



26 Studies In



I Corinthians

Dr. Fred G. Stevenson

26 STUDIES IN I CORINTHIANS

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FOREWORD

It is with great joy and hope that this book goes to press. Much solid scholarship for the Lord goes to naught for want of recognition.

This volume is a revision of two Adult Sunday School Quarterlies first published by the Baptist Sunday School Committee in 1954. It is hoped that this will be only the beginning of such sound, doctrinal publications.

While he was in the hospital at Booneville, Arkansas, in 1956, an appeal was made for the re-printing of the writings of Dr. Fred Stevenson. Permission was given Dr. Stevenson to reprint the material at his own expense and discretion. Brother Stevenson has been kind enough to allow some of his friends to aid in the effort.

Dr. Fred G. Stevenson has long been held in high esteem by those who know him well. His many years of devoted effort as a teacher of Bible Languages at the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock have earned for him the respect of many pastors and workers in the American Baptist Association of churches.

His ideas about Bible interpretation are fresh and easy to understand. He challenges the individual student to study for himself rather than to accept blindly the pronouncements of another.

If the re-publishing of this book can aid any Bible study groups; if it can help further the cause of Christ and His church; if it can help lead one person to salvation, our purpose will have been accomplished.

Mike Crane and
Bill Johnson

Lesson 1

PAUL PLEADS FOR UNITY

I Corinthians 1:1-17

INTRODUCTION

I Corinthians has a great appeal in that it is clearly revealed that this church is made up of ordinary human beings like ourselves, with all the human weaknesses which we recognize within ourselves and our brethren and sisters in the churches today. For this reason alone we are able to approach the study of this book with more sympathy and interest than we are able to muster for some other books of the Bible.

As is true with reference to all of the inspired writings, this book fills a very definite place in revelation. From the practical standpoint especially, this study can be made one of the most fruitful possible, for it deals primarily with practical problems which arise in the ordinary course of the working of a church. Let it not be overlooked, however, that some deep doctrines are embedded in the body of this letter to the Corinthian Church.

Probably more difficult practical problems are discussed and solved in this book than in any other in the Bible. It should be remembered that Corinth was in the land of Greece, far removed from where the influence of the people of God had been previously felt. They were an alien people so far as their religious background was concerned. Their ancestors had been idolaters and worshippers of many gods for many generations. Therefore we may logically expect problems of a different nature to arise among them from those in a church of Jewish background. The recognition of this fact should help us to better understand and rightly evaluate the subjects discussed with the Corinthian brethren.

It is revealed that there were all kinds of ills, divisions, heresies, and sins in the Corinthian church which needed to be set right. This fact should stir a kindred spirit in us, who know we have all the weaknesses of the flesh and the mind which the Corinthians had. We are made to marvel how a church made up of such weak and unstable material could endure even for a short time. But we may be reminded of two great Bible lessons from the situation.

First, the angel said to Zerubbabel concerning Judah, "*...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts,*" when the people were inclined to despise the small restoration of worship in Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, Zech. 4:6. Thus it was not the knowledge and virtue of the Corinthian brethren on which the church stood, but on the Word, the power and integrity of God. We would not be so badly discouraged over some of our churches if we would admit this great fundamental fact of church continuity.

Second, the situation at Corinth is very hard indeed on the fleshly doctrine of sinless perfection. The brethren at Corinth were very far removed from having destroyed all the lusts of the flesh from among them, yet they were recognized and claimed as a body of Christ. This situation is likewise very hard on some modern doctrines we hear among Baptists these days to the effect that our acceptance by Christ depends on our overcoming the lusts or the flesh with a mighty hand—our own fleshly hand of course. No, church continuity does not depend on a fleshly battle against the flesh in which fleshly people may glory. But, it depends on our adherence to New Testament doctrines and practices in church capacity. Performing a scriptural baptism is of infinitely more weight than the sisters covenanting together to throw away their snuff boxes so that they would have something whereof to boast. Surely we can all be encouraged with the information that there were people in the church at Corinth just as "sorry" as we are.

I. Christian Greetings, verses 1-3.

A comparison of Acts 20:31 with I Cor. 16:5-8 indicates that this epistle was written from Ephesus near the end of a three year's period which Paul spent there. It is said to have been written about the year 59 A. D.

Paul claims as his authority for writing this epistle to the church at Corinth the fact that he was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. This authority makes all the difference in the world. With the authority of God resting upon him, he might expect to receive the inspiration to rightly instruct the church. If we walk according to the New Testament pattern we can give unfailing counsel to all, and we also have the full approval of God resting upon us.

The letter is addressed to the church at Corinth. Then there are included the sanctified, the called, and those who call upon the name of the Lord. This does not include all the saved, as some would have us believe, but it means those who are set apart, called, and who act in church capacity. In other words, this is a local church epistle and it does not embrace that great imaginary universal invisible church.

Paul invokes the grace of God upon these saints because this is the only way any group of saints can stand and do business for the Lord. None of us can stand in our own strength, wisdom and righteousness.

II. Position in Christ, verses 4-9.

Paul thanked God for the grace of God which was bestowed upon this group of saints. Without this grace they would not have known the way of salvation and they would not have had the opportunity of participating in the great blessings of the church. Abraham never had the privilege of

claiming the blessings of a church saint. Do we have any more merit than he in that we can work and worship in the church? Not by any means. Then it is by the grace of God that the blessing has come to us.

The Corinthians were enriched in Christ in all utterance and knowledge. That is, they had learned to speak the words of Christ and they were permitted to enter into that knowledge that comes from inspiration and which is made real by Christian experience, guided by the hand of God.

The testimony of Christ was confirmed in them both in their witnessing to the world and in the confidence which they had in themselves of their salvation and hope in Christ.

As the picture is presented in verse 7. the Corinthian brethren were doing two things. They were exercising their Christian gifts and they were waiting for the coming of Christ. This very thoroughly sums up the business of Christians in the world.

Paul desires the brethren to be blameless in the day of the Lord. Now we all know that no one can be blameless in the sense of having lived a sinlessly perfect life. But we can be blameless in the matter of religious doctrines and practices. This simply means following the New Testament to the very best of our ability and understanding, and always being ready to recognize and confess error in our beliefs and practices. The continuity and purity of the church do not rest on our integrity, but it rests on the faithfulness of God, who has promised that He will keep it on the world until the day of the Lord. On the other hand, our relationship to this church depends largely on our own attitude and initiative.

III. The Desire of Paul, verse 10.

The great desire of Paul was that the brethren should all speak the same thing. Our experience with the conversation of people teaches us there is only one way a group of various sorts of people could speak the same thing, and that is that they should all speak what the Bible says. This is the only right road to Christian unity today.

Likewise, they could avoid divisions only be deferring personal likes and dislikes to the pure Word of God.

They could be perfectly joined together in the matters of contending for the faith and winning the lost to Christ. They were not all required to part their hair alike or to like the same kind of food. Such matters as these should not be allowed to break church fellowship.

