



Division

211

Section

550

EPISTLES
TO THE CORINTHIANS



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

I CORINTHIANS BY
PROFESSOR JAMES S. RIGGS
AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

II CORINTHIANS BY
PROFESSOR HARRY LATHROP REED
AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1922

All rights reserved



PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

COPYRIGHT, 1922,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and printed. Published November, 1922.

Press of
J. J. Little & Ives Company
New York, U. S. A.

FOREWORD

Owing to peculiar and unavoidable circumstances it became necessary for me to ask to be relieved of the interpretation of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. It was my earnest desire that Dr. Reed, my colleague at Auburn, should take over this task. Having secured the kindly consent of the Editor and Publishers to this change, Dr. Reed graciously set himself to work. As the result of his analytic power, spiritual insight and clearness of expression we have an interpretation which, I am sure, will prove itself greatly helpful toward the understanding of this complex epistle.

J. S. RIGGS.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
THE FIRST EPISTLE	21
INTRODUCTION	151
THE SECOND EPISTLE	180

EPISTLES
TO THE CORINTHIANS

I. EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

I. CORINTH

THERE is no one of Paul's letters which reveals so fully the reaction of the life of the city upon the church as does 1 Corinthians. It is well, therefore, to know something of the city itself. Located on the southwestern side of the isthmus of the same name, it was on the direct line of trade and travel between the East and the West. It had two ports—Lechæum, one and one-half miles distant on the Corinthian gulf, to which came the shipping of Italy, Sicily, and Spain, and Cenchreae, eight and one-half miles from the city on the Saronic gulf, where ships from places all about the eastern part of the Mediterranean found anchorage. The way across the isthmus shortened the route to the west by many miles and obviated the perilous sail around Cape Malea, on the southern coast of Greece. Arriving at either port, large ships transhipped their cargoes across the narrow neck of land for further transport. Small vessels were often hauled across the isthmus on a tramway about five miles long. The value of this shortened trade route is evident from the fact that plans were made in Paul's time to cut a canal through the isthmus. Nero actually began to dig one, but found the undertaking too difficult, and it is only in recent times (1893) that the two gulfs have been thus united. Corinth was thus, as Horace described

INTRODUCTION

it, "the city of two seas." Nor was it only on the shortest way from the East to the West, but as the isthmus was the "bridge of the sea," Corinth was likewise on the direct road from the Peloponnesus to the northern parts of Greece and profited also by reason of this position. In fact, its highly advantageous commercial situation lay at the foundation of the greatness of both Old Corinth and New Corinth and did much to give both of them their peculiar character. It is with New Corinth, however, that we are now concerned. The old city was utterly destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. and the site was desolate for about one hundred years. In 46 B.C. the new city was founded by Julius Cæsar, who established a colony of Roman veterans and freedmen near the Acrocorinthus, the great protective rock of the old city. By the time Paul came to visit it the new foundation had become a very large city with a mixed population of Italians (descendants from the early colonists), Greeks, Jews, and orientals from all parts of the East. The Greek influence was dominant in the life of the city. Because of its importance it had been made the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and the seat of the Roman Proconsul. The commercial greatness of the old city, which, during the period of desolation, had been given to Delos, was rapidly regained. New Corinth became the most prominent and the richest city of Greece. Its chief business was again the transport of goods.

Like most cities that have become great commercial centers, it was a place of sharp contrasts. Poverty and squalor had their abode in wretched huts; wealth and luxury in costly palaces. Beautiful temples enriched by columns of marble and porphyry and ornamented with gold and silver adorned its streets. The gods of Greece, Rome, and Egypt had their shrines not far from each other. Luxurious living characterized often by gross

INTRODUCTION

self-indulgence brought about debasement of character. Two elements of the population contributed especially to the maintenance of the desperate profligacy for which Corinth was noted, *viz.*, the sailors found constantly in her streets and the numerous slaves who had their miserable existence within her confines. Even religion gave sanction to immorality by its cult of sexual indulgence. To live like a Corinthian was synonymous with debauchery. Paul wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth, and it was from her life that he got the description of paganism which is found in Rom. 1:21-32. Drunkenness was common and dishonesty notorious. It would be unfair, however, to leave the impression that business and profligacy were the only characteristics of the city.

There were intellectual interests both in art and philosophy. No Greek city was without interest in philosophy and schools of philosophy were to be found in Corinth. Her citizens were proud of their mental acuteness; so much so that in their conceit they criticized all men and questioned anything and everything. They loved disputation, but all their intellectual activity resulted in nothing of much value. The wisdom of the schools took little hold upon the earnest realities of life. They dabbled in philosophy. The knowledge that "puffeth up" was a consequence. Indeed, "the artificiality and flowing rhetoric of the sophists" were quite satisfying. Far-reaching fame came to the city from the Isthmian games which were under the supervision of the Corinthians and which brought together every third year many contestants and visitors from all parts of the world. In the markets of the world Corinthian wares of fine clay, tapestries, and vessels of bronze were well known. New Corinth, in brief, was a busy, keen-witted, pleasure-loving, grossly immoral city, given over to idolatry and superstition and exerting a wide-reaching influence by

INTRODUCTION

reason of the streams of travel constantly passing through it. "The merchant toiling upward by all possible means, the glutton yielding to every desire, the athlete steeled by exercise and bidding defiance to every power—these were the real Corinthian types; in a word, the man whom none surpasses, to whom nothing is impossible and nothing denied" —Dobschütz. The one place of any moral illumination at all amid the surrounding darkness was the humble synagogue of the Jews. Until the church of Christ was established it was probably the only refuge for any Gentile who longed for better things than either the idolatry of the temples or the philosophy of the schools could give him. Such was the Corinth to which Paul came as a Missionary of the Cross. Only unwavering faith in the power of God could have nerved him for his task.

II. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

It was on his second missionary journey that Paul crossed into Europe for the first time. Sailing from Troas he landed at Neapolis in Macedonia, and took Philippi, "the foremost town of the district of Macedonia" (Acts 16:12), as the starting point of his labors. There, at Thessalonica, at Berea, and in all likelihood in neighboring places, he accomplished an extensive and important work which he was compelled to leave because of the determined hostility of the Jews. Very reluctantly he gave up Macedonia, for he felt that his work there had not been finished. There was no alternative but to get away, at least for a time, so his friends escorted him as far as Athens (Acts 17:15). Here he was to await the coming of Timothy and Silas, who were expected to join him as soon as possible. Timothy came bringing unfavorable news, and was immediately sent back to Thessalonica to strengthen and encourage those who had

INTRODUCTION

been faithful. Though Silas is not mentioned, he also came to Athens and was given, in all probability, a like mission to Philippi. Paul with his mind and heart still fixed upon Macedonia, was left alone in Athens. It was during his wanderings about its streets that he became oppressed and saddened by the idolatry of this university city. As was his custom, he argued with the Jews in their synagogue, but with no success. The impressive event of his brief stay was his address on the Areopagus, wherein with "words of wisdom" he sought to win his hearers, who responded only with sneers and ridicule. Three converts were the result of this brief ministry in Athens. Dispirited, lonely, half sick (1 Cor. 2:3), he resolved to go on to Corinth. Upon his arrival he naturally sought out the Jews' quarter, and in order to support himself, the bazaar of the tentmakers. Here he came across Aquila, a fellow craftsman, who had recently come with his wife, Priscilla, from Italy, both of them having been driven out by the anti-Jewish edict of the Emperor, Claudius (Acts 18:2). Cheered by these friends, who were, in all probability, Christians, he began to preach in the Jewish synagogue. How he preached is set forth in 1 Cor. 2:1-4. He sought to convince the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus, but he met with little success. They opposed and abused him as they had done in Macedonia. Paul, however, had been nerved by the good news from Macedonia (1 Thess. 3:6-9), and from the same source freed from the burden of daily toil by the contribution of funds towards his support; in consequence, he made up his mind that he would not be driven out again by the Jews, but would turn to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6). The house of Titus Justus, a Roman proselyte, was offered him as a center for work and gladly accepted. It was a critical moment in the mission of the Apostle. The Jews were now embittered; the city was in spirit a foe to his message. Could he

INTRODUCTION

make any impression upon it? Luke tells us of a vision given him at this time by the Lord, who said to him, "Have no fear, speak on and never stop, for I am with you, and no one will attack and injure you. I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:10). This completely settled the matter, and Paul "sat down," as the original expresses it, resolved to stay and give himself wholly to his ministry. The brief record is that "many of the Corinthians listened, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). The Jews made one more attempt to get him put away. They brought him up before the Proconsul Gallio, with the charge that he was inciting men "to worship God contrary to the Law," *i.e.*, that Paul was interfering with their religion and by implication establishing a new religion, which was not allowed by Roman law, as was Judaism. Gallio refused to see the matter in this light, and not only dismissed the charge but winked at the beating which the populace gave the Jewish leader (Acts 18:17). Thus was fulfilled the promise that "no one will attack and injure." Paul continued his work for sixteen months, and then left for Syria.

"The church of God in Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2). How suggestive of earnest, effective spiritual labor the statement is! Also how pregnant with contrasts it is! There is good reason to believe that a large Christian church was built up in this wicked city. From what Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:27-28, *viz.*, that God hath chosen what is foolish, what is weak, what is mean and despised—those who are so insignificant as to be considered nonentities, it has been concluded that only the poor and ignorant were persuaded to accept Christ. The majority perhaps were poor, but there are evidences from the letter itself that a goodly number of the better class had also become members. We know of Crispus, "the ruler of the synagogue" (Acts 18:8); of Erastus, the city treasurer (Rom.

INTRODUCTION

16:23); and of Gaius, who was "hospitable to the whole church" (Rom. 16:23). While no one in the church could "plume himself in his advanced education or in his long descent from an old family," yet there were, doubtless, freedmen who were men of ability and had to some degree prospered in business. Even the slaves were not of the most degraded kind, for household slaves and town slaves enjoyed many privileges. The congregation was a mixture not only of people of different races, but also of different social classes. There was ample opportunity for the exercise of charity and tolerance. It is notable from the epistle itself "that moral transformation had been accompanied by mental quickening" and this latter slipped easily into manifestations of itself that were characteristic of the intellectual life of the city, such as, *e.g.*, a fondness for "words of wisdom," pretensions to knowledge, love of disputation, or some form of mental display. All of this points to a level of social position quite above the lowest. The "saints" of the Corinthian church were for the most part an eager, mentally undisciplined company who needed much instruction both as regards the way and the spirit of true Christian living. Withal it was a matter of deepest thanksgiving that he had been enabled to gather into a new unity such a group from the paganism of Corinth.

III. THE PLACE, DATE AND OCCASION OF THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE

I. *The Place*

THIS was Ephesus. Near the close of the letter Paul writes: "I am staying on for the present at Ephesus until Pentecost" (1 Cor. 16:8).

INTRODUCTION

2. *The Date*

Owing to the insufficiency of the data of the New Testament for constructing a precise chronology of the life and letters of Paul there is considerable variation in the chronological schemes of different scholars. This letter has thus been dated by each year from 53 to 57 A.D. Recently an inscription was discovered at Delphi which throws some light upon the problem. This inscription contains part of a letter written by the Roman Emperor Claudius to the city seemingly confirming some of its privileges, and in it he mentions Gallio as "his friend and proconsul of Achaia." It is the dating of the inscription which helps us to the time of the proconsulship. The date is the twenty-sixth *acclamatio imperatoria*, i.e., the twenty-sixth public approbation given to the Emperor for some great accomplishment. By comparing this with two other inscriptions—one found in the Carian city of Cys and the other in Rome, commemorating the completion of the Claudian Aqueduct, we are able to get the year of the twenty-sixth acclamation. The time of the dedication of the Arch of the Aqueduct was August 1, 52. The twenty-seventh acclamation was just before this date. As the proconsul took office on July 1, A.D. 52, this was in the time of the twenty-sixth acclamation. It was probably soon after Gallio's arrival in Corinth that the Jews brought Paul before him. He had already been at work in the city about a year. After his release he remained some time and then started for Syria (Acts 18:18). It is not needful to give here the stages in the journey which brought him via Jerusalem, Antioch and Galatia around to Ephesus. The journey was somewhat protracted and Paul was in Ephesus three years, near the close of which period this was written—probably in the spring of 56 A.D.

INTRODUCTION

3. *The Occasion of the Epistle*

Two equally important reasons impelled Paul to write 1 Corinthians. One was the disturbed condition of the church reported to him by "Chloe's people" (1 Cor. 11:1) and by others coming from Corinth. Contentions had arisen and the church was split up into cliques asserting adherence respectively to Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Christ. Apollo, the brilliant Alexandrian, was contrasted with plain and unassuming Paul. Cephas was extolled by those who were mainly inspired by a strong prejudice against the broad teaching of Paul, and along with these came the party of Christ who tried to repudiate all party names and yet after all made the name of Christ a badge of their destructive position. These parties had not come to an open breach, but they were on the way to it. Discord and confusion were fast becoming the atmosphere of the church. The same factious spirit was also manifest in their resort to heathen courts for the settlement of their disputes. Furthermore, the sin of impurity had manifested itself in a desperate form among them and had not received the stern treatment it deserved. He had already written to them upon this general subject (see 1 Cor. 5:9¹). How could they go on in "windy pride" and with no sign of grief over the matter? There were disorders connected with worship and denials of the resurrection of the dead. All these called for earnest, searching words from Paul and gave him ample reason to write. But another reason called for the use of his pen, and that was a letter sent by the Corinthians to Paul requesting instruction upon several matters which were perplexing the church and causing anxiety. This letter is referred to in 7:1. "Now about the ques-

¹By several commentators a part of this lost letter is found in 2 Cor. 6:14—7:1.

INTRODUCTION

tions in your letter.”—In all likelihood Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus were the bearers of this letter as well as of other information not included in the letter. The questions in the Corinthian letter may be surmised from the recurring formula “Now concerning, etc.,” which is found in 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1, 16:12—which marks the beginning of Paul’s treatment of a given subject. Several ingenious reproductions of this letter have been made, but we have not space to give one here.¹ The whole of 1 Corinthians, after the introduction, may be roughly divided into two parts: 1:10—6:20 based upon information brought by Chloe’s people, and 7:1—16:24 based upon the letter of inquiry and the information of its bearers. The portion 7:1—11:1 is immediately concerned with the reply to the Corinthian letter. It is from these questions and problems arising out of the experience of the church and from Paul’s answers rich in insight and comprehensive in grasp that this epistle has gained its practical character. In this respect no other epistle in the New Testament is quite like it.

IV. PLAN OF THE EPISTLE

INTRODUCTION

1. *Salutation*; 1:1-3.
2. *Thanksgiving*; 1:4-9.

I. CONCERNING MATTERS NEEDING CENSURE, 1:10-6:20

1. *Party Spirit in the Light of the Gospel and Its Ministry*, 1:10-4:21.
 - a. The situation in the church and an exhortation to unity; 1:10-17.

¹An excellent speculative reproduction of it by Dr. Findlay is found in the *Expositor* for the year 1900.

INTRODUCTION

- b. The true nature of the Gospel; 1:18—3:4.
- (1) It is not a wisdom but a power; 1:18—2:5.
This is shown:
 - (a) by the experience of those to whom it came; 1:18—25.
 - (b) by the make-up of the church; 1:26—31.
 - (c) by Paul's attitude when he came to them; 2:1—5.
 - (2) The Gospel contains a wisdom; 2:6—3:4.
 - (a) This wisdom described; 2:6—13.
 - (b) Who alone can describe it and why; 2:14—3:4.
- c. The true conception of Christian Teachers; 3:5—4:23.
- (1) They are but husbandmen—God gives the increase; 3:6—8.
 - (2) They are builders and must build with care; 3:10—15.
 - (3) They are (by implication) conservers of the Temple, for whosoever destroys it by party strife shall be destroyed; 3:16—17.
 - (4) The true teacher renounces the wisdom of the world; 3:18—20.
Conclusion; 3:21—23.
 - (5) They are to be accounted stewards of God's secret truths; 4:1—5.
 - (6) Personal application of truth with an attack upon the pride of the Corinthians; 4:6—13.
 - (7) As their father in the faith he appeals to them to follow him. The test he will apply when he comes; 4:14—21.
2. *The Case of Incest*, 5:1—13.
- a. The offender to be expelled; 5:1—8.

INTRODUCTION

III. DISORDERS IN CONNECTION WITH PUBLIC WORSHIP

1. *The Unveiling of the Head by Women in Public Worship*, 11:2-16.
2. *The Profanation of the Lord's Supper*, 11:17-34.
3. *The Misuse of Spiritual Gifts*, 12:1-14:40.
 - a. The test, variety, unity and purpose of spiritual gifts; 12:1-11.
 - b. The analogy between the Church and the human body; 12:12-31.
 - c. The indispensability of love, its characteristics and its durability; 13:1-13.
 - d. The superiority of prophesying to speaking with tongues; 14:1-25.
 - e. Regulations for the orderly exercise of gifts in Public Worship; 14:26-33.
 - f. Women are to keep silent in the churches; 14:34-36.
 - g. Paul's assertion of authority; 14:37-38.
 - h. Conclusion of the whole matter; 14:39-40.

IV. TEACHING CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58

1. *The Creed which the Church had accepted and a Summary of the Witnesses of the Risen Lord*, 15:1-11.
2. *Four reductio ad absurdum Arguments from the Assertion of some that "dead men do not rise,"* 15:12-34.
 - a. If dead men do not rise, Christ is not risen and our preaching and your faith are *empty*; 15:13-15.
 - b. If dead men do not rise, Christ is not risen then (a) your faith is *futile*, (b) the Christian dead have perished, (c) we who

INTRODUCTION

have hoped in Christ in this life are of all men to be pitied most; 16-19. Paul passes, at verse 20, from argument to a prophetic utterance whose theme is Christ is risen from the dead

hence

- (1) Those who belong to Him shall rise in the Parousia; 22-23.
 - (2) When He shall have brought all enemies, even death itself, to naught; 24-26.
 - (3) And He shall give up the Kingdom that God may be all in all; 27-28.
- c. If dead men do not rise Baptism for the dead is of no avail; 29.
- d. If dead men do not rise, daily risk and danger have no meaning; 30-34.
3. *Objectors Answered—The Body of the Risen*, 35-49.
- a. Analogy from nature—to the seed sown and through death (disorganization) appearing again above the ground God giveth a body (so in the resurrection); 35-38.
 - b. The great variety of bodies shows that God can easily provide another body for the resurrection life; 39-41.
 - c. This mortal body is during life sown in corruption, dishonor, weakness and as an animate body. That body which God shall give shall be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual; 42-44.
 - d. The promise and pledge of this is in the fact that the Risen Lord is a quickening spirit; 45-49.
4. *What shall Happen to those who shall be Alive When the Lord Comes.*
- a. In an instant they shall be changed—the mortal shall put on immortality; 50-53.

INTRODUCTION

- b. Death shall be vanquished; they shall be victorious through the Lord Jesus Christ; 54-57.

Conclusion: Be stedfast, abounding in the work of the Lord; 58.

V. PRACTICAL AND PERSONAL MATTERS AND THE CONCLUSION, 16:1-24.

1. *The collection for the poor at Jerusalem*, 16:1-4.
2. *The Apostle's intention to visit Corinth*, 16:5-9.
3. *Commendation of Timothy and Apollos*, 16:10-12.
4. *Directions about Stephanas and others*, 16:15-18.
5. *Salutations, warning, benediction*, 16:19-24.

V. AUTHORSHIP

IT is only in recent years that any doubt has been cast upon Paul's authorship of the Corinthian epistles. All attacks, however, have failed, for the testimony to the genuineness of both epistles is really irrefutable. Especially for 1 Corinthians has the attestation of Paul's authorship been sure and widespread. Clement of Rome (90-100 A.D.) writing to the Corinthians near the close of the first century calls upon them to "take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle. Of a truth he enjoined you spiritually concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos because even then you had begun to show partialities" (1 Epis. to Cor., ch. 47). Polycarp (140-155 A.D.) quotes 1 Cor. 6:2 as the words of Paul (Epis. to Phil., ch. 11). Irenæus (140-202 A.D.), the disciple of Polycarp, also quotes from Corinthians and attributes it to Paul (Bk. III. Against Heresies, ch. 11:9, 18:2). Clement of Alexandria (189-219 A.D.) and Tertullian (160-220 A.D.) of Northwest Africa do the same. These names are of men not only prominent in the church,

INTRODUCTION

but representative of widely separated parts of it. Other writers of this early time have many echoes of the thoughts and quotations of the words of 1 Corinthians, showing their familiarity with it but taking for granted Paul's authorship. The evidence is continuous and clear from within a comparatively short time of its origin to the beginning of the second century. From that time onward it is unquestioned. In addition to the witness of early Christian writers the fact is to be noted that the epistle is found in the early Syriac, Coptic and Latin versions. In several important ancient manuscripts the letter is found in its entirety.

This external evidence is seconded by the witness of the epistle itself. It not only fits into the account of Paul's work in Corinth given in the Acts, but also to the historical situation from which it is supposed to come. The enthusiasms, defects and aberrations of the Corinthians are justly accounted for by their training and environment. Who but Paul could have met the perplexities of the time, with the spiritual insight, firmness and tenderness which the letter displays! It all thoroughly accords with his character as made known to us in the Acts and in his other epistles.

VI. THE DISTINCTIVE VALUE OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

BEFORE turning to the study of the epistle itself it will be helpful to emphasize some of its features which should be kept in mind as one studies.

1. *Its picture of life in the early church.* Undoubtedly among its members were those who had passed from the outer circle of the synagogue, *i.e.*, from the proselytes to Judaism. They had come under the influence of its strong demands for purity of life and ideals of conduct far above those of paganism. The Corinthian church was not singular in this—all the Pauline churches

INTRODUCTION

had accessions of this kind. Others in the church had separated themselves directly from a heathen mode of life. It was a sharp change and those who experienced it faced a steep and difficult path away from old habits and customs toward new and exalted ideals. No epistle exhibits more fully the need and struggle for readjustment to another order of life. Paul addresses them all as "Saints" and thanks God for the "grace that has been bestowed upon them in Christ Jesus" (1:4), but we soon realize as we go on in the epistle that "saints" has a different meaning from that which we ordinarily give to the word and that "grace" has much to do to shape life in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel. Strong contrasts are brought out within this community of saints. Individualism asserts itself again and again against the bond of the spirit which holds them together. They own one Lord, indeed, but how much they have to learn of His spirit. Some fall easily into the old ways to which they had been accustomed; others react with such rigor that they are ready for rather extreme forms of asceticism. They go as brethren to a common meal and manifest a selfishness that virtually denies all brotherliness. The pressure of social custom in regard to guilds, clubs, or temple feasts is put upon them and "the strong" lose all consideration of "the weak." "Pride of knowledge" is impatient with unclear and hesitating conceptions. Independence is almost eager to break with habits of decorum in public worship. Skepticism questions the truth of great Christian verities. There is manifest in the church in more than one direction a sad lack of a clear church consciousness. And yet that heterogeneous body of slaves, artisans, slave-owners, city officials from different races, is, after all, held together by allegiance to Christ and by the Spirit of God. It is all this that makes the epistle a fascinating study. It is calculated to destroy all illusions about an ideal church in the apostolic age.

INTRODUCTION

These men were human as men in the church today are—very human, and this epistle lets us see the fact. It also shows the eagerness of the church to learn the way of life. Part of the reason of the letter's existence is the questioning earnestness as to how its perplexities and difficulties can be solved. First Corinthians might be described as Lessons in the Education of the Early Church. This brings us to the second distinctive feature of the epistle.

2. *The application of great principles to the problems of Christian, social life.* It is this feature that has made this letter of abiding worth. Factional spirit, compromise with the world, careless assertion of Christian liberty and the pride of intellectualism have not been peculiar to any one age of the church. We, alas! know too much about them in our own day. Again and again the church has come back to the principles which the Apostle gave to the Corinthians. We have no problem about eating meat offered to idols, nor of the pride of "speaking with tongues," but the spirit which needed rebuke or instruction yet appears. Paul's spiritual insight and his profound understanding of the spirit of his Master enabled him to give answers which are yet applicable. He suggested no superficial remedies; rather, he met the spirit of selfishness in any and every form with the spirit of devotion to Christ and forgetfulness of self, embodying them in a principle which was a sure solution of the problem to which it was applied. It is these principles that virtually constitute the Bible for us as far as 1 Corinthians is concerned. In them we have the soul of this epistle. It were well to gather them out of one's study of their setting. The peculiar form of the setting has in more than one instance passed away. The principles abide.

3. *Another feature of this epistle is its great chapter on Love.* The twelfth and thirteenth chapters have been called the heart of the epistle. Certainly in the thir-

INTRODUCTION

teenth chapter we reach the climactic expression of that spirit which Paul in some way set over against all the sins of the church. The church was marked by the possession of the Spirit, but it had but a faint conception of the truth that the "spirit worketh by love." Its "knowledge" was not what it should be, because of the want of love. Its liberty was not guided and restrained by it. Its pride was untouched by it. In an exalted utterance which Paul would describe as "a prophecy" he sets forth the indispensability, the characteristics, and the durability of Christian love. No chapter in the epistle deserves closer study. It is a study of the Spirit of Jesus Himself. Held up before the preceding chapters of the epistle it reveals, as would a fine mirror, the distortions and defects of the unlovely spirit that appears in them. The one other part of the epistle that stands out with prominence is

4. *The Teaching about the Resurrection of the Dead.* There is a triumphant note in it that is often missed in the way it is read at the burial of our dead. The remarkable feature in it, however, is in its way of correcting the misapprehensions of both the Jews and the Greeks regarding this great subject. It does not speak of "the resurrection of the body," though it defends bodily resurrection; it teaches that there will be "a spiritual body," but is silent about the substance of that body; it is confident of the "resurrection of believers," but has no doctrine regarding the resurrection of those who have not felt the quickening Spirit of the Risen Christ. Wise in its silences, it is also careful in its utterances. It is emphatic in its assertion of the vital connection of the resurrection of Jesus with His life and death in the accomplishment of redemption. If He did not rise, then the whole Christian message of salvation is emptied of its content and Christian faith and hope are futile. The chapters rank with the greatest in the New Testament.

INTRODUCTION

VII. HELPS TO THE STUDY OF THE EPISTLE

I. TRANSLATIONS

- MOFFAT'S *A New Translation of the New Testament.*
WEYMOUTH'S *The New Testament in Modern Speech.*
A. S. WAY'S *The Letters of Paul—A Translation.*

II. COMMENTARIES

- EDWARDS. Independent and highly valuable.
FINDLAY (*Expositor's Grk. Test.*). Thorough, clear, and very able.
EVANS (*Speaker's Commentary*). Scholarly and vivid in presentation.
GODET. Distinguished by spiritual insight and clearness of style.
STANLEY. Rich in illustration.
ROBERTSON & PLUMMER (*International Crit. Com.*). Scholarly, full, and very helpful.
GOUDGE (*Westminster Commentaries*). Helpful.
BEET. Concise and scholarly.
PARRY (*Cambridge Bible for Schools, New Edition*). Concise and scholarly.
MASSIE (*The New-Century Bible*). Concise and helpful.
DODS (*Expositor's Bible*). An attractive and able homiletic presentation.
ROBERTSON (F. W.)—*Lectures on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Full of spiritual insight and practical applications.

III. GENERAL BOOKS

- KNOWLING. *Witness of the Epistles.*
COHN. *St. Paul in the Light of Modern Research.*
SMITH (DAVID). *The Life and Letters of Paul.*
LAKE. *The Earlier Epistles of Paul.*
RAMSAY. *St. Paul the Traveler.*
Historical Commentary in Expositor, 6th Series, Vols. I and II.
Pauline and Other Studies.
CHADWICK. *The Pastoral Teaching of Paul.*
THACKERAY. *The Relation of Paul to Contemporary Thought.*
KENNEDY. *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions.*
MILLIGAN. *The Resurrection of the Body.* Exposition of Chap. 15.
HASTINGS. *Dictionary of Apostolic Church:* Articles on the Epistles and on various subjects, such as "Eucharist," "Gifts," "Resurrection," etc.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

SALUTATION AND THANKSGIVING, 1:1-9

1. Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our ¹ brother:
2. To the Church of God which is at Corinth, *even* them that are ² sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* Saints, with all that call upon the name of

¹ Gr., *the brother.*

² *Consecrated, set apart.*

The Salutation (1-3). Paul using the customary polite form of Greek letters sends a salutation and an expression of thanks. Both are modified by Christian forms of thought. The thanksgiving is to God for the spiritual enrichment of the Church.

1. **Through the Will of God.** Paul emphasized always the directness of his call from God to be an apostle. Cf. Gal. 1:1. **Sosthenes the brother.** He is associated with Paul in the salutation, not as joint author of the epistle but rather as one who, well-known to the Corinthians and honored by them, approves the views and counsels of the letter. It is not certain that he was the Sosthenes of Acts 18:17.

2. **The Church of God at Corinth.** All that was actual in the contrast between the pagan, corrupt city and the little body of Christians is gathered up in this expression. **Sanctified in Christ Jesus.** Sanctified does not mean holy in our common use of that term but "consecrated," "set apart." Their consecration by faith to Jesus Christ had in it the promise of ultimate holiness. The same is true of the word "saints" immediately following. In the clause attached to the word saints, *viz.*, **with all who call upon the name of Jesus Christ**, the writer wishes to remind the Corinthians of their unity with all Christians who have as their common distinctive mark, prayer to Christ. There was sad need of emphasis upon this conception of

3. our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their *Lord* and ours: 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
6. utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony

Christian unity for the Church was disturbed by factions. In this brief, compact salutation Paul gives the marks of a true church (1) it is called of God, (2) it is consecrated by faith in Jesus Christ to a holy life, (3) it is one in worship of Jesus as Lord.

3. **Grace and peace.** A combination of Greek and Jewish forms of salutation with a spiritual meaning given to both. Grace is the loving favor of God to men, and peace the outcome of it. "The two together comprehend all the gifts of the Spirit."

The Thanksgiving (4-9). There is considerable variety in the thanksgivings prefixed to the various letters of Paul, since each one singles out that which is noteworthy in the history or state of the Church addressed (see Phil., Thess., Rom.). Here the cause of thanksgiving is the enrichment "in all utterance and all knowledge" which had issued from the gift of God's grace. Despite the sins concerning which the letter is to speak the Corinthians had shown clearly the presence and power of the Spirit. Paul is careful to remember this and thus in a conciliatory way prepares for dealing with their inconsistencies.

4. Paul's gratitude is for the **grace of God which was given** to them at conversion and which, in virtue of their union with Christ maintained by devotion to Him, had brought about

5. that enrichment of their nature which was manifested in **all utterance and in all knowledge.** By this is meant that their spiritual experience had quickened and expanded their natural powers. The Greeks were noted as thinkers and speakers. These talents the Spirit used for the understanding and proclamation of the Gospel and the Church had revealed a peculiar power in apprehending truth and conveying it to men. The ability to throw light upon the meaning of the Christian life was no small enrichment. Temptations came in connection with the use of these gifts, but they had hitherto nobly served the cause of Christ.

6. **Even as.** This introduces an explanation. It was because of, and in proportion to their firm conviction regarding the

-
7. of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our
 8. Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye be* unprovable in the day of our
 9. Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son 'Jesus Christ our Lord.
-

Gospel message concerning Christ that their natural powers had been quickened.

7. The result was that they felt themselves in no way inferior to other churches in any gift of grace. "No other church excelled the Corinthian in the variety of its endowments." **Waiting for the revelation.** The consciousness of their complete enrichment was kept clear by that spiritual attitude which earnestly looked forward to the end of the age when Jesus should again appear. The hope of the Second Coming was very vivid in the Early Church.

8. **Confirm you.** Toward that great day they might look with abiding comfort for their Master would keep them steadfast so that they might be **free from charge** at its august judgment.

9. **God is faithful.** This is the ultimate ground for what has just been said. He who has called them into a fellowship founded by His Son Jesus Christ and drawing thence all its blessings will not fail in His promises.

I. CONCERNING MATTERS NEEDING CENSURE,
1:10—6:20

1. *Party Spirit in the Light of the Gospel and its
Ministry, 1:10—4:21*

10. 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,

a. The situation in the Church and exhortation to unity, 1:10-17

It is somewhat surprising to pass from the commendation of the introduction to this first section which has to deal with faction. The whole introduction keeps prominent the relationship of God and His grace to all that had been achieved. The coöperation and devotion of the Church itself are, of course, supposed, but the Church was human, and despite all there was to praise there were at the time of writing sad instances of shortcoming. One of the marked characteristics of the Greeks was their readiness to criticize and argue. Opportunity for its exercise came as different teachers came to them. The whole tendency of critical comparison was to put greater emphasis upon the manner of the presentation of the gospel rather than upon the gospel itself. From this it passed to questions of authorities, hence their dissensions. There had been no actual rupture in the Church but the condition was troubled and threatening. It demanded serious attention.

10. **Speak the same thing.** Earnestly he begs of them to make up their differences; to do away with their factions by coming to the same frame of mind and opinion. The figure of the latter part of the verse is that of repairing a rent in a garment.

11. **Chloe.** Nothing is known of her beyond this reference to her household. She was probably a resident of Ephesus; her

- my brethren, by them *which are of the household of*
12. Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 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
13. Christ. Is ¹ Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?
14. ² I thank God that I baptized none of you save

¹ Or, *Christ is divided*. Was Paul crucified for you?

² Some ancient manuscripts read: *I give thanks that*.

“people” had been to Corinth and returned to Ephesus bringing reports of the Church.

12. **I am of Paul.** Much discussion has been given to the questions regarding the number and characteristics of these parties. There were probably four. Comparison and dispute may have begun after Apollos had preached in Corinth. Ultimately the whole church was involved. **Each one of you saith**, etc. Apollos was a learned and eloquent man. His manner of preaching the truth drew many to him to the disparagement of Paul. Those who had come into the church under the apostle’s preaching stood for him. The question as to who was the most attractive preacher passed over into the more significant one, “Who is our authority?” This brought to the front the Jewish element in the church which, with its stricter adherence to the law, took the name of Cephas or Peter as its watchword. Finally, as over against them all a Christ party asserted itself. Whatever the basis of its claim, whether personal knowledge of our Lord while on earth or pretension that it best understood his mind, its sin lay in making the name of Christ the rallying cry of a sectarian spirit and bringing Him into rivalry with Paul and Apollos and Peter.

13. **Is Christ divided?** Christ belonged to the whole church. Does he belong to one section of it? Does the Christ as interpreted by Paul differ from the Christ interpreted by Apollos? The parties were virtually saying “Yes,” and thus bringing about difference and division. **Was Paul crucified for you or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?** The cross and baptism both should have emphasized in the thought of the Corinthians the exclusive supremacy of Christ. He alone had died for them; they were all baptized into His name. The remembrance of these facts would show the folly of magnifying the names of leaders as they were doing.

14. **I thank God.** The tendency to rally about and glorify

15. Crispus and Gains; 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 the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.
18. For the word of the Cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God.

leaders makes Paul thankful that he has done so little baptizing. Thus he had destroyed every pretext for regarding him as a party leader. It was for exceptional reasons that he had baptized Crispus, a former ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:8) and Gaius (Rom. 16:23) and the household of Stephanas (cf. 16:15, 17).

17. **For Christ sent me not to baptize.** Paul had in no way failed to do his duty in not baptizing nor does he mean to disparage baptism. He simply makes it subordinate to the great commission which he had received, *viz.*, to preach the good news of salvation. **Not in the wisdom of words.** He would make no effort to captivate them by fine speaking or philosophical argument. Nothing must divert attention from the cross and its significance, lest it be emptied of its power. With these words Paul turns to explain further why he preached to them as he did. In this explanation he sets forth (1) the true nature of the Gospel (1:18—3:4) and (2) the true position of the Christian teacher (3:5—4:5). In considering the true nature of the Gospel he shows in the first place that it is not a religious speculation (wisdom) but a *power* unto salvation. His argument is based upon the experience of those who heard it (1:18—25); upon the make-up of the Corinthian Church (1:26—31) and upon the manner of his coming to them (2:1—5).

I. *The True Nature of the Gospel*, 1:18—3:4

1. *It is not a wisdom but a power*, 1:18—2:5. This is shown (a) by the experience of those to whom it came, 1:18—25.

18. **For the word of the Cross is to them that are perishing foolishness.** As the fact of the Cross was set before men they separated into two classes. Some seeing in it no wisdom, *i.e.*, no attractive exposition of a consistent system of thought,

19. For it is written:
 I will destroy the wisdom of the wise
 And the prudence of the prudent will I reject.
20. Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where
 is the disputer of this ¹ world? Hath not God made
 foolish the wisdom of the world?
21. For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world

¹ *Age.*

considered it silly that it should be a means of salvation; others, accepting it, found it a veritable power in their lives for the transformation of character. This latter result confirmed the Apostle in his determination to know nothing but "Jesus and him crucified" among them. To be sure, those turned away who were looking for intellectual gratification but intellectual satisfaction is often far removed from spiritual consecration. No merely human wisdom can secure that penitence and that faith which the direct vision of the cross awakens.

19. **For it is written.** See Is. 29:14. The substitution of the power of God for worldly cleverness is just what God had prophesied He would in time accomplish. The prophecy is now fulfilled. The wise man, whether Greek philosopher or Jewish Scribe, no matter how able to argue, has had his wisdom confounded. See Is. 19:11 and 33:18.

21. **For seeing that in the wisdom of God,** Mark how closely Paul joins his statements through verses 18-21. Each is connected with the preceding by a "for" giving the basis or reason of what has been said. Verse 21 thus explains what has been said in verses 19-20. Two interpretations have been given to the words **in the wisdom of God**. One refers it to those works of creation and providence by which God seeks to make Himself known (see Rom. 1:19 ff.) and then the reason would be "since the world did not come to know God as He was manifested in creation, it pleased God, etc." According to the other and preferable interpretation "the wisdom of God" means God's wise plan that He was not to be known through human philosophizing. The best Greek philosophy had gained but vague and indefinite conceptions regarding Him. It was also a way over which few could go. How little the people knew! God was virtually an unknown God to them. Now by a method which in comparison was simplicity itself men were to have revealed to them the very heart of the Father. **Through the foolishness of preaching** they were brought to

through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the ¹ foolishness of preaching to
 22. save them that believe. Seeing that Jews ask for
 23. signs and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach
² Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block and
 24. unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto ³ them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of

¹ *The thing preached.* ² *A Messiah.* ³ *The called themselves.*

a saving knowledge. Paul speaks of the foolishness of preaching from the point of view of the Greeks. That could not be really foolishness which was the means through which was expressed the power of God (see vs. 18) to those who believed.

22. **Seeing that Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek after wisdom.** Herein was the reason why the message of the Cross appeared "foolishness"; why, too, the world knew not God. The Jew and the Greek typified the attitudes of the world in that day. The characteristic of the one was a demand for external proofs, signs, miracles as confirmation of one's right to the claim of being a teacher sent from God. Above all, the hoped for Messiah of the Jews must exhibit such signs. They repeatedly asked for these from Jesus. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (Jn. 4:48). The Greek mind on the other hand sought for something subtle and brilliant. It is not surprising that the message of a crucified Messiah became to the Jewish nation a stumbling block and to the Greeks appeared as foolishness.

23. The externality of the religious life of the one had blunted the sense of sin; the optimism of the philosophy of the other had never felt it. Christ's death for sinners was the vital, divine message which alone could awaken men to the sense of their true position and save them through faith. Hence the emphatic antithesis in which Paul puts his Gospel.

24. **We preach Christ crucified.** To those who have accepted him, whether Jews or Greeks, he has proved to be **the power of God and the wisdom of God.** In the forgiveness of their sins and the transformation of their lives they have had evidence of God's power clearer and surer than any external signs, while in the truth which He revealed they have a wisdom above all earthly wisdom.

25. **Because the foolishness of God.** What the Greeks looked upon as a foolish policy and the Jews as weak, is wiser and stronger than anything either could devise or do.

25. God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
26. For behold your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not
27. many noble ¹ *are called*; 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
28. that are strong; 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
29. bring to naught the things that are; that no flesh

¹ Or, *have part therein.*

b. It is confirmed by the Make-up of the Corinthian Church,
1:26-31

26. For behold your calling. The word "calling" does not refer to one's vocation in life. It refers to their summons to the Christian life. Paul asks them to consider "the principle God has followed in calling them" (Beza) to be Christians. The great majority of them were from the humble class. Not many philosophers (**wise according to the flesh**), not many socially influential men (**powerful**), not many well-born men among their number. Had the Gospel made its appeal through human wisdom or in some form of external power it would have won such a constituency. On the contrary, God has

27-28. chosen the uneducated, the **foolish things** (simpletons in the world's estimate), those having no influence (**weak things**), those of ignoble birth (**the base things**), those who are despised, yea, those who are so insignificant as virtually to be counted not existing at all (nonentities). What a confirmation it all is of the fact that the Gospel is not "a clever dialectic" but a power!

29. And God has acted upon this principle of putting to shame those who esteemed themselves wise or powerful and of bringing to naught those who are recognized as of importance, in order that no man should boast of his own wisdom or power in His presence. "The one party are humiliated because with

30. should glory before God. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.
31. 2. 1. And I brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of ¹ speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the ² mystery of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and

¹ Or, *word*. ² SV. With many ancient authorities read *testimony*.

all their wisdom and might they have not obtained what it concerned them to reach, salvation; the other because if they have obtained it, it is impossible for them to imagine that it is by their own natural resources that they have come to it."—Hofmann.

30. **But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus.** It is to God alone that they owed their union with Christ who by God's gracious purpose became wisdom to us,—*i.e.*, in Christ we can discern the revelation of God's mind with reference to our salvation. This wisdom is manifested in our justification which means our being brought into right relation with God through the forgiveness of our sins and by the impartation to us of His Spirit; our sanctification or our growth in holiness and our redemption or our final and complete deliverance from sin and death and entrance into heaven. Christ is the means under God to our realization of all these high issues. Surely, then, there is no room for boasting in regard to any man or his work. "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

c. It is shown by his attitude when he came to them, 2:1-5

1. The Apostle has given his readers two confirmations of the truth that the Gospel is not a wisdom but a power. He now recalls his manner of preaching to them as a further proof of the same fact. He did not attempt any oratorical display (**excellency of speech**) or philosophic depth (**wisdom**) in proclaiming the **testimony of God**, *i.e.*, the Gospel.

2. **For I determined not to know, etc.** He restricted himself with deliberate purpose to the one theme that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Messiah had been crucified. It was an unpopular subject.

3. Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and
4. in fear, and in much trembling. And my ¹ speech and my ² preaching were not in persuasive words of
5. wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not ³ stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
6. Howbeit we speak wisdom among the ⁴ perfect, yet a wisdom not of this ⁵ world nor of the rulers of this ⁵ world who are coming to naught; but we

¹ Or, *word*. ² Gr., *thing preached*. ³ Gr., *be*. ⁴ SV, *fully grown*.

⁵ Or, *age*: and so in vss. 7, 8, but not in v. 12.

3. **And I was with you in weakness.** Not only was his theme unpopular but he preached to them with none of the self-confidence of their orators. On the contrary he was

4. timid and anxious as he realized his own insufficiency. Despite all this, his plain, earnest setting forth of the doctrine of the Cross proved mighty, for the **Spirit's power** accompanied it and wrought upon the minds of those who heard.

5. **That your faith should stand.** The purpose of the Apostle's method of preaching was to have their faith placed upon that which could not be shaken. It had not been won by specious arguments; it could not be overthrown by them. It came to be through the power of God. This brings to a conclusion that part of the letter which shows that the Gospel is not a wisdom but a power. But while it is not a wisdom in the sense in which the Greeks might have wished it to be, nevertheless it contained a wisdom. This is the main thought of the next section of the second chapter.

(2) *The Gospel contains a wisdom, 2:6—3:4*

6. **Wisdom.** While Paul and his fellow-preachers (**we**) in Corinth had set forth the facts of the Cross in plain speech and unmixed with human philosophizing it was not therefore to be understood that Christianity had no wisdom of its own. On the contrary, in the Gospel there are treasures of wisdom; there is a philosophy of redemption, divine, profound and abiding. Only he who has "the power of insight into things Divine revealed to faith" can understand it. He must be a **mature** (perfect) Christian. The Epistle to the Romans is an unfolding of this wisdom. Mere secular knowledge or intellectual power will not give one this insight, for this wisdom is **not of this age nor**

7. speak God's wisdom in a mystery, *even the wisdom* that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the ¹ worlds unto our glory: which none of the
8. rulers of this ¹ world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of
9. glory: 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. ² But unto us God revealed ³ *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the
11. deep things of God. For who among men knoweth

¹ Or, *age*: and so in vs. 7, 8, but not in v. 12.

² Some ancient authorities read *for*.

³ Or, *it*.

of those rulers of this age who dominate it by their mental power or political position. It is **God's wisdom**.

7. **Mystery.** This denotes that which cannot be known unless revealed. This wisdom of God, this philosophy of redemption has been in the mind of God from all eternity and He has revealed it in and through Christ.

8. **Which no one of the princes of this world knew.** It is a striking example of the calamitous ignorance concerning this wisdom of God that Caiaphas, the Scribes and Pharisees and Pilate—men, all of them, of high position—put to a shameful death the Lord of Glory.

9. **But, as it is written.** The construction of the relative clause "the things which eye saw not" is best accounted for by making it the object of "we speak" understood. It is then in antithesis to the clause "which none of the rulers of this world knoweth" (vs. 8). The quotation is loosely given from Is. 64:4 and 65:17. This verse is often quoted as referring to the glories awaiting the Christian in heaven. The context shows us that it is the treasures of divine wisdom that are in the Apostle's mind for he goes on to tell us how they **have been revealed**.

10. **But.** The preferable reading is *for* and gives the reason of their ability to tell of the things "which eye saw not," etc. The Spirit of God had revealed these things to them—that Spirit who knoweth the whole mind of God, being everywhere active.

11. The argument in this verse is from analogy. No one knows the thoughts, imaginations, purposes of a man's spirit

- the things of a man save the spirit of the men which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Spirit teacheth; comparing ¹ spiritual things with spiritual. Now the ² natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for

¹ Or, *interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men*; SV, *combining spiritual things with spiritual words*.

² Or, *unspiritual*; Gr., *psychical*.

except that spirit itself. "Nor even the dearest soul, and next our own, knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh." God's Spirit alone in like manner knows the mind of God.

12. **The spirit of the world.** This is the spirit to which the cross was foolishness; the spirit of those who crucified the Lord; the spirit of that wisdom which God had Himself made folly. From it could come no light upon the purposes of God. It was not this spirit which the Apostles received when they became Christians, but rather the Spirit of God. Verses 11 and 12 may be stated succinctly in this form: Only the Spirit of God knows the things of God. We received the Spirit of God, therefore, we know what is given us by God.

13. Paul now passes from the substance of his preaching to the manner of it. His utterances are inspired by the Spirit. They are not in the rhetoric of human wisdom, but in expressions taught by the Spirit. This statement is not to be pressed into the service of a theory of verbal inspiration. As Meyer says, "the term 'taught' excludes all mechanical representation of the fact and implies in the person inspired a living assimilation of the truth expressed." **Comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** There are two possible interpretations of these words: (a) combining spiritual ideas with spiritual language, or (b) suiting spiritual truths to spiritual minds. The latter opens the way to what follows in verse 14, and is, on the whole, to be preferred.

14. **Natural.** This adjective describes man as he is before he opens his life to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He is one whose aims, ambitions, and desires do not rise above earthly

- they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually ¹ judged. But
15. he that is spiritual ² judgeth all things and he him-
16. self is ¹ judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.
3. 1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto

¹ Or, *examined*.

² Or, *examineth*.

horizons. He may be a man of culture and refinement on the one side, or coarse and degraded on the other, but he has not committed his way unto God. The Holy Spirit is shut out of his life. Such an one rejects the things of the Spirit of God as foolish; what is more, he is utterly unable to appreciate them, for insight into their meaning and worth comes only from the indwelling Spirit, *i.e.*, they are spiritually discerned. Spiritual discernment comes not so much through investigation and argument as through humility, love, and self-discipline, under God's Spirit.

15. **But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.** He stands upon the highest plane of judgment. The Spirit within him helps him to estimate the moral worth of men and measures. He is enlightened and quickened to sift everything that comes before him. Paul's treatment of the matters which come up in this letter illustrates just this right and power of the Spiritual man. **And he himself is judged of no man, *i.e.*, of no unspiritual man.** This does not mean that a Christian is above criticism, except as his deep spiritual-mindedness exempts him.

16. **For who hath known the mind of the Lord.** This verse gives the proof of what has just been set forth. It is a quotation from Is. 40:13 with the omission of the middle clause. Jehovah addressing ignorant man asks "Who hath measured the Spirit of the Lord? Who being His counsellor hath taught Him?" The answer is of course, "No one." The fact that, by the indwelling Spirit the believer has the mind of Christ and is thereby put over against the unspiritual man as is the Lord Himself, renders him also superior to the judgment of the world. Note that Paul substitutes "mind" for Spirit in the quotation. "Mind" is spirit on its intellectual side. Also that Christ is put in the place of Lord, a substitution which points to a close identification of the two.

3. **Carnal as unto babes in Christ.** With this verse begins

- 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 walk
 4. after the manner of men? For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?

the application to the Church of all that he has just written. The wisdom which could be unfolded to those who were mature in the Christian life could not be spoken to them. They were not ready for it. "He had preached to them the Gospel as power (2:1-5); he could not preach it to them as wisdom (3:1-4)." The reason was that they were yet "carnal, babes in Christ." The close conjunction of the words "carnal, babes" helps to interpretation. By the word "carnal" Paul does not mean to say that the Corinthians were entirely without the Spirit. In that case they would be "natural" (cf. 2:14). They were rather hindering their development in spiritual things by giving place to their natural instincts. They were prolonging their babyhood, hence he says

2. **I fed you with milk.** The strong meat, which is a figurative expression for that wisdom of which he has written, he could not give them.

3. **For ye are yet carnal.** In this judgment Paul uses in the original another word to express the conception "carnal." In verse the word signifies "fleshy" made of flesh and points to that "natural state" which, as suggested by the word "babes" immediately following, indicates the period of natural instincts "not culpable in itself, but only so if unduly prolonged." Here the word is the equivalent of our English word "fleshy" and sets forth their willful conformity to worldly motives. It is further defined by the last clause of the verse "**walk after the manner of men?**" *i.e.*, they were conducting themselves as unspiritual men do. Their carnality was all too evident in the jealousy and strife which centered in their party cries and in party support.

Inasmuch as the formation of these parties had its source in a misconception of the position and function of their teachers as well as in a wrong idea of the Gospel, Paul now turns to consider the position of the Christian ministry.

5. What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord
 6. gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God
 7. gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God
 8. that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we
 9. are God's fellow-workers; ye are God's¹ husbandry, God's building.

¹ Gr., *tilled land*.

II. *The True Conception of Their Christian Teachers*, 3:5-4:21.

(1) *They are but the servants of God whose power alone brings forth increase* (3:5-9); (2) *builders upon God's building whose one foundation is Jesus Christ* (3:10-15); (3) *conservers of the temple of God* (3:16-17); (4) *those who renounce the wisdom of this world* (3:18-23); (5) *stewards of the mysteries of God* (4:1-5).

5. **Ministers, i.e.,** servants, not heads of parties. The verse implies that some were converted through the instrumentality of Apollos. **The Lord** here signifies God.

6. Under the figure of a garden the Church is viewed as planted by Paul and watered by Apollos (cf. Acts chs. 18 and 19). The emphatic consideration is, however, that God is the efficient cause of growth.

7. As growth is the vital matter, so in comparison with Him who causes it human workers are as nothing. Certainly they are not rivals.

8. They are **one thing** (neuter in the Greek) *i.e.*, one instrumentality. They come under one category. This does not mean that they all do exactly the same thing or accomplish just the same amount of work. They may differ in capacity for service and in the amount of service rendered and so **each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor**. Both facts are true, *viz.*, that all men as related to God, are but servants, instruments; and that as they differ from each other in capacity and accomplishment, they shall be rewarded.

9. **For we are all God's fellow-workers**. The emphasis in this verse is upon the word "God." We are God's fellow-

10. According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise master-builder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other
11. foundation can no man lay than that which is laid
12. which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood,
13. hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; ¹ and the fire itself shall prove each
14. man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work

¹ Or, and each man's work, of what sort it is, the fire shall prove it.

workers. It is honor enough to be called to this high relationship. It ought to shame all thought of rivalry. The workers, the field, the building, all belong to God. How, then, can one say "I belong to Paul" or another "I belong to Apollos"?

10. The figure now changes to that of a building in the course of construction. Jesus Christ is its foundation and it belongs to God. The teacher's work, continuing the figure, is to build the superstructure and his one concern is to be careful how he builds, for there is a possibility of putting in poor as well as good materials and a day is coming when the character of the work will be tested and the workman be judged according to the issue of the test.

11. **Wise Master-builder.** Wise in the method he had used and the foundation he had laid.

12. **Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.** The distinction in materials is clear. To what do they refer? Not to doctrines wholly dissociated from persons, since in verse 9 the Apostle writes "ye are God's building" but, as Evans suggests, the figure seems, as in a dissolving view, to change from an edifice of persons molded by doctrine to one of doctrines molding persons. It is this latter edifice that shall be destroyed, if made of "wood, hay, stubble." It is, however, to be understood that the inferior construction does not represent teaching that is intentionally false; otherwise the workman could not himself be saved (vs. 15).

13. **The day shall declare it.** The Day of Judgment which shall be when Christ comes (ch. 4:5). **Because it** (*i.e.*, the Day) **is revealed in fire.** Fire is here symbolic of a searching, testing judgment.

15. shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as
 16. through fire. Know ye not that ye are a ¹ temple of
 17. God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the ¹ temple of God him shall God destroy; for the ¹ temple of God is holy ² which
 18. temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this
 19. ³ world, let him become a fool, that he may become
 20. wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness; and again, the Lord knoweth
 21. the reasonings of the wise that they are vain. Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things

¹ Or, *sanctuary.*² Or, *and such are ye.*³ Or, *age.*

15. **But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.** The picture is of one escaping from a burning building. He shall be saved as out of the flames. He has built on the true foundation and has not intentionally put up inferior work. His teachings shrivel up in the fire of judgment; he is saved.

16. Paul passes in this verse from the consideration of the responsibility of teachers in their relation to the Church as builders to their responsibility as preservers of the Church itself—the **temple of God**. The word for temple points to the inner shrine or holiest place where the deity dwelt.

17. **If any man destroyeth the temple of God.** The local church is here pictured as the temple of God and the destroying that is referred to is that which was being brought about by the spirit of faction. He who seeks to destroy God's Church by a factious spirit, shall himself be destroyed.

18. **If any man thinketh he is wise among you.** The thought here reverts again to that wisdom which has been spoken of in 1:17—2:5. It is the wisdom of this world—that worldly knowledge and intellectual self-sufficiency which allows a man to think that he can further these divisions. He is self-deceived, and must become a fool, *i.e.*, rid himself of all that which in the world is regarded as wisdom in order to be wise.

19. **It is written.** See Job 5:13 and Ps. 94:11.

21-23. **All things are yours.** All your teachers, all good

22. are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's
23. and Christ's is God's.
4. 1. Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found
3. faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be ¹ judged of you or of man's ² judgment; yea I ³ judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified;

¹ Or, *examined*.² Gr., *day*.³ Or, *examine*.

things of the world, life in all its divine meaning and death in all its gain, the present and the future with all their possibilities for the Christian—all these are yours, *i.e.*, they exist to serve you; but *you belong to Christ* as Christ belongs to God, is His Son. With such truth does Paul seek to sweep away all party spirit.

1. In the previous chapter Paul has set forth the true position of the Christian ministry. The teachers in the Corinthian Church were to be regarded servants, fellow-workers of God, builders upon God's building. He now considers them from another point of view as

2. **Stewards of the mysteries of God.** The ancient steward (he might be either a freed-man or slave) was the one to whom the head of the house intrusted the management of his affairs. It was his duty among other things to deal out the proper portion to every servant of the house and even to children not yet of age.—Thayer. The Christian teacher was thus instructed with the revealed truths of the Gospel which he was to give to the household of God. The one test of such service was fidelity.

3. **It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you.** The test being fidelity, who can apply it? Certainly not the Corinthians, for they by reason of their very party spirit were incompetent; "**I judge not mine own self.**" His own conscience was incompetent to examine the matter fully. Even though it in no way reproached him, that would not be the equivalent of saying that he was irreproachable.

4. There is only one competent judge—the Lord Himself. Hence we are to wait until He comes. His revelation of hidden

- but he that ¹ judgeth me is the Lord. Wherefore
4. 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.
 6. 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
 7. the one against the other. 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? Already are

¹ Or, *examineth*.

acts and the motives of the heart will give the only adequate basis for an exact judgment of fidelity.

5. **Praise from God, i.e.,** the praise which he really merited. All other praise, or blame, was of small account.

(6) *Personal application of what he has written (3:5—4:5) with an earnest rebuke of their pride (6—16).*

6. **In a figure transferred to myself and Apollos.** What was true of the whole class of teachers is illustrated by the case of Apollos and himself. In this concrete way he has set forth the principles regarding the ministry which he wishes them to understand. **Not to go beyond the things which are written.** As this clause appears in the Greek it is equivalent to a quotation "Not beyond the things that are written." It is perhaps a rabbinical maxim and has in view such passages as 1:19, 31; 3:19—20. A proper conception of man as given in the Old Testament would save them from such pride as they were exhibiting in this or that teacher to the disparagement of others.

7. **For who maketh thee to differ?** Nothing but the man's own imagination. The force of the following question may be brought out by the paraphrase: Suppose thou hast some superiority to others? "What hast thou that thou dost not receive?" Then why boast as if what thou hast which, in any way, distinguishes you were not God's gift? The "for" intro-

8. ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have reigned without us: yea and I would that ye did reign that we also might reign with you. For I think God
9. hath set forth us the Apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to ¹ angels and to men. We are fools
10. for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye have glory, but we
11. have dishonor. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place; and we toil,
12. working with our hands: being reviled we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we

¹ Or, *both to angels and men.*

ducing these questions makes the right answers to them show the baselessness of party pride.

8. The contemplation of the conceit and calamity of this party-spirit in the Church so stirs the heart of the Apostle that he breaks forth into an apostrophe full of irony and indignation (8-13). **Already ye are filled.** In their pride they were satisfied as if they were already in possession of the blessings of the Kingdom of God. "They had got a private millennium of their own" and so had far outstripped the Apostles. They were full, rich, and on thrones, while their teachers "were doomed to death" and made a spectacle unto the world. The irony in the contrast which runs through the whole section must be kept in mind.

9. **For, I think, God hath set forth us the Apostles last of all, as men doomed to death.** "For" gives the reason for the wish in verse 8. The figure is suggested by the experiences of a public festival whose closing hours witnessed the exposure of criminals to the wild beasts in the arena. Instead of "reigning" the Apostles were in their sufferings a spectacle to both angels and men.

10. **Fools** in the sense that they preach a message which to the world is foolishness; **weak**—helpless amid hardship and trials; **have dishonor**,—the order here is changed that verses 11-13 may be brought into close connection with this adjective, whose meaning they set forth. Want, ill-treatment and contempt constitute the dishonor which the Apostles experience.

intreat: we are made as ¹ the filth of the world, the
 14. offscouring of all things, even until now. I write
 15. not these things to shame you, but to admonish you
 as my beloved children. For though ye should have
 ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many
 fathers: for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the
 16. Gospel. I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of
 me.

¹ Or, *refuse*.

13. **Filth of the world, the offscouring of all things** (or, men). The words "filth" and "offscouring" have reference to that which has been "scraped off" or "wiped off" from anything in making it clean,—hence "scrapings," "refuse." They were both used to describe the men who were thrown by the Greeks into the sea as a propitiation to the gods in the time of plague. It is probably in the former sense that they are to be taken here. They express the climax of humiliation .

(7) *As their father in the faith he appeals to them to follow him.*
The test to be applied when he comes, 4:14-21

14. With verse 13 the indignant strain has spent itself and once more a tone of tenderness appears. Plain speaking and strong feeling had not been primarily to put them to shame. That it might well do, but his purpose was rather to give them fatherly admonition.

15. **His Pedagogues.** Pedagogues were trusted slaves who cared for the children of the household, escorting them to and from school. The word is here qualified by the regimen in **Christ**. Though many might, as tutors or guardians care for them in the Christian life, they surely could not have many fathers. They had only one Christian father. Paul does not use the word father here but it is implied in his use of the word "children" and its justification is given in the statement "**in Jesus Christ I begat you through the Gospel.**" Note how the words "**I begat**" are carefully guarded from any human assumptions by the phrases accompanying them. "Call no man your father on the earth," said Jesus (Matt. 23:9), *i.e.*, do not use the term "in such a spirit as to forget Him from whom all being proceeds."

16. **Be ye imitators of me** in self-denial and self-sacrifice. The right of his appeal was in his fatherly relation to them.

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 ¹ be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every
 18. church. Now some are puffed up as though I were
 19. not coming to you. But I will come to you shortly
 20. if the Lord will; and I will know not the word of
 21. them which are puffed up, but the power. For the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power. What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod or in love and a spirit of meekness?

2. *The Second Matter Needing Censure—A Case of Incest, 5:1-12*

5. 1. 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

¹ SV, *are.*

17. **Timothy.** It was to help them to the right course that he had sent "this beloved child" to them. Timothy at the time of the writing of the letter was probably in Macedonia and would arrive in Corinth later than the letter itself (cf. Acts 19:22). **My ways.** See 1:17, 2:1-5, 4:11-13, 9:15, 22, 27.

18. **Now some are puffed up.** There was probably some uncertainty regarding Paul's coming to Corinth. This had been doubtless wrongly construed as not daring to come and had led to all the boastful self-assertion which had split up the Church.

19. **Not the word . . . but the power.** He will pay little attention to their fine addresses and high-flown pretensions, but test their effectiveness in winning men to a true Christian life and advancing them therein. The Kingdom of God is not in abundance of clever speech but in spiritual power.

20. **Rod.** The emblem of rebuke and discipline; **meekness,** the opposite of harshness, *i. e.*, gentleness.

(a) *The offender to be expelled, 5:1-8*

1. **Fornication.** Any illicit sexual intercourse. A specially revolting kind of it was being tolerated in the Church, *viz.:* that

2. wife. And ¹ye are puffed up and ²did not rather mourn that he that had done this deed might be
3. taken away from among you. For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as
4. though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together and my spirit, with the

¹ Or, *are ye puffed up?* ² Or, *did ye not rather mourn . . . you?*

of a man having as his wife or concubine his stepmother, or, as the text more vividly puts it, **his father's wife**. Such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles. It is an evidence of the low moral tone in Corinth that this relationship made no stir in the Church. The instances that may be cited to support the legitimacy of such a marriage are so few that it can be said that virtually the sin did not exist. Roman law forbade it as did also Jewish (Lev. 18:8). From the passage as a whole it seems correct to infer that the woman in the case was not a Christian since all proposals of discipline are directed against the man. The man's action may be one of those instances of the false conceptions of Christian liberty regarding which Paul had more than once to warn his Gentile converts. Whatever its ground, its flagrancy was pitiful. All the more so since the Church was "**puffed up**," *i.e.*, in a state of serene satisfaction with itself, not directly, of course, in view of this one matter, but in spite of it. The reasons of their inflation have been given in the preceding chapters.

2. **That . . . he might be taken away.** The conjunction sets forth the contemplated effect of the mourning. The removal of the wrongdoer would be the result of the sorrow and shame over his misdeed.

3. **For, I verily.** Paul sets his earnest determination to act over against their laxity. Though absent he was with them in spirit and in mind and as though present, had already pronounced judgment.

