Bible. The spiritual gifts enabled the Corinthians to recognize the pretender in their day; the truth of the Bible enables one to do the same today!

unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.—Pagans assumed that their gods communicated with them in three ways. (1) Through their priests who "interpreted" various kinds of signs. In this way they were led to believe that the gods were pleased or angry. (2) Through those who uttered unintelligible sounds in a state of ecstasy. Under emotional stress induced by various methods the priest or priestess was supposed to deliver a message from the gods to the one seeking guidance. (3) Through attempted or actual communication with the spirits of the dead. The Old Testament gives some basis for the assumption that this may have been possible. God had legislated against "familiar spirits" (Deut. 18:11). In the days of Saul, those who had "familiar spirits" were put out of the land, but, in the end, Saul himself sought information from the woman of Endor (I Sam. 28:7). Demon possession in the New Testament period may also indicate that "evil spirits" were permitted to communicate with the living. Paul indicated that the idolaters were actually worshiping demons (I Cor. 10:20). The apostle John said, "believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are from God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world (I John 4:1). The criterion by which they were known was their teaching about Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians must have been thoroughly familiar with this pagan procedure. Lest there be any doubt about the source of a communication, Paul gave them the rule by which to test any one who claimed to speak by the Holy Spirit. A person speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God could not say ANAMETHA JESUS, and no one could say LORD JESUS except by the Holy Spirit. This meant, of course, that no one under the power of an evil spirit could say LORD JESUS.

This is an important distinction between paganism and Christianity. God did speak to the fathers in the Old Testament days and at the end of the days of revelation He did speak with finality and completeness and authority through the one whose exalted character is seen in the name "Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). Since God spoke the message, it was authoritative; since it was spoken through the Son at the end of the days of revelation, it was final; since it was final, it had to be complete. This divine communication came through the Holy Spirit who spoke through the inspired apostles and prophets. The Bible is the written record of that communication. The issue is: Do we accept the Bible as the final, complete, and authoritative revelation of the will of God? This is not a plea for blind submission to authority, but a plea for an intelligent, loving, and obedient submission to God.

no man speaking in the Spirit of God.—The ability to speak in or under the control of the Holy Spirit is mentioned throughout the Bible. Jesus plainly taught that the Holy Spirit would speak through His apostles (Matt. 10:20). Peter mentions the fact that "the Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16). On the Day of Pentecost, the apostles "were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). The record of what was said at that time is given in the second chapter of Acts. When Paul had laid his hands on the twelve men at Ephesus who responded to his instruction and were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, "the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

The Holy Spirit did speak through men to give an intelligible message for the guidance of those who were seeking to do the will of God and follow His truth. (John 16:13-14). How to distinguish this from the pretended claims of the pagan priests was the problem which the Corinthians faced.

Jesus is anametha.—Anametha means accursed or completely devoted to destruction. Those who hated Him in His lifetime sought to do this very thing, but God raised Him up from the dead. Those who also hated Him as He was proclaimed by His apostles cried ANAMETHA JESUS. But Paul reminded the Corinthians that this could not be done by one who spoke by the Spirit of God.

Jesus is Lord.—The ancients were used to the phrase LORD CAESAR. It suggested complete devotion to the emperor and implied that he was deity. But the Christians said LORD JESUS and by so doing acknowledged Him as God. To say that He is Lord and mean it is to say that He is to have complete direction of one's life.

diversities of gifts.—The charismatic gifts mentioned in this chapter were the various miraculous powers distributed by the Holy Spirit to individuals in the church upon whom the apostles had laid their hands. They were to serve during the period in which the New Testament was being written. "The word that was spoken through the Lord was confirmed by them that heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and manifold powers, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will (Heb. 2:3-4). The apostles "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed them" (Mark 16:20). The word "gift" in other contexts means simply "gracious gifts." Eternal life is God's gracious gift to the believer in Christ (Rom. 6:23). Paul wanted to impart some "spiritual gift" to the Romans—probably the encouragement that his faith would be to them (Rom. 1:11). He mentioned the fact that each one has his own gracious gift from God—self-control (I Cor. 7:7).

"Diversities" actually refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit distributed the various gifts, the Lord distributed the services, and God distributed the workings which effectively accomplished His purpose. These distributions enabled those who received them to perform the necessary work for the benefit of the whole church. For example, there were the apostles, prophets, and teachers who had the gifts of wisdom and knowledge; these and others worked miracles and healed the sick to prove that God was directing the church by the Holy Spirit. Some spoke in foreign languages, others translated, and still others had divine power to decide correctly concerning the spirits that spoke.

the same Spirit.—All the gifts were given by the same Spirit; all the services were rendered under the direction of the same Lord; and all the effects produced by divine power were from the same God. Since the apostle mentioned the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God, the Corinthians could easily see that there was no excuse for anyone to have a spirit of jealousy or arrogance because of any gift that he might have received. Division over tongues would have been avoided if they had remembered that service and not personal honor was the principle involved in the distribution of these gifts.

the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.—The apostle stresses the fact that the Holy Spirit had distributed these gifts and powers. They were to help the whole church and not just the individual who received them. They enabled some to speak in foreign languages to

convince the unbeliever that God was with them; miracles were performed to confirm the spoken word; the gift of discerning of spirits was exercised to protect the church from the "spirit or error" (I John 4:6).

word of wisdom, word of knowledge.—These gifts had to do with the revealing of the truth of God. For the meaning of "wisdom" see the comments on chapters one and two. The word "knowledge," which we may not be able to define with absolute accuracy, was probably the ability to understand the revealed message of wisdom. The Corinthians who possessed these gifts knew exactly what was meant by each of these terms. Our uncertainty in some instances is a positive proof that we do not possess them. An example of the meaning of wisdom and knowledge is given in Peter's message on Pentecost. It came by direct revelation through the Holy Spirit. But the expression, "to you is the promise, and to your children and to all that are afar off," was not completely understood by the apostle. Later the Lord had to give him a demonstration that this meant Gentiles as well as Jews. See Acts 10:15, 34-35. This helps us see why the early church needed the gift of knowledge. We have the information in the whole Bible to guide us in the understanding of any given problem today.

faith, healings, miracles.—The second group of gifts pertained to the confirmation of the revealed message of wisdom.

Faith, as it is used in this context, is the belief through which the power to perform miracles was made operational for those to whom such power had been given. J. W. McGarvey, in the *New Testament Commentary on Acts,* says that no amount of faith ever enabled one to perform a miracle to whom such power had not been given. It was the Spirit who distributed these gifts. He did it through the laying on of the apostle's hands (Acts 8:18; II Tim. 1:6). One should distinguish carefully between the use of faith in connection with miracles and the faith that saves. The latter is the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, based on the testimony of the Bible, expressed in obedience that leads to eternal life. Faith may also refer to the whole body of Christian doctrine that is to be believed. See Gal. 1:22-23 and Jude 3. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews presents faith as the acceptance of God's instruction upon which the great men whose names are mentioned there built their lives that were characterized by trust in God and victory through obedience to Him. Faith is a complete commitment—intellectual, volitional, and emotional—to the Lord through obedience to His Word. For "faith to remove mountains" see notes on 13:2.

The gift of healings had to do with miraculous recovery from illness. All healing, of course, comes from God, but this was miraculous. "Miraculous" means that it occurred instantaneously. No long period of convalescence followed the healing as in the case of ordinary recovery from sickness. We often hear the word "miraculous" applied to those cases today in which some unexplained change takes place, such as an unexpected passing of a crisis. But this is not the same as the Bible miracle. In the apostolic period, miracles were performed by the apostles and others upon whom they laid their hands. Complete and instantaneous recovery is the mark of the genuine Bible miracle. James 5:15 is often cited to support the claim of "faith healing" today. A full translation of that verse will help us to see what it means: "The prayer of that kind of faith will heal him that is sick." The article used with the word "faith" indicates that it was the faith of the elders—the same faith about which we read in I Cor. 12:9—that produced a miraculous healing. James cites the miracles in the days of Elijah to prove his point. No elder today has had the apostles' hands laid on him, and we can confidently say that no elder has that power of miraculous healing today. That gift was for the primary purpose of confirming the Word. See John's plain statement of the purpose of miracles in John 20:30-31. But let us thank God for those trained doctors and nurses who are doing so much to relieve the sick today, and thank God also for His Word which He demonstrated to be true, for it tells us how to be made free from sin so that we may hope for that glad day when death and pain and mourning will be no more (Rev. 21:4).

Working of miracles had to do with miracles other than healings. A good example is the miracle by which Elymas was punished for his interference with Paul's effort to bring the gospel to Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:6-12).

prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.—Prophecy was more than prediction of future events. But for prophecy in the sense of prediction, see the reference to Agabus in Acts 11:27-30. The primary work of the prophet was to proclaim the message of God, that is, to speak forth under the direction of the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:19-21). In this way, the prophet edified the church (I Cor. 14:4).

Discerning of spirits enabled the one who possessed this gift to diagnose a case of demon possession. This required divine power for the symptoms of demon possession were often exactly like those of

some physical or mental illness. See Luke 9:37-43 and 8:26-39. This gift enabled the early church to protect itself against false teachers who claimed to speak for God. The truth in the Bible enables us to do the same today!

The gift of tongues was the gift that enabled one to speak an intelligible message from God in a foreign language. See notes on chapter fourteen for a full discussion of this gift.

Interpretation of tongues was the ability to translate a foreign language. It was not some power to "interpret" nonsense so as to make sense out of it. Two examples of the meaning of the word "interpret" are seen in John 1:41-42, where it clearly means "translate."

worketh the one and same Spirit.—It was necessary for the apostle to point out that all these gifts were the work of the Holy Spirit in order to offset the claims of some that the gift of tongues was an indication of superiority of the one who possessed the gift. It was the Spirit Himself who distributed the gifts. There was, therefore, no excuse for the spirit of arrogance which some who possessed the gift manifested.

Maintaining the Unity of the Church (12-31)

Text

12:12-31. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. 13 For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now they are many members, but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: 23 and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; 24 whereas our comely parts have no

need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; 25 that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 have all gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.

Commentary

so also is Christ.—Division threatened the life of the church at Corinth. It was divided over men and doctrine; it was divided over custom and conduct; it was divided over the abuse of the spiritual gifts. The latter produced the most serious schism. This section of the epistle was written to prevent splits over the possession of these gifts. They were not given as a token of personal honor of the one who received them, but for the building up of the body of Christ through promoting the preaching of the gospel. Paul used the figure of the human body to illustrate the lesson they needed so much. Just as the body is one and has many members, so Christ has one body of believers made up of many members with different tasks. There was no more reason for schism in the church than there was for such an unthinkable thing as strife and division among the members of the human body.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.—The oneness of the church was produced by all—whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free—being baptized in one spirit into one body. On the Day of Pentecost, the three thousand who were either Jews or proselytes were baptized in water in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins. On the occasion of Peter's speaking to the household of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard his word. Because God had poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit on that group of Gentiles, Peter asked, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he

commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:44-48). Thus both Jews and Gentiles were brought into the body of Christ by the act of baptism in water. See Acts 18:8 and I Cor. 1:14-17 for additional information about the baptism of the Corinthians. Paul wrote to the Galatians and said, "Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). There is no doubt that the expression "baptized into Christ" refers to their baptism in water in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins.

What, then, is the meaning of the expression, "in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body"? To answer this question, we must consider this important fact: The Book of Acts, which gives the history of the founding and progress of the church in the first century, records only two cases of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first was that of the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, and the second was that of the Gentile household of Cornelius (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-11:18).

The following facts of Scripture on the subject of the baptism in the Holy Spirit will help to answer our question:

1. Christ is the administrator of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11). Baptism in the Holy Spirit and in fire are two different baptisms. Since the burning up of the chaff can only refer to the destruction of the wicked in hell, the gathering of the wheat into the garner must refer to the baptism in the Holy Spirit that enabled the apostles to reveal the terms of salvation. See Jesus' promise, its fulfillment, and its effect as given in Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4, 37-39.

2. The Holy Spirit is the element in which this baptism took place (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5). Just as water was the element in which John baptized, so the Holy Spirit was the element in which Christ baptized the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. But this expression must be figurative since the Holy Spirit is a person. The literal meaning of it is to be found in Jesus' own words when He spoke of the power which the apostles were to receive when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). They were immersed in that power.

3. According to Acts, the apostles and the household of Cornelius were the only ones baptized in the Holy Spirit. Christ promised this baptism to the apostles (Acts 1:5). Only the twelve—not the hundred and twenty—were present when the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:26-2:4). Only the apostles spoke in tongues on that day and performed miracles (Acts 2:4, 14, 43). Only the apostles who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit laid hands on

others to give them miraculous powers (Acts 8:18; II Tim. 1:6). Peter clearly states that the Gentiles were baptized in the Holy Spirit while he was speaking to them (Acts 10:44-47; 11:15-16).

4. The purpose of the baptism of the apostles in the Holy Spirit was to enable them to recall what Jesus had said (John 14:26); to guide them into all the truth (John 16:13-14); to speak in other languages (Acts 2:4, 11); to perform signs to confirm their spoken message (Acts 2:43; Heb. 2:3-4).

The purpose of the baptism of the Gentiles in the Holy Spirit was to prove to those who accompanied Peter and to the apostles at Jerusalem that God had granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles (Acts 10:47-48; 11:1-18).

Since "in one Spirit" refers to all who were baptized into the one body of Christ, it cannot mean baptism in the Holy Spirit. Both the King James and the R. S. V. translate "by one Spirit." But the fact remains that the Greek says "in." While there are situations in which this Greek preposition must be rendered "by" or "with" in English, it seems most doubtful that this is one of them. Those English versions that have "by" seem to suggest that this has something to do with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But the context has to do with the spirit of oneness of the believers in Christ who were baptized in water into His body. It makes good sense if we translate "in one spirit—small "s"—all were baptized into one body." That spirit was not the spirit of a Jew or the spirit of a Gentile, it was not the spirit of a slave or a free man, but it was the spirit or attitude of faith in Christ which characterized all who were baptized into the one body. Since it was in this attitude of oneness that they were baptized, the apostle urges them to maintain this unity and overcome the jealousy and faction that had arisen over the abuse of the spiritual gifts. This "one spirit" forbids the unchristian conduct of the ear that would say, "I am not a part of the body because I am not the eye."

drink of one Spirit.—All that has been said to indicate that the word "spirit" in this context is to be spelled with the small "s" applies here. All who were members of the body of Christ were made to share in this oneness in Christ—the great spiritual blessing that removed all distinctions such as Jew or Gentile and made one new man in Christ (Eph. 2:15).

For the body.—There are three steps in the apostle's argument for the necessity of preserving the unity of the body of Christ: (a) the body is not one member, but many (14); (b) they are many mem-

bers, but one body (20); (c) ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof (28). No one member, regardless of the gift he possessed, could say that he was the body. There were many members with many gifts and functions, but there was just one body. The church is the body of Christ, and each member is a part of that body, not the whole body.

God set the members, each one of them, in the body.—Just as God had a purpose for each member of the human body, so He had a purpose for each of the gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit to the various members of the church.

God tempered the body together.—Just as honor to one member honors all the body, so the gifts given to any one honors the whole church.