IV. The Cause of Divisions, verses 11-17.

The letter states that there were contentions among the brethren. Factions had developed over likes and dislikes for preachers. Paul said in effect that they ought to be contending for Christ instead of for or against preachers.

Paul denies baptizing any but a very few of these contenders. He says he

was sent to preach the gospel and not to baptize. He does not discredit baptism but he reveals two important truths. One is that baptism is to seal a man as a disciple of Christ and not as a proselyte to some man. The other is that baptism is not a part of the gospel of Christ. He was sent to preach the gospel and not to baptize. Therefore baptism is not a part of the gospel of salvation as some claim.

The aim of Paul was not to allow baptism, fair words, or any other thing to turn the minds of people from the cross and its saving power. He knew there is salvation in no other power expedient in Heaven or on Earth. Anything that detracts from the cross and its meaning is dangerous to follow.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What was Paul's authority for writing this letter?
2. Who are included in the greeting in verse two?
3. Why do the saints need the grace of God?
4. For what did Paul always thank God?
5. In what were the Corinthians enriched?
6. How was the testimony of Christ confirmed in them?
7. What two things were the saints doing in verse seven?
8. How can one be blameless in the day of the Lord?
9. What guaranteed the success of the church?
10. How could the saints all speak the same thing?
11. How could they avoid divisions?
12. To what extent could they be joined together?
13. What bad condition existed in Corinth?
14. What was the nature of the contention?
15. What did Paul say about the cause for division?

Lesson 2

THE SOURCE OF TRUE WISDOM

I Corinthians 1:18-31

INTRODUCTION

The subject which was discussed in the last lesson is the source for the discussion in this one. In that lesson the brethren at Corinth were wrangling over their preferences of preachers. There were factions following Paul, Apollos, Cephas, etc. The present discussion is to show these warring factions that no man is of very much consequence either in salvation or in works after he is saved. Salvation is totally in Christ and His merits in the first place, and Christian works are outlined, empowered and blessed of God after we are saved. So there is little credit to be ascribed to any man in either situation.

Since the fall of man in Eden, he has been trying to inject something of merit on his part into the plan of salvation, but God has never admitted any part of such. Man became completely lost in the fall. An admission of this repeatedly stated fact in the Scriptures is also an admission that salvation must come entirely from the Lord if it comes at all. But man is reluctant indeed to go the full length in making this admission. He is always attempting to inject human wisdom and righteousness into his salvation when in fact no such qualities exist in fallen man.

Our Scripture material makes clear that the way of the cross of Christ is the way of salvation, and it does not stop here, for it goes on to say that Christ is made to us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Today we have people doing such works as being baptized, joining the church, and discarding a besetting sin to save themselves. Then we find them working with all their might to keep themselves saved. There is sufficient pungent Scripture in the present lesson material to forever destroy all such ideas of the way of salvation and keeping. Yet men refuse to be convinced by what the Scriptures say. They merely wrest other Scriptures to establish their point and go on their merry, deluded way. But why cannot we as Baptists steer clear of all such entanglements? It seems we cannot, for we hear almost as much preaching of slavish obedience among us today as is heard from the Protestant world.

We have a peculiar problem in a certain contrast which is set forth in the lesson. This contrast is the preaching of the cross set in opposition to all other systems. The cross has been preached in its fullness only in this, the church age. What about Israel under the Law of Moses then? Were they saved in some other way, or were they not saved at all? This problem is further complicated by the scribe of the law being brought into the matter as opposed to the preaching of the cross. The answer seems to be that this scribe is not a scribe of faith, but one of ceremonies and legalism for

salvation. The cross was not clearly preached in the sacrifices, but the sacrifice of Christ was set forth clearly enough that the Israelite could look to the cross and be saved. The fact seems to be that the way of the cross was made clearer to those who might wish to go that way in the gospel age, in which we live.

I. The Wisdom of God, verses 18-21.

The preaching of the cross is foolishness to the perishing world. This is true because the world has the Devil for its god, II Cor. 4:4. The Devil has blinded the minds of worldly men lest they should believe and be saved. He has found it easy to convince men that the logical way is for them to work their way into salvation. Therefore a plan whereby salvation comes without merit or effort on the part of man is utterly unacceptable to them.

It is not clear from the text whether it is the cross or its preaching which is the power of God. This is a technical matter anyway. The cross and its preaching are the power of God to the saved because we know it was only by the virtue and power of the cross that we were saved. It is hard to conceive of anyone who has recently been saved, with the remembrance of repentance and faith fresh in his mind, claiming that he did any work to help God save him.

By its own wisdom the world failed to come to a knowledge of God. The Greeks in this wisdom created for themselves many false gods who were supposed to live on Mt. Olympus. The Jews created for themselves a god of wrath who exacted strict obedience to law in order to be saved.

It has been pointed out that the preaching of the cross became prominent only after Jesus went to the cross. But the gospel of the sacrifice was preached to Cain and Abel. Noah preached the same gospel to his generation, and it was preached to all generations of the Israelites in the sacrifices prescribed by the law.

II. The Wisdom of Men, verses 22-25.

The Jews sought God through signs. The point here is rather hard to grasp. It is best understood by referring to an incident in the ministry of Jesus as recorded at Matt. 12:38-40. Here the Jews sought a miracle from Heaven to convince them anew that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus had previously given them such signs, but now He calls them a wicked and adulterous generation for asking for such a sign. They should have been persuaded by those former signs and laid hold on Jesus by faith. A fleshly bond is not necessary when one has once apprehended Christ by faith. This is where present-day miracle seekers are fundamentally wrong. Our present connections with God are spiritual, not material; see Romans 14:17 for the definition of the Kingdom of God during the present age.

The error of the Greeks was that they were trying to apprehend God purely through the intellect. They sought a god who could be fully understood by the natural mind of man. The Bible teaches us that the ways and thoughts of God are as high above those of men as the heavens are above the earth. Thus the Greeks arrived at an immature and perverted conclusion concerning God. There are many "Greeks" seeking after wisdom today.

Christ becomes the power and wisdom of God to those who are called, both of Jews and Greeks. Those called here are really those who answer the gospel call and the church call. They are not those elected to salvation before the foundation of the world.

The foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Therefore we are doing a very foolish thing when we presume to instruct and help God to run His business. More humble confession of weakness and error and less presumption to fix up and explain the truth of God would help greatly in our day.

III. The Wise Made Foolish, verses 26-29.

Not many wise, mighty, and noble are called by the gospel appeal; not because God is a respecter of persons, but because they will not heed. It is only the foolish and weak in the things of the world who will heed the gospel of the cross, which must be apprehended by faith.

God confounds the mighty with the weak. The Bible has many illustrations of this principle. For instance, Gideon defeated an army of many thousands with three hundred men, Judges chapter seven. We are told God does things this way so that no flesh may glory in His presence.

IV. The Foolish Made Wise, verses 30, 31.

We are told it is the will of God that salvation shall be in Christ. It always has been so, and it always will be so, regardless of the efforts of men to locate salvation in some other, especially self.