4, 5. The factors and nature of this judgment. The best possible arrangement of the clauses in verse four is that which connects the first one, **in the name of our Lord Jesus**, with the infinitive "to deliver" (vs. 5) and the others with "being gathered together." Three factors are to enter into the grave pronouncement of judgment. The assembled Church, the spirit of the Apostle (his unseen but directing influence) and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was to be a solemn meeting full

5. power of our Lord Jesus, 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 ¹Jesus. Your
6. glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old
7. leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacri-

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *Jesus*.

of instruction and warning for all taking part in it. **To deliver such a one unto Satan.** The clew to the meaning of this judgment is in its purpose. Clearly the man was not given up to the devil in order that all the enticing or propelling forces of sin might have unhindered play upon him. That were not the way to insure the saving of his spirit. It is rather to that physically punitive power of Satan that reference is here made (cf. Lk. 13:16). Sickness and death are often ascribed to him. Job's experience (chs. 1 and 4) illustrates what is meant. The slow progress of a disease issuing in death was to show this man the folly of his sin and bring him to repentance. Satan, working in a way congenial to him in that he brings suffering, is yet an instrument in God's hands to the accomplishment of the divine Will. The Greeks were not strangers to an analogous custom according to which a person having been wronged and without means for retaliation "consigned the criminal to a god and left the punishment to be inflicted by divine power."—Ramsay, *Hist. Com. on Corinthians*.

6. **"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."** The "little leaven" can hardly be the sin which has been so solemnly judged. It is rather that "inclination to fornication" which had made the Church indifferent through a vitiation of public opinion. In view of this all boasting was indeed unseemly.

7. **Purge out therefore the old leaven.** The word "old" confirms the above interpretation. They were to go further than removing the sinful man from the Church. It must be cleansed from all trace of this evil propensity. The Jews were accustomed on the eve of the first and great day of the Passover to remove every particle of leavened bread from their houses; hence the figure. **A new lump, as ye are unleavened.** A new lump signifies a mass of dough freshly kneaded with sweet water instead of leaven. Such bread was used during the Passover. The Church was to make a fresh start unmingled with sin.

8. ficed even Christ: wherefore let us ¹ keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
9. I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company
10. with fornicators; ² not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs
11. go out of the world: but ³ now I write unto you

¹ Gr., *keep festival.*² SV, *not at all meaning.*³ SV, *as it is, I wrote.*

Ideally it was "unleavened" (cf. Jn. 15:3); let it become so in fact.

8. **For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.** An extension of the figure of the leaven to confirm what has been said. After the Jews had eaten the passover they were to abstain from all leavened bread for seven days. Christ is our passover. He is the lamb slain for us. We are, therefore, to keep, not a seven-days' festival, but perpetual festival of a new life from which the leaven of wickedness and wrongdoing have been put away and in which are manifest "the unleavened bread" of transparency and truth.

(b) *Explanation of a former command relating to fornicators, 9-13.*

9. **I wrote unto you in my epistle.** In a previous letter, now lost (some find a part of it in 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1) Paul had told them not to associate with immoral people. In some way this had been misunderstood. With the case of discipline just considered in point Paul explains his statement.

10. **Not altogether.** (I did) not at all mean that you were not to associate with immoral people of the world, *i.e.*, with fornicators, with the covetous and extortionate, and with idolaters outside the church. Since the streets of Corinth were full of them it would virtually mean going out of the world. It would put a stop to all the business of life and, what is of more importance, prevent all contact of Christian life with society.

11. **But now I write.** The marginal reading "but, as it is, I wrote" is preferable for it is not likely that the two past tenses (vs. 9 and vs. 11) are to be taken, one as a past, the other as a present. **Now** is logical and means "now you understand," "as

- 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. For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within, ¹ whereas them that are without God judgeth? Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

3. *The Third Matter for Censure—Their Litigious Spirit,*
6:1-11

6. 1. Dare any of you, having a matter against ² his neighbor go to law before the unrighteous, and not 2. before the saints? Or know ye not that the saints

² Gr., *the other.*

¹ SV, *but.*

it is." I meant, when I wrote, this: if a **brother**, so named, be immoral you are not to associate with him; **no not to eat** with him. You are not to share his hospitality; nor he yours.

12. **For** gives the reason why they should never have supposed he was referring to the immorality of the world. God is the world's judge. Our jurisdiction is within the church, as your own practice has shown. There is only one thing to do, "Cast out the evil one."

1. Twice in the previous chapter Paul has joined the fornicator and the covetous man (5:10, 11); also he asked if the sphere of judgment for Christians was not within the Church (5:12). Both points were suggestive of the matter which he is now to consider. The Greeks were great sticklers for their rights. This led them into frequent disputes for the settlement of which they had made appeal to those outside of the Church.

Dare. In view of the majesty of the Church, the seal of the Holy Spirit. **The unrighteous.** The word is really the equivalent of "unbelievers." It is not to be pushed so far as to imply that "outsiders" could not give justice. The "cases" brought to judgment were not serious crimes but in all probability, commonplace matters which had been magnified by their quarrelsome spirit. It was the unchristian spirit, the utter lack of brotherly love which was the serious defect.

2. **Know ye not.** Paul is appealing to an expectation familiar to the Jews and one which Paul had taught the Corin-

- shall judge the world? And if the world is judged by you are ye unworthy ¹ to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?
4. How much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have ² to judge things pertaining to this life, ³ do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church? I say *this* to move you to shame. ⁴ Is it so, that there cannot be *found* among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother and that before unbelievers? Nay, already it is alto-

¹ Gr., of the smallest tribunals.

² Gr., tribunals pertaining to.

³ Or, set them . . . church.

⁴ SV, what, cannot there be, etc.

thians but which they had apparently lost sight of, *viz.*: that the saints were ultimately to judge the world, for they were, with the Messiah, to rule the nations at the Messiah's coming (see Dan. 7:22; Wis. 3:8). Jesus had promised this to the apostles (Matt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30) and the promise had been widened. It is part of the office of a ruler to judge and, in sharing with Christ his final glory, his followers shall share in the judgment of the world. The argument is from the greater to the less. If as saints you are to have such an exalted prerogative, "are you incompetent to adjudicate upon trifles?"

3. That you shall judge angels? This question carries the previous argument a step further and heightens the contrast between their future position and their present dereliction. If they are to judge such exalted beings as angels, it would follow, as a matter of course, that they could decide upon matters pertaining to ordinary life. Though angels are not characterized as good or bad, the implication is of bad angels.

4. If then they were to have courts for such matters it were better for them to set up as judges those who were of no account among them than to go to heathen judges. The least esteemed would be competent to settle such insignificant matters.

5. I say this to move you to shame. His sarcastic words are to shame them. He turns to ask them seriously if no wise man can be found among them to arbitrate their disputes.

6. But. The sharp contrast introduced is practically their own answer to the question of verse 5. In their lack of wisdom they quarrel, hurry to litigation, and worst of all, before unbelievers.

7. Paul now turns to the cause of the whole trouble. Nay,

gether ¹ a defect in you that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? Why
 8. not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren. Or
 9. 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, nor
 10. thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God.
 11. And such were some of you: but ye ² 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.

¹ Or, a loss to you.

² Or, washed yourselves.

already it is altogether a defect. Leaving aside, for a moment, the question of the judges, he seems to mean it is, under any circumstances, a spiritual defect that you have lawsuits with one another. They reveal, at bottom, a lack of genuine Christian spirit, or, it may be, a defect of that spirit by quarrelsome tendencies. They might better suffer wrong and even deprivation.

8-10. **Nay, ye do wrong and defraud.** On the contrary, they were inflicting wrong and that, too, upon brethren, forgetting that by such conduct they were identifying themselves with wrongdoers who shall not inherit God's Kingdom. **Neither fornicators—nor thieves.** It will be noted that this enumeration of sinners is made with pointed reference to the prevailing evils of Corinth—uncleanness and greed.

11. **Ye were washed—sanctified—justified.** The first verb refers to baptism which symbolized the fact that the Corinthians had voluntarily turned their backs upon the sins first mentioned and had by God's grace been "set apart" (sanctified) and declared to be in right relation to Him (justified). The two verbs sanctified and justified refer to the same gracious act of God. **In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.** The clause belongs to all three verbs. Baptism in the name carries with it an acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord and Messiah; **in the Spirit,** recognition of the power which effectuates a separated and holy life.

4. *The Fourth Matter for Censure—Impurity, 6:12–20*

12. 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. Meats for the
13. belly and the belly for meats; but God shall bring to naught both it and them. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the
14. body; and God both raised the Lord and will raise
-

12. **All things are lawful to me, i.e.,** all things that are not in themselves wrong. But, in reference to this wide range of things, morally indifferent, two limitations are to be noted (a) when the doing of them may have an ill effect upon others. One must at times abridge his own liberty when it is not **expedient** or advantageous for others and (b) when the doing of them weakens the power of self-control. Whatever gains the mastery over a man, even though in itself it be not wrong, becomes unlawful in so far as it masters him. The misuse of Christian freedom was easily possible in Corinth. Pagan society had accepted fully the doctrine that every requirement of the body was natural and right and ought to be satisfied. Sexual appetite was on the same level with appetite for food. It was to cover just this view that the Corinthians probably used the maxim "all things are lawful." Paul now seeks to show how fundamentally different these appetites are when morally considered.

13. **Meats for the belly.** Food is, indeed, meant to satisfy the needs of the stomach, but, in two significant particulars the body and fornication differ from the stomach and food. (1) The latter belong to an order that passes away. **God shall bring to naught both it and them.** "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." Physical upbuilding through material food ends with man's earthly career. The body, however, raised and glorified, is to abide forever. (2) The body is for the Lord and not for the gratification of sexual appetite. It is meant to be the instrument through which the will of the Lord is executed. As thus the Christian is to serve the Lord through the body so the Lord is to redeem the body. Jesus Christ and the body are reciprocally for each other.

14. **And God both raised the Lord and will raise us up through His power.** Jesus in his resurrection set forth the resurrection of the whole man—soul and body. Hence Paul

15. up us through His power. 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. Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for, The twain, saith He, shall become one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sin-

says "us" instead of "our bodies." Christ is the "first fruits" of the resurrection in which God shall ultimately include all who believe. Verse 14 is not parallel to 13b, but antithetic. In one case God destroys; in the other He raises up. All through Paul is using the word "body" with emphasis upon the fact that it is a part of man's personality. Here it is material; there it shall be spiritual.

15. **Members of Christ.** As Christ dwells within the believer his bodily members are virtually members of Christ. The infamy of the sin of fornication is that it robs Christ of his members and then debases them by "making them members of a harlot."

16. This is a corroboration of the last statement of verse 15. Carnal connection with a harlot makes the two one body, for, as God says, "the twain shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:14). These words referred originally to marriage. They imply that in carnal connection is established a oneness which was meant to be as sacred as it was profound. Fornication in a sinful way brings about this mysterious oneness.

17. **One Spirit.** Faith brings about a "oneness" with Christ that is spiritual. How antagonistic are these two conditions—"oneness with a harlot" and oneness with Christ, is fully evident. There is consequently only one thing to do and that is to "flee fornication."

18. The clew to the interpretation of this difficult verse lies in the declaration "shall become one flesh" (vs. 16). The exceptional character of fornication is that it at once robs Christ of the body which belongs to Him and joins it to a harlot. The contrast between "without the body" and "against his own body" is not to be pressed too far. In 5:11 the apostle enumerates other sins that will shut out men from the Kingdom of God. Fornication acts more directly and swiftly—"It is a fearful and radical contradiction of the idea of Christian personality."

19. neth against his own body. Or know ye not that your body is a ¹ temple of the ² Holy Ghost which is in you which ye have from God? And ye are not
20. your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body.
-

¹ Or, *sanctuary*.

² SV, *Holy Spirit*.

“It is a contradiction of the truth of the body wrought within itself.”—Alford.

19. **Temple of the Holy Spirit.** If they could not feel the force of what he had just written, then let them remember that the body is the shrine of the Holy Spirit. Fornication is profanation, desecration.

20. **Bought with a price.** A third reason why they should flee fornication. They were really not the owners of themselves—soul or body—for they had been bought with a price, even the life-blood of Jesus.

20. **Therefore.** Rather “be sure” to glorify God in your body by chastity and all other ways. The whole section lays weighty emphasis upon the dignity of the human body.

II. QUESTIONS REGARDING MARRIAGE AND THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO IDOL SACRIFICES AND FEASTS, 7:1—11:1.

1. *Questions regarding Marriage, 7:1-40*

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

a. Marriage or celibacy? 7:1-9

1. **Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote.** With this chapter Paul begins to deal with the questions put to him by the letter from the Corinthians. His answers are shaped by the conditions and needs of the Corinthian church. Some in the church were altogether opposed to marriage while others who were married wished to ignore all sexual relations pertaining thereto. The former may have defended their position by the belief that the Kingdom of God was for those who did not marry but were "as the angels in heaven" (Lk. 20:34). The latter regarded sexual relations as incompatible with a strict sense of holiness. These and other perplexities existing in the church must be borne in mind for they explain why the view of marriage set forth is not as exalted as that found in the fifth chapter of Ephesians—**It is good for a man not to touch a woman.** Note that this is not a comparative statement. Celibacy is good, honorable, if a man can maintain it in purity. It would appear from the form and directness of the assertion that in the letter from the Corinthians this had been denied. Marriage they thought must be universal in order to reform society. It is against this sweeping panacea with its implied condemnation of a pure single life that Paul thus defends celibacy.

2. **Nevertheless.** However good a single life might be, the temptations of such a city as Corinth made safeguards necessary and, therefore, **let each man have his own wife**, etc. Two things are to be noted in this direction, (a) the words **his own** forbid polygamy and (b) that the woman is to be as care-

- wife, and let each woman have her own husband.
3. Let the husband render unto the wife her due; and
 4. likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over
 5. his own body but the wife. 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
 6. of your incontinency. But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment. ¹Yet I would
 7. 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. But I say to the unmar-

¹ Many ancient authorities read *for*.

ful as the man. The recommendation of marriage as a means of avoiding fornication has been criticized as unworthy, but it is to be remembered, as said above, that it was made in view of the needs of Corinth.

3-5. But there was more needed than simply marriage; there must be recognition of the rights of each in marriage. They must not live like celibates. Each has rights in regard to the other. Marital intercourse is due on the part of each and only by common consent should they refrain from it for a time in the interest of higher things. Prolonged restraint, or refusal of one's right in the matter would simply open the way for the temptation of Satan. This is the substance of the teaching of these verses. "It defends marital intercourse against rigorists, as verse 1 commends celibacy against sensualists."

6. **This I say.** "This" covers not simply some single clause in verse 5 but all that is said in 2-5.

By permission, i.e., in the way of **concession** to the general circumstances in Corinth. It was personal advice, rather than a divine command.

7. **Yet I would, etc.** While he urges marriage in view of the temptations of a licentious city, he would, rather, that men, if they have the gift of continence, should be as he was, *i.e.*, unmarried. But men differ in this regard. Each man is differently constituted; one can be continent, the other not. No absolute rule, therefore, can be laid down.

ried and to widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

10. But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her
 11. husband (but and if 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
 13. dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman which hath an unbelieving husband and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her

8-9. **To the unmarried and widows.** Bachelors and widows. If they have not the power of self-control, it is wiser for these to marry than to be compelled to fight the fire of inward lust. Young unmarried girls are considered later.

b. Shall those who are married separate? 7:10-16

10. **Not I, but the Lord.** The command of the Lord is given in Mk. 10:9; Lk. 16:18. The distinction here made is not between private views of the apostle and inspired utterances. Paul claimed the authority of the Spirit for his own directions to this church. In this matter he has an express command of Christ and that is authoritative everywhere in the church. **The wife depart not.** The woman is mentioned first because she would be the more likely, perhaps, through ill-treatment or aversion to marital relations to seek separation. Separation, however, was all she had a right to; if she could not be satisfied with that, she must be reconciled to her husband. She must not marry again. It is probable that "Paul is here considering separations which have a less serious ground than that of adultery."

12-13. **But to the rest.** With this verse he turns to the cases of mixed marriages in which one of the parties had become a Christian after marriage and the other not. For these he had no express command from his Master. He writes, however, under the conviction that he is guided by the Spirit (see vs. 40). The substance of his teaching is that if the unbelieving wife or the unbelieving husband is content to abide in the mar-

14. husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean;
15. but now are they holy. Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath
16. called ¹ us in peace. For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

¹ Many ancient authorities read *you*.

riage relation with the one who has become a Christian, the Christian should not seek separation.

14. **For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife.** The word "sanctified" does not of course refer to personal holiness. That cannot be conferred. The conception is that the faith which in conversion "sets apart" or "consecrates" the husband or wife gives to the other a sort of holy status. "He (or she) stands upon the threshold of the church: his (or her) surroundings are hallowed." "United to a saintly consort he (or she) is in daily contact with saintly conduct: holy association may become holy assimilation and the sanctity which ever environs may at last penetrate."—Evans.

Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. This is meant to confirm the statement that the unbelieving spouse is consecrated in the one who believes. In a Christian mother's or father's thought a child is a gift of God and devoted to Him. It is a holy thing. The "consecration" which thus enfolds within itself the offspring of marriage extends also to an unbelieving husband or wife. The solidarity of the family sanctifies the bond between parent and child; husband and wife. This fact should stand in the way of seeking separation. The verse gives no secure help toward the settling of the question of infant baptism.

15. **Peace.** A Christian is not to seek separation from an unbeliever, simply because he is an unbeliever. If, however, the unbeliever insists upon separation he is to be allowed to depart. Marriage is not to be a form of slavery. Life in such conditions will sadly interfere with Christian peace.

16. **For how knowest thou, etc.** A reason for allowing the unbelieving spouse to depart if separation is insisted upon.

17. Only as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so
 18. ordain I in all the churches. Was any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised.
 19. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is
 20. nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man abide in that calling wherein he
 21. was called. Wast thou called being a bond servant? care not for it: ¹ but if thou canst become free, use

¹ Or, *nay, even if.*

Peace is not to be imperiled by the uncertain hope that the unbeliever may be won to faith.

c. The Christian life and one's earthly station, 7:17-24

17. This verse is both a summary of what immediately precedes it and a preface to what follows. It gives the general principle, "it is best for each man to abide in the condition in which the divine call came to him" and applies this principle to circumcision and slavery.

18-20. **Was any man called being circumcised?** The distinction between Jew and Gentile was not to be effaced. Renegade Jews had at times in order to avoid ridicule attempted this effacement by means of a surgical operation (1 Macc. 1:15; Josef. Ant. xii:5, 1; Celsus vii:25, 5). No more was a Gentile to be circumcised (see Acts 15:1, 5, 19). Christianity being essentially a spiritual matter, circumcision or uncircumcision were comparatively of no importance (see Gal. 5:6; 6:15). **The** essential thing is to "keep the commandments of God." **Calling** (vs. 20) signifies not "vocation" but "condition of life" which is part of the divine act of calling in that it may be the occasion of it and determine the manner of it.

21. The new dignity given to life in becoming Christians undoubtedly brought to those in slavery added restlessness and discontent. Was the principle of abiding in that condition of life in which the call came to be applied here? Yes, a slave could be a worthy Christian. **But if thou canst become free use it rather.** The critical question in the interpretation of this clause is the reference of "it" in "use it rather." Does it stand for "freedom" or "slavery"? If a slave can be free, is he to take

22. *it* rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bond servant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ's bond servant.
23. Ye were bought with a price; become not bond
24. servants of men. Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God.
25. 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 faithful. I

freedom, or is he to remain a slave? Regarding the interpretation of this clause Dean Stanley says that "it is one of the most evenly balanced questions in the New Testament." It seems best, therefore, to give the two interpretations and leave the reader to choose. (1) Use it, *i.e.*, slavery. Remain a slave and honor Christ in the condition of slavery. Even though a slave, you are the Lord's freeman. This interpretation accords with the principle "abide in that calling wherein he was called" and seems to be confirmed by the first clause of verse 22. (2) Use it, *i.e.*, freedom. By this interpretation the clause "but if also—rather" is made parenthetical. The adversative "but" is strong and the verb "use" is more naturally employed in reference to a new opportunity than of a continuing state. Furthermore it would be more consistent with Paul's mind to recommend "freedom" if it were legitimately possible. See Epistle of Philemon.

22. Inasmuch as the new relation to Christ frees a man from the bondage of sin his condition in life, whether a slave or a freeman, can be maintained without harm. In either case he obeys a Master whose service is spiritual freedom.

23. **Become not bond servants of men.** The words are addressed to the whole Church. Bought, as all have been, with the blood of Jesus, they are not to allow evil advisers or public opinion to bring them into any kind of bondage to men.

d. Regarding the Marriage of Virgins, 7:25-40

25. Paul now turns to consider the third question about which the Corinthians had asked advice, *viz.*: what to do in the case of girls who were still at home under the care of father or guardian. Before treating specifically of this matter he lays down a general principle in view of the "present distress" and of the belief that "the time is shortened."

I give my judgment. As one "worthy of trust" he gives an

26. think, therefore, that this is good by reason of the present distress, *namely*, that it is good for a man
 27. ¹ to be as he is. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife?
 28. seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Yet such shall have tribulation in the flesh:
 29. and I would spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time ² is shortened, that henceforth both those
 30. that have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and

¹ Gr., *so to be.*² Or, *is shortened henceforth, that both those, etc.*

opinion which is not to be taken as a fixed rule, but which, in their conditions, should have careful attention. Those conditions are covered by the description

26. **The present distress**, which refers to the troublous times preceding the Lord's coming (see Lk. 21:23-28). Paul and the early church generally believed in the nearness of the Lord's second advent. In view of this crisis **it is good for anyone** (not merely virgins) **to be as he is**, *i.e.*, to remain without change of condition. Verse 27 explains this last statement.

28. Marriage, while discouraged because of **existing circumstances**, is not to be looked upon as sinful. It is simply that it shall bring **tribulation in the flesh**. "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune." Persecutions might come.

29-32. **But this I say, rather, I declare.** This earnest utterance is antithetic to what he has advised about remaining in the condition in which each one was, especially in the unmarried condition. All are urged to change **their attitude** toward earthly things, in view of the fact that **the time is shortened**. The Lord's coming is nigh. They must live as those who at any moment may be called to leave earthly relations and interests. This does not mean that they were to be neglectful of present duty. Family obligations were not to be ignored nor business interests abandoned, but they must keep in mind the great expectation of their faith. They must maintain that spiritual detachment which would save them from becoming entangled in the affairs of this world and encumbered by them. Sorrow and

31. those that buy, as though they possessed not; and those that use the world, as not ¹abusing it: for
 32. the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be free from cares. He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he
 33. may please the Lord: but he that is married is careful for the things of the world, how he may please
 34. his ²wife. And there is a difference also between the wife and the virgin. She that is unmarried 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
 35. may please her husband. And this I say for your

¹ SV, *using it to the full.*

² SV, *wife, and is divided.* So also the woman that is unmarried and the virgin is careful, etc.

joy are both to be tempered by the thought of the coming of the Lord. What one buys he will not hold with too keen a sense of possession; he will use the world but not to excess **for the fashion, i.e., its external state, "the world of marryings and marketings, of feasts and funerals" is passing away.** In this section the writer has turned, as in 17-24, from considering wedlock to other earthly conditions involving **engagements** which might fetter the Spirit. He now returns to the subject of wedlock and in verses 32-34 gives another reason for abstention from marriage, viz., freedom of mind for devotion to Christ's work. This reason is enforced by all that he has written regarding the "shortened time."

32-35. **I would have you free from cares.** The unmarried man is "anxious" to devote himself wholly to the work of the Lord; the married man is "anxious" to please his wife as well as to serve the Lord. His care has in it, therefore, an element of distraction. Care for the earthly circumstances of married life is identified with care for the things of the world. **Not that I may cast a snare upon you.** The figure is that of a halter or lasso, not a trap, and means that he does not wish to deprive them of freedom to marry. He is rather advising that which, in view of the exigencies of the times, is "**seemly**" and may allow attendance upon the Lord without distraction. Lk. 10:39-41 illustrates the force of the last clause of verse 35.

- own profit; not that I may cast a ¹ snare upon you, but for that which is seemly, and that ye may attend
36. upon the Lord without distraction. But if any thinketh that he behaveth unseemly toward his ² virgin daughter, if she be past the flower of her age, and if need so requireth, let him do what he will;
37. he sinneth not; let them marry. 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

¹ Or, *constraint*; Gr., *noose*.

² Or, *virgin* (omitting daughter).

36-37. The specific question as to what a father ought to do with a daughter of age to marry is now considered. In accord with ancient custom the advice is given to **parents** who decide on the marriage of their children. Two cases are supposed in giving the advice which the Corinthians were seeking: (1) That in which a daughter is **past the flower of her age**, *i.e.*, over twenty years old, and there are good reasons for the marriage (if **need so requireth**). The father then is to give his consent and let his daughter and her suitor marry. He commits no sin in so doing. (2) That in which the father is firmly convinced in his own mind (**standeth stedfast in his heart**) as against social pressure that it is better for his daughter to remain single; is under no constraint (**having no necessity**) from peculiar circumstances but can act freely according to his own will. In such a case he does well if he keep her at home unmarried. There is no fixed rule according to which a father must always act. Marriage is honorable but in the general situation, as Paul viewed it, the single life was preferable.

Another interpretation of this difficult section (7:36-37) is to-day meeting with favor* and merits attention. It requires some modifications in the translation of the section. This is, therefore, given below:

"If anyone considers he is not behaving properly to the maid who is his spiritual bride, if his passions are strong and if it must be so, then let him do what he wants—let them be mar-

* See Moffat's translation of 1 Cor. 7:36-38; David Smith, *The Life and Letters of St. Paul*, pp. 266-268; Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of Paul*, pp. 184-191; Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, pp. 839-840.

38. ¹ virgin *daughter*, shall do well. So then both he that giveth his own ¹ virgin *daughter* in marriage doeth well; and he that giveth her not in marriage,

¹ Or, *virgin* (omitting daughter).

ried; it is no sin for him. But the man of firm purpose who has made up his mind, who instead of being forced against his will, has determined to himself to keep his maid a spiritual bride—that man will be doing the right thing. Thus both are right alike in marrying and in refraining from marriage, but he who does not marry will be found to have done better.”

According to this interpretation Paul is not writing about the duties of a father in reference to unmarried daughters, but of a husband toward his “spiritual bride.” A spiritual bride was one who was pledged to share the spiritual life of a given man to whom she was not married but with whom she was to live in spiritual fellowship.

The specific question touching upon the relation of a man to his spiritual bride is now considered. “What shall he do if he finds himself unequal to the abstinence he has attempted?” or to put the question in the words of the text, “If he thinketh he **behaveth unseemly** * toward his spiritual bride” and if he **be overpassionate** and his nature demands marriage. What then? The course is clear—“let them marry.” As seconding this rendering the following points are to be noted: (a) In the original (Greek) neither the word “father” nor “daughter” occurs. It reads “if anyone behaveth unseemly toward his virgin.” (b) The phrase “act unseemly” is not strictly appropriate to a father’s conduct toward his daughter. (c) Let them marry naturally applies to the husband and his spiritual bride. (d) A more natural sense is given to the whole section. (e) The translation “exceedingly lusty” or “overpassionate” instead of “past the flower of her age” is justifiable since found elsewhere. In the Apostolic Constitutions (III, 2) it is rendered “overpassionate.” It is applied here to the man.

Two difficulties confront this interpretation. (1) The verb rendered in the Revised Version “give in marriage” (28) must be changed to “marry.” The word is not found outside the New Testament and is there translated “give in marriage.” On the analogy, however, of like formations the verb can mean “to practice marriage” or “to celebrate marriage,” either of which would fit into the above interpretation. (2) The custom of spiritual

* The word has a sexual reference in Rom. 1:27.

39. shall do better. A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be ¹ dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in
40. the Lord. But she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment: and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

2. *On Eating Meat Offered to Idols*, 8:1—11:1

It was the intimate relation of idolatrous worship to social life which gave rise to the questions connected with this subject. The temples in a city like Corinth were often closely identified with social festivities. The sacrifice was the center of worship, and, as the greater part of the animal offered (only the legs and entrails were burned) reverted to the worshipers, the occasion for sacrifice was also the occasion for a banquet either

¹ Or, *fallen asleep*.

marriage cannot be traced back of the second century. It is, however, possible that owing to the emphasis Paul put upon the value of celibacy as well as to an ascetic reaction against the impurity of Corinth that this exceptional expedient arose. If the expedient in any case became too severe, it might be ended by marriage.

39-40. To the same import is the appended word regarding the **remarriage of widows**. It is perfectly right for them to marry again if they marry in the Lord, *i.e.*, with those who are believers, but a widow is more blessed if she remain a widow in order that she may give undivided devotion to the Lord. In all his advice upon the question of marriage or remarriage Paul believes that he is guided by the Spirit and not from mere personal inclination. It is to be remembered, however, that he is speaking to Corinthians and at a time when the expectation of the Lord's speedy coming was emphasized. These considerations have done much to determine the character of the teaching. Nevertheless, it is well to note that the marriage of Christians is in any circumstances honorable. Exceptional conditions may make celibacy preferable but only for those who are continent and eagerly desire to serve the Lord. Paul does not exalt celibacy as an ideal for all.

in the temple itself or at the home. To this relatives and friends were invited. Such an invitation has come to light in an Egyptian papyrus: "Chairemon invites you to dinner at the table of the Lord Serapis in the Serapeum, to-morrow, *i.e.*, the fifteenth" (Pap. Oxy. I, 110). These gatherings were by no means always religious. Associations and clubs of various kinds, though organized for nonreligious purposes, were usually united by a bond of devotion to some deity in whose temple they held social feasts. The god himself was supposed to be the host. What should a Christian do in case he were invited? Furthermore, much of the meat for sale in the public markets came from sacrificial altars. Had it become thereby polluted? What was a Christian's duty in regard to this? Must he carefully inquire about it before buying it, or partaking of it, if he sat down at the table of a non-Christian friend? Apparently there were two opinions upon the subject in the Corinthian Church. Some, sure in their judgment that the idols of the city represented merely imaginary things and, therefore, really had no significance, claimed full liberty in the matter. "We have knowledge," they boasted, "all things are lawful" for us; we may eat wherever and whenever idol-meats are put before us. Others, having no such firm conviction regarding the nothingness of idols were troubled with scruples,—survivals from their habits of idolatrous worship. They had so long revered the deities whom the idols represented that they could not free themselves completely from a sense of their reality. In partaking of these meats they were fearful lest they take part again in the worship they had given up. Their consciences would then be defiled. "The strong" saw no reason for any breach of social friendliness; "the weak," desiring to keep alive friendly relations with former friends, could do so only with spiritual peril to themselves.

Such was the situation and Paul meets it by showing (1) how "the strong" must act in view of the weak. Personal liberty must be restricted by the spirit of love (8:1-13). This he illustrates and enforces by his own practice (9:1-22). He then considers (2) the value of voluntary restriction of personal liberty to the strong themselves. Without it they may in the end fail (9:23-27). A confirmatory example of this is the experience of Israel in the wilderness (10:1-14). Finally he dwells upon the inconsistency of Christians attending idol-feasts. These feasts imply fellowship with demons. Can a Christian who has fellowship with Christ have fellowship with demons (10:15-22)? The whole section concludes with a summary statement of the rules which should regulate one's action (10:23-11:1).

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

¹ Gr., *buildeth up*.

- a. *How the Strong Must Act in View of the Weak; Personal Liberty Must Be Restricted by the Spirit of Love, 8:1-13.*

8:1. **We know that we all have knowledge.** This is quite likely a quotation from the Corinthian letter and is made with a touch of irony. There is a bit of conceit in the assertion. At any rate the enlightenment which they claimed seems to have been of that purely intellectual kind which easily fosters pride. They might clearly know that an idol is nothing and yet work harm through their knowledge. Only love can save one from this for it is love that "buildeth up" (edifieth) a church. 2. Indeed, if any man thinks that he has come to know anything but knows it simply with his head, he does not know as he ought to know. **Knowledge which is devoid of love is really not a true knowledge.** 3. The real way to the knowledge of God is to love Him (1 Jn. 4:7-8). Spiritual knowledge has in it the ele-

-
4. known of him. 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
 5. one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods
 6. many, and lords many; 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
 7. all things, and we through him. Howbeit in all men there is not that knowledge: but some, being used
-

ment of appropriation. He who knows God in this way is known of Him which guarantees the fact that the man himself has true knowledge. In this way before coming to the answer of the question itself regarding idol-meats Paul calls upon the Corinthians to reflect upon the worth for real Christian service of the knowledge which they claimed.

4. **No idol is anything.** The better translation is **there is no idol in the world** as the structure is parallel with the next clause "and that there is no God." It may be a statue; it cannot be the image of a god who does not exist.

5-6. Over against the polytheistic faith of the Greek who believed "in gods many" is set the clear enlightened creed of the Corinthian Church:—"one God, the Father—the source of all created things and the One to whom we Christians are consecrated; one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things came into being (the Messianic stamp is upon all creation) and through whom we Christians are what we are because He has redeemed us." If this creed was part of the Corinthian letter addressed to Paul, which is not at all improbable, it shows what an emancipation from the superstitions of heathendom had come to many in the church. Such a creed surely made meats sacrificed to idols things morally indifferent and opened the way to freedom. It is to be noted also how early the higher doctrine of the Lord's person existed in the faith of the church. Paul would undoubtedly have encouraged the freedom which this "knowledge" brought had it not been for the "weaker brothers." Because of them, the spirit of love lays restriction upon the exercise of freedom.

7. **Howbeit in all men there is not that knowledge.** In some there was not the clear insight of the creed given above. Weakness of understanding or the easy habit of heathen worship made it impossible for them to get rid of the impression that an

- until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.
8. But meat will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, ¹ are we the worse; nor, if we eat, ² are
9. we the better. But take heed lest by any means this ³ liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to
10. the weak. For if a man see thee which hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, ⁴ be emboldened to eat
11. things sacrificed to idols? For ⁵ through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose
12. sake Christ died. And thus sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is

¹ Gr., *do we lack.*² Gr., *do we abound.*³ Or, *power.*⁴ Gr., *be builded up.*⁵ Gr., *in.*

idol is a reality and therefore, in eating the idol sacrifices, they felt that they were doing wrong. And so **their conscience, being weak, is defiled.** It is defiled by doing something which, through want of insight, it considers idolatrous, thus bringing a sense of guilt. It is to be noted that Paul has not in mind censorious and narrow-minded people. "Weak brethren" are not those who wish to make others fit to their whims or demand certain restrictions upon freedom because they have different and decided conceptions of duty. It is rather one who, troubled by unfounded scruples, is quietly emboldened to do violence to them through the example of others. It is one thing to use freedom in the maintenance of right principles; it is quite another to embolden a scrupulous conscience to be untrue to itself.

8. **But meat will not commend us to God.** As that "which goeth into the mouth cannot defile a man" the eating of meats offered to idols can in no way affect our relation to God. Whether a Christian of insight exercises his freedom or restricts it, he in no way, changes his position toward God as far as the food is concerned. The serious question to be considered in the whole matter is the effect of our action upon others. That possible effect is shown in the next verses.

9-12. An "enlightened" Christian goes to a banquet. A "weak brother" in the same company sees him partake of the feast. What follows? He is **emboldened** to join in the feast. Paul

13. weak, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble.
9. 1. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are ye not my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye

uses ironically the word "edified"—edified to the weakening of his conscience! The very "enlightenment" which takes the one freely to the feast becomes the means of the other's entering upon the road to ruin. "Through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth." Furthermore the weak Christian is a "brother"; Christ died for him. The sin, therefore, is not alone against a fellow-disciple, weak though he be. It is against Christ. This is the climax of the tragedy. The loveless exercise of freedom could not be more clearly condemned.

13. **Wherefore.** Note in this personal pledge the recurrence of the word "brother." "It is this personal element that turns an academic question into a vital and personal one." Note also that the pledge is conditional. If there is no danger of offense to a "brother" then the freedom which enlightenment gives is unrestricted.

b. Paul's Example of Self-denial for the Sake of Others, 9:1-27

In setting forth his own practice of restricting personal liberty for the highest interests of others Paul's thought moves as follows: There are indisputable proofs of his apostleship (vss. 1-2) and that apostleship has certain rights which he was free to claim (vss. 4-11). These rights he had foregone in the sacred interests of the gospel. He had not only made no claim for material support, but he had brought himself under bondage to all—Jew and Gentile, that he might win them for Christ.

1. **Am I not free?** Have I not the freedom of one who is Christian? **Am I not an apostle?** While the main purpose of this latter question is to lead up to the thought of the rights which he is willing to forego for the sake of others, there is also an emphasis upon the validity of his apostleship.

2. The two credentials of his apostleship are (1) that he has **seen Jesus our Lord.** Paul rarely uses this combination of names: generally he has Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ. The name Jesus stands for the earthly life of the Master. "Jesus our

-
3. in the Lord. My defence to them that examine me
4. is this. Have we no right to eat and drink? Have
5. we no right to lead about a wife that is a ¹ believer,
even as the rest of the apostles and the brethren of
6. the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas,
-

¹ Gr., *sister*.

Lord" signifies the risen Jesus. The reference of the whole statement is to the experience on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3-5, 17). (2) **The Corinthian Church.** That under the power of God he had established a Christian church in Corinth was in itself ample vindication of his claim to be "sent" of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:2).

3. **This** refers to what has just been set forth. His apostleship had evidently been challenged in Corinth, but we are to bear in mind in this chapter, that the main consideration is not so much the defense of his apostleship as it is his unwillingness to press his rights as an apostle to the offense of others.

4. With this verse begins the section (4-15a) setting forth the rights of those who minister to the church in spiritual things. As an apostle Paul claims that at the expense of the church he is entitled to (a) material support (b) to take a wife with him on his journeys (c) to be freed from the necessity of manual labor. The last is really the first claim stated in negative form.

5. **A wife that is a believer.** The Greek reads, "a sister—a wife." The question in substance is: "Have we not the right to take a Christian sister to wife and to have her go with us on our journeys?" **As the rest of the apostles.** An indication that most of the apostles were married and took their wives with them on their missionary tours. **The brethren of the Lord.** Mentioned because of their preëminence in the church. They, too, had claimed and used this right of taking their wives with them at the expense of the church. See Matt. 13:55 for their names. Their relationship to the Lord has been much disputed and is still undecided. Were they (1) actual brothers, (2) half brothers, or (3) cousins? There is no decisive reason against (1), (2) is possible, (3) is improbable. **Cephas** is especially mentioned because his name and example were well known in Corinth.

6. **Or I only and Barnabas.** Barnabas, who, from the manner of the use of his name, was apparently widely known, had joined Paul in the work of self-maintenance.

7. have we not a right to forbear working? 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
8. of the flock? 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, or ¹saith he it
10. altogether 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 par-
11. taking. If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it

¹ Or, *saith he it, as he doubtless doth, for our sake; SV, assuredly for our sake.*

7. Having set forth his parity with the apostles and other eminent servants of the church in his claim for material support he now adduces five distinct reasons for the defense of this claim. (1) **Analogy.** The soldier is paid for his services; the planter eats of his vineyard; the shepherd partakes of the milk from the flock which he feeds.

8. (2) **The teaching of the Law.** This is higher than human judgment ("after the manner of men"); the Law (Deut. 25:4) yields the same principle when understood in its full import. "Thou shalt not muzzle a threshing ox." As he tramples out the grain upon the threshing floor he is allowed to eat. This custom is continued in Palestine to this day.

9. **Is it for the oxen that God careth?** The form of the question in Greek "it is not for the oxen, is it, etc." plainly expects the answer "No"—but this can mean only that it is not **primarily** for the oxen. The law was for man's moral good. It was to be secured in this case by his humanity toward his beasts.

10. **Altogether—assuredly. For our sake.** The principle involved was originally for the Jewish nation, but Paul makes especial application of it to Christian teachers. **Because (that).** Better, "to show that." The force is explanatory rather than casual. They should work in the hope of partaking of the products of their spiritual labor.

11-12. This gives the third reason in defense of his claim for support, viz., the intrinsic justice of it. He had brought to

- a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?
12. If others partake of *this* right over you, do we not yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Know ye not that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple *and* they which wait upon the
13. altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the
14. gospel should live of the gospel. 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
15. my glorying void. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me,
16. if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.
17. What then is my reward? That, when I preach the
- 18.

them rich spiritual blessings. Should they not in return, give him enough of their earthly gains upon which to live? This reason was further sustained by the fact that they had already supported other teachers. **We bear all things.** The verb indicates a patient endurance of all the consequences that came to him from not availing himself of the right of support.

13. Again the practice of the priests confirmed his claim. A portion of every sacrifice was always reserved for them (see Numb. 18:8-20).

14-15a. His last reason is the word of Jesus himself, "The laborer is worthy of his food" (Matt. 10:10; Lk. 10:7).

After thus giving reasons in defense of the righteousness of a minister's claim to support he turns to declare that he will make no use of the privileges to which he is entitled and to explain why he takes this stand. It is for the gospel's sake (23) (vss. 15b-23). **My glorying.** His boast is that he preaches the gospel without cost to the church.

16-18. Preaching itself is no ground for glorying. He was obliged to do this. The duty, the necessity to preach, was laid

- gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so
19. as not to use to the full my right in the gospel. 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, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I
21. might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I
-

upon him by the commission given him on the way to Damascus (see Acts 9:15; 13:2; 22:21). He was "laid hold on by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). Hence his position was not that of one who of his own free will had taken up the service; he was rather like a steward whose work was chosen for him and of whom fidelity was expected (4:2). He was not to be rewarded for simply doing his duty (Lk. 17:10). And yet he had a reward in that he had determined to preach **without pay** for thereby he had the satisfaction which comes to a generous mind from unpaid service. Note the succession of "fors" in verses 16-17.

19. **For though I was free from all men.** Turning back again to the thought of "freedom" with its implied rights Paul sets forth other ways in which he gave up his rights in the interests of others and for the furtherance of the gospel.

20. **To the Jews I became as a Jew.** The word Jew has here "a religious, not a racial meaning." Paul, of course, remained a Jew by race. Illustrations of the way in which he "became as a Jew" are found in Acts 16:3; 18:18; 21:26; 23:6; 26:22. **To them that are under the law.** These were in all probability circumcised proselytes. They were "under the Mosaic law, and the above illustrations from the Acts explain also how he became "as under the law." The death of Christ had freed him from subjection to the law of Moses but he was bound by the law of Christ, *i.e.*, by the law of love. It was love which constrained him to waive his rights that he might win the greater number.

21. **To them that are without law.** These are the heathen. Paul often accommodated himself to their prejudices (Gal. 2:3, 12, 14). He quoted their poets and once used as a text an inscription from one of their altars. Acts 17:23, 28. **As without law.** This is not the equivalent of our English "Outlaw"

22. might gain them that are without law. 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
23. means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof.
24. Know ye not that they which run in a ¹ race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run that
25. ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

¹ Gr., *race-course*.

(Evans) which is too strong. It means rather that he took the heathen point of view as opposed to the Jewish who were under law. The limitation upon this is in the words that follow. The law of love (Christ's law) saved him from the violation of Christian principle, while it gave him, through sympathetic accommodation, the greater power to win men to the gospel.

22. **To the weak I became weak.** He respected their scruples and refrained from doing what seemed to them wrong. **I am become all things, i.e.,** all things possible to sympathetic accommodation but not contrary to Christian principles. His purpose was to save men; his motive was Christian love exhibiting itself wherever needful in self-denial.

c. The Value of Voluntary Restriction of Personal Liberty to the Strong Themselves, 9:23-27

23. Hitherto Paul has been urging self-denial for the salvation of others. Now he presses its claim as a means of achieving one's own salvation. Without it he might fail to be a partaker therein with those for whom he had labored. In other words, self-denial was of the very spirit of the gospel itself. It were tragic indeed, because of a lack of it to preach to others about it and in the end be rejected.

24. **So run that ye may obtain.** The Isthmian games celebrated every third year not far from the city were familiar to all his readers. Two of the five—boxing, racing, wrestling, leaping and throwing of the discus—he selects for illustration of his meaning.

25. **Temperate in all things.** Those who took part in the games were required to abstain for ten months from all physical indulgence. The points in both illustrations are self-discipline

26. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so ¹ fight I,
 27. as not beating the air: but I ² buffet my body and
 bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that
 I have preached to others I myself should be re-
 jected.
10. 1. For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant
 how that our fathers were all under the cloud and
 2. all passed through the sea; and were all baptized
 3. ³ unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did

¹ Gr., *box*.² Gr., *bruise*.³ Gr., *into*.

and definiteness of aim. The application to the earnest endeavor of winning eternal life is patent.

27. **Rejected.** A term from the games, "rejected by the umpire." Such rejection was no imaginary danger, as an illustration from the history of Israel will show.

d. The Rejection of Ancient Israel and its Warning to them,
 10:1-14

1. **For** refers back to "rejected" (9:27) and introduces an illustration corroborating the danger referred to. **Our fathers**, *i.e.*, our spiritual fathers. The Gentiles have through faith become members of the spiritual Israel (Rom. 4:11). **All**. Five times attention is called to the fact that all shared the blessings of God, but yet with most of them (really only two were exceptions) God was not pleased (vs. 5).

2. **Baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea** (Ex. 13:21, 22; 14:22). They gave themselves in loyalty to Moses in those experiences which attended their deliverance from Egypt—the baptism in the cloud and in the sea. Not only were they delivered from bondage but they were given daily sustenance.

3. **Spiritual meat. . . Spiritual drink.** The manna (Ex. 16:14) and the water from the rock (Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11) were **material** in substance but spiritual in the sense that for those who partook of them with discernment they had spiritual power. "They were intended to convince the covenant people of God's special relation to them" and so to strengthen their faith. Such divinely ordered sustenance was clear evidence of a redeeming purpose.

-
4. all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual
 5. rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well
 6. pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilder-
 7. ness. ¹ Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to
-

¹ Or, *in these things they became figures of us.*

4. **A spiritual rock that followed them.** As explaining "the spiritual drink" two statements are made (1) that it came from a spiritual rock which followed them, and (2) that this rock was Christ. A Rabbinical legend traceable back to the first century A. D. is to the effect that a well (later a rock) followed the Israelites and gave them drink. It may be that this legend suggested to Paul the form of presentation of his teaching, but the adjective "spiritual" dismisses entirely any literal acceptance of the story. He is thinking of the preëxistent Christ through whom God's redemptive purpose had expression in the old as well as in the new dispensation. This "expression" of God in Old Testament times is described in the Book of Wisdom 10:16 as Wisdom; in Philo, as the Word. For the preëxistence of Christ see Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 8:9; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:5-6.

5. All had the blessings, nevertheless only two—Caleb and Joshua—entered the promised land (Num. 14:16, 29-30). Herein was the stern warning against a careless, unspiritual use of God's blessings.

6. **These things.** The misuse of divine blessings and the consequent rejection. **Examples** for us (not types of us) showing us that we should not lust after evil things (Num. 11:34). Four examples of sins springing from this lust after evil things are selected from the history of Israel because of the parallel situation of the Corinthians. The first of these is

7. **Idolatry.** The incident in the Old Testament is the worship of the molten calf (Ex. 32:6). In connection with this worship there was a feast in honor of the new God. **Neither be ye idolaters.** Attending the feasts in idol-temples might be playing with temptation. **Rose up to play**—to take part in frolicking and dancing.

8. eat and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in
 9. one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt the ¹Lord, as some of them tempted, and
 10. perished by the serpents. Neither murmur ye as some of them murmured, and perished by the de-
 11. stroyer. Now these things happened unto them ²by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are
 12. come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth
 13. take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation

¹ Some ancient authorities read *Christ*.

² Gr., by way of figure.

8. **Fornication.** Israel's sin is recounted in Num. 25:1-9. Because of it 24,000 perished. The number given in the text is probably due to a lapse of memory. Idolatry and fornication were closely associated at Corinth. The priestesses in the temple of Aphrodite were courtesans.

9. **Tempt the Lord.** To test God to the utmost limit by "the sin of mingled unbelief, impatience and presumptuousness." The incident in the Old Testament to which reference is made is found in Num. 21:4-9. The Corinthians were tempting God by trifling with idolatry.

10. **Murmur.** The Israelites exhibited a spirit of rebellious discontent with Moses and Aaron for their severe punishment of Korah and his followers (Num. 16:41). This was being paralleled in Corinth by the irritation over the rigid teaching of Paul regarding self-denial in the matter of idol-festivities. **Destroyer.** Not Satan but the destroying angel sent by God Himself (Ex. 12:23).

11. **The ends of the ages.** "The ages are the successive periods in the development of the world's history." The Corinthians were living in the final age, and were the inheritors of all God's teaching in the previous ages. It behooved them in the light of Christ's revelation to interpret aright and fully the meaning of past disciplines and judgment.

12. **Thinketh he standeth.** The strong, enlightened, self-confident Corinthian who is sure he can go to the idol-feasts with impunity. **Lest he fall** as the Israelites did. Overconfidence begets carelessness. The only safety is in the watchfulness of discipline and self-restraint.

13. While one must be watchful, on one side he is not, on

- 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
14. it. 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 ¹ communion of the blood of Christ? The ² bread which we break is it not a ¹ communion of the body of

¹ Or, *participation in.*² Or, *loaf.*

the other, to be afraid or distrustful. In the trying experience which the breach with his old heathen life would bring about his temptations would not be beyond the power of endurance. Others had resisted like temptations. Moreover, **God is faithful** to His promise to keep and will make a way of escape.

e. The Inconsistency of going to the Lord's Table and also to Idol-feasts, 10:15-22

15. **Ye** (emphatic) yourselves. I say, I "declare" or I "admit." Judge yourselves what I admit. In order to a clear understanding of this section several points must be kept in mind. (1) While Paul denied the existence of the heathen divinities he held that evil powers were at work behind the idols. There is but one God in the world; an idol, therefore, is nothing as the representation of a god. Malignant and degrading powers, however, used idol-worship for their own ends. (2) The Lord's supper and Jewish sacrificial meals are used as analogies. The chief subject is the **idol-feast**. It is only as it bears upon this that the Lord's supper is referred to. (3) The cup is mentioned first probably because of its importance in the pagan ceremony. The worshipers drank out of the same cup but they did not partake of the same bread (Hastings, DB., p. 132). **Wise men**,—men of good sense.

16. **The cup of blessing**, *i.e.*, the cup which was consecrated by the prayer of thanksgiving said over it and to which the congregation said "Amen" (**which we bless**). The word "**communion**" is the key word of the whole section. It has to do with personal relationship and means fellowship. Through partaking of the cup and of the bread they have fellowship both with Christ and with each other. **The blood of Christ . . . the body of Christ**. These words do not imply that in the

17. Christ? ¹ seeing that we, who are many, are one
² bread, one body: for we all partake ³ of the one
 18. ² bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they
 which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?
 19. What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols
 20. is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say
 that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they
 sacrifice to ⁴ devils, and not to God: and I would not

¹ Or, *seeing that there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body.*

² Or, *loaf.*

³ Gr., *from.*

⁴ *demons.*

Lord's supper we partake somehow of the substance of the Lord's blood and body as really present in the elements. "Communion of the body and blood is communion with the personal Christ through appropriation of the fruits of that sacrifice which is represented by the broken bread and the wine." It is a spiritual communion or fellowship.

17. **Seeing that we who are many, etc.** The thought of the verse is that as we all partake of one bread, we all belong to one body. As the Lord's supper evidences our fellowship with Christ, so it does our fellowship with one another, for we all partake of the one bread. This fellowship should not be lightly looked upon and broken by going to idolatrous feasts.

18. **Israel after the flesh.** Israel as a nation. **Communion with the altar.** In eating of the sacrifices offered upon the altar they came into fellowship with Him to whom the sacrifices were offered. "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thy oxen and I will bless thee" (Ex. 20:24). In both the Lord's supper and in the Jewish sacrificial feasts there is fellowship with an unseen Divine power. Can the idol-feasts be without fellowship with an unseen power? The answer to this is prepared for by guarding himself against any inconsistency with what he has said in 8:4. Meat offered to idols is not different from meat not so offered; neither has an idol in itself any reality. Certainly not.

20. **They sacrifice to demonic Powers.** These constitute the unseen powers with whom the worshipers in an idol temple come into fellowship. The evidence of it is in the riot and debauch which so often attended these feasts. Paul shared the widespread contemporary belief in demonic Powers and their evil influence upon men. His language here is reminiscent of

21. that ye should have communion with ¹ devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of ¹ devils: ye cannot partake of the table of the
22. Lord and of the table of ¹ devils. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?
23. All things are lawful; but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful but all things ² edify

¹ demons.

² Gr., *build not up.*

the Greek version of Deut. 32:17. In this verse the real danger of attendance upon idol-feasts is brought to light.

21. **Ye cannot**—a moral impossibility if one has real fellowship with Christ.

22. **Provoke the Lord to jealousy** (Deut. 32:21). Drive Him to the assertion and vindication of His exclusive claim. The figure is taken from the marriage relation and has a good sense. **Stronger.** There is a note of irony in this.

f. Conclusion—Containing some General Principles and Specific Directions, 10:23—11:1

The whole subject of eating meat offered to idols has, as the Apostle has considered it, two distinct phases. One has to do with it from the point of view the weak Christian (8:1—9:22) and one's own highest interests (9:23—10:14) and urges the limitation which must be put upon personal freedom. The other, centering attention upon feasts connected with idolatrous worship whereby those who partake are brought into communion with demonic powers, makes clear the moral impossibility of any earnest Christian taking part in them (10:15—22). It is regarding only the first phase that expediency has any place. The single and only line of action in regard to the second is to keep away, "to flee from idolatry." These closing admonitions have to do with the first phase of the matter and touch upon (1) the eating of sacrificial meat bought in the market; (2) eating such meat upon the table of a heathen host.

23. **All things** not wrong in themselves (see 6:12). **Expedient**—profitable, advantageous to one's own self (see 9:24—10:13) or to others. **Edify not**, do not help others in their Christian life; do not build up the Church.

24. not. Let no man seek his own, but *each* his neighbor's *good*. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. 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 shewed it, and for conscience sake: conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; *for why is my liberty*
-

24. Our aim should be in all our social relations to look to the bearing of our conduct upon the good of others. This sums up 8:7—9:22.

25. In the case of meat bought in the public market for his own table an enlightened Christian is to eat asking no question for conscience sake, *i.e.*, stating no inquiries with a view to making it a matter of conscience.

26. He knows that to the Lord belongs the earth (Ps. 24:1) hence that all meat is good whether offered to idols or not (1 Tim. 4:4; Mk. 7:15).

27. If a non-Christian friend asks some of you to a meal in his home and you are **disposed to go** (*i.e.*, to go after reflecting upon the matter) follow the same course you would at your own table, if nobody raises a question regarding the meat. Paul's whole line of advice here shows that he has not in mind a ceremonial feast in an idol-temple.

28. If **any man say**. Any scrupulous or "weak" Christian (see 8:7) **offered in sacrifice**. The word in the original here is peculiar (*hierothuton*). A pagan Greek would have used it to show that the sacrifice was sacred to the gods. Something of this notion, perhaps, lingered in the mind of the informant. At once the question altered the situation and the strong Christian was to refrain from eating. The principle in verse 24 came into play. The scrupulous brother must not by example be induced to violate his conscience.

29. By two rhetorical questions he justifies his refusing to eat. **"For why is my liberty judged by another conscience?"** The "for" points back to the command "do not eat" (28). "Why" means not "for what reason," nor "with what right," but "what worthy purpose," "what good end." The question then

30. judged by another conscience? ¹ If I by grace partake, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I
31. give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat or drink or
32. whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or to Greeks,
33. or to the Church of God: even as I also please all men in all things not seeking mine own profit, but
11. 1. the profit of the many, that they may be saved. Be ye imitators of me as I also am of Christ.

¹ SV, *If I partake with thankfulness.*

is virtually: what good end will be served if by eating I assert my liberty and that liberty is condemned by the conscience of another? (see Rom. 14:16).

30. The second question is to this effect: If I, with thanks to God, partake of the meat and by this assertion of my right and liberty call forth conscientious condemnation from those who are scrupulous what advantage is there in such an assertion? Both questions imply the right, as far as the enlightened Christian is concerned, to eat of the food; both of them justify his self-denial for another's good.

31. The great principle for guidance is this: do all for the glory of God. The **glory** of a thing is in its manifestation. We glorify God when we manifest His character; notably so when we show forth that spirit of love which is always considerate of the good of those about us. **Whatsoever ye do** widens the scope of the application of the principle to all relations of life.

32. **To Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God.** The first two are outside the church and "the church of God" contains those who need such consideration as he has been urging all along. To each and all they must be offenseless. "An ill-advised exhibition of Christian freedom might shock Jews and an ill-advised rigor about matters indifferent might excite the derision of the Greeks." Those without they must not hinder from coming in; those within they must not alienate.

33. **Please.** The meaning of this word is not so much to curry favor with all as to accommodate himself to them with the steadfast purpose of saving them (**that they may be saved**). See 9:19-23.

1. **As I also am of Christ.** The pattern of Christ's unselfishness is in the immeasurable sacrifice He made to redeem us (Phil. 2:5-8) and His self-denying life of love (Rom. 15:3).

III. CONCERNING DISORDERS WHICH HAD ARISEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP, 11:2—14:40

1. *The Unveiling of the Head by Women in Public Worship*, 11:2—16

2. Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things and hold fast the traditions, even as I de-

These disorders were the unveiling of the head by women (11:2-16); the profanation of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34); the misuse of spiritual gifts (12:1—14:40). In treating the third subject the analogy of the church to the body with its unity of life and variety of members is set forth (12:12-21) as is also the supremacy of love (ch. 13).

This is the only passage in the New Testament which has to do with this particular trouble. The atmosphere and spirit of Corinth were, in all likelihood, the reason for its appearance in the Corinthian church. On the part of the upper middle classes, the privacy and honor of mothers and daughters were carefully guarded in public by means of the veil. It was a necessity in a city where hundreds of shameless women went about unveiled. Then, too, there were women of unconventional life—the *hetaerai*—who were allowed much freedom and equality with men in public life. Paul's own description of the character of the church (1:26-29) makes it quite possible to think that there were those in its membership who favored this liberty on the part of the women. Moreover, they could claim that the gospel recognized the complete equality of man and woman in regard to religion. Why, then, should those women who wished to do away with it, be compelled to put on the veil? Paul answers this question very decidedly.* The conventions of

* "The veiling of women was practised more closely and completely in Tarsus than in any other Greek or Graeco-Asiatic city, and Paul, who had grown up to regard veiling as a duty incumbent on all women, now presents it to the Corinthians as a moral and religious obligation." Ramsay, *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day*, p. 214.

3. livered them to you. 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
4. God. Every man praying or prophesying having his

well-ordered society must be respected. Furthermore, the whole Christian and natural order alike as far as man and woman are concerned, seconded this demand. Woman is subordinate to man. This fact is not inconsistent with her equality with man in regard to religion, but it is a fact, nevertheless, and warrants no breach with those customs of the self-respecting society of the time which recognize it. Paul argues the subordination of woman to man (1) From the Christian order in the world (3-5); (2) from the order established by creation (6-12); (3) from the teaching of nature herself (14-15).

2. **I praise you.** The words that immediately follow these are the reason of the praise. They were probably statements from the letter of the Corinthians to Paul "we remember you . . . and hold fast," etc. **The traditions**—Christian instruction and rules current in the churches (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6).

3. **But I would have you know.** The phrase calls their attention to something new which they either had not known or had not fully understood (cf. 10:1) and introduces the principles which should be regulative of their action. **The head of every man is Christ.** The Christian order is: Christ is the head of man, man is the head of woman, God is the head of Christ. **The head** is in close vital union with the body and has dominion over it. Both of these realities are connoted in the metaphysical meaning of "head" which may be interpreted: Dominion based upon vital union. Man united to Christ by faith accepts his authority over him; woman joined to man in marriage accepts his authority over her; Christ as the Son is subordinate to the authority of God (Evans). It is to be understood, of course, that it is in view of the **distinction of sexes and of social relations** that the subordination of woman is spoken of. "The husband is not between a Christian wife and her Lord; she is subordinate to him **in the Lord** and it is by aiding him that she lives for the Lord."—Godet.

4. **Every man praying or prophesying.** This is not meant to imply that such cases of disorder were taking place in the church. The case is instanced only to give force by way of contrast to the proper conduct of women. **Prophesying.** Speaking truth under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. **Dishonoreth his head.** While primarily the reference is to his

5. head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head: for it is one and the
 6. same thing thing as if she were shaven. 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
 7. veiled. For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, for as much as he is the image and glory of
 8. God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For
-

own head, indirectly, in view of the immediate context, it may refer to Christ. The veil is the badge of subordination. By wearing it man shames himself by denying his superiority to woman and shames Christ by denying his proper relation to Him.

5. **Every woman, etc.** By being unveiled, while in prayer or prophesying a woman dishonors her head not only in refusing to acknowledge her subordination to her husband (a divinely ordered relationship,—see vs. 3) but in ignoring the demand of decorum. **as if she were shaven.** Public women went about unveiled. Slave women had the head shaven. Among the Jews an adulterer was thus punished. A woman who insisted upon being unveiled in public worship put herself on a level with these.

6. If she insists in this way also upon social equality with men, let her cut her hair short like a man. As that would be a mark of disgrace, let her keep her veil on.

7. Up to this point Paul has had in mind the "divine law of subordination" set forth in verse 3. This law is confirmed by the facts which appear in the creation of man and woman. The divine order is seconded by the natural. To this attention is now directed. **The image and glory of God.** In Gen. 1:26 it reads "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Paul substitutes "glory" for likeness and centers his thought upon the dominion which was given to man immediately after he was created. So like God was he, as compared with all the rest of creation, that to him was given dominion. This was his "glory." Two distinctions are made between man and woman. (1) He is both the image and glory of God which she is not. (2) Man is the glory of God; woman is the glory of man. Both of these distinctions are reasons why the man ought not to veil his head in public worship and why the woman should.

8-9. These verses contain the proofs or confirmations of the fact that "woman is the glory of man." (1) That she was de-

the man is not of the woman; but the woman of
 9. the man: for neither was the man created for the
 10. woman; but the woman for the man: For this cause
 ought the woman to ¹ have a sign of authority on her
 11. head, because of the angels. ² Howbeit neither is the
 woman without the man, nor the man without the
 12. woman, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the
 13. man so is the man also by the woman; but all things
 are of God. Judge ye ³ in yourselves: is it seemly
 14. that a woman pray unto God unveiled? Doth not
 even nature itself teach you that, if a man have long

¹ Or, *have authority over.*

² SV, *nevertheless.*

³ Or, *among.*

rived from the man (Gen. 2:21-23). (2) She was created for man, *i.e.*, to be a helpmeet for him (Gen. 2:18). Man, under God, is the source and aim of **her** being. All this is based upon a literal acceptance of the account of the creation of woman as given in Genesis.

10. **For this cause**, *i.e.*, because of all that is set forth in 7b-9. **A sign of authority.** The marginal reading is better "to have authority over her head," *i.e.*, control over her head. See Rev. 11:6, 14:18, 20:6; Rom. 9:21, where the same form of expression appears. The veil gives a woman this control. By reason of it she is not exposed to evil gaze nor insulting word. Her privacy is respected and honored. In veiling herself to all but her husband she acknowledges her subordination. **Because of the angels.** The expression "the angels" in the New Testament always refers to holy angels. They were thought of as present at public worship and would be shocked by the irreverence and insubordination.

11-12. These words are to guard against a one-sided emphasis upon woman's subordination and a possible contempt for it. **In the Lord.** Man and woman are indispensable to each other in their common life and service. Woman was taken from man, but man also is born of woman, and both with their compensating interrelations are of God.

13. The Apostle now appeals to social sentiment and natural feeling. **Unto God**, *i.e.*, unto God in public worship where earnest prayer should be accompanied by holy modesty.

14. **Nature.** This means the natural feeling that had been established by custom and so came to be nature. Greek, Roman, and Jewish men wore their hair short. Long hair for them

15. 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
 16. her for a covering. But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

2. *The Profanation of the Lord's Supper, 11:17-34*

17. But in giving you this charge, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the
-

was unmanly. Woman's long hair, on the contrary, was her glory. Nature thus teaches that woman whose hair was "given her for a covering" (vs. 15) was meant for a life of modesty and retirement. The veil is but in line with this and should therefore be always worn in public. Customs have changed and no one would to-day argue that a woman should be veiled in public as symbolizing her subordination to man but the essential fact of the **physical** subordination of woman to man remains.

16. The section ends rather sharply. If after all, these arguments someone is determined to be **contentious**, disputatious,—bound to argue, all that need be said is that we have no such **custom**, *i.e.*, of woman praying unveiled, nor do other churches. That ends the matter.