God hath set some in the church.—If one member said, "I am not a part of the body" that did not make it so. The member can't exist apart from the body. Why then should some assume a spirit of arrogance instead of the spirit of faith and trust in Christ because they had gifts that differed? What if the whole body were an eye? What if all spoke in tongues? What would become of other functions such as helping the sick and needy? No member of the human body could say, to another, "I have no need of you." Yet some of the people of Corinth seemed to think that they could get along without the others. Speaking in tongues was their only concern, but Paul reminded them that God had placed all the gifts in the church for a purpose.

apostle, prophets, teachers.—The history of the church in Acts shows that these were the ones to carry most of the work in the beginning. As the work grew and spread throughout the world, others were given the necessary gifts to assist in the work of the church. The impersonal reference to gifts seems to indicate that the gift, rather than the person who received it, was the important thing. This left no cause for division over gifts.

helps, governments.—"Helps" were the various kinds of helpful deed which were done by deacons. The term "governments" comes from the word that among other things referred to the piloting of a ship. In some way, it had to do with those who gave leadership and direction to the work of the church. It may suggest the work of elders and deacons.

Are all apostles?—Each in this series of questions requires a negative answer. If all were apostles, where would the church be? If all spoke in tongues, what would become of edification?

But desire the greater gifts.—Each gift served a purpose, but some brought greater benefit to the church than others. The latter were the ones to be sought although the others were not to be neglected. Prophecy, for example, was of greater benefit to the church than speaking in a foreign language unless the message was translated for the edification of all.

a most excellent way.—Paul is now prepared to present a superior way to a strife-torn congregation. They had been following the way of jealousy and division over spiritual gifts. The way he is about to show them is the way of love.

Summary

Up to this point, Paul has dealt with the problems of divisions and derelictions as reported by those from Chloe; he has answered the questions raised in the letter of the Corinthians about marriage, meats, and worship. The two remaining problems of major importance that require his attention are spiritual gifts and the resurrection of the dead. The familiar "now concerning" seems to connect this section with the portion of the epistle that began in 7:1.

As he begins the chapter, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the days when they were being led away to the speechless idols that were supposed to give them divine guidance and instruction. They now face the privilege of being led by the inspired message from the Holy Spirit. Their problem was how to know when one was speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The criterion by which they were to determine the source of a message was what the speaker said about the Lord Jesus. There were two tests to be applied: No one under the control of the Holy Spirit could say, "Let Jesus be accursed." No one could say, "Jesus is Lord" except under the control of the Holy Spirit. These words, of course, could be uttered by anyone, but God did not permit an unclean spirit to speak through a man and say these things. The case of Balaam illustrates this point.

This chapter presents a comprehensive view of the miraculous activities in the church at Corinth. There were the gifts distributed through the Spirit; there were the services distributed through the Lord; and there were the workings distributed by God. Nine gifts are mentioned. For convenience, they may be presented in three groups: (1) Those that have to do with the revelation of the will of God: wisdom and knowledge; (2) those that were given to confirm the Word: faith, healings, miracles; (3) those that were used in the proclamation

of the Word: prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, and discerning of spirits. All these gifts were distributed by the one Spirit as He determined and for the benefit of the whole church. But these gifts that were given in order that the gospel might be revealed, established, and proclaimed became an occasion for dividing the Corinthian church.

Paul uses the human body with its many members to show that the spiritual body of Christ with its many members should preserve the unity of Christ's followers. All of them in one spirit were baptized into the one body of Christ. In the church, there cannot be a spirit of the Jew and a spirit of the Gentile. There can only be the spirit of faith in the Lord Jesus which characterizes every one who is baptized into the one body. This spirit should be the controlling factor in the life of the church to make division impossible. Just as the hand and the foot have different functions, so the various members of the church had different gifts and different functions, but they still belonged to the same body. The fact that one had the gift of tongues and another the gift of healings was no ground for assuming a spirit of arrogance that led to the division of the church. Apparently, however, this was the thing that was done, and it was for this reason that Paul wrote these chapters to correct the strife and faction in the church at Corinth.

By a series of questions that called for negative answers, he showed how impossible it was for all to be apostles, or prophets, or teachers. He did not say that these gifts were not to be desired for they had been given for the benefit of the church, but he did indicate that there was a superior way for them to follow which he was about to show them, the way of love.

Questions

1. With what thought does Paul begin this chapter?
2. How did he indicate its connection with what had been written so far?
3. How did the word "gifts" come to be in the opening phrase?
4. Why would it be better to adopt some other heading for this chapter?
5. What subjects are discussed under the general heading of things that belong to spirit?
6. Why was Paul concerned that the church know the truth about these gifts?

7. What is the proper way to study these chapters? Why?
8. What was the background of the Corinthians that made this explanation necessary?
9. What could the converts from paganism be expected to remember about claims to divine direction?
10. What figure of speech did Paul use to describe their former experience?
11. How does it illustrate the effect of false doctrine today?
12. What, then, was the problem which the Corinthian church faced?
13. What test could they apply to one claiming to speak under the power of the Spirit of God?
14. How does the case of Balaam illustrate the thing Paul taught about speaking under the control of the Holy Spirit?
15. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit was to do?
16. Does the frequent use of pious phrases indicate that one is under the control of the Holy Spirit today?
17. What does indicate His control today?
18. What enables one to recognize a pretender today?
19. In what three ways did pagans assume that their gods communicated with them?
20. What evidence is there in the Bible that the spirits of the dead might have communicated with the living? Note: This, of course, remains a controversial question.
21. How did John say that the church was to know about the false prophets?
22. What tests did Paul give for the same purpose?
23. What proof is there that God did speak by the Holy Spirit through men?
24. Where do we find the record of what He said?
25. What are the characteristics of the message of the Bible as the written revelation of God?
26. What did Jesus say as to the fact that the Holy Spirit was to speak through the apostles?
27. How did He speak through David?
28. What caused the apostles to speak on the Day of Pentecost?
29. What happened when Paul laid his hands on the twelve men at Ephesus?
30. According to John 16:13-14, what kind of a message did the Holy Spirit reveal and what was it for?
31. What does anametha mean?

32. What does it mean to say LORD JESUS?
33. How did this compare with what the pagans had been used to saying?
34. What is meant by charismatic gifts in this chapter?
35. In what other ways was this term used in the New Testament?
36. According to Heb. 2:3-4, what was the purpose of miracles?
37. Why did Paul stress the fact that the Holy Spirit distributed these charismatic gifts?
38. What principle was involved in the distribution of these gifts?
39. What was to be accomplished by the use of these gifts?
40. What is meant by wisdom and knowledge?
41. How does the experience of Peter just before he was to speak to the household of Cornelius illustrate the meaning of the gift of knowledge?
42. What was the gift of faith?
43. In what other ways is the term faith used in the New Testament?
44. What was the characteristic of the effect of the gift of healing?
45. How did it differ from cases today that are sometimes called "miraculous"?
46. Whose faith did James refer to in James 5:15?
47. What should be the attitude of Christians towards doctors and nurses who relieve the suffering of the sick?
48. When will pain be abolished?
49. What was the difference between working of miracles and the gift of healings?
50. What was done through the gift of prophecy?
51. Why did they need the gift of discerning of spirits?
52. What was the gift of tongues?
53. How does John 1:41-42 help to understand the meaning of the gift of interpretation of tongues?
54. What was the nature of the division in the church at Corinth?
55. What was the basis of the oneness of the church?
56. What act brings all into the body of Christ?
57. What are the facts of Scripture about baptism in the Holy Spirit?
58. What did Paul mean by "In one Spirit all were baptized into one body"?
59. What are the three steps in Paul's argument for the necessity of preserving the oneness of the church?
60. How does God's purpose for the members of the human body illustrate His purpose for the gifts distributed to the members of the church at Corinth?

61. What is the significance of Paul's impersonal reference to gifts?
62. What is meant by "helps"?
63. What background illustrates the meaning of "governments"?
64. To whose work did "governments" refer?
65. What was the basis of determining what the greater gifts were?
66. What was the most excellent way?

For Discussion

1. How do the reported cases of faith healing today compare with the Scriptural facts about miraculous healing?
2. Which, in your opinion, would have the greater effect on the unconverted world today, a miracle of physical healing or the miracle of a transformed life (Rom. 12:1-2).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Analysis

A. In a series of conditional statements with their conclusions, Paul argues for the necessity of following the most excellent way of love as a means of avoiding schism over spiritual gifts (1-3).
   1. He assumes the possibility of using the gifts of tongues—the ability to communicate in foreign languages or even to use language that is on the angelic level—without being controlled by love; as a result, he says, "I have become echoing brass or a noisy cymbal."
   2. He assumes the possibility of using the gift of prophecy, and having knowledge of all mysteries, and having the gift of knowledge without love as the controlling factor; as a result, he says, "I am nothing."
   3. He assumes that he might go so far as to dole out all his goods to feed the poor or even suffer martyrdom and still not have love; as a result, he says, "I gain nothing."

B. Paul explains what love does and what it does not do (3-7).
   1. He mentions two things that it does:
      a) Love suffers long.
      b) Love is kind.
   2. He lists a series of things that love does not do:
      a) It doesn't cause one to be filled with jealousy.
      b) It doesn't cause one to brag.
      c) It isn't puffed up with arrogance and pride.
      d) It doesn't behave unbecomingly.
      e) It doesn't seek its own things.
      f) It doesn't become irritated.

g) It doesn't count evil.
h) It doesn't rejoice over wrongdoing, but rejoices with the the truth.

3. He indicates what love does in relation to all things:
a) It covers all things.
b) It believes all things.
c) It hopes all things.
d) It endures all things.

C. Paul points out the enduring quality of love—the most excellent way—in contrast to the transitory nature of the spiritual gifts (8-12).

1. He declares that love never fails, but the gifts which are transitory will pass away.
a) Whether these gifts be prophecies, tongues or knowledge, they will pass away.
b) He shows why this must be: We know in part and we prophesy in part.
c) These transitory gifts that are in part will pass away when the perfect (completed) thing comes.

2. He illustrates the meaning of this contrast.
a) He does so by referring to the time when he was a child and to the time when he had become a man.
(1) When he was a child, he spoke, felt, and thought as a child. This corresponds to the time when the church had spiritual gifts—tongues, prophecy, and knowledge.
(2) After he had become a man, he put away things that belonged to childhood. This corresponds to the transitory spiritual gifts that were abolished when the perfect revelation came.
b) He does so by referring to the contrast between seeing in a mirror and seeing face to face.
(1) The gifts correspond to the imperfect reflection in a mirror. "Now" refers to the time when the church had these gifts.
(2) The completed thing (the Bible) corresponds to seeing face to face. "Then" refers to the time when the completed revelation had come.

D. He sums up this important lesson on the most excellent way of love (13).

1. He mentions the three things that abide now: faith, hope, love.
2. He declares that of these three love is the greatest.
3. He urges them to follow after love.

Text

13:1-3. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Commentary

Necessity of the Most Excellent Way (1-3)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels.—Chapter thirteen is an essential part of the discussion of spiritual gifts. It is not to be taken as a separate exposition of the subject of love. In chapter twelve, Paul had indicated that schism had entered the church over these gifts. In chapter thirteen, he shows that this must be prevented by following the way of love, whether the problem be the misuse of the gift of speaking in a foreign language or the gift of prophecy or the gift of knowledge or even such things as benevolence and martyrdom. In chapter fourteen, he shows how the gift of tongues was to be made equal with prophecy in its benefit to the church. By translation, the message spoken in a foreign language could be understood by the whole church. Thus love is the controlling factor in the use of all these gifts; interpretation (translation) of tongues was the necessary accompanying gift that was designed to make the gift of tongues of equal benefit with prophecy and to keep it from becoming a source of strife and jealousy in the church.

tongues of men and of angels.—This suggests that there are two levels of language, human and angelic. Language is a means of communicating an intelligible message to intelligent beings. By tongues of men, Paul means the languages spoken by men—foreign languages in this context. By tongues of angels, he refers to angelic communication. Just what this is, we, of course, cannot say with certainty. Paul gives two suggestions: (1) In Rom. 8:26, he says that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings or sighs that cannot be uttered. They are incapable of being expressed in human language; (2) In II Cor. 12:4, he speaks of having been caught up into Paradise where he heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man

to utter." This only suggests that there is a level of intelligent communication that is above the human. In chapter fourteen, he also suggests that there is a level of communication that is lower than human speech—that which is communicated by such things as the bugle.

We can be sure that the gift of tongues was not "tongues of angels" for it was the ability to speak in a foreign language without previous study or knowledge. This was plainly seen on the Day of Pentecost when each one heard the message that is recorded in Acts 2 in his own native language. Neither can it be the pagan pretense that consisted in uttering speech-like sounds in ecstasy, for that was not communication. Neither is there any good evidence that the Corinthian gift of tongues was like this pagan thing, for it was the gift the Holy Spirit distributed for the benefit of the whole church. Paul used the gift and said to the church, "I would have all of you speak in tongues"—foreign languages.

but have not love.—This, then, is the point of his message: to use the gift of speaking in a foreign language or even in angelic language without being controlled by the principle of love as defined in this chapter would result in becoming as meaningless as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Brass or copper was the metal used to make the echoing gong or other instrument to make noise. It has the ability to repeat the sound without giving an intelligible message. Without love, this gift of the Spirit of God would become just so much noise. Clanging is the sound of men rushing to battle; it is the shout of many voices but without a message. Preaching without love is just so much noise.

Jealousy and faction in the church at Corinth over the use of the gift of tongues was effectively nullifying the message of the gospel which taught, among other things, that all in one spirit had been baptized into one body—the body of Christ.

There are two important New Testament words that are translated "love." One has to do with feelings; the other—the one that Paul uses in this chapter—while expressing feelings, can respond to the will. For example, Paul says that love is kind. We as human beings are capable of responding to God's command to be kind to one another. The first is the love of friendship; the second is the love that can include enemies. We can be kind to those who persecute us. Jesus didn't require the impossible when He said, "Love your enemies." This love was to be expressed in doing good for them. It is in this sense that God loved the world and demonstrated it by sending His Son to Calvary. This does not imply that one can have the same feeling for an enemy as

for a friend, but it may indicate that by loving the enemy he might even be changed into the kind of person for whom one could have a feeling of friendship.

And if I have the gift of prophecy.—Prophecy was speaking for God under the direction of the Holy Spirit in the language of the people, hence, no translating was necessary. Speaking in tongues—foreign languages—had to be translated for all except the foreigner who, of course, understood his own language. But to use the gift of prophecy or the other gifts mentioned in the text without love would simply mean, as the apostle put it, that "I am nothing." Where is the boasting over miraculous powers if the body of Christ is split and torn by faction rather than having its oneness preserved for the benefit of a lost world by the most excellent way of love?

know all mysteries.—A mystery, as used in the New Testament, was the message which God revealed through His inspired apostles. It would have remained a mystery forever if He had not revealed it. See comment on chapter 2:6-10.

Faith to remove mountains.—See comment on 12:9. Jesus used the expression, "faith as a grain of mustard seed" to remind His disciples that the least amount of faith in connection with the performing of miracles would enable them to move a mountain or uproot the sycamine tree. See Matt. 17:19-20 and Luke 17:5-6.