The second chapter of Ephesians insists that salvation is by grace and without merit on our part. The chief thing we need to do is to fully realize and admit this truth. Then we do not have anything to boast of. We were just as unworthy of salvation as anyone else on earth. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, and a confession of the worthlessness of self is another good point from which to begin to learn the truth of God. After all, a willing mind is about the only part we have in our journey to glory. And this is not so much to boast of, for a murderer can have it on an equal with the wise, proud, and moral man. It is well summed up in the situation that God takes the weak and simple and makes something great of them. The near moron who goes to Heaven can glory in the Lord, but surely he cannot glory over the intellectual giant who goes to Hell on the basis of their two minds, for the intellectual man surely has more of human intellect than

does the mentally retarded. Regardless of how we approach the matter, we come around to the view that salvation is of the Lord and we are unworthy of it.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why is the preaching of the cross foolishness to the world?
2. Why is it the power of God to the saved?
3. By what wisdom did the world fail to find God?
4. When did God begin to save people by the foolishness of preaching?
5. How did the Jews seek God?
6. How did the Greeks seek Him?
7. To whom does Christ become power and wisdom?
8. What is wiser and stronger than men?
9. What kind of people are called?
10. How does God confound the world?
11. Why has God followed this plan?
12. Does worldly wisdom hinder people from being saved?
13. Whose will is it that salvation is in Christ?
14. What is the beginning of knowledge?
15. Did you have any merit at all that helped to save you?
16. Do you have any merit or wisdom that will keep you saved?

SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

I Corinthians 2:1-16

INTRODUCTION

There were divisions and wranglings in the church over preferences for preachers. Paul now shows them that preachers as personalities have very little indeed to do with the advancement of kingdom work.

He develops the principle that God does not follow the course of human wisdom in doing His work in the world, but rather He works on the opposite principle of confounding the strong and wise with the weak and simple. By this working principle on the part of the Lord, salvation comes as a free gift from the Lord, and it leaves man without anything whereof he may glory in himself and his accomplishments. All glory goes to God through the work of Christ.

In the present lesson, the specific study of the way of spiritual understanding comes up. If there is any Bible subject which we need to resurvey very carefully today, this is it. This is true because of contrary and heretical views held by other religious bodies and because of extreme views held by some of our brethren on the subject.

One group will contend that all the help we can get in the matter of coming to spiritual understanding comes from an intellectual studying of the Word of God. These give no countenance to the idea of what we call Spirit illumination. According to them, we learn the Word of God the same way we learn English grammar. This view contradicts the very fundamental principle on which Paul stands in making his argument.

Another group goes so far on the idea of a direct illuminating work of the Holy Spirit that it amounts essentially to the idea of present-day inspiration. These are wrong because the only inspiration mankind will get in this life was recorded in the Bible many hundreds of years ago. There is nothing being added to Bible truth today. Those who ignore Bible truth and claim a special light from Heaven are as fleshly and wrong as was Cain in his day. Modern day sects who claim something superior in their religion in the way of spirituality are as wrong and deluded as any fleshly group who ever lived.

But, coming back home to ourselves as Baptists, what do we find? We find two things, which are essentially one. First, we find those who are imagining to discover new truth from their superior education and intellect. The worst trouble with this view of things is that it makes these men very proud of themselves, their abilities and their attainments. This is exactly what Paul is arguing against in this letter to the Corinthians. People who glory in their intellect and education are as fleshly as anyone else,

regardless of what they themselves think about it. The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century came very near to overwhelming the true churches on this very principle. Second, there are those among us who are imagining to find new light in the scriptures from a carefully supervised self-discipline. They are on the same track of the ascetics of Catholicism in the Middle Ages who withdrew themselves from the world to attain a greater godliness, but in truth hurt themselves and did no one else any good. These brethren imagine that they are attaining great spiritual light by whipping down the lusts of the flesh.

A great deal of sanctified common sense is badly needed among us at the present time. The motive in all these things is self-glorification, regardless of how well it is concealed from self and others. The appeal of Paul is for the glory of Christ.

I. The Manner of Paul's Ministry, verses 1-5.

Paul reminds the brethren that he came to them declaring the testimony of God. It seems he made a special effort to know nothing among them except Christ and Him crucified. Perhaps he made this special effort because of the tendency of human wisdom. He was making sure of making disciples to Christ and not to himself.

His demeanor towards them was one of personal weakness, fear, and trembling. Today we set much store by dynamic personality in preachers. Paul simply condemns this attitude in his description of himself at Corinth and that is all there is to it.

His message was not attractive from gems of human wisdom set forth. It had its appeal in the Spirit power that worked in connection with it. The general picture is of his preaching the cross with all the vehemence of his soul and of refusing to recommend himself at all by personal magnetism or words of human wisdom. It is hard for men to admit that the gospel seasoned with the Holy Spirit is the one and only power of God unto salvation. We always want to inject human personality in one way or another.

His purpose was to establish their faith in the power of God rather than in the wisdom of men. If he could succeed in this he would have built a work which would stand when he himself was gone.

II. The Mystery of Spiritual Understanding, verses 6-9.

In verse six Paul wrote of the wisdom which he spoke to the perfect ones. These perfect ones are simply those who had gone beyond elementary things in their ability to understand. He spoke this wisdom to them when they were well established in the faith. It is a shame that we do not have more of such perfect ones in our churches today.

The wisdom of God is a mystery simply because it is not in line with the

wisdom of men. It is contrary to their perverted thinking, therefore it is a mystery to them. The doctrine of security would be an example of this mystery.

It is said that the mystery of wisdom was ordained before the world unto our glory. Reduced to simple terms, this mystery of the wisdom of God is that man should be eternally glorified by the works and virtues of Christ.

It is indicated that men crucified the Lord of glory because they did not understand this mysterious wisdom of God.

Verse nine is very strong in its statement about the glories of Heaven, which we have not yet seen. It seems the home of the redeemed will far exceed our fondest expectations. By the same token, Hell will be far worse than we can possibly imagine.

III. The Manner of Revelation, verses 10-13.

We are told that the revelation came to us from God through the agency of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is capable of searching out the deep and hidden things of God.

Let it be clearly understood that the full revelation of God came to men whom God chose in Bible times. Men today do not receive revelation directly from Heaven. The revelation is recorded in the Bible and we get it chiefly by study.

To arrive at spiritual understanding, one must first be born again. In the second place, he must study diligently with an open and inquiring mind, ever alert to weed out errors in his own conclusions. Much practical Christian experience is another requirement in coming to spiritual understanding. Sometimes the Holy Spirit seems to help the individual to associate passages together which will aid understanding. Let us stop here and not add the matter of special light that is supposed to come to those who follow a course of fighting against the flesh for self-glorification.

Paul claims the things he wrote were given to him by God. This is true, he being chosen of God to receive inspiration. No man is so chosen today; we look for our light in the Bible and in the ordinary, unspectacular course of life.