Through the report of Stephanas and his companions Paul had learned of the profanation of the Lord's Table (for I hear, etc. [18]). It was a serious matter indeed not only in itself, but in its consequences (30) and he gives it most earnest attention. From the very beginning of the history of the church, the spirit of brotherhood had manifested itself in a common meal, with which, in some way, the Eucharist was associated. It is not improbable that at first every meal at which Christians met was hallowed in this way. Later, it became customary for the Church to assemble—perhaps every Sunday—for the common Eucharistic meal. The Corinthians before they became Christians were not strangers to a like custom for the guilds of a city like Corinth had such common feasts, at which rich and poor met together. In the Greek guilds the cost of the meal was paid out of the guild's treasury. The Christian custom was that each one bring his own portion, as a gift to the Lord and for the common repast. This custom opened the way for the evils which had made the meal an occasion for the manifesta-

18. worse. For first of all, when ye come together ¹ in the church I hear that ² divisions exist among you;
 19. and I partly believe it. For there must be also

¹ Or, *in the congregation.*

² Gr., *schisms.*

tion of such selfishness and irreverence as had well-nigh obliterated all true sense of the observance of the Lord's supper connected with it. As a rebuke Paul reminds them of the original institution of the supper, in the night in which Jesus was betrayed, showing them, by reproducing the Lord's words and actions, that it was a solemn service prefiguring His sacrificial death, and intended, in its repeated observance, to be a memorial of that death. If for any reason that purpose became lost from sight there was danger of "eating and drinking judgment" to oneself (29). The emphasis in this passage (11:23-25) is upon the memorial character of the Lord's supper; in 10:15-22 it is upon it as a means of communion or spiritual fellowship with the Lord. Both passages are essential to a full interpretation of this sacred rite. In the section now before us, Paul comments upon their unchristian conduct, as reported to him 17-22, brings to mind the scene in the upper room in the night of the Lord's betrayal, showing its solemn character (23-26), sets before them the seriousness of eating and drinking unworthily (27, 29, 30), urges them to self-examination before partaking (28, 31, 32) and bids them forestall the temptations to selfishness and greed (33-34).

17. **This charge.** The reference of the **this** is formally ambiguous, but, in view of the structure of the original, it is better to refer it to the instruction which follows regarding the Lord's supper. Way's translation marks well the transition to this new subject. "While I am on this subject of your church-meetings, there is one feature with respect to which I cannot say well done. I understand that your gatherings are so conducted as to tend, not to your improvement but to your deterioration."

18. **Church** does not refer to a building but to the congregation. This is the meaning of the word in the New Testament. **Divisions—cliques.**

19. **For there must be also heresies.** The general moral condition of the church was such that cliques would tend to crystallize into parties and the necessity (**must be**) for these is in the providential purpose which they serve, *viz.*, of bringing to the front "**approved men,**" men of sterling character, who

¹ heresies among you, that they which are approved
 20. may be manifest among you. When therefore ye
 assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to
 21. eat the Lord's supper: for in your eating each one
 taketh before *other* his own supper; and one is
 22. hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye
 not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the
² church of God, and put them to shame that ³ have
 not? What shall I say to you? ⁴ Shall I praise you
 23. in this? I praise you not. For I received of the

¹ SV, *factions.* ² Or, *congregation.* ³ Or, *have nothing.*
⁴ Or, *Shall I praise you? In this I praise you not.*

will either seek to establish unity or keep away from these lamentable divisions.

20. In view of these divisions, it was not possible for them when they gathered together to eat the Lord's supper. The emphasis is upon the word "Lord's." His supper was meant to inculcate brotherly love and fellowship. They were emphasizing social distinctions and selfish satisfactions. Verse 21 shows how.

21. No one waited for another. Those who had abundant supplies hurried to eat them without regard to those who had little. It was really a "private supper" for each one with the disagreeable qualities of greed and unconcern for others' need characterizing it. The result was that one went home hungry, while another had drunk to excess. Even decency was forgotten.

22. This verse is full of indignant emotion. Its full force may be given in this way: "Surely you do not mean to say that you have no homes in which to eat and drink? If, then, that is not true (as it is not) the only alternative is that you despise the church of God and put them to shame that have not. There is no praise for such conduct." It sadly revealed the fact that they had no true comprehension of the meaning of the supper which the Lord had instituted. To give them that meaning and thereby show its wide difference from a feast for satisfying physical appetites, Paul recounts the institution of the supper.

23. For gives the reason why he cannot praise them and points to the contrast between the supper which had come to be through their selfishness and the supper whose institution he had **received from the Lord**. This does not mean that what he is to give, in the words which follow regarding the supper, is a direct revelation from the Lord, but rather that he had received them through

Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed
 24. took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which ¹ is for

¹ Many ancient authorities read *is broken for you*.

tradition. They had been communicated to him by his fellow-Apostles and could be followed up to Jesus himself. Paul had received them and in earlier days had delivered them into the Corinthian church. **In which he was betrayed.** "There is an appearance of fixed order, especially in these opening words, which indicates that this had already become a familiar formula."—Stanley. **Took bread.** Bread was then made usually in the form of a thin round cake and broken for eating. **This is my body.** As Jesus was present at the table these words could not refer literally to his earthly body. The bread **represents** his body. The symbolic use of the word "body" is confirmed also by the statement regarding the cup. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." An insistence upon a literal understanding of these words is impossible. "The idea that the language implies a miraculous transformation of the elements of bread and wine into Christ's veritable body and blood, or the equally miraculous presence in these elements of two substances, is a development of sacramentarian theology" unwarranted by a just interpretation of this passage. **Which is for you**—for your spiritual life and your salvation. The emphasis is, in all likelihood, upon the thought of His sacrificial death, hence has crept into some texts the interpretation "broken" (which is broken for you), but the statement as in our text is wide enough to include the whole **incarnate** life as well—the sacrificial death. **This do in remembrance of me.** These words are not found in the accounts of the supper given by Mark or Matthew; though Luke has them, they are in disputed verses (Lk. 22:19b-20). These facts have led some interpreters to the conclusion that Paul instituted the repeated celebration of the Eucharist. This is adequately refuted (1) by the fact that in the early church the supper had been repeatedly observed. Could that have happened without an express command of Jesus? (2) Paul expressly declares that he is delivering to them what he had received (see vs. 23). (3) Nothing less than the authority of Christ were sufficient to account for the widespread observance of the rite. The Lord's supper in its repeated celebration is to be a direct and constant reminder of the Lord as their and our Savior.

25. you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new ¹ covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye
26. drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the
27. Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever

¹ Or, *testament*.

25. **This cup is the new covenant in my blood.** The wine in the cup represents his blood as the bread represented his body. In Mk. 14:23-24 it reads: He gave it (the cup) to them and said, "This is my blood of the covenant." Paul inserts the word "new" or "fresh" before covenant and Luke follows him in this. The account of the ratification of the old covenant of the Law is found in Ex. 24:6-8. The blood of the covenant victims was sprinkled, half of it on the altar, for reconciliation; half of it on the people for purification. The covenant itself promised upon God's side protection and blessing; on the side of the people, obedience. This old covenant was broken by the disobedience of Israel. The promise of a **new** covenant is in Jer. 31:31, where these words "new covenant" appear for the only time in the Old Testament. This new covenant promised a universal knowledge of God and a complete forgiveness (Heb. 8:8). Pardon and life from God in response to faith from man. This is the covenant which Jesus ratifies with His blood (Eph. 1:7). It was sealed by His death. It is well just here to bear in mind "that the center of the symbolism of sacrifice lies not in the death of the victim, but in the offering of its life" (Heb. 9:14); also that in the New Testament the Blood of Christ always "includes the thought of life preserved and active beyond death." **As oft as ye drink it, i.e., the cup.** However frequent the occasion they must remember its significance as connected with Him. These words are a rebuke of their pathetic forgetting.

26. **For as often as ye eat, etc.** This is the Apostle's explanation of the command in the verse 25. Their eating and drinking were an acted proclamation of the Lord's death. **Till he come.** Then all need of remembrance will be over. The hope of the Lord's return was very vivid in the early church. Having now set forth the solemn significance of the supper, by giving the words connected with its original institution Paul turns to warn them about partaking unworthily.

27. **Unworthily.** The word is not interpreted unless it be in

- shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood
28. of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so
29. let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he ¹ discern not the body.
30. For this cause many among you are weak and sickly
31. and not a few sleep. But if we ² discerned ourselves,

¹ Gr., *discriminate*.

² Gr., *discriminated*.

“not discerning the body” (vs. 29) but the general conduct of the Corinthians throws light upon it. Partaking of these symbols of the Redeemer’s sacrifice in a selfish, unloving spirit; treating them with irreverence, or with little thought of that which they were intended to bring to mind; making them the means of greed or excess—all these were unworthy. It is to be noted that a profanation of either symbol—“eat the bread” or “drink the cup”—makes one guilty. **Guilty of the body and the blood.** They are chargeable with insulting the memorials of Christ’s death and so virtually the sacrificial death itself; on the same principle that he who insults his country’s flag insults his country and is a traitor. Irreverence could go no further.

28. **Prove himself.** The word means to prove in order to approve, *i.e.*, he is to test himself to see whether he is in a right frame of mind to partake, and in case of finding himself not right, to put himself right.

29. **For.** The solemn reason for testing himself. He may eat and drink **judgment** unto himself, *i.e.*, he may bring upon himself chastisement such as is indicated in verse 30. **If he discern not the body,** *i.e.*, if he judge not rightly the symbolic significance of the bread as representing the body of the incarnate and crucified Lord, but looks upon it as common bread.

30. **For this cause**—this inability to judge rightly. **Weak and sickly.** These are not spiritual troubles but physical afflictions. Paul attributes them directly to the misuse of the symbols without indicating any intermediate causes such as, *e.g.*, excess in drinking. It was in accord with Jewish belief that they were sent as punishments for sin. **Sleep**—a euphemism for death.

31. **If we discerned ourselves,** *i.e.*, judged ourselves rightly we should escape the judgment.

32. we should not be judged. But ¹ when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be
33. condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren,
34. when ye come together to eat, wait for one another. If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.

3. *The Misuse of Spiritual Gifts, 12:1—14:40*

12. 1. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would
2. not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were
-

¹ Or, *when we are judged of the Lord we are chastened.*

32. **Chastened.** This is the consolation. Judgment is the discipline of the Lord and it is meant to save us from being condemned with the world in the day of judgment.

33. **Wherefore.** Summing up the whole matter let me urge upon you, brethren, two rules of conduct. When you come together for a common meal which has a spiritual purpose wait for one another. Do not let the occasion descend to the level of a merely carnal feast.

34. Avoid that by eating at home if any of you are hungry. Save your gatherings together from that exhibition of self-indulgence which is fatal to true fellowship and leads to judgment. **The rest.** Other details regarding this whole matter I will arrange when I come.

In the previous chapter we have seen how the Lord's supper was profaned through its association with the weekly common meal which, originally intended to foster the spirit of brotherhood, had degenerated into an occasion for the exhibition of a most unlovely spirit. In this chapter we are to look upon the church assembled for the purpose of edification. In some private house the people met together, the men sitting, in all probability, on one side of the room and the women on the other. It is no indifferent congregation, as Paul pictures it, but one full of unrestrained enthusiasm. Each one came with something to contribute—a song of praise, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation (vs. 26). We have no account of any order of service; indeed, there seems to have been an almost untrammelled liberty of worship. In this lay the possibility of the disorder which soon developed. There seems also to have been no such recognized

leadership as could firmly control the ongoing of the service. Paul appeals to a spirit or a principle of action rather than to a given leader, to maintain order and secure edification. There was much to stimulate disorder. There were those who loved to speak, especially if they were convinced that the Spirit was urging them. Anything in the way of the ecstatic was especially valued. We use the word "spiritual" to-day to mark a man whose life has been refined and uplifted by the presence of God within him. The "spiritual" of the Corinthian church, as well as among the Jews and Pagans, were those who were possessed by a spirit not their own who used them as instruments. The cleverest sign of the presence of the Spirit (good or bad; in the church or out of it) was ecstasy. In the church it should of course be a good spirit but even there a test had to be applied, *viz.*: whether its possessor recognized Jesus as Lord or called Him accursed. It is only in a clear grasp of this distinction between our present interpretation of the word "spiritual" and that applicable to the Corinthian church that we can fully understand the situation pictured in this chapter. As the ecstatic was proof positive of spirit possession, so it was a showy gift and eagerly desired. It had little social value, as it did not minister to edification.

Prophecy also was an exalted form of utterance akin to the ecstatic. It is distinguished, as we shall see later, from the ecstatic gift of tongues, by its intelligibility. Much after the manner of those who in recent days "get the power" in a religious meeting, these ecstasies would break forth in their unintelligible utterances. A prophet under like constraint might do the same, and confusion would be the result. How imperatively instruction was needed. God could not be the author of confusion. Social, not individual value, must be the standard of estimate, the guide to action. No gifts could be rightly exercised unless under the control of love. Paul in no way underrates the power of the Spirit. He rejoices in its manifest presence in the church. His task is to open the minds of those who had their conceptions of spirit possession so largely from heathen manifestation of it and who needed to learn with what different aims the Spirit of God came upon them. "The presence of the Holy Spirit is not primarily a gift to the individual, but a gift to the church."

a. The Test (1-3), Source and Purpose (4-11) of Spiritual Gifts,

12:1-11

1. Now concerning spiritual gifts. This formula (Now concerning, etc.) is found in 7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 16:1, 16:22 and in-

Gentiles *ye were* led away unto those dumb idols,
 3. however ye might be led. Wherefore ¹ I give you

¹ SV, *I make known unto you.*

roduces, in each case, an answer to a question supposedly in a letter of the Corinthians to Paul asking for special information and guidance. The words **I would not have you ignorant**, expresses Paul's desire to clear up some points regarding spiritual gifts about which they were either confused or in the dark. The Greek word for "spiritual gifts" can be masculine and be translated "spiritual men." A number of modern interpreters so render it, but the emphasis is rather upon the operations of the spirit than upon the position of spiritual persons. Both ideas, however, are closely associated.

2. **Ye were led away.** Their idols were dumb, incapable of inspiring them, hence no impulse came from them; they were rather "under control" of some demonic, capricious influence which, as occasion happened (**howsoever ye might be led**), carried them away into heathen ecstasies in connection with idol worship. These ecstatic experiences had often been witnessed in their former idolatry.* They knew that men could thus be "carried away" by supernatural power. How were they to be sure that the same evil power was not present in like experiences within the Church? Was a demonic spirit in control or the Spirit of God?

3. Paul in his answer includes not only "ecstatic utterances" which were the subject of the Corinthian questioning, but other operations of the Spirit, about which they as heathen had known nothing, and regarding which they now needed instruction. The mark of the inspiration of the Spirit of God is that it exalts and honors Jesus. If a Jew were suddenly to cry out in public worship "**Jesus is anathema (accursed)!**" they could assuredly know that such an utterance came not from the Spirit of God. On the other hand no one could cry out in rapture "**Jesus is Lord!**" except he were possessed by the Spirit (Jn. 16:14). In either case, the mere **saying or crying out** is not meant, but

* "In Greece the excited shoutings of the Dionysos ecstatic had long been a familiar spectacle. And of the mystery cults ecstasy in its various manifestations formed a constant feature. The god (as was thought) descended upon the mystic, filled him with his spirit, made him a prophet, and gave him revelations. We have the Apostle himself for a witness that it was no easy task to distinguish between a glossalia and prophecy that were spirit-inspired and such as were devil-inspired."—Morgan, *Religion and Theology of Paul*, p. 176.

to understand 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
5. Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations,
6. and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things

the saying as an expression of a genuine heart attitude behind it; in one, of hatred and unbelief; in the other, of faith and loyalty.

4. **Diversities.** The word has two meanings, an active: "apportionings," "distributings"; a passive: "differences," "varieties." The active is preferable here (see vs. 11) but the passive meaning is involved and the whole significance is: apportionings of Himself (the Spirit) in diverse endowments. **Gifts** (*Charismata*). A Pauline word (elsewhere only 1 Pet. 4:10) meaning "Individual capacities or excellences laid hold on, strengthened, vivified and applied by the Spirit to service within the community. They are the natural capacities which men possess apart from their own power of acquiring them and which come from the free bounty of God the Creator. Men are not all alike; their capacities and natural powers differ; and thus when the Spirit works through these powers there is nothing mechanical in the activities set in motion."—Lindsay.

5-7. Three things in these verses deserve attention: (1) The descriptions **diversities of ministrations** (vs. 5) and **diversities of workings** (vs. 6). These are not to be distinguished from the gifts of vs. 4. They denote the same thing from different points of view. As "ministrations" the gifts are viewed from the point of **service** (of which there are many kinds) and they are all appointed by the one Lord and are for His glory; as "workings" they are thought of from the side of **immanent power** originating in God. (2) These verses suggest a Trinitarian conception. Spirit, Lord and God act together in the bestowal of spiritual gifts. Paul nowhere attempts to set forth the inner relations of the Trinity, but he gives once and again a "functional" Trinity (cf. Eph. 4:6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rom. 8:9-10). (3) All these gifts are for the good of the Church. To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to **profit** **wit**al. Whatever his special gift, or kind of service, he is to make manifest through it the Spirit, for the advantage of all. It would appear that very few, if any, of the members of the church were "giftless."

7. in all. But to each one is given the manifestation
 8. of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given
 through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another
 the word of knowledge, according to the same
 9. Spirit: to another faith in the same Spirit; and to
 10. another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; and to
 another workings of ²miracles; and to another
 prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits: to
 another *divers* kinds of tongues; and to another the

² Gr., *powers*.

8. **For.** This connects with "to each one is given" and nine classes of gifts are cited as illustrations of the general statement of verse 7. Various attempts have been made to classify these gifts. A classification is suggested by the Greek text which divides them into 3 groups: (1) Two connected with "word" (speech)—the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge; (2) five connected with faith—faith itself, gifts of healings, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits; (3) two concerned with tongues—divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. **The word of Wisdom** is the gift of **discoursing** about the deep things of God and of His ways in His dealings with men (cf. 2:6). These can be known only **through the Spirit**. **The word of Knowledge.** The speech of Knowledge is that which sets forth the grounds and interrelations of the truths of faith. It is a reasoned presentation of truth. When it is **according to the Spirit** and for the help of others, it is a "gift." These are the endowments of the teacher.

9. **Faith.** This is not the faith which marks the beginning of the Christian life;—the trustful reliance upon God which underlies daily Christian living. In this aspect of it faith conditions all the gifts. Here it is a wonder-working faith, a faith of "heroic daring" which brings great things to pass (cf. Matt. 17:20-21). It may be, and probably is, a generic term covering the four succeeding gifts, all of which are the fruits of this potent gift. **Gifts of healings.** The plural suggests different classes of diseases to be cured (cf. Acts 19:12; 28:8-9).

10. **Workings of Miracles, i.e., acts of power.** Instances of these are casting out of demons and inflicting supernatural judgments (see 5:5; Acts 13:11; 1 Tim. 1-20). **Prophecy.** It is at first surprising that this gift should be placed where it is in the

11. interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will.

list of gifts. It seems to be allied rather with "the word of wisdom" and "the word of knowledge." Two reasons may be given for its present position. It is a gift which is realized through **intensity of faith**, and it stands, in certain of its aspects, in vivid contrast to the gift of tongues. Prophecy presupposed revelation; it might be based upon visions. Prediction was a subordinate part of it. It was such an inspired utterance of revealed truth as effected "edification, comfort and consolation" (14:3) in its hearers. It might be attended with ecstasy but it was always intelligible and, in this respect, was in sharp contrast with the gift of tongues. There were those who claimed the prophetic gift who were really false prophets. To detect and expose such was the peculiar business of those who were gifted with the **discernings of spirits**. These were probably prophets themselves, already known and approved in the Church (cf. 14:29). **Divers kinds of tongues**. This strange gift seems to have been coveted eagerly by the Corinthians. Its sensational and strong character appealed to their vanity. These tongues were ecstatic utterances which were unintelligible unless interpreted, and hence of little service to the Church. The will of the speaker was overmastered by his emotions; intelligent thought had no part in what was uttered. The different kinds of tongue-speech may have been in their different forms of utterance—disconnected sentences, disconnected words, or single sounds, making by their general tone the impression of prayer, or of praise. In no case . . . are we to understand by "tongues" foreign languages. "For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth" (14:2). This could not be said of any man speaking in a foreign language. Whatever profit was to be had from these ecstatic powers could come only to the subject of them himself, unless an interpreter were present. If no interpreter was at hand the gift were best exercised in solitude. The whole subject has gained new interest from the modern study of psychology.*

11. The rich endowment of the Corinthian Church is seen in this list of spiritual gifts. They all have a common origin—the Spirit—and He distributes them as **He will**, but that does not mean arbitrarily; He considers the capacity of each one.

* See Lake: The Earlier Epistles of Paul, p. 241.

12. For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are
13. one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to

b. The Analogy Between the Church and the Human Body,
12:12-31

Thus far the Apostle has made emphatic the **one** source of the diverse gifts of the Spirit and the **one** purpose for which they are given, *viz.*, service. This unity in diversity is like that of the human body. One life moves **its** different members all of which have as their common purpose its preservation and well-being. This analogy of the Church and the human body is particularized in five points. (1) The Church, like the body, is a unity (12-13). (2) The Church, like the body, has many members (14-16). (3) The various members are needful to the completeness of the body, indeed, to the very idea of the body (17-20). (4) All the members, whether conspicuous or otherwise, are needful to each other (21-25). (5) All the members suffer or rejoice with one member in suffering or in joy (26). Having thus fully drawn out the analogy, he makes direct application of it to the Church (27-30).

12. **So also is Christ.** The "body" as a figurative description of the Church is a favorite of Paul. "In Ephesians and Colossians it becomes a fixed title for the Christian community." Why "Christ" in this clause and not "Church"? Because Christ is not regarded here as the head of the body, the Church (see vs. 21), but rather as the unifying life of the whole body—the Church. Church, in this connection, must not be limited in thought to the Corinthian church "except as each Christian community is the universal church in miniature."

13. **For** gives the reason for the last clause of verse 12. In **one spirit.** The Spirit is the means by which, through baptism, they were incorporated into one body. How widely separated originally were those who were brought into a spiritual unity—Jews, Greeks, freemen, slaves (cf. Gal. 3:28). Baptism has "social significance." **Made to drink of one spirit.** This does not refer to the Eucharist. The figure is of plants drenched with water, or of irrigated fields. The reference is probably to baptism. Godet refers it to spiritual gifts.

14. drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one mem-
15. ber, but many. If the foot shall say Because I am
not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not there-
16. fore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Be-
cause I am not the eye I am not of the body; it is
17. not therefore not of the body. If the whole body
were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole
18. were hearing, where were the smelling? But now
hath God set the members, each one of them in the
19. body even as it pleased him. And if they were all
20. one member, where were the body? But now they
21. are many members, but one body. 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.

15-16. These verses have in mind those who, because their gifts were of the less noticeable kind, were disposed to deny virtually that they were members of the body—the Church—by keeping aloof, dissatisfied or discouraged because they were not more important. "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; that does not make it no part of the body." The point is that the humble members as well as the more honored are all members of the body. Each, because of this fact, must perform his function to the best of his ability.

17-20. The membership of all is further argued from the fact that multiformity is of the essence of organic life. Varied members with varied functions are essential not only to the completeness of the body ("If the whole body were an eye, or the whole hearing," etc.) but also to the very idea of body as God made it for He it is who "set the members, each one of them, in the body even as it pleased Him (18). How unchristian, then, is jealousy or discouragement! On the contrary, what comfort there is in the realization that one's gift and place are God's allotment for one's contribution to service!

21-25. Thus far Paul has considered the humbler members. Now he writes with the more gifted ones in view. As there was no reason for jealousy and aloofness on one side, so was there no ground for pride and contempt on the other.

21. **The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee,** etc. One member cannot do the work of another, nor can it be completely independent. It functions in a body whose

22. Nay, much rather, these members of the body which
 23. seem to be more feeble are necessary: And those
parts of the body which we think to be less honor-
 able, upon these we ¹ bestow more abundant honor;
 and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeli-
 24. ness; whereas our comely *parts* have no need: but
 God tempered the body together giving more abun-
 25. dant honor to that *part* which lacked; that there
 should be no schism in the body; but *that* the mem-
 bers should have the same care one for another.
 26. And whether one member suffereth all the members

¹ Or, *put on*.

parts are all closely interrelated. The parts may not be equal in importance, but no one of them can isolate itself. What would the feet do if the eyes were not at their service?

22. If it can be said of the eye and the ear and the hand that they are necessary, with stronger reason (**much rather**) may it be said of those that are **feeble**.

23. Paul does not name these necessary feeble members, nor those which he speaks of as "**less honorable**" or "**uncomely**" (23). All three adjectives may refer to the same parts under different points of view. Whatever they were, the emphasis is upon the fact that they all are necessary to the body and we compensate them for their "less honorable" relation or their "uncomeliness" by bestowing upon them "**more abundant honor**" in the care and protection given them by proper clothing. They are thus shown exceptional respect.

24. **It was God who tempered the body together, i.e.,** blended its parts into one organic whole, by giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked. By this is meant that the instincts of decency and self-respect, shown in the clothing of the body, were implanted by God.

25. In this His purpose was that there should be no divided interests in the body but that all its members should have *material concern for each other's welfare*.

26. And so (as a result of blending the parts into one organic whole) the suffering of one involves the suffering of all; the honoring of one, the joy of all. While all the statements made in 24-26 refer primarily to the physical body it is evident that Paul's language is colored by the thought of the spiritual body—the Corinthian membership.

suffer with it; or *one* member is ¹ honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of
 27. Christ and ² severally members thereof. And God
 28. hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly

¹ Or, *glorified*.

² Or, *members each in his part*.

27. **The body of Christ.** Collectively they are Christ's body "in the sense that each Christian community is the universal church in miniature" (see vs. 12); **severally**, *i.e.*, individually they are apportioned **members** of His body. With this verse begins the application of the figure (developed in vss. 14-26) in detail to the Church.

28. **The Church.** The church universal. **God hath set.** Hath placed for His own use. In the list which follows two particulars are to be noted: (1) The eight functions of 8-10 are replaced by eight which are partly identical, partly different.* "Discernings of spirits" and "interpretations of tongues" are wanting (though see 30) and "helps and governments" are added. Persons are named rather than function in 1, 2, 3. (2) The functions are given in the order of their rank and value. Apostles are first, tongues last. The Corinthian estimate was just the opposite. They glorified the ecstatic rather than the rational.

Apostles. Not simply the Twelve, but all those who had been witnesses of the living Christ and who had, under a commission from Him, given themselves to be Missionary preachers of His gospel (cf. Acts 14:14, Rom. 16:7, Gal. 1:9; and see Lightfoot, *Galatians*, p. 92).

Prophets. The prophets found their sphere within the Christian communities which the Apostles had founded. Their inspired utterances regarding "the divine counsels and hidden mys-

* 1. Cor. 12:8

- Word
- 1. Word of Wisdom
- 2. Word of Knowledge
- Faith
- 3. Gifts of Healing
- 4. Workings of Miracles
- 5. Prophecy
- 6. Discernings of Spirit
- Tongues
- 7. Divers Kinds of Tongues
- 8. Interpretation of Tongues

1. Cor. 12:28

- 1. Apostles
- 3. Teachers
- 5. Gifts of Healings
- 4. Miracles
- 2. Prophets
- 6. Helps
- 7. Governments
- 8. Divers Kinds of Tongues

- prophets, thirdly teachers, then ¹ miracles, then gifts
 29. of healings, helps, ² governments, *divers* kinds of
 tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are
 30. all teachers? Are all workers of ¹ miracles? Have
 all gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues?
 31. Do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater

¹ Gr., *powers*.² Or, *wise counsels*.

teries of faith" were effective, in bringing edification. They were listened to as men who spoke in the name of God and with His authority. A prophet might not be an Apostle, generally was not, but an Apostle was almost of necessity a prophet (cf. vs. 10).

Teachers. Their "gift" was to instruct their fellow-believers, not through immediate revelations, as did the prophets, but by explaining what had been revealed, grounding the Church in the principles of Christian faith and life and training the young in ways of Christian righteousness and service. The teacher's work was local. No hard and fast line can be drawn between the functions of Apostle, prophet, and teacher. An Apostle was gifted in all three ways. A prophet could be a teacher and a teacher at times might manifest the gift of prophecy.

Miracles. It is noteworthy that these are placed after teachers. The Corinthians would have estimated them more highly on account of their striking character. **Gifts of healings.** **Helps.** Various ways of assisting the sick or the poor of the Church. The word is found often in petitions to the Ptolemies. It suggests here assistance given by those who were appointed for this purpose. Aptitude for this service was the gift. **Governments.** The word originally signified "piloting a ship," hence points to those who were skilled in administration. This function became, later, that of the ecclesiastical Bishop, as did "helps" that of the ecclesiastical diaconate. "We are dealing, here, with gifts rather than with the offices which grew out of the gifts." **Divers kinds of tongues.** They are placed last, as of least value. The principle of order Paul here follows in enumerating the gifts is that of their importance.

29-30. All these questions expect the answer "No," and are meant to indicate that no one is by himself sufficient for the life of the Church. "The body is not one member but many" (14). "Ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof" (27). The questions have these two statements in view.

31. **Desire earnestly the greater gifts.** Continue earnestly

gift: and ¹ a still more excellent way shew I unto you.

¹ SV, and moreover a most excellent way.

to desire the greater gifts. But has not "the Spirit divided to each one severally as he will (11)? Yes, but the "greater gifts" to which Paul refers have to do "with the inspired exercise of conscious faculties." These conscious faculties might be trained through prayer and discipline for the higher gift. No selfish desire, however, must prompt the training but only a self-forgetful longing to serve the Church. Such longing with its attending culture might be the condition of the bestowal of the greater gifts. **And a still more excellent way I show unto you.** The connection here is somewhat difficult. This last sentence were best taken with chapter 13. It is a "way," "a super-excellent way," that is now spoken of, not a gift, though love is, of course, the direct fruitage of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart (Gal. 5:22; Rom. 5:5; 15:30; 2 Cor. 5:14). This "way" is set forth not simply as a means for securing the greater gifts, but rather as that whereby all gifts will truly become a blessing. It is higher and better than all gifts. It is a spirit or temper impelling and controlling the exercise of all gifts. As such "it shuts out from the earnest desiring of the best gifts all unworthy passions and insures the good of the Church in the exercise of every gift."—Heinrici.

13. Before entering upon our study of this chapter it will be helpful to note several characteristics of the eulogy as a whole. (1) It is not written in plain prose. There is a stately movement in it and a certain rhythm. This is more clearly seen in some of the modern renderings of it, e.g., Way's, Moffett's, Harnack's. It is the outcome of exalted emotion and is in itself a veritable "prophecy." An illustration of the poetic form will be seen in the following rendering of verses 1-3 by Arthur S. Way (*The Letters of St. Paul and Hebrews*, p. 50):

Though with all tongues of men I speak, yea of Angels,
And have not Love

I have become clanging brass or clashing cymbal.

Yea though I have utterance inspired,
Though I fathom all mystic secrets, have full illumination,

Though I have utter faith, such as might move mountains from
their seats,

And have not Love
Nothing am I.

And though I dole away in charity all my goods,
And though I yield up my body to a death of fire

And have not Love
Nothing it availeth me.

Again, (2) The chapter is marked by fine delicacy and courtesy. It was the loveless character of so much of the life of the Corinthian church that impressed upon the mind of Paul their fundamental need and yet, as Professor Ramsay remarks, "By a skilful use of the first and the third person he avoids suggesting either that the Corinthians are lacking in love or that he himself possesses it."—*The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day*, p. 333. (3) The only adequate accounting for the exalted features of love here presented is in Jesus Himself. He alone of all mortals fills out the character of love as set forth in verses 4-7. Virtually they give a portrait of him. Paul's epistles have been searched for evidence of his knowledge of the earthly life of our Lord. This section of this chapter should certainly have its place in that evidence. (4) The chapter may be divided into three parts: (1) The Indispensability of Love (1-3), (2) Its Characteristics (4-7), (3) Its Durability (8-13).

The Indispensability of Love, its Characteristics and its Durability, 13:1-13

13. 1. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a

1. **Tongues of men and angels.** The gift of ecstatic utterance which the Corinthians so highly prized. He adds "angels" in order to include the highest form of rapturous expression. No power of ecstatic utterance, no matter how exalted, is of any value without love. It is like the senseless noise made by sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Gongs and cym-

2. clanging cymbal. 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
 3. not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my

bals were much used in pagan worship in Paul's day. **Love.** This word has a broad meaning. It includes the "love of the will" as well as the love of the affections, and thus connotes "moral affection," expressed in deeds of kindness and good will. Love of the affections cannot be commanded; this can. We can, in this way, love even our enemies (Matt. 5:44). "It is no mere sentiment or excitement of feeling, but is connected in both Testaments with an obedient will." Charity, because of its limited meaning, no longer gives adequate interpretation of the original.

2. **Prophecy.** The gift of inspired utterance which edifies. **Mysteries.** The word "mystery" is a favorite of Paul and denotes a plan or counsel of God which remains secret until He reveals it. The reference here is to the mysteries (the purposes of God revealed) regarding redemption (cf. 2:7-10). **All knowledge,** which comes from investigation and thought and brings an understanding of redemption. **All faith,** *i.e.*, faith in its intensest form—capable of removing mountains (cf. 12:9; Matt. 17:20; 21:21).

Prophecy was in Paul's judgment the highest gift. Teaching ranked next to it and such a faith as removed difficulties could justly be held in high honor, but without love coöperating with and in them, he who exercised the gift or gifts was spiritually nil (cf. Matt. 7:22-23). The possible misuse of such high endowments should cause earnest reflection.

3. In this verse Paul passes to the administrative gifts. **Bestow,** more vividly, **dole out** my possessions to help the poor. **To be burned.*** This cannot refer to martyrdom at

* The other reading "that I may glory" is supported by such strong textual authority and is accepted by so many interpreters, that it is but just to give its meaning. The following points will give in brief the notable points of the interpretation: (1) The clause belongs to both suppositions of verse 3. (2) The thought of "glorying" in reference to "the day of the Lord" when all shall stand before Him. (3) The distributions of one's possessions and the sacrifice of one's life may be true reasons for glorying in the presence of God. (4) Even such glorying, like prophesying and knowing all mysteries, may be profitless when love is wanting. The verse, with this understanding of its parts, may be given in this way: "If I should give all my goods, piece by piece, and even if I were to offer my body, that I might glory,—that is, that I might have a ground for glorying in the day of God—but had not love, it would profit me nothing."—Harnack.

- goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body ¹ to be burned but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.
4. Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not;
 5. love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not
 6. provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not

¹ Many ancient authorities read *that I may glory*.

the stake for that came later than the time of Paul's writing. The supposition of such an extreme form of sacrifice may have been suggested by the remembrance of instances of it in the history of the Jews (see Dan. 3:28; 2 Mac. 7:5 ff.). **It profiteth me nothing.** To speak with tongues, without love, is to bring forth nothing; to have prophecy and to know all mysteries, without love, is to be nothing; to give up possessions or life, without love, is to gain nothing. One's gifts may be of value to others; spiritually valueless to himself.

4. **Love** is now personified and its characteristics here set forth are not chosen at random, but suggested by the state of the church. **Suffereth long**, is patient under provocation, slow to anger, and controls resentment. **Kind**. Only here in the New Testament. It marks love as always ready to be of service to others; "it is the victory over idle selfishness and comfortable self-pleasing." **Love envieth not**—is neither envious nor jealous. The verb has both meanings. Envy, always a base passion, is aroused by seeing another have that which it wants itself. Jealousy is awakened by fear of losing what it has. **Vaunteth not itself**. Keeps away from ostentation, makes no display. **Is not puffed up**,—is not swollen with self-conceit, does not strut about in false pride.

5. **Doth not behave itself unseemly**. This word has a range of meaning from simple thoughtlessness in conduct to the worst forms of impurity (Rom. 1:27). In all of it there is a selfish element and also a lack of wisdom. Women praying unveiled in public worship (11:5), eating one's own supper at the common meal regardless of others (11:21) are instances of such unseemly conduct. Its corrective is found in Eph. 5:15. **Provoked to anger**, exasperated.

6. **Taketh not account of evil** by storing it up in the memory as a debt in an account book. **Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness**, but rejoiceth with the truth. The wrongdoing of others, even if it bring gain, can never be a matter of joy to Love; her rejoicing is with the Truth (here personified),

7. in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;
¹ beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all
 8. things, endureth all things. 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; but
 10. when that which is perfect is come, that which is
 11. in part shall be done away. When I was a child,

¹ Or, *covereth*.

i.e., with truth as realized in human conduct; in other words, with right conduct.

7. **Beareth**, *i.e.*, in patient self-control it puts up with all those things which might awaken anger or sorrow. **Believeth**. This is the opposite of being suspicious of men's motives and purposes. Love credits them good intentions until it is clear that they are otherwise. It trusts. When the evidence prevents it from "believing the best," then it hopes for the best. **Hopeth all things**. If these hopes fail, then it holds courageously on against disappointment or ingratitude or whatever it may be that affronts it; it **endureth all things**.

8. **Love never faileth**. Verse 7 leads up naturally to this statement. Its everlasting nature is now contrasted with the temporary character of spiritual gifts. Prophecies shall be "done away," knowledge shall be done away and tongues shall stop. Why?

9-10. (1) Because our prophesyings and knowledge are partial (**in part**) and limited. They are all that we can hope to have in our immaturity and imperfection. (2) Because when the Lord comes and shall usher in the perfection of the other world, "the partial" shall be done away. Fragmentary revelations and fragmentary understandings of truth will be superseded by truth in its completeness. The gift of tongues is omitted from verse 9. Speaking with tongues cannot, like prophecy and knowledge, give place to something higher of a like kind. It simply ceases.

11. This change from the partial to the perfect is illustrated by the contrast between childhood and manhood. The thought is not of the development from one stage into the other but of the antithesis between them. When I was a child, I spake, felt and thought as a child. Now that I am become a man I have

- 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
 12. away childish things. For now we see in a mirror
 1 darkly; but then face to face. Now I know in
 part; but then shall I 2 know even as also I have
 13. been 3 known. But now abideth faith, hope, love,
 these three; 4 and the 5 greatest of these is love.

¹ Gr., *in a riddle.* ² Gr. and SV, *know fully.* ³ Gr. and SV,
⁴ Or, *but greater than these.* ⁵ Gr., *greater.*

put away childish things. That period of life was brought to an end.

12. A second illustration is from the use of the polished, metal mirrors for which Corinth was noted. They were made of bronze or silver. The art of silvering glass was a discovery of the thirteenth century. A cheap bronze mirror could give but a poor reflection of the face of a friend; not comparable in satisfactoriness with looking directly into his face. In this world we can know of God and His ways only through the imperfect medium of human life and history. We cannot look directly upon spiritual realities. Our present knowledge of Him as compared with that which we shall have "when that which is perfect is come" is like the dim, baffling reflections of the mirror (margin, *in a riddle* *). The emphasis of the illustration is again upon contrast—the contrast between the present and the future. Paul is not denying the value of prophesyings and knowledge, partial though they may be. He is simply viewing them from another point of view. **As also I have been known**, *i.e.*, intuitively, directly, fully, so shall I know in that blessed future. It has been truly said that "Paul lives much in the problem that is presented by the relation of our knowledge of God to God's knowledge of us" (cf. 8:2-3).

13. **Now**, logical, not temporal—"as the fact is" (cf. 12:18, 20). In contrast to spiritual gifts which shall be done away, faith, hope and love shall go on into the endless perfect future. **These three**, *i.e.*, only these three, abide forever. **Faith** here is to be understood as self-commitment to God in holy trust; hope, as that anticipation inseparable from growth and progress in the life beyond where the mind shall ever "catch new perspectives

* In Num. 12:8 God declares that He will speak with Moses mouth to mouth plainly and not in riddles. If this be the origin of Paul's figure he has applied it to sight rather than to speech and its force may be given by the word "baffling."

CHAPTER 14

In the previous chapter the indispensability of love as the governing principle in connection with spiritual gifts has been set forth. Love thinks not of self-glorification but of service, hence it will not only use each gift to this end, but will desire those which best meet it. It thus is a criterion for estimating the relative value of gifts, and should be the means of guarding against all disorder in their use in public assemblies. All the gifts mentioned in Chapter 12, except that of tongues, suggest their serviceability to the Church. But, as we have seen, it was just the gift of tongues which made strong appeal to the Corinthians. It is, therefore, to a comparison of that with prophecy that the Apostle now turns after his eulogy of love. The chapter may be divided into five parts: (1) Showing the superiority of prophesying to speaking with tongues (1-25). (2) Giving regulations for the orderly exercise of gifts in public worship (26-33). (3) Forbidding women to speak in church (34-36). (4) Paul's assertion of authority (37-38). Conclusions (39-40).

1. *Superiority of Prophesying to Speaking with Tongues,*
14:1-25

1. Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual
2. *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that

of glory"; love, as that spirit which binds all hearts together and expresses itself in innumerable heavenly ways of word and deed. No nobler conception of the other life can be found in the New Testament than is implied in "these three" graces. And the **greatest of these is love**. Because love is the very life of God, while faith and hope are human; because love inspires faith and hope and keeps them from self-centered aims.

1. **Follow after love.** With eager effort they are to seek to realize this wonderful grace by resisting temptations to any course of conduct which hinders it and by using every opportunity to further it. Meanwhile, however, they are to continue their earnest desire for spiritual gifts, more than all for the gift

speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man ¹ understandeth; but in the

¹ Gr., *heareth*.

of prophecy. The exaltation of love is no disparagement of spiritual gifts. Rather to "pursue" love is to deepen the desire for those gifts which shall be of effective service to others. In his treatment of spiritual gifts, hitherto, Paul has given the lowest place in his lists of gifts to the gift of tongues (12:9, 28). That is a hint at his estimate of their relative worth. Now he comes to a direct treatment of the matter for two reasons: (1) Many of the Corinthians had given "tongues" the highest place because of the sensational, showy character of the gift. (2) The more sober-minded had been led to ask the Apostle specifically which of the two—prophecy or tongues, should have precedence in the meetings of the church.*

2. For connects this verse with the last clause of verse 1, and opens the section showing why prophecy is to be especially desired as compared with "tongues." In a word it is because prophecy edifies the church and tongues do not, since they are unintelligible. **No man understandeth.** "The man who speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men but **unto God**"; also "in the spirit he speaketh **mysteries**." This gift, so strange to us and therefore so difficult for us to appreciate, had a real worth in the mind of Paul. It was to him a supernatural elevation of soul, producing a state of ecstasy in which ordinary language was incapable of adequately expressing what was felt. Robertson compares the experience to "the many unmeaning shouts of boyhood, getting rid of the exuberance of life, uttering in sound a joy which boyhood only knows and for which manhood has no words." The ecstatic cries and exclamations or inarticulate mutterings were indicative of exalted communion with God, of the rapture of adoration, of the unutterable intensity of prayer and thanksgiving. Paul himself knew by experience all these "transports of ecstasy and raptures of worship." He had spoken **mysteries**, *i.e.*, Divine secrets, which the church could not understand and, for this reason, he makes no sweeping condemnation of this singular gift. He goes so far as to say that he would that they "all spake with tongues" (5). Nevertheless, the

* This second reason is an inference from the allusions to the subject in the chapter. There were those who wished to forbid tongues altogether (14:39). Strangers were unfavorably affected by them (14:23). These, together with Paul's specific treatment of prophecy, lead to the conclusion that a specific question regarding these two was in the letter to Paul.

3. spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification and ¹ comfort
 4. and consolation. He that speaketh in a tongue ² edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth ² 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
 6. edifying. But now, brethren, if I come unto you

¹ SV, *exhortation.*² Gr., *buildeth up.*

very unintelligibility to the church of the speaking, unless perchance someone "in the same key of feeling" were present to interpret, made the gift inferior to prophecy as far as the church was concerned. There was no edification in it, except to the man possessing it.

3. Not so with prophesying. That was making known the will of God. It was inspired preaching of such intelligibility, insight and power as to build up character, quicken the will and comfort those who were weak or were in sorrow or in fear.

4. **He that speaketh with a tongue edifieth himself.** The blessing centers in himself and ends there, unless an interpreter be found. He that prophesieth edifieth the community by all the truth and inspiration to progress in the Christian life, to duty, and to cheer which come through his enlightening and persuasive speech.

5. Lest he might appear through jealousy or envy to disparage the gift of tongues, he wishes that all might have it (for each one's own sake) but there is a wish that he would rather see fulfilled, *viz.*, that they might prophesy. Besides, he that prophesieth is greater, because more helpful, than he that speaketh with tongues, unless he interprets his utterance in order that the church may be edified. In this case he stands on the level with the prophet.

6. To bring the matter home to them Paul calls attention to his coming visit (4:19-21, 16:5). How much they expected from him in the way of edification may be gathered from what they had already asked of him in the letter they had written to him. He makes the following appeal to their common sense. **"But, this being so"** (that edification is impossible without interpretation) "if I should come to you with (merely) the gift

- 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 fife or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is fified or
 8. harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice,
 9. who shall prepare himself for war? So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?
 10. for ye will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and
 11. ¹ no kind is without signification. If then I know

¹ Or, *nothing is without voice.*

of tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I should speak as a prophet who had had a revelation or as a teacher who had acquired a knowledge of the truth. **Revelation and knowledge** are in this verse the inward Divine gifts; **prophecy and teaching** their outward expression.

7. To confirm his general contention he now adduces two illustrations—one from musical instruments (7-9), the other from foreign languages. **Pipe** (flute), **harp**. These are representative respectively of wind and stringed instruments. **Distinction**—in the notes. **What is piped or harped, i.e.**, the tune or melody. Inanimate musical instruments are of little use unless they can produce an intelligible and significant melody.

8. **Uncertain sound, i.e.**, a sound which is not an understood military signal. **War**: better, battle.

9. So also in your case, if, through the **tongue** (your instrument of speech) you do not give speech easy to be understood, how is any meaning to be attached to what you say? You might as well be "talking to the winds."

10. Another illustration from the many languages in the world. **Voices**, languages, not "natural sounds"; "tongues" is ordinarily the word used to designate languages, but the word "voices" is chosen to avoid ambiguity. Incidentally it confirms the judgment that the gift of tongues is not the gift of languages. **Without signification**. The word in the original is "voiceless," which signifies not "dumb" but meaningless. Every language is intelligible to those who use it.

11. If I cannot understand his language we are to each other

not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be
 12. a barbarian ¹ unto me. So also ye, since ye are zealous of ² spiritual gifts, seek that ye may abound
 13. unto the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret.
 14. For if I pray in a tongue my spirit prayeth,

¹ Or, *in my case.*

² Gr., *spirits.*

as barbarians. "The Greeks used the word barbarian of any foreigner ignorant of the Greek language and the Greek culture."—Thayer. Our word "gibberish" conveys to us the same idea of unintelligible sounds. Corinth was a city in which as many different languages were spoken as in modern Constantinople. The force of the illustration was very clear to his readers.

12. The eagerness of the Corinthians for showy spiritual manifestations needed constantly the sobering corrective of "the good of others" pressed home upon them, as here.

13. **Wherefore.** Introducing an exhortation based upon all that is said in 6-12; also another series of arguments in 14-19. **Pray that he may interpret.** Either before or after speaking in a tongue he is to pray that the gift of interpretation be given to him. This is preferable to the interpretation "pray while in ecstasy."

14. The key to the interpretation of this verse, as well as of verse 15, is in a clear distinction between "spirit" and "understanding." Both words are qualified by the possessive "my"; "my spirit" refers, therefore, to the human spirit. The inner life of man is spoken of in the New Testament as "spirit" and "soul." "Spirit" marks the higher aspect of that inner life. Following the Old Testament, it denotes it as derived from God and related to God. It is the term used, then, whenever the contact of God with man is thought of. Here it denotes the human spirit "permeated by the divine Spirit ecstatically." The human spirit is filled and moved by the Spirit of God and yields itself to the divine impulse. The "understanding," on the other hand, is the thinking faculty "which apprehends, works upon and reflects and reproduces in its own forms the contents given to it." The "spirit," in this connection, is the sphere of intense, exalted, unutterable feeling; the "understanding," the means of clear, intelligible thought. To pray or sing with the spirit, there-

15. but my understanding is unfruitful. 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 ¹ unlearned say the Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what
17. thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well,
-

¹ Or, *him that is without gifts: and so in ver. 23, 24.*

fore, is to leave the understanding unfruitful, *i.e.*, barren of edification to others.

15. **What is it then?** How, then, does the case stand? In this way: Mere ecstatic emotionalism is not enough. I will pray and chant with the Spirit's rapture, yes, but I also will pray and sing with the reason. To unintelligible praying and inarticulate rhapsodical chanting, I will add praying and singing, in which, being expressive of definite, clear thought, others can join. This concludes the first of the second series of reasons for the inferiority of tongues.

16. The second reason is that Tongues are an embarrassment to the unlearned who, not understanding what is said when the speaker, in ecstatic utterances, is praising God for His goodness, is unable to say "Amen." Two questions arise: Who is he that filleth the place of the **unlearned** and what is meant by the **place**? These questions have had various answers. The word translated "unlearned" means primarily "a private person" as opposed to one who has official position; secondarily, one who has lay, and not expert knowledge about any given matter. The second meaning applies here and to those who came to the Christian assemblies but were not yet baptized and gave no evidence of having received the Spirit. Theodoret called them "the uninitiated." These may have had a separate place in the assembly but it is better to interpret **place** as "position." The whole would then read: "How shall one who has the position of the uninitiated say Amen?" The **Amen**—meaning "so let it be"—came over from the Synagogue to the Christian Church.

17. Your thanksgiving is all very well, but then—the man is not edified. It is questionable whether there is a touch of irony in the first clause of this verse since Paul believed in the worth of Tongues to the one gifted with them.

18. but the other is not ¹ edified. I thank God, I speak
 19. with tongues more than you all: 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.
 20. Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in
 21. malice be ye babes, but in mind be ye ² men. In

¹ Gr., *buildded up.*

² Gr., *of full age.*

18. Paul adduces his own experience and judgment as a third argument. He was no stranger to this gift. He thanks God, rather, that he excels in it. Doubtless it has often been to him in **private** a means of exalted communion with God, but in the Church assembly he would give it small place.

19. In the Church he would rather speak five words with the understanding for the instruction of others than ten thousand words in a tongue. This same judgment reveals the fine balance of the Apostle. Over against the ecstatic element in himself and in others he resolutely set his deeply ethical understanding of the Spirit's purpose and of the Christian life.

20. **Be not children in mind.** The child loves that which is showy and attracts attention and in the Corinthian's love of tongues Paul discerned a sort of childishness. In **malice be ye babes**, *i.e.*, if you will be children, let it be in reference to a malicious disposition, but in intelligent discernment be men. Softened as this rebuke is by the affectionate address "brethren," it nevertheless must have been humbling to those who prided themselves upon their knowledge.

21. Thus far the whole discussion has been in reference to the usefulness of gifts—particularly of tongues and prophecy—to **the church**. Now he turns to consider the bearing of these two upon the **outsider** who finds his way into the assembly. To him tongues could be a sign of judgment, whereas prophesying might issue in his conversion. Again in this way the inferiority of tongues to prophecy is set forth. The argument begins in citing an instance from the law. This name was given to the Old Testament as a whole from the fact that the law was the more important part (cf. Rom. 3:19; Jn. 10:34). The quotation is from Is. 28:11-12 * and is to this effect. The scoffing Jews in Jerusalem treat with scorn God's method of dealing

* The quotation is not exactly in accord with the Septuagint or with the Hebrew. It is more like the Greek version of Aquila.

- the law it is written, By men of strange tongues and by the lip of strangers will I speak unto this people; and not even thus will they hear me, saith the
22. Lord. 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
23. to them that believe. If therefore the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving,
24. will they not say that ye are mad? But if all

with them and His warnings to them through His prophets. "He treats us as children," they said, "with line upon line, precept upon precept." God, through the prophet, in reply threatens them that since they refused to listen to His simple, clear commands, He would speak to them by the strange tongues of the Assyrians, their captors. The passage is in no sense a prediction regarding speaking with tongues. It is simply an illustration which in some features finds a parallel in the Corinthian situation. The striking feature is that the strange Assyrian tongue by which

22. God spoke to Israel was in retribution. Just so (wherefore) speaking with tongues was to the outsider who would not listen to the call of the Gospel an ominous sign. Its abnormality did not commend it, rather it confirmed his unbelief. In brief, "tongues do not convince those who are not convinced already." Compare a like situation in the case of the parables of Jesus in Mk. 4:11-12. **Prophesying, on the other hand, is for a sign.** The words "is for a sign" are not in the Greek. The text gives a good sense without them. If they are kept, the sign in this case is not of judgment but of grace.

23. To bring out the force of what has just been said a supposition is made of the church gathering together in one place and the whole service being given up to speaking with tongues, not necessarily all speaking at the same time, but probably so, adding confusion to unintelligibility. Into this gathering come unlearned men (see vs. 16) and those who are positively unbelieving. Will they not say "You are insane"?

24. But if, on the other hand, all prophesy (in turn since prophesying implies self-possession and aims at edification—see vs. 32) and one does not believe or one who is yet uninitiated (vs. 16) comes in and listens to the inspired searching words of

25. prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is ¹ reprov'd by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, de-

2. *Regulations for the Orderly Exercise of Gifts in Public Worship, 14:26-36*

26. clarifying that God is ² among you indeed. 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
27. things be done unto edifying. If any man speaketh in a tongue, let *it be* two, or at the most three,

¹ Or, *convicted*.

² Or, *in*.

truth, he is convicted of sin (by each in turn), his thoughts are probed (as each prophet speaks).

25. And the secrets of his heart are laid bare: and so, falling upon his face he will worship God announcing (by that act and afterwards by word) that God is really among you. The two suppositions make again clear the superior value of prophecy, and the whole chapter, thus far, make evident the fact that in dealing with the gift of tongues we have nothing to do with foreign languages.

26. **What is it then?** Cf. verse 15. How then does the case stand? *i.e.*, how are these gifts to be exercised? The principle governing their exercise is edification. This principle is now applied to the orderly exercise, particularly of the gift of tongues and prophecy. A graphic picture is given of the assembling church, eager to contribute, each his part, to the service. One has a psalm, either his own composition or an Old Testament psalm with a Christian application. Regarding this psalmody of the early church we know very little. Another has a word of **instruction**, another a **revelation**, *i.e.*, an inspired setting forth of the revealed will of God, another breaks forth in the rapturous utterances of a tongue, and another gives an interpretation of these utterances. The spontaneity of the offerings and variety of forms made necessary some definite regulations.

27. As regards those having the gift of tongues—only two, at most three, were to speak at a service and these in turn. One and only one was to interpret, probably on account of time and

28. and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church;
 29. and let him speak to himself, and to God. And let the prophets speak *by* two or three, and let the
 30. others ¹ discern. But if a revelation be made to
 31. another sitting by, let the first keep silence. For ye all can prophesy, one by one, that all may learn,
 32. and all may be ² comforted; and the spirits of the

¹ Gr., *discriminate*.² SV, *exhorted*.

28. to prevent discussion. If no interpreter be present then "let the rhapsodist be silent in the assembly." He must commune with God in this way in solitude, *i.e.*, at home.

29. As regards prophets there was also to be a limited number, two or three, naturally, in succession. **Discern.** The gift of discernment, probably exercised by those who were themselves prophets, was to determine whether the spirit was of God.

30. If while one prophet is speaking, another sitting in the audience has a revelation it shall be an indication to the speaker that he is to bring his address to a close. The wording does not signify an abrupt stop on the part of the speaker nor an abrupt beginning on the part of his successor. Courtesy as well as order should have place. It does signify that one prophet must not occupy the whole time of the meeting, if others felt called upon to speak.

31. **For.** This verse gives a reason for the direction in 30. If one prophet gives way to another, it would be possible for all the prophets in successive meetings to be heard and all the members of the congregation to be instructed and comforted. The varied speakers with their varied revelations would compass the needs of the congregation. The listening prophets would, of course, share in the blessings of instruction and comfort.

32. **And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.** And connects this verse with the preceding and gives another reason for the regulation in verse 30. One can become silent if another has a revelation, for a prophet is not under the power of a spirit he cannot control. He is not helplessly driven to talk on and on. He is master of the spirit which speaks through him. "The very ideal of prophecy is to receive the Divine communication unperturbed by the nearness of the Divine and to deliver it with a calm confidence in its truthfulness and its certainty to prevail."—Davidson, *O. T. Prophecy*.

33. prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not *a God* of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the saints.

3. *Forbidding Women to Speak in Church*

34. Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them

33. This is a proof of the maxim of verse 32. God is not a God of disorder and confusion. His Spirit therefore cannot be the breeder of turbulence. He cannot inspire men to make them unruly. That would mean unseemly contention in the church, but God is a God of peace. **As in all the churches of the saints.** It is not clear whether this clause should go with verse 33 or with 34. In either case supply the words "is the custom." If taken with 33 it refers to the custom of reverent orderliness. If connected with 34, it would read "as is the custom in all the churches of the saints let the women keep silence in the churches." **Saints**—those set apart to God, believers.

34. **Let the women keep silence in the churches.** The prohibition is positive and is grounded upon Gen. 3:16. The difficulty which it presents is its apparent contradiction with 11:5, 13, where women are spoken of as praying and prophesying. "Every woman who, while praying or prophesying in public, keeps her head uncovered, etc." The simplest solution is that in 11:5 his whole thought is upon the "wearing of the veil" in public assemblies and the matter of "praying and prophesying or speaking with tongues" is left untouched. That has his attention now under the general theme—decorum and edification in speaking in the church gatherings. Women are to keep silent.* The ground of this is in the words of Gen. 3:16, "thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." They are to be in subjection or, perhaps better, in subordination in accordance with the nature of the sexes and the word of God. In I. Tim. 2:12 a more specific prohibition is given, "I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to lord it over a man," *i.e.*, Findlay suggests that these two functions—"church-teaching and authoritative-direction," as unfit for women, may have been what was

* Other solutions are: (1) that the speaking is defined by verse 36 as "asking questions" and has nothing to do with prophesying (Heinrici); (2) that verses 34-35 are an interpolation coming into the text from the margin and placed there by a much later hand (Weinel); (3) that women might pray and prophesy in more private meetings consisting chiefly of women (Beet). Each explanation raises other difficulties in trying to solve the one of the text.

35. be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to
36. speak in the church. What? was it from you that the word of God went forth? or came it unto you alone?

4. *Paul's Assertion of Authority, 14:37-38*

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
38. of the Lord. ¹ But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *But if any man knoweth not, he is not known.*

here in the mind of Paul. It is well in this connection to remember that "the attitude of Apostolic Christianity toward women is largely due to the interaction of two distinct principles—the fundamental Christian assertion of the intrinsic worth of human personality and the eschatological foreshortening of the time which could not fail to hinder the social application of the former principle."—Robinson. Our day has applied this "former principle" and given women larger liberty.

35. **And if**—better, "and, moreover, if," showing that verse 35 is not an explanation of verse 34, but adds something to it. It may be rendered "And even if they would learn something they must not speak in church but carry their questions home to their husbands, or, if not married, to their fathers or brothers." It might look like heeding the injunction to be "in subjection" if they merely asked questions, but even this could not be allowed, as it might serve as a pretext for gaining some larger privilege. **Shameful**—because a violation of the modesty required by ancient custom.

36. A sharp rebuke. The questions are ironical. Pray, did God's word start from you? Are you the only people it has reached? So you seem to think, in view of the authority you claim and the right you assert to be independent regarding such disorders in public worship as I have condemned.

37. **The commandment of the Lord.** Paul is sure of the source of the directions he has been giving them. Whoever is

5. Conclusion of the Whole Matter, 14:39-40

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.
-

moved by the Spirit will recognize that they are from the Lord and will acknowledge their authority.

38. If any says "I fail to see it" that does not alter the facts, he must rest in his ignorance. Paul will have no contention with him.

39. The whole discussion is summed up in three exhortations to seek earnestly to be inspired preachers of the revealed truth of God; to allow the exercise of the gift of tongues under such restrictions, of course, as he had given them, and to carry on their public worship in a seemly manner and in order. The peculiar phrase translated "in order" applies, perhaps, solely to the exercise of public gifts; while "seemliness" bears upon woman's dress and the profanation of the Lord's table.

IV. TEACHING CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, 15:1-58

1. *The Creed which the Church had accepted and the summary of evidence for the Resurrection with which they were familiar, 15:1-11*

15. 1. Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye re-

Paul's gospel was principally the gospel of the cross and the Resurrection. This does not mean that the earthly life of Jesus before the crucifixion was of no importance to him. On the contrary, all that preceded Calvary's hour was a preparation for it. It was the climactic expression of the spirit and purpose of all that Jesus said and did. By that supreme sacrifice redemption from sin was provided for all who would accept it. But had death been victorious over Jesus and there had been no Resurrection there would have been wanting a vital element in the Apostle's message. It is to show this that a part of this chapter is written. The triumph of Jesus over the grave is the guarantee of the same triumph for those who believe in him. As this chapter is the great chapter of the New Testament upon the subject of the resurrection of the dead, it merits close attention. The reasoning of the chapter is concise and sometimes intricate. Before entering upon a detailed study of it it will be of advantage to get at the situation in the Corinthian church which called it forth, to mark the postulates with which Paul begins it, and to have a general outline of his argument.

Belief in a future life was accepted alike by Jew and Greek. The point in question was whether it was reached by the way of resurrection. To the Jew the resurrection of the body was the completion of salvation, an essential element of future, heavenly existence. To the Greek, on the contrary, with his conception of matter as the source of evil and with the evidence that the body in the grave was dissolved into its original elements, the thought of a resurrection of the body was both impossible and undesirable. There were some in the church who held this latter view.

It seems illogical that they could admit that Jesus had risen from the dead, for he was a man and had a mortal body. But so they did believe, and their belief was of great apologetic value to Paul. They were perhaps willing to accept the fact because of the uniqueness of Jesus and in view of the sure witness of many that they had seen the Risen Lord. They could not, however, see in the fact any guarantee of the resurrection of his followers. There may have been in their attitude a touch of that boasted "enlightenment" (rationalism, we would call it) which based denial upon the impossibility of forming any human conception of what resurrection is—or "affecting 'the wisdom of this world' they cherished the rooted prejudice of Greek culture against the idea of bodily resurrection." At any rate, their assertion was that "Dead persons do not live again" (vs. 12) and it is this assertion which engages Paul's attention through seventy-two verses of this chapter. His whole effort is to make clear to these dangerous doubters how illogical their position is. He argues with these postulates in mind: (a) that Christ has risen, (b) that those who believe in him shall also rise from the dead. It is to be noted that the chapter has nothing to do with the resurrection of unbelievers and that it does not once use the expression "the resurrection of the body." It proclaims "bodily resurrection," which is quite a different thing from "resurrection of the body"; it also shows how central and vital the doctrine is to complete Christian salvation. A brief analysis of the chapter is as follows: He first calls their attention to the gospel which he had preached to them and which they had received, together with the traditional summary of witnesses to the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus (2-11). Then he takes up the general denial which doubters made, *viz.*: "Dead men do not rise again," and by a reduction *ad absurdum* form of argument shows the inconsistency or falsity of it. There are four of these arguments, beginning respectively at verses 13, 16, 29, 32. The first, accepting the strictly logical conclusion that if dead men do not rise, Christ also Himself did not rise, since he was a man, shows that his (Paul's) preaching and their faith were without content, empty, and they and all other believers were false witnesses (13-15). The second argument, accepting the same conclusion as the first, concludes that (a) faith is futile "Ye are yet in your sins." (b) That all Christians, who have died, have perished. (c) That those in this life who have hoped in Christ are of men most pitiable (16-19). The mere statement of such conclusions would seem to be their refutation. Paul meets them, however, by turning from argument to prophecy, one of those exalted spirit-inspired utterances in which he sets forth with exultant assurance the

2. ceived, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are
¹ saved; *I make known, I say*, in what words I

¹ Or, *saved, if ye hold fast what I preached unto ye. SV, if ye hold fast the word which.*

outcome of Christ's resurrection. Risen he is, yes! And he is the first fruits of them who have fallen asleep in him. At his coming they shall arise and then shall be the end, when Death's defeat shall mark the close of his triumph over all opposing forces, the placing of all enemies under his feet and the giving up of the Kingdom to God (20-28). The third argument (29) and the fourth (30-32) are thrown into the form of questions implying that there is no satisfactory answer to either except in the hope of a future life with which the hope of resurrection is practically identified. After a warning against association with those who hold materialistic views of life (33) and an exhortation to get back to a sober mind (34), Paul turns to the consideration of the intellectual problem of the Resurrection—the problem of the body. The difficulties before the minds of the Corinthians are set forth in the two questions: How are the dead raised? With what kind of a body do they come? Shall we have the same bodies that we put aside when we die? If not, what will be the nature of the body? Paul begins his answer with an analogy of the sowing of the seed, out of which can be drawn the two teachings—the continuity of life between the old and the new body and identity—God giveth each seed a body after its kind (wheat, barley, etc.), 37-41. As preparatory to the application of this to the resurrection the Apostle calls attention to the great diversity of bodies which God has provided on earth, in the sea, and in the sky. Surely He can furnish one suitable for the life beyond. Whatever its substance, that body shall have marked contrasts in quality from our earthly body. It will be immortal, glorious, powerful, spiritual (42-44). As we have had a fleshly body so we shall have a spiritual body, and the basis of this sure hope is in the fact that the resurrected Jesus has become a life-giving Spirit whence shall come that body suited to a spiritual environment. The secret, the mystery of the Resurrection is just this (45-49). If we live to the time of the Lord's coming, to the great day of resurrection, we shall have this "spiritual body" as the result of a sudden transformation, and so "Death shall be swallowed up in victory." In view of it all, let us be steadfast for earthly toil is not in vain, if it be in the Lord (50-51).