"Faith to remove mountains" does not mean mountains of trouble. It means real mountains and explains the limitless power of God that was given by the Spirit through the apostles to enable the early church to perform miracles, speak in tongues, heal the sick, and perform other acts by which the Word of God was being established (Heb. 2:3-4).

We should not confuse this with the loving trust in God and in His promises that enables the faithful Christian to victoriously face the trials of this life.

I am nothing.—The conclusions of Paul's three arguments stated in the form of conditions are significant. Without love, he says, "I am a gong, a cymbal." Without love, "I am nothing." Without love, "I gain nothing." Why should the Corinthians create strife in the church for nothing?

Text

13:4-7. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; 6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;

7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Commentary

What Love Does (4-7)

Love suffers long and is kind.—If we would know the meaning of love, see it in action. Love has the quality that lasts and it is kind. These two characteristics of love if put into practice would by themselves stop most of the wrangling in churches. In all probability there were in Corinth some short-tempered men who could not look with kindness on the fact that some members of the church seemed to be more prominent than they. This was the foot saying, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body." We should think of the kindness of God our Saviour and be kind to one another (Titus 3:3-5; Eph. 4:31-32).

Love envies not.—Love is not jealous of the honor or success of others. But there was jealousy in the Corinthian church because one had the gift of tongues while others had gifts that were less desirable to them. But all the gifts were distributed by the same Spirit according to His will for the benefit of all the church. Love is the antidote for jealousy in the church.

love vaunteth not itself.—Love does not brag about its gifts, possessions, honors, or accomplishments. It is this spirit of the braggart that tends to produce jealousy in a church. Bragging about ability to speak in tongues was destroying the body of Christ at Corinth. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:31).

is not puffed up.—It isn't inflated—a thing that arrogance and pride produce. Some of the Corinthians were puffed up over position, but failed to carry out their responsibilities in the church (5:2).

doth not behave itself unseemly.—The conduct of love is not unbecoming to a Christian. Christianity is rooted and grounded in love. But much of the conduct of the church at Corinth was unbecoming to men professing to love God and claiming to be the objects of His love. They were guilty of practicing division, immorality, going to law before heathen judges, and wrangling over the possession of spiritual gifts, especially the gift of tongues. If one's conduct is unbecoming to a Christian, he needs to be shown the most excellent way, the way of love.

seeketh not its own.—Selfishness was the root of much of the trouble in the church at Corinth. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" "The body is not one member, but many." There is

work enough and honor enough for every member of the church. Love is the axe to use to cut the root of selfishness before it bears bitterness and strife to the shame of those who call themselves the body of Christ. Paul had this to say to the Philippians, "in lowliness of mind each counting others better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:3-5).

is not provoked.—It is not love that makes one irritable. We stand amazed at the gentleness of Jesus in situations that would have provoked most men, but He was the embodiment of love. The church at Corinth needed to be more Christlike in so many ways, especially in the use of spiritual gifts. Sharp disagreement over the relative value of tongues and prophecy was making the church appear ridiculous in the eyes of the pagan communtiy to which it was supposed to be bringing the gospel of redemption.

taketh not account of evil.—Watch that man who sets down in his notebook every evil deed done to him whether real or imaginary for the purpose of getting even. Love is not his master. "Whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." The church needs to remember that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth.—Is it possible that there were some in Corinth who were rejoicing over the fact that the leader of the party to which they belonged had the gift of tongues even though he might have been misusing it for personal glory? Did some rejoice in the assumption that they could practice unrighteousness with impunity because they were members of the church? Love cannot rejoice in the unrighteous conduct of misguided church members. Love does rejoice with the truth. John says, "I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in the truth, even as we received commandment from the Father" (II John 4).

beareth all things.—Paul spoke of bearing the hard things that he faced in his work as an apostle to the Gentiles in order to win some to Christ. The root from which the word "beareth" comes means a roof or a cover. Love wards off insults and injuries; love won't mention the unlovely traits in others; love won't remember the unkind deed, but is always ready to forgive. The church at Corinth with its imagined slights over the distribution of the spiritual needed so much to be shown the most excellent way.

believeth all things.—Some people cannot believe that there is any good in those who do not support their views or belong to their party or follow the leader they believe to be superior. Some who followed Apollos discredited every thing that Paul did. Love looks for the good in others and is willing to believe that others not only mean well but actually do some good. Some elders cannot bring themselves to believe that the deacons are really concerned about the church. Some deacons cannot believe that it is an honor to serve in the body of Christ, but long for the "promotion" to the "position" of elder. But love for the Lord, and love for His church, and love for the lost believes that it is a privilege to serve in the most inconspicuous way that Christ might be exalted and that the lost might be saved.

hopeth all things.—Gentiles once had no hope and were without God in the world (Eph. 2:12), but "in hope we were saved" (Rom. 8:24). Had some of the Corinthians forgotten these vital issues? Israel lost hope of the promised land as they faced the trials of the journey. Some of the Corinthians were saying "that there is no resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15:12). But love could say with Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3). Is there any wonder that the Corinthians were striving for supposed superiority in the possession of spiritual gifts instead of walking the most excellent way of love?

endureth all things.—Love is like the good soldier who stands up under every attack of the enemy. Love is the way to defeat schism in the body of Christ, for it leads to obedience to Him rather than human leaders.

Text

13:8-12. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.

Commentary

The Transitory Nature of Spiritual Gifts (8-12)

Love never fails.—When taken with the statement, "love endures all things," we see why Paul says that love never fails. To endure is to

withstand all the attacks of the enemy. Love that does that never fails. It stands up after the battle rolls on. It is like the walls of the city that never fall before the enemy assault. This fittingly introduces, by way of contrast, the transitory nature of the spiritual gifts: prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. It was not necessary for Paul to repeat the whole list for one to understand that all of the spiritual gifts were to be wiped out when the completed revelation should come.

in part . . . that which is perfect.—While spiritual gifts served a worthwhile purpose, they were, at best, only in part; they were not the complete thing. That is why they were of necessity transitory; they were to give way to that which is perfect. But what is the perfect thing? Commentators suggest that it is Christ or the perfection that will be known when He comes. But there is no reference to the coming of Christ in this context. The word translated "perfect" means "mature" when it refers to persons as in 2:6. Paul says, "We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown." When it refers to things, as in this case, it means the end or purpose achieved by the thing, complete. That which was in part must balance with that which is complete. The things that were in part, the spiritual gifts, were used of the Lord to bring the revelation of His will to man. Without the work of the inspired apostles we never would have known the "wisdom of God." The spiritual gifts given by the Spirit through the laying on of apostolic hands made it possible for others to reveal the same wisdom of God. But when this revelation was committed to writing as it was in the first century, there remained no further purpose to be fulfilled by these gifts. Therefore, when the completed revelation—the Bible—came, the things that were in part were abolished.

By walking in the most excellent way, the Corinthian church should have been able to use the gifts for the benefit of the whole church while awaiting the day when the completed revelation would be available for all to use.

When I was a child.—The apostle clearly indicates that the spiritual gifts belonged to the childhood period of the church; their possession and use were not the mark of spiritual maturity.

now that I am become a man.—As the mature man puts away childish things, the church could look to the time when it was to have the completed revelation of the Word and put away the transitory spiritual gifts.

For now we see in a mirror darkly.—The subject is still spiritual gifts. It is not a reference to time as opposed to eternity. By "now" Paul

points to the situation which existed at Corinth. They had the gift of tongues, but it was like seeing an imperfect reflection in a mirror in contrast to the perfect view possible through completed revelation in the Bible.

but then face to face.—This is not a reference to the coming of Christ when we shall see Him as He is. By "then" Paul is indicating the time when the completed revelation would be available for all.

now I know in part.—This was true of the time when the gifts were being used as opposed to the full knowledge that would be possible through the complete revelation in the Bible. It is not a reference to the partial knowledge of this life as opposed to knowledge in heaven. Context does not permit the application to heaven.

as I was fully known.—Just as God knew the needs of all men so He has given complete instruction in His Word for life and godliness (II Pet. 1:2-4).

Text

13:13. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Commentary

Things That Abide (13)

But now abideth.—There was no reason for the church at Corinth to feel insecure simply because they were in the childhood period of the church so far as spiritual gifts were concerned. While they were looking forward to the completed revelation of the Word of God, they were reminded that there were things that did abide—faith, hope, love.

faith.—Faith as an abiding thing is not to be confused with faith which is listed as one of the spiritual gifts, for that was a thing that would be done away. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whom God raised from the dead is an abiding faith. Paul said, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

hope.—Hope that is based solidly on the fact of the resurrection will abide until He comes with the clouds and every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1:7).

love.—This is the most excellent way; it was permanent; it was the greatest of the three abiding things. The apostle's advice is: "Follow after love."

Summary

In many ways, chapter thirteen is the high point in First Corinthians. Even taken alone, it is a wonderful message of practical value.

The most excellent way should be followed by all Christians of all ages. But, like all Scripture, it should not be taken out of its context if it is to be understood. We should remember that chapters twelve, thirteen, and fourteen are a unit and should be studied together. This is seen in the closing statement of chapter twelve and the opening words of chapter fourteen. Paul closes the twelfth chapter by saying, "And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you." Then in chapter thirteen he shows the importance, the meaning, and the abiding nature of love. This he does over against the wrangling that was going on in the church at Corinth over the possession of spiritual gifts, particularly, the gift of tongues. The climax of his appeal is: "Follow after love."

In a series of conditional statements, Paul raises the question of the value of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues or possessing the gift of prophecy or having faith to remove mountains. He boldly declares that without love he is ineffective as a noisy gong; he is nothing; he gains nothing.

The description of love that follows is sufficient to show the church that this is the solution to their problem of strife, for love is long-suffering and kind. It possesses all those characteristics that nullify jealousy, arrogance, selfishness, irritability, and desire to repay evil for evil. It has no pleasure in wrongdoing; it rejoices with the truth. Love covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. This was the divine remedy for a church that was sick because of it was torn by strife and jealousy over possession of miraculous powers, disrupted by pride in their leaders, and discredited before the community because of unchristian conduct.

The apostle then presents an explanation of the transitory nature of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge in contrast to love that abides. Three of the nine spiritual gifts are used as examples of the whole group. These, although not complete in themselves, served to bring about the completed revelation of God's will—the Bible. When the completed revelation came and was confirmed by the accompanying miraculous demonstration, the incomplete things were done away. They are likened to the things of childhood that are put away by the grown man. They were like seeing an imperfect reflection in a mirror in contrast to the complete revelation in the Bible that is like seeing face to face. They gave incomplete knowledge, but the completed revelation enables one to know "all things that pertain to life and godliness" with nothing more to be added, for God fully understands

the needs of His people and has completely revealed His will in the Word.

As the church faced the fact that these things which were causing strife and division among them were, after all, only transitory, they were reminded that there are "things that abide." Faith, hope, and love would abide long after the "spiritual gifts" had given way to the completed revelation of God's Word. Therefore the apostle urged them to "follow after love."

Questions

1. How does Paul show the connection between this chapter and what he had written in chapter twelve?
2. How does he indicate that the thought of both chapters is completed in chapter fourteen?
3. What is the first point that he makes in this chapter?
4. Why was it necessary to begin at this point?
5. What is meant by tongues of men?
6. What is the purpose of language?
7. What is there to indicate that Paul is speaking about foreign languages in this section of the epistle?
8. What is a possible meaning of tongues of angels?
9. What suggestions does Paul give to help explain this phrase?
10. Why can we say that he was not referring to the gift of tongues when he mentioned tongues of angels?
11. Why can we say that the pagan pretense at communication with their gods was not the tongues of angels?
12. Where do we find the message that was delivered through the apostles when they spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance? What is the content of that message?
13. Why was it unnecessary to translate that message?
14. What are the three conditional statements by which Paul argues for the necessity of following the most excellent way of love?
15. What is the result of failing to be motivated by love in each of the assumed situations?
16. What is the nature of love as Paul uses it in this chapter?
17. Give an example of Jesus' use of this same term and show how it is possible to obey His command.
18. Why was it necessary to translate the message spoken in a tongue in the church at Corinth?
19. What is faith to remove mountains?
20. Why do we say that it does not mean mountains of trouble?

21. How does it differ from the trust in the Lord that makes for a victorious Christian life?
22. How would love in action which is longsuffering and kindness put an end to the problem at Corinth?
23. How would love put an end to the sin of jealousy in the church at Corinth?
24. Why did Paul say, "Love vaunteth not itself"?
25. What is meant by "not puffed up"?
26. Of what unseemly conduct was the church at Corinth guilty?
27. How would the principle of love overcome this problem?
28. Why did they need love that is not provoked?
29. What is meant by "taketh not account of evil"?
30. In what way were they guilty of rejoicing over unrighteousness?
31. What is meant by "beareth all things"?
32. How was this to meet the problem at Corinth?
33. What is the difference between gullibility and love that "believeth all things"?
34. What was the situation of the unconverted Gentiles so far as hope was concerned?
35. What is the basis of Christian hope?
36. Why is love the way to defeat schism in the church?
37. Why did Paul say, "Love never fails"?
38. How does this statement introduce the thought of the transitory nature of spiritual gifts?
39. In speaking of the transitory nature of spiritual gifts, why did Paul mention only three?
40. In what sense were the gifts "in part"?
41. What is meant by "that which is perfect"?
42. What does the word translated "perfect" mean when it refers to things?
43. How had Paul used the same term to refer to persons?
44. How does Paul show that the possession of spiritual gifts is not a mark of spiritual maturity, but something that belonged to the childhood period of the church?
45. To what does Paul refer when he says "now we see in a mirror darkly"?
46. What evidence is there to show that this is not a contrast between time and eternity?
47. What was to take place that was like seeing face to face?
48. To what period did he refer when he said, "now I know in part"?
49. When was he to know fully?

50. Why did he speak of the three things that abide?
51. What is the meaning of "faith" in this context?
52. Why can it not be "faith to remove mountains"?
53. What is the basis of Christian hope?
54. Why did Paul say that the greatest of these is love?

For Discussion

1. What is to be said about division in the church today that possesses the completed revelation of God's will, the Bible?
2. What place should the "most excellent way" have in the work of evangelizing the world?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Analysis

A. Paul indicates that he is not discouraging the use of the gifts, but that he is arguing for the necessity of correcting the misuse of the gift of tongues (1-19).
   1. In urging the church to follow after love, he says for them to earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy (1-5).
      a) Follow after love, the most excellent way explained in chapter thirteen.
      b) In doing so, earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy.
      c) He explains what is accomplished in speaking in tongues without interpretation in contrast with what is accomplished for the church through prophecy (2-4).
         (1) He points out what is done by speaking in a tongue (2).
            (a) One speaks not to men but to God.
            (b) No one understands.
            (c) In the Spirit he speaks mysteries.
         (2) He points out what is done by prophecy (3).
            (a) One speaks to men.
            (b) He speaks for the edification, exhortation, and consolation of the church.
         (3) He contrasts the effects of the two (4).
            (a) He that speaks in a tongue edifies himself.
            (b) He that prophesies edifies the church.
         (4) He tells why he would prefer to have them prophesy (5).
            (a) In so doing, he does not discourage the use of

tongues. He says, "I would have you all speak in tongues."