IV. The Blindness of the Natural Man, verses 14-16.

A fundamental principle for all the argument Paul makes along here is that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. He is spiritually dead and therefore utterly incapable of responding to Spirit communication. He is as powerless to receive spiritual messages as a deaf man is powerless to hear or a blind man to see.

The spiritual man stands above judgement when he thinks and acts along spiritual lines, in this state he makes no mistakes. But the Adam nature in him is yet subject to judgment.

We have the mind of Christ from the new birth and from growth in grace. Paul is not here building up a case for sinless perfection. He is rather

rebuking the brethren for not having made more advancement in spiritual understanding within the resources they had at their command. The chain seems to be this: He found them acting after the **flesh**. **He** tried to rebuke them in spiritual terms. They did not follow his arguments because they were still thinking like the natural man. He reminded them that by their position and nature in Christ they ought to be acting differently but were not doing so.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What did Paul preach to the Corinthians?
2. What was his personal appearance to them?
3. What made his ministry attractive?
4. In what did he establish their faith?
5. Who are the perfect ones of verse six?
6. Why is the wisdom of God a mystery?
7. What did God ordain before the world?
8. Why did men crucify Christ?
9. Do we have a clear understanding of Heaven?
10. Through whom did the revelation come?
11. To whom did the revelation come?
12. Who may understand the things of God, and how?
13. From whom did Paul receive the words of inspiration?
14. Who is the natural man?
15. Why can he not know spiritual things?
16. Who stands above judgment?
17. How do we get the mind of Christ?

LABORERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

I Corinthians 3:1-10

INTRODUCTION

Having rebuked the Corinthian brethren for the divisions which existed among them, and having shown that spiritual understanding would eradicate divisions and strife among them, Paul in this lesson advances the idea that they were all laborers together with God. Since they were all laborers together with one another and with God, it was utterly inconsistent that they should work against one another. Surely if we would keep this truth in mind today there would be far less working at cross purposes among the membership of a church.

In the first section of our Scriptural lesson, Paul makes the complaint that he had formerly fed the brethren with milk because they were not able to receive strong food. This means, of course, that he had taught them the simple and easily grasped truths of the Word of God, avoiding those deeper doctrines which require spiritual understanding to grasp. Then he makes the more serious charge that neither now were they able to take the strong food. One cannot be blamed for not understanding the strong doctrines of the New Testament when he is first saved, for up to now he has not been equipped to understand them. But when one has been saved for years with an open Bible in his hands and a church to attend and learn the truth, it is a serious matter indeed not to understand and accept a number of the fundamental doctrines of the New Testament. Any person of average ability can learn the fundamental doctrines of his church, and he can learn the why of these fundamentals. There is no excuse for his not doing so. He should accept the fundamental principles on which the church stands, or he should get out and go elsewhere.

Actually, we have a number of members in our churches who believe Baptists teach church salvation, which is not true, of course. If they would listen to the preacher instead of going to sleep they could soon get this error adjusted in their minds. Again, there is an alarming number who are falling into the error of the universal invisible church heresy. The pastor could soon explain this error if he were asked to do so, or the member himself could soon see that a local visible church is the only kind found in the New Testament. We must admit that all such members as these are carnal and babes in Christ just as the Corinthian brethren were.

The second lesson laid down in our study is that those who labor in the gospel are laboring together and not in opposition to one another. The church members were attempting to set such characters as Paul, Apollos,

and Cephas in array against one another, when in fact they were all laboring in a common cause. They had all the fight they could stand against the world and the Devil without expending their energies against each other. It is a pity we cannot fully learn the same lesson Paul sought to teach these people. There is plenty of labor for all without scattering our forces and consuming our energies against each other.

The third lesson is closely related to the second. We are not only laborers together with one another, but also with God. It is really God's project, and we merely have the noble privilege of co-operating with Him. Not only do we labor with Him, but also, we ourselves are His building and husbandry. When we realize this fact, our own importance will surely sink into the background so that it will not stand as a hindrance to the mighty project of God. Paul goes on to show that he was a wise master builder simply because God had chosen him to so work. He was grateful for the grace of God that was extended to him, but he did not become proud of his own position or accomplishments. God was using him as He saw fit, and Paul could only submit himself to the will of God in the matter. Do not allow this study to slip away without gaining some practical lessons on cooperation with the church and especially with God.

I. Fleshly Christians, verses 14.

This chapter begins with the accusation of Paul that he could not speak to the Corinthian brethren as unto spiritual, but as to carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. "Carnal" means fleshly, and "fleshly" refers to the natural or unregenerated state of man. We read at I Cor. 2:14 that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. He is not able to know them because they are spiritually discerned. This natural man is spiritually dead, and thus out of touch with spiritual things. These Corinthian brethren were thinking and acting like unregenerated men. Therefore they were carnal, or fleshly, or babes in Christ. They were not natural men, because they were saved, but they were acting like natural men.

They were of necessity fed on milk at the beginning of their Christian career because they did not know enough to take strong food, the deeper doctrines of the New Testament. The milk is a figure of the simple first principles of Christianity. Now, after years as saved people, they still had to be fed milk, for they had not grown in grace and the knowledge of Christ as they should have.

Paul cites the envy, strife, and divisions among the brethren as proof that they were yet carnal. In the new birth he ceases to be a natural man, but he does not necessarily cease to be a carnal or fleshly man. The putting away of this condition in his life comes, not in the new birth, but in growth in grace. It consists in learning and living by the Word of God and putting down the lusts of the flesh.

Perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses in churches today are those people who are saved, joined to the church, but fail to grow in grace by

learning and living by the New Testament rule. It is amazing how many people of long standing as church members do not know the foundation doctrines of Baptist churches. These cannot be depended on in times of stress because they do not understand the situations that arise in the churches.

II. The Work of Ministers, verses 5-8.

The great argument in the church was over Paul and Apollos as leaders. Paul points out that they were only the ministers by whom the brethren believed in Christ. They had not been saved by Paul nor Apollos, nor had they been baptized into, or unto, either of these worthy leaders. In these things they had committed themselves unto Christ and His church, not to Paul or Apollos. Therefore, why should these men be a cause of controversy in the church to wreck the fellowship? It did not make sense to the earnest man of God.

Speaking in a figure, Paul says he planted and Apollos watered. Paul was a missionary and, doubtless, Apollos was a pastor. Then Paul planted the church at Corinth and Apollos ministered to it after it was planted. Each of these men had his different and appointed work.

After pointing out the part of himself and of Apollos in the work at Corinth, Paul says God gave the increase. Therefore the essential work belonged to God. Neither man was indispensable to the endeavor, but God was necessary to its success.

Paul and Apollos were one in that there was agreement between them in desire for the prosperity of the cause of Christ in Corinth. Of course, if each had been seeking his own glory, there would have been disagreement between them as there was disagreement among the church members. Selfish interests is the cause of the majority of strife in the world.

Paul tells us our rewards will be according to our works. He does not specifically say so here, but it is God who will do the judging and the setting of the standard of judgment, and not man.