15. **I make known unto you.** There is a suggestion of regret and mild reproach in these words. He had preached the Gospel to them and they had received it and were being saved by

- preached it unto you, if ye hold it fast, except ye be-
3. lieved ¹ in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for
 4. our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried and that he hath been raised on the third
 5. day according to the Scriptures; and that he ap-

¹ Or, *without cause.*

it, but some of them had become skeptical about one of its vital doctrines—the Resurrection. He must therefore make it known again to them, *i.e.*, explain its nature and import.

2. **What word.** This expression takes the place of “the Gospel” in the previous verse. It lays stress upon “form” rather than substance. The story of the Gospel as told is what it points to. Paul is making “a challenge to memory and faith” and the verse may be rendered “I make known unto you, I say, again my account of the Gospel and you will remember it, if you are holding (it) fast, unless your faith was haphazard.”

3. **For**—introducing verses 3–4 which explain the contents of the Gospel which had been proclaimed to them. **First of all** in importance, not time. **I received** from the Apostles and others with the added illumination of the Spirit. Here follows a virtual Christian creed. **Christ died for sins.** There is a real connection between Christ’s death and the forgiveness of our sins. His death has an atoning purpose (Rom. 4:25). **According to the Scriptures.** Is. 53 is the main prophecy concerning it. It was the Resurrection itself which threw light upon this word (cf. Acts 8:29–35).

4. **He was buried.** The importance of this statement is in its witness to the fact that Jesus came under the power of the grave. It certifies His death and implies an “empty tomb” in connection with the Resurrection. **Hath been raised.** The Greek form signifies not only that He rose from the dead, but also that He is now living. “His resurrection is not merely an event of history but a condition and a power of life present and future.” **The third day.** From the first this detail has been accepted by the church. A resurrection so mysterious as that of Jesus could have taken place at any moment after the body was placed in the grave. The belief “in the day” goes back ultimately to the word of Jesus (Matt. 16:21, 17:23; Lk. 9:22) and was confirmed by the first appearance on the third day.

5. Here begins the list of witnesses, not of the resurrection itself, for that no one saw, but of the risen Lord. **And that.**

6. peared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now; but some
7. are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then
8. to all the Apostles; and last of all, as ¹ unto one
9. born out of due time, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the Apostles and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church

¹ SV, *to the child untimely born.*

This indicates that the evidence is part of that which he had received and delivered to them. **Cephas**—cf. Lk. 24:34. Paul uses this Aramaic name for Peter always in this letter and all but twice in Galatians. **The Twelve**—an official title, for there were but really eleven Apostles at the time of the resurrection.

6. **Above five hundred at once.** The occasion is unknown but it is usually identified with Matt. 28:18-20; see also Matt. 28:10. The fact that many of these were living when Paul wrote made it possible still to get full evidence at first hand. **Fallen asleep:** euphemism for death.

7. **James.** This is James the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19) who became prominent as a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

8. **All the Apostles.** This refers to the original band of Apostles. The term cannot be widened, as it is elsewhere in the New Testament, for a larger number of Apostles than the twelve was not possible until after Pentecost. It means all who were then really Apostles. In regard to this list it is to be noted that, with the exception of the group of five hundred, it is of men of the highest importance in the church whose witness would be unquestioned. Furthermore, Paul's knowledge, much of it, regarding the resurrection came to him doubtless during his visit to Jerusalem when he had intercourse with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18). **Last of all.** The appearance to Paul closed the appearances of our Lord. **Born out of due time**—a violent and premature birth. The other Apostles, when the Lord appeared to them, were already children of the household of faith. It has been suggested that the Jews gave Paul the nickname of "the Abortion."

9. For I, this untimely child, because as such I was imperfectly developed and really unfit to be called an Apostle and because I persecuted the Church of God, am the least of the Apostles. Remorse for this fanatical activity against

10. of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found ¹ vain; but I labored more abundantly than
11. they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Whether then *it be* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

2. *Four reductio ad absurdum arguments from the assertion of some that "dead men do not rise,"* 15:12-34

12. Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there
-

¹ Or, *ineffectual*.

10. the church never left Paul. What he had been in himself and what he yet was, set over against what he had become through God's grace, and what, by that same grace, he was enabled to do, was the source of his deep humility on one side and of his just pride on the other. He attributed all that he accomplished to the power of God working through him and with him (with me). Thus he had toiled more abundantly than all the other Apostles together.

11. "Yet not I," he says, but the grace of God which was with me," and the case is the same whether "I or they" (the Twelve or James) are the preachers, for they preached the risen Lord whom they had seen, and you believed their witness and its import.

12. Paul has shown upon what a solid, reliable basis rests the belief of the church in the resurrection of Jesus. All the Apostles and many others had been eye witnesses of the Risen Lord, and they had been preaching the fact and its significance with telling power. Furthermore, this doctrine had been accepted by them. They believed that Christ had risen from the dead. How could they, then, say that "there is no such thing as a resurrection of dead (men)? This we are to remember was not the equivalent of their saying that they had no belief in a future life. It bears wholly upon **bodily** resurrection. It was not immortality of the soul that was in question, but resurrection of the body. Of course, if this sweeping denial had any truth in it, then Christ had not been raised.

13. is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead neither has Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching ¹vain, ²your faith also is ¹vain.
14. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up ³Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised neither

¹ Or, *void*. ² Some ancient authorities read *our*. ³ Gr., *the Christ*.

a. First argument: If dead men do not rise, Christ is not risen and our preaching and your faith are empty,

15:13-15

13. Two consequences of such an issue are now set forth. (1) Their preaching of the doctrine is void and they are made liars (14) (2) Their faith is empty (14).

14. **Our preaching is vain.** The word translated vain signifies "empty," "void." If Christ had not been raised, then they had been preaching an empty gospel. And what was that gospel? Weinel gives it as follows: "That there had come forth a man out of Nazareth mighty in deed and in word, that the Jews had killed him, that they made him die the ignominious death of a criminal, that this man was the Son of God, that His death had taken place on account of sin, that God had manifested Him as His Son beyond and after death by raising Him from the dead and that this resurrection was known by experience to His disciples." All this was void, if Christ had not been raised.

15. What is more, their faith is also void. There is nothing left for them to believe. They have no risen Christ upon whom salvation depends.

b. Second argument: If dead men do not rise, Christ is not risen, (a) your faith is futile, (b) the Christian dead have perished, (c) we who have hoped in Christ in this life are of all men to be pitied most. A prophecy, 15:16-28.

Preaching what is not true, we are **beginning to be found out as false witnesses of God**, lit. **against God**, because we have declared once and again that God raised Christ from the dead. Either He did, or we have lied in saying that He did. Paul hints at no self-deception or hallucination in the matter.

17. hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.
18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹ If in this life only we have hope
19. in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.

¹ Or, *If we have only hoped in Christ in this life.*

Neither one entered his thought. The alternative was fact, or deliberate lying.

17. (a) **Faith is vain.** The word in the Greek here for "vain" is not the same as in verse 14. Here it means **without effect or results**, hence, **ye are yet in your sins**. Why? Because justification depends upon His resurrection. Only through His **risen life** can Christ come into such living union with men that their sins are forgiven. Furthermore, through His risen life He becomes a "life-creating spirit" in purifying us from sin and strengthening us in goodness (see Rom. 4:25, 6:4-11).

18. (b) Then, too, those who have "fallen asleep" in Christ have perished. They were yet in **their sins** if Christ has not been raised from the dead. "The sense of His presence and the promises of His gospel turned their death into sleep." But they awoke **in perdition!**

19. (c) "If all we have done is merely having hoped in Christ in this life" (Alford) and there it ends with nothing to look for beyond, then we are most to be pitied. The Christian life itself is a monstrous delusion! Magnificent hopes end in blank disappointment! Paul is not thinking here of goodness which is looking simply for reward—a form of selfishness—but of that desire for a nobler, higher life with God and in God for ends outside of self which our few years here are all too brief to attain.

A review of these arguments will show that Paul is not arguing primarily with unbelievers but with inconsistent Christians. He appeals both to fact (17) and to rational feeling (18-19). What he says about being "yet in their sins if Christ had not risen" the members of the church understood from experience. It was the risen Christ who had brought them out of their pagan, sinful living and they could not but feel the force of the arguments of verses 18-19. A doctrine which involved such monstrous conclusions could not be true. It is not true. Christ is risen! And the Apostle turns to consider the effect of this great fact. In so doing he passes from argument to

20. But now hath Christ been raised from the dead the
 21. first fruits of them that are asleep. For since by
 man *came* death, by man came also the resurrection
 22. of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in
 23. ¹ Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his
 own order: Christ the first fruits; then they that are

¹ Gr., *the Christ*.

prophecy (spirit-inspired, exalted teaching), the theme of which is the outcome of the Resurrection of Jesus, summed up,—

- (1) The resurrection of all believers "at His coming";
 (2) The bringing to naught of all that opposes Him, even death itself;
 (3) The giving up the Kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all (20-28).

20. Christ . . . the first fruits of them that are asleep. The figure is from Lev. 23:10-12. As the harvest in ancient Israel was ready to be gathered, the priest was to take a sheaf from it and wave it before the Lord, a pledge that the whole harvest belonged to the Lord. The first fruits were, of course, in kind like the harvest. The resurrected Jesus was by analogy a pledge of that harvest of resurrection which should include all believers.

21. As between the sheaf and the harvest there is likeness of nature, so Jesus as man, risen from the dead, is the pledge of the resurrection of believing men. As through man came death, so through man cometh resurrection of dead men.

22. For—confirming and explaining verse 21. All in Adam die. This is universal since all men are descended from Adam. All in the Christ (in the Messiah) shall be made alive. This is limited to believers and for the following reasons: (1) in Christ according to Paul means in vital relationship with Christ, *i.e.*, a spiritual relationship. Only believers have this. (2) The expressions used in the text on each side of this verse indicate the same limitation in the Apostle's thought. See "those who have fallen asleep" in verses 18, 20 and "they that are Christ's at his coming. (3) Otherwise the thought of universal resurrection is introduced into a chapter devoted to the fact and significance of the resurrection of believers.

23. But each in his own order. Order signifies company, troop, division. It is military metaphor. Christ constitutes the first; all who belong to Christ, the second. The time of the

24. Christ's at his ¹ coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to ² God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule
 25. and all authority and power. For he must reign,
 26. till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The

¹ Gr., *presence.*

² Gr., *the God and Father.*

resurrection of this second division is at his coming. To Paul this was the great "second coming" (as it is named by us) of the Lord (cf. 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Cor. 1:7-8).

24. **Then cometh the end.** The end of what? Not of resurrection as though there were a third "division," but the absolute end—the conclusion of the world's history. The following reasons are given for this interpretation of "the end": (1) The figure "first fruits" calls for only two divisions of resurrection. (2) That there is to be understood the word "resurrection" after "the end" is an assumption. Such an important word is not usually left out of a Greek sentence. (3) Paul nowhere else gives countenance to the doctrine of two resurrections (of men) separated by an interval. (4) The definition which follows the words "the end" suits better the absolute end than the end of resurrection. **When he shall deliver up the Kingdom.** This is simultaneous with the end and means that Christ's mediatorial work will be accomplished. The reign of sin and death will have come to an end. Christ will give up His mediatorial function. "Now we see God and experience His action through the God-man who represents Him to us; then Christ will have brought us to the Father; we shall enjoy Beatific Vision and immediate union with God Himself." The English is framed like the Greek to show that before this giving up of the Kingdom, at the end, he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. This denotes all opposition, whether heavenly or on earth—Angelic, demonic, human.

25. **For he must reign**—explanatory and confirmatory of what is just declared in verse 24. The time of this "reigning" is now and continues until "the end."

26. **The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.** This is accomplished in the resurrection of "those who belong to Christ" (vs. 23). Towards this goal Paul's thought moves, in setting for it the meaning of the Lord's coming at the end. Christ hath been raised. He now reigns and shall continue so

27. last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, he hath put all things in subjection under his feet.
¹ But when he saith all things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all
28. things unto him. 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.

¹ Or, *But when he shall have said, All things are put in subjection (evidently excepting him that did subject all things unto him) when, I say all things, etc.*

to do until every enemy is put under His feet. His coming at the end shall be the time of the conquest of His last enemy, Death (death is personified), and the evidence of it shall be the resurrection of those who belong to Him. Then He shall give up His mediatorial position for His work shall be accomplished. Death and sin shall have been vanquished.

27. The insertion of names in the place of the somewhat confusing pronouns will facilitate the understanding of this verse. When God (or Christ) shall have announced: "All things (see above) are in subjection" it is evident that God is excepted Who did subject all things unto Christ and when all things have been subjected to Christ then shall He (the Son) also Himself be subjected * to God (the Father) Who subjected all things to Christ (the Son) that God may be all in all.

In Paul's thought creation is intimately related to redemption (Col. 1:16). It has the Messianic stamp upon it, as the stage upon which the great drama of the world's redemption is enacted. In the end the purpose of it will be fulfilled. The emphasis in the passage is upon **subjection**, or, perhaps better, **subordination**. Whether it is the equivalent of reconciliation as far as "all things" are concerned is one of the earnest questions of modern thought. In considering it, it is well to remember what Paul says in Phil. 2:9-11. These verses (24-28) are, like Chapter 13, an instance of exalted prophecy. Much in them passes our comprehension. God will be all in all in the realm which Christ delivers up to Him. The note in it all is one of triumph.

* The subordination of Christ is a distinct teaching of Paul (Gal. 4:4; Col. 1:19). It is a subordination of office or function rather than of nature. The sovereignty of Christ did not cease with the delivering up of the Kingdom, only His function as Mediator (see Eph. 5:5).

29. Else what shall they do which 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? I

c. Third argument: If dead men do not rise, Baptism for the dead is of no avail, 15:29

In offering further support of the resurrection Paul now brings forward arguments which are virtually *ad hominem*. Baptism for the dead is futile if there be no resurrection.

29. Else (*i.e.*, if there be no resurrection of the dead) **what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?** As helpful in leading to a just interpretation of this perplexing question several points must be noted. (1) The words "**they who are baptized,**" without further definition, refer to those who have received Christian baptism. It is not, therefore, probable that Paul is here alluding to any rite of substitutionary baptism connected with pagan mystery-religions. (2) **For the dead** refers not to the dead in general but to those who were in some way connected with "those who were baptized," *i.e.*, with Christians. It implies that "the dead" were Christians. (3) Vicarious baptism, *i.e.*, the baptism of a living Christian as a proxy for anyone who had died unbaptized, is so foreign to Paul's ethical conception of baptism that such a magical view deserves no more than a passing notice. There is no evidence that vicarious baptism was practiced anywhere in the church in Paul's time. Keeping these points in view, the most natural interpretation is that through affection for one who had died and who had prayed for those who were dear to him, they had been led to Christ and were baptized in the hope of reunion with him who had gone. Findlay, to whose exposition of this verse I am indebted, illustrates by the case of a dying mother who wins her son by the appeal "Meet me in heaven!" Futile would be any such hope if there were no resurrection.

d. Fourth argument: If dead men do not rise, daily risk and danger have no meaning, 15:30-34

30. **Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour** (Rom. 8:36; 2 Cor. 4:10-12). The list of perils found in 2 Cor. 11:23-27 will amply confirm this fact of "jeopardy every hour" as far as Paul is concerned. Silas and Timothy, doubtless, had like risks.

31. protest by ¹ that glorying in you brethren, which I
 32. have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after
 the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus,
² what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised,
 33. let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Be not
 deceived; ³ evil company doth corrupt good man-
 34. ners. ⁴ Awake up righteously, and sin not; for
 some have no knowledge of God. I speak *this* to
 move you to shame.

¹ Or, *your glorying.*

² Or, *what doth it profit me, if the dead are not raised? Let us eat, etc.*

³ SV, *Evil companionships corrupt good morals.*

⁴ Gr., *awake out of drunkenness righteously.* SV, *awake to soberness righteously.*

31. **I die daily.** Death menaced him every day. That is as true, he assures them, as his pride in them "in Christ Jesus our Lord."

32. **After the manner of men.** Looking at the matter as any ordinary man would who is without the incentives and hopes of Christian faith. What profit would I have if I fought with the beasts at Ephesus? None whatever. "The beasts of Ephesus" are not to be taken literally. As a Roman citizen Paul could not be compelled to fight in the arena. His conflict was with infuriated men. The tumult caused by Demetrius (Acts 19) was probably later. **Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die** (cf. Is. 22:13). This is not Paul's conclusion. It is what men generally say who have no belief in a future life and seek their satisfactions in the present (cf. Wisd. 2:5-9).

33. **Be not deceived.** Let no one captivate you with such immoral teachings. "Evil companionships corrupt good morals"—and the doubts and laxity which some of you exhibit, mark a moral torpor. The quotation is from Menander, an Athenian poet (who died in 291 B.C.). It is here in the form of a proverb.

34. **Awake.** The verb originally means "to recover from drunkenness"; metaphorically, "to get a sober mind," "to get back to one's sober senses." Righteously, as is right, as one ought to do. **And sin not.** Stop going wrong in evil companionship. Some of you have an **ignorance of God.** This expression is stronger than "do not know God." It marks a culpable ignorance, a moral defect rather than an intellectual. It was the root of their disbelief in the resurrection. Surely

3. *Objectors answered; the Body of the risen, 15:35-49*

35. But someone will say, How are the dead raised?

36. and with what manner of body do they come? Thou

they had been corrupted by evil company. They were really worse than the heathen about them for they had stifled what knowledge of God they once had. With right could Paul say "I speak to move you to shame."

3. *Objectors Answered: The Body of the Risen, 15:35-49*

Thus far Paul has sought to make clear to the Corinthians that the Resurrection which he had preached to them and which the Old Testament had predicted was an historical fact witnessed to by the Apostles and himself (1-11); that the denial of the fact emptied the Gospel of its substance and made faith futile (12-19); that the acceptance of the fact gave a basis for the assurance of the resurrection of all Christ's followers and of the completion of his mediatorial work (20-28). After an appeal to Christian practice and conduct as confirming all he had claimed and after rebuking some of them for their willingness to be led astray by their evil companionship, he turns to consider the real crux of the whole subject, so far as the Corinthians were concerned,—the matter of the "body" in reference to resurrection. This was the stumbling block, due to the possible influence of Greek thought and to their materialistic conceptions. "With what manner of body do they come?" is asked. The answer to this question is another example of prophecy and it constitutes the central section of this great chapter. He begins with an analogy from nature. In sowing a seed, it is only through the process of disorganization that you get a new seed with its new body which God has given to it, each seed (whether of wheat, barley, etc.) having its own body (36-38). Nature is not shut up to one kind of body. Men, beasts, birds and fishes have each a different kind. There are celestial bodies and terrestrial, each having its own glory. The sun, moon, and the stars differ, yes, one star differeth from another. Just so the resurrection shall reveal a different body for man—with characteristics quite opposed to his present body (39-44). He shall have a "spiritual body" and that shall be because of his relation to Christ, who is a life-giving Spirit. As Adam is the type of one form of embodied life—so Christ is the type of the other—the one of the earth, earthy; the other of heaven, heavenly. As we have borne the

- foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not
37. quickened, except it die: 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
38. kind: but God giveth it a body even as it pleased
39. him, and to each seed a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of
40. birds, and another of fishes. There are also celes-
-

image of the earthy, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly (48-49).

35. The two questions of this verse have a different bearing. The first, "How are the dead raised up?" implies the impossibility of resurrection; the second, "with what manner of body do they come?" the inconceivability of it. The second question is considered first and answered by analogy.

36. Life is perpetuated through disorganization of the seed. The shell is broken and the life assimilates what is needful for its new form.

37. The bare seed (stripped of all covering) put into the ground is not the same as that which appears above the earth on the stalk,—a grain or seed of wheat, or barley.

38. Each seed develops its own kind, we say; "God giveth it a body as He will, but to each seed a body of its own," says Paul. Each, from a different point of view, is true. The analogy establishes two relationships between the seed in the ground and the one springing from it in the process of growth—continuity of life and identity—these we may carry over to the resurrection. The mystery of growth is not touched in this analogy—only the manner.

39. As preparatory to the declaration that the spirit will have in the resurrection life a body fitted to its environment there, attention is called to the wealth of variety there is in "bodies" in the universe. Flesh is differently organized in men, beasts, birds and fish. What a difference between the body of a bird organized for flight in the air, and of a fish for moving in the water!

40. **Celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial.** It is not certain whether by "celestial bodies" is meant the sun, moon, stars, or the bodies of heavenly beings like angels. Paul's use of the word body as the "organism" which results from life, would

- tial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is
41. another. 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
42. glory. 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

argue for the latter meaning. This is the more probable interpretation (see vs. 48). Angels were represented in the form of men, but with their own especial glory. The difference of their embodiment from ours is indicated in the words of Jesus—Lk. 20:34-36. **Glory** is manifestation—of “being, character or merely presence.” The manifestation of earthly bodies is in earthly ways. The swift flight of a bird or its brilliant plumage is its glory. The strength and intelligence of a horse are its glory.

41. The brilliant light of the sun; the paler silvery light of the moon, and the radiance of the stars—all these are different forms of manifestation or of glory. Even one star differeth from another. How bright is the planet as compared with a fixed star!

42. In view of all this, is it strange that there should be a body for the resurrection life? On the contrary, a body suitable for the new glorious life into which the spirit is to go is what we may and should expect. **So is the resurrection of the dead.**

43. The characteristics of that “suitable” body are now given—in contrast with those which mark our present body. **It is sown.** This also may be rendered “there is a sowing.” The figure is of the seed and the sowing is not to be restricted to the act of burial. The seed is sown **before** it dies (vs. 36). All our earthly course is the time of “sowing.” **Corruption.** (“The moment we begin to live, we begin to die.”) **Dishonor**—caused by the many and varied humiliating conditions of earthly life. **Weakness.** Often we are incapable of executing our purposes or desires through frailty, weariness, or infirmity (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9). Over against these are set the attributes of the body of the resurrected life, incorruptible, glorious, powerful. These characteristics of the glorified body are drawn from that of the Lord about which Paul and the Corinthians knew

44. sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a¹ natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a¹ natural body, there is also a spiritual
45. *body*. So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam *became* a

¹ Gr., *psychical*.

more than the opening verses of the chapter make evident. The contrast given in the next verse needs more extended interpretation.

44. **It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.** A psychical (*sensuous* is our nearest equivalent) body is one adapted to the needs of the soul in a material environment; a spiritual body, to the activity of the spirit in a heavenly environment. In neither case does the adjective tell us what the body is made of; it simply marks its suitability. The sensuous body is the body ruled by sense; the spiritual body, by spirit. A spiritual body, for all we know, may be constituted of refined forms of matter. We know nothing about its substance. Our faith is that it will be "formed to be the organ" of an immortal, tireless spirit. How did Paul come to this? It sounds like a mere assumption to say "if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." The conclusion rests in part upon the revelation made by Christ's resurrection and in part upon the principle that "when God gives the inward He gives also its appropriate outward garb or frame." God hath given us His Spirit—the source and means of our spirit-life—and it is the "pledge" that we shall have "a house from heaven" (2 Cor. 5:5). Not only does the principle in the light of Christ's resurrection justify our faith regarding "a spiritual body" but God's plan calls for it. This is opened up in the next verse.

45. **So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul: the last Adam a life-giving spirit.** Note regarding the text (1) that the quotation from the Old Testament (Gen. 2:7) stops with the words "living soul." Paul himself adds the last clause. In the nature of the case this could not come from the Old Testament; (2) that in Gen. 2:7 the words "first" and "Adam" are not found. They are, however, both implied. In Paul's mind Adam and Christ are the heads of two lines of descendants (cf. Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22), hence he uses Adam metaphorically for Christ and names him "**the last Adam,**" meaning that there will be no other. In the divine plan with reference to man there are two stages. Gen. 2:7 gives

46. life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual but that which is natural; then that which
 47. is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy:
 48. the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly,

us the first stage. In this stage God breathed the vital principle into the lifeless body which had been formed from the dust of the ground, and man became "a living soul." To put it in another way, the result was a soul-governed body. He became man "as nature presents him to our experience." The goal of this first stage was reached when man stood forth perfect in his physical organization. He was, however, of the earth, earthy (vs. 47). His body was a natural (psychical) body encasing a soul that was capable of the spiritual. That capability of the spiritual points forward to the second and higher stage. It is well to bear in mind that the thought of the Apostle is limited to the consideration of body. The second stage dependent, not upon spiritual development in man, but upon Christ, the last Adam, who is a life-giving spirit, will reveal man not only as spiritual within, but as furnished with a spiritual body. And when did Christ become a "life-giving spirit"? When, through the resurrection, He became the risen and glorified Lord. Then, leaving the fettering form of psychical existence, He entered upon the Spiritual form and "was installed as Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4)—"a Being above nature who had life and was capable of communicating it" (cf. Jn. 17:1-3). See verse 2.

46. **Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual.** A statement of the law of progress but with special bearing upon the matter of the body. Man was not created morally perfect. He must progress from the natural to the spiritual. The spiritual body can come only to one who has accepted and lived in the life of the Spirit.

47. **The first man is of the earth and of the dust.** This describes his origin and substance. "And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2:7). **Of heaven.** These words refer to the Risen Lord. It is thence comes the life-giving spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18). From His resurrection onward Christ is "the heavenly man" through whose spiritual quickening shall come not only a transformed spirit but a spiritual body (Rom. 8:10-11).

48. **And is the earthy.** Adam and Christ are representatives

49. such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthly ¹ we shall bear the image of the heavenly.

4. *The change that shall come to those who are alive when Christ comes; Conclusion, 15:50-58*

50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *let us also bear*.

of two types. The emphasis is still upon **body**. As long as men, whether Christians or not, are in the physical body, they are subject to the liabilities of the earthly body—corruption, dishonor, weakness. In the heavenly state those who belong to Christ shall have the glorified body as he now has (Phil. 3:21).

49. **As we have borne the image, i.e.,** the outward and bodily form of the man of dust, we shall bear the likeness of the heavenly man. Many ancient manuscripts read “let us bear,” but a moral appeal is not in line with Paul’s thinking here. The main subject all through these verses (35-49) is the spiritual body. We cannot be exhorted to bear that. That comes, if we are faithful to our Lord.

4. *The change that shall come to those who are alive when Christ comes; Conclusion, 15:50-58*

The questions “How are the dead raised up?” more specifically, “With what kind of a body do they come?” have been answered. One other remains to be answered, “What about those who are alive when the great time of resurrection arrives?” Shall they too be changed from the psychical to the spiritual? This brief section has to do mainly with this question. The expectation of the early church that the Lord’s return to earth would be soon is very evident in the New Testament. No one looked forward more earnestly and with more eager expectation to it than did Paul. It was to him a living hope and he preached it with all its implied stimulus, cheer and comfort. Then would be the day of resurrection, of the incoming consummated Kingdom of God, and of the blessedness of the redeemed. What would it mean to those who, at its sudden appearing, were still in bodies of flesh and blood? Paul’s

51. Behold I tell you a mystery: we ¹ shall not all
 52. sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in
 the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the
 trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised
 53. incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this
 corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mor-

¹ Or, *We all shall not sleep, so SV.*

answer is that "flesh and blood" cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (50). The living must be suddenly changed (51-53). Death shall end in complete overthrow. God shall give victory through the Lord Jesus Christ (54-57). Therefore let all be steadfast, overflowing with zeal in the Lord's work, knowing that work will not be in vain in the Lord (58).

50. **Flesh and blood.** The characteristic substance of our earthy, perishable bodies. They are subject to decay. The terms here refer to those who are living, and since decay is inherent in our mortal bodies, the word "corruption" in the second clause of the verse likewise refers to the "living." The full expression then is "our corruptible bodies of flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." Inherit signifies have a right to entrance. **The Kingdom of God.** This in its full glory will be ushered in by the coming of the Lord.

51. **Behold, I tell you a mystery.** A secret of God revealed to Paul (cf. Rom. 16:25-26). **We shall not all sleep, i.e.,** only some of us may die. The words imply that Paul and most of those to whom he is writing expected to be alive when the Lord came (cf. 1 Thess. 4:15; Phil. 4:5). **But we shall all be changed.** This is the secret which is revealed. Their bodies shall be changed from the weak, perishable and inglorious nature which they now have, to be immortal and fit for the glorious activity of the Spirit.

52. This change will be instantaneous and at that solemn, final moment when the **last trump** shall sound. The figure is taken from Jewish apocalyptic and is not to be interpreted literally. As though obeying some divine signal, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we (who are alive) shall be changed.

53. **For this corruptible must put on.** The verse explains why the change must be, depending upon the statement in verse 50. The figure is that of putting on of a garment, in the act of which the corruptible and the mortal disappear. Note, however, that it is the same spirit which is newly clothed.

54. tal must put on immortality. But when ¹ this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is
 55. swallowed up ² in victory. O death, where is thy
 56. victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting
 57. of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but
 thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory
 58. through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my

¹ Many ancient authorities omit *this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and.* ² Or, *victoriously.*

54. Then shall the word of Isaiah (25:8) have its widest fulfillment: "Death is swallowed up in victory!" "Death is absorbed in unperishable life" (Godet) (2 Cor. 5:4). In the thought of it all Paul breaks forth into a song of triumph.

55. Freely adapting the words of Hosea 13:44 (as given in the Septuagint) death is represented first as a conqueror, O Death, where is that victory of thine! and then the figure is changed to that of a venomous serpent, "O death, where is thy sting?"

56. **The sting of death is sin.** The consciousness of sin and the fear of judgment are what give to death its terror. **The power of sin is the law**, both in provoking us to sin (Rom. 7:8, 13) and deepening our consciousness of sin (Rom. 7:1, 9).

57. **Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ.** It is in and through Christ, *i.e.*, in living union with Him, that the guilt and power of sin are taken away, the bitterness of death is destroyed, and the assurance of a blessed resurrection established. So certain is all this that the Apostle says "giveth" us the victory. That day shall reveal it all when we rise to be with Him, clothed with the spiritual body.

58. **Wherefore**, in view of all the resurrection means, be steadfast, unmoved by skeptical speculations and evil companionship. Throw yourself earnestly and enthusiastically into the Lord's work at all times, knowing, as you do, that your labor is not fruitless in result either now or hereafter, if done under the Lord's inspiration and with His divine help.

Several facts regarding the chapter as a whole are worthy of notice. (1) **It is wise in its silences.** It goes only so far as the facts gained from the appearances of the Lord after His

beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not ¹ vain in the Lord.

¹ Or, *void*.

resurrection and the facts of spiritual experience will warrant. There are no speculations about the substance of the "spiritual body" or about the process of resurrection. Just where speculation is likely to push its questions, the chapter is silent. (2) **It makes the bodily resurrection of Jesus essential to the belief in the divinity of the Lord and to our resurrection.** Why were it not enough to believe that He continued to live on in the spiritual world and let the bodily resurrection go? Is not the answer that had there been no bodily appearances of the Lord there could not have come to the Apostles any sure consciousness of His survival of death? As far as Christ is concerned conceptions of His survival of death would have been left vague and indefinite. It was just this element of a bodily resurrection which was unique in their experience. It assured them of His triumph over death and that triumph threw a flood of light upon the meaning of His death as regards sin. And this taken together with the promises which Christ Himself had made and thus had fulfilled opened their eyes to the true, full meaning of His Messiahship. It is after the resurrection and because of it that the exalted Christology of the New Testament appears. (3) *The third fact to be noted is that this chapter, like the thirteenth, gives us instances of that prophecy which Paul so highly praised in his discussion of spiritual gifts.* Its exalted feeling breaks forth in the same rhythmic expression (see 20-28, 42-44, 45-49, 52-57). A note of triumph characterizes the whole chapter. It is one of the great chapters of our New Testament.

V. PRACTICAL AND PERSONAL MATTERS AND THE CONCLUSION, 16:1-24

1. *Concerning the Collection for the Jerusalem Church,*
16:1-4

16. 1. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do

An analysis of the chapter yields the following divisions: 1. Concerning the collection for the Jerusalem church (1-4). 2. The Apostle's intention to visit Corinth (5-9). 3. Regarding the coming of Timothy and Apollos to Corinth (10-12). 4. An exhortation to steadfastness, manly conduct, and loving action (13-14). 5. A commendation of Stephanas and others to their kindly consideration (15-18). 6. Salutations (19-21). 7. Warning, benediction and message of love (24).

Before considering each verse in detail it will be well to get some general idea of the collection here spoken of. The following points are to be noted regarding it: (1) It was being gradually gathered from all the groups of churches in Asia, Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia. (2) It was an act of policy rather than a call to meet any exceptional distress in Palestine though for several reasons the need there was serious and constant. No great haste was urged in the gathering of funds. Corinth had had the matter in hand for some time. (3) Its main purpose was to show how genuine and close was the interest of the Gentile churches in the Mother Church in Jerusalem. It was to serve as a bond of sympathy between the Pauline churches and the Jewish Christians in Palestine. Delegates from the different churches were to carry the funds to Jerusalem and thus give the benefactions a personal touch. So earnestly had Paul laid the accomplishment of this great purpose to heart that, despite great risk, he personally conducted the delegates. "I go constrained by the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing what shall befall me there, save that the Holy Spirit testified unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me" (Acts 20:22-23).

2. ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no
3. collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, ¹whomsoever ye shall approve by letters, them will I send to carry your bounty unto Jeru-
4. salem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me.

2. *The Apostle's Intention to Visit Corinth, 16:5-9*

5. But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I do pass through

¹ SV, *Whomsoever ye shall approve them will I send with letters.*

1. **Now concerning the collection.** This indicates that the Corinthians had asked Paul for directions (cf. 12:1). **Saints** *i.e.*, believers. The word has a broader meaning than our word "saint." **Churches of Galatia**, in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

2. **First day of the week.** Hebraistic expression. Jesus rose from the dead "on the third day." This corresponds to the "first day of the week" (see Lk. 24:1) and here we have the earliest evidence that this day had especial consecration on the part of the early church. It was not yet regularly known as "the Lord's day." **Lay by him in store.** The money was to be "laid by" at home. **As he may prosper, i.e.**, in proportion to weekly gains. No definite proportion is required, nor is any pressure to be put upon

3. **them by himself, i.e., no collections be made when I come. Whomsoever ye shall approve by letters.** Credentials given to the delegates who were to carry the funds to Jerusalem. On all sides Paul wishes to guard against any suspicion of misuse of the funds. The word "approve" means tested and satisfying the test.

4. **and if it be meet, i.e.**, if the contribution is sufficiently large. It should be worthy of an apostolic mission. Respect for his apostleship, not personal pride, is to be considered.

His visit will be preceded by a trip through Macedonia, but when he comes to them he plans to be with them for quite a time. He hopes for their hearty forwarding of his plans and purposes when the time comes for him to leave them. His present plan is to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost. This because of opportunity for service and because enemies were active.

6. Macedonia; 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. For
7. 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, 9. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me and there are many adversaries.

3. *Regarding the coming of Timothy and Apollos to Corinth, 16:10-12*

10. Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you

5. **When I shall have passed through Macedonia.** "Passing through" is Paul's "technical term for making a missionary tour through a district."—Ramsay. Our word for it is "itinerating." Luke in describing Paul's work uses the same word.

6. Paul did spend three months in Corinth (Acts 20:3). Navigation was dangerous after September 14, and ceased after about the middle of November until the opening days of April. **Set me forward on my journey.** This setting forward might include a generous gift for the Jerusalem saints if he should go thither, provision for his journey, and certainly their prayers and good wishes.

7. **By the way,** just in passing.

8-9. **At Ephesus.** Showing that the letter was written there. **Pentecost.** The great Jewish festival which took place on the fiftieth day after the offering of the barley sheaf at the pass-over, now named Whitsuntide. Owing to its importance in the early church (Acts, ch. 2) it was probably remembered annually. The letter was written some weeks before this. The reason of his stay was "the standing open of a door, great and effective," *i.e.*, a large opportunity for rendering telling service in preaching the truth and in meeting opponents who were trying to gainsay it. "The superstition of all Asia was concentrated in Ephesus. Throughout the early centuries the city mob, superstitious, uneducated, frivolous, swayed by the most commonplace motives, was everywhere the most dangerous and unfailing enemy of Christianity, and often carried the imperial officials further than they wished in the way of persecution."—Ramsay, *St. Paul*, p. 277.

10. In 4:17 Paul speaks of having sent Timothy to them. His

- without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord,
11. as I also do: let no man therefore despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace that he may
12. come unto me; for I expect him with the brethren. But as touching Apollos, the brother, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren: and it was not at all ¹ *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
14. men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love.

¹ Or, *God's will that He should come now* (cf. Rom. 2:18, marg.).

letter, if sent directly across the sea, would arrive before Timothy, who went by the way of Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Paul bespeaks for Timothy, comparatively young and apparently somewhat timid (1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:6-7), kindly treatment and respect.

11. They were also to see to it that he came away without leaving any bad feeling behind him. **With the brethren.** The same is in verse 12. They were the bearers of the Corinthian letter to Paul. The phrase then is to be joined with "I expect." "I, with the brethren" (who are here in Ephesus waiting for my reply) "expect him." In this letter of the Corinthians it is not unlikely that an invitation was sent to Apollos to come to Corinth.

12. Paul, to show that there was no rivalry between him and Apollos, urges Apollos to go back **with the brethren**; but, feeling sure that his presence at this time might still further inflame party spirit, Apollos decidedly declined to go.

13-14. As though he were ready to close up the epistle, he sums up its great teachings in five terse injunctions. **Be watchful against enemies.** There was too much carnal security in the church; also, they were to watch for the Lord's coming. **Stand fast in the faith.** Their faith in the atonement and in the Resurrection had wavered (see chs. 1 and 15). **Play the part of men.** In their love of display (14:20) and in their petty jealousies and rivalries they had acted like children. **Be strong,** *i.e.*, be vigorous, get the mastery. An insecure faith had begotten a moral flabbiness. They were too easily the victims of temptation. **Let all that ye do be done in love.** Another way

4. *A Commendation of Stephanas and others to their kindly consideration, 16:15-18*

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
16. saints), that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and
17. laboreth. And I rejoice at the ¹ coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was
18. lacking on your part they supplied. For they re-
-

¹ Gr., *presence*.

of urging upon them the spirit which breathes through Chapter 13. The radical fault of the church was its want of love. In this the Corinthian Church did not stand alone.

15. A word now follows regarding the delegates from Corinth who were with him and who were awaiting his reply. **Stephanas and his house** were among the first fruits of Achaia. Paul, contrary to his usual custom, baptized them, because, perhaps, there was nobody else to do it. The family, being of independent means (no others could do it), devoted itself to the service of fellow Christians—the sick, the needy, those requiring hospitality, and those in sorrow.

16. On account of their noble, self-imposed, and helpful ministrations, Paul asks of the Corinthians deference and respect toward them, indeed, toward everyone who, like them, makes himself helpful and works hard. In a word, his exhortation was to follow earnestly such leadership.

17. **Fortunatus and Achaicus.** Nothing is known of them beyond what is here given. For that which was lacking on your part. By their presence they filled up the gap in his life which was made by his absence from them all in Corinth.

18. **For they refreshed.** This explains what he means by "filling up the gap." They relieved his anxieties by telling him of the love of the church and giving him the brighter side of the whole situation in Corinth. **And yours** is anticipatory of their return to Corinth, when they will do for the Corinthians what had been done for him. **Acknowledge ye therefore them, i.e.,** recognize them for what they are and give them their due.

freshed my spirit and yours: acknowledge ye therefore them that are such.

5. *Salutations*, 16:19-24

19. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the
 20. church that is in their house. All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.
 21, 22. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be Anathema ¹Maranatha. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in
 24. Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ That is, *Our Lord cometh.*

19. **Asia** = proconsular Asia. Ephesus was the seat of the government. Paul made this city his strategic center and carried on his work in neighboring cities (cf. Acts 19:10, 26; Col. 2:1). While he had not visited all of them he was undoubtedly in close touch with them. **Aquila and Prisca** (Priscilla in the Acts). Their house in Ephesus was one of the gathering places for worship and work. They entertained Paul when he first came to Corinth (Acts 18:1); had risked their lives for him (Rom. 16:3-4) and, not only for their devotion to Christian service, but also by reason of their intimate personal relations, were very dear to him. Their salutations were hearty and full (**much**) but in recognition of their common bond of service (**in the Lord**).

20. The third salutation was from all the brethren of the Ephesian church. **A holy kiss**. If the "kiss of peace" was taken over from the Jewish synagogue and made in the church the token of Christian brotherhood, it is unlikely that it was promiscuous. Men would kiss men; women, women. It became later part of the ritual of public worship.

21. Paul takes the pen from the hand of the amenuensis and writes. It authenticates the letter as coming from him (Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17).

22. **If any man loveth not the Lord**. An unusual word is used here for love. The exact sense can better be given "if any man is no friend of the Lord"; is virtually heartless toward

him, let him be accursed. Maranatha, Aramaic, meaning either "our Lord has come," or "our Lord cometh," or "Our Lord, come." The translation is doubtful. It is, however, in any one of the forms, monitory. It may have been a sort of watchword current in the churches, calling to mind the possibility of being obliged to face judgment at any moment. Also, the second or third meaning given above would be preferable.

II. EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

I. THE INTERVAL BETWEEN 1 AND 2 CORINTHIANS

1. *Its Extent*

It is impossible to be certain with regard to any dates in the life of the Apostle Paul. Almost every writer on the subject has his own arrangement of the chronology, and no two chronologies are alike.

The most probable date of the writing of both 1 and 2 Corinthians seems to be the year 56. The length of the interval between the two letters is even more uncertain than the date. Probably 1 Corinthians was written in the spring of 56 and 2 Corinthians in the autumn of the same year.

"I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost," Paul writes in 1 Cor. 16:8. He was then writing sometime previous to that Feast. It may have been winter; it may have been early spring. After writing 2 Corinthians Paul pays a visit of three months to Corinth (Acts 20:3). How soon after sending 2 Corinthians he followed the letter it is impossible to say. According to Acts he left Corinth not long before the Passover. If this was the year 57 the Passover fell on Thursday, April seventh. He spent the Passover week at Philippi in Macedonia (Acts 20:6). The end of his three months in Corinth must have been in March, and the beginning must have

been in December. Sometime previous to December he wrote 2 Corinthians. The interval between the two letters to Corinth then was not more than nine months (April to December) and it may have been much less.

Because very much happened during that interval, of which we have only the most fragmentary notices, it has been thought necessary by some to add a whole year to the interval. It would then continue from before Pentecost of one year till before December of the succeeding year. This is unnecessary and unlikely. The age was noted for the ease, opportunity and rapidity of travel. The log of Paul's journey from Troas to Tyre (Acts, chs. 20-21) is an illustration. The long voyage was made in less than two weeks, including a stop of two or three days at Miletus. A good many round trips could have been made between Ephesus and Corinth in six months, even if some of them took the route via Troas and Macedonia.

2. Its Events

- (1) Timothy is sent from Ephesus to Corinth.
- (2) Serious trouble arises in the Corinthian church.
- (3) Paul pays Corinth a short unexpected visit.
- (4) He returns to Ephesus hurt and heart-sick.
- (5) He writes a scathing letter.
- (6) Titus takes the letter to Corinth.
- (7) Paul anxiously awaits Titus' delayed return.
- (8) He goes to meet Titus, as far as Troas and then Macedonia.
- (9) Titus returns with good news.
- (10) Paul, overjoyed, writes 2 Corinthians.

(1) Timothy was sent to Corinth either at the time that 1 Corinthians was despatched, or previous to its sending (1 Cor. 16:10). His errand was important and seems to have some connection with the bitter party strife

INTRODUCTION

in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 4:17). He was to represent Paul, and was to return to Paul (1 Cor. 16:11). Later, but certainly not before Pentecost, Paul plans to go himself to Corinth. He will take the route through Macedonia. It will not be a flying trip, as it would have to be if he interrupted his work to go at once. He hopes for a long stay at Corinth, perhaps the whole winter (1 Cor. 16:5-7). A reference to this same plan is apparently made in Acts 19:21-22. Whether Timothy ever reached Corinth, and, if he did, whether his mission was a success or failure, is not known. He is with Paul some months later when 2 Corinthians is written.

(2) The silence in regard to Timothy's success or failure, and the fact that Paul did change his plan and pay a hurried visit to Corinth, is evidence that the trouble with the church was too much for Timothy's diplomacy and authority as Paul's representative. The probability is that he returned from Corinth in haste, with a report that determined Paul to drop everything and go himself to the seat of trouble. A hint that he had feared this might be necessary is found in 1 Cor. 4:21.

(3) The visit was "with sorrow." All that is known of it is found in the few vague references in 2 Cor. 2:1-11 and chapters 10-13. The "sorrow" had its ground chiefly in some personal encounter. The person—"any," "such a one" (2 Cor. 2:5-6)—had "caused sorrow" to Paul; and then, or by Paul's next letter, or both, he had been "made sorry" by Paul (2:2). It was a venomous, personal insult or injury. Later the majority in the church recognized its enormity and the offender was punished so severely that Paul pleads for his forgiveness (2:7). Many gratuitous insults were offered to Paul, perhaps by this individual as spokesman for a party. They included accusations of fickleness and broken promises (1:17-18); and of cowardice and hypocrisy (10:1-2; 10). This stay

INTRODUCTION

in Corinth seems to have been short as well as heart-breaking.

(4) It was from Ephesus that Paul went to Corinth, and to Ephesus that with a heavy heart he returned. It is not necessary in a chronology to crowd this all in before Pentecost. Although Paul's intention seems to have been to leave Ephesus soon after Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:8), there is no certainty that he did so. The narrative in Acts 19:21-23 implies that he was delayed in carrying out his intention. If this is true the visit to Corinth "with sorrow" probably took place in the summer of 56, not earlier than June or July.

(5) On his return Paul sits down and "out of much affliction and anguish of heart . . . with many tears" (2:4) writes to the church at Corinth a letter, of which he could say (7:8): "Though I made you sorry with my epistle I do not regret it, though I did regret." It was very severe. It was personal. It may have contained an explanation of his sudden appearance in Corinth, when he had written them previously that his route would be via Macedonia. It certainly contained not only a condemnation of the individual and the party who opposed him but a vindication of his own authority.

The part of this letter which deals with the individual is lost. The church did not preserve it for public reading in the Lord's Day services. Possibly the whole letter is lost. But a fairly satisfactory, working theory finds in chapters 10-13 of 2 Corinthians a part of the severe letter.

(6) The bearer of this letter is not Timothy but Titus. With much misgiving Paul entrusts to him not only the letter but the mission of reading to the Corinthians its heart-message from himself. It would be Titus' part to see that the letter was not misunderstood and that the readers did not read into it anything that was not there. It was a mission requiring the greatest wisdom, patience

INTRODUCTION

and tact. Titus was not unknown at Corinth. He had been the adviser of the church when it began its plans for the contribution for the Christians of the mother church in Jerusalem. The references to Titus and his previous relation to the Contribution (8:6; 12:18) are much better taken as of an earlier visit to Corinth than of the visit when he bears this letter.

(7) So delicate was Titus' mission and so important was the letter he carried that Paul passed the time of waiting for his return in great restlessness of spirit. He even regretted having written the letter (7:8).

(8) For some reason Titus' return journey was to be by the longer route through Macedonia. Long as it might be expected to take, it took longer than Paul hoped. As the time drew near for Titus' return his restlessness increased. He could not work. He had left Ephesus for Troas, and hoped to meet Titus there. "Now when I came to Troas," he said, "I had no relief for my spirit because I found not Titus, my brother; but taking my leave of them I went forth into Macedonia." Although there was an open door in Troas, and work to be done, Paul had no heart for his work. He could not rest till he had heard from his letter. Corinth was written on his heart.

(9) In Macedonia, possibly at Philippi, Paul and the returning Titus meet. What the effect upon Paul of Titus' report was is found in the expressions of joy in 2:14-17 and 7:4-16. It is summed up in this: "I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you" (7:16). The letter and Titus had won the hoped for result. The church was sorry. The majority (2:6) had inflicted punishment upon the person who had caused the trouble; and the minority seems to have been in favor, not of no punishment, but of a still severer penalty. The whole church was reconciled to Paul and renewed its pledges of loyalty and fidelity to him.

INTRODUCTION

(10) And hence 2 Corinthians. In an outburst of gratitude to God and joy in the outcome He has granted, Paul begins and continues and (if chapters 1-9 are the letter) concludes his epistle. Instructions and encouragement in regard to the Contribution are included, and Titus, accompanied by two others (8:17-23), is dispatched again to Corinth. He bears a very different letter, and he goes on a much easier mission. This was in the early autumn, perhaps September or October. In December Paul follows, as he had said he would (9:4-5) and the three winter months are spent with the Corinthian church.

II. THE INTEGRITY OF 2 CORINTHIANS

Integrity must not be confused with genuineness or trustworthiness. It sometimes is. The genuineness of 2 Corinthians is unquestioned. It was all written by the Apostle Paul, and it was all written to the church at Corinth. There is practically no difference of opinion in regard to that. Was it written at one sitting, or on one occasion, and sent to Corinth as we have it today? Is it a perfect whole, or is it two or more letters or fragments of letters incorporated into one?

There is little doubt that 1 Corinthians is a single letter. Though it deals with many very different subjects, it bears the marks of integrity. It is a unit. The case is quite different with 2 Corinthians. A careful reading of the epistle impresses every reader with the strange inconsistencies of tone and manner, and with certain almost inexplicable breaks in the style and subject matter. These have never gone unnoticed on the part of students, but they have been variously accounted for.

The epistle is divided into three clearly marked sections, (1) chapters 1-7; (2) chapters 8-9; (3) chapters 10-13. This in itself is nothing strange. Paul's letters

INTRODUCTION

nearly always have such cleavage. But usually the cleavage is not marked by startling changes in tone. In addition there are two passages for the existence of which in their context it is difficult to find an explanation. These are 6:14—7:1; 11:32—33. Many theories, some wild, some plausible, have been invented to explain these peculiarities in 2 Corinthians. Even allowing for the emotion under which Paul wrote, *some* explanation is clearly demanded.

Between chapters 1—7 and chapters 8—9 the break is no more than is natural when the author passes to a new subject. To this transition and to possible explanations of the difficulties involved in the sections 6:14—7:1 and 11:32—33, reference will be found in the comment on the text at those points. The theory that there are in them evidences of fragments of various letters involves much difficulty and affords little relief.

The break between chapters 1—9 and 10—13 calls for special consideration. The two sections are separated by a wide gulf. This separation has given rise to several theories, and careful study has resulted in radically different conclusions.

1. *The Difference in Tone Between Chapters 1—9 and 10—13*

In the first nine chapters of the epistle the tone is unmistakably that of joy, hope, and confidence in the readers. Titus' report, on his return from Corinth, gives Paul the keenest pleasure and satisfaction. His gladness is colored here and there with the memory of his former anxiety and sorrow, but his relief is genuine and unmistakable, his assurance is unfeigned and his joy knows no bounds. Titus' errand has been eminently successful, the church at Corinth has asserted its better self, and relations of mutual affection between it and Paul have

been reestablished. The Introduction (1:3-11), the conclusion to the first section (7:2-16), and other outbursts of gratitude (2:14-17; 9:15) show how happy and how much relieved and encouraged Paul is.

In the closing section, on the other hand, chapters 10-13, all this is lacking. The difference is very noticeable. Paul is on the defensive; he lacks confidence in his readers; he finds threats necessary; he is under great constraint. There is a real pathos in much that he says, brightened at times with a flicker of humor. He is almost fierce in some of his statements; he speaks with a tone of authority and severity; there is no trace of the happy, confident feeling of chapters 1-9.

2. Possible Explanations of the Change of Tone

(1) *A change of circumstances.* If the letter was written at one time and sent to Corinth just as we have it, then the sudden change of tone must have been due to some change in Paul as he wrote. This might be accounted for by:

(a) A change of mood. Sometimes an author writes himself out of one humor into another. Paul's first feeling was that of joy and satisfaction in Titus' report. But later, perhaps the next day, there is a reaction. He cannot forget the past. Memories of the wrong done to him and to others still rankle in his heart, and he is not so certain that all is well. Often a letter has a very different sound to the reader from that intended by the writer. If the readers could have seen Paul's face or heard his voice it would not have seemed so harsh.

(b) A change of readers. The difference in tone is sometimes explained by the hypothesis that the latter part of the letter was written to those who were hostile to Paul in the church. Perhaps not all the members of the church had become reconciled. In chapters 1-9 he is

INTRODUCTION

addressing those who are friendly to him; in chapters 10-13 he is addressing his opponents.

(c) A change of news. It has been suggested that before Paul had finished his letter, or before it was ready to be dispatched, a further report had come from Corinth which was not so rosy as that of Titus. It paints conditions in quite a different light; and in view of new information Paul adds to his letter the severe message of chapters 10-13.

None of these explanations has ever been found quite satisfactory. It is not likely that Paul's mood could change so suddenly; there is not the slightest indication in the letter that two different sets of readers, friends and opponents, are addressed; he includes them all in both sections in the word "you"; it is not probable that Titus brought a biased or colored report, and that later returns showed him to be wrong in his estimate of the situation. These suggestions have been made only as possible explanations of a serious problem.

(2) *Two letters in one.* The change of tone is accounted for by the hypothesis that in 2 Corinthians we have not one letter but two. The letters were written at different times and under very different circumstances, and very early came to be welded into one letter as we have it. The closing section of the epistle, chapters 10-13, was written at a time prior to that of chapters 1-9.

(a) Probability. It is not inherently improbable that two letters of Paul's, or parts of them, might have come into circulation as one letter. There is no external evidence that they did; but it is easily possible. The letters of the Apostle Paul were cherished by the churches to which he wrote, and they were copied and sent to other churches, in order that they might be read and re-read at the Lord's Day service, usually in the place of the sermon or address. Written on papyrus the copies through much rolling and unrolling were soon worn to

INTRODUCTION

shreds. The re-copying process began almost immediately, and each copy was made for the convenience of church readers. It would be quite natural that parts of two letters should be copied on the same papyrus roll and that ultimately they should lose their identity as two separate letters. All the more is this likely if there were parts of one or both letters which for some reason (as, for example, that they were too personal and intimate), the church thought it better and more tactful to omit from public reading. It is therefore not improbable that such a welding of letters took place. There is a possible example in Rom. 16.

(b) Theories. Granted the possibility that there are in 2 Corinthians two letters, or parts of two, the question at once arises, what letters are they? The letter found in chapters 1-9 of course identifies and locates itself. It was written from Macedonia after Titus' return from Corinth in the autumn of the year 56. But what of the letter in chapters 10-13? Two theories are suggested: (1) It is a letter of which nothing else is known; (2) It is the "lost letter," so-called, referred to by Paul in 2 Cor. 2:4 and 7:8-12.

The former of the two theories is very simple and so is fairly satisfactory. The difficulty with it lies in its uncertainty. When was such an unknown letter written and under what circumstances and from what place? The answers are left to the merest guesswork.

The second theory has very much in its favor, and deserves very careful consideration. It solves many very interesting problems; and, like all theories, it is open to objections.

3. *Is 2 Cor. 10-13 the "Lost Letter"?*

(a) Identity of the "lost letter." Twice in 2 Corinthians Paul refers to a letter written by him to Corinth

INTRODUCTION

which caused sorrow to the writer and to the readers. The passages are 2:3-4 and 7:8-12. It is usually referred to, along with the letter mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:9, as a "lost letter." But a number of attempts have been made to find it, and to identify it either with 1 Corinthians, in whole or in part, or with a part of 2 Corinthians. There are certain severe passages in 1 Corinthians (chs. 5-6) which might possibly deserve such phrases as these applied to the "lost letter," *viz.*, "out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you" (2 Cor. 2:4); or, "though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it" (2 Cor. 7:8). These phrases are applicable, if at all, to only a small part of 1 Corinthians.

Much more plausible is the discovery of this "lost letter" in 2 Cor. 10-13. The hypothesis takes this form. In chapters 10-13 we have not the whole, but a part of the letter which Paul wrote with "many tears," and which was sent to Corinth by Titus from Ephesus in the summer of 56. (See Order of Events between 1 and 2 Corinthians.) The most personal and possibly the severest part of the letter, that which referred to the offender and his punishment, is actually "lost." With it has gone the introduction of the letter. There is no intimation of the beginning of a letter at 2 Cor. 10:1. But that part of the severe letter which was best adapted to reading in the church service, and least apt to give constant personal pain and mortification to individuals, is found in 2 Cor. 10-13.

(b) Arguments for identifying with chapters 10-13. The evidence in favor of this identification is purely internal. It is negative rather than positive; but it is fairly conclusive.

(1) In the first place it answers to the brief references which Paul makes in chapters 1-9 to another letter. Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that chapters 10-13 are the letter to which he refers, and see how well cer-

INTRODUCTION

tain phrases fit it: "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears" (2:4); "I wrote . . . lest when I came I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice" (2:3); "Though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it, though I did regret" (7:8). These all fit the tone and style of chapters 10-13.

(2) There are certain other general references which, if chapters 10-13 are the former letter, find in those chapters their basis. For example, in 1:23 Paul writes: "But I call God for a witness upon my soul that to spare you I forbore to come unto Corinth." While in 13:2 he had written: "if I come again I will not spare."

Much of chapters 10-13 is given to a kind of self-commendation which Paul diffidently calls "glorying" or "boasting" (11:5; 11:18; 12:1). In chapters 1-9 he several times refers to self-commendation: "Are we beginning again to commend ourselves?" (3:1). "We are not again commending ourselves unto you" (5:12). Such references multiply when the two parts of 2 Corinthians are read with this inverted order of sequence in mind.

(3) In the closing chapters Paul expresses his "fear lest" there be need of great severity at Corinth because of sin and unrepentance (11:3; 12:20-21). In the earlier chapters he is "confident" and "encouraged" and "comforted" in his thought of the church at Corinth (7:4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16; 8:22). In the closing chapters Paul magnifies his authority because he fears their disobedience (10:2-6; 8-11). In the earlier chapters he rejoices in their obedience and loyalty (2:5-10; 7:11).

In the order in which these occur in 2 Corinthians they are with difficulty reconciled. If the closing chapters were the earlier letter the change is most natural. From disobedience the church has changed to obedience; from fear and misgiving Paul has changed to confidence and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

(c) Objections. To the identification of 2 Cor. 10-13 with the letter referred to in 2:4 and 7:8 certain objections naturally present themselves. They must be given full weight.

(1) There is absolutely no external evidence for any such division of 2 Corinthians. In the earliest manuscripts which we have, and, so far as is known, in the manuscript copies used by the early church, the epistle stands just as it is, with no evidence of cleavage of any sort.

(2) "With many tears" does not seem a very true description of chapters 10-13. "Anguish of heart" there is, severity of tone and word, indignation, threat; but hardly "tears."

(3) It is implied in 1:23-2:4 that the severe letter took the place of an expected visit by Paul to Corinth, a visit which Paul decided would have been most unpleasant for all concerned. The letter, therefore, should explain Paul's failure to go to Corinth in person and should excuse him. There is no such excuse in chapters 10-13.

(4) It is made very plain in 2:5-11 and 7:12 that the severe letter had to do, at least in part, with certain individuals, he "that did the wrong" and he "that suffered the wrong." There is no direct reference to these persons in chapters 10-13.

In answer to the objections it may be said again that the hypothesis suggests only that we have in chapters 10-13 a part of the severe letter. The strictly personal matter was allowed to be "lost." It was too harrowing for public reading in church. The "lost" part might easily have cost Paul "many tears" in the writing, and it might have contained an explanation of his abandoned visit. That there is no external evidence for such a theory is significant but not conclusive.

As a working hypothesis it is quite satisfactory to think of chapters 10-13, and to read them, as a part

INTRODUCTION

of the letter which Titus carried to Corinth on his mission of reconciliation, written several weeks or months before chapters 1-9, and responsible, together with the good judgment, wisdom and tact of Titus, for the change in the Corinthians from disobedience and insult to obedience and loyalty, and for the change in Paul from sorrow and apprehension to joy and comfort.

III. THE TROUBLE-MAKERS AT CORINTH

There were certain persons at Corinth who had been responsible for an enormous amount of trouble. Who they were and exactly what the trouble was it is impossible to determine in detail or with full satisfaction. It was not necessary for Paul in writing to be specific, for all his readers knew the precise meaning of each veiled reference. Paul's short visit to Corinth had been a most serious occasion for him and for the church. Things were said and done that scorched and scarred, and probably none of the witnesses of those church scenes ever forgot them. But the readers in these later days find themselves very much in the dark. They are left to a general knowledge of the times and to their own ingenuity in piecing together the story.

A few facts seem assured. There was an individual and there was a group or party. The two as mischief-makers may or may not have been connected. Probably they were.

In the first nine chapters it is the individual who figures prominently. In the last four chapters it is the group. If the last four chapters were part of an earlier letter than the first nine, this difference between the individual and the group forms one of the separating contrasts.

1. In chapters 1-9 an individual is twice mentioned, not by name but by a very pointed reference. "If any hath caused sorrow . . . sufficient to such a one is this

INTRODUCTION

punishment which was inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow" (2:5-7). And again: "So, although I wrote unto you, I wrote not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but . . ." (7:12).

Further than this there is nothing. Most of this section, chapters 1-9, is devoted to Paul's ministry, and to his joy at Titus' report from Corinth. The references to a group or party which causes trouble are few, if any. Possibly they are found in: "We are not as the many, corrupting the word of God" (2:17); and, "that ye may have wherewith to answer them that glory in appearance and not in heart" (5:12); and, "need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you" (3:1). These are all, and these do not at all certainly point to any party. They may be quite general.

Things that Paul's opponents may have said of him are found in echoes throughout the section; that he was fickle; that he was a yea nay man (1:17); that he was beside himself (5:13); that he wronged or took advantage of men (7:2). But if these are references to the storm, they are but heat lightnings and not angry flashes. The storm has passed.

2. In the second section, however, chapters 10-13, it is quite different. Here no individual is mentioned at all. But there are many references to a group, and the storm has not passed, it is raging. (If chapters 10-13 are a part of the "lost letter," the references to the individual were in the other part which is still "lost.")