(b) Through prophecy the church receives edification.

(c) Greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks in a tongue except he interpret.

2. He presents a three-fold argument for the necessity of using the spiritual gifts in such a manner that the church may receive edification (6-12).
   a) The first argument: His own use of the gift of tongues.
      (1) He assumes that he may be speaking to them in tongues.
      (2) He asks the question: What profit would it be to the church unless it is by way of revelation, or knowledge, or prophesying, or teaching?
   b) The second argument: Such instruments as the flute, harp, and bugle must be so used as to be understood. Note: Tongues had to be interpreted in order to edify the church.
   c) The third argument: The tongue (the human organ of speech) must be so used that what is spoken can be understood (10-11).
      (1) If what is spoken is not understood, it is like speaking into the air.
      (2) Languages (voices) of the world must be understood; otherwise, it would be like speaking to a foreigner.
   d) Conclusion: He says, "Seek that ye may abound unto the edification of the church" (12). Note: The argument that follows is for the necessity of translation so that the "tongue" may edify.
3. In giving instruction to the one using the gift of tongues, he presents a three-fold argument for the necessity of translating the message spoken in a foreign language (13-19).
   a) He instructs the one using a tongue to pray that he may interpret (translate) (13).
   b) First argument: He assumes a case in which he might be praying in a tongue (14-15).
      (1) In this situation his spirit prays but his understanding is not benefitted.
      (2) He therefore determines to pray and sing with the understanding (this implies the necessity of translation as indicated in verses 5 and 13).

c) Second argument: He assumes a situation in which the "unlearned" (the one without these gifts) is unable to understand and say "Amen" (16-17).
   (1) In this situation one is giving thanks by using the spiritual gifts.
   (2) But if he doesn't know what is said, how can he say "Amen"?
   (3) The result is that he is not edified. (This implies the necessity of translation).

d) Third argument: Paul's own experience in using the gift of tongues (18-19).
   (1) He thanks God that he speaks in tongues more than all the Corinthians (18).
   (2) He tells why he prefers to speak in the church with his understanding, that is, he would rather speak five words to instruct than ten thousand in a tongue (19). (Implies necessity of translation).

B. In appealing to the church to use the spiritual gifts as they were intended, Paul sets forth certain rules and regulations to be followed (20-40).

1. He appeals to them to use the gifts as they were intended (20-25).

a) He indicates that this implies the necessity of taking a mature view of gifts (20).

b) He indicates the purpose of the gift of tongues by reference to a statement of the law (21-22).
   (1) The statement of the law (Isa. 28:11-12).
   (2) Tongues are a sign for unbelievers; prophecy is for (the instruction) of the believer.

c) His appeal for the proper use of the gifts (23-25).
   (1) He assumes a situation in which "unlearned men" (those without the gifts) and unbelievers may enter the assembly while all are speaking in foreign languages. The effect will be that they say, "Ye are mad."
   (2) He assumes a similar situation when all are prophesying and points out the result since the unbeliever or the one without gifts understood.
      (a) He is approved by all.
      (b) He is judged by all.
      (c) The secrets of his heart are made manifest.

(d) He will fall down and worship God.
(e) He will declare that God is among you.

2. He presents rules and regulations for the church to follow (26-40).
   a) He gives general rules to be followed for the edification of the church (26).
   b) He gives specific rules for the use of tongues (27-28).
      (1) Two or three, and that in turn.
      (2) One to interpret.
      (3) If no interpreter, keep silence. Speak to self and to God (implying that the speaker and God understood what was said).
   c) He gives rules for the prophets to follow (29-33).
      (1) Only two or three to speak; others to discern.
      (2) One at a time; prophets can control their use of the gift.
      (3) God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.
   d) He gives certain regulations for women to observe (34-36).
      (1) This is the same in all the churches of the saints.
      (2) The women are to keep silence in the churches.
      (3) The law indicates that they are not to speak but to be in subjection.
      (4) They are to ask their husbands at home.
      (5) It is a shame for a woman to speak in church.
      (6) The apostle, implying that there were objections to this instruction, asks: "Was it from you the word of God went forth? Or did it come to you alone?"
   e) He indicates that what he wrote is the commandment of God; ignorance of the fact does not change it (37-38).
   f) He gives a closing word of advice on the matter (39-40).
      (1) Desire earnestly to prophesy.
      (2) Do not forbid speaking in tongues.
      (3) Let all things be done decently and in order.

Text

14:1-19. Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation. 4 He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesi-

eth edifieth the church. 5 Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. 6 But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching? 7 Even things without life, giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war? 9 So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye will be speaking into the air. 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification. 11 If then I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me. 12 So also ye, since ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church. 13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16 Else if thou bless with the spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say the Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest? 17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. 18 I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all: 19 howbeit in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Commentary

Misuse of the Gift of Tongues (1-19)

Follow after love.—Paul wrote First Corinthians to correct the disorders in the church. One of the most serious of these was the misuse of the gift of tongues. Jealousy over the possession and use of the gift was causing faction and division in the body of Christ. To correct this misuse of the gift, Paul showed the brethren a most excellent way, the way of love. In chapter fourteen he discusses two more serious misuses of the gift of tongues: (1) The unrestrained use of the gift without considering the necessity of edifying the church. This was to be corrected by properly using the gift of interpretation of

tongues, that is, by translating the message spoken in a foreign language for the benefit of the whole church that all might be edified. (2) All speaking in tongues when the church came together. This resulted in such confusion that men who did not possess the gift or unbelievers who might be present would say that they were mad. This misuse of the gift was to be corrected by following the rules which Paul gave so that all things might be done decently and in order.

yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.—They were to pursue the course that love points out and to seek eagerly the things that belong to spirit. There would be no problem over these gifts if love governed their use. The gracious consideration of others forbids the spirit of jealousy that divides the body of Christ and prohibits the selfish use of the Spirit-distributed gifts that overlooks the need of the whole church for edification. These gifts were to be done away when they had fulfilled their intended purpose; but while there was a need for them in the church of the first century, they were to be desired and used according to the principle of love and regulated by the rule which the apostle gave for their use.

While Paul wrote to correct the misuse of the gift of tongues, he did encourage its proper use as indicated by the following:

a) "Desire earnestly spiritual gifts" (verse 1). While prophecy was to be preferred because of the need of the church for edification, the gift of tongues was not prohibited.

b) "I would have you all speak in tongues" (verse 5). There is no suggestion here that he was attempting to discourage the use of this gift.

c) Since edification is the essential purpose of the gifts when used in the church, Paul says, "Let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret" (verse 13).

d) Paul thanked God that he used the gift of tongues more than all of the others, but he said that he would rather speak five words to instruct the church than ten thousand in a tongue. This clearly implies that if the foreign language was used in the church it had to be translated for the edification of those who did not understand. See verse 19.

e) Tongues are a sign to the unbelieving (verse 22). That's why its use in the church was prohibited unless the foreign language was translated that the church might receive edification.

f) When they came together each one had, among other things, a tongue or an interpretation. Paul says, "Let all things be done unto edifying" (verse 26).

g) Paul gives rules for the correct use of tongues and other gifts (verse 27).

h) "Desire earnestly to prophecy, and forbid not to speak with tongues" (verse 39). If nothing else were said in the entire chapter on the matter, this would be sufficient to prove that the assumption that the apostle was trying to discourage the use of the gift by the church at Corinth is not valid.

i) In the divine purpose of the gifts, they were to pass away when the perfect revelation had come. Until that time, they were to be used in accordance with the regulations given by Paul to prevent their misuse.

but rather that ye may prophesy.—The emphasis on prophecy did not forbid the use of the gift of tongues. Prophecy was speaking forth the message of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit as well as predicting events to come. Peter uses the expression, "the word of prophecy" to refer to the message proclaimed by the apostles (II Pet. 1:19). Since the message of the prophet was spoken in the language of the people for their edification, there was no need for translation. The message spoken while using the gift of tongues could be made equal to prophecy in edifying the church by translating the foreign language in which the message was spoken.

he that speaks in a tongue.—The gift of tongues which was distributed by the Holy Spirit enabled one to speak in a foreign language without previous knowledge or study. This was demonstrated on the Day of Pentecost when all heard in their own native tongue. It cannot be claimed, therefore, that the apostles while in a state of ecstasy were uttering unintelligible speech-like sounds. There is no indication that Paul used the term "tongue" in chapter fourteen to mean anything other than what it means in chapter twelve or in Acts two. Some have assumed that the gift at Corinth was different since the message had to be translated for the edification of the church. But tongues were for a sign for unbelievers throughout the apostolic period while the New Testament was being committed to writing. The unbeliever could understand the message spoken in his own language, but it could not edify the church unless it was translated. It is not possible to "translate" unintelligible sounds into intelligible language; nonsense cannot be "interpreted" so as to make sense.

Claims are made today that some perfectly sincere people who may utter speech-like sounds while under emotional stress are speaking in tongues. These persons, it is claimed, are speaking in a foreign lan-

guage; others may attempt to "interpret" what is being said. There are several things that should be considered in an attempt to evaluate this claim:

a) The Bible is the final, complete, and authoritative revelation from God. The modern missionary to a foreign land must learn the language before he can successfully work in the language of the people. Some missionaries even claim to have the gift of the Spirit to overcome the language barrier; nevertheless, they must patiently learn the language just as anyone else. This, it seems, invalidates their claim to be under the power of the Spirit of God.

b) The providence of God, which any faithful Christian can see by looking back over the pathway of his life, is not to be mistaken for direct guidance by the Spirit such as that enjoyed by the apostles. The light for our pathway is the Bible. God's blessings do accompany the one who walks in its light. See Eph. 1:7-10. The story of Joseph illustrates this truth in a beautiful way (Gen. 45:1-5). The light that guided him during the long period of trial in Egypt came from the moral instruction and knowledge about God which he received in his father's home. Later, as he looked back over his life, he was able to see the hand of God in the things that had happened to him.

c) The ability to speak in tongues was given to the apostles when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. They in turn were able to impart these gifts to others upon whom they laid their hands. No one can claim to have contacted that source of transmission of the divine power today.

d) There is no point in attempting to speak in a tongue since the Bible must be translated into the languages of the world to be understood by the peoples of the world. One of the greatest of the missionary efforts today is the translation of the Word of God into the languages of the world that all may read the message of salvation and hope in their own tongue.

e) Paul made it clear that the gifts were not to be used except "by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching." In the light of this rule, one of two things is certain: Their attempted use in the church today is wrong, or the Bible is not the completed revelation of God's will.

f) "Speaking in tongues" today is often carried on in the churches today in the absence of an interpreter. This is in violation of the regulation laid down by Paul for the use of the gift at Corinth. It is evident that the Holy Spirit would not lead one to do a thing today that violates what He caused to be written in the Bible.

speaketh not unto men, but unto God.—The gift of tongues, it seems, could be used by the one who possessed it to speak to God, although its primary purpose was to convince the unbeliever that God was speaking to him through this means. The message could not benefit those who did not understand it. Evidently men could use the gift in speaking to God if they so desired, but in doing so they left the church without edification unless they translated for the edification of the church. This was to be done by the speaker himself or by some other person who possessed the gift of interpretation. The one who used the gift of tongues was to pray that he might interpret for the benefit of those who heard him speak.

in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.—Some translators have assumed that the word "spirit" in this context refers to the human spirit as it does in verse fourteen where Paul says, "My spirit prays." But the gift of tongues was given by the Spirit of God. The one who used it was speaking under the power of the Spirit; his spirit was directed by the Holy Spirit. It seems better, therefore, to translate this verse, "in the Spirit, that is the Holy Spirit, he speaks mysteries." RSV so translates. The mystery that was spoken was that which would have forever remained secret if God had not made it known through His Spirit to the inspired apostles and prophets. See comment on 2:7.

he that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself.—This definitely implies that he understood what he was saying under the power of the Holy Spirit. If edification for the church required that a message spoken in a foreign language be translated, it is evident that the edification of the one using the gift of tongues required his understanding of what he said in the tongue.

rather that ye should prophesy.—By translating the message spoken in a foreign language that was for the primary benefit of the unbelieving foreigner, the whole church might receive edification. If this was like pagan jargon uttered in ecstasy, how could it be so translated as to edify the church or anyone else?

greater is he that prophesieth.—See comment on 12:31. The prophet was of greater assistance to the church than the one who spoke in a tongue unless he translated the message spoken in a foreign language. This was contrary to the view held by some of the Corinthians who seemed to feel that the Lord had elevated those who had the gift of tongues above their fellows. This spirit of arrogance was causing strife and division in the church. The reminder about the superior value of prophecy should have had a wholesome effect on those who

were striving for power and position through the misuse of the gift of tongues.

if I come to you speaking in tongues.—This is the first of three arguments for the necessity of using the gift of tongues in such a manner that the church might be edified. It plainly implies that the message spoken in a foreign language had to be translated for the benefit of the church. Paul indicated that it was necessary for him to speak by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching in order to help the church. This he could not do unless the church understood what he was saying; therefore, the message spoken in a foreign language had to be translated to be of benefit to the church.

pipe or harp.—The second argument implies the very same thing. There must be a distinction of sounds made by pipe or harp for one to know what was piped or what was played on the harp. Just so, the message spoken in a tongue had to be translated for the church to understand what was said. The use of the bugle illustrates the same need. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare for war?"

by the tongue.—This is the third argument in the series. While some think of "the tongue" as the gift of tongues, the context seems to indicate that it is the human tongue as the organ of speech. It corresponds to the other instruments that make sounds to communicate intelligible messages such as the pipe, the harp, or the bugle. It was necessary to use the human tongue, just as it was the lifeless instruments, in such a manner that the message spoken could be understood. To speak a foreign language that was not understood by anyone present was to speak into the air. Therefore, the message spoken by the gift of tongues (as it was uttered by the human tongue) had to be translated in order that the church might understand and be helped by it. Language has one purpose: to present a message that can be easily understood. The Corinthians were misusing the gift of tongues by failing to translate so that the church might receive edification.