III. Builders for God, verses 9, 10.

These ministers of the gospel were laborers together with God. God was the planner, the caller, and the empowerer. The part of the men was merely to do what God had called them to do in cooperation with Him. It was not their place to take matters into their own hands and work for self-glorification.

The church was the husbandry, or vineyard, and the building of God. He has a vital interest in the progress of every true church. He will cause, it to prosper in so far as the members will allow Him to do so.

We are told that it was by the grace of God that Paul became a wise master builder. Let it be remembered that Paul was the greatest wrecker of churches when he labored in his own wisdom. See Acts 9:1, 2.

The one who built on the foundation which Paul laid was the pastor who followed him in the church. Apollos and Cephas, who is Peter, are mentioned in this connection.

We are warned to take heed how we build in church capacity. The blueprint is the New Testament and we must be careful to build after its pattern.

There may be those in the church whose personal ways we do not like, but this is not the issue in church work. The vital question is whether our companions in labor are willing to stand with us on the New Testament foundation.

The great accusation against the Corinthian brethren is that they were not spiritual. The situation reveals that their greatest fault was not being willing to follow the Scriptures in letter and spirit. Therefore, it looks as though spirituality is scripturality above all else. Certainly, spirituality is not the fleshly frenzy which many try to make it today.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What does carnal mean?
2. What are the milk and the meat mentioned?
3. What is the proof that the Corinthians were fleshly?
4. Are there many fleshly Christians today?
5. How important were Paul and Apollos?
6. How did their work differ?
7. Who is the important character, and why?
8. How were these ministers one?
9. How are our rewards determined?
10. With whom were the ministers laboring?
11. What was the church to God?
12. What determined the success of Paul as a builder?
13. Who built on Paul's foundation?
14. How shall we know how to build?
15. Are you willing to co-operate with anyone who builds scripturally?
16. What can be done to make a church spiritual?

Lesson 5

OUR WORKS TESTED BY GOD

I Corinthians 3:11-23

INTRODUCTION

As Christian workers we are not building after the ways of the flesh. The works of God stand in sharp contrast to those of the world. When the Corinthians were saved and brought into church relationship, they supposedly turned their backs on their old manner of life and embarked on an entirely new career. They had walked after the flesh in human wisdom, but this way of life had brought them neither satisfaction nor salvation. Now they had been saved, not after the ways of the world, but after the heavenly wisdom of God.

But the brethren of this church had done what many another has done. Having put their hand to the plow of walking in the Christian life, they had turned back to the ways of the world and lusts of the flesh.

It seems likely we are living in the Laodicean period of church history today as outlined in the third chapter of Revelation. This church had become fleshly and worldly in practically all of its thoughts and actions. The people were glorying in the flesh just as the Corinthians of our present study were. It behooves us to take special note of the ways of the fleshly Corinthians and to be warned against them, because multitudes are now falling into the same manners of errors.

The last lesson dealt with the idea that men are laborers for God and with Him, and that all the wisdom, power, and guidance come from Him. Therefore the men involved in the labors are of very little consequence. If the church pays due allegiance to God, and if He is guiding the destiny of the church, it makes little difference, indeed, as to which men are involved in the matter. God could bring success though the preacher might be very weak. Or God could permit failure though the preacher might be strong in the strength of the world.

This lesson begins by stating that there is no other foundation but Christ. It seems this foundation is the foundation of both salvation and the church. Many religious bodies claiming the distinction of being churches have been founded in modern times on men of modern times. These are not recognized at all by Paul when he considers the matter of a foundation. He simply says there is none other but Christ. Therefore it is church saints who are under consideration in our lesson. A church should be able to identify herself with churches holding the same doctrines and practices all the way back to Christ. Some new body with new doctrines will not meet the requirements for a Scriptural church. The Corinthians were founded on Christ, but they were now acting as though they were founded on Paul or

Apollos or Cephas. Paul was attempting to set them right lest God should disown them as He does modern man-glorifying bodies.

There are two ways of building in the church: Scriptural building and unscriptural building. The Scriptural work is acceptable; The unscriptural is utterly rejected. The works of wood, hay and stubble will not stand the fire of the searching judgment of God.

God has established a temple in the world, which is the church of His Son. Since it is the temple of God, He sets the rules for its building and its government. He inhabits this temple in the person of the Holy Spirit, and it must be a fitting habitation if the Spirit is to continue to abide there.

At the close of the chapter, Paul reverts to an argument he has set forth many times: that the ways of God are not the same as the ways of fleshly men. Those whose works are to be acceptable to Him, though they are saved people, must shape their labors after His will. His will is revealed in the New Testament. Thus God does not require an impossible thing from His people, but He does require works different from those of carnal men.

I. Christ, the Foundation, verse 11.

It is stated there is no other foundation but Christ. He is the foundation for salvation in that He is the only person and way through Whom we may be saved from the condemnation of sin. Peter tells the Jewish Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, as recorded at Acts 4:12, *'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'*

At Matt. 16:18 Jesus tells us how He is the foundation of the church:

Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "The rock is Christ Himself. He is the foundation of the church in that it is built by Him on His own power and merits, and it stands on these same things. It is not the energy and wisdom of men that keeps the church alive and pure in the world. If it were, it would not last for two generations.

II. Two Manners of Building, verses 12-15.

In terms of building, we all know that gold, silver, and precious stones represent durability, beauty, and real worth. Thus the works of the church of the nature of these worthy things will stand every test. The full outline for our church, or Christian, works is given in the New Testament. Thus, when we build by New Testament instructions, we are building with gold, silver, and precious stones.

Wood, hay, and stubble are weak and insecure as building materials. One cannot expect such a building to stand the ravages of time and storms. Man-made churches change their doctrines and practices constantly. They do not endure from generation to generation, nor will their unscriptural works stand in the day of judgment.

We are told that the works built on Christ will be tried by fire. This fire appears first in the testings that come to churches now. The final phase of it will be when the saved stand before God to give an account of their stewardship of His truth in the world.

The builder who used good materials in his work will receive a reward. This reward consists in the guidance of the Holy Spirit now, the acclaim of Christ at the day of judgment, and a position of great opportunity in the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Those who build with worthless material will see their works consumed by the fiery wrath of God in judgment. Also, they live in fear and uncertainty in the world and support teachings which will deceive people into hell. They will appear in great shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Compare II Corinthians 5:10 with Rev. 16:15.

Note the condition to come from good works. It is not to keep the workers saved but to receive a reward for good works. We are kept by the power of God in salvation.

Note again that the builder of wood, hay, and stubble does not lose his salvation. It positively states he shall be saved. But it will be as by fire. That is, he comes before Christ without any rewards at all.

III. The Church As a Temple, verses 16,17

The Corinthian brethren who banded together in church capacity formed a temple of God. On this subject, Eph 2:21,22 reads, *'In whom (Christ) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.'*

The Greek text of the New Testament says that if anyone destroys the temple of God, him will God destroy. This means that if anyone perverts the teachings of Christ in the church, God will bring judgment on him in destroying his influence or even taking his life out of the world. One of the most serious offenses possible is the wilful turning or perverting the truth of God as we act in church capacity.