Note their number and variety: "I count to be bold against some which count of us as if we walked according to the flesh" (10:2); "His letters, they say, are weighty . . ." (10:10); "We are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend

INTRODUCTION

themselves, but they . . .” (10:12); “if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus whom we did not preach” (11:4); “I reckon that I am not a whit behind those pre-eminent apostles” (11:5); “. . . that I may cut off occasion from them which desire an occasion, that wherein they glory they may be found even as we. For such men are false apostles” (11:12-13); “Satan’s minister” (11:14-15); “Seeing that many glory after the flesh . . .” (11:18); “Are they Hebrews? So am I . . . Are they ministers of Christ? . . .” (11:22-23).

Who were “they”? The road to the answer seems to lie along these signposts: (a) Their mission in Corinth: (1) They were traveling missionaries, or, at least, had, like Paul, come to Corinth from a distance (11:4); (2) they prided themselves on being Hebrews, Israelites, seed of Abraham (11:22); (3) they were Christian ministers (11:23); (4) they claimed some special, spiritual relationship to Christ (10:7); (5) they claimed to be apostles (11:5). (The word apostle is, of course, equivalent to missionary. It is possible that their claim had nothing to do with “the apostles,” as Jesus named the twelve, but only with the general term for commissioned messengers); (6) they claimed a special ministry of righteousness (11:15).

(b) *Their estimate of Paul.* It is possible to read into Paul’s words a great deal that is not there, and some of the seeming quotations of his opponents’ slurs and abuse may not be justified. Nevertheless they certainly looked upon Paul with contempt and spoke of him with innuendoes. (1) They said he “walked according to the flesh,” *i.e.*, he was unspiritual. This was perhaps to Paul the worst of all their charges (10:2); (2) that Paul did not have the same intimate relation to Christ which they had (10:7); (3) that he was not prepossessing: “his bodily presence is weak and his speech of no account” (10:10); that he thundered when at a safe dis-

tance, but whispered when face to face (10:1, 11); (4) that he was no real apostle; he did not have the marks of an apostle; he did not work miracles (12:11-12); he did not receive his support from his converts (12:13-14); but he took advantage of them in some indirect way, by his agents, and "caught them with guile" (12:16-18); (5) that he "overreached" himself, and trespassed on the territory that belonged to someone else, and had no right in Corinth (10:14).

(c) *Paul's estimate of them.* (1) They are conceited and ignorant (10:12); (2) it is they who are trespassing, not he (10:15-16); (3) they are "false apostles," hypocritical and presumptuous (11:13); (4) they "preach another Jesus," "a different spirit," "a different gospel" from Paul (11:4); (5) they are "Satan's ministers" (11:15).

These phrases characterize the trouble-makers, but they do not clearly identify them. They are Jewish Christian teachers, but there is nothing to indicate that they were such "Judaizers" as came to Antioch or the churches of Galatia and caused trouble for Paul by preaching: "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1, 5; Gal. 2:12-14). There is nothing in the epistle anywhere to indicate that they were that kind of propagandists. There is nothing about the Law or about circumcision.

However, they were Jews, and prided themselves on their pure Jewish ancestry (11:22-23). They were not reactionary "Judaizers" but belonged to a liberal party, who in their relation to Christ believed themselves to be far superior to Paul, and to be so "spiritual" that he, by comparison, "walked according to the flesh." They were probably, therefore, not Jerusalem Jews but Greek-speaking Jews from the provinces, and the term "Judaizer," if used at all, should be used in this sense. They

INTRODUCTION

had apparently won to themselves many of those who previously had been Paul's loyal and devoted supporters (11:2-3), and he is quite excusable if he pictures them in the blackest terms.

If chapters 10-13 are an earlier letter than chapters 1-9, then, after Titus' return to Paul, the heart and mind of the Apostle are set at rest, not only in regard to the offending individual, but also in regard to the trouble-making "false apostles."

One other question arises. Is there any connection between the party-strife of 1 Corinthians, chapters 1-3, and the trouble-makers of 2 Corinthians, chapters 10-13? The letters which deal with them are not many months apart in time of writing and in time of conditions described. In spite of this fact there is nothing in 2 Corinthians which positively identifies any of the trouble-makers in the church with either of the parties of 1 Corinthians. One phrase has sometimes been used as a mark of identification with the "I am of Christ" party. It is 10:7, "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." This is scanty evidence on which to base a theory. The probability is that there is no reference here to a Christ-party. On the other hand there is every probability that the "Judaizer" missionaries made a greater appeal to some of the parties than to others, and that those who had adopted the slogan "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Christ," were more easily influenced against Paul by newly-arrived claimants to apostleship than those who had stoutly maintained "I am of Paul."

IV. THE CONTRIBUTION

Two chapters in 2 Corinthians are devoted to a subject which has no immediate connection with what

INTRODUCTION

precedes or with what follows it in the letter. "Ministering to the saints" is the title Paul gives it (8:4; 9:1), and it has to do with one of those many interests and activities which filled his life full. "That which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches" (11:28) is the way in which he refers to this part of his busy life. His several letters and hurried visit to Corinth illustrate one form of this anxious care. His letters to the Thessalonians, the Galatian churches, the Romans are typical of another. A third is barely hinted at in the phrase, "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). During his three years at Ephesus Paul organized and conducted an evangelistic campaign which covered the whole province of Asia. Doubtless his ever-enlarging band of energetic helpers did most of the field work, as, for example, Epaphras at Colossæ (Col. 1:7; 4:12-13); but Paul was the directing head and inspiring genius of it all.

Another illustration of Paul's incessant and versatile "care for all the churches" is found in the elaborate plan which he originated and executed for a large money contribution from his Gentile churches to the Jewish mother-church at Jerusalem.

All that we know of this plan and its working is gleaned from a few brief references. Nowhere is there any full account. The passages from which the story is derived are 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8 and 9; Rom. 15:22-29. In Acts the only mention of it is in 24:17, where Paul says of his last journey to Jerusalem, "I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings." Except for this vague reference Luke makes not the slightest mention of the plan or of its outcome.

The reason for Luke's silence is not known. From innumerable incidents in Paul's life and ministry Luke necessarily made choice of but very few. The omissions

INTRODUCTION

must have far outnumbered the incidents chosen. The "Contribution" is one of the omissions. Possibly it was a "sublime failure." Paul had his misgivings with regard to its outcome (Rom. 15:31). Possibly Luke's part and that of Titus in raising the funds was so prominent that the author of Acts could not give the narrative of the Contribution without bringing himself into prominence. Nowhere in Acts is either Luke or Titus mentioned by name. The omission of these two names must have been intentional on the part of the author. He had some good reason for leaving them out.

1. *The Origin of the Idea*

There can be no doubt that the idea of the Contribution originated in Paul's fertile mind and warm heart. Back of the idea, however, were two facts of serious import. One was the poverty of the Jerusalem church; the other was the natural suspicion and antagonism which the Jerusalem church felt toward the Gentile Christians of the churches of Asia Minor and Europe.

The apostles James, Peter and John, when, at the private interview in Jerusalem about ten years before this, they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (Gal. 2:9-10), urged them to **remember the poor**. Although the injunction is general it is almost certainly a request for the **poor** of the Jerusalem church. Paul never forgot the injunction.

Why the Jerusalem church was poor, or whether it was really poorer than many Gentile churches, no one knows. No Christian community was likely to have many rich men or women in its membership (Jas. 2:5). The early persecution and constant oppression by the Jewish authorities aggravated the conditions of poverty. At any rate, the church at Jerusalem was poor, and Paul was eager to help it with alms and offerings (Acts

INTRODUCTION

24:17), just as he had been eager to relieve the strenuous famine conditions long before when he conducted a famine-relief expedition from Antioch to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30).

But there was another and stronger reason back of his project. No one felt more keenly than Paul the suspicion and antipathy which the mother-church felt for the far away Gentile churches. Rumors that Paul had gone so far as to urge Jewish Christians to renounce Moses, circumcision and all the old sacred Jewish customs, were in circulation everywhere (Acts 21:21). Paul cherished the hope, not without misgivings, that generous and kindly recognition of the Jerusalem church on the part of the Gentile churches, and acknowledgment of the debt (Rom. 15:27) that all Gentile Christians owed to the mother-church, might possibly win the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem to a better understanding of his Gentile work, and to more sympathy with Gentile Christians; and that all suspicion and jealousy might be removed. It was the proposition and hope of a magnanimous man.

2. *The Givers*

The churches of four provinces united in the proposed Contribution. They were (1) Galatia; "As I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye" (1 Cor. 16:1). No mention is made of the Contribution in the letter to the Galatians, and Paul "gave order" to them either in a special letter; or, more probably, when he passed through Galatia on his way to Ephesus three years before this (Acts 18:23). The churches of Galatia are the churches of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Other churches in the province of Galatia, whose names have not come down to us, may have been included. (2) Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1; Rom. 15:26). (3) Achaia (2

INTRODUCTION

Cor., chs. 8-9; Rom. 15:26). (4) Asia. No mention is made by name of the part the churches of Asia had in the Contribution, but the fact that delegates went with Paul from Ephesus to Jerusalem ("and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus," Acts 20:4; see also Acts 21:29) is conclusive evidence that they had a part. That Paul in Rom. 15:26 mentions only Macedonia and Achaia is testimony only to the fact that those two provinces had the largest part. When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans he was in Achaia (Corinth) and he had just come from Macedonia.

3. *The Method of Collecting*

"As I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. 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" (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This was genuine systematic giving. It was an individual matter. It was a weekly offering, made on the first day of each week. It was proportionate giving, proportional according to each man's ability to give (2 Cor. 8:11-12). It was purely voluntary (2 Cor. 9:7). It was, at least in the case of Macedonia, surprisingly generous (2 Cor. 8:3-4). It covered a long period, at least a year, probably longer (2 Cor. 8:10; 9:2).

Paul stimulated a friendly rivalry between Macedonia and Achaia. He told the churches of Achaia how generous Macedonia had been (8:2). He boasted to Macedonia that Achaia had been ready for a year (9:2). But the rivalry was not to be carried to the extreme. It was long-distance rivalry. Paul disapproved of a spectacular finish at the end of the campaign with a whirlwind drive as the climax. There were to be no "collections" at Corinth after he arrived (1 Cor. 16:2).

4. *The Method of Transmitting*

The sum of money collected during the year and more of weekly offerings must have been relatively a large one. Paul was unwilling to handle this money himself. He was eager to avoid all danger of suspicion that any of it stuck to his fingers. This was true while the money was being collected. "The brother whose praise is spread through all the churches (generally supposed to be Luke) . . . was appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace . . . avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us; for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 8:18-21).

And it was true when it came to transmitting the total contribution to Jerusalem. "When I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve by letters, them will I send to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem; and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me" (1 Cor. 16:3-4). It was therefore a part of the plan that delegates equipped with proper credentials should be the bearers of this "bounty." It did prove to "be meet" for Paul "to go also," and so the delegates went with him.

No mention of the delegates as such is anywhere made. But the companions of Paul when he goes to Jerusalem are significant.

Expecting to sail from Achaia direct to Syria, Paul suddenly changed his plan and went north via Macedonia to Troas (Acts 20:3). A plot against his life had been discovered. Probably he was to have been "lost overboard" from the crowded transport bearing pilgrims to the Passover at Jerusalem. The change of plan involved considerable delay. He would reach Jerusalem not for the Passover but for Pentecost. The Passover was spent

INTRODUCTION

at Philippi (20:6). The change also involved changes in the plan for meeting the delegates, who "were waiting for us at Troas" (20:5). The names of some of these delegates are given by the author of Acts, and the fact that they were representatives of churches is emphasized by the identification of each one (20:4). "There accompanied him:

Sopater of Berœa	}	Macedonia
Aristarchus of Thessalonica		
Secundus of Thessalonica		

Gaius of Derbe	}	Galatia
Timothy (of Lystra)		

Tychicus of Asia	}	Asia
Trophimus (of Ephesus)		

The delegates from Achaia would have left Corinth with Paul and so are not included in the account in Acts with those who made Troas their meeting place.

Whether all these men went to Jerusalem, we do not know. Presumably they did. Mention is made of Trophimus in Jerusalem (Acts 21:29). Probably the others were there too. Certainly they all met at Troas, even if they there delegated their authority to a smaller number.

5. *The Receipt of the Gift*

That Paul had misgivings as to the reception that the delegates and their gift would be accorded in Jerusalem is seen in his letter to the Romans (15:30-31) "I beseech you . . . that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judea, and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints."

INTRODUCTION

It is a remarkable fact that we have not the slightest intimation of the result or the effect of the Contribution. The author of Acts seems studiously to avoid all mention of it; and Paul falls into trouble soon after his arrival in Jerusalem, in another attempt to bring about harmony between the two factions. It is from Paul's letters that our meager information of this notable effort at reconciliation is drawn; and no letter of his written at this time has survived.

V. THE OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE

A somewhat different method of outline has been followed for 2 Corinthians from that which is usually pursued. The purpose has been not only to give a careful outline of the epistle itself, but also to illustrate a method of Bible study by outline which is profitable in the school or in the home.

It is as applicable of course to any literary work as it is to the Bible; and especially is it usable and helpful when the thought of the writer is not easily gained at the first reading, or where there is so much thought that each new reading opens new doors of entrance into its depths.

The quest of the Bible interpreter is for the exact meaning of the author—the meaning that he intended his first readers to get. Few of the New Testament writers wrote for a distant posterity. Some of them did not expect that there would be any posterity. They wrote, without thought of coming generations, for the immediate attention of men and women of their own generation. The application, therefore, can be neglected by the interpreter, at least until he is sure that he has mastered the writer's exact meaning to his first readers.

In seeking that exact and primary meaning there are two questions that in theory, and usually in practice,

INTRODUCTION

may be asked. They should be asked not only of the writing as a whole, but of each separate paragraph. They are exceedingly simple and elementary, but they are not always easy to answer. The questions are, first: What is the author talking about? Second: What does he say about it?

The answers should be in exact and concrete form, not merely a paraphrase of the writer's words. The answer to the first should give a short, concise subject; the answer to the second should give the subordinate heads under that subject. It can be carried out so as to include every word the author has written, and when the answers have been given the result is of course a complete logical outline of each paragraph. It may be cumbersome and often overbalanced, but the result justifies the method.

This outline is naturally not the author's outline. He may have had no outline as he wrote. It may not be the outline of any other interpreter. A literary work is often like a beautiful piece of architecture, seen from different points of view it presents very different faces; but it is the same edifice.

But it is the thought of the author arranged in orderly manner as that particular student of the author sees it. And it is the assurance to his own mind that he does understand the author's message even to the least emphasis. If he cannot so order the thought he has no such assurance.

It is often arbitrary. It is sometimes most difficult to name the thing the author is talking about, or to fasten upon and characterize by name or epithet the thing he says about it. But the fascination of the mental processes in attempting it, and the satisfaction in success are both profitable and enjoyable.

The attempt has been made in the outlines which follow to pursue that method. The results are often clumsy and inadequate, but they will at least serve as an

INTRODUCTION

example of a form of Bible study which is possible for the individual student or for the group, and which lends intense interest to the search for the message which the Bible writers had for those to whom they wrote. It is applicable to all the forms of Biblical literature, and to none more so than to the epistles of Paul.

The following is the general outline of 2 Corinthians which has been developed more in detail just preceding the comment on the successive paragraphs:

SALUTATION, 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION: PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT IN TROUBLE, 1:3-11

1. Its source; 1:3-5.
2. Its effect; 1:6-7.
3. A special instance; 1:8-11.

I. PAUL'S SINCERITY OF HEART AND LIFE, 1:12-2:17.

1. *Attested by his own conscience*; 1:12.
2. *Attested by those who know him*; 1:13-14.
3. *Attested by his relation to Christ and God*; 1:15-22.
4. *Attested by the facts*; 1:23-2:13.
Conclusion: God's Triumphal Procession; 2:14-17.

II. PAUL'S MINISTRY OF THE NEW COVENANT, 3:1-6:10

Introduction: His Letters of Introduction; 3:1-3.

1. *The Character of the Ministry*; 3:4-18.
2. *The Conduct of the Ministry*; 4:1-6.
3. *The Limitations of the Ministry*; 4:7-5:12.
4. *The Secret of the Ministry*; 5:13-6:10.

INTRODUCTION

III. PAUL'S JOY IN THE CORINTHIANS, 6:11—7:16.

1. *The Ways in which it finds expression*; 6:11—7:4.
2. *The Immediate Cause*; 7:5-6.
3. *The Underlying Cause*; 7:7-13.
4. *An Additional Cause*; 7:13-16.

IV. THE GRACE OF GIVING (TO THE SAINTS AT 'JERUSALEM'), 8:1—9:15

1. *Illustrated in the Churches of Macedonia*; 8:1-7.
2. *Desired in the Churches of Achaia*; 8:7-15.
3. *Administered efficiently in both provinces*; 8:16—9:5
4. *Regulated by the Law of the Harvest*; 9:6-15.

V. PAUL'S "GLORYING", 10:1—12:13.

1. *The Boldness which characterizes it*; 10:1-18.
2. *The Grounds which excuse it*; 11:1—12:13.
Intro. His excuse for talking about the grounds;
11:1-6.
 - a. His gratuitous preaching at Corinth; 11:7-15.
 - b. His honor "in the flesh"; 11:16—12:13.
Intro.; 11:16-21.
 - (1) In his ancestry and race; 11:22.
 - (2) As a minister of Christ; 11:23-31.
 - (3) In his visions and revelations; 12:1-10.Conclusion; 12:11-13.

VI. PAUL'S INTENDED VISIT TO CORINTH, 12:14— 13:10

1. *Its Number—the third*; 12:14.
2. *Its Object*; 12:14-19.

INTRODUCTION

3. *Its possible disappointment to Paul*; 12:20-21.
4. *Its possible disappointment to them*; 13:1-9.
Conclusion; 13:10.

CONCLUSION, 13:11.

SALUTATIONS, 13:12-13.

BENEDICTION, 13:14.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

SALUTATION I:1-2

- I. 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy ¹ our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which

¹ Gr., *the brother.*

SALUTATION

- I. The Authors introduced.
1. Paul.
 - (1) Authority: Apostle of Christ Jesus.
 - (2) Appointment: through God's will.
 2. Timothy, the Christian brother.
- II. The Readers, to whom introduced.
1. The Church of God at Corinth.
 2. All Christians in the Province of Achaia.
- III. The Prayer of Salutation.
- Content of petition: Grace, Peace.
1. Source:
 - (1) God our Father.
 - (2) The Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. Destination—"you"; all the readers.

No two of Paul's salutations are alike. They are so varied and so significant that each deserves careful study. Though the similarities are marked, there is in the salutation of each letter something that is peculiar to itself.

In its simplest terms the formal salutation in common use would have made this letter begin: Paul to the Church at Corinth, Greeting. The Epistle of James comes the nearest of the New Testament letters to the stereotyped forms of salutation. But most of the New Testament writers, and Paul in particular,

vary the form and lengthen it. The author is introduced with a statement of his rank or authority as well as his identity; the reader or readers are given some descriptive or complimentary phrase; and the simple "Greeting" is enlarged into a prayer, the favorite petitions in which ask for grace, and peace for the readers. The two epistles to Timothy add "mercy" between "grace" and "peace."

1:1. An Apostle. This is Paul's title of authority, and in all but four of his letters he uses it. Twice he precedes it with the designation "slave (servant) of Christ," or "slave of God." To the Philippians he uses only the title "slaves of Christ Jesus" for himself and Timothy. To the Thessalonians there is no title of authority given. To Philemon he calls himself a "prisoner of Christ Jesus." If there is any question of his authority Paul lays strong emphasis on his apostleship. Jesus chose twelve "whom also He named apostles" (Lk. 6:13). The name is nearly the equivalent of "Missionary." They were *sent forth* by Jesus on the business of the Kingdom. Though not one of the twelve, Paul claimed an equal right to the title apostle and to its authority. He was chosen and sent forth by Christ Jesus no less than they. On this he insists with great emphasis. In Corinth certain church workers had been opposing Paul's authority. He calls them "false apostles, deceitful workers, *fashioning themselves* into apostles of Christ." Because of them, in this letter, as in the letter to the Galatians, he lays great stress on his credentials. He is an apostle of Christ Jesus, not self-appointed, but under appointment of God—*through God's will*.

Timothy our brother. *The* brother, *i.e.*, *your* brother. Timothy was well known at Corinth. He was with Paul during part at least of the eighteen months spent there when the church was organized (Acts 18:5). "Timothy the brother" is sufficient reference to one so well known. He is not, however, like Paul, an "Apostle."

In most of Paul's letters some friend or friends of the readers are associated with the author in the salutation. In 1 Corinthians it was Sosthenes "the brother." In six of the letters it is Timothy. It is an evidence of Timothy's close relationship to Paul and his great influence among his "brother" Christians everywhere. This letter, like all of Paul's letters, is nevertheless strictly his own message. He does not share the responsibility for it with anyone. After the salutation it would be difficult to discover any part that Timothy has in the letter. Even when the first person plural is used it does not as a rule, and probably not once, include Timothy. It is Paul's letter.

The Church of God which is at Corinth. Once (Rom. 16:16) Paul uses the phrase "churches of Christ." That is the only use of the term in the New Testament. Elsewhere it is always the church of God, or the churches of God. It is God's church, but, figuratively, it is Christ's body. Although Paul often uses the plural, "churches of God," he thought of the church of God as being one great whole. Just as one might speak of the Atlantic Ocean at New York, or at Boston, he spoke of the church of God at Corinth. Just as the ocean is not at its best and purest at every point, so the church of God at Corinth was not at its purest or its best. But it *was* the church of God. It could be purified.

All the saints. "Christians" would be a better rendering, though not a translation. "Saints" in our vocabulary is likely to be misleading. They were "saints" because they were called to be saints, to be *holy*, to be *separated* as God's people; not because they had reached any advanced stage of Christian perfection. It is a tribute to Paul's optimism and hope that, in spite of their moral deficiencies he calls the Corinthian Christians "holy," "saints." Though the term "saints" implies that they had been separated, sanctified,—there is nothing of the sanctimonious in it.

The whole of Achaia. Paul always spoke geographically in terms of Roman Provinces. Achaia was a Roman senatorial province, governed by a proconsul whose residence was at Corinth. During a part of Paul's first long stay in Corinth, September, 51 A.D. to March, 53 A.D., Gallio, the brother of Seneca, was proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12).

One of Paul's methods of evangelization, which developed with his increasing experience, was to reach the surrounding country from some city as a strategic center. As early as at Pisidian Antioch, 47 A.D., it could be said, "The word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region," *i.e.*, all Phrygia (Acts 13:49). Doubtless all Achaia in a similar way had heard the gospel, and there were many Christians. Athens was in Achaia, and so was Cenchreæ, the harbor of Corinth on the Ægean side of the peninsula. There were Christians at Athens (Acts 17:34); and there was a church at Cenchreæ (Rom. 16:1). Although the letter is addressed to the church in the city of Corinth Paul graciously includes in the salutation all the Christians in the province of which Corinth was the capital. They were certainly associated with the church in Corinth in some intimate way and must have known something of the difficulties that had arisen there.

2. are in the whole of Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION: PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT IN TROUBLE,
1:3-II

3. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all com-

2. **Grace to you and peace.** Paul's two favorite words in the salutation of his letters. In their choice he may possibly have been influenced slightly by the similarity of sound in the Greek language between these two words on the one hand, and the formal word "Greeting," on the other. They sound very much alike. But besides that, *grace* and *peace* are to Paul the most comprehensive words in his Christian vocabulary. They are rich in historical associations. The priestly benediction (Num. 6:22-26) was similar in thought. But they had been wonderfully enriched by Christian use. To Paul *grace* includes all of God's gracious giving. It has its consummation in Christ, God's "unspeakable gift" (9:15), and in all the blessings that come to men and women through Jesus Christ. On the other hand, *peace* is the harmony and satisfaction which come into a life that has accepted God's *grace*, is reconciled to God, and rests in the assurance of forgiven sin. In this sense Jesus was the great *peace*-maker. He was the Son of God; and so, "Blessed are the makers of peace for they shall be called God's Sons" (Matt. 5:9). Grace and peace sum up, for Paul, all the blessings of Christianity, the wealth of God's gracious giving, the results in man's full acceptance. In every letter Paul begins with a prayer that his readers may have these blessings.

PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT IN TROUBLE, 1:3-II

1. Its source is in God, vs. 3.
- a. His Identity—The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. His Nature:—
 - (1) The Father, whose characteristic is mercy.
 - (2) The God, whose characteristic is encouragement.
 - c. His Expression of his nature—keeps Paul encouraged, vs. 4.
 - (1) Occasion—in his every trouble;
 - (2) End (purposed and actual)—ability to encourage others;

- (a) Occasion—in their every trouble;
- (b) Means—by his own personal experience.
- (3) Agent—Christ, vs. 5:
 - (a) Measure of his encouragement—abundant;
 - (b) Comparison—as abundant as his sufferings for Christ.
- 2. Its effect (designed and actual)—the encouragement of the Corinthians, vs. 6.
 - a. Method:
 - (1) Through his trouble, inspiration to patience;
 - (2) Through his encouragement, inspiration to courage.
 - b. Surety—a hope well grounded in his knowledge of them, vs. 7.
- 3. A special instance—Paul's trouble in Asia, vs. 8.
 - a. Severity—a trouble almost too heavy to bear.
 - b. Extent—Death's door.
 - (1) Utter despair of life;
 - (2) Death sentence passed on himself, vs. 9.
 - c. End—(designed result) perfect trust, not in self, but in God.
 - d. Outcome—rescue and confidence, vs. 10.
 - e. Result—encouragement; assurance of rescue always, in God.
 - Grounds—the prayers of the Corinthians for him, vs. 11.
 - (1) Effectiveness—a subtle help;
 - (2) Desired end—many expressions of thanks to God.

This introduction is not a thanksgiving, but it springs out of Paul's overflowing thankfulness. He is not uttering a thanksgiving to God, but tells his readers how much he has to be thankful for, and what it is. He begins nearly every letter he writes with a thanksgiving or with a statement of his thankfulness. Its absence in the letter to the Galatians is therefore noteworthy. Usually Paul's introduction begins "I thank my God," or "We give thanks to God." Here he uses an equivalent phrase. The "blessing" and the "thanksgiving" are almost synonymous. He blesses God for his encouragement. The return of Titus from Corinth with a message to Paul of the renewed loyalty of the church gives the apostle new cause for rejoicing and hope. He thanks God and takes courage.

His thought in the introduction is this: My heart is full of gratitude to God, for again, as always, He has given me the encouragement I needed in trouble. He is an unfailing source of such encouragement, supplying it as often as I need it. As my sufferings are for the sake of Christ, so Christ is the agent of my encouragement. And this constant supply of encouragement in trouble gives me the opportunity, through my own ex-

-
4. fort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any afflic-
-

perience, to be a source of encouragement to you and to others. There has been one notable instance recently in Asia. I wish you knew all about it. It was a trouble that brought me to death's door, and I despaired of life. But God raised me up and saved me, and I have learned never to despair, trusting in God's care for me, and in the effectiveness of your prayers on my behalf. And one further result of such prayers and such rescues, is that thanksgivings in great abundance rise to God from many hearts. The more thanksgiving we can have the better.

3. **Blessed.** Used in the New Testament only of God or Christ; the equivalent of "worthy to be praised." Hence it is almost an alternative expression for "deserving of gratitude, or thanks."

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul does not hesitate to speak of God as both the God and Father of Jesus Christ (see also Eph. 1:17). It is first of all in his relation to Jesus Christ that God is known by Paul to be a God whose characteristic is encouragement, and a Father whose characteristic is compassion.

Mercies. Not the equivalent of favors, but of feelings of compassion. It is that emotion which seeks expression when, in the presence of suffering or need or sin, one is moved with a desire to help.

Comfort. As there is in this word *comfort* the idea of exhortation, inspiration to courage and hope, as well as the idea of consolation, it is helpful to read the passages, substituting *encourage* or *encouragement* for *comfort*. The word, as noun or verb, occurs ten times in these five verses. It is the chief burden of Paul's thought and of his gratitude, and it is the theme of his introduction—encouragement in trouble. It is one of the key-words to this letter, and is found nineteen times after the introduction in the body of the letter—almost as many times as in all the rest of Paul's letters put together. The return of Titus from Corinth with good news has greatly encouraged Paul, and he is reminded that always in his experience encouragement and comfort follow trouble. He thinks of one remarkable instance not long before in Asia. And so, quite naturally, this is the burden of his thankfulness.

4. **Affliction.** *Trouble* gives the meaning better. It includes any stress under outside pressure, mental anxiety, spiritual discouragement, accident, danger, physical pain or disability.

- tion, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are
5. comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth
 6. through Christ. But whether we be afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we be comforted, it is for your comfort, which worketh in
 7. the patient enduring of the same sufferings which

5. **The sufferings of Christ abound unto us.** The emphasis here is on Christ as the agent through whom Paul's encouragement has come. To *are comforted of God* (vs. 4), verse 5 adds *abundantly through Christ*. Paul says that this encouragement that God gives him through Christ is always as abundant as the sufferings which come into his life because he is Christ's follower. It is unnecessary to find anything more subtle than that in his words. The *sufferings of Christ* which were abundant in his life are the afflictions of which he has just spoken. Abundant as they are, they are no more abundant than the encouragement that meets them. That encouragement comes to him through Jesus Christ. God is its source; Christ is its agent. Elsewhere (e.g., Col. 1:24) Paul uses the figure of the church as the body of Christ, and draws a parallel between the sufferings of Christ's physical body and the sufferings of Christ's figurative body, the church. As a member of the church which is His body Paul suffered the sufferings of Christ's body. There seems, however, to be nothing of that metaphor here. It is best to take it in its simplest meaning.

6. **It is for your comfort.** One effect, designed and actual, of Paul's troubles, as the effect of his encouragement also, is the example it sets his readers and the inspiration it gives them to endure patiently and hopefully similar troubles. To think of troubles in that way helps him. He adds to the first clause, **Salvation**, for always he thinks of his troubles as having their chief purpose in making him an efficient minister of salvation to men. (A great uncertainty as to the exact order of the words in the original at this point, is responsible for the difficult rendering here and in the A. V. This order is probably correct.)

7. **Our hope for you is steadfast; knowing, i.e., now that I know.** This seems to be a more personal reference. It is veiled, but the readers would understand it. Paul had almost despaired of them. Now his hope for them is confident and sure. It is grounded on the information that they have shared not

- we also suffer: and our hope for you is stedfast; knowing that, as ye are partakers of the sufferings,
8. so also are ye of the comfort. For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell *us* in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we

only in this particular trouble with his church at Corinth, but that they have shared in his encouragement. Titus had brought Paul word that the majority of the church had suffered in this very troublesome matter just as Paul had suffered, and that they had found their source of encouragement where Paul found his, in God through Christ.

8. **Our affliction which befell us in Asia.** It is impossible to think that the plurals *our* and *us* and *we* refer to Paul and Timothy or to Paul and any other, while the singulars *I* and *me* and *my* are reserved for the Apostle alone. He turns so easily and so often from singular to plural and back to singular again (e.g., I:13; I:23-24) and it is often so difficult to find any second person associated with him in the plural that it is better to take all of these plurals as being the "editorial we." Timothy is in all probability not included in *our affliction*.

What this special *affliction*, or trouble, was the readers of the letter at Corinth knew. They may not have known how severe it was, but a reference to it is all that is necessary. It is impossible for Paul's later readers to discover any clew by which to identify the affliction. There have been many guesses. It befell him in **Asia**. *Asia* of course means Ephesus. It was recent, and of sufficient importance to be thought of as outstanding, towering above all his other troubles in Asia. He writes as if there were only one affliction in Asia. It brought him to death's door. He **despaired even of life**. A severe illness best explains his description of the affliction. Some form of persecution or of mob violence might also explain it. It is not likely that a man of Paul's faith and strength would be brought to death's door by the anxiety that a defiant church gave him. But that is sometimes suggested as an explanation. In great variety afflictions are mentioned in chapter 11, and they include *in deaths oft* (11:23). This is but one of them. Paul refers to it because it was recent, known to his readers, severe, and because it illustrated his many troubles and the unfailing encouragement he received. At Corinth they had evidently prayed for his recovery and for his encouragement (vs. 11).

9. despaired even of life: ¹ yea, we ourselves have had the ² answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which
10. raiseth the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver: on whom we have ³ set
11. our hope that he will also still deliver us; ye also

¹ Or, *but we ourselves.*² Or, *sentence.*³ Some ancient authorities read, *set our hope; and still will he deliver us.*

9. **The answer of death.** Or, sentence of death within ourselves. Death had seemed the inevitable outcome. He faced death, and asked himself this question, "Must I die?" And he answered it, "Yes." The sentence was pronounced by himself. He really thought he could not survive. And so it seemed to him a veritable resurrection, when he was given back to life out of so great a death.

That we should not trust in ourselves. One purpose which Paul found in his varied afflictions was the resulting effect on his churches. They were encouraged and strengthened. Here is another purpose. This illness gave him a new sense of trust in God, a new lesson that trust in self for rescue was useless, and a vivid experience of God's power to raise the dead.

10. **On whom we have set our hope.** As always, the *comfort* that came to him in this experience helped him to face the future with new courage. It was genuine encouragement. No matter what may be in store for him God will also still deliver us.

11. **Ye also helping.** Very tactfully Paul implies that his readers had a part in his recovery, because they had prayed earnestly for it. Or if their *supplication* was not offered for his previous rescue, then he tactfully suggests that in the future they will be found *also helping*. This expectation is another factor in his encouragement.

For the gift bestowed upon us. The deliverance is a special gift of God, a special favor bestowed upon Paul, in answer to the prayers of his many friends.

Thanks may be given. Here is another purpose in affliction and encouragement, the thanksgivings that are sure to result. No one ever had more of the spirit of gratitude than Paul. He is always interrupting himself to exclaim *thanks be to God* (Rom. 6:17; 7:25; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 8:16; 9:15). And it seemed to him a result very much to be desired that a chorus of

helping together on our behalf by your supplication; that, for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf.

thanksgivings should be ascending constantly to God. Anything that accomplished that end gave him great joy. He counted on the fact that all those who had prayed for his deliverance would return thanks for his deliverance. So the chorus would be swelled, and another worthy outcome of his troubles would be achieved.

I. PAUL'S SINCERITY OF HEART AND LIFE, 1:12—2:17.

12. For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we

This is the subject about which Paul feels impelled first to write. It touches him at a vital point. It has to do with his honor. He has been accused of insincerity and fickleness. Titus' return has greatly cheered Paul's heart, because he brings the news that the majority at least of the church at Corinth believe in him and are loyal to him. Nevertheless he cannot help but say a few things in defense of his absolute sincerity, not only of heart, but also of words and plans and actions. It is a difficult thing to *prove* one's own sincerity. Talking about it will not do it. Insisting that one is sincere does not prove it. But to those who are inclined to believe in Paul the arguments will seem conclusive.

It is possible to gather from what he writes in his own defense some of the charges which have been made against him. They are vague references, but these are some of the malicious accusations: he is insincere (12); fickle (17); a "yea and nay" man (18); writes his own credentials (3:1, 5:12); is "beside himself," *i.e.*, unbalanced (5:13). And to these can be added a few gleanings from chapters 10-13: "his letters are weighty, his presence puny" (10:10); he shakes his fist when he is at a safe distance, but when he is close to them he only shakes his finger (10:1); he walks "according to the flesh," *i.e.*, he is very human for a man who pretends to be spiritual (10:2); he is a great boaster (10:8 and often). It is because such things as these have been said about him that Paul defends his own sincerity. His argument seems to fall under this outline. His sincerity is attested by four kinds of witness:

PAUL'S SINCERITY OF HEART AND LIFE

- I. *Attested by his own conscience; vs. 12.*
 - a. As to its genuineness—Godlike.
 - b. As to its sphere of expression.
 - (1) Negative: not in worldly wisdom;
 - (2) Positive: but in divine grace.

behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

13. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or even acknowledge, and I hope
 14. ye will acknowledge unto the end: as also ye did

c. As to its sphere of influence.

- (1) The whole world in general;
 (2) The Corinthians in particular.

12. **For.** The transition from the Introduction to this proof of his sincerity. He can count on their prayers for him and his constant encouragement in trouble *for* he is absolutely sincere, he glories in his consciousness of sincerity in all that he is and all that he does. **Our glorying.** This is one of Paul's words. It seems to be reminiscent of one of the accusations against him. Perhaps they misused his own expression and turned it upon him. Only four times, in James (3) and in Hebrews (1), is *glorying* in any of its forms found outside of Paul's letters in the New Testament. But Paul uses it nearly fifty times. Especially in chapters 10-12 is it frequent. There it is one of the key-words to his letter. It is rendered *rejoicing* in the authorized version. The word is inadequate. *Boasting* is too strong. It is better to use the uniform rendering *glorying*. He glories in his consciousness of sincerity. **Sincerity of God, i.e.,** a sincerity that is holy and Godlike. It is God's sincerity, a striking phrase. The word *in* is used in this verse with three phrases, each giving a different emphasis to the attestation of his conscience. It is *in* God's sincerity; *in* the sphere of God's grace; *in* the world. **In the Grace of God** is contrasted with *fleshly wisdom*. The latter is human wisdom, man wisdom, worldly wisdom, contrasted with spiritual wisdom. Paul lived his whole life in the sphere, or atmosphere, of God's grace, *i.e.,* of God's gracious, lavish giving. Living in that atmosphere his sincerity partakes of it. It is God-like sincerity. **In the world.** Toward the whole world he knows he is sincere; how much more toward the Church at Corinth which is in the same realm, or sphere, of God's grace.

2. *Attested by those who understand him; vss. 13, 14.*

a. Who they are: The Corinthians themselves.

- (1) Who all understand him *now*;
 (2) Who will continue to understand him, he hopes;
 (3) Who, in part, always have understood him.

b. What their understanding signifies: they appreciate that he is their object of glorying, as they are his.

13, 14. The difficulty in these two verses is no fault of Paul's. It is the difficulty of transferring a play upon words from one language into another. There seems to be no way of reproducing it in English. The play is upon the word *read* and the word *acknowledge*, which are very much alike. Paul's thought is this: What I say about my sincerity is acknowledged and understood by you all. There is nothing that must be read between the lines. You all now understand my letters and me—and I hope you always will—as some of you always have understood. When the Lord comes I shall be as much to you as you are to me. **Acknowledge.** It is well to read these two verses substituting for *acknowledge* first the word *understand* and then the word *recognize*, both of which help to reproduce Paul's meaning. He is confident now that they will read his letters without reading into them what is not there, and that they will read him without reading into him any insincerity. They understand him; they recognize his sincerity; they acknowledge it. **Unto the end.** He hopes there will never again be a *misunderstanding*. **Ye did acknowledge us in part.** The *in part* may mean that part of the church always did understand him; or that the church never wholly misunderstood him. **In the day of our Lord Jesus.** This is not so much a reference to time as to a state of clear perceptions of things as they are. Paul looked forward to the coming of the Lord. When he comes things will be seen as they are. So, *in the day of our Lord Jesus* is here almost equivalent to *as Christ sees it*. As Christ sees it, the Corinthians are finding that Paul is an object of pride on their part, just as they are his source of pride. In the day of the Lord Jesus there are no misunderstandings.

3. *Attested by his relation to Christ and God; 1:15-22.*

a. The statement to be proved: He is *not* insincere.

Specifications:

(1) He did not practice the supposed fickleness; vs. 17.

(2) His word is not "yea and nay"; vs. 18.

Particular instance called in question.

(a) His plan, Macedonia via Corinth; then Judea via Corinth; vs. 15.

(b) His change of plan (implied); vs. 17.

(c) His motive, sincere; vs. 18.

b. The Proof:

(1) The Son of God is true, Jesus Christ; vs. 19.

(a) Identity—The Christ preached to them by Paul.

(b) Proof—All God's promises have come true in him; vs. 20.

acknowledge us in part, that we are your glorying, even as ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

15. And in this confidence I was minded to come before unto you, that ye might have a second ¹ benefit;

¹ Or, *grace*. Some ancient authorities read *joy*.

(2) Paul's relation to Christ is one of identity (*in Christ*); vs. 21.

(a) Agent, who confirms it, is God.

(b) Evidence, found in anointing and sealing and in the earnest of the Spirit; vs. 22.

(3) Conclusion: Therefore Paul must be true.

This is Paul's real proof of his sincerity. It is an actual demonstration. First the theorem to be proved: He is not fickle, or insincere. Then the argument: The Son of God is true; Paul is identified with the Son of God, the evidence is complete. Therefore Paul cannot be untrue.

15. **In this confidence.** The confidence that his own conscience and the judgment of those who understood him bore witness to his honesty of purpose. This would seem to refer to a time when the relations between Paul and the Church at Corinth were not strained. **A second benefit.** The word usually rendered *grace* is here rendered *benefit*. The margin suggests that Paul *may* have written *joy*, not *grace*. It is his consciousness of a God-given authority as an Apostle, not any pride in his personal attractions, that leads Paul to speak of his visits as benefits, or as joys. He did it in all humility. And yet it may have been expressions such as these that led to some of the charges against him of boastfulness.

It is impossible to determine just what he meant by a *second* benefit, but most probably he refers to the two proposed visits of which he goes on to speak in the following verses. The only promised visit of which we know is that of 1 Cor. 16:5-9. It was his purpose then (also Acts 19:21-22) to go from Ephesus first to Macedonia and afterward to Corinth for a long visit, spending the winter there. He did not wish to go first to Corinth, for if he did it would be for a short visit only. There is no evidence that he had before the writing of 2 Corinthians even mentioned a change of plans, but it is quite possible that he may have done so in the "lost" letter, or by messenger. At any rate his plans had been changed. He hoped to visit them on his

16. and by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come unto you, and of you to be set
 17. forward on my journey unto Judæa. When I therefore was thus minded, did I shew fickleness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be the yea yea
 18. and the nay nay? But as God is faithful, our word
 19. toward you is not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you ¹ by us, *even* ¹ by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not
 20. yea and nay, but in him is yea. For how many

¹ Gr., *through*.

way to Macedonia, both going and returning. And this he had not done. He is now writing from Macedonia, and is following the original plan of 1 Cor. 16:5. This change of plans, either from two visits to one, or from one to two and back to one again, had given the disloyal members of the Church at Corinth another occasion to complain of him. They said one never could tell what Paul was going to do from what he said. In special reference to this Paul argues that his relation to Christ and God proves that he is true, even if he does change his plans.

17. **The yea yea and the nay nay.** One of the many accusations made against Paul in this change of plans was that he was a "yea and nay" man. It implied that he answered questions with both a *yes* and a *no*, and left the questioner guessing as to what his intention really was; his word couldn't be trusted.

18. **As God is faithful.** This is probably not an asseveration, calling God's faithfulness as a witness to Paul's sincerity. He grounds his own sincerity in the faithfulness of God, and he goes on to show that because he is identified with Christ his truth and sincerity are identified with Christ's.

19. **For** begins the explanation of what he means in verse 18 by linking his own sincerity to God's. God's Son, Jesus Christ, had been the theme of the three evangelists, Paul, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy, when they labored in Corinth for eighteen months (Acts 18:5, 11), and Jesus Christ is not a "yea and nay" man. **Yea** is personified in him.

20. **For.** Again an explanation of the preceding verse. **Yea** is personified in God's Son, because He has proved to be the affirmation and fulfillment of all God's promises. He is God's

- soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the
21. glory of God through us. Now he that stablisheth us with you ¹ in Christ, and anointed us, is God; ² who
22. also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

¹ Gr., *into*.² Or, *seeing that he both sealed us*.

yea to all the promises God has made. If God's *yea* has been the theme of Paul's preaching, and if Paul has been identified with God's *yea*, how can his own promises be *yea and nay*. **Through him is the Amen.** *The Amen* is the *yes* of assent at the close of the prayer or the doxology in public worship (1 Cor. 14:16). In the Revelation (3:14) the "one like unto a son of man" calls himself *the Amen*, and its use as the *yea* of assent is indicated in Rev. 22:20, and elsewhere. The members of the Corinthian Church in their every repetition of *the Amen* in public worship had testified to their belief that the Son of God whom Paul preached was *God's yea*, the incarnation of the truth and sincerity of a promise-keeping God. Paul cannot put in any stronger way his conception of the inviolable faithfulness and sincerity of God.

21. **Now.** Here is the second step in his proof. It is the assertion that God has identified Paul with Christ and has set the seal of His approval upon that intimate and living relation, *in Christ*. **Stablisheth us with you in Christ.** **In Christ** is one of Paul's most used expressions. It defines one of his most characteristic thoughts, the relation of intimacy, of identity, which the follower of Christ has with his Lord. It is parallel to Jesus' metaphor, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Something like seventy-five times *in Christ* is found in Paul's letters. Very gracefully he includes his readers in this relation to Christ. They no less than he are *in Christ*. This relation to Christ is not only intimate but it is sure, indissoluble. And it is God who makes it so; He **stablisheth** it. **And anointed us.** The **stablishing** is continual; it is always going on. But the **anointing**, the seal and the earnest were once for all. He was anointed by the Spirit for service as Jesus was (Acts 10:38); he was sealed by the Spirit as Jesus was (Mk. 1:10-11); and the Spirit in his heart was given him as an *earnest*.

22. **Sealed us.** A seal guarantees genuineness and proclaims ownership. After Jesus' baptism the Spirit descended upon Him and a voice testified to the seal: "Thou art my beloved Son,"

23. But I call God for a witness upon my soul, that
 24. to spare you I forbore to come unto Corinth. Not

The Spirit was the seal of his relationship to God. He was God's Son. So Paul looks upon the Spirit as the seal that marked him as God's and Christ's. **The earnest of the Spirit.** The earnest is the part payment in a contract or bargain which is the pledge that the whole will be paid in full. So it is both a payment and a pledge. It is a word that is found three times in Paul's letters (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14) and nowhere else in the New Testament; but it was a familiar word in the business world, just as *stablish* and *seal* were also business terms. Paul thought of the gift of the Spirit in his heart as the first installment of God's endless giving, and as the pledge and guaranty that all God's promises would be fully kept. God has made absolutely sure Paul's relation as Christ's own, by the *anointing*, the *seal*, and the *earnest* of the Spirit.

4. *Attested by the facts—The change of plan.* 1:23—2:13.

a. Reasons (for the change).

(1) To spare them; vs. 23.

(a) Asseveration—I call God for a witness.

(b) Explantation (parenthetical) of the authority implied in *spare*; vs. 24.

1. Neg. Not as lord of their faith.

2. Pos. But as partners in promoting their joy.

(2) To spare himself sorrow; 2:1, 2.

b. Nature (of the change) from a visit to a *letter*; vs. 3.

(1) Purpose: to save sorrow.

(2) Expected outcome: their joy equal to his.

(3) Character (*i.e.*, kind of letter), heavy-hearted, tearful;
 vs. 4.

(4) Reason (for such a letter).

(a) Neg. Not to cause sorrow.

(b) Pos. But to show his exceeding love.

c. Result (of the change) which justifies it; the author of the sorrow ("such a one," *i.e.*, *someone*); vs. 5.

(1) Has caused sorrow.

(a) Neg. Not to Paul only.

(b) Pos. But to them all.

(2) Has been punished enough; vs. 6.

(a) Consequence: forgiveness; encouragement; vs. 7.

(b) Reason: More might engulf him in sorrow.

that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers
 2. 1. of your joy: for by ¹ faith ye stand. ² But I de-

¹ Or, *your faith*.

² Some ancient authorities read *For*.

(c) End (further result): Public confirmation of love;
 vs. 8, 9.

(3) Has been forgiven by Paul; vs. 10.

(a) Condition: Provided they forgive too.

(b) Reason: For their sakes.

(c) Sphere: Christ's presence.

(d) Purpose: To thwart Satan's plans; vs. 11.

d. Effect on Paul—a restless, heavy heart (owing to the delay); vs. 13.

(1) Time: When he came to Troas; vs. 12.

(2) Severity: Could not enter an open door; vs. 13.

(3) Ground Titus' delay.

(4) Extent: Left the open door and went to meet Titus.

23. **To spare you I forbore to come unto Corinth.** Now, listen to the facts, Paul says. If a man has good and sufficient reasons for changing his plans he is not fickle. The facts of the case bear witness to his sincerity. Instead of paying a visit to Corinth, as the Corinthian church had expected him to do, he sent a letter. Those who were disloyal in the church made this the ground for harsh criticism of Paul.

There are two very simple and evident explanations of his change of plans: namely, to spare them and to spare himself. (In 13:2 he says, *if I come again I will not spare*. This is one of the important phrases in the evidence that chapters 10-13 are a part of the "lost letter.")

24. The abrupt change again from first person singular to first person plural, and then back again in the following verse is to be explained as one of Paul's mannerisms. It is impossible to think that with each use of the plural he includes Timothy and Silvanus, or others, with himself. **Lordship over your faith.** This is much more conciliatory than the thirteenth chapter. Evidently the word *spare* sounds to Paul, after he has said it, to imply more of authority and lordship over his readers than he intends. He hastens to qualify it. He wishes to exercise no tyranny over their faith. It is sorrow and mortification he would spare them, for he is specially interested in promoting their joy. As to their faith, they now stand firmly on their own feet. **By faith ye stand** is better rendered *in your faith ye stand*. (This too seems in strong contrast with 13:5, "try your own selves whether ye be in the faith.")

- terminated this for myself, that I would not come
2. again to you with sorrow. For if I make you sorry, who then is he that maketh me glad, but he that is
 3. made sorry by me? And I wrote this very thing, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in
 4. you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all. For out

2:1. There should of course be no paragraph or chapter division between the preceding verse and this. **But** is preferable to the marginal reading **for**. This is his second reason for his change of plans. *And further* would be better than **but**. **Again to you in sorrow**. The simple and very evident meaning is that he had made them one visit with sorrow, and deliberately determined not to make another. The sorrow seems to be his own. The *for myself* indicates this. There is no record elsewhere of this visit to Corinth, but it is supposedly the second of the three (13:1), when he writes, *this is the third time I am coming to you*.

2. **For**. The explanation introduced by *for* is, in our English version, a little incoherent. It is the incoherence of great emotion. To his readers it was perfectly intelligible. They knew what he had written in the previous letter. The explanation is of the double paradox that to make them joyful he made them sorry, and that making another sorry made Paul glad. **He that is made sorry**. No definite person is referred to here. The personal reference begins at verse 5. His visit and his letter had both caused sorrow to himself and to the church. But the sorrow had resulted in repentance, and so, at last, in their joy and in Paul's joy. The end had justified the means.

3. **I wrote this very thing**. This is a reference to a letter written between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, which, in part, may be found in 2 Cor. 10-13. In this letter he had written *this very thing*, namely, that he had changed his plan from a visit to a letter in order to spare them and himself the *sorrow* which a visit would surely cause. It seemed to him better to write, and he had told them why. **Having confidence in you all**. Paul knew that at heart they and he were one, and that they rejoiced in the same spiritual results which gave him joy. He was confident that in the end they would be found mutually glad because of the outcome of the trouble. His confidence had proved to be well placed.

4. **I wrote unto you with many tears**. It had been no

of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

5. But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow not to me, but in part (that I press not too

easy task to write them, even though that seemed easier and better than to visit them. The letter cost Paul anguish of heart and many tears. One of the difficulties in finding this letter in chapters 10-13, is the difficulty of finding the *tears* in those chapters. That they were written under great emotion, and even anguish of heart is evident, but hardly tears. Possibly the tears were in that part of the letter which is lost. The cost to Paul bears witness that his purpose was not to cause them *sorrow*, but in the end to show how much he loved them.

5. **If any hath caused sorrow.** No name is mentioned, but here is the person who was most responsible for the trouble. Who or what he was there is no means of determining. He certainly was not the offender mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:1-8. His offense was in part at least personal and directed toward Paul. He seems to have defied and insulted the Apostle. It is possible that it began in a defiance of Timothy, Paul's messenger (1 Cor. 16:10; Acts 19:22); but there is no certain evidence that Timothy actually made the proposed visit of 1 Cor. 16:10. Titus has now returned from Corinth with the good news that Paul's letter had proved a wise substitute for a visit. The offender had been summarily punished by the majority in the church, and the punishment had resulted in his penitence. There was a possibility that the punishment might now go too far; that even the majority might not know when to stop. And so Paul urges his forgiveness by the church, announces that he himself forgives him freely, and pleads that he be restored and encouraged. **Not to me.** Paul declines to consider it any longer as a personal matter. The church has taken it into its own hands and has made it its own. Paul is too big to cherish any personal resentment. **In part to you all**—that is, to a part of you all, to most of you. He adds, parenthetically, that **I press not too heavily.** He would not add another straw to the burden of punishment upon the offender, even by implying that every one in the church was against him. It was only a part, but it was the majority, as he states in the next verse.

6. heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this
 7. punishment which was *inflicted* by ¹ the many; so
 that contrariwise ye should ² rather forgive him and
 comfort him, lest by any means such a one should
 8. be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Where-
 fore I beseech you to confirm *your* love toward him.
 9. For to this end also did I write, that I might know
 the proof of you, ³ whether ye are obedient in all

¹ Gr., *the more*.² Some ancient authorities omit *rather*.³ Some ancient authorities read *whereby*.

6. **To such a one.** The offender, of course; but Paul tactfully and with real delicacy omits his name. **By the many.** The margin suggests the more accurate reading, *the more*. It was a majority who had taken his punishment in hand. Evidently there was at least a small minority. But there is no evidence that they had condoned the offender's insults, nor that they were still opposed to Paul. Possibly they demanded a severer punishment than that which the majority had fixed.

7. **Ye should rather forgive him.** The *rather* should probably be omitted, as the margin suggests. He has been punished enough; now forgive. **And comfort.** As in the introduction, so here, *encourage* is a better word than *comfort*. It was not petting that the offender needed, but encouragement to take up his life again as a humble, penitent, forgiven christian man. **Overmuch sorrow.** His penitence is genuine. It is possible to push the punishment too far and overwhelm such a one with sorrow.

8. **Wherefore I beseech.** The word rendered *beseech* here is the word rendered *comfort* above. It would not be out of place to do as Paul did and in our translation use the same word for both. *Wherefore I encourage you to confirm* your love toward him. The expressions of love to him ought to be as public and as unmistakable as the expressions of disapproval and condemnation. **Confirm** here signifies public ratification. The same word is used in Gal. 3:15 of a covenant.

9. **For to this end also did I write.** Verse 9 is a parenthetical explanation. The *for*, as often with Paul, gives an explanation of something implied but not expressed. In urging that the offender from now on should be loved, not punished, Paul implies that the object of his severe letter has been accomplished, *for* one of the objects of that letter was to test their

10. things. But to whom ye forgive anything, I *forgive* also: for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes *have I forgiven it* in the
11. ¹ person of Christ; that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices.
12. Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the

¹ Or, *presence*.

loyalty to himself and their willingness to follow his advice (*to obey*) in everything. They have proved their loyalty and obedience. **Whether** is to be preferred to the suggestion of the margin, *whereby*.

10. **I forgive also.** This is the third effect or result of the change from a visit to a letter. All three justify the change. The church has been made sorry; the offender has been adequately punished; Paul freely forgives him for their sakes. The offense was in part at least personal. If the church will forgive the offender, Paul will cherish no grievance. He makes light of it (*if I have forgiven anything*) but the evidence all points to the fact that it was a most grievous insult. It took a christian spirit to forgive it, and so he adds **in the presence of Christ** (using the rendering of the margin). Paul lived in the presence of Christ; he practiced the presence of Christ. He felt Christ's face turned toward him, His eye upon him. Remembering Christ's forgiving spirit the christian of course forgives.

11. **Satan—his devices.** Paul seems to see Satan still skulking around this church trouble. He has been defeated in his main purpose by the summary action of the church against the offender. He is nevertheless plotting to get some advantage out of it yet. An unforgiving spirit in Paul or in the church would be greatly to Satan's advantage. With something of a playful touch Paul serves notice on Satan that his devices are known; he is watched. Full and frank forgiveness now thwarts Satan once more.

12. **When I came to Troas.** Briefly Paul tells the effect that this change from a visit to a letter had upon himself, owing to the delay which was necessary in getting a reply to his letter. He was so nervous and anxious that he could not enter an open door of service when it swung wide to him in Troas.

For the gospel of Christ. After writing the letter Paul left

13. Lord, I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.
14. But thanks be unto God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through

Ephesus and went north to Troas. It was primarily the business of the **gospel of Christ** which took him there. During the three years spent by Paul at Ephesus "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10). Many calls to other cities must have come to him in such an extensive campaign. This was one of them. He answered this the more readily, however, because it led him toward Titus, who was returning from Corinth by way of Macedonia and Troas. **A door was opened.** A door of opportunity for gospel ministry *in the Lord*. The figure of the opened door is found in 1 Cor. 16:9 and Col. 4:3. It was not Paul's habit to turn from an open door. That he did decline to enter this door is proof of the intensity of his restlessness.

13. I had no relief for my spirit. He had hoped that Titus might have speeded his return so that he should arrive in Troas when Paul did. Because Titus did not come Paul had no heart for his work. He turned away from the open door and crossed to Macedonia, the sooner to meet Titus and get his message. Somewhere in Macedonia, probably at Philippi, Paul and Titus met. It is not till the seventh chapter (7:6) that the statement of their meeting is made. An exclamation of thanksgiving, most characteristic of Paul, interrupts his narrative and argument in chapter 2 at this point, implying that in Macedonia his anxiety was relieved by Titus' arrival, but in reality furnishing a picturesque metaphor which is a digression, a conclusion, and a transition to his next subject.

Conclusion: God's Triumphant Procession (a burst of thanksgiving); 2:14-17.

a. Length: Continuous (*always*); vs. 14.

b. Captive: Paul.

c. Significance: Making known everywhere the knowledge of Christ.

d. Incense: Offered by Christ to God; vs. 15.

e. Spectators: Those being saved; those perishing.

f. Effect: (on the spectators of the odor of the incense); vs. 16.

15. us the savour of his knowledge in every place. For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them

(1) On those being saved, an odor of life.

(2) On those perishing, an odor of death.

g. Meaning—(of metaphor); vs. 17.

(1) The honor of the captive—no one is equal to it.

(2) A testimony to his sincerity:

(a) No adulterator of God's Word;

(b) But one who speaks sincerely as in God's sight.

14. **But thanks be unto God.** This burst of thanksgiving is very characteristic of Paul. He does not finish his story, telling where and when he found Titus, but lets this ebullition of gratitude imply the meeting and its glad result.

It is a significant fact that in Paul's language the same word is used for *grace* and for *thanks*. In English we speak of God's *grace*, and of *grace* at table. Grace and gratitude are twin sisters. God's gracious giving is *grace*; Paul's gracious receiving is *thanks*. The words are identical.

God which (who) always leadeth us in triumph. A vivid metaphor of an imperial triumphal procession. The returning victorious general brought with him his captives to be led in triumph in the great procession through the streets of Rome. Incense was burned along the route and its fragrance filled the air. Paul had never seen such a triumphal parade in Rome. He may have seen similar processions elsewhere. But in the Roman empire everyone knew what the triumphal procession was. Paul does not carry out the figure with accuracy enough to make it an allegory, but there is no mistaking his picture. It is God's triumphal procession. Paul is his captive. Everywhere he is led and exhibited as God's captive *in Christ*. All along the way there rises a fragrance of incense. Christ is offering it to God. It is the knowledge of Christ and of God which because of Paul's captivity and through it is filling the world. Its odor reaches all the spectators, and it has for them differing effects. To those who are on the way of salvation it is a fragrance of life, whose source is life, whose end is life. But to those who are on the way to destruction it is a bad odor, an odor that seems to have its source in death and to prophesy the end of death. Paul glories in a captivity which brings such results. **In Christ.** Not only Paul's liberty, honor, activity are in *Christ*, but his captivity. All that he was or had or did he conceived of as in that sphere in which Christ was dominant and regnant. So this

16. that are being saved, and in them that are perishing; to the one a savour from death unto death; to the
 17. other a savour from life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as the many,
¹ corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity,

¹ Or, *making merchandise of the Word of God.*

triumphal procession is *in Christ*. His knowledge, *i.e.*, the knowledge of Christ. The his might refer to God. But Paul's thought is always that knowledge of God comes through knowledge of Christ (see 4:6).

15. **We are a sweet savor.** Here as elsewhere the plurals *we* and *us* must have their personal reference to Paul. Only in a vague way do they embrace other apostles or Christian evangelists. He is thinking of himself. Because he is the captive, the chief exhibit in the triumph, he can be said to be the cause of the incense of the knowledge of Christ filling the world; and Christ is offering that incense to God.

16. **To the one . . . to the other.** The spectators who witness the procession are all those to whom Paul goes. He divides them into two classes. See also 4:4. They are those who are being saved, and those who are perishing. They are on the way or at the entrance, facing the narrow gate or the wide gate (Matt. 7:13). The appeal to them of the gospel in the person of Paul confirms their direction and destination. The triumphal procession proves to be the crisis of their lives. This seems to be Paul's thought. And so, while rejoicing in his captivity, he magnifies the mission that it gives him. If his mission means so much to the world, then **who is sufficient for these things.** The expected answer is not *no one is sufficient*, but *we are sufficient*; no one is sufficient in himself, but we are sufficient *in Christ*.

17. For gives the explanation of the implied answer to his question; *we are sufficient, for we are not as the many.* *The many*, a reference to the troublesome propagandists at Corinth, were *peddlers, hucksters* of the Word of God, retailing it for pay. As such peddlers were apt to adulterate their wares the word is translated *corrupting*. The marginal reading is preferable. No *huckster* could be sufficient for such a mission as Paul's. **As of sincerity.** He closes, as he began, with *sincerity* (1:12). He multiplies descriptive words: We are sufficient for these things only because we speak out of absolute *sincerity*; we speak as those whose message has its source in God—*as of God*; we

but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.

speak as those who stand always in the sight of God; we speak as those who are in Christ.

In this way, with striking emphasis and vivid imagery, he closes his argument about his sincerity and leads to the larger subject of his ministry.

II. PAUL'S MINISTRY OF THE NEW COVENANT; 3:1—6:10

Introduction: His Letters of Introduction; 3:1-3

3. 1. Are we beginning again to commend ourselves?
or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to
-

PAUL'S MINISTRY OF THE NEW COVENANT

Introduction: Paul's Letters of Introduction; 3:1-3.

- a. Not ordinary credentials; vs. 1.
 - (1) Neither written by Paul himself.
 - (2) Nor by others, to or from Corinth.
- b. But those of heart and life; vs. 2.
 - (1) His letters *to* the Church at Corinth.
 - (a) Nature: written on Paul's heart.
 - (b) Legibility: known and read by all men.
 - (2) His letters *from* the Church at Corinth; vs. 3.
 - (a) Author: Christ.
 - (b) Amanuensis: Paul.
 - (c) Instrument of writing:
 - (1) Neg. Not pen and ink.
 - (2) Pos. The spirit of the living God.
 - (d) Tablets:
 - (1) Neg. Not stone.
 - (2) Pos. Human hearts.

It is impossible for Paul, when he stops to think of the magnitude and importance of the mission that God has entrusted to him, to refrain from expressions of wonder and praise and thanksgiving. These give an opening to those not in sympathy with him for accusations of boastfulness. They say he writes his own credentials. He is very sensitive to the charge and parries their thrust whenever he feels that he may seem to have given occasion for it. Even to imply that he is sufficient for these things gives another occasion, and besides that he is going on to talk about himself and his ministry, and so he prefaces his next subject with these very tactful words about letters of introduction.

Peddlers, who make merchandise of the Word of God, may

-
2. you or from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our
 3. hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables *that are hearts of flesh.*
-

need letters to the Church at Corinth or, when they leave, letters from them. Paul has such letters, he says, and they are always in evidence. His letters *to* them are written on his heart. Anyone can see that Corinth is written there. He comes to them with his heart open to them to read his love for them. He has also letters *from* them. Christ wrote the letters, using Paul as his amanuensis. They are the hearts, the spirit-touched lives of the members of the church. Away from Corinth, if any one asks him for his credentials he refers him to the affectionate hearts and devoted lives of the Corinthians, saying, these are my letters of introduction.

3:1 **Are we beginning again.** Paul has suffered under the taunt that he wrote his own letters of commendation. He forestalls another such insult by the graceful metaphor that follows.