I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian.—That is, a foreigner. Paul is thinking of the one who speaks a foreign language and who would be like a foreigner to him if he did not understand the language that was spoken.

seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church.—This is the conclusion of the first series of arguments. The gifts are not to be used in the church for the private benefit of the one who possessed

them. But this was being done in the church at Corinth with the result that the church was being divided over the gifts which were intended to benefit all the church.

pray that he may interpret.—This begins the second series of arguments for the necessity of interpreting the message spoken in a foreign language. The first series proved the necessity of edifing the church through using the gifts. It also implied the necessity of translating messages spoken in foreign languages. The individual who used the gift of tongues was to pray that he might also interpret. This would indicate that the message was capable of being translated into the language of the people.

if I pray in a tongue.—This is the first point in the three-fold argument for the necessity of translating the message spoken in a tongue so that the church might understand. Paul says, "If I pray in a foreign language my spirit prays." As an intelligent being he prays under the control of the Holy Spirit. Since the gifts were distributed the Spirit of God, we are to understand that the Holy Spirit exercised control over the spirit—the person—of the one who was praying. Paul assumes a situation in which one might speak without the message being understood by the hearer. But the speaker himself would also need to understand what he was saying under the control of the Holy Spirit or his understanding too would not be fruitful. Such praying wouldn't help even the one who prayed. What was one to do in such a situation? Paul answers his question: "I will pray with my spirit (under the control of the Holy Spirit) and I will also pray with the understanding (by translating the foreign language). The same applies to singing, for he was to sing under the control of the Holy Spirit and to translate that he might understand. This shows that the one who used the gift had to understand what he was saying just as those who heard had to understand to be edified.

he that filleth the place of the unlearned.—This is the second argument for the necessity of translating the message spoken in a tongue. By "unlearned" we are to understand that Paul meant the one who did not possess the gift of tongues. See footnote in American Standard Version. The word signifies one who did not belong to a class of specialists. Peter and John were called "ignorant and unlearned men" by their persecutors (Acts 4:13). They were not school men and they were not priests, but it would be wrong to think of them as ignorant in the sense in which we use the word. There were some in the church at Corinth who did not have the gifts. Paul was thinking of such peo-

ple in this case. What were they to do when they heard some one speak in a foreign language? How could they say "Amen" if they did not know what was said? It was necessary to translate that all might understand. Some think of the "unlearned" as being outsiders—not members of the church. The contrast is between those who did have the gift of tongues and those who did not. It would seem, therefore, that by "unlearned" Paul is speaking of the church members who did not have the gift. The point of the argument is the same which ever view of the word is taken.

the other is not edified.—The purpose of the gifts was to edify those who heard. Even the gift of tongues that was primarily a sign for the unbeliever was to be translated for the benefit of both the speaker and the one who heard.

I speak with tongues more than you all.—This is the third point in the argument for the necessity of translation. Far from discouraging the use of the gift, Paul says that he used it more than all. But he placed a limitation on its use: it had to be translated if it was to be used. That is why he says that he would rather speak five words in the church that he might understand than ten thousand in a tongue (foreign language) that no one understood. He argued for the necessity of translating the message spoken in a foreign language. The misuse of the gift of tongues was to be corrected by observing two rules: Use them to edify the church and, in order to do this, translate messages spoken in a foreign language.

Rules For Using Spiritual Gifts (20-40)

Text

14:20-40. Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men. 21 In the law it is written, By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will I speak unto this people; and not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving: but prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving, but to them that believe. 23 If therefore the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed.

26 What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: 28 but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 And let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern. 30 But if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence. 31 For ye all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted; 32 and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; 33 for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints, 34 let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. 35 And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church. 36 What? was it from you that the word of God went forth? or came it unto you alone?

37 If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord. 38 But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 But let all things be done decently and in order.

Commentary

be not children in mind.—They were to take a mature view of the purpose of the gifts. Gifts did belong to the childhood period of the church as indicated in 13:11; they were not marks of spiritual maturity. But more than this, some in the church were acting like children in the possession of the gifts. As a result, there was jealousy among brethren in the Lord. The possession of the gift was not a sign of God's preference of one above the other, for God is not partial. But it was well to be like babes in malice for babes have none, but in mind Paul wanted them to be mature men.

By men of strange tongues.—That is, those who speak in foreign languages. This word defines "speaking in tongues" and justifies our assumption that speaking in tongues was not some unintelligible

speech-like utterance, but rather that it was speaking in a foreign language. In calling upon the Corinthians to take a mature view of the gift of tongues, Paul reminds them that their primary purpose was to be a sign for the unbeliever, while prophecy was for the edification of the believer. He illustrated his point by a reference from the law (a general term for Old Testament). See Isa. 28:11-12.

According to the quotation from Isaiah, the prophet was answering the quibbling of those who rejected the message of the prophet. They said it was childish, precept upon precept, line upon line. The Lord said that since they wouldn't listen to the prophet, they would have to listen to foreigners and then they really wouldn't understand. Paul uses this to show that tongues were not primarily for the church, for they couldn't understand without having the message translated. But just as in the time of the prophet when the stranger was to speak a foreign language, so those who used the gift of tongues were to speak a language capable of being translated for the edification of all.

Wherefore tongues are for a sign.—The gift of tongues was for a sign to cause the unbeliever to see that God was speaking to him in his own language through one who would not be expected to know his native tongue. See Acts 2:11-13. Prophecy, on the other hand, was for the edification of the believers. Prophecy was not "a sign" for the believers. They needed no such sign since they were already believers. These words, given in italics in the American Standard Version do not occur in the Greek text and should not be inserted in the English translation.

will they not say that ye are mad?—Paul assumes a situation in which the whole church is assembled and all are speaking in tongues. Into this assembly there came certain "unlearned" men or unbelievers. They were two classes who did not understand what was being said through the gift of tongues. The "unlearned" is the church member who did not possess the ability to speak in tongues. See comment on verse 16. Some have assumed that the unbeliever in this case was a foreigner who could have understood the foreign language since Paul had indicated that tongues were a sign for unbelievers. But it is a mistake to assume that all unbelievers were foreigners, and in this case it is evident that they were not, for they did not understand what was being said and therefore joined with the "unlearned" in saying that all were mad.

But if all prophesy.—Paul then assumed a similar situation in which all were prophesying. In this case all understood and were edified. The result was that all declared that God was among them.

Let all things be done unto edifying.—Whether one had a psalm, or a teaching, or a revelation, or a tongue, or an interpretation, his object should be to edify the church. This was the first of the list of important instructions given for the guidance of those who possessed spiritual gifts in Corinth.

If an man speaketh in a tongue.—Instead of all speaking at once with the resulting confusion that would cause men to say, "You are mad," they were to use common sense and Christian courtesy and limit the speakers to two or three and that in turn. One was to interpret, but if no interpreter was present the one with the gift of tongues was to be silent. He could, however, speak to God in private in the tongue.

let the prophets.—The same rule of common sense was to govern the prophets. Others were to discern, that is, they could decide correctly concerning what was heard. It may, however, refer to the gift of discerning of spirits (12:10). Courteous consideration for another who might have a message for the group was to determine which one was to speak. The gift was to be used that all might learn and be built up in the Christian life.

the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.—The prophets own spirits—that is, the prophets themselves—were used by the Holy Spirit to deliver the revelation from God, but the prophet could exercise self-control in the use of the gift. This is solid evidence that they were not involved in some ecstatic experience in which it was impossible to control their speaking. The reason for exercising such control was clear: God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints.—This refers to those who made up the church. See comment on 1:2. Saints were those who had been separated from a life of sin and who had dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord. There was no place among "saints" for jealousy and discourtesy that led to the sin of strife and division. It would be well to restore the use of this term in the church and live up to its evident meaning.

let the women keep silence in the churches.—This was to apply to all the churches of the saints. See notes on 11:1-16 about the relation between man and woman while praying or prophesying in the church. This, however, has to do with wives and their husbands. Several things are indicated for their guidance: (1) Wives are to be in subjection—have respect for their own husband (I Pet. 3:1-6). This is not the subjection of a slave, but the giving of honor that is due the husband who in turn is to love his wife (Gen. 1:16; Eph. 5:21-33).

(2) Let them ask their husbands at home. This implies the necessity of the husband assuming his responsibility in the matter of Christian teaching in the home. (3) This was to be observed because of the culture of that day, for it was a shameful thing for a woman to speak in the church. In our culture, it is not a shame for a woman to speak in public provided she can do so and maintain her womanly dignity. (4) The instruction seems to have involved the misuse of gifts. Just what the problem was, we may not know, but the Corinthians did. Paul gave the regulations to protect the church from the misuse of the gifts. Perhaps some would disagree with him, but he reminded them that the gospel did not originate with them nor did it come to them alone.

the commandment of the Lord.—What was said by the inspired apostle was the commandment of the Lord and it was to be obeyed by His church. In all probability, there were some in Corinth who were claiming that they were prophets or even apostles, but if such a one disregarded this truth and failed to agree with what God said through the inspired apostle Paul, he was not to be recognized as a true leader of the church. Ignorance of this fact did not change the matter; God's commandments for the church were delivered through His apostle.

desire earnestly to prophesy, forbid not to speak with tongues.—As the chapter began, so it closes: the gifts were for the benefit of the church in the absence of the completed revelation of God's will and were to be used to accomplish the task for which they were distributed by the Holy Spirit. They were not to forbid the use of the gift of tongues; it was to be used in accordance with its purpose and the rules given to regulate its use. In this way, all things could be done decently and in order.

Summary

Chapter fourteen concludes the three-chapter discussion of the subject of spiritual gifts. It is the longest of any of the discussions of problems with which the apostle deals in the epistle except that of division. These two issues were related in that the misuse of the gift of tongues was causing jealousy and strife in the church.

In attacking the problem, the apostle did not discourage the use of the gifts, but argues for the necessity of correcting the misuse of them. In the thirteenth chapter he had pointed out the most excellent way of

love that would correct the sin of jealousy over the possession of the gift of tongues. In this chapter he presents two more corrective measures to overcome the misuse of the gift of tongues. The gifts were to be used to edify the church, whether prophecy or tongues. The gift of tongues was not to be used unless the message spoken in a foreign language was translated so that all the church might receive edification. Prophecy which required no interpretation was to be preferred in the church. Tongues were primarily intended as a sign for the unbeliever.

Paul presents two series of arguments in support of these corrective measures. Each series has three steps in it. The first series shows the necessity of using the gifts to edify the church. Even Paul wouldn't benefit the church by using the gift of tongues unless he translated so that the church might be edified. Then he shows how such instruments as the flute or harp must give understandable sounds if they are to benefit those who hear. Just so, the gift of speaking in foreign languages had to be accompanied with the gift of interpretation (translation) to be of benefit to the church. His third argument indicated that the human tongue must be used to speak a message that can be understood or the one speaking will be speaking into the air and those who hear will be like foreigners to him. Therefore, he declares, "Seek that ye may abound unto edification of the church."

In the second series, he argues for the necessity of translating the message delivered in a foreign language. He assumes a case in which he might be praying in a foreign language. Unless he understands what he is saying, his spirit is praying under the control of the Holy Spirit, but he is not benefitted. Therefore, he argues that the one speaking in a tongue must translate in order for the gift to be used in a profitable manner for the speaker and for those who hear. In his second argument in this series, he thinks of those who may not have the gifts—the unlearned—and who are not able to say "Amen" to what is being said because they do not understand the language. Therefore, it must be translated for the benefit of those who do not have the gift. Then he adds a word about his own experience in using the gift of tongues. He thanked God that he spoke in tongues more than all, but adds, "in the church, I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue." The message simply had to be translated to make it profitable for the whole church.

With this basic issue established, Paul proceeded to present certain rules and regulations to govern the use of gifts. They were to be used

in accord with God's purpose. The church was to take a mature view of them instead of the childish attitude they had allowed to govern their thinking. The gifts were not a mark of maturity; they belonged to the childhood period of the church, but they were not to be allowed to become a source of jealousy and strife in the church. Christian courtesy toward others was to regulate their use. If all spoke at once and no one understood, the "unlearned" and the unbeliever would say that they were mad. But if the rules were observed, all would know that God was in their midst. For this reason they were to limit those who spoke to two or three, and these were to speak in turn; others were to listen and be benefitted by the message. No one was to speak in tongues unless there was one present to translate. Paul plainly pointed out that the prophets could control themselves in the use of these gifts. He reminded them that God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

A difficult problem is presented in his reference to women who were to keep silence in the church. This was the rule in all the churches of the saints. There was, in all probability, some trouble that had arisen in connection with the misuse of the gift of tongues. Wives were to have proper consideration for their own husbands who were to assume the responsibility—not authority—for teaching at home. Respect for each other in public and at home was necessary then and now. It is a shame for a wife or a husband to be discourteous to each other at home or in the church. What Paul wrote was the commandment of the Lord.

He closed the chapter with this exhortation, "Desire earnestly to prophesy," and adds, "forbid not to speak in tongues." These gifts had a place in the early church, and when their purpose was fulfilled they were done away. Now we have the whole revelation of the Lord in the Bible. Let us follow Paul's closing word also by doing all things decently and in order.

Questions

1. What are the two principal phases of the subject of spiritual gifts which are discussed in this chapter?
2. How is the discussion of this chapter related to what is said in the two preceding chapters?
3. In what way is the subject of spiritual gifts related to the discussion of division?

4. What are the three major abuses of the subject of tongues which Paul discussed in this section?
5. What corrective measure does he suggest for each?
6. What evidence is there that Paul was not discouraging the use of the gift of tongues?
7. What was the essential purpose of the gifts when used in the church?
8. Why did Paul indicate that the church should desire prophecy above the gift of tongues?
9. What did he recommend in order to make tongues of equal value to the church?
10. What was speaking in tongues?
11. How does the gift which was used in the church at Corinth compare with the gift as used on Pentecost?
12. In the light of Paul's teaching on the subject of spiritual gifts, what differences are evident between the gift of tongues and the present day utterance of speech-like sounds under emotional stress?
13. What is the difference between the guidance which the Holy Spirit gave the apostles and the providence of God which the faithful Christian can observe by looking back over his experiences?
14. How was the ability to speak in a foreign language distributed by the Holy Spirit?
15. How is the modern missionary forced to meet the language barrier?
16. How was it possible for the one who used the gift of tongues to speak to God and not to men?
17. What is meant by speaking mysteries? By whom was it done?
18. How was it possible for one who spoke in a tongue to edify himself?
19. Why, then, was not the church also edified?
20. Why was the one who prophesied greater?
21. What bearing does this have on the problem of jealousy over the gifts?
22. What is the issue in each of the two series of arguments for the correct use of tongues?
23. What are the three arguments in the first series?
24. What are the three arguments in the second series?
25. In verse nine, what is meant by "the tongue"?
26. What is meant by "barbarian"?

27. Why would the use of the gift of tongues cause one to be like a foreigner?
28. What did Paul mean by the expression, "my spirit prays"?
29. What is meant by "unlearned"?
30. What is Paul's point about saying "Amen"?
31. Why did Paul thank God that he spoke in tongues more than all?
32. Why, then, the comparison about five words with understanding and ten thousand words in a tongue?
33. What did Paul mean by the remark, "Be not children in mind"?
34. How explain the quotation from Isaiah about men of strange tongues?
35. How does this show what was done by speaking in tongues?
36. To what did Paul refer by "law"?
37. What was the primary purpose of the gift of tongues?
38. What was the purpose of prophecy?
39. Why should we delete the italicized words, "is for a sign" in the English text?
40. What is the difference between "unlearned" and "unbeliever"?
41. Why would they say, "Ye are mad"?
42. Why would the same ones say, "God is in the midst of you"?
43. What rules were to be observed in determining who was to speak in the church?
44. What proof is there that the prophets could exercise self-control in using the gift of prophecy?
45. What bearing does this have on some instances of supposed speaking in tongues today?
46. What is meant by "churches of the saints"?
47. Why did Paul use it in this connection?
48. Why did he say, "let the women keep silence in the churches"?
49. What responsibility of the husband is implied by the apostle's instruction for the wife to ask her husband at home?
50. Why did he say that what he was saying was the commandment of the Lord?