IV. Wise and Foolish Builders, verses 18-23.

Saved people become wise by forsaking the wisdom of the world and looking to God for that true heavenly wisdom. This is one of the strongest points insisted on throughout the Scriptures. The child of God must forsake what he thinks he knows after the flesh and look to God by faith for help and strength to live acceptably in the world.

The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. We should be able to realize this when we remember that all wisdom originated in God. The Devil then took some of the wisdom of God's creation and utterly perverted it and gave this perverted wisdom to the world to live by.

Because the Lord knows that the thoughts of men are vain, these

thoughts coming from the Devil, we should not glory in men. Surely enough has been said in this passage to convince us to turn from the thoughts and devices of men and seek our wisdom from God in His Word.

In being saved and entering into the church relationship, the brethren had become fellow heirs with Christ, who is to inherit all things and give His church a full portion of his inheritance. This being the case, it was unseemly that the brethren had become so wrapped up in the men who had merely preached the gospel to them and had thrust Christ and His principles of church work into the background.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How is Christ the foundation for salvation?
2. How is He the foundation for the church?
3. What do gold, silver, and precious stones signify as building materials?
4. How will saved people's works be tried?
5. What will be the condition of the good builder?
6. What will be the condition of the bad builder?
7. Do faithful works keep one saved?
8. Do unfaithful works destroy, salvation?
9. What is the temple of God on earth today?
10. How does God inhabit this temple?
11. What is the penalty for destroying this temple?
12. How do saved people become wise?
13. What is foolishness with God?
14. Why should we not glory in the wisdom of men?
15. How do all things belong to the church?

FAITHFUL MINISTERS OF CHRIST

I Corinthians 4:1-21

INTRODUCTION

The Corinthian brethren had manifested the fleshliness of their minds by creating factions and divisions in the church over the question of leaders, some being for Paul, some for Apollos, etc. The true position of ministers and servants is set forth in the present study.

The first thing he sets forth is that as workers in the kingdom we are accountable to God, and not to men, nor are we to set up standards of judgment for ourselves. God will do the judging according to His own righteous standards at His appointed time, which will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The results of this judgement are set forth in the third chapter of I Corinthians. At the present time there are preachers among us who spend a major portion of their time and efforts setting up standards of judgment for the saved. May we all thank God that we will not have these preachers sitting in judgment over us at the appointed time, nor will their standards be the ones by which we are judged unless their standards are far **less** fleshly and more scriptural than some we have heard proclaimed. Paul seems to have despised the efforts of those who set themselves up to judge his merits and conduct. He was a minister of the mysteries of Christ and was answerable only to Christ as to his stewardship. And, he was so unsure of the details of judgment that he did not dare to judge even himself, much less all the other servants of the Lord. Is not this doctrine of touch not, taste not, handle not," which is so prevalent among us of late, about the most presumptuous thing that has come among Baptists in modern times?

Paul indicates that he and Apollos had lived the true spirit of the servants of the Lord among the Corinthian brethren. Certainly, from experience and background, these ministers of the gospel had reason to hold a position of preeminence over the inexperienced members of the church at Corinth. Instead, we see them coming before the brethren in a spirit of humility to the extent that the brethren were presuming to despise them and pronounce judgment on them. The purpose of these ministers had been to stand as examples to the flock in humility. Paul tells them it is no concern to him that he is judged by them, for the time will come when God will make known the hidden things of the hearts of men. It is only this judgment over which he has concern. The same should be true of us today.

The inspired writer goes on to point out the self-denial which he and his

companions in labors had undergone among the brethren. They had been made a spectacle not only to men, but to angels as well. They had endured these things that the brethren might be made something great in Christ and in his church. It is truly a strange situation in the eyes of the world when the men that had brought the gospel of salvation to the people were in want, dishonor, and reproach while those who had so greatly benefited from their ministry stood in prosperity. Likewise, it is a strange state of affairs today when some of the most faithful ministers stand in poor financial circumstances and are reproached even by their own brethren. But, the same things might be said of Christ to a greater extent that is true of any of his servants.

The thing that is hard to understand is that Paul denies all authority to judge, and then he threatens to come to Corinth in judgment. But this judgment is merely a measuring of the labors of presumptuous ones by the rule of the Scriptures. Without regard to the "do's" and "don'ts" of their private lives, he will see whether or not their labors are accompanied by the power of the Spirit of God. He will see whether they are getting people saved and teaching them to walk in true humility before God and man.

I. Accountable to God, verses 1-5.

The apostles who went to labor in Corinth were not to be regarded and judged as ordinary men by fleshly standards of judgment. They were to be regarded as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. The argument is made in a veiled way that if God accepts a man and sends him forth to labor for Him, it is a very presumptuous thing for another to judge and condemn him.

It is the duty of a servant that he be found faithful. If it were required of us that we understand all of the teachings of the Bible and all the wisdom of men, then the Christian work would be an impossible task. But it is not so required. God sets a standard for his servants that all can meet who wish to do so: it is that we be found faithful in what we do know and in what we have the wisdom and ability to do. There is no excuse for one's not measuring up to this standard.

Paul says he knew nothing within himself, but he hastens to explain that this ignorance did not relieve him of responsibility. He was not justified by his ignorance and relieved of responsibility. He was to stand before the Lord and be judged as the Lord reckoned his ability and opportunity.

We are plainly told that the time for judgment of the servants is when the Lord comes. He will bring to light the hidden things of the heart. We can put on a bold front and largely deceive men, but not so with the Lord. He will judge according to righteous judgment and not according to the excuses a man might make in the presence of a human judge. Not only are we prone to create wrong estimations of ourselves in the minds of men, but also we very readily deceive ourselves when we are attempting to shirk responsibility and neglect opportunity. None of these things will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

II. An Example in Humility, verses 6-8.

Within himself Paul had exhibited the true principle of judgment to the brethren. An object lesson is the best lesson of all. Though being apostles of Christ and being in a position to exercise authority among the brethren thereby, Paul and Apollos on the other hand had come among the people in humility as waiting to be judged of God. It is a sad situation then when the brethren for whom this example was set forth began to judge the men who had given them the great object lesson.

The saints were puffed up, the one against the other, because of their rivalry over leaders. Paul and Apollos had labored together in humility to set the opposite example, but the example had not been received.

According to verse seven, all of our abilities come from God. There is nothing which originates within ourselves by which we may glory over someone else..

The Lord had given the Corinthians the gospel whereby they had been saved, and He had given them the privilege of working and worshipping in church capacity. The assurance of their hope in Christ made them to reign as kings in the world.

III. An Example in Self-Denial, verses 9-13.

The apostles had been made a spectacle to men in the world by going forth in weakness and preaching the gospel in unfriendly surroundings. They had also been a spectacle in the presence of angels, who look upon the affairs of men. No doubt the angels of the Devil rejoiced in the humiliation of these servants of the Lord.

The people were wise in Christ in that they had accepted salvation in Him. The apostles had been made fools in the sight of men to gain converts to Christ. We are told this was so that their faith might stand in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men.