As do some. It is not necessary to find in the *some* the *many* of 2:17, or the false teachers or Judaizers who are the chief opponents of Paul at Corinth. It may be that he has in mind a special group who came to Corinth with letters and who, when they left, asked for letters. It was a usual custom then as now to carry letters of introduction, and this may be merely a statement of a general fact. **To you or from you.** Two kinds of letters are mentioned here, and it is much simpler in the figure which follows to think that Paul still has the two kinds of letters in mind, than to think that he mixes his metaphor or bungles his figure. He too has letters *to* them and *from* them.

2. **Ye are our epistle.** This is his letter *to* them. It is perfectly legible. Any one can read that *Corinth* is written on his heart. With this letter he comes to them.

3. **Ye are an epistle of Christ.** This is his letter *from* them. If any one asks him for his letter from Corinth he points to the church and its devoted members, their hearts written upon by the Spirit of Christ under Paul as amanuensis. He needs no other letter of commendation than that. Here, as often in this letter, Paul parries a thrust or answers an insult with a most gracious, delicate and tactful compliment.

1. *The Character of the Ministry; 3:4-18*

4. And such confidence have we through Christ to
 5. Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to

1. *The Character of Paul's Ministry of the New Covenant; 3:4-18.*

- a. Its sufficiency has its source; vs. 4.
 (1) Neg. Not in himself; vs. 5.
 (2) Pos. But in God, who (vs. 6):
 (a) Is the author of all his sufficiency;
 (b) Has made him sufficient as minister of a new covenant.
 (1) Neg. Not of the letter (law, death).
 (2) Pos. But of the spirit (promise, life).
- b. Its glory far surpasses that of the old; vs. 7.
 Proof: The comparative glory of each.
 (1) The glory of the old ministry is:
 (a) Characterized by death, letter, stones, condemnation.
 (b) Dazzling; children of Israel could not look at Moses' face.
 (c) But fading, transient; vs. 11.
 (d) Not glorious at all by comparison; vs. 10.
 (e) A means.
 (2) The glory of the new ministry is (vs. 8):
 (a) Characterized by life, spirit, righteousness; vs. 9.
 (b) Much more brilliant.
 (c) Abiding; vs. 11.
 (d) Excelling in glory; vs. 9.
 (e) An end, a sphere; vs. 11.
- c. Its freedom and confidence surpass the old; vs. 12.
 Proof: The comparative freedom of each.
 (1) The old, lacking in confidence (vs. 13):
 (a) Illustrated by Moses veiling his face.
 (b) Illustrated by the Synagogue reading; vs. 14.
 (2) The new, a spirit of *great boldness*, liberty; vs. 12, 17.
 (a) Ground, the veil is taken away; vs. 16.
 (b) Illustrated, an unveiled look at the glory of God; vs. 18.

account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as

- (1) Manner, looking at the Lord, who mirrors God's glory.
- (2) Results, gradual transformation into the same image.

Paul has much to say to the church at Corinth about his ministry. The subject, begun with this chapter, continues, including some natural digressions, to 6:10. What he says first about his ministry has to do with its character; with the source from which it derives its power, and with the splendor which marks it as a ministry of the new dispensation in contrast with the old. The emphasis on this contrast between the new and the old is doubtless due to the fact that Judaizers, who magnified the old covenant and sought to minimize Paul and his ministry of the new, had done much effective proselytizing in Corinth.

Ministry is suggested in verse 3. The letter written by Christ on the hearts of the Corinthians was *ministered by us*. Christ had used Paul's *ministry* to write it. Thus he introduces the subject on which he has so much to say.

4. **Such confidence**—confidence that he needs no letters because his work speaks for itself. But it is a confidence that is not grounded in his own ability, but in his use by Christ as an amanuensis. So his confidence is not *through* self-appreciation but *through Christ*. It is also **God-ward**. The idea is not that his confidence is *in God*, but that it is in himself and his ministry because he is always looking toward God, is always face to face with God, and feels sure of God's direction and approval.

5. **Not that we are sufficient of ourselves**. This is the *sufficient* of 2:16, taken up again. It shows that the answer to his question there was, *We are sufficient*. Here he explains his sufficiency as God's captive making Christ known to the world. It is grounded in no sense in himself, but only in God who uses him.

6. **Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant**. The *also* turns from the *these things* of the triumphal procession to the notable and unique mission of Paul, **minister of a new covenant**. For this great and responsible calling *also* God makes him sufficient. **New covenant** introduces the contrast with the *old covenant*. The emphasis is on new. It is new not merely in the sense of more recent, but in the

sense of fresher and better than an outworn old. For the word *covenant* the margin suggests the alternative *testament*. *Covenant* is the better word, but neither is adequate to the meaning. *Covenant* is an Old Testament word used repeatedly for that close relationship which God entered into with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, but especially with Abraham (Gen. 6:18; 15:18; 17:2; 17:21; Lev. 26:42; Deut. 5:2). It was an arrangement by which God promised great blessings conditioned only on obedience. In the literal sense it was not a covenant form of agreement between equals. It was a conditional promise. It was a divine arrangement.

The word rendered in the Old Testament *covenant* came between the Old Testament and New Testament periods to have enlarged meanings of special application. One of them, in the Greek world, was will or testament, where it defined that arrangement or provision which a man made for his children and for the honor and continuity of his family. It differed in many ways from a modern will. In this sense it was in common use when Paul wrote. Something of this later meaning is in Paul's mind when he uses *covenant* (Gal. 3:15, 17), but its Old Testament significance predominates.

The covenant with Abraham was God's arrangement by which Abraham and his descendants were to receive promised blessings conditioned on their obedience. It was confirmed to Moses and the children of Israel. The tables of stone contained the law of the covenant (Ex. 34:28). The ark of the covenant held the tables of stone (Ex. 40:20; Deut. 31:25-26). That was the old arrangement or dispensation. With this Paul contrasts what he calls the new covenant of which he was a minister. God's gracious promises are still the covenant. But in the *new covenant* Gentiles as well as Jews are included, and Christ takes the place of the old Law.

It is often helpful to try substituting for *covenant* one of the other words, *arrangement*, *dispensation*, *disposition*, or even *promise*. But no word is quite adequate to the concept.

Paul's contrast is not between the two covenants or dispensations, but between the ministry of the two covenants. Moses is the representative minister of the old, Paul of the new. He does not contrast himself with Moses to the disparagement of the latter as a person, but only in their representative capacities as ministers.

Not of the letter but of the spirit. In the epistle to the Romans (2:29; 7:6) Paul later amplifies this contrast. **Letter** is the written Law of Moses with all its old authority. Paul knew from experience how it killed hope and faith and love

ministers of a new ¹ covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, ² written, *and* engraven on stones, came ³ with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which *glory* ⁴ was

¹ Or, *testament*.

² Gr., *in letters*.

³ Gr., *in*.

⁴ Or, *was being done away*.

(Rom., ch. 7). **Spirit** is the authority and power of Christ in the new covenant, which inspires and makes alive.

7. **The ministration of death.** That is the ministry of the old covenant—Moses' ministry. If it kills, it is not too strong language to call it the *ministration of death*. It is better to read *ministry* for ministration, as in 4:1. **With glory.** Here begins the comparison of glories, the glory of the ministry of the old covenant with that of the new. *Glory* is one of Paul's most characteristic words. It is found everywhere in his writings. Reading Paul's epistles one is fairly sailing on a sea of *glory*. The word is found eighteen times in the first eight chapters of this letter. It is the best field of all Paul's letters for a study of the word.

(*Glory* is of course entirely unconnected in origin or meaning with the glorying of 1:12, 14; or the verb *glory* found fourteen times in chapters 10-12. It is a pity that our translators could not have found unrelated English equivalents for these two outstanding words in the two sections of the letter.)

As in English, so with Paul, *glory* has two meanings. The one is praise, honor, fame; the other is splendor. In 1:20, *unto the glory of God*, it is the former—God's honor. Here in verse 7 it is the latter. It is a splendor like that of a sunset or a sunrise, only it is figurative and Paul applies it to a ministry, to a man, to Christ, to God. The splendor of God is all the goodness and greatness which Paul knows as God's attributes. It is therefore God's character, and often character, or splendid character would be a satisfactory substitute for *glory* when applied to God or Christ or a man or a ministry. **The glory of his face.** In the case of Moses the glory of God was reflected in his face when he descended from the mount (Ex. 34:29-35). Paul uses this as a figurative description of the glory of Moses' ministry. So dazzling was the glory in Moses' face when he came from God's presence that Aaron and the people were afraid to come near him (Ex. 34:30). Paul says they *could not look stedfastly upon*

8. passing away: how shall not rather the ministration
 9. of the spirit be with glory? ¹ For if the ministration
 of condemnation is glory, much rather doth the min-
 10. istration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily
 that which hath been made glorious hath not been
 made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory
 11. that surpasseth. For if that which ² passeth away
was ³ with glory, much more that which remaineth
is in glory.

¹ Many ancient authorities read, *For if to the ministration of condemnation there is glory.* ² Or, *is being done away.* ³ Gr., *through.*

the face of Moses. But that glory faded. Moses veiled his face after speaking with the people until he again entered the presence of God (Ex. 34:33-35). Paul says the veil was to hide the fact that the glory faded, or to prevent the fading from being seen (13). It was, nevertheless, while it lasted, a dazzling splendor, but it was transient. So it symbolized the splendor of Moses' ministration.

8. The outline seeks to bring out the comparisons in these verses. Splendid as was the ministration of death, that of the spirit must of necessity be more splendid.

9. **Ministration of condemnation**—another characterization of the old covenant. Its law of condemnation led to death. But the righteousness through Christ led to life. So the new is called **the ministration of righteousness.**

10. **By reason of the glory that surpasseth.** When the sun rises the candle light that served to pierce the darkness and seemed bright then, now casts a shadow in the sunshine. So much more glorious is the ministration of the new that the old seems to have had no glory at all. It casts a shadow in the light of the new.

11. **Much more that which remaineth.** The ministry of Moses and the law was temporary, like the reflected glory in Moses' face. But the new covenant and its ministry is forever. A continuing glory outshines a passing glory.

12. Here begins the third feature of Paul's ministry: its freedom and confidence surpass those of the old. This too, is a comparison and a contrast. **Having therefore such a hope.** Paul has not previously spoken of any *hope*. It has been absolute assurance. His *hope* is nothing uncertain, but a confident expectation that the splendor of the ministry of the new covenant is

12. Having therefore such a hope, we use great bold-
 13. ness of speech, and *are* not as Moses, *who* put a
 veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should
 not look stedfastly ¹ on the end of that which ² was
 14. passing away: but their ³ minds were hardened: for
 until this very day at the reading of the old ⁴ cove-
 nant the same veil ⁵ remaineth unlifted; which *veil*

¹ Or, *unto*. ² Or, *was being done away*. ³ Gr., *thoughts*. ⁴ Or, *testament*.
⁵ Or, *remaineth, it not being revealed that it is done away*.

an abiding glory. **We use great boldness of speech.** Paul confesses to his boldness. He is unafraid and unashamed. It is his certainty about his ministry and its surpassing splendor which makes him so. It is an evident defense of his outspoken message and his assumption of authority against his opponents, the Judaizers, in Corinth.

13. **Not as Moses.** He takes up again the figure. It is not that Moses was meek, lacking in boldness, but that it was necessary for him to place a veil between himself and his people. He reflected God's glory in his face, but he could not come with that glory directly to the children of Israel. They could not endure it. **On the end of that which was passing away.** That is, should not watch the fading glory fade, till it vanished and the end of the glory came. It is figurative of course. How could Moses be bold if he knew that the people were watching the gradual disappearance of the evidence that he had been face to face with God.

14. **But their minds were hardened.** *Dulled, or blunted* is better than hardened. Paul carries the figure from Moses and the children of Israel over into the present, including all the past history, and says that this veil between the glory of God in Moses' face and the Jews has always remained. When Moses, *i.e.*, the Law, is read, even to-day, the veil is still there. Now it is on the readers' hearts. But it is still there. **At the reading of the old covenant.** Only here in the New Testament is *old covenant* found. The marginal reading makes it *Old Testament*, which phrase has come down through the ages for our use as the title of the Jewish Scriptures. Paul may have originated it. **Which veil is done away in Christ.** There is no veil on Christ's face, and nothing between him and his people, and he, too, reflects the glory of God. Therefore all who are *in Christ*, in the realm in which Christ is supreme, see with unveiled faces.

15. is done away in Christ. But unto this day, whenso-
 16. ever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. But
 whensoever ¹ it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is
 17. taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where
 18. the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. But we all,

¹ Or, *a man shall turn.*

Paul changes the figure insofar as to put Christ, from this point on, in Moses' place.

15, 16. The thought is repeated in slightly different form. **Whensoever it shall turn to the Lord.** The *it* of course refers to *their heart*. The marginal reading, *whensoever a man shall turn to the Lord*, is simpler. In Ex. 34:34 the story of Moses and the veil closes with the words: "But when Moses went in before the Lord . . . he took the veil off. . . ." The phrase is so similar to this that it is probable Paul is quoting loosely from the story. If so, it is possible that the passage should read, as a quotation, *whensoever he (Moses) shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away*. **The Lord** is here, however, Christ. Paul remembers his own experience at Damascus (Acts 22:13). When a man turns to Christ the veil that kept him from seeing God's glory in the face of Moses is taken away. In 4:6 he speaks of *the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. There is no veil there.

17. This verse is parenthetical but important. It has been interpreted in various ways. Probably there is no specific reference to the Holy Spirit. It would be better not to print *spirit* with a capital. Where spirit is last mentioned (vss. 6, 8) it is in contrast with letter. So here: a man turns from *Moses* to the *Lord*; he turns from the *letter* to the *spirit*. And so Paul adds: *Now the Lord* (Christ, to whom he turns) *is the spirit* (of which I spoke above): *and where the spirit of the Lord* (the *Christ spirit*, as opposed to the *Moses letter*) *is, there is liberty*. It is one of Paul's favorite figures of speech that the bondage of the law is exchanged for the freedom of Christ (Gal. 5:1; Rom. 8:2 and often). This is the ground of the liberty or boldness of which he spoke in verse 12. A ministry of the spirit is of course a ministry of liberty and confidence.

18. **We all with unveiled face.** Often Paul's most transcendent thoughts are found in a place very subordinate in the outline of his subject. This is one of his master thoughts. The *all* shows that he is now speaking not only of himself. He is putting himself with all Christians in contrast to the children of

with unveiled face ¹ reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from ² the Lord the Spirit.

2. *The Conduct of the Ministry*; 4:1-6

4. 1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as
2. we obtained mercy, we faint not: but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceit-

¹ Or, *beholding as in a mirror.*

² Or, *the Spirit which is the Lord.*

Israel—or the Jews. For us there is no veil. It is taken away in Christ.

Reflecting as a mirror. The marginal reading is more accurate and better. It carries out the changed figure. If the figure had been consistent from the beginning the text-reading would be preferable. The contrast is now not between Paul and Moses as ministers of two covenants, but between Christ and Moses as reflecting the glory of God. So Paul says, The splendor of the character of God is reflected in Christ as in a mirror. When we look at Christ there is no veil; we are looking at the mirrored glory of God. Living in that glory we are gradually transformed into the same image, Godlikeness, Christlikeness. Christ is a mirror. In Him we see the splendor of God's character. Our gradual transformation follows. **The glory of the Lord, i.e.,** the glory of Christ; but because he is a mirror it is the reflected glory of God. This is one of Paul's *glory* passages in which to substitute for *glory, splendor of character*, helps the interpretation. **From glory to glory.** There is no *fading glory* here. It is a *process* of transformation. There are always heights of character still to be gained. There is never a time when *we all* have not come short of the glory of God.

Even as from the Lord the spirit; i.e., as is inevitable when the glory comes from the *Lord the spirit*. The text-reading is to be preferred to the marginal suggestion. Paul is simply laying the emphasis again on *the Lord* (Christ) *the spirit* as contrasted with *Moses the letter*. From *Moses the letter* it was a decreasing not an increasing glory.

2. *The Conduct of Paul's Ministry of the New Covenant;*
4:1-6.

- a. Its persistence—he faints not; vs. 1.
 (1) Incentive: his freedom and confidence (therefore).
 (2) Incentive: the mercy involved in God's choice of him.
- b. Its frankness,—repudiation of all secret methods of which one ought to be ashamed; vs. 2.
 (1) Manner, *Neg.*
 (a) No practice of cunning.
 (b) No tricks (corruption) of God's Word.
 (2) Manner, *Pos.* commending himself to every man's conscience.
 (a) *Means*: throwing light on the truth.
 (b) Check: in the sight of God.
- c. Its apparent failure (*i.e.*, obscurity, veiling); vs. 3.
 (1) Condition: Provided it has failed of illumination.
 (2) Explanation: Its failure is in his hearers who are being lost; vs. 4.
 (a) Their unfortunate state—blind men.
 (1) Figure: Blind in their minds.
 (2) Agent: The God of this age.
 (3) Effect: Unbelief.
 (4) Result: The "illumination" does not light up.
 (b) Proof: (that they must be mentally blind).
 (1) Paul has preached not self but **Christ**; vs. 5.
 (2) Christ became Paul's illumination, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; vs. 6.
 (3) Therefore: if the illumination does not light up it must be the fault of blinded minds, not of the illumination.

4:1. **Therefore.** Because of the liberty and confidence he has as a minister of the new covenant.

This next short paragraph of the letter tells of the conduct of Paul's ministry. It says three things about it: It is persistent; it is open and frank; its apparent failure is a failure only with blinded minds.

This ministry. Paul uses the same word here that he uses in 3:7, 8, 9. It is rendered in those verses *ministration*. Uniformity would render them all by the word *ministry*, as here. He is on the same subject as in the preceding chapter; it is his *ministry of the new covenant*.

fully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the
 3. sight of God. But and if our gospel is veiled, it is

Even as we obtained mercy. Paul thought of his own conversion and of his choice for special ministry as being specific acts of God's *mercy* (1 Cor. 7:25; see also, 1 Tim. 1:13, 16). With Paul *mercy* is the outreaching of God's heart to help in the presence of the sin or the misery or the need of His children. It is *compassion*. In God's *mercy* to him Paul sees both a reason for great humility and an incentive to courage and persistence. In view of it he faints not; does not lose courage; does not flag in his zeal.

2. In the background of Paul's thought are two things: the accusations of fickleness or untrustworthiness made against himself; and the false methods and untruthfulness of the Judaizers. Both are responsible for this verse, but it is difficult to separate the two influences.

He makes a negative and a positive statement of the openness and frankness of the conduct of his ministry.

Renounced the hidden things of shame. He has repudiated all secret or tricky methods of which a man ought to be ashamed. He specifies two ways in which such methods find expression: **not walking in craftiness.** *Craftiness* is the word used of those who attempted to catch Jesus in His words (Lk. 20:23). Jesus *perceived their craftiness*. It is the opposite of straightforwardness. *Walking* is applied to his whole life, including his speech. That is the first way. The second has to do with his interpretation of God's Word: **Nor handling the Word of God deceitfully.** One of the remarkable things about Paul's use of Scripture is that he is so free from the methods of the scribes in whose school he was trained. Only here and there do we find any evidence of that training. There is no juggling with words and meanings. Here he says that it is one of his principles of ministry to be fair in his methods of interpretation of Scripture. (This is a specially appropriate verse for Bible teachers.) Having put his principles twice in the negative form, he puts them third in the positive, and says that he tries to commend his interpretation of the truth to every kind of conscience, as if always in the presence of God. **Every man's conscience is literally every conscience of mankind.**

3. Verses 3 to 6 speak of the apparent failure, at times, of his ministry. If it ever is veiled, like Moses' ministry, it is the fault not of the ministry nor of the gospel. There is no veil over

4. veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the god of this ¹ world hath blinded the ² minds of the unbelieving, ³ that the ⁴ light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn
5. *upon them.* For we preach not ourselves, but

¹ Or, *age.*² Gr., *thoughts.*³ Or, *that they should not see the light . . . image of God.*⁴ Gr., *illumination.*

that. Its glory is undimmed. The fault lies in the blindness of those on whom the glory shines.

If our gospel is veiled. Paul's ministry did have its failures. The light was so brilliant and beautiful to him that he found it difficult to understand why it was not the same to every one. But there were some who did not see.

In them that are perishing. It is the same phrase that was used in 2:15 of the spectators of the triumphal procession. They are *the unbelieving.*

4. The God of this age. *Age* is better than *world*, though the meaning is not different. Only here in the New Testament is this phrase found—*the God of this age.* But *the prince of this world* is found in Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. The reference is to Satan. Paul uses *age* more frequently than *world* in referring to the realm of evil over which Satan has authority. Once (Eph. 2:2) he uses the two words together. *Age* has in it the time element, which is not so prominent in *world.* Satan has made the minds of the unbelieving *blind*, and they cannot see. **That the light of the gospel . . . should not dawn.** The alternative reading is better: *that they should not see the illumination.* Upon Paul on the road to Damascus God "turned on the light." Paul thought of it as a brilliant illumination. It was like turning on the electric illumination at a great exposition. Paul's ministry consisted after that in turning on the illumination for others. He calls it *the illumination of the good news (gospel) of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.* It is very much the same thought as in 3:18. The splendor of the character of Christ, which is the reflected splendor of God, is the illumination. In his gospel ministry Paul simply tries to turn on that light. If there are any who cannot see it, it is because they are blind.

5. For we preach not ourselves. The *for* gives the proof that they must be blind. If he had preached himself there would have been no illumination. But his whole message had been and is Christ Jesus as Lord. He has been accused of *preaching*

Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your ¹ servants
 6. ² for Jesus' sake. Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the ³ light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

3. *The Limitations of the Ministry; 4:7—5:12*

7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God,

¹ Gr., *bondservants*.

² Some ancient authorities read *through Jesus*. ³ Gr., *illumination*.

himself, because he claimed so much for his ministry. He does *preach himself* to this extent, he is their **slave for Jesus' sake**. *Servant* and *bondservant* are euphemisms of translation. *Slave* is the word Paul uses.

6. **Seeing it is God.** A further explanation or proof that only blindness can fail to see the illumination. It is a further and more specific reference to his personal experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13). Till that time he had not seen the light. But the same God who, at the creation, said, *Let there be light*, lighted up Paul's life; and in the face of Jesus Christ (as in a mirror, 3:18) he saw the illumination of the splendor of the character of God. It is always God who says, *let there be light*. It is God, through Paul, who, when Christ is preached, turns on the illumination of his own glory.

Light shall shine out of darkness—a paraphrase of Genesis 1:3, *Let there be light*.

Who shined in our hearts. Paul's continual use of the plural must not obscure his very personal references. First his own heart received the illumination, and now it is his ministry to be God's agent in bringing the illumination to other hearts.

In the face of Jesus Christ. The contrast between the veiled face of Moses and the unveiled face of Christ is still in Paul's mind. In Christ's face he sees the splendor of God's character.

3. *The Limitations of Paul's Ministry of the New Covenant because of his Body; 4:7—5:12.*

a. **The Nature:** A cheap and fragile jar; vs. 7.

Reason: That there may be no mistake about the source of power.

- b. The all but unbearable trouble it brings; vs. 8.
- (1) Frequency: Continual.
 - (2) Characteristics: (Figure changes to contest; war or games.)
 - (a) Hard pressed—but not crushed.
 - (b) At a loss—but not utterly at a loss.
 - (c) Pursued—but not abandoned in the flight; vs. 9.
 - (d) Struck down—but not killed.
- c. The continuous burden it imposes; vs. 10.
- (1) Nature: Like carrying about the daily killing of Jesus.
 - (2) Explanation: Always handed over to death for Jesus' sake; vs. 11.
 - (3) Purpose: To make known Jesus' life.
 - (4) Motive for enduring: Jesus' sake.
 - (5) Result (immediate) life in them; death in himself; vs. 12.
 - (6) Inspiration: Hope of a resurrection.
 - (a) Ground: The Psalmist's spirit of faith; vs. 13.
 - (b) Assurance: Jesus' resurrection; vs. 14.
 - (c) Satisfaction: Presentation with you.
 - (7) Motive (a second) for enduring: The good of the Corinthians.
 - (a) End: Thanksgiving abounding; vs. 15.
 - (b) Effect: Encouragement of Paul; vs. 16.
 - (8) Result (progressive and final): An eternal weight of glory; vs. 17.
 - (a) Process: Renewal of inner man through decay of outer.
 - (b) Condition: Fixed attention; vs. 18.
 - (1) Neg. Not on the things that are seen.
 - (2) Pos. But on the unseen.
Reason: One is temporal, the other eternal.
- d. The change of bodies which it necessitates; vs. 1.
- (1) The character of the change.
 - (a) From a tent on earth to an edifice in heaven.
 - (b) From temporal to eternal.
 - (2) The natural attitude toward the change: frequent sighing; vs. 2.
 - (a) Reason: The desire to put the heavenly on over (*i.e.*, to be changed at Christ's coming).
Condition: Provided that we are to be found clothed, not naked; vs. 3.

8. and not from ourselves; *we are* pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair;

- (b) Reason: The depression that the dread of dying brings; vs. 4.
- (3) God's attitude toward the change: It is best; vs. 5.
 (a) Reason: He fashioned us with this in view.
 (b) Guarantee: He gave the Spirit as earnest.
- (4) The consequent attitude of Paul toward the change and toward life in view of it; vs. 6.
 (a) He tries to keep up courage always; vss. 7, 8.
 Ground: Knowing that:
 (1) At home in the body is absence from the Lord.
 (2) To be with the Lord is preferable.
 (b) He tries to be ambitious to do what is pleasing to Christ; vs. 9.
 (1) Incentive: The judgment seat of Christ; vs. 10.
 (2) Result in Paul's ministry:
 (a) Continued attempt to persuade men; vs. 11.
 (1) Encouragement: God sees clearly.
 (2) Confidence: Others see clearly too.
 (b) Continued offer to them (vs. 12):
 (1) Neg. Not self-written credentials.
 (2) Pos. But resources for glorying.

7. Beginning with verse 7 Paul speaks of the limitations laid upon his ministry because of his physical body, which he calls an earthen vessel. After speaking of the nature of the body, and the troubles which it undergoes, and the continuous burden which it imposes upon himself and his ministry, he indulges in a natural and ingenuous digression. The thought of his physical body and the rough use it has had and the disabilities it suffers leads to the thought of the expected loss of that body and of the new body for which it will be exchanged. With the use of very striking figures (5:1-12) Paul expresses his hope that he may not need to die, but that the coming of Christ will bring to him his new heavenly body which can be put on over the outworn physical body. Nevertheless he is ready to accept whatever the Lord has in store for him, whether death or translation.

Just where the digression ends it is difficult to say, for it moves smoothly into his next thought. In 5:18 and 6:3-4 he is again

9. pursued, yet not ¹ forsaken; smitten down, yet not
 10. destroyed; always bearing about in the body the
² dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be

¹ Or, *left behind.*

² Gr., *putting to death.*

writing of his *ministry*, and it is perhaps best to place the paragraph division between verses 12 and 13.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels. Again the plural for the singular. Paul is thinking of his own body and his personal sufferings. By *this treasure* is meant his *ministry*, but it is his *ministry* as pictured in the preceding paragraph, a *ministry* of illumination—of turning on *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. Treasures of money or jewels were often kept in earthenware jars, and the use of the word *treasure* for his glorious ministry leads to the use of *earthen vessel* for himself. The jar made of clay was both cheap and fragile, rather a poor receptacle for treasure. Any human body is an unworthy receptacle for so glorious a ministry. And Paul's body, racked and wrecked by all it had suffered (11:23-27), seemed to him especially unworthy. That he has chiefly his own body and its limitations in mind is shown by his reference to his physical body in 5:1-10; but it is his whole personal presence of which he uses the figure *earthen vessel*. His outward appearance seems physically not to have been very prepossessing (10:1, 10), and his *thorn in the flesh* (12:7) and his many hardships and sufferings had not made it more so.

The power. There was no doubt about the results of Paul's ministry. They had been evidences of *power*. The frailty of his body made it all the more evident that the source of the power was not in himself but in God.

8-10. With four antitheses, vigorous and in poetic form, Paul characterizes the all but unendurable trouble which the limitations of his frail body bring to him. But he changes completely his figure. He is a master of the mixed, or changed metaphor. No longer is he an earthen vessel but a hard pressed soldier. The figures are partly applicable to an athlete in the games, and Paul may have both athlete and soldier in mind.

In everything,—

Pressed hard—but not in hopeless straits.

At a loss—but not utterly at a loss.

Pursued—but not left to the mercy of pursuer.

Struck down—but not put out.

11. manifested in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for 'Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal
 12. flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.
 13. But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I

10-11. Verse 11 repeats the thought of 10 and explains it.

The dying of Jesus, *i.e.*, the killing of Jesus. The marginal *putting to death* is better. Very seldom, perhaps only six or eight times outside of these two verses, does Paul use the name Jesus without another title, *Christ* or *Lord*. It is the narrative use in the gospels; and it is quite possible that unconsciously Paul adopts the use of the narrative name, because he is referring to the story of Jesus' life as he had often told it. Paul's life was one long series of deaths. This is hyperbole, but 11:23-27 shows how much truth there was in the figure. As his sufferings and deaths are all in Jesus' service and for Jesus' sake, he has no hesitancy in saying that it is the *putting to death of Jesus* which is the burden his body always imposes upon him. He identifies himself with Jesus and his sufferings, here and elsewhere (1 Cor. 15:31; Rom. 8:36; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24). And just as Jesus' sufferings and death had as their purpose *life*, so Paul thinks of his suffering as serving the purpose of making known, *manifesting*, the life which Jesus lived and which He gave. And that of course was Paul's ministry.

12. **Death worketh in us but life in you.** Eventually this always *being put to death* would result to Paul in the actual death of his body. He knew the progress of its working. But as long as spiritual *life* was working correspondingly in the Corinthians he was content. Of course the same kind of life was *working* in Paul too—spiritual life. But he uses the paradox to show their *life* is dependent on his *death*.

13. **Spirit of faith.** This introduces his hope of resurrection. In his life of dying he finds inspiration from his faith in God's power to raise him up.

That which is written. The quotation is from Psalm 116:10. Paul quotes accurately from the Greek version of the Psalm. Our English version of Psalm 116 is from the Hebrew and varies from this. The emphasis is on *believing*. Like the Psalmist who spoke because he believed, Paul is encouraged to continue his ministry because of his faith that resurrection is stronger than death. He quotes, and then applies the quotation to himself.

14. speak; we also believe, and therefore also we speak; knowing that he which raised up ¹ the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present
15. us with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through ² the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *the Lord*.

² Gr., *the more*.

14. **Knowing.** This explains his *believing*, or gives the ground for it. The *believing* and the *knowing* are practically the same. Christ Jesus had abolished death (2 Tim. 1:10), and so, forgetting death, Paul derives his encouragement from the knowledge that the God who raised Jesus will not leave the followers of Jesus dead.

With Jesus. That is, with the same power that raised Jesus, and so associated in Jesus' resurrection. Paul seems to be uncertain as to his future. Once (1 Thess. 4:17) he did not expect to die. He expected the coming of the Lord before the coming of death. But here, and below (5:1-10), he shows his expectation of death. His near approach to death (1:8) was not easy to forget.

Shall present us with you. His readers, in whom *life is working*, and he himself, in whom *death is working*, are to be all together at the *presentation*. He does not say at what or to what they shall be presented. In Rom. 14:10 Paul uses the same word in its reflexive sense: *we shall all stand (present ourselves) before the judgment seat of God*. In 2 Cor. 11:2 and in Eph. 5:27 the presentation is of the church as a bride to Christ. In the former Paul would present the church to Christ; in the latter Christ presents it to Himself. This is the probable meaning here, only, it is God who is to present them all to Christ.

15. For introduces another motive for enduring his life of dying. Not only is it all for Jesus' sake (vs. 11), but for the Corinthians' sake also. And these motives in Paul's mind always include another. He mentioned it in 1:10-11. The more he suffers, the more God's grace is made known, and consequently the more thanksgivings will be offered to God. Anything that causes thanksgiving to God is to Paul worth all it costs.

In *grace* and *thanksgiving* there is a play on words. See note on 2:14.

16. Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day
 17. by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly
 18. an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the

16. **Wherefore.** Here is his conclusion. He ends as he began (4:1) *we faint not*. The *wherefore* covers in its reference all that he has said about his hope and inspiration (vs. 13-15) but it is particularly the thought of verse 15, that all his sufferings are for the sake of others, and multiply thanksgivings to God, that has its sequence in *wherefore* we never lose courage.

Then he adds what the real result is to himself. In verse 12 he told the immediate result of his continuous burden, *life working in them, death in him, i.e., in his body*. Here he gives the greater result to himself, *an eternal weight of glory*.

Outward man. A reference to his physical body, in contrast to the **inward man**, which is his real self, his spirit life. *Outward man* is found only here in the New Testament; but *inward man* is found in Rom. 7:22; Eph. 3:16. Though my physical self, the earthen vessel, is fast going to pieces, my real self makes new growth every day.

17. **For** gives another explanation of what he means. The contrasts are vivid and emphatic. *Affliction* works out *glory*. Heavy as his afflictions seem they are a very *light weight* when compared with the *heavy weight of glory*. Unending as the afflictions seem they are *momentary* as compared with the *eternity of glory*.

Weight of glory. Here again *glory* is best interpreted by splendor of character, Godlikeness or Christlikeness. Compare Heb. 2:10, where glory is the destination toward which God is bringing his sons. Undoubtedly Paul's eye is fixed on the future and the *things God hath prepared for them that love him, which eye saw not, and ear heard not* (1 Cor. 2:9). But this *weight of glory* is not all a distant future hope; it is a continuous present process of growth. *Day by day* it is going on. The end is not yet, but *more and more exceedingly the affliction worketh the glory*. See Phil. 3:12-14.

18. **While we look.** Just as in 3:18 the transformation comes by beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, so here the only condition laid upon Paul by himself is to keep his attention fixed on the things which are not physical, visible and temporary, but spiritual, unseen, eternal; not affliction and body, but glory

things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

5. 1. For we know that if the earthly house of our¹ tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from

¹ Or, *bodily frame*.

and spirit. The affliction will bring about the glory if he keeps his eyes in the right direction. It is Paul's philosophy of life and suffering so far as he himself is concerned. He says very little anywhere about his conception of the future life. It is found in such poetic references as 2 Cor. 5:6; 1 Cor. 13:12; Phil. 1:23. Evidently he hoped to keep on growing in *glory*.

5:1 For. The word *eternal* (4:17, 18) and its rather vague reference to the future life leads Paul off onto a short digression. It has nothing immediately to do with his ministry, but it lets us into his heart. No matter how much limitation his body caused his ministry he did not want to lose it by death; he did not want to die. The greatness of Paul's character is enhanced by this ingenuous expression of his fear and hope. Although he knew that his light affliction was but for a moment, he did not look forward with the greatest satisfaction to its end, if the end meant death. The *for* adds an explanation to what is implied in *for the moment* (4:17).

The earthly house of our tabernacle. *Our house on earth which is a tent* is a better rendering. The reference is to the physical body. The passage should be studied with 1 Cor. 15:35-58 in mind.

Be dissolved. This rendering obscures the figure. Tents are not dissolved. *Taken down* is the correct translation. Possibly it is as strong a word as *demolish*. A tent might be blown down by a storm.

Paul's thought is this: My present body in which I live is only a tent. Soon it will be taken down. Then I shall have a permanent edifice, a spiritual body to live in (see 1 Cor. 15:44). But will there be a period between the two residences when I shall be without any body? I often sigh when I think about it, for I should so much prefer not to die, but to have my new permanent body, at Christ's coming, put on over my physical body and absorb it, so that there may be no period when I am without a body. Nevertheless, God knows best, and I am perfectly willing to accept whatever He has in store for me.

A building from God. Not a tent but an edifice, a perma-

- God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the
2. heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from
 3. heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be
 4. found naked. For indeed we that are in this ¹ taber-

¹ Or, *bodily frame.*

ment dwelling, not made by human hands, but God-given. Paul thinks of himself as living in his body. He will always need a body of some sort in which to live.

Eternal, in the heavens. There will never be the need of another change of residence. The new body will be permanent because spiritual. *In the heavens* is the figurative way of referring to the spiritual life after death. It is a figurative contrast with *on the earth*. There is no reference to *heaven* as a place.

2. **In this we groan.** In this tent-body we keep sighing.

Longing to be clothed upon. This is the explanation of the frequent sighing. Paul longs for that expected change which will come with the return of Christ, when those who are living will get their spiritual body at once, without the necessity of the death of the physical body (1 Thess. 4:17). He mixes his metaphors again, but his thought is all the more luminous. He thinks of the new body as a dwelling, not one into which he shall enter, but one which like an overcoat could be put on over his tent-body. That is the force of *clothed upon*.

Which is from heaven is equivalent to the *eternal in the heavens* of verse 1.

3. **If so be.** This verse is parenthetical. Paul's meaning is not perfectly clear. **Naked** of course means without either a tent-body or an edifice-body, without either the garment of a physical body or the overgarment of the spiritual. But when is he to be *found*? The simplest meaning seems to be, *provided that, or if only, we shall be found with a body when Christ comes, not without a body, i.e., be found by Christ's coming still alive.* If he had put off his tent-body he could not put the new body *on over*, could not be *clothed upon*. So verse 3 becomes merely the parenthetical statement, *provided only that we are allowed to live till Christ comes.* The text should then read, *if so be that, because we are clothed, we shall not be found naked.*

4. **For.** As often with Paul the *for* introduces an explanation that is a confirmation of what he has just said. He repeats his thought, and makes it simpler. See 4:10-11.

Do groan, being burdened. There is a slight difference in

nacle do groan, ¹ being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up
 5. of life. Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the

¹ Or, *being burdened, in that we would not be unclothed, but would be clothed upon.*

the reason given for his *groaning* or sighing. In verse 2 it was a longing to have the new body put on over the old; here it is a burden of depression because of the fear that it may not be possible. **Not for that we would be unclothed—clothed upon.** The alternative reading of the margin is better—*burdened because we do not wish to be unclothed* (lose our tent-body by death) *but to be clothed upon* (have our edifice-body put on over the tent-body).

Mortal may be swallowed up of life. In that way the tent-body which is mortal would be absorbed by the spiritual body which is eternal and which never dies. There would be no death, and no period when the tenant of the bodies would be houseless, *naked*.

5. **Now.** *But* would be preferable. There is a distinct antithesis. Paul has been speaking of his natural attitude toward the change, now he turns to God's attitude and his own consequent attitude.

For this very thing. For what thing? Paul does not make it plain and there is great difference of opinion. But, as the whole paragraph thus far has been about the change of bodies, it seems most natural to take "*this very thing*" as referring to that change. It is a part of God's plan for us, Paul says. He fashioned us for this change. Life in the spirit body is his destiny for us. We can leave it to him whether we get there through the taking down of the tent or by putting the edifice on over the tent.

Who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. God can be trusted to do what is best, for He has already given us in the gift of the Spirit a part of His promised blessings and a pledge of all that is to follow. *Earnest* as a business term is that part of a purchase or contract price which is paid down as a part payment and as a pledge that the whole will be paid. The Spirit is God's *earnest*—is "both the foretaste and the pledge of future blessedness."

6. Spirit. Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the
 7. body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by
 8. faith, not by ¹ sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body,
 9. and to be at home with the Lord. Wherefore also

¹ Gr., *appearance*.

6. **Therefore.** This is the conclusion. Paul's natural attitude toward the change is one of sighing. God's attitude is that it is best. *Therefore* Paul's consequent attitude is one of *good courage* and eagerness to accept whatever God has in store for him.

At home in the body . . . absent from the Lord. Only here in the New Testament are these phrases found. One is used of a person who stays at home, does not travel; the other of one who leaves his home to travel in other places. They are vivid figures as Paul uses them. While I am a stay-at-home in my tent-body, he says, I am an absentee from home with Christ. To die meant to depart and be with Christ (Phil. 1:23). Then, lest his readers misunderstand him, he adds parenthetically verse 7. Did not his close relation to Christ, even in his tent-body, make him *at home* with Christ?

7. **For we walk by faith, not by sight.** He is not now *at home* with Christ, because his relation is one of faith, not of sight. But *when that which is perfect is come* (1 Cor. 13:10-12) he shall see *face to face* and shall *know even as also he has been known*. That will be *at home*. The rendering *sight* is better than *appearance*, though the latter is more literal—*we walk by faith not by form*.

8. The sentence begun in verse 6 is not finished. If it had been finished grammatically verse 8 would have begun, *we are willing to be absent, i.e., to die*. The parenthesis (vs. 7) interrupts his sentence, and he begins again at verse 8.

Are willing rather—deem it better to die in order to be with Christ. *To die is gain* (Phil. 1:21). Nothing is said about any spiritual body, and apparently Paul means to say that it is better to be at home with Christ, even though he has no body, neither tent nor edifice, but is a *naked* spirit waiting for his new body to be given him when Christ comes again. There is no emphasis on that, however. The emphasis is on the fact that he is ready for anything that God thinks best.

9. **Wherefore also we make it our aim.** This is the sec-

we ¹ make it our aim, whether at home or absent,
 10. to be well-pleasing unto him. For we must all be
 made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ;
 that each one may receive the things *done* ² in the

¹ Gr., *are ambitious.*

² Gr., *through.*

ond way, *wherefore also*, in which his consequent attitude finds expression. Not only does he keep up courage, but he tries to be *ambitious* (better than *make it our aim*) to be well-pleasing to Christ. Paul's use of tense is perhaps rendered best by inserting the word *try*.

Whether at home or absent. Supply body from the context above: *whether at home in the body or absent from the body*; whether at His coming the Lord shall find him still living in his tent-body or having struck his tent. But the emphasis is on the last clause; no matter what happens to his body, *to be well-pleasing unto Him* is his lasting ambition.

10. For introduces the explanation of Paul's ambition to be *well-pleasing* to the Lord, now, in the body. The bodily experience is necessary to the heavenly. The body has that much to its credit at any rate, no matter how fragile a vessel it is, it lends the condition which makes possible the heavenly experience. Paul cannot get the latter without the former.

We must all be made manifest. He is not speaking of a general judgment. *We all* are Christians, with a hope of glory. It is not merely an *appearance* before the judgment seat which is a necessity for all, but that *disclosure* or *manifestation* of each man's character which *Christ's judgment seat* will assure.

The judgment seat of Christ. In Rom. 14:10 Paul speaks of the *judgment seat of God*. The raised platform on which was the seat of the presiding officer at any trial, military or civil, was known as the Bema, which is usually rendered *judgment seat*. In the presence of Christ *we all shall be made manifest*.

That each one may receive. The end or purpose of the manifesting is the getting of that which is one's own. *Receive* is not merely *get*, but *get back that which is one's own*. Each one, figuratively, gets back **the things done in the body**, or literally, *the things through the body, i.e.*, the body has been the agent through which the experience or character comes which one *gets back*, as it were, before Christ's Bema.

According to what he has done. Not merely *done*, but *tried to do, practiced, been busy with*.

Whether good or bad—bad in the sense of *cheap—whether*

body, according to what he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

11. Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your
12. consciences. We are not again commending ourselves unto you, but *speak* as giving you occasion of glory-

worth while or worthless. The body is of real importance after all if it is the agent of that character which the Christian *gets back* before Christ's judgment seat.

11. **Knowing therefore.** With verses 11 and 12 Paul seems to come back again to the main track of his thought after taking the side-track at verse 1. These are transition verses. The *therefore* might be called a *resumptive therefore*, by which he resumes his former line of thought. He has not forgotten that he was talking about his *ministry*. We get the word again in verse 18.

In the outline it seems best to include these two verses with what precedes, making them a conclusion in which he says that the effect of this attitude toward life and death and God's will, is to keep him true (a) to his attempt to convince men of his ministry and its gospel, and (b) to offer them resources of glorying on his behalf.

The fear of the Lord. The awe, the reverent fear which comes from the thought of the *judgment seat of Christ* and its meaning.

We persuade men of the sincerity and reality of our ministry. The context shows that he does not use *persuade* in an evangelistic sense, but in reference to his own ministry. And he adds, *but to God we have been and continue to be thoroughly understood (made manifest)*. It is the same word he used in verse 10, for our manifestation before Christ's judgment seat.

And I hope (see 1:13) that also to you in your inner consciousness of what is right and true I have been and continue to be thoroughly understood (see 4:2).

12. **We are not again commending ourselves.** How sensitive Paul was to the accusations made against him of *commending himself* is shown by his repeated references to it, and by his use of the word *again* (3:1). In this epistle the word rendered *commend* is found nine times. It is found, with varying meanings, only seven times in all the rest of the New Testament. As he is beginning again after his short digression to

ing on our behalf, that ye may have wherewith to answer them that glory in appearance, and not in heart.

4. *The Secret of the Ministry; 5:13—6:10*

13. For whether we ¹ are beside ourselves, it is unto
14. God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is unto

¹ Or, *were*.

speak of his ministry, he feels compelled to say once more that he does it in no spirit of boasting. Then he adds that what he does say about his ministry offers the loyal Corinthians ample opportunity and resources to do the commending for him if they wish.

To answer them that glory in appearance. A reference to his opponents, probably Judaizers, in Corinth, who boasted of external things, religious observances, ancestral privilege and the like (11:18, 21-23). The word *appearance* is literally *face*. *Face* and *heart* are contrasted, externals, with genuine inner worth. What Paul says of himself and his ministry will furnish his readers, he says ingenuously and with a dry humor, with a base of supplies (*occasion*) from which they can on his behalf out-glorify those whose glorying is only in externals.

4. *The Secret of Paul's Ministry of the New Covenant—Self-Devotion; vs. 13-16.*

- a. Its constraining power: Love of Christ; vs. 14.
 (1) Its Manifestation, for God, for the Corinthians,
 vs. 13.
 (2) Its explanation: Christ's death for all; vs. 15.
 (a) Immediate consequence, all died.
 (b) End in view: Life, which shall be:
 (1) Neg. Not selfish,
 (2) Pos. but devoted to Christ who died for
 them.
 (3) Its effect on Paul's attitude toward men *in Christ*;
 vs. 16.
 (a) He sees anyone *in Christ* as a new creation;
 vs. 17.
 (1) Explanation (Neg.) He does not think of
 him from the point of view of the flesh.

- (2) Explanation (Pos.) but as *in Christ*, whom he thinks of as spirit, not flesh.
- (b) He sees everything become new.
- b. Its fundamental purpose: Reconciliation to God; vs. 18.
- (1) Source: God.
- (2) Reason: Paul's own reconciliation to God.
- (3) Content: God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself; vs. 19.
- (a) Manner (Neg.)—No calculation of transgressions,
- (b) Means (Pos.) but the message of reconciliation in us.
- c. Its outward expression: A spokesman for God; vs. 20.
- (1) In his plea for reconciliation.
- (a) Authority: Christ's representative.
- (b) Inducement offered: God made Christ to be sin for us; vs. 21.
- End: That we might become God's righteousness.
- (2) In his exhortation to the Corinthians not to receive God's grace in vain; vs. 1.
- (a) Authority: Working with God.
- (b) Argument: Do it now; vs. 2.
- Illustration: Scriptural (Is. 49:8).
- (3) In his life, in every way commending God's minister; vs. 4.
- (a) Method: Giving no offense to any one; vs. 3.
- (b) Manner (ideals of life which he sets himself); vss. 4-7.
- (c) Means (arms he uses); vss. 7, 8.
- (d) Condition (paradoxes of conditions); vss. 9, 10.

13. **For.** With this explanatory *for* Paul passes to the fourth and last characteristic of his ministry, its secret. He does not call it "*its secret*," but speaks of its constraining power, its fundamental purpose, and his conception of himself as spokesman for God; and these *are* its real secret. It is found in his self-devotion, his absorption in Christ's love and God's redemptive work. He tries to lose himself in his ministry.

Unto God . . . unto you are the key-words to the secret of his ministry.

Whether we are beside ourselves . . . whether sober. This may, and probably does, refer to another set of charges made against Paul, that he was unbalanced. The same was said of Jesus (Mk. 3:21) by His friends when He lost Himself in

you. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all

the greatness of His ministry. In the case of Paul his experiences of *visions and revelations* (12:1) may have given grounds for the charge. Or, as in the case of Felix (Acts 26:24), the enthusiasm of Paul's delivery of his message and his self-forgetfulness may have led to the slur that he was *mad*. *Sober mind* is the opposite. Whichever he is, it is his devotion to God and to his fellow men that is the mainspring of his ministry.

14. **For.** Another *for*. It is most natural to think that by it Paul confirms and explains what he has just said. His whole life is *unto God* and *unto you*, and his love for Christ is the link that binds him to God and to the Corinthians.

The love of Christ constraineth us. So far as the form of words is concerned *love of Christ* may mean either Paul's love for Christ or Christ's love for Paul. It would be quite in keeping with the context if he meant the former. The *for* in its relation to verse 13, and the idea of self-devotion in verse 15 and elsewhere—*should no longer live unto themselves*—would make that interpretation consistent. Paul's love for Christ is the real secret of his ministry. The objection to this rendering—and it is all but conclusive—is that Paul seems everywhere else to have the other, the subjective meaning, in mind, when he speaks of *love of God* or *love of Christ* (2 Thess. 3:5; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 3:19; Rom. 5:5). The thought is not very different, whichever interpretation holds, for *constrain* seems to have in it the idea of restrain and impel. Like a canalized river whose artificial banks serve to keep the stream within its course and so send it more swiftly and easily on its way, the love of Christ restrains Paul from selfishness of purpose and impels him to a life of unselfish ministry.

Because we thus judge. This is the explanation, as Paul understands it, of the *way* in which the love of Christ constrains him: Christ's love found its utmost expression in his death for others (Jn. 15:13; 1 Jn. 3:16). In that death *they* died to sin and selfishness, that they might be *raised*, made alive, to a Christ-like, unselfish life (Rom. 6:8; Col. 3:1-3). If they are alive, *i.e.*, raised with Christ to the highest life, they cannot live to themselves any more; they live for Christ. So it is Christ's love that constrains them to lives of unselfishness.

One died for all, therefore all died. Paul is not giving a discourse on the atonement. He is simply explaining how he looks at the constraining influence of Christ's love. Christ's

15. died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him
 16. who for their sakes died and rose again. Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh:

death is a supreme act of love. It is *for all*. *For* means here *on behalf of*, not *instead of*. By this act of love Christ made it possible for *the all*, for whom he died, to die with him to selfishness, and to live with him in unselfishness. It is one of Paul's favorite figures.

15. **That they which live.** That those who have been raised with him to the highest life, *i.e.*, to Christlikeness, and so *live*, may live not to self but to Christ. All selfishness is low. Selflessness is high. "If ye were raised together with Christ seek the things that are above" (Col. 3:1). If one is *raised* with Christ, he will be *above* all selfishness. Low things will be *beneath* him. It is in the light of such figures as Col. 1:1-3 that this is to be understood.

16. **Wherefore.** In view of the constraining love of Christ and Paul's explanation of it. **We henceforth.** The *we* is emphatic. There are those who still *live unto themselves*. Possibly he has the Judaizers in mind. The *henceforth* seems to mean from the time he began to live unto Christ.

Know no man after the flesh. The phrase *after the flesh* or *according to the flesh*, is a favorite figure in Paul's letters. He uses it twenty times (in Romans eight times; in 2 Cor. six times). Only once is it found in the New Testament outside of Paul's letters (Jn. 8:15), and that once differs slightly from Paul's use. *After the flesh* is Paul's phrase. He uses it either as equivalent to *natural*; *Abraham our forefather according to the flesh* (Rom. 4:1) or as contrasted with spiritual; *who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit* (Rom. 8:4). Any word that brings out that contrast will serve as a paraphrase for *after the flesh*. Sometimes *carnal* will serve. But here the idea of *spiritual* in verses 14-15, *i.e.*, of one who has died to sin and no longer lives to himself, but is constrained by Christ's love, finds its contrast in the *old* or unchanged man, who has not been touched by Christ's love and who still lives to himself. In that sense he is *old* (see vs. 17), he is *natural*, he is *after the flesh* (Rom. 8:13). So, Paul says, I think of every one in the terms of what he is or may be *in Christ*, what he is potentially as a Christian, not apart from Christ, *after the flesh*.

And then, parenthetically, he adds: once I knew **Christ after the flesh**, not of course as a sinful man, but as a man untouched

even though we have known Christ after the flesh,
 17. yet now we know *him so* no more. Wherefore if
 any man is in Christ, ¹ *he is* a new creature: the
 old things are passed away; behold, they are be-
 18. come new. But all things are of God, who reconciled

¹ Or, *there is a new creation.*

by the power of the resurrection; perhaps as the Jesus of Nazareth who *died*. But now I know him as the Christ who was raised from the dead. The reference may be to Paul's estimate of Jesus before his arrest by him on the road to Damascus, or to his thought of him in his earliest Christian experience before he came to know him as a risen Christ. It does not seem probable that there is any reference to any personal acquaintance with Jesus in the flesh, nor to any accusation on the part of Paul's opponents of a change of view with regard to Jesus.

(Verse 16 has always puzzled interpreters, and there have been many interpretations. One of them, which is possible, is that *after the flesh* corresponds to *in appearance* contrasted with *in heart* [vs. 12]. We know no man according to externals of rank, race or appearance, but only according to what he is.)

17. But the sequence of thought is better preserved by the former, for he goes on to say **Wherefore**, *i.e.*, in view of what Christ is, who *died and rose again* (15), and whom we know, not *after the flesh*, but according to the power of His resurrection (16), any man who is *in Christ*, any Christian no longer living to himself, is *new, a new creature*, or (marginal), *a new creation*. Paul speaks out of his own experience; once *in Christ* the *old things are passed away*, the old selfish life, the *after the flesh* life; everything is *new*. For *in Christ*, see note on 1:21.

18. **But**. The antithesis is not strong, but Paul turns to a second thought in regard to the secret of his ministry. *Furthermore* or *again* would be better than *but*. *Furthermore* it is a **ministry of reconciliation**. Its fundamental purpose is reconciliation to God. He begins by saying that Christ is the agent, *through Christ*, but the source of all good, of all *new creations*, is God. Paul often pauses to make plain that God is the source from which all goodness in the world springs. Christ is the agent whom God used to reconcile Paul to Himself. Again the reference is personal. The *us* refers to Paul's own experience. Once he was out of harmony with God. Through Christ he was brought into harmony. That resulting state is what Paul calls *peace* (see note on 1:2). **Reconciled** is another of Paul's words.

19. us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having¹ committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
20. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ,

¹ Or, placed in us.

It is found only in Paul's letters in the New Testament, though a similar word is translated reconciled in Matt. 5:24. (See Rom. 5:10-11; 11:15; 1 Cor. 7:11; 2 Cor. 5:18-20. These are all the instances of its use.) In every instance *reconciled* signifies the bringing of someone into harmony with another, and usually of bringing those who have been hostile to God into a relation of harmony with him (Rom. 5:10-11). Paul was called through Christ to a *ministry of reconciliation*, to be a *peacemaker* (Matt. 5:9), to devote his life to the purpose of bringing men into a relation of harmony with God.

19. **To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.** This explains the *ministry of reconciliation*. Paul was reconciled to God *through Christ*. Now he adds that *in Christ* God is working out His plan of bringing the world into harmony with Himself. It should not be read *God was in Christ, reconciling the world*, but as punctuated in the text. And it was Paul's particular message that it was *the world* that *in Christ* was being reconciled, not merely Jews.

Not reckoning unto them their trespasses. Not counting up, calculating, their lapses from truth and righteousness. It was not tabulating sins that God was concerned with, but getting all men out of enmity into harmony with him.

And having committed unto us. This is the *ministry* part of the *ministry of reconciliation*. The means which God devised for making known his *word*, or message, of *reconciliation* was human agency. To Paul he *committed* this ministry. It was peculiarly Paul's, for it was a gospel for *the world* and not only for his Jewish race.

20. **We are ambassadors therefore.** The *therefore* introduces a third characteristic of the secret of his ministry, connecting it by natural sequence with the preceding. Because God is *reconciling the world unto himself in Christ* and has *committed unto Paul the word of reconciliation*, therefore Paul becomes a spokesman for God. It is the outward expression of the secret of his ministry. He is not on his own business. He is Christ's

as though God were entreating by us: we beseech *you*
 21. on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. Him
 who knew no sin he made *to be* sin on our behalf;
 that we might become the righteousness of God in

ambassador. In Paul's world the ambassador was the Emperor's personal messenger.

On behalf of Christ. This is specially emphatic. It would be better to begin the sentence: *On behalf of Christ therefore we are ambassadors.*

As though God were entreating by us. Paul is God's spokesman, but only on behalf of Christ. God's entreaty to harmony with him is *through Christ* and *in Christ*. Christ is the great *peacemaker*. And Paul is his ambassador bringing to men God's entreaty which is made possible and intelligible only in Christ.

Be ye reconciled to God. Not, may God be reconciled to you. The enmity is on man's part, not God's. This is Paul's emphasis always.

21. Here is the inducement which Paul offers in his plea for reconciliation; it is the ground on which he makes the plea; God's wonderful gift of His Son, who died that men might gain God's righteousness.

Him who knew no sin, i.e., who consciously had no personal acquaintance with sin; who was sinless. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46), Jesus said of himself. **He made to be sin on our behalf.** This of course is figurative. One can be a *sinner*, but cannot be *sin*. Paul does not say that God made Christ a sinner, but made him to be *sin*. It is his figurative way of saying that Jesus died for us sinners. The reference is to his death. The cross was the death penalty for sin. Paul could best illustrate his thought of Jesus' death by saying that in his death he identified himself with sin, so that men, dying with him to sin, might be raised with him to life. It of course had to be illustrated with figurative language. Paul had many figures which he used for Christ's redemptive work—*redemptive* is one of them. But it is all *on our behalf*, because of God's great love and desire to *reconcile the world unto himself*.

That we might become the righteousness of God in him. This is the purpose of it all. As Paul used *sin* in the abstract, *made to be sin*, so here he uses *righteousness* in the abstract. *To become God's righteousness* is also figurative. It is to become an example or representative of God's righteous character. It is

6. 1. him. And working together *with him* we intreat
 2. also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain (for he saith,

At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee,
 And in a day of salvation did I succour thee:
 behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is

God's whole purpose for human life. It is to be *transformed into the same image from glory to glory* (3:18); only, that is the process, this is the end, as God plans it. And it is all *in him, i.e., in Christ*. To draw from these words involved theories of the atonement or of justification is to run the risk of reading into Paul's language what was not in his thought.

6:1. Chapter 6 continues the thought. There is no paragraph break. The *ye* is now emphatic. It was not emphatic in 5:20. There his message was general; here it is particular. As spokesman for God Paul *entreats* (exhorts or encourages) the Corinthians that they *receive not the grace of God in vain*. Not only is the emphasis on *ye* but it is on God's *grace, i.e., on God's love expressed in giving*. *Grace* interprets the preceding verse. This is the second item in Paul's message as God's spokesman.

Working together with him, i.e., with God. This gives Paul his authority. He is fellow worker because he is spokesman for God.

In vain. It was possible for the Corinthians to make a public declaration of their acceptance of God's grace, and yet have it *in vain*. It was possible to profess to receive God's grace, and have it an empty profession because there was no result.

2. In Old Testament Scripture language verse 2 says, "do it now." The quotation is from Is. 49:8. In the Greek it is an exact quotation from the Greek of the Old Testament. The English version shows a slight variation. Either the word *receive* (vs. 1) suggested the quotation to Paul, or, less likely, he thought of his own mission as similar to that of the *Servant* in Is. 49. Whichever suggested to him the words, verse 2 is parenthetical and its Scripture comment on Paul's thought is rather vague. *The acceptable time, the day of salvation* of Is. 49:8, Paul says is the present time, not the present, passing moment, but the present period which is represented by Paul's ministry of the new covenant. This is the day of God's *grace—receive it not in vain*. In effect the illustration is an injunction to receive that *grace* now.

3. the day of salvation): giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not
4. blamed; but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in

3. As spokesman for God this is the third item in Paul's message: In his life, in every way, he seeks to commend God's minister and his ministry.

Giving no occasion of stumbling—a figure which Paul uses often, but with different words for *stumbling*. The word he uses here is found only here in the New Testament. Other words are rendered *stumbling block*, *occasion of falling*, *offense*, etc. Paul tries to live in such a way that nothing in his ministry may prove an obstruction or a snare in the path of any one who is seeking God, causing him to get a fall.

Ministration. *Ministry* would be better. It is the same word he has used before (4:1; 5:18). There is no reason for changing the English word to *ministration*, the word used in 3:7, 8, 9.

4. **Commending ourselves.** This is the phrase he has used several times (3:1; 4:2; 5:12). He does not commend *himself*. It is *God's minister* he seeks to commend. To his readers' consciences he commends himself as a *minister of God*.

There follows a carefully thought out and poetically worded enumeration of the ways, means and conditions which characterize his daily life as a message of commendation for his ministry.

The richness of his thought is best illustrated by a careful outline. The preposition *in* introduces eighteen words and phrases. The first, *in much patience*, is followed by three groups of three circumstances each, in which his patience is exercised. Then follow eight further ideals of life which he sets himself, coordinate with *in much patience*, nine in all.

Then the preposition is changed to *by* (margin, *through*). *By* means of his *integrity* he fights his way *through* two sets of circumstances.

A group of seven paradoxes follows, giving the reported condition and the true condition of his life and ministry. Most, if not all, represent the things which men say about him (or might say about him) and the actual truth as he sees it. Each of the seven is introduced by *as*. An outline of verses 3-10 is a commentary. (See (3) of outline on page 233).

(a) Method: Giving no offense to any one.

(b) Manner (ideals of life which as minister he sets himself):

-
5. necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments,
 6. in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; in
-

1. *Much patience:*

(1) In general, in trying experiences:

- (a) *afflictions:* trials, suffering.
- (b) *necessities:* unavoidable troubles.
- (c) *distresses:* desperate situations.

(2) In particular, in abuse from his opponents:

- (a) *stripes:* blows, by rod or scourge.
- (b) *imprisonments.*
- (c) *tumults:* riots, mob violence.

(3) In particular, in the hardships of his work:

- (a) *labors:* fatiguing toil.
- (b) *watchings:* sleeplessness, from work or worry.
- (c) *fastings:* hunger, voluntary or involuntary.

2. *Pureness:* a clean heart and a clean life.

3. *Knowledge:* intimate acquaintance with Christian truth.

4. *Longsuffering:* not easily provoked.

5. *Kindness:* kindly, gentlemanly.

6. *The Holy Ghost:* a spirit of holiness, reverence.

7. *Love unfeigned:* sincere, straightforward love.

8. *The Word of Truth:* speech whose characteristic is truth.

9. *Power of God:* God-given effectiveness.

(c) Means (weapons or instruments he uses):

Armor of righteousness—integrity, his sword and shield.

1. *Through glory and dishonor;*
2. *Through evil report and good report.*

(d) Condition (paradoxes of conditions):

1. *Deceivers* and yet *true*—called “imposters,” but genuine.
2. *Unknown* and *well known*—called “obscure,” but well known.
3. *Dying . . . we live*—reported dying, but very much alive.
4. *Chastened and not killed*—scourged, but not fatally.
5. *Sorrowful . . . rejoicing*—reason for sorrow, but joyful.
6. *Poor . . . making many rich*—reputed poor, but with much to give.
7. *Having nothing . . . all things*—penniless, but with large possessions.

4. In denotes manner as used with *much patience* and with the eight other graces beginning with *pureness*. With the nine kinds of experiences, beginning with *afflictions*, *in* gives the sphere in which the nine graces must be practiced, especially the *patience*.

- pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness,
7. in the ¹ Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; ² by the armour of
 8. righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report;
 9. as deceivers, and *yet* true; as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as
 10. chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

¹ Or, *Holy Spirit* and so throughout this book.

² Gr., *through*.

6. **In the Holy Ghost.** *Holy Spirit* is the better translation always used in the American Revised Version. But here *in a spirit of holiness* gives Paul's meaning better than *in the Holy Spirit*, and corresponds better to the companion graces.

7. **By the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.** Just as above there was a difference in the use of *in*, so here there is a difference in *by*. With *armor* it denotes means or instrument. His integrity is his sword and his shield, the sword is the *armor of the right hand*, the shield is the *armor of the left hand*. With this offensive and defensive armor he goes unscathed *through* (here the *by* should be rendered *through*) *glory and dishonor, evil report and good report*. No matter whether he is surrounded with the praise, compliments, adulations of his friends, or the abuse, complaints, discrediting of his opponents, his integrity takes him through.