For Discussion

1. What should our attitude be toward the Bible as the guide-book to heaven?
2. Have you found anything lacking in it?
3. Do you know of instances where attempts to speak in tongues have caused division in a local church?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Analysis

A. As Paul comes to the resurrection, the last of the problems to be discussed in the epistle, he makes known to the brethren the gospel which he preached to them (15:1-11).
   1. He points out the relation of the Corinthians to this gospel (1-2).
      a) They had received the gospel which he preached.
      b) They were standing in this gospel.
      c) They were being saved by it.
         (1) The process of salvation was going on.
         (2) Paul indicates that their being saved depended on holding fast by means of the word which he preached.
         (3) This was true, unless they had believed in vain—some were saying there was no resurrection.
   2. He points out the basic issues of the gospel he preached (3-4).
      a) He delivered to them as a matter of first importance that which he also received.
      b) He indicated what these basic issues were:
         (1) That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
         (2) That He was buried.
         (3) That He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.
   3. He lists the appearances of Christ in proof of His resurrection (5-8).
      a) He appeared to Cephas.
      b) Then to the twelve.
      c) He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once.
      d) Then He appeared to James.
      e) Then to all the apostles.
      f) Last of all, as to the child untimely born, He appeared to Paul.
   4. He gives an explanation of his apostleship which was based on Christ's appearance to him (8-11).
      a) His last appearance was to Paul, "the child untimely born."
      b) He was unworthy to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church: "I am the least of the apostles."

c) He shows how God's grace worked through him.
(1) He said, "By the grace of God I am what I am."
(2) God's bestowed grace was not found vain.
(a) He labored more abundantly than they all.
(b) But this was God's grace working through him.
d) The other apostles and Paul preached this same gospel and the Corinthians believed it.

B. Paul explains the bearing of Christ's resurrection on the subject of the resurrection of the dead (12-34).
1. He bases his first argument on the assumption of the Corinthians that there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead (12-19).
a) Question: If Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead—as Paul had just shown—how could some of them say that there was no resurrection of the dead?
b) Consequence of denying the resurrection: If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised.
c) Result of denying that Christ has been raised (14-19).
(1) The preaching of the apostles is vain.
(2) The faith of the brethren is vain.
(3) The apostles are found to be false witnesses of God.
(4) The faith of the brethren is vain and they are still in their sins.
(5) Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
(6) The apostles, who have only hoped in Christ in this life, are of all men most pitiable.
2. He bases his second argument on the fact of Christ's resurrection from the dead (20-23).
a) Christ has been raised as firstfruits of them that are dead (20-23).
(1) The argument of "firstfruits."
(2) The source of death and resurrection:
(a) Death came by Adam.
(b) Resurrection came by Christ.
(3) The order in which this occurs: Christ as the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's at His coming.
b) He shows what will occur at the end when Christ comes (24-28).
(1) The kingdom to be delivered to the Father.
(2) All enemies, including death, to be conquered.
(3) The Son to be subject to the Father.

3. He bases his third argument on the relation of baptism to the resurrection (29-34).
   a) Why be baptized if there is no resurrection (29-30)?
   b) Why should Paul risk his life daily if there is no resurrection (31-32)?
   c) A word that should move them to shame (33-34).

C. Paul answers some problems involved in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (35-58).
   1. A two-fold question: How are the dead raised, and what kind of a body will they have (35-50)?
      a) Paul answers the questions by a series of illustrations that help to understand the problems (35-41).
         (1) A seed dies that a new plant might grow from it.
         (2) Each kind of seed produces an appropriate plant as God pleased.
         (3) There are various kinds of flesh, that of men, animals, birds, fish. This implies that the resurrection body will be suited to the resurrection state.
         (4) Celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies—sun, moon, and stars—differ in glory. This implies that the resurrection body will have a glory suited to the heavenly state.
   2. An explanation of the resurrection of the dead (42-50).
      a) Burial and resurrection are likened to sowing: perishable and imperishable; dishonor and glory; physical and spiritual.
      b) Argument for a spiritual body: If there is a physical body, there is a spiritual one.
         (1) Shown by comparison of Adam and Christ.
         (2) As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall bear the image of the man of heaven.
      c) Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; perishable cannot inherit imperishable. What then?
   3. The secret revealed (51-57).
      a) A change will take place.
      b) When the last trumpet sounds the dead will be raised and all will be changed.
      c) This will mean victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ.
   4. An exhortation to be steadfast since the resurrection will prove that the Christian's work is not in vain in the Lord (58).

The Gospel Which Paul Preached (1-11)

Text

15:1-11. Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, 2 by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; 5 and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; 6 then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; 7 then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

Commentary

Now I make known unto you, brethren.—Paul comes to the last of the long list of problems that had so seriously disturbed the brethren at Corinth. The problem of the resurrection was in all probability the most serious of all for it questioned the basic issue of the gospel which Paul preached. To deny that there is a resurrection of the body is to deny that Christ has been raised.

the gospel which I preached unto you.—That gospel was the word of the cross, the message that saved the believer. Paul determined to know nothing among them but Christ and Him crucified. He had reminded them in the beginning of the epistle of his confidence that they would stand unreprovable in the presence of the Lord in the day of his coming. This, of course, implied resurrection. At the very beginning of the discussion of their problem, then, he emphasized the facts of the gospel, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. To deny the resurrection was to deny the facts of the gospel Paul preached.

which also ye received.—They had accepted these facts when they became Christians. To reject them now was to reject the foundation of their faith and hope of salvation. They had taken their stand for Christ because of the gospel that proclaimed Him as the risen Savior.

if ye hold fast.—Paul reminded them that that salvation depended on their holding fast and that this was to be done by means of the word which he preached to them. By denying the resurrection they were rejecting the means of holding fast their hope of salvation. Paul emphatically stresses what he had preached: the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

except ye believed in vain.—Was it possible that they had accepted the gospel without carefully considering its very basic issue, the resurrection of Christ? There is a warning implied in these words: they were in grave danger because of the position that some had taken on the subject of the resurrection. The one thing above all others that Christians are required to believe is that God raised Christ from the dead. See Rom. 10:9-10. Of course, as Paul argues later, if there is no resurrection, Christ has not been raised and faith is without basis or meaning.

that which also I received.—Paul preached the message to the Corinthians which he had accepted when he became a Christian. When he saw the risen Lord on the way to Damascus he gave up his role as persecutor and surrendered to Christ. From that day on, his faith did not waver. As a matter of primary importance, he had delivered this message to them, and they had accepted it. To deny the resurrection was to call in question the Scriptures and the testimony of Paul and all the others who had seen the risen Lord.

Christ died for our sins.—Christ's death concerned our sins. He shed His blood to make expiation for our sins (Rom. 3:25). John called Him the Lamb of God that takes away our sins (John 1:29).

according to the scriptures.—The death, burial and resurrection of Christ was pointed out in the Old Testament. The passover lamb and the other blood offerings looked forward to His death (Heb. 9:11-14). The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was about His death (Acts 8:30-35). On Pentecost, Peter quotes the Psalms to prove the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25-31). Jesus referred to the experience of Jonah to explain the fact that the Son of man was to be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights (Matt. 12:39-40). To deny the resurrection was to set aside the Old Testament scriptures.

and that he appeared.—The proof of the resurrection depends on the testimony of those who saw Him, touched Him, and heard Him speak to them after His death and resurrection. There was a sufficient number of witnesses and the appearances occurred over a long enough period of time for them to be sure that He was alive and that He will come again for those who wait for Him unto salvation (Heb. 9:27). Each of the four gospels gives detailed information about the appearances of Christ that established the fact of His resurrection. Paul refers to some of them and also to the fact that he had seen the risen Lord (9:1).

to Cephas.—Paul used Peter's Aramaic name (John 1:41-42). Both Mark and Luke mention the appearance to Peter (Mark 16:7 and Luke 24:34).

then to the twelve.—This is the general name for the group of apostles, but it does not indicate that all of the group were present. Not more than eleven and perhaps only ten were present, depending on whether or not Thomas was among them. Judas had gone to "his own place" (Acts 1:25); Matthias was not yet numbered with them.

then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once.—This was strong evidence that could still be verified for most of them were yet alive. The fact that so many saw Him at one time makes it difficult to reject their testimony. Those who denied the resurrection of the dead were not careful in weighing such evidence.

then he appeared to James.—Though Paul does not identify him, James was in all probability the Lord's brother. This again is very strong evidence of the resurrection. The brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him until after the resurrection which forced them to acknowledge Him as Lord (John 7:5; Acts 1:14; James 1:1).

then to all of the apostles.—Thomas was absent on one occasion of Jesus' appearance to the apostles (John 20:19-23). At another time he was with them when Jesus came into their midst. He examined the evidence that satisfied him that Jesus was his Lord and his God (John 20:24-28).

and last of all, he appeared to me also.—The Corinthians had heard the gospel from Paul. To deny what he said about the resurrection of Christ was to deny the foundation of their hope in Christ. The appearance of Jesus to Paul was of such importance that it is recorded three times in the book of Acts—in chapters nine, twenty-two, and twenty-six. Before king Agrippa, Paul quoted the words of Jesus telling why He appeared to Paul: "To this end have I appeared unto

thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:16-18). All this was lost to the Corinthians who were denying the resurrection, for if there is no resurrection, Christ has not been raised.

child untimely born.—This expression which literally means an untimely birth or miscarriage is used by Paul figuratively as a term of contempt. It apparently has nothing to do with the fact that he was the last to be appointed as an apostle of Christ. "Untimely birth" would suggest the opposite. "Dead fetus" more correctly fits the context. See Lenski, *Interpretation of First Corinthians,* p. 638. But who would call him stillborn? It well might have been his former Jewish companions who had, no doubt, looked to him as the one who, one day, was to take the place of their great teacher, Gamaliel at whose feet Saul of Tarsus had been instructed. On the way to Damascus, their hope suddenly died when Saul acknowledged Jesus as Lord and accepted the responsibility of Christ's apostle to the Gentiles. It was not an unusual thing for Jews to look upon a Jewish convert to Christianity as dead.

It seems unlikely that "untimely born" could refer to the sudden and, as some suggest, violent experience of his conversion and appointment to the apostleship. Others suggest that Paul may be expressing his own feeling toward his former life of persecuting the church of God.

the least of the apostles.—Paul was the last to whom Christ appeared. This fact is balanced with the statement that he—in his own opinion—is the least of the apostles because he had persecuted the church of God. He never got away from the memory of his activity as a persecutor. But in spite of it, God's grace was extended to him in calling him to the work of an apostle. It was not overcompensation for the life of a persecutor but love for Christ that caused him to labor more abundantly than all the apostles (II Cor. 5:14).

That this estimate of his apostleship is his own may be seen by the approval he received from Peter and John. See Gal. 2:1-10.

the grace of God which was in me.—This is the word of a truly humble Christian. He takes no credit for the great effort he had put forth for the cause of Christ; it was God's grace—God gave him the opportunity to be an apostle—that had accomplished it all. But all the apostles preached the same message, and it was that message that caused the Corinthians to believe. This was the important thing, not who did the preaching.

The Resurrection of the Dead (12-34)

Text

15:12-34. Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: 14 and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: 17 and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.

20 But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are äsleep. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. 27 For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. 28 And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.

29 Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? 30 why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? 31 I protest by that

glorying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. 33 Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals. 34 Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak this to move you to shame.

Commentary

How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?—The glaring inconsistency of the Corinthians was too much for the logical mind of the apostle Paul! He had preached Christ crucified and raised from the dead. He had accepted this basic proposition of Christianity on his way to Damascus. The Corinthians had accepted it when they became Christians. How could they deny it now? Greek philosophers had long held the view that escape from the body at death was the goal of life, the escape from slavery. The resurrection of the body was foreign to their thinking. But the Corinthians had believed the evidence of Christ's resurrection as Paul preached it. Were they carelessly slipping back into their former views of the matter or had they just failed to really think through to the logical conclusion of Paul's proposition? "Except ye believed in vain" seems to suggest the latter.

The Sadducees said that there is no resurrection, but it is doubtful that their influence had reached to the Corinthians. See Acts 23:8 and Matt. 22:23-33.

If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised.—There is no escaping Paul's logic; but were the Corinthians prepared to accept the consequences of denying the resurrection of Christ? That meant that the glorious gospel of salvation and hope was without foundation in fact, and there was no basis for their faith. More than that, the apostles were found to be false witnesses of God, saying that He raised Christ from the dead, which, if there is no resurrection, is not true. To put it another way, if dead people are not raised, neither has Christ been raised (16). That means that your faith is without foundation and you are still in your sins. Were they willing to accept the consequences of denying the gospel which Paul preached? The thought—Christ is not raised—was completely unac-

ceptable to Paul, for he had seen the risen Lord on the Damascus road. Repetition at this point in the argument shows how important this issue was in establishing the fact of the resurrection of the dead. If the Corinthians were right and the apostles were wrong, then those who died believing in Christ had perished.

we are of all men most pitiable.—This is the last in the list of tragic results of denying that Christ has been raised. What is the antecedent of "we"? Is Paul saying that Christians, assuming there is no resurrection, are more pitiable than others? Are not Christians in this life blessed beyond others? They have, if they are willing to accept it, the "peace that passeth understanding" to guard their hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6-7). They may not, in some cases, have as much in material possession as some others, but they know that life does not consist in the abundance of things which man possesses (Luke 12:15).

It is possible that Paul is speaking of the apostles. But why would they be more pitiable than all if there is no resurrection? The answer may be found in Paul's own words in 4:9-13. The apostles were men doomed to die; they were a spectacle to the world and to angels. They were fools for Christ's sake; they were weak; they were held in disrepute. They suffered hunger and thirst; they were poorly clad; they were buffeted and without homes; they labored with their hands rather than being supported with the dignity accorded other teachers. They were reviled, persecuted, and slandered; they became the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things.

All this, they suffered because they believed that God had raised Christ from the dead, and they looked in hope to the coming of the Lord.

the firstfruits of them that are asleep.—The fact of Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of the dead. In Old Testament times the first portion of the harvest was given to the Lord as an indication that all the harvest was in reality His. Whatever firstfruits was the rest was. Christ who died was raised from the dead; His resurrection was like "firstfruits" in that all the dead must be raised.

For since by man came death.—Physical death is the penalty for the transgression of God's law in the Garden by Adam. The resurrection which cancels the penalty of death comes through man also, that is, Christ, for as in Adam all die, all shall be made alive in Christ. What happens after the resurrection is another matter. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs

shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29).

they that are Christ's at his coming.—For Paul's own comment, see I Thess. 4:13-18.

deliver up the kingdom of God.—Those who have accepted the rule of Christ by faith and obedience to His gospel and have remained faithful to Him until death are all to be presented to the Father in the "eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:11). The apostle was anticipating this when he wrote in the beginning of the epistle that they were to wait "for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be unreprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:7-8). In that eternal kingdom there will be the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 22:1).

For he must reign.—The angel promised that He was to reign on the throne of His father David (Lk. 1:32). The writer of Hebrews declares that when He had made purification for sins He assumed the seat of authority as King at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3). Peter declared that the promise to David was fulfilled when Christ arose and ascended to the right hand of the Father, "for David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet" (Acts 2:29-35). Now Paul declares that the last enemy to be abolished is death. In it all, the Son is subject to God.

Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?—The problem in this text is: What is meant by "for" the dead? It cannot mean that Christians were getting themselves baptized on behalf of some friend or relative who had died without being baptized into Christ. Although such a thing was done much later, there is no good evidence that it was being done in the time of the apostles. Paul wrote this epistle to correct errors that had crept into the thinking and conduct of the church. It is strange that he would not label this an error if the Corinthians were actually practicing vicarious baptism. Baptism was a personal act for the one who believed and repented of his sins (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). One might go through a form of immersion and pretend that it was for some dead friend, but that one could in no way fulfill the requirements of faith and repentance for another.

The preposition which is translated "for" in this verse is also translated "for" in verse three where it evidently means "concerning" or "because of." In Rom. 9:27 it is translated "concerning" and in John 1:30 "of." John the Baptist had spoken about Jesus who he said was the Lamb of God. The basic meaning of the preposition is "over" and its resultant meaning is "concerning" or "with reference to." There are other meanings also, but our problem is to determine which fits the context, being careful not to read into obscure passages such as this one meanings that are contrary to what is taught on the subject of baptism in the plain passages.

This text suggests that there was something in the act of baptism that had to do with the resurrection of the dead, for baptism is both a burial and a resurrection (Rom. 6:4). But if there is no resurrection, it is meaningless to go through a burial and a resurrection in the act of being baptized into Christ. Some object that this is reading too much into the text, but the whole chapter concerns the resurrection of the dead, and in the next verse Paul asks, "If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?" If there is no resurrection, baptism as to form and purpose is meaningless.

Some think that the verse means baptism for the purpose of pleasing some friend or relative who had died. While such a motive would not necessarily invalidate one's baptism, it is not likely that the language of the text has this meaning.

why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?—Why should Paul and others face the constant danger of losing their lives if there is no resurrection? The act of baptism suggests that there is a resurrection; but if there isn't, there is no point in suffering needlessly in this life. Why suffer here if there is no hope of life beyond the grave where there will be no pain nor death nor suffering? Paul said, "I die daily," but it was a needless risk if there is no resurrection.

I fought with beasts at Ephesus.—This is another reference to the jeopardy which he faced. There was no point to it if there is no resurrection. Some assume that the fighting with wild beasts is to be regarded as figurative for the struggle he had with the vicious men who opposed him at Ephesus. It is true that men can be like wild beasts when they decided to destroy someone who disturbs their conscience. There is no record in Acts of any literal battle with beasts in which Paul was engaged. But this does not prove that he didn't have such an experience. It is argued also that since he was a Roman he could not have been subjected to such treatment, but authorities didn't always

ask about such issues. See Acts 16:37. But whether he did or did not face real beasts, his life was in real danger and there was no point to it if there is no such thing as a resurrection from the dead. Therefore he says, "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Evil companionships.—The Corinthians were being deceived by associates who did not hold the truth of the gospel. Paul urges them to wake up and stop being deceived by those who have no knowledge of God. Intelligent people should be ashamed of being deceived when the facts of the gospel had been so clearly presented to them with the evidence that definitely established the resurrection of Christ.

Answer to Problems of The Resurrection (35-58)

Text

15:35-58. But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? 36 Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die: 37 and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; 38 but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes. 40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43 it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: 57 but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.

Commentary

But some will say.—The apostle is ready now to answer the objections of the critics. Perhaps many were sincere in their inability to see how there could be such a thing as the resurrection of the body which disintegrates in death. The Sadducees in Jesus's day objected on a different ground and were told that they were ignorant of the Scriptures and did not know the power of God (Matt. 22:29). The Corinthians wanted to know how the dead are raised and with what kind of body? Paul answers both questions by a simple reference to the fact that the seed that is sown dies that the new plant may spring from it. God gives each kind of seed the kind of new plant that pleases Him. God will equip the saint with the kind of body that pleases Him. Paul says that it will be fashioned anew to conform to the glorious body of Christ (Phil. 3:21). John says that we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is (I John 3:2).

So also is the resurrection.—Paul argues from the facts that all flesh is not the same kind, and that there are both celestial and terrestrial bodies, and that one star differs in glory from another, and that the resurrection body will be different. He then explains that difference: It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. Dishonor is balance with glory; weakness with power; natural body with spiritual.

If there is a natural body.—If there is a body for this life, there is a body for the heavenly life. See Paul's comment in II Cor. 4:16-5:10.
The first man Adam ... The last Adam.—All of us have a physical body that is subject to death because we are descendants of the first man Adam. The saints will have a heavenly body because they belong to the last Adam who as a spiritual being gives life to those who believe in Him. See John 4:24; 5:21; 6:57-63.
flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.—That kingdom is spiritual, difficult though this is for us to grasp. The body which God gives us in which to glorify Him in this life must be changed into the likeness of the glorious body of Christ in order that we might continue to glorify Him in heaven. Paul is now ready to tell this secret.
We all shall not sleep.—Enoch and Elijah did not see death (Heb. 11:5; II Ki. 2:1). When Christ comes again there will be those who will be taken up to meet Him in the air along with those who will be raised from the dead (I Thes. 4:13-18).
but we shall all be changed.—This is the secret that some apparently did not know; all who are to be with the risen Lord in heaven are to be changed when the dead shall be raised incorruptible. Then Death is swallowed up in victory.
thanks be to God.—Paul who had seen the risen Lord looked to this time of triumph through Him with thanksgiving to God.
your labor is not vain in the Lord.—This triumphant note of hope called for steadfastness on the part of the brethren whom Paul loved. He urged them to stand firm in this conviction and abound always in the work of the Lord. The hope of the resurrection was enough for them to know that their labor was not vain in the Lord.

Summary

This great chapter concerns the resurrection. Paul has now reached the climax of this remarkable epistle covering so many of the problems that the church faced in Corinth.

It may be that it was most urgent for him to answer the problems of division and dereliction reported by those of the house of Chloe, but it was most important for the saints that he answer their questions about the resurrection which lay at the foundation of their faith and hope. It is true that they needed to know the answers to the questions that puzzled them about marriage, idolatry, and worship; but the answer to the questions about the resurrection was even more necessary

because it had to do with their eternal hope in Christ and the goal toward which all Christians were striving. It was necessary that he show them the most excellent way of love that they might correct the misuse of spiritual gifts, but it was also necessary that he reassure them of the foundation of the Christian life by logical proof that there is a resurrection from the dead.

At the beginning of the chapter, Paul reminds the Corinthians about the facts of the gospel which he preached to them. That gospel was based on the well established facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Paul had accepted the fact of the resurrection of Christ when he surrendered to the Lord on the Damascus road. Nothing could shake his conviction on this issue for he had heard the voice of the Lord when He appointed him to be an apostle to the Gentiles. The Corinthians had accepted the fact of Christ's resurrection when they became Christians, but because some were saying that there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead, they were in need of reassurance on this great issue.

The resurrection of Christ was according to the Scriptures and it was supported by the testimony of those who saw Him after He was raised from the dead. Cephas, James, the five hundred, and Paul testified that Christ had been raised. There was no reason for the brethren to doubt it.

It was by God's grace that Paul had been able to labor more than all the apostles in proclaiming this fact to the Gentiles. Because he was dealing with the Greek mind that was trained in logic, he presented a series of arguments that was designed to reestablish their belief in the resurrection of the dead. He had presented evidence to prove to them again that Christ had been raised. But, he said, if there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised. To put it in another form, if dead people are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. Were they ready to accept the consequences of their unbelief?

If Christ has not been raised, their faith was without meaning; they were still in their sins; those who had died believing in Christ had perished; and the apostles who were like men doomed to death were a most pitiable spectacle before angels and the world.

Paul took his stand on the evidence that could not be denied that Christ has been raised from the dead. He showed what this meant to the Christian because Christ's resurrection was similar to the firstfruits of the Old Testament harvest. As in Adam all die, in Christ all shall be made alive. Christ must reign until He conquers every enemy, the

last of which is death. Then He will present the redeemed in triumph to the Father to whom He also is subject for God is all in all.

He reminded them of their baptism which is a burial and a resurrection. Why go through such an experience if there is no resurrection? Why live in jeopardy daily as Paul had done at Ephesus? Why not say, "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."? It was time for them to think soberly and to break with those who were repudiating the very foundation of faith and hope.

Paul answered two questions that puzzled the people. They probably came from their background of training in Greek philosophy. They had been led to believe that to escape from the body in death was the goal of life. They wanted to know how it was possible for the body that disintegrates in death to be raised, and what kind of body they were to have in the resurrection. Paul gave them a simple yet adequate answer. The seed that falls into the ground dies and from it comes a new plant. God gives it a new "body" as it pleases Him. The resurrection body will be different, but it will be what God pleases to make it. As there is a difference in flesh, and celestial bodies, and in the glory of the stars so there will be a difference between the earthly and the heavenly body. The heavenly body will not be subject to the problems of the earthly body. We derive our earthly body from Adam; our spiritual body is from Christ, the last Adam. The corruptible body will be replaced by the incorruptible body. Paul is now ready to tell them the secret.

Not all shall die, for some will be alive when Christ comes; but all shall be changed in the moment when the trumpet sounds and the dead are raised incorruptible. Then Death will be swallowed up in victory! Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

To this triumphant note of hope, Paul adds his affectionate appeal for the brethren to remain unmovable in the work of the Lord for now they know that their labors are not in vain.

Questions

1. Why did Paul begin the discussion of the resurrection of the dead by referring to the gospel which he had preached?
2. What are the facts of the gospel which Paul preached?
3. Why did he remind them that he had accepted the fact of the resurrection?
4. Why remind them that they also had accepted it?

5. Why did he add, "if ye hold fast"?
6. By what were they to hold fast?
7. What did he mean by "believed in vain"?
8. Why did Christ die?
9. In what Scriptures do we find the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ?
10. What evidence is presented in the New Testament to prove the fact of the resurrection of Christ?
11. What is the significance of the fact that five hundred saw Him at one time?
12. Why did Paul mention Cephas as a witness of the resurrection?
13. In what sense is "the twelve" used here?
14. What is the value of the testimony of James?
15. What is the value of the testimony of Thomas who was present when Christ appeared to all the apostles?
16. Why did Paul mention the fact that Christ appeared to him last of all?
17. How is the importance of this fact indicated in the book of Acts?
18. What does the expression, "child untimely born," mean?
19. Who may have applied it to Paul? Why?
20. Why did Paul call himself the least of the apostles?
21. To what did Paul attribute the fact that he had labored more than all the apostles?
22. What glaring inconsistency did Paul see in the thinking of the Corinthians?
23. What were some of the consequences of denying that Christ had been raised?
24. To whom does the expression, "of all men most pitiable," refer?
25. What is the meaning of "firstfruits"?
26. What did Paul imply as to the resurrection by this term?
27. Why does Paul say that death came by man?
28. What will Christ do for all men in the resurrection?
29. Does this imply universal salvation?
30. What did Jesus say about the resurrection of the good and the bad?
31. How does Paul describe the resurrection in First Thessalonians?
32. What is meant by the statement that Christ will deliver the kingdom to God?
33. When did the reign of Christ begin?

34. In the expression, "baptized for the dead," what are some of the possible meanings of the preposition translated "for"?
35. What are the arguments against the assumption that this is vicarious baptism?
36. What bearing does baptism have on the doctrine of the resurrection?
37. What rule of interpretation must be observed in treating obscure passages?
38. What are the views on Paul's remark about fighting beasts at Ephesus?
39. Why did Paul shame the people at Corinth?
40. What are the two questions which the Corinthians asked about the resurrection?
41. What was the view of the Sadducees on the resurrection?
42. What was taught in Greek philosophy about escape from the body?
43. What is the Christian view about absence from the body?
44. How did Paul show that the resurrection body must be different from the earthly body?
45. What will the resurrection body be like?
46. Why is Jesus called the last Adam?
47. Why can't flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God?
48. What will happen to those who are alive when Christ comes?
49. Why does Paul stress the fact that all shall be changed?
50. What did Paul ask the brethren to do in view of this assurance of the resurrection?

For Discussion

1. Would it be worthwhile to be a Christian if there were no hope of the resurrection?
2. What place should the doctrine of the resurrection have in the thinking of Christian people.
3. Should we leave the subject of the resurrection to Easter Sunday?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Analysis

A. Paul gives orders about the collection for the saints and tells about his plans to visit the church at Corinth (1-9).
   1. He gives orders for the collection for the saints (1-2a).
      a) The order is the same as he gave to the churches in Galatia.
      b) They were to set aside the offering on the first day of every week.
      c) Each one was to have a part in it.
      d) Each one was to do as he might prosper.
   2. The reason for this procedure was to avoid gathering the offering when Paul came (2b).
   3. He reminded them of some things to be taken care of when he came (3-4).
      a) Those who would be approved by the church were to be sent with letters to carry the offering to Jerusalem.
      b) If it should become fitting for Paul to go also, the brethren would go with him.
   4. He tells of his plans to visit Corinth (5-9).
      a) He planned to come after he had passed through Macedonia (5).
      b) He wanted to stay at Corinth through the winter and be helped on his way by them (6-7).
         (1) His plan to stay with them.
         (2) He didn't want to make a brief visit.
         (3) He hoped to stay a while if the Lord would permit.
      c) He was to remain at Ephesus until Pentecost (8-9).
         (1) A great and effectual door was open for him there.
         (2) Many adversaries were there too.

B. Paul gives information about the plans and work of other workers of the Lord (10-18).
   1. He gives instruction about the visit of Timothy and Apollos (10-12).
      a) The church is told how to receive Timothy (10-11).
         (1) He is to be with them without fear.
         (2) He does the work of the Lord just as Paul does.
         (3) He is to be sent on his journey in peace.
         (4) Paul was expecting him with the brethren.

b) He tells of his desire to have Apollos visit them (12).
   (1) He calls him Apollos the brother.
   (2) He had urged him to visit Corinth with the brethren.
   (3) It was not the will of Apollos to do so at that time but he would do so when he had opportunity.

2. Paul gives direction for the guidance of the church (13).
   a) "Watch ye."
   b) "Stand fast in the Lord."
   c) "Quit you like men."
   d) "Let all that ye do be done in the Lord."
3. Paul exhorts them concerning Stephanas (15-18).
   a) He reminds them that they know the house of Stephanas.
      (1) They were the firstfruits of Achaia.
      (2) They had set themselves to minister to the saints.
   b) He urges them to be in subjection to such and to all who help in the work.
   c) He tells of his joy at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus.
      (1) His rejoicing.
      (2) The cause: they supplied what was lacking on the part of the Corinthians.
      (3) They refreshed Paul's spirit and that of the Corinthians.
      (4) He asks that they be acknowledged.