From the standpoint of the world, the apostles stood on the level of bums. They had no secure home and they frequently lacked the comforts and even the necessities of life. When they were reviled by men, they besought these men to turn to Christ for salvation.

IV. Authority to Judge, verses 14-21.

The special interest of Paul in the brethren at Corinth was that he had led them to salvation. It is a sad thing for one to see those he has led to Christ going after the errors of the world.

There was a young minister by the name of Timothy, a disciple of Paul, a most faithful servant, whom Paul sent to Corinth to remind the brethren of the things Paul had previously taught them. In this way Paul sought to rescue them from the error of their ways.

Paul said that when he should come he would not be persuaded by the words of those who claimed to be something great in Christ, but he would examine the power in which they operated. It is one thing to claim to be a great servant of the Lord; it is another matter to have spiritual fruits to prove one's claim to the favor of the Lord.

Paul had previously disclaimed authority and judgment on his part, but now he of necessity invokes the Word of God to test and rebuke and set right those who had departed from the right way.

The difficult task which Paul accomplished here is that he fully asserted the word of God as the guide of life without asserting himself and what he might think as a man. This is a large order for any church to carry out.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How were ministers to be regarded?
2. When will the servants be judged, and how?
3. What principle had Paul exhibited to the brethren?
4. What caused the saints to be puffed up?
5. Where do we get our Christian abilities?
6. How had the Lord blessed the brethren?
7. To whom had the apostles been made a spectacle?
8. How were the people wise and the apostles fools?
9. What was the physical condition of the apostles?
10. How did they respond to ill treatment?
11. What was the special interest of Paul in the church?
12. Why was Timothy sent to Corinth?
13. How would Paul test the claims of puffed-up men?
14. On what authority would he test the leaders at Corinth?
15. How could Paul be humble and authoritative at the same time?

A STUDY ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE

I Corinthians 5:1-13

INTRODUCTION

This is a difficult subject for two reasons. In the first place, it is often hard to know just how to apply the Scripture rule to many given situations. In the second place, it is hard to induce the membership of a church to act in accordance with the Scripture rule. There are always the relatives and friends of the guilty members who are not willing to exercise discipline. There is no excuse for this weakness on the part of the membership of the church. Everyone concerned is harmed and no one is helped by a church's refusal to practice disciplinary measures when the New Testament clearly prescribes such action. The church is weakened in spiritual power and it loses the respect of the onlooking world. The member who needs to be rebuked is harmed by not receiving the rebuke which the situation demands. This is the fundamental explanation for the lack of effectiveness of much of our church endeavor today.

The matter of church discipline is introduced by a case of fornication in the church at Corinth. Since the matters of fornication and adultery will be discussed prominently in the next few lessons, no full discussion of this subject will be attempted at this time. It may be observed here that this is one of the most perplexing of all problems that come up in the practical working of a church. There are almost as many varying ideas on the subject as there are Bible students among us.

As to our present lesson, the erring man had his father's wife. It is not evident whether he had married his father's widow, or his divorced wife, or whether he was living with her without benefit of wedlock. The Law of Moses forbade an Israelite to marry his father's widow, see Leviticus 18:8, but this fact does not help us much with the present problem. It is suggested that any one of the situations mentioned above would be wrong on the part of a church member. Practical details will come out when we study the sixth and seventh chapters of the book.

The most vital point in our present lesson is the attitude of the members of a church when one of her members falls into sin. Paul tells us clearly what the reaction of the Corinthian brethren was. They were puffed up, and they were rejoicing in the sin the man committed. Doubtless they were puffed up with a spirit of superior righteousness. This man had done a thing worse than they themselves had done and they were elated by their spirit of self-righteousness. They rejoiced in his sin because it gave them the occasion to revel in their own righteousness. They were better than he in

this particular detail at least, and the thought gave them a pleasing sense of self esteem. It is possible that some gloried in the sin of this church member because it **seemed** to give more leeway to others to indulge in sin of one kind or another. It is a strange trait of human nature that our ideas of right and decency are largely relative; we are not so much concerned with what is ultimately right and wrong, but our goal is to do as well as, or just a shade better than, those with whom we associate. This principle is true of the masses of people, even though the general moral standard may be very low. This is why the moral fiber of a whole nation decays with the passing of time: the upright seeks to do just a little better than the great sinner. Paul tells the Corinthian brethren in effect that the whole church should have repented of the sin that one member committed. There seems to be no way of escaping this conclusion, and there seems to be no way of escaping the import of it and the responsibility it throws upon the church. Do we repent and grieve for the sins that our fellow church members commit? It seems if we do not that we do not measure up to the Scripture requirement of a church.

I. The Offending Brother, verses 1, 2.

The nature of the offence was that there was fornication among the membership of the church at Corinth. A man had his father's wife. The exact nature of this relationship is not told by Paul in his rebuke of the church. He shamed them by saying such a situation did not exist among the Gentiles, or the heathen nations.

Not only did the case of fornication exist among the membership of the church, but also, the brethren were puffed up about it. It is not certain just what is meant by their being puffed up, but likely they were reveling in their own righteousness and despising the fallen brother.

Paul tells them they should have mourned in order that the one who had done the sin might be taken from their midst. It is evident that the whole church should have repented and grieved over the sin of a member.

II. What the Church Should Do, verses 3-5.

Paul had already judged concerning the case though he was not present. This was a case wherein there could be no circumstances to alter the case or excuse the church from acting upon it. He was present in spirit in that he was vitally interested in the welfare of the church.

From verse four there can be no doubt that it was the duty of the church to act on this case which had arisen among them. There are many in Baptist churches today who are willing to so wrest the Scriptures that it will not ever be necessary to exclude a member. In taking such an attitude they positively deny the clear teaching of this verse.

The church should enter into the matter in the spirit of Paul, which was a true Christian spirit, and they should operate in the power of Christ. The

power of Christ is invoked only as a church acts in a Scriptural manner. This latter statement should be shouted from the housetops until every church member understands its import and accepts it. The power of Christ does not accompany religious bodies which do not walk according to the New Testament rule.

This sinning man was to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. He was to be excluded from the church membership. It did not take his salvation away from him, for neither the church nor its members saved him in the first place. Delivering him over to Satan is simply turning him out into the world where he does not have the teaching, guiding, comforting, and admonishing influence of the church. The truth of Christ prevails in the church. He was to be cast out into the world where the lie of Satan abounds. Why attempt to make any more or less out of this matter?

The saving of the spirit refers to the works of righteousness which a man will have manifested in the day of the Lord, which is the resurrection day. There is no need for anyone to try to read falling from grace into it for it simply is not there.

III. The Leaven of Harbored Sin, verses 6-8.

The church should not glory in this sin, because the sin of the one man put sin in the whole church, just as a little leaven permeates the whole mass of dough.

The old leaven was the old manner of sinful life the people had lived. Matthew 16:6-12, along with many other passages, teaches us that leaven is always a type of sin.