8. **As deceivers and yet true.** Each of these seven paradoxes is introduced by *as*. Since some of them give the contrast between what is said of Paul and what he actually is, it is best to take them all in that way. They are not seven charges against him by his opponents, but each represents either what they said or what they might naturally have thought.

This closes, with a striking climax, what Paul has to say about his ministry. It would be impossible to find anywhere a loftier statement of a minister's ideals for his life and his ministry.

III. PAUL'S JOY IN THE CORINTHIANS; 6:11—7:16.

11. Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our
 12. heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye
-

PAUL'S JOY IN THE CORINTHIANS

1. *The ways in which it finds expression:*

- a. His frank speech; vs. 11, 4.
 b. His wide open heart.
 (1) The narrow quarters of constraint are not in Paul.
 (2) They are found in the Corinthians' feelings.
 c. His yearning for a reciprocal affectionate frankness; vs. 13.

Parenthesis, suggested by *enlarged* and its association with
 Deut. 11:16; 6:14—7:1.

Being wide open to unbelievers; vs. 14.

1. Its incongruity—seen in:

- a. The incompatibility of righteousness and sin.
 b. " " of light and darkness.
 c. " " of Christ and Belial; vs. 15.
 d. " " of faith and unfaith.
 e. " " of God's temple and idols; vs.
 16.

Explanation:

Christians are God's temple.

Proof: Scripture; vs. 16.

2. Its sinfulness—it disobeys God's commandments.

Proof: Scripture; vss. 17, 18.

Conclusion: Therefore:

1. be pure.
 2. be separate.

d. His yearning for expressions of affection; vs. 2.

Justification; his attitude toward them:

(1) Neg. He has wronged, hurt, taken advantage of no
 man.

(2) Pos. They are his heart's life; vs. 3.

e. His confidence and pride in them; vs. 4.

f. His bubbling over with encouragement and gladness in spite
 of all his trouble.

2. *The Immediate Cause*: Titus' return.
 - a. The anxiety preceding it; vs. 5.
 - b. The Author, who brought it about, God; vs. 6.
3. *The Underlying Cause*: Titus' encouraging message; vs. 7.
 - a. Content of message: Their longing, mourning, zeal for Paul.
 - b. Significance (to Paul), (vs. 8):
 - (1) Neg. Not their being hurt by the letter, which he had almost repented sending.
 - (2) Pos. But that they were hurt unto repentance; vs. 9.
 - c. Significance (for the church): It was a God-sent hurt, which justified it.
 - (1) Proof (in general), vs. 10:
 - (a) A God-sent hurt worketh repentance.
 - (b) A world-sent hurt worketh death.
 - (2) Proof (in particular): The result in the Corinthians:
 - (a) Their eagerness to make good the wrong; vs. 11.
 - (b) Their discovery of how much they cared for Paul; vs. 12.
- Conclusion: Paul's consequent encouragement; vs. 13.
4. *An Additional Cause*: Titus' personal joy; vs. 13.
 - a. Its ground: The refreshing of his spirit by the Corinthians.
 - b. Its effect on Titus: His heart went out to them; vs. 15.

Cause: His memory of:

 - (a) Their obedience.
 - (b) Their reception of him with fear and trembling.
 - c. Its effect on Paul: Satisfaction that he had truthfully boasted of them to Titus; vs. 14.

Comparison: As truthfully as he has always spoken to them.
- Conclusion (Summary; in a word):

It is a joy to have confidence in them in everything; vs. 16.

11. At this point Paul turns from the subject of *his ministry* to his personal relation to the church at Corinth. The passage is full of emotion. Affection, joy, pathos, humor all blend. He is unspeakably happy over the result of Titus' mission to Corinth and the removal of all constraint, or nearly all, between himself and the Corinthians.

The words *comfort*, *i.e.*, encouragement, and *joy* or *rejoice* are repeated many times in the paragraph, especially in chapter seven. Under the subject, *Paul's joy in the Corinthians*, it is possible to gather in outline form all that he says, in spite of its emotional character. The section 6:14—7:1 is parenthetical, no matter what the subject of the paragraph as a whole.

Our mouth is open unto you. The reference is not only to

13. are straitened in your own affections. Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto *my* children), be ye also enlarged.

what he is about to say, of which this section (6:11—7:4) is the Introduction, but to what he has just been writing in regard to his ministry. He has spoken very frankly. There have been no tight closed lips, indicative of concealment and suppressed bitterness.

O Corinthians. Paul seldom in the body of his letter addresses his readers by name. It is an indication of his great emotion. See Gal. 3:1; Phil. 4:15.

Our heart is enlarged. I have thrown wide open to you the doors of my heart. There could hardly be a more winsome or irresistible confession of affection.

12 **Ye are not straitened in us.** *Straitened* is contrasted with *enlarged*, narrow with wide. If there is still any feeling of constraint on their part, any sense of closed doors or quarters too narrow for them and Paul, the constraint must be in them, for Paul has thrown reserve and diffidence to the winds.

13. **Now for a recompense in like kind, i.e.,** pay me back in the same coin by opening *your* hearts wide to me. You are my own children, and I ask it as your father.

With 7:2 Paul takes up the thought of 6:11-13. *Make room in your hearts for us*, he says. If 6:14—7:1 were omitted his thought would be continuous and logical. How shall this parenthetical paragraph be explained? The simplest, but least satisfactory explanation, is that it is an interpolation here, in some way dropped into the letter by a copyist who was copying an early manuscript of the letter. It is from Paul's correspondence with the church at Corinth, but does not belong at this point. At best this is a guess. There is no evidence to substantiate it.

The most probable suggestion is based on Paul's familiarity with Old Testament language. In the phrases *our heart is enlarged, be ye also enlarged*, he uses a word whose most familiar association is with the Old Testament. *Enlarged* is better rendered *opened wide*. It is found in the New Testament only here and in Matt. 23:5. But in Deut. 10:16 is this familiar injunction: "Take heed to yourselves lest your heart be opened wide (R. V., *deceived*) and ye turn aside and serve other gods. . . ." Having used this word, the association of ideas leads Paul on to say: Do not open wide your hearts to let in unbelief, iniquity, darkness, Belial, idols of any sort . . . *make room for us*.

14. Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what
 15. communion hath light with darkness? And what
 16. concord hath Christ with ¹ Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a ² temple of God with idols? for we are a ² temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be

¹ Or, *Beliar*.² Or, *Sanctuary*.

This explanation is only plausible. It is not altogether satisfactory, but it is in line with a habit of Paul's to let Old Testament quotations take him a little out of his course. It is given probability by the use of such words as *Belial* and *idols*, which indicate that he is thinking in Old Testament terms; and also by his emphatic and pointed change (7:2) to another word for *open*. The marginal reading makes this plain. *Make room for us* is better than *open*, which should have been used for *enlarged* (11, 13). If we knew more of the conditions in Corinth we might find easier of explanation this digression about the danger of too intimate association with the heathen.

14. **Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.** In Deut. 22:10 is the injunction: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." This seems to be the metaphor in *unequally yoked*. Unbelievers are non-Christians, and the reference is to the idolatrous and sensual heathen of Corinth, from whose number they had come, and from *wide open* associations with whom Christians must be *separate* (17).

What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity. The incongruity and the absurdity of a Christian being *wide open* to, or *unequally yoked with, unbelievers*, is illustrated in five epigrammatic antitheses, the incompatibility of (1) *righteousness and iniquity* (they are not good yoke-fellows); (2) *light and darkness*; (3) Christ and Belial (Belial is a name for Satan. He is the personification of utter wickedness. Christ is the *light* of the world and Belial the prince of *darkness*); (4) *a believer and an unbeliever*; (5) *a temple of God and idols*.

Five well-chosen words, all different, all vigorous, are used to characterize the incompatibility. Between these opposites there can be no *fellowship* (partnership), *communion* (intimacy), *concord* (harmony), *portion* (sharing), *agreement* (compact).

16. **For we are a temple of the living God.** The *we* and

17. their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore
Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate,
saith the Lord,
And touch no unclean thing;
And I will receive you,
18. And will be to you a Father,
And ye shall be to me sons and daughters,
7. 1. saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these
promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all

the *living* are emphatic. The *we* is not Paul's plural for the singular, but *we* Christians, *i.e.*, the church, *are a temple of a God who is living*. *Idols* are not alive.

The statement is confirmed by a quotation from Lev. 26:11-12.

17. **Wherefore** introduces Old Testament phrases which prove that an intimacy of Christians with heathen is not only incongruous but is sinful. Christians are commanded to be *separate*. The quotations are from several sources (Is. 52:11; Ez. 20:34; 2 Sam. 7:14). They are at best only quoted phrases as Paul remembers and adopts Scripture language. But the quotation is much more evident in the Greek than in our English translation. This Old Testament language is an indication that it was the Old Testament phrase *open wide* which was responsible for this digression.

18. **Sons and daughters**. In Is. 43:6 *daughters* as well as *sons* of God are mentioned, but it was not a usual form of expression.

7:1. **Therefore** introduces the conclusion to the digression, or parenthesis. Because of the commands and promises of God, let us be pure, let us be separate.

Let us cleanse ourselves. Paul associates himself with his readers in the exhortation and tactfully calls them *beloved*, a form of address which he uses seldom, only once again in this letter (12:19). Idolatry and impurity were the two heathen sins, most besetting, and to the Jewish and Christian thought most revolting. In the **defilement of flesh and spirit** Paul has these in mind. They are heathen practices and from them the Christian must *cleanse* himself.

Perfecting holiness. *Holiness* in its very essence means separation, a setting apart for God. It is the climax of the digression. To the heathen and heathen practices of idolatry and impurity the Christian cannot open his heart wide. Perfect

defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2. ¹ Open your hearts to us: we wronged no man, we
3. corrupted no man, we took advantage of no man. I say it not to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die together and live to-

¹ Gr., *Make room for us.*

holiness means perfect separation from sin to God. Then, choosing another word than *open wide*, Paul returns to his thought of 6:13, *Make room for us in your hearts.*

2. **We wronged no man.** Paul yearns for expressions of affection on their part. He justifies his yearning by his own personal relation to them, negative and positive: he has not wronged, hurt, taken advantage of one of them; on the other hand they are a part of his heart's life; they are in his heart whether he dies or lives.

3. **I say it not to condemn you, for.** By insisting so earnestly that they ought to be equally frank and affectionate toward him he may seem to be condemning them for coldness or heartlessness. He is *not* condemning them; he could not, *for* they are his very heart. Where there is such a wealth of affection there is no room for condemnation.

I have said before. Probably he refers to 3:2, *written in our hearts.*

4. **Great is my boldness.** *Frank confidence* is better than *boldness of speech*. Great is my confidence in you, great is my glorying over you, *i.e.*, I am very proud of you, I sound your praises.

I am filled with comfort. Again *encouragement* is a better word than *comfort*. His thought is once more where it was in 1:3-7. **In all our affliction.** The same phrase that he used in 1:4. In spite of his trouble (literally *upon all our affliction*) encouragement and gladness fill his heart full till it runs over.

5. **For.** By *for* is introduced the first of the three grounds or causes for Paul's special joy. The immediate cause is Titus' return from Corinth.

That Paul had met Titus somewhere in Macedonia is implied but not stated in 2:13 ff., where Paul speaks of leaving Troas because he was so eager to hear from Titus, and of going across to Macedonia. His outburst of thanksgiving to God for his Triumphant Procession interrupts his story there. It is taken up in 7:5 just where it was broken off at 2:13. Titus came at last.

4. gether. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying on your behalf: I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.
5. For even when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief, but *we were* afflicted on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.
6. Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, *even*
7. God, comforted us by the ¹ coming of Titus; and not by his ¹ coming only, but also by the comfort

¹ Gr., *presence*.

Our flesh had no relief. In Troas he *had no relief for his spirit* (2:13). In Macedonia his *flesh had no relief*. The two phrases cannot be very different in meaning. Usually Paul contrasts strongly *spirit* and *flesh*. But here flesh is not the seat of sin but the seat of natural emotions, dread, anxiety, fears. Even in Macedonia he had a hard time till at last Titus reached him.

Afflicted on every side. What he says of *affliction* and *comfort* here helps to interpret what he meant when he used these words repeatedly in the first chapter (1:3-11). What the troubles were which surrounded him in Macedonia he does not say. But he implies that they were of two kinds.

Without were fightings, within were fears. The *fears from within* are easily understood. Paul feared lest the delay of Titus meant the failure of his mission to Corinth. He feared that his letter, written *with many tears*, had not had the desired effect. What the *fightings from without* were no one can determine. Possibly he was beset with opponents. But why should he have had contests with them in Macedonia? More likely the reference is to the fight which he is having with the church at Corinth. Not till Titus comes and announces peace is the struggle over.

6. He that comforteth the lowly. He that encourageth those who are depressed, those who are discouraged. As in 1:3 Paul lays strong emphasis on the fact that God is the author and source of all encouragement.

The coming of Titus. The marginal rendering *presence* is not preferable. It adds a meaning that is in the word *coming*. It was the *arrival and presence* of Titus that occasioned the joy.

7. And not by his coming only. There was a still deeper meaning to Paul's joy. It was Titus' message that was the

- wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so
8. that I rejoiced yet more. For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it, though I did regret; ¹ for I see that that epistle made you
 9. sorry, though but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in
 10. nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *for*.

underlying cause. Titus' feeling of encouragement and optimism as he made his report caused Paul to *rejoice yet more*.

Your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me. These were the three special points in Titus' report. They were eager to see Paul; they were sorry for what they had said and done; they were ardent, not half-hearted or lukewarm, but intensely in earnest.

8. **For**, explanatory of Paul's rejoicing at their sorrow. The significance to Paul of this report from Titus that they were sorry was not in the fact of their hurt, but in the fact of their repentance. His letter, in spite of his fears, had produced the desired effect.

Though I did regret. The latter part of verse 8 should be read as a parenthesis inserted between *though I did regret* and *now I rejoice*, and these two should be brought together. The punctuation in the text is not the most satisfactory. It might be rendered in this way: *For though I made you sorry with my epistle I do not regret it. Even though I did begin to regret it, when I saw that the epistle, though only for a season, had made you sorry, yet now I rejoice . . .*

9. **Sorry after a godly sort.** A second significance of Titus' encouraging report is that the hurt has proved to be God-sent and so has been justified. *After a godly sort* is equivalent to *according to God's plan*. If the letter of Paul caused a God-sent hurt, then the hurt cannot be laid to Paul's account as damage or loss which he has caused. God's purpose turns what might have been loss into gain.

10. The proof, in general, that it was a God-sent hurt is found in its result. When God sends a hurt it results in a repentance

¹ unto salvation, *a repentance* which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11. For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what longing, yea, what zeal, yea, what avenging! In everything ye

¹ Or, *unto a salvation which bringeth no regret.*

which ends in a joyful salvation. *A world-sent hurt* never stops hurting till it has wrought out its natural end, *death*.

Salvation—which bringeth no regret. The rendering of the margin is preferable. The salvation in which the hurt results had its beginning in repentance (regret) and has its end in a state never to be regretted (repented of).

Sorrow of the world. Not a parallel phrase with *godly sorrow*, but almost parallel in its meaning. It is not a *worldly* (i.e., an insincere or superficial) sorrow, but a sorrow which belongs to the world as opposed to God. If *pain* or *hurt* is used instead of *sorrow* Paul's meaning is clearer. If he had written his severe letter in any but a Christian spirit it would have proved not a *godly sorrow* but a *sorrow of the world*, and it would not have stopped till it had wrought out a condition the opposite of *salvation—death*.

11. A second proof, in particular, is the actual effect of this *God-sent sorrow* on the Corinthians. It takes two avenues of expression. The one is their discovery of how much they really cared for Paul; and the other is their eagerness to make good the wrong.

What earnest care. As the same words are used again in the next verse, where it is *earnest care for us*, that is probably his meaning here. Titus, in his report, has laid great emphasis on the fact that the church at Corinth has discovered that it really does care very much for Paul.

What clearing of yourselves. The six descriptive words of which *clearing* is the first are summarized by the last clause, *in everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter*. This is the second effect of the letter and the *godly sorrow* it caused, an eagerness to make good the wrong. *Clearing of yourselves*; i.e., of participation in the wrong. **Indignation**, at those who had wronged Paul. **Fear**, genuine alarm at the probable consequences. **Longing**, to have the wrong righted and win

12. approved yourselves to be pure in the matter. So although I wrote unto you, *I wrote* not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be
13. made manifest unto you in the sight of God. Therefore we have been comforted: and in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, be-
14. cause his spirit hath been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have gloried to him on your behalf,

Paul's forgiveness. **Zeal**, ardor, fervor, in their resolve to make good. **Avenging**, insistence on the punishment of the offender.

12. **So**. A repetition in a little different form of the thought of the preceding verse. The effect of the letter justifies and proves Paul's real purpose in writing it. Primarily it was not to secure the punishment of the one who did the wrong; it was not to secure reparation for the one who *suffered the wrong*; it was to reveal the Corinthians to themselves, and bring them to see how closely they were bound to Paul.

In the sight of God—that is, as God sees it; as in His presence. Their vision of things and relations, especially of their relations to Paul, had been obscured. Paul's letter has cleared it. *In the sight of God* things are seen as they are.

13. **Therefore**. The conclusion to the preceding paragraph. Because of Titus' encouraging report we were and are encouraged.

And in our comfort we joyed the more. This introduces the fourth fact which Paul states about his joy in the Corinthians; an additional cause for his joy is the personal joy of Titus. Titus had returned from Corinth so happy over the outcome of his mission and so buoyant of spirit, so *refreshed*, that Paul's joy was greatly increased just by observing Titus' joy.

14. **For** introduces an explanation of Paul's special pleasure that Titus is so happy over his mission to Corinth. Titus had not been so sanguine in advance as to its probable outcome. Paul had assured him that the Corinthians would prove true. He had *gloried to him* on their behalf, had boasted a little about them. And now he can say to Titus, "I told you so," *I was not put to shame*.

But as we spake all things to you in truth. Paul takes this tactful and playful way of adding another proof of his sincerity and truth. "Another instance," he says, "of my truth-

I was not put to shame; but as we spake all things to you in truth, so our glorying also, which I made
 15. before Titus, was found to be truth. And his inward affection is more abundantly toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear
 16. and trembling ye received him. I rejoyce that in everything I am of good courage concerning you.

fulness! What I said to Titus about you, boasting of you, proved to be just as true as what I have said to you about myself, 'boastingly.'"

15. His inward affection is more abundantly toward you. Titus' heart goes out to the church at Corinth every time he thinks of the reception which the church gave him.

Obedience . . . fear and trembling. Evidently Titus went to Corinth with something like an ultimatum from Paul. The Apostle magnified his authority and the authority of his office. He did not hesitate to command. To Titus' surprise and joy the Corinthians *obeyed*. They recognized the right of Paul to *enjoin* them (see Philem. 8). And they received Paul's representative with *fear and trembling*. The phrase is peculiarly Paul's. It is found four times only in the New Testament, and these four times in Paul's letters (1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12). A study of these four indicates that Paul uses *fear and trembling* to mean an eager desire to do the right, fairly quivering with the excitement and gravity of it.

16. I rejoyce. Here is the summary of the whole paragraph from 6:11 to 7:16. It is a fitting conclusion to this section and to all the epistle to this point. "In a word," he says, "it makes me very happy to feel that I have absolute confidence in you."

With this chapter ends the first and longest division of the epistle. It begins and ends with almost ecstatic expressions of joy and encouragement because of Titus' report of the church at Corinth. Between the beginning and end there is a defense of his sincerity and of his ministry. All seven chapters glow with an electric charge of intense emotion. With the possible exception of 6:14—7:1 it is a unity in thought and style.

It is followed by a totally different subject, chapters 7 and 8.

IV. THE GRACE OF GIVING (TO THE SAINTS AT JERUSALEM); 8:1—9:15

8. 1. Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches
-

THE GRACE OF GIVING

1. *Illustrated in the Churches of Macedonia.*
 - a. Its source: God; vs. 1.
 - b. Its wealth of generosity; vss. 2, 4.
 - (1) Origin: A combination of joy and poverty.
 - (2) Sphere: Trouble's testing.
 - c. Its spontaneity.
 - (1) Measure: To the top of their ability and beyond; vs. 3.
 - (2) Form it took: Begging the favor of giving; vs. 4.
 - d. Its accompanying devotion—first offered themselves; vs. 5.
 - (1) Object (indirect) to the Lord and to Paul.
 - (2) Measure: Beyond expectation.
 - (3) Influence: God's will.
 - (4) Result: Titus' mission—encouraging Paul to send Titus to Corinth; vs. 6.
 - e. Its worthiness of imitation—abound in this grace also; vs. 7.
 - (1) By whom? The Corinthians.
 - (2) To what extent? The abounding of their other graces, faith . . . love.
2. *Desired in the Churches of Achaia.*
 - a. Its significance: A proof of genuine love; vss. 7, 8.

Illustration: The *grace* of Jesus. He became poor; vs. 9.

 - (1) The wonder of it: Though he was rich.
 - (2) The reason for it: Their need.
 - (3) The purpose of it: That they might be rich.
 - b. Its expediency: It would be to their credit; vs. 10.
 - (1) Proof: Only Paul's opinion.
 - (2) Reason: Their reputation is at stake.

Proof:

 - (a) They were first to begin.
 1. Time: Last year.
 2. Object: Plan and accomplishment.

- (b) They ought to carry it through; vs. 11.
 1. Time: Now.
 2. Extent: Their ability.
 Explanation: No one is asked to do more than he can; vs. 12.
- c. Its obligation: Mere Christian reciprocity; vs. 13.
 (1) Explanation:
 (a) Negative: Not an exchange of poverty.
 (b) Positive: but a fair division.
 (1) Now—their own abundance helps others.
 (2) Another time—they are helped by others; vs. 14.
 (2) Illustration: (Scripture) the manna-gathering; vs. 15.
3. *Administered efficiently in both provinces*; vs. 19.
 a. Manner: With every precaution against occasion for suspicion.
 (1) Not only in fact; vs. 20.
 (2) But also in appearances; vs. 21.
- b. Agents: Honest, well-accredited men.
 (1) Their identity:
 (a) Titus—who has a zeal for them like Paul's; vs. 16.
 (1) Source: God-given.
 (2) Proof; vs. 17:
 (a) He welcomed Paul's exhortation.
 (b) He volunteered for the mission.
 (b) The brother whose praise is in all the churches; vs. 18.
 (1) Appointment: By Paul.
 (2) Election: By vote of churches.
 (a) Purpose: To travel with Paul.
 (b) Object: Ministration of this grace.
 (c) End: Furthering God's glory and Paul's plan.
- (c) Our brother, tried and found true; vs. 22.
 (1) Extent: In many things, many times.
 (2) Manner: Especially now by his great confidence in the Corinthians.
- (d) All of them, as to credentials; vs. 23.
 (1) Titus—Paul's partner.
 (2) The other two.
 (a) Missionaries of churches.
 (b) The glory of Christ.
- (2) Their reception at Corinth—what it should be; vs. 24.
 (a) A proof of Corinth's love, before the churches.
 (b) A confirmation of Paul's boast.

- (3) Reasons for sending them in advance; vs. 3, 5.
- (a) Negative: Not lack of interest at Corinth; vs. 1.
Proof:
(1) Paul's boast of their forehandedness; vs. 2.
(2) The inspiration of their zeal.
- (b) Positive: But to avoid the possibility of; vs. 3:
(1) Their being surprised in unreadiness.
(2) Their shame, and Paul's, at the discovery; vs. 4.
- (c) Positive: To assist in prearrangements; vs. 5.
(1) Specification: The before-promised benefit.
(2) Reason: That the readiness may be
(a) Neg. Not an expression of selfishness.
(b) Pos. But a real blessing.
4. *Regulated (governed) by the Law of the Harvest.*
- a. The Law in Nature—its two principles; vs. 6:
(1) Sow sparingly, reap sparingly;
(2) Sow liberally, reap liberally (with blessings).
- b. The law in Christian life:
(1) Sow liberally; vs. 7.
(a) Method: With deliberate purpose.
(b) Manner: With cheerfulness, not grudgingly.
Incentive: God loves a cheerful giver.
- (2) Reap liberally—God will make all grace abound; vs. 8.
(a) Intended result—Twofold;
(1) Contentment, because of sufficient for the givers' needs;
(2) Opportunity to abound in every good work.
- (b) Proof (from Scripture, Ps. 112:9):
The man who gives liberally prospers forever;
vs. 9.
Application: The Lord of the Harvest will supply seed and fruit; vs. 10.
- (c) Effect—upon the Jerusalem Christians:
(1) Many thanksgivings to God; vs. 11, 12.
Ground:
(a) Their needs are supplied.
(b) The proof of the givers' faith; vs. 13.
(2) Many prayers for the givers; vs. 14.
- Conclusion: Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift; vs. 15.

Chapters 8 and 9 take up the subject of the contribution for the Jerusalem Christians which was being made, under Paul's direction, by the churches of the four Roman provinces, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia. A reference to the subject The Contribution, in the Introduction, and to the outline of these

-
2. of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty
-

two chapters which is easily discovered from the text, makes detailed comment almost unnecessary. Paul takes occasion not only to urge upon the church at Corinth to be ready with their quota of the contribution, but also to lay down for them some very fundamental principles underlying the grace of liberality.

He begins by using the generosity of the churches of Macedonia as a glorious example, worthy of imitation by the churches of Achaia. Paul's tact in the use of praise and the stimulus of rivalry is beautifully illustrated in the two chapters.

8:1. **Moreover, brethren,** marks the transition to a totally different subject

The grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia. The *giving* of the churches of Macedonia has in its unselfishness and in its lavish generosity been like God's giving. *God's grace* is His gracious giving. It has found an expression in the giving of these churches. So Paul can speak of their generosity as being *the grace of God* exhibited in them.

As always, Paul speaks in terms geographical of Roman provinces. Macedonia was such a province. The churches in Macedonia of which Acts makes mention as Paul's churches are those of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 16-17).

2. **In much proof of affliction, i.e.,** in spite of the fact that they were being tested by serious troubles. **Joy and . . . poverty.** Out of that combination of great *joy and deep poverty* springs a lavish generosity. Poverty was one of the *afflictions* by which they were being tested.

Liberality. The marginal rendering *singleness* is not to be preferred to *liberality*, but it throws light on the real significance of the word. The same word is rendered *liberality* (9:11, 13; Rom. 12:8), *simplicity* (11:3), *singleness* (Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22), and these are its only occurrences in the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus uses the adjective *single*, *Let thine eye be single*; where the meaning is that the eyes of the heart, like the eyes in the head, must focus and see like a single eye, if the vision is to be perfect. The eyes must not attempt to look in two directions at the same time. So *singleness* is the faculty of undivided attention; it is the faculty of seeing straight. As applied to giving, *singleness* is that liberality which gives without grudging (9:7) and gives disinterestedly. It does not look in two directions at the same time.

3. abounded unto the riches of their ¹liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, *they gave* of their own accord,
4. beseeching us with much intreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the
5. saints: and *this*, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us by the
6. will of God. Insomuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also

¹ Gr., *singleness*.

3. **According to their power.** Better than *power* would be *ability*, *i.e.*, ability to give. To the top of their financial ability and beyond it they gave. The awkwardness of the long sentence (vss. 3-5), which by the use of italics in the English version is somewhat lessened, is more than counterbalanced by the gracefulness of the tribute Paul pays to the Macedonian churches. Their spontaneity takes the form of requesting the privilege of a part in this contribution. And much as Paul had expected of them they passed beyond his expectations, voluntarily offering to him themselves as well as their money for whatever part in the Lord's service they might be permitted to take.

4. **This grace and the fellowship.** *Fellowship* means *sharing*. It might be paraphrased: *begging us with much urgency for the opportunity of giving (grace), i.e., for their share (fellowship) in being of service (ministering) to their fellow Christians.* Possibly Paul, on account of their poverty, had tried to dissuade them from taking any large part in the contribution.

5. **Not as we had hoped, i.e.,** beyond Paul's expectation. **But first, i.e.,** most important of all. **To the Lord and to us.** They offered themselves to the service of Christ, and then put themselves at Paul's disposal for whatever part in Christ's service he might suggest.

By the will of God. This may be Paul's explanation of the influence back of such devotion. He referred every good influence to God's will. Or it may be the answer which the Macedonian churches gave to any protest on his part that they were giving beyond their ability, or that they ought not to put themselves without any reservation under his direction.

6. **Insomuch.** This introduces the result of the devotion and generosity of the Macedonian churches. By them Paul has been encouraged to urge upon Titus that he return to Corinth where

7. complete in you this grace also. But as ye abound in everything, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all earnestness, and *in*¹ your love to us, see
8. that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love.
9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became

¹ Some ancient authorities read *our love to you*.

at some previous time, not on his recent visit, he had laid the foundations for the Corinthians' part in the contribution, and bring the matter to a successful conclusion.

This grace also. The *grace* of giving to the Jerusalem Christians. By the *also* Paul tactfully implies that this is not the only *grace* of his Corinthian readers, and then he goes on to make specifications.

7. **But as ye abound in everything.** Paul chooses his words very carefully. He is tactful but discriminating. There are graces to which he does not refer, and which his readers lacked. In 1 Cor. 1:5 he mentions *utterance* and *knowledge* as the gifts in which they are *enriched*. To these he here adds *faith*, *earnestness* and *love to us*. (The reading of the text is much to be preferred to that of the margin.) In all of these he can honestly say that the Corinthians *abound*.

8. With verses 7 and 8 Paul turns from the illustration to the application, from Macedonia to Achaia. What *Macedonia* has done Achaia ought to do. He does not use the name of the province *Achaia* until 9:2, but there is no doubt that he is stimulating a generous rivalry between two provinces. He does it **not by way of commandment**. Though he often waived the right to command, he always insisted that as an apostle he had the authority (Philem. 8, 9).

The sincerity also of your love. Although he has just spoken of their love for him (vs. 7) in which they abound, verse 8 shows that it is not their personal loyalty to him that he wishes to bring to the proof, but their love for their fellow Christians who are in need. Generous giving is sufficient evidence of the sincerity of Christian love (see 1 Jn. 3:17-18). There is no doubt about Macedonia. Paul expects the same results when Achaia's love is put to the test.

9. **For** introduces the illustration which explains what he

poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.
 10. And herein I give *my* judgement: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning

means. Love which not only gives but *gives up* may be stamped as sterling. It stands the test.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This favorite phrase of Paul's has become specially familiar from his use of it as a closing benediction to his letters (1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 3:18; Philem. 25). Its use here may help to make his benedictions more vivid. The *gracious giving* (*grace*) of Christ they well knew. It was Paul's one great theme. The emphatic phrase is **for your sakes**. Because of his love for the Corinthians Christ gave himself and gave up his rich estate. It is the supreme example of genuine love (see 1 Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

He became poor. Paul's thought is almost surely of the riches that Christ had before the incarnation, which he gave up in order to become a man (Phil. 2:6-8). But neither here nor elsewhere does he elaborate this thought. His references to the preëxistent Christ are always vague and always to point another truth. The reference here is not to the poverty of the Nazareth home and the carpenter shop in particular, but to the eternal choice which Christ made of the glory of the cross instead of the glory of riches, honor and reputation. The temptation scene in his life illustrates that choice. Even in Col. 1:16-17 it is the preëminence rather than the preëxistence of Christ which is Paul's emphasis.

10. Verse 9 is parenthetical in its explanation. Verse 10 takes up the thought of verse 8. Paul does not *command*, but he gives his *judgment*. **This is expedient**. Their reputation is at stake. They cannot afford to let a good beginning end in a failure, not merely because of what others may think, but because of their own moral character.

A year ago, *i.e.*, last year; not necessarily twelve months ago. It was, however, some time before this, or there would be no point to his boast in 9:2.

Not only to do but also to will. It would seem more natural to say "not only to will but also to do." But Paul uses the other order intentionally. The Corinthians began their plans before the churches of any other province got started, and their beginning was not only a single act (*to do*) but a continued purpose (*to will*) to persist. Probably the *doing* had been interrupted by the church troubles through which the Corinthians

11. a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. But now complete the doing also; that as *there was* the readiness to will, so *there may be* the completion also out
 12. of your ability. For if the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as
 13. *he* hath not. For *I say* not *this*, that others may be
 14. eased, *and* ye distressed: but by equality; your

had just passed, but the purpose to do was still present. To this Paul appeals. Verse 11 makes this evident.

11. **Out of your ability, i.e.,** according to your means. The following verse explains the phrase. Paul is not insisting that they should give *beyond their power* as the Macedonians had done (vs. 3).

12. **For.** Again *for* introduces an explanation of that which is implied but not actually expressed. It is indirect. The implied thought is: I do not ask you to give beyond your ability—*for* it is the spirit of willingness that makes the giving acceptable, no matter whether a man has much to give or little.

According as a man hath. It is not necessary to supply the subject in italics *a man*. *The readiness* might be the subject. Then it would read: *if the spirit of willingness is in evidence it is acceptable according as it hath, not according as it hath not*. The latter phrase is awkward, but its meaning is plain. A tactful person receives a gift from a poor man graciously, thinking of what the man has to give, much or little, not thinking of his poverty. He accepts it with gratitude; he does not protest that the poor man cannot afford it.

13. **For.** Another explanatory *for*. It may be coördinate with the *for* of verse 12, and give another explanation for asking them to give only *according to their means*. But it is better to carry its explanation back to the plea for the contribution, *abound in this grace also* (vs. 7), *for* it carries the obligation of Christian reciprocity—*equality* he calls it. It has its negative and positive side. It does not mean an exchange of poverties, but only that those Christians who have are under obligation to help those who have not. Sometime the tables may be turned. Then the obligation will rest upon the Jerusalem Christians to send a contribution to Corinth.

14. **But by equality.** This is vague. It is better to drop the semicolon which follows it and render it something like this: *But on the principle of fairness* (equalization, equity, equality) *your abundance . . .*

- abundance *being a supply* at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your want; that there may be equality:
15. as it is written, He that *gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *gathered* little had no lack.
16. But thanks be to God, which putteth the same

That their abundance also. How the tables could be turned so that Jerusalem would have the privilege and duty of sending help to Corinth Paul does not say. It is simply a possible hypothesis to illustrate what he means by *equality* or fairness. In Rom. 15:27 Paul speaks of the Gentiles paying their *spiritual* indebtedness to Jerusalem with *carnal* coin. He is there referring to this same contribution. But that thought is entirely lacking here. He does not ask the Corinthians to pay debts, but to be generous and fair.

15. **As it is written.** An illustration taken from the manna-gathering of Ex. 16:18. The point of the illustration has nothing to do with generous giving, but only with a fair proportion of food for every man. It suggests itself to Paul as an Old Testament instance, not of a community of goods, but of a principle of equality in the supply of the necessities of life. Each man had just what, and only what he needed.

16. Abruptly Paul turns from the exhortation for a generous contribution on the part of Corinth, to a statement of the efficiency and honesty with which such a financial experiment has been and must be administered. Paul had good business principles. He was not careless in money matters. He took every precaution that there should be no suspicion that some of the money stuck to his fingers. Verses 8:16—9:5 have to do with this matter of efficient administration. They take up the manner and the agents. Verses 20—21 speak briefly of the manner. All the rest is about the agents.

Thanks be to God. The transition to the new thought is made by another of Paul's exclamations of gratitude. Again his word *thanks* is identified with his word *grace*. It is unfortunate that the English cannot reproduce the identity (see note on 2:14). Five times already in chapter 8 he has used *grace* for gracious giving. Here he uses the same word for gracious accepting, *viz., thanks*.

Titus is the first of the three agents and the only one mentioned by name. Paul refers to him as one who had *the same earnest care* for the Corinthians that he himself had. **Earnest**

17. earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For indeed he accepted our exhortation; but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own
 18. accord. And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel *is spread* through
 19. all the churches; and not only so, but who was also

care is the word that is rendered *earnestness* as one of Corinth's graces (vs. 7). This whole paragraph is an opportunity for the study of Paul's tact. He is graceful and generous in introducing his friends.

17. Titus needs no introduction to Corinth, but he receives a few words of well-deserved commendation.

For introduces an explanation that is only a confirmation of Titus' *earnest care*. He had *accepted Paul's exhortation* to go to Corinth, but nevertheless it was of his own volition and because of his great personal interest in the Corinthians that he went.

He went forth unto you. The reference is not to a former visit, but to the coming visit as bearer of this letter. A better reading would be, *he has gone forth, or he goes forth unto you*.

18. The brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches. The second of the agents is nameless. Not only is he appointed by Paul to accompany Titus to Corinth, but he had previously been elected by the churches to travel with Paul in the interests of this contribution. At least twelve different companions of Paul have been suggested as *the brother whom Paul leaves unnamed*. In the list are such names as Barnabas, Silas, Mark and Luke. There can be no certainty, but Luke is altogether the most probable. A strange silence in the Acts covers not only Luke but Titus, and also the whole matter of the contribution. Luke seems nevertheless to have been the closest of Paul's companions when the contribution was taken to Jerusalem as well as in the following years, and no one so well fits the requirements for this unnamed delegate as he. No reference of course is made to the Gospel according to Luke in the phrase *in the gospel*, for that gospel had not yet been written.

19. Appointed by the churches. What churches, Paul does not say. Possibly the churches of Asia and especially Ephesus, where Paul was located when the plans for the contribution were being made; but more probably the churches of Macedonia from among which he is now writing.

To travel with us. Most of the arrangements for the con-

- appointed by the churches to travel with us in *the matter of this grace*, which is ministered by us to the
 20. glory of the Lord, and *to shew* our readiness: avoiding this, that any man should blame us in *the matter*
 21. *of this bounty* which is ministered by us: for we take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight
 22. of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have

tribution seem to have been carried out by letter or by messenger. The *travel* was doubtless the voyage which would finally take the accumulated funds to Jerusalem. Other delegates are elected by the churches for the same purpose.

And to shew our readiness, *i.e.*, our earnest intention. This second delegate was chosen by the churches to travel with Paul for this purpose, *viz.*, the furtherance of God's glory and Paul's plan.

20. Verses 20 and 21 give an insight into Paul's business methods. He has asked the churches to appoint someone to travel with him *in the matter of this grace* in order to avoid any occasion of suspicion that he might himself have been careless in the handling of the money. There is always danger in being the sole administrator of trust funds. It is much to Paul's credit that he realized it.

This bounty, *i.e.*, this big sum of money which is being contributed.

21. For we take thought for things honorable. Paul adapts a quotation from Prov. 3:4. He was not satisfied merely to have a clear conscience; he was careful about appearances also. He made it a point to be honest not only as God saw him, but even as men saw him.

22. Our brother. The third member of the party. He too is unnamed. It is even more impossible to identify him than *the brother* of verse 18. Fewer guesses have been made, and with less general agreement. It is better to leave him, as Paul does, distinguished only by his sterling qualities.

Proved earnest. *Earnest* is a favorite word of Paul's in this epistle. It has in it the idea of haste, alacrity, eagerness, as well as earnestness. *Many times* and *in many things* Paul has tested this *brother* and found him eager and efficient. He knows the story of Corinth, though he may never have been there, he believes in the Corinthians, and he is specially eager to have a part in this mission.

- many times proved earnest in many things, but now much more earnest, by reason of the great confidence
23. which *he hath* in you. Whether *any inquire* about Titus, *he is* my partner and *my* fellow-worker to you-ward; or our brethren, *they are* the ¹ messengers of
24. the churches, *they are* the glory of Christ. ² Shew ye therefore unto them in the face of the churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf.

¹ Gr., *Apostles*.

² Or, *Shew ye therefore in the face . . . on your behalf unto them*.

23. **Whether any inquire about Titus.** Paul had a gift for recommendation. He is at his best in this verse. The bearers of this letter will lose nothing of prestige when the readers have finished reading it. Titus should be well known in Corinth by this time for his own services, but Paul puts his commendation in this form. He is Paul's *partner* and *associate* in all that concerns the church at Corinth.

Or our brethren. Of the two nameless envoys Paul uses two memorable descriptive phrases: **They are the messengers of the churches.** The word Paul used was *apostles*. As he was an *apostle* of Jesus Christ, these two men are *apostles of the churches*. *Missionaries* would perhaps be better than *messengers*. An *apostle* is one who is sent out on a special mission.

They are the glory of Christ. Not, *they are an honor to Christ*, but *they are the splendor of Christ*. Where they go, there goes the splendor of the character of Jesus Christ; they are *glorious* men. Nothing more genuinely complimentary was ever by way of introduction said of anyone.

24. **In the face of the churches,** *i.e.*, just as if the churches which they represent were there in person to witness the demonstration.

The proof. A literal rendering would be *demonstrate the demonstration of your love*. Paul wanted them to be *demonstrative* in its real sense.

Our glorying on your behalf. The reading of the margin is to be preferred. The Corinthians are urged to prove by actual demonstration that their love for Paul was genuine, and that all the boasts regarding them which Paul had made to the three delegates were warranted.

9. 1. For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is
 2. superfluous for me to write to you: for I know your
 readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of
 Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a
 year past; and ¹ your zeal hath stirred up ² very
 3. many of them. But I have sent the brethren, that

¹ Or, *emulation of you.*

² Gr., *the more part.*

9:1. With the beginning of chapter 9 Paul turns to the reasons for sending these three men in advance of his own coming. It is the third thing he says about these agents of the Contribution plan. He has spoken of the identity of the men, who and what they were; of their expected reception at Corinth; and now of the reasons for their going on at once, without waiting for him to go with them. There are three reasons; the first is negative, the other two are positive. First, it is not lack of interest at Corinth.

For. A study of Paul's use of *for* is always profitable. This *for* shows the close connection which chapter 9 has with chapter 8. It gives the reason for the confident tone of the preceding verse; as if he said: Prove to the churches that *our glorying on your behalf* is warranted. I know you will, *for* I am so sure of your readiness that it is *superfluous for me to keep writing to you* about the contribution.

The ministering to the saints, *i.e.*, the contribution for the aid of the Jerusalem Christians.

2. *For I know your readiness.* This *for* gives the proof that it is superfluous to keep writing. Having urged the example of the generosity of Macedonia (8:1-5) Paul now very tactfully confesses that he has been using the readiness of Achaia to spur on the Macedonians, boasting that Achaia had her preparations all made last year. He confesses also that the ardor of Achaia, as he had pictured it, had been largely instrumental in spurring on the Macedonians to their splendid liberality.

Achaia. The Roman province of which Corinth was the capital. Paul as usual speaks in terms of Roman provinces when using geographical terms. *For a year past.* See note on 8:10.

Your zeal, i.e., your fire, your ardor, as Paul had pictured it to Macedonia. The reading of the text is to be preferred to the alternative reading of the margin, both here and in the case of *very many of them.*

3. *But I have sent the brethren.* This is the first positive

- our glorying on your behalf may not be made void in this respect; that, even as I said, ye may be prepared: lest by any means, if there come with me any of Macedonia, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be put to shame in this confidence. I thought it necessary therefore to intreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your aforepromised ¹ bounty, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not of ² extortion.

¹ Gr., *blessing*.

² Or, *covetousness*.

reason for sending *the brethren*, Titus and his two companions, in advance. It is to avoid two possibilities, the possibility that after all Achaia might be surprised in unreadiness; and the possibility that both Achaia and Paul might be embarrassed in consequence.

That, even as I said, ye may be prepared. That they had been ready last year did not necessarily prove that they were ready now. Such readiness needs to be progressive and continuous.

4. **If there come with me any of Macedonia.** Paul is still planning to make his visit to Corinth. He will go from Macedonia, and some of those to whom he has been boasting about Achaia's readiness may accompany him.

Put to shame in this confidence, *i.e.*, embarrassed because of Paul's *confidence* in their *readiness*.

5. The second positive reason for sending *the brethren* in advance is that they may assist in the prearrangements.

That they would go before. This is the first mention of the purpose to send these three brethren in advance, although it is implied in verse 4. Here it is made very emphatic.

Make up beforehand, *i.e.*, before Paul comes to Corinth. Paul did not desire to use any money-getting expedients after he arrived. The three agents of the fund could be of use in a business way in helping to *make up*, not merely any deficiency, but all the accounts.

Your aforepromised bounty. *Bounty* is another word for the contribution. Paul has already called it a *grace* (8:4), a *fellowship in ministering* (8:4), a *bounty* (8:20, meaning big contribution), and in 9:12 he calls it a *service*. But here his

6. But this *I say*, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth ¹ bountifully shall
 7. reap also ¹ bountifully. *Let each man do* according as he hath purposed in his heart; not ² grudgingly, or

¹ Gr., with *blessings*.

² Gr., of *sorrow*.

word is *blessing*. *Bounty* does not give his meaning and the alternative reading is better. It is called *benefit*, a *benediction*, a *blessing*, and it ought to be made so in fact. The word *blessing* (*benediction*) originally refers to spoken praise or petition; then the spoken blessing finds more adequate expression in deeds.

And not of extortion. The rendering of the A. V. and of the margin is better, *covetousness*. *Extortion* would seem to imply that if they were not ready when Paul came he would resort to strenuous measures. But it is not a threat. Paul hopes that the three envoys will succeed in making this gift what it is meant to be, a real blessing, and not an expression of a spirit of selfishness. *Covetousness* is a better rendering than *extortion* only as it means a greedy desire to have more, and so to keep more, for oneself.

6. **But this I say.** Here begins the conclusion to what Paul has to say about this grace. It is governed by the law of the harvest.

He that soweth bountifully. The word *bountifully* makes a good contrast to *sparingly*, and it links the thought to the *bounty* of the preceding verse, but it misses the figure in Paul's words. The alternative reading *with blessings* gives the figure but is not quite accurate. A literal rendering would be *upon blessings*, and the picture in the phrase is of a sower who sows *on the theory of blessings*, with the purpose or intention of *blessings*, and hence *generously*. It is a picturesque metaphor, repeated in *shall reap also bountifully*. The only difference is that the sowing is on the theory of giving blessings, while the reaping will be on the theory of blessings deservedly received.

7. Here begins the application of Nature's law of the harvest to Christian life. Sowing upon the theory of giving blessings involves method, deliberate, purposeful, intelligent. **As he hath purposed in his heart** means as he hath deliberately chosen in advance to do. It is not impulsive or spasmodic. It also involves a cheerful manner, **not grudgingly**, or **of necessity**. *Grudgingly* is literally out of sorrow; *of necessity* is out of compulsion.

God loveth a cheerful giver. *Cheerful* in Paul's Greek is

8. of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may
9. abound unto every good work: as it is written,
 He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor;
 His righteousness abideth for ever.
10. And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing,

a very emphatic word. He quotes rather loosely from Prov. 22:8, where the thought is about sowing and reaping, and where, in the Greek version of the Old Testament, there is added to what is found in our English version, "A cheerful man and a giver God blesses."

8. **To make all grace abound unto you.** This is the Christian's reaping with blessings. *Grace* may mean every Christian grace, of which the grace of liberality is one; or, more probably, it means God's grace, God's gracious giving, including both spiritual and temporal gifts. The context favors the latter meaning. The intended result, the proof and the effect of this harvest of God's grace follow in the concluding verses.

That ye, having . . . may abound. It is a twofold result that God purposes. His gifts will result first in the contentment of the giver because he has sufficient for his own needs always, in everything (see Phil. 4:19). This may be actual or psychological. The man who gives liberally often loses any exaggerated idea of his own needs. And then second, he will *abound unto every good work*; he will have larger opportunity for giving.

9. **As it is written.** A quotation from Ps. 112:9, which is a description of *the man who feareth the Lord*. **He hath scattered abroad** is suggested to Paul's mind by the metaphor of the sower, and he uses the quotation as a Scripture proof that the liberal man has enough for himself and to give to others.

His righteousness in the Psalm means either *prosperity*, or else (see Matt. 6:1) *almsgiving, generosity*. These are not the usual meanings of *righteousness* with Paul; but this is a quotation.

10. **And he that supplieth seed.** Using Old Testament phrases Paul puts the personal application to the Scripture proof of verse 9. Is. 55:10 and Hos. 10:12 seem to be the sources of his language, but they are not quoted accurately. It is

11. and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in everything unto all ¹ liberality, which
 12. worketh through us thanksgiving to God. For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth
 13. also through many thanksgivings unto God; seeing

¹ Gr., *singleness*.

especially the word *righteousness*, which again means *bountiful giving*, that links this verse to verse 9. The Lord of the harvest who supplies the *seed to the sower* and gives the harvested grain as *bread for eating*, will also supply *seed to the giver* and *increase the fruits* of his bountiful giving.

11. Verses 9 and 10 are parenthetical. Verses 11 to 14 continue the thought of verse 8, and enumerate certain of the results that the bountiful *grace* of God will accomplish. But these results are in the receivers of the contribution instead of the givers. The effect on the Jerusalem Christians will be twofold; they will overflow with thanksgivings to God, and they will pray for their benefactors with earnest solicitation.

Ye being enriched. The *ye* goes back in its reference to the *ye* of verse 8, and the thought of verse 8 is repeated; *enriched in everything* by God's grace they will *abound unto every good work, i.e., unto all liberality*. But Paul repeats the thought in order to bring out the resultant effect on the Jerusalem Christians. It will be that which seemed to Paul always the result most to be desired—*many thanksgivings unto God* (cf. 1:11).

Through us, i.e., through Paul, who is the agent of the contribution.

Thanksgiving to God. This is the subject of verses 11-13. It is one of the very greatest of the anticipated results of the contribution. Verse 12 merely amplifies the thought.

12. For introduces an explanation which is merely confirmatory. It repeats the thought with additions for emphasis.

The ministration of this service. Another phrase to characterize the contribution. This word *service* has in it the idea of a public or community *service* rendered as an offering to God.

Not only filleth up. This is of course its main purpose, it goes without saying. Conditions of poverty at Jerusalem are to be alleviated. But of this part of the result Paul says very little. The chorus of thanksgivings which will ascend to God is his chief cause of gratitude.

that through the proving of *you* by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the ¹ liberality of
 14. *your* contribution unto them and unto all; while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of
 15. God in you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

¹ Gr., *singleness*.

13. **Seeing that . . . they glorify God.** This is the ground of their thanksgivings. It is twofold. It is for the evidence of true Christian faith in these Gentile benefactors as well as for the liberality of their contribution. **They glorify God** is equivalent to *thanksgivings unto God*.

The obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ. It is an elaborate phrase, equivalent to "your loyalty to Christ." The Jerusalem Christians were always suspicious of the Gentile converts in distant provinces. It is Paul's earnest hope, not altogether unwavering (see Rom. 15:30-31), that in this contribution Jerusalem will see an evidence that Gentiles become loyal and devoted Christians, obedient to every requirement of the Christ whom they have confessed.

Unto them and unto all. There is an implication here that the Jerusalem Christians were not the only subjects of the Corinthians' generosity, and that they were aware of it, or would learn of it.

14. **With supplication on your behalf.** This is the second anticipated result in the recipients of the contribution. They will make the contributors the object of their earnest prayer, with a genuine affection and longing for them which will lend effectiveness to their petitions. It will be one of the blessings accruing to the liberal givers.

The exceeding grace of God in you. And so Paul ends this section as he began it (8:1), with *the grace of God*. His conclusion lets us into the secret of his tremendous interest in this great undertaking. He hoped to see the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem praising God for the genuineness and generosity of the Gentile Christians in the provinces, and earnestly making request to God on their behalf.

15. **Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.** A typical conclusion! Another of Paul's spontaneous bursts of thanksgiving. See 1:3; 2:14; 8:16. Again his word for *thanks* is his word

for *grace*. Coming so close together he must have associated them in his thought.

By **unspeakable gift** he means a gift beyond all power of language adequately to describe. The gift is Christ; but it is Christ through whom God is bringing together, by bringing to himself, both Gentile and Jew. To Paul it was a wonderful vision of God's gracious love finding expression in giving. He could not put his thought of it into words. It was ineffable, *unspeakable*.

V. PAUL'S GLORYING; 10:1—12:13

1. *The Boldness Which Characterizes it*; 10:1—18

10. 1. Now I Paul myself intreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am
-

PAUL'S GLORYING

1. *The "boldness" which characterizes it.*
- a. Its caricature by his opponents.
The forms it takes:
- (1) He looks meek when present, is bold when absent; vs. 1.
 - (2) His letters are fierce, his speech of no account; vs. 10.
 - (3) He walks very humanly; no spiritual power; vs. 2.
- b. Its genuineness:
What he is in word and letter that he is in deed; vs. 11.
- c. Its proof (test): Not a thing to be desired; vs. 2.
- (1) Reason: Paul's estimate of its effect.
 - (2) Reason: It is no human warfare he wages; vs. 3.
 - (a) Concession: Though he is human.
 - (b) Evidence: His weapons are not human; vs. 4.
 - (c) Evidence: The nature of the warfare; vs. 5.
 - (1) Casting down self-exalted things.
 - (2) Taking captive thoughts.
 - (3) Holding reserves for discipline; vs. 6.
 - (3) Reason: No one looks or is any more Christ's than Paul looks and is; vs. 7.
 - (4) Reason: His authority is genuine; vs. 8.
 - (a) Equal to any boast he makes of it.
 - (b) No mere scarecrow; vs. 9.
 - (5) Reason: The sort of "glorying" to which it leads him; vs. 12.
 - (a) Negative: Not that of those who commend themselves.
 - (1) Measure: Using themselves as measure.
 - (2) Estimate: They are anything but wise.
 - (b) Negative: Not a "glorying" which leaps bounds; vs. 13.
 - (1) Manner: By overreaching itself; vs. 14;

(2) Manner: By appropriating others' labors;
vs. 15;

(3) Manner: By trespassing on others' grounds;
vs. 16.

(c) Positive: but a "measured" glorying; vs. 13.

(1) Measure: God's measuring-rod.

(2) Field: Even Corinth.

(3) Future anticipations: The parts beyond;
vs. 16.

Conclusion: Whom the Lord commends is approved; vs. 18.

Proof: (Scripture) Jer. 9:24.

With chapter 10 begins another subject. Chapters 10-13 form a separate section of the epistle, quite distinct from all that has preceded it. For a full statement of the difference and the probable inference the Introduction should be consulted.

It is assumed here that these four chapters were not a part of the original letter. They were written of course by Paul to Corinth, but they were a separate letter or a part of a separate letter. This separate letter may or may not have been the letter referred to in 2:4. If it is that letter, then it can be only a part of it, not the whole of it. This is the easiest hypothesis by which to explain the great difficulties which arise. It is not altogether satisfactory but it is workable.

The outline of this section of the epistle is made to follow in sequence the outline of chapters 1-9, for there is no evidence that anyone ever knew of the epistle being divided into parts. It could hardly be outlined as a separate letter for it lacks so much that an entire letter would necessarily have. That Paul had no very clear outline of his own in mind when he wrote the letter is proved by the difficulty of making a satisfactory outline for him. His thought is occasionally involved, and his language, always vigorous, is sometimes vague. Much of the vagueness is due to his veiled use of quoted words and phrases, references which must have been perfectly clear to his readers, but are not to us. They may have been used of Paul to his face when he was recently in Corinth. Some of them may have been reported to him. It is impossible to be sure of them all, but the following list includes most of them, the words "bold" and "boast" ("glory") being the chiefest:

- 10: 1 "being absent he is of good courage";
"when present he is meek enough."
2 walks very humanly (*according to the flesh*).
8 considerable of a boaster (*glory somewhat abundantly*).

- 9 terrifying in his letters.
 10 his letters are strong but his presence is weak.
 12 very daring (*bold*) in commending himself.
 13 a measureless boaster.
 14 outreaches himself.
 15-16 trespasses on other men's preserves; uses a private measuring-rod.
 11:1; 16-19 folly; foolishness; foolish; fool.
 6 rude in speech.
 12:14 a heavy burden on the churches.
 16 being tricky he caught them.
 19 always defending himself.

As Paul uses these phrases and rings the changes on them his emotions are varied and deep. There is much of pathos and sorrow; there is grim humor and playful humor; there is indignation; there is some bitterness; at times he is very stern, and again he is almost plaintive in his pleading. It is very difficult to see how he could have written in this way from Macedonia after Titus' arrival and after the receipt of his good news. It is not altogether easy, on the other hand, to find a description of this letter in the "I wrote unto you with many tears," of 2:4.

10:1. Now I Paul myself intreat you. This certainly sounds like the heart of one of Paul's letters. The *now* is not the introductory word of the beginning of a letter, and the *I Paul* is one of Paul's mannerisms. It is found five times, as here, in the heart of a letter (Gal. 5:2; Eph. 3:1; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:18; Philem. 19). In addition he three times names himself at the close of a letter, the *salutation of me Paul with my own hand* (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). If this section was written at a different time from chapters 1-9 the letter can scarcely have begun at this point. Something has been lost.

Intreat is the same word that in 1:3-7 was rendered so often *comfort*. The idea of *intreaty* is of course paramount here, though *admonish* or *call on you* would give the tone better. The change of tone from the preceding part of the letter is very noticeable, and it comes with absolute abruptness. **By the meekness and gentleness of Christ.** This is one of the few references in Paul's letters to the earthly life and character of Jesus. There can be no doubt that it is to the life of Jesus he refers. Jesus was at times most stern and outspoken in his denunciations. Paul calls on his readers by the **gentleness of Christ** not to force him to use the stern denunciations of his Christ-given authority.

- lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you: yea, I beseech you, that I may not when present shew courage with the confidence wherewith I count to be bold against some, which count of us as if we walked according to the flesh.
3. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war
 4. according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God

I who. Here follows a quotation. This is what had been said of him in Corinth. "When he is among us he is abject; when he is far away he is courageous against us." It is difficult to decide whether this should be read with the tone of one deeply pained and hurt but yearning, or of one indulging in bold irony and threat.

2. **Yea, I beseech you.** Without finishing his first sentence he changes his verb from *intreat* (admonish) to *beseech* (beg of you) and completes it with the phrase used in quoting their insults, and with another. It is not a graceful sentence but it is vigorous. "Do not compel me, I beg of you, to be courageous the next time I am among you with the kind of daring I can count on myself to display against some who count on me to display low, human motives and conduct." **Against some.** These *some* are the cause of the whole trouble. There are to be many references to them between this and the end of the epistle. They reckon Paul to be one who is governed not by spiritual principles and high ideals, but by low, worldly, unspiritual motives. **According to the flesh** is the opposite of *according to the spirit*. Here it seems to mean *humanly*, weakly, without spiritual power or moral courage. The very mention of *the some* and their "*count of us*" rouses Paul to eloquent indignation.

3. **For.** The test of Paul's *courage*, or *boldness* is not a thing to be desired, *for*—then follows a second reason. **Though we walk in the flesh.** He changes the phrase and the thought but keeps the word. *In the flesh* is not *according to the flesh*. He does not walk *according to the flesh*; he does walk *in the flesh*. He is human, but he is not under human leadership; it is no human war that he is engaged in.

4. **For** introduces a parenthetical explanation of what he means by a *war not according to the flesh*.

The weapons—are not of the flesh. It is the weakness of

5. to the casting down of strong holds); casting down
¹ imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted
 against the knowledge of God, and bringing every
 thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ;
 6. and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience,

¹ Or, *reasonings*.

the flesh that is emphatic here. They are not human weapons, weak and ineffective, but mighty before God. The phrase is equivalent to *exceeding mighty, i.e., mighty as God sees might*. *Mighty* is in contrast with the *weakness* implied in *of the flesh*. The contrast of spiritual weapons with weapons of the flesh is not lacking. **To the casting down of strongholds.** Although verse 4 is parenthetical its thought of offensive weapons powerful enough to demolish castles and fortresses leads to the details of the weapon in verse 5.

5. **Casting down imaginations.** The *casting down* agrees grammatically with the *we* of verse 3 (note Paul's return to the plural *we* after being so emphatic with the singular *I*), not with the *weapons* of verse 4.

Paul keeps the military figure. There are three phases of his military strategy: (1) He assaults strongholds; (2) he takes captives; (3) he holds reserves for emergencies. He seems to have definitely in mind the situation at Corinth, what he has tried to do to meet it, and what he plans to do. He does not mention persons as his opponents but theories and systems. These were the views of the authors of much of the trouble at Corinth. They seem to have been of the "Judaizing" party, but nothing very definite can be discovered from Paul's figurative language here.

Reasonings is a little nearer the meaning than *imaginings*, for the strongholds he will cast down. The word means calculations, reckonings. It may include lofty flights of imagination as among the *high things that exalt themselves* against the knowledge of God. It is some teaching that does not find its *knowledge of God* in the *face of Jesus Christ* (4:6). Paul's spiritual weapons can knock down any fortress heights that are not built on that foundation. **Bringing every thought into captivity, i.e., capturing for Christ every device and purpose that opposed Christ's full and complete authority.** Christ, by these Judaizers and their followers, was not given His proper place.

6. **And being in readiness.** This implies that most of the church will give themselves up when Paul turns his weapons

7. when your obedience shall be fulfilled. ¹ Ye look at the things that are before your face. If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he
8. is Christ's, so also are we. For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not

¹ Or, *Do ye look . . . face?*

against them. But there will be some, the leaders, who will not. For them Paul will have reserves for administering the punishment due to disobedience. Can this be the situation that Titus left at Corinth, and over which Paul so greatly rejoiced when Titus brought him news of it?

7. **Ye look at the things that are before your face.** The declarative form is better than the imperative, or than the interrogative which is suggested in the marginal alternative. Each of the three is possible. The phrase **before your face** is the same that was rendered in verse 1 *in your presence*. The reference probably is to their estimate of Paul when he was with them. You are quick with your judgments of those who are *in your presence*, Paul says, and you find some to be Christ's because they are emphatic in their assurance that they are his. (These are perhaps men who had had some personal touch with Jesus during his life, or with apostles who had, and who discredited Paul because he had not.) Understand that I am Christ's just as much as they are. **If any man.** Another reference to the *some* of verse 2; any one of his opponents.

8. **For.** Verse 7 gave a third reason why the church at Corinth will find it wiser not to put Paul's "boldness" to the test. Verse 8 with its *for* introduces another, a fourth. These "reasons," as seen in the outline, follow the various "forms" that the caricature of Paul's boldness takes. See the Outline. Reason (2) takes up form (3); reason (3) takes up form (1); reason (4) takes up form (2).

Though I should glory somewhat abundantly (or, more abundantly than I have as yet) **concerning our authority . . . I shall not be put to shame.** No matter how much importance he attaches to his authority, when it comes to the test he will have no ground for embarrassment. Paul adds, parenthetically, that his authority was given him by the Lord not to demolish, as he is threatening to do, but to build up.

- for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame:
 9. that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by
 10. my letters. For, His letters, they say, are weighty
 and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his
 11. 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.
 12. For we are not bold ¹ to number or compare ourselves

¹ Gr., to judge ourselves among, or to judge ourselves with.

9. **By my letters.** The authority to which he refers has been exercised so far chiefly in letters. To what epistles he refers it is impossible to say. It does not necessarily refer to any particular letter, but possibly to his reputation as a letter-writer. Paul is evidently quoting a charge made against him that he tried *by his letters to terrify*, or to frighten them out of their wits. Of course if 2 Corinthians is all one letter, this might be a reference to the letter of 2:4.

10. **For.** This *for* merely introduces a further quotation from his opponents' charges, to illustrate what he means by his "terrifying letters." They said his authority was a sort of paper authority, but when he got face to face with them it had all oozed out; neither his looks nor his speech were prepossessing. **They say** makes the quotation very clear.

11. **Let such a one reckon, i.e.,** one of the *they* who say such things. The boldness of authority which his opponents caricatured is genuine and well grounded and will be found to prove its genuineness if put to the test.