C. Paul writes the closing words of the epistle of the Corinthians (19-24).
1. Salutations.
   a) The churches of Asia send their greetings.
   b) Aquila and Prisca together with the church in their house send greetings in the Lord.
   c) All the brethren send their greetings.
   d) Paul asks them to greet one another with a holy kiss.
   e) Paul writes his greeting with his own hand.
2. A solemn warning: If any man does not love the Lord, let him be anathema.
3. A prayer of hope: Our Lord, come.
4. A gracious benediction: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
5. An affectionate last word: My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The Collection for the Saints (1-9)

Text

16:1-9. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. 3 And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: 4 and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me. 5 But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I pass through Macedonia; 6 but with you it may be that I shall abide, or even winter, that ye may set me forward on my journey whithersoever I go. 7 For I do not wish to see you now by the way; for I hope to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. 8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; 9 for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Commentary

Now concerning the collection.—The familiar "now concerning" does not introduce some problem that was disrupting the life and harmony of the church. It suggests Paul's concern for the people he knew and loved. He had a lasting concern for the saints in Judea. Before his conversion he had persecuted them and had tried to make havoc of the church of God (Gal. 1:13, 23). Some time after his conversion when Agabus came to Antioch and predicted a famine over all the world, "the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea; which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11:27-30). Still later when Paul was in conference in Jerusalem with Cephas and John and James, he was asked to remember the poor in Judea. This, he said, he was very eager to do (Gal. 2:1-10).

Although Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, he never forgot his own Jewish people (Rom. 9:1-3), but he seemed to be particularly concerned about those from the Jews who had turned to Christ as he had done. In all his labors among the Gentile converts to Christianity, he urged that the suffering saints in Judea be remembered and that offerings be sent for their relief. See II Cor. 8:1-9:15.

As I gave order.—The apostle did not hesitate to lay down regulations to be followed by the church in fulfilling their obligations to others. He had already reminded them that what he was writing was

the commandment of the Lord (14:37). He had given the same orders to the churches in Galatia.

upon the first day of the week.—The expression clearly indicates the first day of every week. Each one was to participate in the collection. He was to set aside an amount which he was to determine on the basis of his being prospered.

no collections be made when I come.—Some take this to mean that the members of the church were to put their weekly offerings into a common treasury. Paul's concern was that the money be ready when he came. In order to have it so, it was necessary for the brethren to begin early and set it aside on every first day of the week. Each one could have brought what he saved when Paul arrived. It would be difficult to say just how they did it. The important thing was to save regularly for the offering so that it would be ready when Paul arrived. He did not want to spend time waiting for them to get it together after he came. Most people will find it easier to save something each week than to get a large sum ready at one time.

whomsoever ye shall approve.—Paul was careful about handling funds that belonged to others. The people were to approve the ones to take the offering to Jerusalem. He was willing to go along if it should be the thing to do, but he was not giving his critics an opportunity to condemn him in the handling of the collection. A good example for all who handle church funds!

them will I send with letters.—Those who were to be appointed by the church to perform this task were to have letters of commendation from Paul to the brethren in Jerusalem. This is further evidence of his concern that everything be done in a manner that was above criticism. The Lord's people were giving the money for the suffering saints of the Lord and the Lord's servants were taking every precaution to have it done for His glory.

But I will come unto you.—Paul planned for the future. Sometimes he was hindered in carrying out his plans. He had already written of his intention to visit them in connection with other matters (4:18-21). He looked forward to the visit with joy and hope that the problems would be taken care of and that the collections would be made by the time he arrived. His trip was to take him through Macedonia, but he planned to stay through the winter at Corinth.

that ye may set me forward.—It is not likely that he had in mind any financial support (9:15). Luke records the facts of the farewell which the Ephesian elders gave Paul at Miletus (Acts 20:36-38). Something like it may have been in his mind as he wrote this word to the brethren at Corinth.

if the Lord permit.—Paul was always conscious of the Lord's hand in all of his plans and journeys. See also James 4:15.

a great and effectual door.—Paul was at Ephesus when he wrote the epistle. He planned to stay there until Pentecost. This does not suggest that he was planning to keep the feast there but rather that he was aware of the great door of opportunity before him to do an effective work for the Lord.

Ephesus was the third great radiating center of early Christianity. Jerusalem was the first; Antioch was the second. All Asia heard the gospel as a result of Paul's work at Ephesus (Acts 19:9-10). The apostles did not neglect the rural areas, but they concentrated their efforts on the great centers of population from Jerusalem to Rome.

there are many adversaries.—This was another reason for remaining at Ephesus. Paul was not one to run because of opposition. He was confident that the Lord would always lead him in triumph in Christ in every place as he proclaimed the gospel (II Cor. 2:14-17). He was eager to preach the gospel in Rome also, for it is the power of God (Rom. 1:16).

Workers in the Work of the Lord (10-18)

Text

16:10-18. Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: 11 let no man therefore despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace, that he may come unto me: for I expect him with the brethren. 12 But as touching Apollos the brother, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren: and it was not at all his will to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 14 Let all that ye do be done in love.

15 Now I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints), 16 that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth. 17 And I re-

joice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they supplied. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours: acknowledge ye therefore them that are such.

Commentary

Timothy.—Paul had mentioned him earlier in the epistle (4:17). Now he gives directions for their reception of his fellow-worker. He was a young man when Paul selected him to travel with him. It may be because of his youth that Paul said, "see that he be with you without fear." Or it may be that Timothy was timid. Whatever the cause, they knew his value to Paul who declared that "he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." The attitude of Paul as an older minister toward Timothy as a young evangelist is one that should be seen far more often today than it is.

The brethren were to help Timothy as he continued on his way. Just what was involved is not stated.

Apollos.—He had been prominent in the work at Corinth. See 1:10 and 3:4-6. Paul looked upon him as a brother in Christ and a fellow-worker for the Lord. His affectionate concern for those who worked with him is one of the marks of Paul's true greatness.

It is interesting to note that Paul did not order Apollos to go to Corinth. He had urged him to go but recognized his right to decide when it was best for him to do so. Paul was sure that the opportunity would come.

Watch ye.—Certain things were to direct the church as they faced the opportunities of service and the problems that were involved. Like good soldiers, they were to be alert. Like true followers of the Christ, they were to "stand fast in the faith" and not be frightened from the truth by any adversary. Like dedicated servants of the Lord, they were to conduct themselves as men. Like citizens of the heavenly kingdom, they were to be strong and rely on Him who had conquered at Calvary and who would give them the victory in all their work for Him. Paul said, "Let all that ye do be done in love." He had already explained just what that meant (13:1-13).

the house of Stephanas.—They were among the first of Paul's converts at Corinth (1:16). He calls them "firstfruits" because they were the first of the harvest for the Lord. There were to be others like them.

When Paul was at Corinth the first time, the Lord had revealed to him that He had "much people in the city" (Acts 18:9-10). This family had set themselves to the task of ministering to the saints. Just what was involved in this ministry is not stated, but it was such that Paul recommended that others align themselves with these servants of the Lord and all others who helped in the work.

the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus.—Paul received these brethren from Corinth with great joy. There were times when it had become necessary to reprove the Corinthians for sinful practices. Even then he admonished them as beloved children (4:14). It was not possible for the whole church to pay him a visit, but his spirit and theirs was refreshed by the coming of these who represented all the brethren at Corinth.

Paul's Closing Words (19-24)

Text

16:19-24. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. 22 If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Marana tha. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Commentary

The churches of Asia.—Paul had opened the epistle with a reference to the saints who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place (1:2). In sending greetings from Ephesus and the churches of the other cities of Asia, Paul was showing the brethren at Corinth something of the meaning of fellowship in the churches of the saints. Corinth was not alone; what he taught them, he had taught in all the churches (11:16; 14:33).

Aquila and Prisca.—This is the couple with whom Paul labored when he first came to Corinth (Acts 18:1-4). They sailed with him when he left Corinth and came to Ephesus where Paul left them (Acts 18:18-19). They were responsible for having "expounded the way of God more accurately" to Apollos (Acts 18:26). It is fitting that

he should include their greeting to the church at Corinth. When he wrote to the church at Rome, he sent his own greetings to them for they had moved back to that city. He called them his fellow-workers in Christ Jesus and mentioned the fact that they had laid down their own neck for his life (Rom. 16:3-4).

the church that is in their house.—This phrase is in the Roman letter also (Rom. 16:5). It gives some insight into the effort of this faithful couple to promote the gospel wherever they lived. In the absence of church buildings, the church gathered in their house. The church did not always meet in homes. Paul started his preaching in many cities in the synagogues of the Jews. At Ephesus, he "separated the disciples and reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9-10). The place of meeting seems to have been a matter of expediency; the church was the temple of God where the Spirit of God dwelt (3:16-17).

Salute one another with a holy kiss.—This was the custom of Paul's day. Our culture suggests the handshake. The principle of friendly greeting between Christians is that which matters. Only such as deny the teaching of Christ are to be denied this greeting (II John 9-10).

The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.—This the mark of genuineness in Paul's epistles. See II Thes. 3:17; Gal. 6:11.

If any man love not the Lord.—We cannot be sure that he had in mind any specific individual. This is a general warning similar to the one in the Galatian letter (Gal. 1:8-9). He had already warned them about "evil companionships" (15:33). Anathema means accursed or devoted to destruction. Paul was careful not to lend approval to the enemies of the Lord. See 5:11; 6:9-10; Phil. 3:17-19.

Maranatha.—This Aramaic word must have been something like a watchword to the early Christian. Paul did not translate it for the Corinthians. This shows they knew what it meant: "Our Lord Come!" How much have we lost by letting this word drop from our vocabulary? It is like the prayer of John at the close of Revelation: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.—The epistle closes as it began with a prayer for God's unmerited favor to be with His people.

My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.—This affectionate, personal, Christian word was to assure the church to whom he had written in serious words about problems that beset them that the apostle loved all his brethren in the Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Summary

Paul had been deeply concerned over the problems that had confronted the church at Corinth. He had written to them as the inspired apostle of Christ to give authoritative directives for the correction of the sinful practices that had been allowed to develop in the church. He had advised them as one who was worthy to be trusted. He had admonished them as a father would have done. It is in the closing chapter of the epistle, however, that we get a deeper insight into his personal feeling for all the brethren at Corinth as well as his fellow-workers elsewhere.

His concern for the suffering saints in Judea comes first in the brief statement about matters that lie close to his heart. He had already given instruction to the churches in Galatia about the collection for the saints. He had sent his colaborers to tell the Macedonians to be ready to help those in need. He was depending also on the Corinthians to prove their love for the brethren in Judea.

He asked each one to have a part in this effort. Each one was to set aside an amount on the first day of every week as he might prosper. This was to avoid gathering up the funds after Paul arrived.

Paul was careful in handling the funds of the Lord. The brethren were to appoint those who were to carry their "bounty" to Jerusalem. Paul would send letters of introduction to the brethren in Jerusalem, or, if it seemed best, he would have the brethren travel with him.

He was planning to come to Corinth after going through Macedonia, where he would encourage the brethren to help in the offerings. He hoped to spend the winter at Corinth, if the Lord permitted. He was planning to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a great door of opportunity to further the cause of the gospel was open to him and there were many adversaries.

Perhaps in no place are we to see the respect, admiration and love which Paul had for his fellow-workers in the Lord than in his remarks about Timothy, the young man who had been his traveling companion in so many places and who was soon to come to Corinth on a mission for him. He was eager to have the brethren receive Timothy in a manner that would allow him to be with them "without fear." No one was to "despise" him. They were to help him on his journey which would bring him back to Paul.

Paul had been urging Apollos to make the trip to Corinth, but he was not ready to do so. But as soon as he had opportunity he would visit them.

Suddenly, it seems, there flashed upon the mind of Paul the vision of the church at Corinth going forth as an army to fight "the good fight of the faith." He could see them ready to press the battle to victory. He issues orders for the battle: "Watch ye." "Stand fast in the faith." "Quit you like men." "Be strong." But this is no ordinary fight and he adds, "Let all that ye do be done in love."

He called their attention to the house of Stephanas as an example for them to follow. It is important to line up with the right kind of people. These were among the first converts at Corinth. They had set for themselves the goal of serving the saints. The visit of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus had refreshed him. He was confident that the whole church had been blessed in sending these to see him.

It was time to close the epistle. Greetings from the churches in Asia and from Aquila and Prisca and the church in their house are written. All the brethren are sending greetings. Then he adds, "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

Now he is signing the letter as he sends his own greetings. But once again he is reminded of those who had caused so much trouble in the church and he hastily writes, "If any man love not the Lord, let him be anathema."

The mention of the love of the Lord may have prompted him to add this watchword of the early church, "Maranatha"—Our Lord, come. Then he added, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Still he could not close the letter without this last word, "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."

Questions

1. How does the subject matter of this chapter, introduced by the familiar "now concerning," differ from that of the other chapters introduced by the same phrase?
2. What was Paul's attitude toward the churches in Judea before his conversion?
3. How did he feel about his Jewish brethren after he became a Christian?
4. Why was he concerned for the saints in Judea?
5. How did he propose to help them?
6. What churches besides Corinth were asked to have a part in the matter?

7. What rules did Paul lay down to govern the brethren in getting the money ready by the time he arrived?
8. What precautions did he take to avoid criticism in handling the funds?
9. Who was to select the one to carry the money to Jerusalem?
10. How was Paul to cooperate in the matter?
11. What were his plans for the journey to Corinth?
12. Why was he going to go through Macedonia?
13. How long did he plan to stay at Corinth?
14. How were they to help him on his journey?
15. Upon what condition did he make his plans?
16. Did he carry them out as planned?
17. Where was he when he wrote First Corinthians?
18. Why did he plan to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost?
19. What did he mean by the great and effectual door that was opened to him?
20. What was his attitude toward the adversaries at Ephesus?
21. Why did he mention Timothy and Apollos?
22. What was his estimate of the person and work of Timothy?
23. When did he expect Timothy to reach him?
24. Why didn't Paul as an apostle order Apollos to go to Corinth?
25. What was Apollos' view of Paul's suggestion?
26. What caused Paul to say, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith"?
27. Why did he add that they were to do all things in love?
28. What did the Corinthians know about the house of Stephanas?
29. Why did Paul say that they were the firstfruits of Achaia?
30. What goal had they set for themselves?
31. What was to be the attitude of the church toward such people?
32. What was Paul's attitude toward the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus?
33. What was lacking that they supplied?
34. How had they refreshed the spirit of Paul and of the church?
35. Why did Paul send the greetings of the churches of Asia to the church at Corinth?
36. What was the connection of Aquila and Prisca with the church at Corinth?
37. How did they happen to be at Ephesus?
38. Where were they when last mentioned in Paul's letters?
39. What is to be said of the church in their house?
40. What is known of the buildings in which Paul preached?

41. Why did he say to greet one another with a holy kiss?
42. What is to be said of the importance of friendly, Christian greetings today?
43. From what one is this greeting to be withheld?
44. Why did Paul write his own greeting with his own hand?
45. How account for the sudden recollection of those who do not love the Lord?
46. What does "Maranatha" mean?
47. Why didn't Paul translate the term?
48. How could the church today make use of the meaning of this term in its conversation?
49. With what thought did Paul begin and close the epistle?
50. Why did he close the letter with an expression of his love?

For Discussion

1. In the light of what Paul says in this chapter, how can the church avoid developing a spirit of selfishness?
2. Recall those whom you know whose examples could be followed by all the church.
3. What can be done today to further the cause of brotherly kindness and love in the churches?