12. **For.** With this *for* is introduced one of the most involved and obscure paragraphs in the epistle. The connection, however, is evident. The *for* gives an added explanation of the statement that it is not desirable to put his boldness to the test (vs. 2). It is not desirable for his boldness is not like that of his opponents, founded on conceit, but founded on his God-given authority. The word *bold* in verse 2 is repeated only in verse 12. Paul says that the sort of *glorying* to which his *boldness* leads him is (1) not like that of his opponents; it is not a glorying of self-commendation, nor one which overreaches itself and trespasses on the fields and the labors of others; but (2) it is a "measured" *glorying*, measured by God's measuring-rod, and glorying only in what God's measurements permit him to be and do. It is therefore a *glorying in the Lord*. **We are not**

- with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding. But we will not glory beyond *our* measure, but according to the measure of the ¹ province which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves overmuch, as though we reached not unto you: for we ² came even as far as unto you in the gospel of

¹ Or, *limit*. Gr., *measuring-rod*. ² Or, *were the first to come*.

bold. This is sarcasm; we have not the courage, do not dare: **To number or compare ourselves with certain.** There is a play on words in the Greek in *number or compare*. It has sometimes been rendered into English to *pair or compare ourselves with certain*. The rendering of the margin is literal, but not as satisfactory as that of the text. Paul has not the "daring" to class himself with those "bold" men, his opponents, (certain of them), whose whole standard of measurement and comparison for themselves is to be found in themselves. **Are without understanding.** He cannot help adding that they have no sense.

13. **But we will not glory beyond our measure.** Evidently his opponents in Corinth had accused Paul of doing just that, of being "off his beat," trespassing on someone's else "preserve," and so glorying *beyond his* measure. What business had he in Corinth anyway? His answer is that God did the measuring for him, laying out his field, and that, since he came to Corinth first, his opponents are the trespassers. **The measure of the province.** The word *province* is literally *measuring-rod*. It is something like the English word "rule" in its various uses. From being the measuring-stick it comes to mean the length or area measured, and so *limits* (as in the margin) or *field* or *province*. God measured his *province* for him, and it included Corinth.

14. He did not overreach himself or overstep his boundaries when he preached the *gospel of Christ* to Corinthians. **Came even as far as unto you.** The alternative rendering of the margin is preferable, *were the first to come*. He was first on the field; it was therefore his "*province*," not only by right of discovery, as it were, but because God had drawn, to include Corinth, the line that marked the boundary of Paul's field for *gospel* preaching.

15. Christ: not glorying beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men's labours; but having hope that, as your faith groweth, we shall be magnified in you according
16. to our ¹ province unto *further* abundance, so as to preach the gospel even unto the parts beyond you, *and* not to glory in another's ¹ province in regard of
17. things ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let
18. him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

¹ Or, *limit*. Gr., *measuring-rod*.

15. Verse 14 is parenthetical. Verse 15 takes up and repeats the thought of verse 13, *not glorying beyond our measure*. He adds as an explanation of *beyond our measure, in other men's labours*. These Judaizing opponents might accuse him of trespassing, or of glorying in the work that they, not he, had done. When he wrote letters and paid visits to Corinth from his headquarters in Ephesus, he might seem to them to be trespassing. But he had appropriated Corinth as his "*province*" years before. **But having hope.** An involved sentence, the simple meaning of which seems to be that he hoped when the Corinth field had been sufficiently tilled, his "*province*" might be again enlarged, God's measuring-rod circumscribing for him still more distant and unoccupied fields like Italy or even Spain. **We shall be magnified in you.** It rests with the Corinthians, Paul thinks, whether and when his "*province*" becomes enlarged.

16. If their faith grows to maturity there will be no further need of the one who planted (1 Cor. 3:6). He can be released to plant another garden further to the west, **even unto the parts beyond you.** **Things ready to our hand, i.e.,** a "*province*" of another, already tilled—plowed and planted. Paul had no desire to occupy another man's field. He was by nature a pioneer.

17. **But he that glorieth.** Once before to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:31) Paul has used this Scripture quotation. It seems to be suggested by the language of Jer. 9:23-24, though the quotation is not exact. He justifies his own *glorying* as being a *glorying in* the Lord, because to the Lord he ascribes all the direction of his work and all his success. The *glorying* of his opponents is in themselves (vs. 12).

18. **Is approved, i.e.,** as coins or metals are accepted as genuine. Not self-commendation but God's commendation marks a man as sterling (cf. 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12).

2. *The Grounds Which Excuse It*; 11:1—12:13

11. 1. Would that ye could bear with me in a little foolishness: ¹ nay indeed bear with me. For I am jealous

¹ Or, *but indeed ye do bear with me.*

2. *The grounds which excuse it*; 11:1—12:13.

Intro. His excuse for "this little folly" (*i.e.*, for talking about the grounds); vs. 1.

- (1) His jealousy for them; vs. 2.
 (a) Genuineness: God's jealousy.
 (b) Reason: Their betrothal to Christ and their tendency to prove false; agent: the same old serpent; vs. 3.
- (2) His jealousy for his apostleship.
 (a) Its rival with them—one who, vs. 4:
 (1) Preaches another Jesus than Paul's.
 (2) Gives another spirit than Paul's.
 (3) Brings another Gospel than Paul's.
 (4) Is put up with beautifully by them (ironical).
 (b) Its exalted character (worth guarding); vs. 5.
 By comparison—not a whit behind the "preëminent" apostles.
 (1) Exception—oratory; vs. 6.
 (2) Specification—knowledge.
- a. His gratuitous preaching at Corinth.
 (1) The form it took—a free "good news" of God; vs. 7, 10.
 (2) The cost it involved—"robbing" other churches; vs. 8.
 (a) Manner—when absent, taking wages (rations).
 Reason—to minister to Corinth.
 (b) Manner—when present, receiving gifts from Macedonia; vs. 9.
 Reason—to keep from being a burden.
- (3) The ground of its expediency.
 (a) Negative: Not lack of love—God knows; vs. 11.
 (b) Positive: but to checkmate false boasters; vs. 12.
 (1) Their identity—false apostles, dishonest workmen, masqueraders; vs. 13.
 (2) Their authority—ministers of Satan; vs. 15, whose example they follow:

- (a) He, an angel of light; vs. 14.
 (b) They, ministers of righteousness; vs. 15.
 (3) Their end—according to their works.
- b. His honor in the flesh (as a man); vs. 18.
 Intro. Leniency toward "a little folly."
 (1) Due because of its nature; vs. 16.
 (a) Not really foolishness.
 (b) Yet not inspired wisdom; vs. 17.
 (c) Just boasting.
- (2) Due because of their superior wisdom, vs. 19,
 witnessed by their putting up with anyone, vs. 20:
 (a) who makes a tool of them.
 (b) who lives off them.
 (c) who dupes them ("gets" them).
 (d) who takes on airs.
 (e) who "skins" them to their face.
- (3) Due because Paul is not equal to such wisdom; vs. 21.
- (1) In his ancestry and race—a Hebrew, an Israelite, seed
 of Abraham, as much as they; vs. 22.
- (2) As a minister of Christ; vs. 23.
 (a) Degree: Beyond them (speaking in madness).
 (b) Proof: Attested by his experiences of suffering.
 (1) At the hands of magistrates and mobs.
 (a) In general:
 (1) Prisoner.
 (2) Lashes.
 (3) "Deaths."
 (b) In particular:
 (1) From Jews—stripes—five times; vs.
 24.
 (2) From Romans—rods—three times;
 vs. 25.
 (3) Stoned—once.
- (2) From travel, danger, toil and exposure.
 (a) Shipwrecks—three times.
 (b) In the sea—twenty-four hours.
 (c) Perils of rivers, sea, wilderness, city; vs. 26.
 (d) Perils of men; robbers, Jews, Gentiles,
 false brethren.
 (e) Exposure and toil; exhaustion, sleepless-
 ness, hunger, thirst, cold; vs. 27.
- (3) From care and anxiety for all the churches;
 vs. 28.
 (a) Sympathy for the weak; vs. 29.
 (b) Indignation at wilful injuries.

- (4) One special incident (ludicrous weakness)—
 over a wall in a basket.
 (a) Place: Damascus.
 (b) Occasion: Search made for him.
 (c) Officer: Ethnarch of Aretas.
 (d) Escape: Through a window.
 (c) Asseveration of truthfulness—God knows; vs. 31.
- (3) In his visions and revelations; vs. 1.
 Intro. The necessity and unfitness of glorying:
 (1) A particular instance:
 (a) Time: Fourteen years ago.
 (b) Condition: A man in Christ; vss. 2, 3.
 (1) Either in the body
 (2) or out of the body, God knows.
 (c) Attending circumstances:
 Caught up to the third heaven, Paradise;
 vs. 4.
 (d) Nature of revelation—secrets; words that
 man cannot utter.
 (e) Result: A real cause for glorying.
 (1) Ground: Not self, but such a man of
 visions; vs. 5.
 (2) Specification: Just the plain truth would
 be no “folly.” It is so big a thing;
 vs. 6.
 (3) Treatment—unused.
 Reason: lest he be estimated by revela-
 tions, not character.
- (2) The weakness that counterbalances—a thorn in the
 flesh; vs. 7.
 (a) Nature: Satan’s messenger to buffet him.
 (b) Purpose: That he may not be exalted too
 much.
 (c) Permanence: He must keep it; vs. 8.
 Proof:
 (1) He prayed three times for its removal.
 (2) The answer was “No.”
 Reason: God’s grace is sufficient.
 Con. He keeps it.
- (d) Effect on Paul: He glories in it.
 (1) End: That Christ’s power may cover
 him; vs. 9.
 (2) Resulting attitude: He chooses, vs. 10:
 (a) Item: Weaknesses; insults, etc., for
 Christ’s sake.

(b) Reason: When he is weak he is strong.

Conclusion: The excuses for this "folly" of glorying; vs. 11:

(1) Compulsion—They drove him to it.

(2) The truth about his apostleship; vs. 12.

(a) Rank: Not behind the "preëminent" apostles.

(b) Evidence: The signs of apostleship wrought among them.

(1) In general: Signs, wonders, powers.

(2) In particular: The church at Corinth—in no way inferior to others; vs. 13.

One exception—he was not a "burden."

11:1. With the beginning of chapter 11 Paul's tone changes a little. The cause of the change is that his thought focuses now on the church that he loves, rather than on the persons in the church who have caused so much trouble. He has them still in mind, but he addresses the whole church. His tone is gentler, more tender. Though the current of his emotion still runs swift and deep, its surface ripples with an occasional smile. There is much playful humor in his words, as well as intense seriousness and occasional irony.

The word "glorying" is always uppermost. That is what he is talking about. In chapter 10 it was "boldness" which characterized his glorying. Now he turns to the grounds which excuse it. After a few words about the excuse he has for talking about it at all—he calls it "this little piece of folly"—he gives two grounds: the first (8-15) is his gratuitous preaching. He had worked for nothing. The second is his honor *according to the flesh, i.e.,* as a man, what he is, what he has done, what he has received and what he has suffered. **Would that ye could bear with me.** With a tone tender in its fatherliness and almost childlike in its plaintiveness he turns to the church as a whole, the church which is his child, his daughter, whom he has betrothed to Christ, and begs her to be patient with *a little piece of folly* (nonsense) on his part. **Nay indeed bear with me.** The rendering of the margin is preferable (the indicative), *but indeed ye do bear with me.*

2. **A godly jealousy.** It is literally *a jealousy of God, or God's jealousy.* Probably he means a God-like jealousy, pure and without sinful human motives. To the Old Testament reader God's jealousy was a familiar phrase (Ex. 20:5; 34:14). **For I espoused you to one husband.** Paul uses a figure for the relation of the church to Christ which was used in a veiled way by Jesus (Matt. 25:1-3; 9:15); and in Jn. 3:29; and one which

- over you with ¹ a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you *as* a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your ² minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. For if he that

¹ Gr., *a jealousy of God.*

² Gr., *thoughts.*

came to be a very popular metaphor (Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2; 22:17). In Eph. 5:25 Paul speaks of Christ presenting the church to himself as a bride. But here his figure is of himself as a father arranging the betrothal of the church to Christ. Like a father he has a noble jealousy that his daughter shall be worthy of her husband in all purity and love.

3. **But I fear.** The great anxiety Paul felt for the church at Corinth was lest teachers with false motives and a false message should so influence the church that it should be neither simple (*i.e.*, single) in its love, nor pure in its loyalty to Christ. They were Satan's agents of infidelity. **As the serpent beguiled Eve.** There is no reason for finding in the illustration anything more than a reference to the story of Gen. 3:1-13. (It is barely possible that there is a reference to a Rabbinical legend that the serpent disguised as an angel seduced Eve from her faithfulness to Adam. *Apocalypse of Moses.*) Not until the period of the Wisdom Literature was the serpent identified with Satan. Paul seems to associate them here. Nowhere else in the New Testament is there mention of Eve.

4. **For if he that cometh.** Here is Paul's second excuse for his *little foolishness*. Not only is he jealous for the church as Christ's bride, but he is jealous for his own office and message, his apostleship and his gospel. First he speaks of his rival, the preacher of another gospel (vs. 4); and then of the exalted character of his own office and gospel (vss. 5, 6). **He that cometh** can scarcely refer to any one individual. Paul uses this general term to refer to the group of teachers who were reactionaries and who are called Judaizers. What Paul puts ironically into the form of a conditional sentence is really a statement of fact. **Another Jesus.** He does not say another Christ (see note on 4:10-14). Only there and in this verse is the name Jesus found in this epistle without the accompanying title Christ or Lord. **A different spirit.** Paul's preaching of Jesus and the reception by his converts of the spirit were a part of the "gospel"

- cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or *if* ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel, which ye did
5. not accept, ye do well to bear with *him*. For I reckon that I am not a whit behind ¹ the very chief-
6. est apostles. But though *I be* rude in speech, yet *am I* not in knowledge; nay, in everything we have

¹ Or, *those preëminent apostles.*

which was peculiarly his own. It was a proclamation of the good news that the cross of Christ and all the gifts of God's grace were for Gentiles as much as for Jews. Against the whole world Paul was willing to defend that thesis, and he burned with indignation against those who substituted for it any other kind of spirit or gospel. See Gal. 1:8-9; Col. 1:26-28. **Ye do well to bear with him.** It is literally, *ye bear with him beautifully*. The statement is of course ironical. Like the Galatians they were inclined to follow any new and fascinating propaganda, and quickly to turn their backs on their first teacher. This was true of at least a strong element in the church.

5. **For.** The *for* gives the reason for the negative statement implied in the irony of verse 4. It is not a beautiful thing to turn their backs on the Jesus, spirit and gospel which Paul had preached *for* the self-styled apostles to whom they have turned are in no way superior to Paul. **The very chiefest apostles.** If this is the correct rendering it is a reference of course to Peter, James and John, and Paul is maintaining the authority of his office as equal to theirs. The marginal rendering *those preëminent apostles* is, however, the better. **Very chiefest** means literally "*over much*" or "*more than too much*," and is far more likely an ironical designation of the Judaizing leaders to whom he has already referred, and whom he characterizes as *false-apostles* (vs. 13). In 12:11 the same phrase is repeated—*over much apostles*, and with the same reference. These men must have assumed the title *apostle*.

6. **But though I be rude in speech.** This seems to be the one exception Paul makes. The "over much" apostles may be more eloquent orators than he. But **in knowledge** they are not superior. For the proof of this he calls on his record to bear witness. His teaching has been public. Those who have listened to him can judge of his intimate knowledge of the truth he teaches.

7. made *it* manifest among all men to you-ward. Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of
 8. God for nought? I robbed other churches, taking
 9. wages of *them* that I might minister unto you; and
-

7. I preached to you the gospel of God for nought. It is quite possible that those hostile to Paul used to his discredit his principle of gratuitous preaching. And, if so, this paragraph may be a defense of another trait in which he was declared to be inferior to the self-styled apostles. But what he says of it in verse 10, *no man shall stop me of this glorying*, shows that it was one of the things in his ministry of which he was proud. In the outline it is best to make this the former of two grounds which excuse his "glorying." There is still the irony in his tone as he says, *did I commit a sin in humiliating myself for your elevation*. Slavery in the large cities of the empire had made manual labor by a freeman not only a disgrace but almost an impossibility. It was not so among the Jews in general, but in the eyes of Gentiles Paul humiliated himself by working with his hands as he did at Corinth, Thessalonica and Ephesus (Acts 18:3; 1 Thess. 2:9; Acts 20:34). Though Paul emphasizes the support he received from other churches rather than from his tent-making, there is a distinct reference to the latter in the word *abasing*. The "over much" apostles said of him that a teacher who would teach for nothing was worth just about what he charged—he was no worthy apostle.

8. I robbed other churches. *Robbed* is a strong word and primarily a military word. So is *wages*, which means literally *rations*. Paul says he pillaged other churches to get the rations which were due him in Corinth. The Macedonian churches were generous, but not rich. See 8:1-2. In accepting their generosity Paul felt as if he robbed them.

It is possible that the reference here is to the church in Syrian Antioch. Paul's missionary campaigns started from Antioch and ended at Antioch. Very likely something of the financial burden was borne by Antioch.

9. And when I was present with you. The emphasis on *when I was present* implies that verse 8 refers to *when he was absent*. The reference is either to supplies he brought with him when he came to Corinth, or to the more remote financing of his campaigns by Antioch or by other churches. *I was not a burden on any man*. Paul uses a rare word. It is either a

- 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
10. burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of
11. this glorying in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore?
12. because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I

technical word, perhaps medical, or a colloquial word with a slang meaning. It seems to mean to reduce to a state of torpor; perhaps to squeeze into numbness (the English "narcotic" is derived from its stem); and so possibly it is the equivalent of "to sponge on." **The brethren.** Probably Silas and Timothy (see Acts 18:5).

10. **As the truth of Christ is in me.** This is not strictly an asseveration but its force is equivalent to one. Literally it should be rendered *the truth of Christ is in me that this glorying of mine shall not be stopped, i.e.,* it is Christ's spirit of truth in me which affirms that—(cf. 1:18).

This glorying, i.e., in his gratuitous preaching. He glories in it and nothing can make him ashamed of it or sorry for it. **In the regions of Achaia.** *Regions* is a word peculiar to Paul (cf. Rom. 15:23; Gal. 1:21). Achaia, the Roman province, is in contrast with Macedonia (vs. 9). It is not to the Macedonians that he boasts of gratuitous preaching in Achaia.

11. **Wherefore?** "Why do I insist on preaching without remuneration? God knows it is not because I do not love you." It is a mark of real friendship and affection to be willing to accept favors. His opponents in Corinth had said that if Paul really cared for the church as he said he did he would have accepted his support from it.

12. **But.** Here is the real ground for its expediency as Paul sees it. It is to checkmate those who are seeking an opening through which to injure his influence. **Occasion.** Better *the occasion, i.e.,* the point of attack from which they hoped to hurt him. **That . . . they may be found even as we.** It is much better to read this as the *occasion* which they desire. Omit the semicolon after *occasion*, and let it read: *An opportunity to be found, in the matter in which they glory, just like us.* The meaning is uncertain, but this rendering would explain it in this way: The "over-much" apostles considered it a sign of apostolic authority to let the church carry the burden of their support.

- do, that I will do, that I may cut off ¹ occasion from them which desire an occasion; that wherein they
 13. glory, they may be found even as we. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning them-
 14. selves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light.
 15. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.
 16. I say again, Let no man think me foolish; but if

¹ Gr., *the occasion of them.*

Although they tried to discredit Paul's apostleship because he did not follow their example, they nevertheless felt the strength of his position of independence and chafed under it. If they could ridicule or abuse Paul into accepting support then they would *be found even as he*. Paul understood their motive and checkmated it. As Paul seems never to have accepted support at Corinth, this ground for its expediency has to do only with recent conditions. He will not be stopped in this glorying by the recent opposition: *What I do that I will do*.

13. Three things Paul says about *those who desire an occasion*: (a) Their identity. They are **false apostles**; dishonest workers; masqueraders, **fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ**. This is direct, personal and unequivocal. There is no dodging of the issue. He will not give *such men* any opportunity to put their apostleship on an equal footing with his own.

14. **And no marvel**. This introduces (b) Their authority. They are ministers of Satan, whose example they follow. **Even Satan masquerades as an angel of light**. Satan was the Prince of Darkness (Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13). When he masqueraded it was as an *angel of light*. If Paul had any particular tradition in mind we cannot locate it.

15. **His ministers**. Another very definite statement as to what these false apostles are. They are *Satan's ministers* masquerading, like their master, as *ministers of righteousness*. **Whose end**. This is the third thing, (c), their end; it shall be according to their works, *i.e.*, not according to their masquerading costume, the thing they pretend to be, but according to what they actually are.

16. **I say again**. In verse 1, to which the *again* refers, he

ye do, yet as foolish receive me, that I also may
 17. glory a little. That which I speak, I speak not after
 the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of
 18. glorying. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I
 19. will glory also. For ye bear with the foolish gladly,

had asked the readers to bear with him *in a little foolishness*. He is even there looking forward to this recital of his grounds *in the flesh* for glorying. Paul's extreme reluctance in making this recital is very evident from the difficulty he finds in getting started. Verse 16 introduces, in the outline, the second of the grounds which excuse his "glorying." This second ground is *his honor in the flesh*. Verses 16-21, however, are an introduction to this recital. They contain a plea for leniency toward his "little folly." **Let no man think me foolish.** This is not exactly what he said before (vs. 1), but his plea is not very different. If they must think him *foolish*, as he himself feels, yet they can be lenient in their judgment and listen to his *foolishness*. **That I also may glory a little.** It is the "glorying" of others that has driven him to talk this way about his own claims. He did not begin it.

17. **Not after the Lord.** In most that Paul had to say he spoke *after the Lord*. But for this glorying that is to follow he takes, in his own human capacity, the full responsibility. It seems so foolish, that he does not wish to compromise his Lord and his message by charging this up to him. **In this confidence of glorying, i.e.,** in this confident glorying. If he must boast he will boast just as confidently, with just as much assurance, as his boasting opponents.

18. **After the flesh.** Here for the first time he tells just what line his glorying is to take. It is not now his authority as an apostle or his spiritual power of which he speaks. It is his claim to honor as a man. It includes his ancestry, his endurance of physical hardships in his ministry, and the special visions and revelations which have been granted him. These are not the highest grounds for glorying; they are rather low; they are *after the flesh*. But as the Judaizers boast of such things, Paul will descend to their level and show that he is not a whit behind those "preëminent" apostles even in such things.

19. **For ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise.** This of course is a keen sarcasm. He goes on to show how "wise" they have been. Only the foolish will be impatient with foolishness. Wise men can afford to be patient.

20. being wise *yourselves*. For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you *captive*, if he exalteth himself, if he
 21. smiteth you on the face. I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak. Yet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I
 22. am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they,

20. **For.** The explanation of their "wise" patience with the foolish, *i.e.*, with his boasting rivals. **Ye bear with a man if.** Then follow five very vigorous descriptions of the way in which these false apostles have treated the Corinthian church. Paul puts them into the form of a hypothesis, *if he bringeth*— They are patient with (1) one who makes a tool of them (literally, enslaves); (2) one who lives off of them; (3) one who dupes them (literally "gets" them); (4) one who takes on airs; (5) one who insults them (literally "skins" them to their face). All of these are doubtless figurative, and all refer to the heavy burden laid by the false apostles on the church. **If he smiteth you.** The word *smite* is used constantly for a blow either of the hand or of a rod (Jn. 18:23; 1 Cor. 9:26). Its primary meaning, however, is to skin, or to flay. From the effect of blows on the skin the word came to denote merely a blow, but it retains something of its original meaning always. Cf. the English colloquialisms "to flay," "to hide," "to skin." The Greek had plenty of other words for a blow with the fist, had Paul cared to use them.

21. **I speak by way of disparagement.** There is irony in this too. By referring to the great strength of these false apostles, Paul says, I throw discredit on myself and make myself out to be weak by comparison, for I have not been strong with you in the way they have. Then his tone changes. The irony is gone. And he leads at last directly to his subject with the words: "speaking still in foolishness, I am as bold as the boldest. Whatever any one of them dares, I dare also." This launches him on a most remarkable biographical sketch.

22. First, in Jewish ancestry and race his honor is second to none. **Hebrews.** Aramaic speaking Jews; Jews who had not forgotten the mother tongue; usually Jews of Palestine. A term of great honor. **Israelites.** Members of the nation which traced its origin to Jacob (Israel) and which had, through all its history, been theocratic, a nation whose God was the Lord. A term of still greater honor. See Jn. 1:47. **Seed of Abraham.**

- Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham?
23. so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above
24. measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times re-

Heirs of all the promises made to Abraham, the father of the race. A term of the greatest honor. If the false apostles could boast of any or all of these honors, so could Paul.

23. Second, as a **minister of Christ**. Paul has called them *false apostles* and *Satan's ministers*. They call themselves *apostles* and *ministers of Christ*. This defines fairly accurately who they were. They were Christians, and they were Jews. They claimed to be more genuinely ministers of Christ than Paul and more worthy Jews. That is, they were Judaizers, seeking to ground all Christian faith first of all in Jewish form and ceremony. **As one beside himself**. This is a stronger word than *foolish*, but from the same root. The words might be rendered "without sense" and "out of my senses." If it was "without sense" to glory, he is "out of his senses" to claim to be more than a *minister of Christ*. **I more**. If they are *ministers of Christ*, Paul says, though it be madness to say it, *I am more*. Their ministry of Christ has meant ease. They have fattened themselves on the Corinthians. Paul's ministry of Christ had meant something far beyond that. **In labours more abundantly**. Paul's list of his experiences of hardship, trial and suffering is exceedingly brief and compact. It tells much more than is given in the narrative in Acts, and shows how far from exaggeration that record is. This list may be outlined under four heads: First, hardships at the hands of magistrates and mobs. At first he speaks in general terms, labors, prisons, stripes, deaths. Then he particularizes. He was human enough to have counted the times. He uses the comparative twice, *more abundantly*, i.e., more abundantly than they. Then he forgets the comparison entirely and speaks only of his own experience. **Labours** is the most general word. Possibly it includes all that follows. It means *troubles*. **In prisons more abundantly**. Of only one imprisonment up to this point has Acts told us, that at Philippi (Acts 16:23-40). **In stripes above measure**. Of this he gives the details and the count below. Except for this our account is as meager as for the *prisons*. **In deaths oft**. As, e.g., the narrow escape referred to in 1:8-9.

24. **Forty stripes save one**. The Jewish law (Deut. 25:1-3)

25. ceived I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered ship-
26. wreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my*¹ countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false
27. brethren; *in* labour and travail, *in* watchings often, *in*

¹ Gr., *race*.

allowed forty stripes, no more. For fear of a miscount and so of exceeding the number the executioner always stopped at one short of forty. These were lashes with a scourge, and were administered in the Synagogue. Acts mentions none of the five times.

25. **Thrice was I beaten with rods.** This was the Roman method of punishment. Luke records one instance of the three (Acts 16:23). His Roman citizenship should have saved Paul from this form of punishment. **Once was I stoned.** See Acts 14:19. **Thrice I suffered shipwreck.** Here begins the second group of experiences—hardships from travel, danger and exposure. Of the shipwrecks previous to this time we have no other information, nor of the twenty-four hours **in the deep.**

26. **In journeyings often.** Paul turns again to the general and uses *often* instead of the actual number of hardships. **Journeyings** seems to introduce the various forms of *perils*, just as *labors* introduced the experiences with magistrates and mobs. **In perils.** There are eight of these—four are local, four are personal. There are *perils of rivers, sea, wilderness, city*; and there are *perils of robbers, Jews, Gentiles*, even Christians—*false brethren*. Paul does not arrange them in their order. *My countrymen* (or literally *my race*) is contrasted with *Gentiles*; and *wilderness* with *sea*. In the others contrast is lacking. They are memories which spring up in his mind as he thinks of the two campaigns which we call “journeys,” which covered the ten years from 47 to 57 A.D. It is possible that some of the dangers, like that of verses 32–33, occurred during the fourteen years after his conversion, of which so little is known (Gal. 2:1).

27. **In labour and travail.** There is still a fifth group which has to do chiefly with conditions of exposure. It is introduced by the word labor, as he introduced the whole series with the plural of the same word, labors (vs. 23). *Labor and travail*,

28. hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ¹ Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety
29. for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not

¹ Or, *Beside the things which I omit.* Or, *Beside the things that come out of course.*

i.e., toil and trouble, may refer to his continued hard work wherever he preached. In that case the following experiences may be descriptive of his hardships even when he was not in imminent danger. **In watchings often**, *i.e.*, sleeplessness, long vigils made necessary by his work. He did not spare himself. **In fastings often**. Probably not ceremonial fastings, but, like his *watchings*, periods when he was too busy or too preoccupied to eat. **In hunger and thirst . . . in cold and nakedness**. These were involuntary hardship and exposure incurred during the course of his arduous tasks. How little the narrative in Acts tells of the cost to Paul of his apostleship and ministry!

28. **Beside those things that are without**. If this rendering is correct, then he contrasts his external troubles with the anxieties of his mind and heart. The exact meaning is uncertain. Either of the alternative readings in the margin may be the right one. The former of the two seems the more probable, *beside the things which I omit*, which is equivalent to saying, *not to mention the pressure upon me every day, anxiety for all the churches*. We know a little of his anxiety over the church at Corinth. There were at least eight other cities where Paul had personally organized churches, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Ephesus. But this gives only Luke's brief account. Not only were there others that Paul had personally established, but he counted as his own those which his band of assistants had founded. The number of these can be inferred from such phrases as *the whole of Achaia* (1:1); *all they which dwell in Asia* (Acts 19:10); throughout all the region (Acts 13:49). If Paul bore the problems of all the churches on his heart it is no wonder that he spent sleepless nights and days of *fastings*.

29. **Who is weak and I am not weak?** He gives two examples of his *anxiety for all* the churches. But these are examples not of church problems but of the problems of individual men and women. *Weak* is explained by 1 Cor. 8:9-13. **Made to stumble** is the result to some *weak* brother of the ruthless action of one who was stronger. By such action Paul's indigna-

- weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not?
30. If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things
31. that concern my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed ¹ for evermore,
32. knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Dam-
33. ascenes, in order to take me: and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands.

¹ Gr., *unto the ages.*

tion is roused. Doubtless the brief reference in the letter would bring to his readers many memories of instances at Corinth when Paul burned with shame and righteous anger.

30. The word *weak* brings him back to the thought of his *glorying*, and from this point on it is his *weakness* which he makes the object of that glorying (12:6, 9, 10). Of this he is willing to boast.

31. Paul interrupts himself with a very strong asseveration that he is telling the truth. He occasionally in his letters does this (see Gal. 1:20; Rom. 9:1). It is not very clear just what the need here of such an asseveration is. The simplest explanation is to refer it back to all he has said since verse 16, but especially the conclusion to the paragraph (vs. 30) where he affirms that his real glorying is in his *weakness*. It is not easy to convince anyone that a man can really *take pleasure in weaknesses*, as Paul affirms of himself (12:10). The asseveration looks forward only as Paul reiterates his glorying in the things that concern his weakness.

32. In *Damascus* . . . Here is a tremendous anti-climax. A wonderful series of hardships in groups in which not a single incident is given in detail, is followed by a very ludicrous incident which antedated them all. Why should Paul spoil in this way an eloquent and most effective recital of hardships? Certainly it was not because it was the earliest of them all, and so made the most impression; certainly not because he thought it the best illustrative instance of all his troubles, or of his weaknesses. The only adequate explanation is that he could never think of himself as descending down a wall in a basket without seeing in it its ludicrous side, and he purposely uses it for an anti-climax. He has been writing under a strong nervous tension. He breaks the tension with this Damascus picture. He

12. 1. ¹ I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *Now to glory is not expedient, but I will come*, etc.

comes down from his high pitch of exalted emotion by way of a humorous anecdote of himself, a window, a basket and an escape. There is no reason why Paul's humor should not have given relief to his other intense emotions. This makes it easy for him to go on with his *glorying* in less tense style.

There can be no doubt that this is a reference to the incident of Acts 9:25, where the wall and the basket and the escape are mentioned. But Paul adds the historical fact, otherwise unknown, that Aretas IV, king of the Arab Nabatæans (B.C. 9 to A.D. 39) held Damascus under his control. The governor of Damascus was under Aretas.

12:1. The climax of Paul's recital of his experiences was reached with the asseveration of 11:31. The twelfth chapter continues his *glorying*, but the tense strain is for the moment relieved. He comes now to his third point under "his honor *in the flesh*," viz., his visions and revelations.

I must needs glory. The text is uncertain, as the rendering in the margin indicates. The meaning is not very different if the alternative translation is accepted. It is another apology for *glorying*. It is not expedient, i.e., it does not help matters much, but it is forced upon me. **Visions and revelations of the Lord, i.e.,** granted by the Lord. Just what Paul means is to be discovered in the illustration of a vision which follows. He was a man of visions, but this particular word for vision occurs rarely in the New Testament. It is used of Zacharias' vision (Lk. 1:22); of the women at the tomb (Lk. 24:23) and of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:19); nowhere else. But another word is used several times of Paul's visions in dreams (Acts 16:9; 18:9) which were frequent (see also Acts 23:11; 27:23). As to revelations, Paul felt that his whole life was guided by revelations of the Lord (see Gal. 1:12; 2:2; Eph. 3:3). Nowhere have we any more details in regard to the nature of visions and revelations than are given us here. Some were in dreams at night; one occurred in the Temple when he was praying, and is called a trance (Acts 22:17); the circumstances attending his conversion he calls a "vision" (Acts 26:19). But he can speak of the *exceeding greatness of the revelations*, and look upon them as affording a reason for his being *exalted overmuch* (vs. 7).

2. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up
3. even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know
4. not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into

2. **I know a man in Christ.** The man of course is Paul himself. Verse 7 makes that plain, if there could be any doubt. **In Christ** is the equivalent of Christian in its largest and noblest sense. **A man in Christ** is one whose life is lived in that sphere, or realm, in which Christ is absolutely dominant. When Paul is glorying of a man in Christ he is glorying in the Lord, not in himself. **Fourteen years ago.** If the date of this letter is 57 A.D., the vision occurred in the year 44. Paul can locate it exactly. It was not long before Barnabas went to Tarsus to get Paul and bring him to Antioch. It is therefore just at the threshold of Paul's active Gentile work. Possibly his vision gave him a look into the future, not only of his own life, but of the world-wide gospel he was to preach. **Whether in the body.** The experience Paul well remembers. The conditions which made it possible he does not know, and he is willing to leave the knowledge of all that to God. He felt **caught up**, carried off, to **the third heaven.** Paul has very little to say in his epistles about heaven as a place. It is rather remarkable in view of the fact that contemporary Jewish literature was very minute in its description of a seven-fold heaven, like a great seven-story apartment, each floor with its own particular occupants. The probability is that Paul is writing figuratively here. He is not counting heavens. **The third heaven** means simply to the highest point of spiritual exaltation.

3. **And I know such a man.** There is no sufficient reason to think that this is a second experience of ecstasy. It is a poetic repetition of verse 2. There is but one experience.

4. **Caught up into Paradise.** There is nothing in the words Paul used to imply that Paradise was up. He was "carried off to Paradise." Probably, however, **Paradise** is another term for *the third heaven*. It is not a common word in the New Testament (found only in Lk. 23:43; Rev. 2:7; 2 Cor. 12:4). Originally meaning a hunting park, then a pleasure park, it was used in Genesis for the Garden of Eden, and came in later Jewish thought to be applied to the abode of the righteous after death. It was located variously. In Paul's use it is figurative.

- Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is
5. not lawful for a man to utter. On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not
 6. glory, save in *my* weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or heareth
 7. from me. And by reason of the exceeding greatness

And heard unspeakable words. The following clause explains his meaning. **Unspeakable**, or unutterable, **words** is a contradiction. He heard what it is not possible (better than *lawful*) for a man to utter. The description could scarcely be more vague. Paul got an indelible impression of spiritual significance, but he could not repeat it in words. It was one of the great impressions of his life, but he is able to give his readers only a veiled description of what it was like.

5. **On behalf of such a one.** It is not glorying on his own behalf to glory in a man in Christ who was given such visions of the Lord. **Save in my weaknesses.** With this he comes back to the thought of 11:30. So far as he himself is concerned all his *glorying* shall be only in his *weaknesses*.

6. **For.** The connection of thought seems to be: "I refuse to glory in anything but my weaknesses, for if I should desire to glory in my privileges and honors the plain unvarnished truth would prove so big a thing that the terms 'fool' and 'foolishness' would have no significance at all." When Paul boasts of insignificant things he might be open to the charge of foolishness; not so if he should begin to *glory* in his *visions and revelations*. **But I forbear lest.** Paul prefers to be known by what he is and does and says, not by an exaggerated estimate which a long story about his visions and other honors might create.

7. Some texts place the first clause of verse 7 with the last of verse 6. The original reading is uncertain. The thought is not changed very much by the change in punctuation. It is *the exceeding greatness of the revelations*, by which he does not wish to be estimated, and it is *the exceeding greatness of the revelations* which, in his judgment, made necessary a **thorn in the flesh**. This thorn is the weakness that counterbalances the overmuch exaltation. The thorn in the flesh lifts again the veil, which in all this recital of personal experiences Paul has lifted a few times only—the veil that so completely hides his personal

of the revelations—wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a ¹ thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I
 8. should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might de-
 9. part from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace

¹ Or, *stake*.

life. The lifting of the veil gives only the briefest and most unsatisfactory glimpse into the inner life of the man Paul. No one knows what the thorn in the flesh was. From the earliest interpreters down to the present the attempts at its identification have been many and varied. And when the interpreter had any special physical or temperamental disability he was quite likely to guess that *his* thorn and Paul's were the same. In the early church headache, earache, persecutions, a personal enemy, were suggested; the Middle Ages were quite unanimous in guessing carnal temptations; the reformers thought it was spiritual doubts; in recent times epilepsy, ophthalmia, malarial fever, hysteria, have had their advocates. Paul left his readers' curiosity unsatisfied. *A stake for the flesh* is possibly a more accurate rendering than *a thorn in the flesh*, but it throws no light on the metaphor. It was chiefly physical or nervous, and it was painful. More than that is only conjecture. Paul considered it a messenger of Satan, whose purpose was to buffet (hit with the fist) and to keep him humble.

8. **I besought the Lord thrice.** There may have been three periods in his life, or three special occasions when it seemed unbearable.

9. **My grace is sufficient for thee.** There seems to be a parallel in Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. The apparent answer was "No"; yet Paul got, not what he asked, but what he needed and really desired. He received a sufficient supply of Christ's gracious favor and a gift of strength such that the thorn was made not only bearable but enjoyable. **For** explains the answer. It is a paradox of the spiritual world. There is no power like human weakness touched by the strength of Christ. **Most gladly.** The answer to his repeated prayer gives him all that he hoped for. He is glad at the result, and has another ground for glorying in his weaknesses. **The strength of Christ.** This indicates that by the Lord, in verse 8, he meant Christ. **May rest upon me.** The alternative reading in the margin, *spread a tabernacle over me*, is more literal and more picturesque.

- is sufficient for thee: for *my* power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may
10. ¹ rest upon 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 am I strong.
11. I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I

¹ Or, *cover me*; Gr., *spread a tabernacle over me*.

10. **Wherefore** introduces his final summary. It is an elaborated repetition of what has just preceded. **I take pleasure in.** "I welcome," "I deem best," or "I am pleased with" are nearer Paul's thought than *I take pleasure in*. **In weaknesses.** Weaknesses is the general word he has used (11:30; 12:5, 9), of which he now gives four specifications. It is used to include all that weakens his physical or mental efficiency and power, or all that would naturally tend to do so. Its repetition emphasizes two things, that he has been called "weak" instead of "bold" or "strong," and that he is glorying, like his opponents, "in the flesh." **Injuries.** The word is found in the New Testament only here and in Acts 27:10, 21, where it is used of *injury* to the ship. While it may include *reproaches* (A. V.) its chief reference is to insolent and intentional bodily harm. **Necessities . . . distresses** (cf. 6:4), **persecutions**; *i.e.*, any form of hostile pursuit and attack. **For Christ's sake.** This should be read with *I take pleasure in*. **For when I am weak, then am I strong.** A striking paradox, giving the explanation of his attitude toward "weaknesses," and giving a climax to his conclusion. Whenever (better than *when*) he is "weak" in his own estimation and that of others, then, experience has taught him, God's power has its opportunity in him.

11. **I am become foolish.** Verses 11-13 are a transition to what Paul has to say about his intended visit to Corinth. It is better to make them the conclusion to the preceding paragraph rather than the introduction to the following. Paul stops to read over, or think over, what he has just been writing, and reiterates what he said at the beginning (11:1, 16, 17, 21), that he is *foolish* to have written as he has. There are two excuses for it; they drove him to it; and the truth about his apostleship seemed to warrant it. **The very chiefest apostles.** Again the margin is better (see note on 11:5). **Though I am noth-**

- ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind ¹ the very chiefest apostles, though
12. I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and
13. wonders and ² mighty works. For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the churches, except *it be* that I myself was not a burden to you? forgive me this wrong.

¹ Or, *those preëminent apostles.*

² Gr., *powers.*

ing. This is more than an expression of humility. It is a reflection on the "over much" apostles, to whom he was in nothing inferior.

12. The signs of an apostle were wrought, *i.e.*, by God's power. Paul does not say that *he* wrought the signs; the patience was his, *i.e.*, the steadfastness and the endurance; the power was God's. He characterizes the *signs of an apostle* with three words, *signs, wonders, mighty works*. *Signs* is repeated with a different use. One of the accepted marks of apostolic authority is "*signs.*" *Signs* and *wonders* are often coupled together in New Testament use, and twice these three words are associated, as here (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:4). In the former instance the reference is to Jesus, and there can be no doubt that they are meant to include supernatural proofs, such as miracles of healing. The marginal *powers* is more literal than *mighty works* but not more intelligible. The three words should be taken as giving the accepted *signs of an apostle*, and not as specifying three distinct kinds of *signs*. It is one of the very brief references on Paul's part to his possession of special powers. See also Gal. 3:5; 1 Cor. 14:18-19; Rom. 15:18-19.

13. For what is there. Paul closes with a playful reference to the one thing in which he has wronged the church at Corinth. It is a mild sarcasm without a sting. No church had received more from Paul's ministry than had the church at Corinth. The only difference he can think of is that he has not given the Corinthians the favor of being burdened by his financial support. For this omission, this wrong, he craves their forgiveness. This is not pure irony. Paul seems to have felt that in some ways it was an actual wrong. The church might have thought more of Paul if he had cost it more.

VI. PAUL'S INTENDED VISIT TO CORINTH; 12:14—13:10

14. Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be a burden to you: for I seek

PAUL'S INTENDED VISIT TO CORINTH

1. *Its number—the third*; vs. 14, 1.
2. *Its object.*
 - a. Pos. To seek them.
 - b. Neg. Not to seek theirs.
 - (1) Explanation:
 - (a) Pos. He will spend and be spent for their lives; vs. 15.
 - (1) Reason: Parents ought to lay up for children.
 - (2) Reason: He loves them so much.
 - (b) Neg. He will not be a burden on them.
 - (1) Directly—by his coming; vs. 14.
 - (2) Indirectly—through others; vs. 15.
 - (a) Explanation: They charged him with “catching them with guile”; vs. 16.
 - (b) Proof: The charge is false, vs. 17:
 - (1) Titus made nothing out of them
 - (2) Nor the brother.
 - (3) All walked the same track; vs. 18.
 - (2) Asseveration: This is no “excuse,” but *truth* as God sees it; vs. 19.
3. *Its possible disappointment to Paul*; vs. 20.
 - a. Nature: That he find them not what he desires.
 - b. Specifications: That there be among them:
 - (1) quarreling, (2) jealousy, (3) bad tempers, (4) rivalries, (5) slanders, (6) gossiping, (7) airs, (8) dissensions.
 - c. Result: Another humbling of Paul before them; vs. 21.
 - d. Result: Another mourning by Paul for those who:
 - (1) In general—have sinned and not repented.
 - (2) In particular—are grossly immoral.
4. *Its possible disappointment to them*; vs. 20—13:2, 2.
 - a. Nature: He will spare no one who sins; vs. 2.
 - (1) Witness: His previous and present warning.

- (2) Reason: Their demand of proof that Christ speaks in him; vs. 3.
- b. Effect: Knowledge of the kind of Christ who speaks through him.
- (1) Neg. No weakling.
- (2) Pos. But a Christ of power, who:
- (a) was crucified as a result of "weakness," vs. 4,
- (b) but lives as a result of God's power.
- (c) expresses himself in Paul's "weakness" and power.
- c. Safeguard (*i.e.*, the way to prevent it) testing themselves; vs. 5.
- (1) Nature of test: Proof that they are *in* the faith.
Explanation: Either Christ is in them or they are failures.
- (2) Result of test: They will come to know that Paul is not a failure; vs. 6.
- (3) Aid of test: Paul's continual prayer for them; vs. 7.
- (a) End:
- (1) Neg. Not Paul's vindication.
- (2) Pos. but their perfecting, no matter what the estimate of Paul; vs. 7, 9.
- (b) Grounds (of Paul's prayer):
- (1) His loyalty to the truth; vs. 8.
- (2) His eagerness for their strength, even at the expense of his weakness; vs. 9.
- Conclusion: The object of the letter—to make unnecessary the exercise of Paul's authority; vs. 10.

14. Behold this is the third time I am ready to come to you. With a change in tone Paul turns to his intended visit to Corinth. He is making his plans and it will be his third visit. The translation is unfortunate in that it reads as if it were a third readiness to come rather than a third coming for which he is ready. Undoubtedly the first visit was his eighteen months' stay (Acts 18:11); the second was the visit "with sorrow" (2:1). It is difficult to see how he could have written as he does about this third visit if Titus had brought him the report that caused the joy of 7:7, 13. It is with much anxiety and misgiving that Paul looks forward to this third visit. **I will not be a burden to you.** It is this thought of the "burden" that is the transition from the preceding section (vs. 13) to this closing section. Even though it may be in a certain sense a "wrong" to fail in being a burden upon them, he will not change his habit. He will come at his own expense. **For I seek not yours but you.** This gives the reason which of course is back of his consistent habit of

- not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.
15. And I will most gladly spend and be ¹ spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved
16. the less? But be it so, I did not myself burden you;
17. but, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I
18. have sent unto you? I exhorted Titus, and I sent

¹ Gr., *spent out*.

independence. He wants no misunderstanding of his object. He is after them, not after their money. He feels toward them like a parent. Parents do not find it easy to be supported by their children. Paul does not say *support*, but *lay up for the parents*.

15. **Be spent.** The marginal *be spent out* is more literal. It means *be used up*. **Souls.** *Lives* is better than *souls*, and so usually (see 1:23). The word rendered *soul* here is variously translated. *Soul, life, and self* are all satisfactory renderings of the original word; but sometimes one is much more appropriate than another. It is well to try each of the three renderings whenever the word *soul* occurs, adopting the one that seems most apt. **If I love you more abundantly am I loved the less?** It is not certain that this is a question. At best it is an awkward expression. Another reading, which is perhaps better, renders the verse in this way: "I will most gladly spend and be spent out for your lives even if the more I love you the less I am loved by you." Even if his love meets with no reciprocal love from them he will nevertheless spend himself on them till he is exhausted—used up. This is in keeping with the parental tone of all of verses 14-15.

16. **But be it so.** This introduces another insinuation which had been made against Paul. "Granted," they said, "that you yourself were not a burden, nevertheless you were naturally clever and caught us by a trick. You sent your representatives and they took advantage of us."

17. **Did I take advantage of you . . . ?** The question expects a negative answer. "I did not take advantage of you, did I?" It is equivalent to a denial of the insinuation.

18. **I exhorted Titus and I sent the brother with him.** Apparently this is a reference to the part these two had in starting the campaign for the contribution to the Jerusalem church. When they visited Corinth cannot be determined. A

the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? walked we not by the same Spirit? *walked we not in the same steps?*

19. ¹ Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. But all things, beloved, *are* for your edifying. For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I

¹ Or, *Think ye . . . you?*

reference to this visit is probably found in 8:6, "as he had made a beginning before." It certainly is not a reference to Titus' visit in company with two others on the business of the contribution (8:17, 18, 22), for no arrangement of Paul's letters can be made to place the visit earlier than this writing. It is not probable that it was the visit (2:13; 7:6, 13) on which Titus accomplished the reconciliation, even if these last four chapters are a part of the whole letter. We have no hint of any other visit by Titus to Corinth, though of course there may have been one. Who the brother was we do not know. **Did Titus take any advantage of you?** Again the question expects a negative answer. Its form implies that no one ever had any suspicions of Titus' sincerity and honesty. **By the same spirit.** The rendering of the A. V. *in the same spirit* is here preferable. It is the spirit of the parent who desires to spend and be spent for the child. **In the same steps**—this refers to their methods. In spirit and in method Titus and Paul have been one.

19. **Ye think.** It is better to put it, as the margin suggests, into interrogative form, *think ye?* **All this time, i.e.,** during all this "*glorying*" (chs. 10-12).

Excusing ourselves, i.e., defending ourselves. It may have sounded like an excuse or a defense, but its real object has been the edifying, *i.e.,* the building up, the helpful instruction, of the readers. **In the sight of God speak we in Christ.** Not the Corinthian church, but God, is the judge, in whose presence Paul speaks, and whose approval he seeks. In all he has written he has not forgotten God's presence nor that he himself is **in Christ.** This is in effect an asseveration of his truthfulness.

20. **For** introduces the explanation of their implied need of edifying. It is found in the two disappointments which Paul fears are in store for him and for the church. How could he have feared these disappointments after Titus' joyful message unless Titus had at first kept something serious back? **Lest**

- should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means *there should be* strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings,
21. ¹ tumults; lest, when I come again, my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed.
13. 1. This is the third time I am coming to you. At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be

¹ Or, *disorders*.

by any means *there should be*. Paul is fond of lists, both of virtues and of vices. There are many examples (Gal. 5:19-23; Col. 3:5-9). Usually the lists seem to be not haphazard but carefully thought out. Here he uses eight specific dangers. They seem to be arranged in pairs. The first two are singular, the others plural. Possibly the first two, a jealous, quarrelsome spirit, are thought of as the general characteristics out of which six particulars spring (see outline). In 1 Cor. 3:3 he uses these first two words, "whereas there is among you *jealousy and strife*," and applies it to the existence in the church of rival parties. **Tumults** is not as satisfactory a rendering as dissensions, or the marginal *disorders*.

21. **Lest, when I come again.** A better reading is, "lest, when I come, my God should humble me again." **Again** is emphatic. He had been humbled before them during his recent visit. **And I should mourn for many.** By common usage *mourn* signifies *mourn as dead*. There is possibly a concealed threat in the word. Either that, or else the mourning will be for the offenders as lost forever to the church. Such mourning will be a part of his humiliation, and a result of what he finds them to be. If the church were not so full of jealousy and quarreling there would be less sensual sin unrepented of. **Them that have sinned heretofore, i.e.,** those who on Paul's recent painful visit to Corinth were found in a state of shameless heathen sin, and did not repent. He fears there may be many of them. **Lasciviousness, i.e.,** unbridled licentiousness.

13:1. **This is the third time.** The repetition of this statement (12:14) shows that verse 14 above was the beginning of

2. established. I have said ¹ beforehand, and I do say ¹ beforehand, ² as when I was present the second time, so now, being absent, to them that have sinned heretofore, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I
3. will not spare; seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ

¹ Or, *plainly*.

² Or, *as if I were present the second time, even though I am now absent.*

this last paragraph, even though he again went back to the thought of *being a burden*. **At the mouth of two witnesses or three.** This Old Testament injunction (Deut. 19:15) seems to have become almost a proverb (cf. Matt. 18:16). Paul's use of it here has given rise to various explanations: *e.g.*, that he means to assure them that when he comes all the culprits will have a legal trial; or, that his three visits are the three witnesses. Neither of these is satisfactory. It seems as if his use of *third* suggested the *three*. He is going on at once to explain how his visit may be a disappointment to the church (12:20) as well as to himself. His treatment of the offenders will be final. He will not spare them. But just as he has several times softened his tone by a lighter, almost playful touch, so here he softens the threat to come by a playful use of a proverb which is perhaps equivalent to our "three times and out."

2. **I have said beforehand.** There is no sufficient reason for the marginal rendering *plainly* instead of *beforehand*. Still less is there reason for the rendering given the next clause by the margin. The sentence is awkward but the text gives the meaning. Just as on his second visit Paul gave warning in person that he would not spare them, so now he repeats from a distance the same warning. The repeated warning includes those to whom it was first given and all the rest, *i.e.*, all who since then may have similarly sinned.

3. **Seeing that ye seek.** A comma is sufficient to separate this from the preceding. This is the reason that he cannot spare them; they have challenged him to proof that Christ speaks in him. He must furnish the proof. **Who to you-ward is not weak.** No matter what they may think of Paul's weakness they cannot consider Christ's relation to them as that of a weakling. There had been evidences enough, even in the church at Corinth, that God's power was unmistakably in Christ. These evidences were chiefly those of Christian character, developed by the power of Christ.

- that speaketh in me; who to you-ward is not weak,
4. but is powerful in you: for he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak ¹ in him, but we shall live with
5. him through the power of God toward you. Try your own selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your

¹ Many ancient authorities read *with*.

4. The effect of Paul's third visit to Corinth, if it is to be a "disappointment" to the church, will be to show them the kind of Christ who does speak through him. He is not weak, but a Christ of power. The evidence of the power is found in verse 4. **For he was crucified through weakness.** Through gives the origin, as a result of "weakness." Paul's thought can be rendered by putting quotation marks about **weakness**. It was as a result of that thing called "weakness," when it was said of him, "he saved others, himself he cannot save" (Mk. 15:31), that he was crucified. *As a result of (through) the power of God* he lives. **For we also are weak in him.** The *for* adds a further explanation of Christ as a power, and it is Paul's special point. **In him** is probably better than the *with him* of the margin. Closely identified with Christ, Paul too is "weak," in the same sense that Christ is "weak," but, just because he has died with him, he has been raised together with him to a life in which God's power is everywhere expressed. See Col. 3:1-4. It is that power which they shall witness when Paul comes again and does not spare them. Note the change from "I" to "we."

5. **Try your own selves.** In this way they can prevent the disappointment that he fears his third visit will cause them. If they stop trying Paul and try themselves as to whether they are really Christians or not, the special exercise of his power will be unnecessary. **Whether ye be in the faith, i.e.,** whether ye be Christians. **The faith** is the Christian life of the faithful, or the principles on which that life is founded. **Prove your own selves.** The pronouns are very emphatic. They have spent too much time trying to prove Paul. He changes from *try* to *prove*, and that leads to his play on words in *reprobate*. **Or, know ye not.** The object of their proof is to test whether or not they are Christians, *i.e.,* whether Christ is in them. If he is not in them, then they fail of the test, and are **reprobate**. **Reprobate** is not the best word to render the thought. It is kindred with the word *prove*, but it has an acquired alien sig-

- own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be
6. reprobate. But I hope that ye shall know that we
 7. are not reprobate. Now we pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we may appear approved, but that ye may do that which is honourable,¹ though we be
 8. as reprobate. For we can do nothing against the
 9. truth, but for the truth. For we rejoice, when we are weak, and ye are strong: this we also pray for, even

¹ Gr., and that.

nificance. *Failures in the test*, or, simply *failures* would carry the meaning better.

6. **But I hope that ye shall know**, *i.e.*, I hope that your test of yourselves will show you what it means to be *in the faith*, and then you will come to know that I too have stood the proof and have not failed in the test—am not *reprobate*.

7. **Now we pray to God**. *But* would be better than *now*. His prayer is like the expression of another hope. The thought is this: "My prayer is, not that I and my power may be vindicated, but that you may give up the wrong and do the right, whether I am vindicated or not." **Though we be as reprobate**. The marginal reading *and that* is literal, but it is not better than *though*. Paul prays that they may stand the test (appear *approved*) even though it leave him and his claims without proof (*reprobate*). If the Corinthians must continue sinful and rebellious in order to put his authority to the test, he prays that he may go as it were untested, unproved.

8. **For we can do nothing against the truth**. Paul finds it difficult to stop. *For* introduces the explanation of verse 7. His relationship to the truth would make it impossible for him to desire to be vindicated at the expense of the Corinthians' inconsistent lives, if it can possibly be avoided. He is for the truth first, last and all the time.

9. **For we rejoice when we are weak and ye are strong**. Still another *for*. It is coördinate with the explanation of verse 7, and adds an example of what he means. He rejoices—it is no mere passive acceptance of the truth—he rejoices to be weak, to continue to appear weak, if only they can be proved and found strong Christians. **This we also pray for, even your perfecting**. *Perfecting* is what he means by *strong*, *i.e.*, strong, growing Christians. His prayer is not only that they may *do no*

10. your perfecting. For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down.

evil, or may do that which is honorable (vs. 7) but that they may be everything which they ought to be.

10. **For this cause I write these things.** Here is Paul's ultimate reason for writing all that he has. **These things** includes 10:1—13:9. By letter, by warnings, by threats, by his extended "glorying," he hopes to prevent the necessity of *dealing sharply* when he makes the third visit. **According to the authority.** After all, his God-given authority has but one end; it is *building up*, not *casting down*. And therefore whatever *casting down* may be necessary finds its justification only when it is a preparation for *building up*.

And thus ends this strenuous, heart-breaking letter (chs. 10–13). Except for the final conclusion there is little to relieve its continued strain. Here and there Paul seeks to relieve it by a playful touch in lighter vein. But the attempts serve only to show how deep his feeling is and how serious the conditions in Corinth. Can Paul have written this after writing the joyful, hopeful, encouraged letter of chapters 1–9?

CONCLUSION; 13:11-14

11. Finally, brethren, ¹farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and

¹ Or, *rejoice: be perfected.*

CONCLUSION—THE FAREWELL SUMMARY

WHAT THE CORINTHIANS SHOULD BE AND HAVE:

1. Content, vs. 11:
 - a. Be mended.
 - b. Be encouraged.
 - c. Have harmony.
 - d. Cultivate peace.
2. Result, vs. 12:

The God of love and peace shall be with them.

SALUTATIONS:

1. Salute one another with a holy kiss; vs. 12.
2. All the saints salute you; vs. 13.

BENEDICTION, VS. 14:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
 The love of God,
 The fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

11. Finally. The conclusion is brief and in milder tone. No words are wasted; there are no personal greetings; no names are mentioned. It is dignified, almost solemn; but it is not lacking in friendliness or affection. It is a fitting close to such a letter as chapters 10-13. **Farewell.** The marginal suggestion *rejoice* gives the literal meaning of the word Paul used. It was the stereotyped form of salutation in a letter, usually translated "greeting" (Acts 15:23; 23:26; Jas. 1:1), and about equivalent to "dear sir." At the close of a letter it is just as formal, and *farewell* is the better rendering. **Be perfected, i.e.,** become what a church ought to be. Of broken things the same word is used

12. the God of love and peace shall be with you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.
13. All the saints salute you.
14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.

for mend. The church at Corinth needed mending, improvement, perfecting (cf. "to mend one's ways").

Be comforted, *i.e.*, be encouraged (see note on 1:3-4). The word has been used several times in the letter for *exhort*, and here *be exhorted, listen to our exhortations*, is a possible rendering. **Be of the same mind**, *i.e.*, think the same thing; think alike; have harmony of purpose and of thought. Lack of such harmony was the cause of most of the trouble at Corinth. **Live in peace**. Better, *cultivate peace*. Paul uses four carefully chosen and very comprehensive words. They cover his whole message to this broken and distraught church. **And the God of love and peace shall be with you**. The God whose characteristics are love and peace. If they are *the church of God* (1:1) they must covet for themselves the characteristics of God. Only here in the New Testament is the phrase "God of love" found. "God of peace" is used a number of times (1 Cor. 14:33; Rom. 16:20; Heb. 13:20).

12. **Salute one another with a holy kiss** (cf. 1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Thess. 5:26; Rom. 16:16). The kiss was not only an expression of friendship and affection but of respect or reverence. In the early church it was adopted as a token of Christian brotherhood and unity. It had a religious significance and hence was a holy kiss.

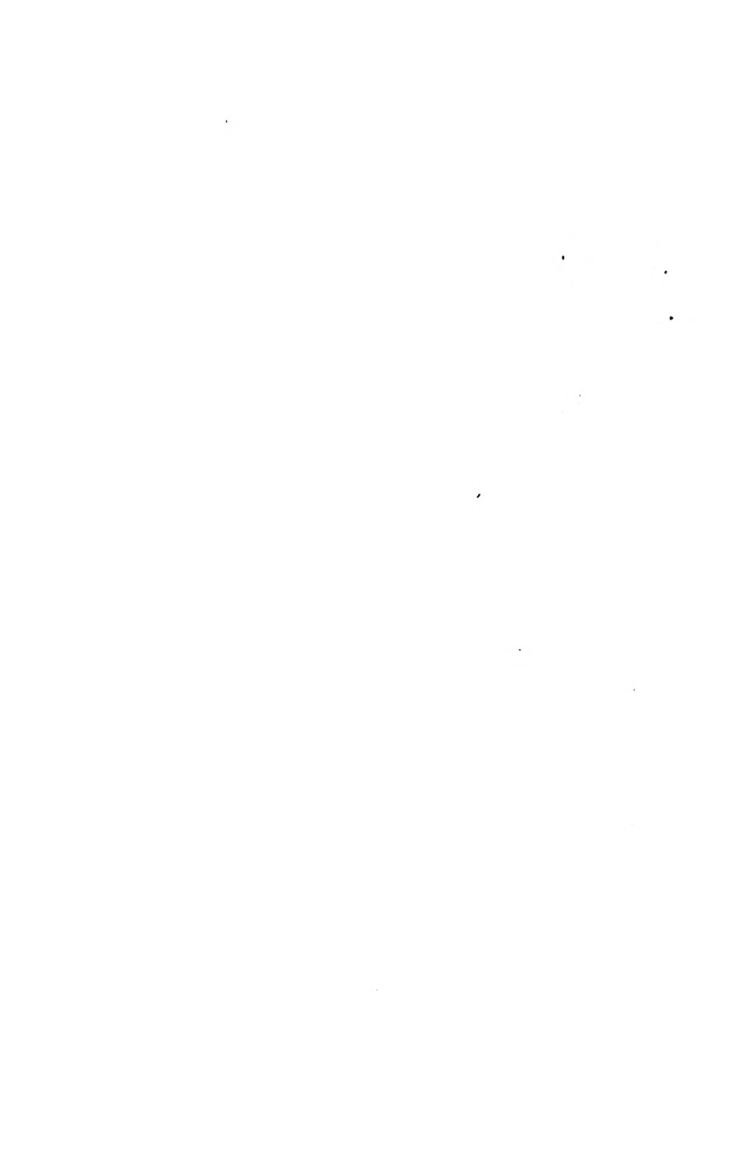
13. **All the saints salute you**, *i.e.*, all the Christians with whom Paul is now associated in Macedonia; possibly the church at Philippi.

14. It is noteworthy that the most familiar benediction in the church today is the benediction with which Paul closes this letter. Nowhere else in Paul's letters or in the New Testament is it found in this form.

Paul's benedictions, like his salutations, are worthy of very careful study. In every benediction he uses the word *grace*. In four letters (Col., 1 Tim., 2 Tim., Titus) it is simply "*grace be with you.*" In seven letters (Rom., 1 Cor., Gal., Phil., 1, 2 Thess., Philem.) he uses the form *The grace of our* (the) *Lord Jesus Christ*, adding either *be with you*, or *be with your*

spirit. Ephesians he closes with *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In this benediction, after beginning as is his custom, Paul adds, *and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.* That these are an addition to his usual form explains their order. Otherwise we should expect *the love of God* to come first. **The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, i.e.,** Christ's gracious giving of himself and of all good gifts (see 8:9). By his giving he became the reflexion and pattern of God's grace, both God's "*unspeakable gift,*" and the type of God's unstinted giving. **The love of God, i.e.,** God's love for them. Grace is God's love expressed in giving. **The communion of the Holy Ghost, i.e.,** the fellowship or companionship which the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Lord (3:17-18), makes possible for the Christian to have with God, with Christ and with his fellow Christians; hence Christian fellowship. In Eph. 4:3 the "unity of the Spirit" is the unity of fellowship which binds the church as a body of Christ. In the thought of 1 Jn. 1:3 fellowship with God, with Christ and with fellow Christians is all one fellowship. So Paul's benediction is not a mere stereotyped phrase for a formal ending of a letter or of worship, but an earnest petition for God's best blessings to rest through Christ and His spirit upon the church.



BS491 .B58 46
Epistles to the Corinthians

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00006 4164