The new lump was the church, whose members had forsaken the old life of sin to walk in newness of life with Christ by faith.

The feast kept by the church is communion with Christ by the Spirit, attained by a New Testament walk. There may be a reference to the Lord's supper here also.

IV. Judging Sinners in the Church, verses 9-13.

Let the student learn the list of sinners whose ways are not to be tolerated in the church. This means that the church members are not to do these things wilfully, and if they do them inadvertently, they are to repent and turn from the sin when it is so done.

This lesson teaches that church members should be excluded from the fellowship for certain offences. Those Scriptures which are called up to deny this fact are perverted when they are so used. It is a terribly perilous thing to array one passage of the word of God against another whose meaning cannot be questioned.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What was the nature of the offence against the church?
2. What was the attitude of the brethren toward the offence?
3. What should their attitude have been?
4. Who had already judged concerning the fornicator?
5. Who should have judged concerning his case?
6. In what spirit and power should he be judged?
7. What is the delivering of the sinner to Satan?
8. What is the saving of the spirit?
9. Why should the church not glory in sin?
10. What was the old leaven?
11. What was the new lump?
12. What feast does the church keep?
13. What kind of sinners should not be harbored in the church?
14. What would be the result of harboring sinners?
15. Do you believe a church should exclude offending members?
16. Are you willing to put the church before relatives and friends?

Lesson 8

SETTLING INTERNAL STRIFE

I Corinthians 6:1-20

INTRODUCTION

There are three fundamental Scripture principles involved in this lesson which are intimately related to one another. If the student will take careful note of these and keep them in mind as he studies the details of the lesson, he may hope to see a sensible pattern. If he does not do so, then the details are likely to appear mysterious and contradictory to one another. These fundamental principles may be stated in the following terms: The church saint is to walk in the Spirit and not after the flesh. The second principle is that the Bible makes clear distinction between wilful sins and incidental sins; that is, sins that are committed without premeditation or deliberate planning. The third principle is that some acts are sin only if we make them so.

As to the first of the principles mentioned above, when one is born again a new spirit nature is created within him, which did not exist before. This new nature gives him a definite inclination to accept and follow the Scripture rule of faith and practice. The Holy Spirit also helps the infirmities of the flesh. When he lives and walks in this environment there is no law against him, for his thoughts and actions are right. If we follow this viewpoint to an extreme conclusion we would arrive at the idea of sinless perfection, which many have done. But the Bible reveals that the fleshly nature is not destroyed in the new birth, nor can it be completely destroyed by righteous living. It will ever remain to plague and trip up the child of God until the death of the body. Thus he has these two warring personalities within himself as long as he lives. Study Romans 7:15-25 on this subject. It is in the spirit discussed here that Paul says all things are lawful to him, meaning that anything he did in the letter and spirit of the New Testament was lawful. Stealing hogs would not be lawful to him, for it would not be possible under the spirit and letter of the New Testament. Nothing is right nor holy which violates both the letter and the spirit of the New Testament, and the very instant a child of God departs from the spiritual walk, he makes himself liable to moral law.

Our second related fundamental principle is the matter of wilful sins and incidental, accidental, or unpremeditated sins. For instance, covering up the truth in the stress of the moment is one thing; deliberately joining oneself to a harlot is an entirely different matter. For a Corinthian brother to be angry with his brother on the spur of the moment was one thing; for them to commonly go to law with one another before Gentile judges was entirely something else. This latter was a deliberate, premeditated violation of the New Testament principle. No one ever does it and escapes

the consequences. For a brother to secretly and momentarily lust after a woman was an incidental sin; for a brother to practice fornication in the knowledge of the whole church was a deliberate sin, accepted not only by the man himself, but by the whole church also. If one can keep this distinction in mind he should have no trouble with this lesson; otherwise it must remain a hopeless jumble to him.

The third principle is that sin is sometimes sin because we make it so. This is not so of every situation by any means. It is never right under any circumstances to commit murder or adultery or to curse God. But Paul clearly sets forth examples wherein a thing was sin to one but not sin to another. Study the eighth chapter of I Corinthians on this subject.

Eating meat in worship to an idol was a sin. Eating the same meat without regard to the idol was not sin. Eating the Lord's supper in memory of the death of Christ was a great virtue. Eating this supper with some other motive was a sin that brought death to many of the church members; see I Corinthians 11:26, 30. Again, it is insisted that a due recognition of these three principles will clear up most of the perplexing details of our present lesson.

I. Judgment by the Saints, verses 1-5.

The chapter begins with a rebuke of the saints for going to law with one another before the unjust rather than having their matters settled among the saints. At Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus lays down the following rule for such situations: Two church members should first try to settle their differences between themselves. If they fail, then two or three brethren should be called in for witnesses and for counsel. If this plan fails, then the matter should be presented to the church. If the stubborn brother fails to heed the counsel of the church, then he should be excluded from the fellowship of the church.

The saints should judge the matters that come up among them because they shall judge the world. The saints will judge and rule the world with Christ during the thousand years of the Millennial reign; see Revelation 20: 4-6 and Matthew 19:28.

The saints judging angels is somewhat of a puzzle. Angels were created with far more understanding than men. Despite this understanding some angels rebelled against God and fell into sin and everlasting destruction. With far less wisdom by nature, some men accept Christ and come into eternal glorification. Their choice stands as a great condemnation of the course chosen by rebellious angels. Furthermore, angels become the servants of the saved; see Hebrews 1:14.

It seems Paul is speaking in sarcasm when he admonishes the church to choose those lightly esteemed ones to judge of their worldly matters. Surely if they would accept the judgments of worldly men they would be willing to accept the judgments of the least of those who are to inherit the world.

II. Judgment by the World, verses 6-11.

As a common practice, the church members were going to law before unsaved judges over matters that came up between them. These judges and their systems were to be condemned with the world when Christ should take judgment into His hands. Therefore the brethren should commit their causes to those who were destined to reign forever with Christ. They would not give judgment to those to whom Christ has given judgment. It would be better to suffer wrong than to defer judgment to the unrighteous.

The saints in their past lives had been all manner of evil and sinful characters such as adulterers, idolaters, thieves, covetous, etc.; but they had been washed, sanctified, and made righteous in the name of Christ and by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God.

It is utterly illogical then that they should turn from the God who had freed them from all uncleanness and guilt and go back to those old ways in which they had been branded as all manner of sinners and unclean persons. Let it be noted that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, regardless of what one has done before he becomes a child of God, except as he may be able to make restitution for his past sins. If a man has robbed a bank and still has the money in his possession when he is saved, then he would logically return the stolen money. Simply saying he was sorry he had stolen the money would not clear the account in such an instance.

III. Wilful Sins and Incidental Sins, verses 16-20.

It seems the deep argument is that when we are saved we become united in spirit with Christ. When we are united with the church we become united in body with Him, for the church is the body and manifestation of Christ in the world. We commit unpremeditated sins which we then disown in repentance and confession. These are the sins without the body. They creep in, but we cast them out. But a premeditated sin is like the act of fornication. It is entered into deliberately, and as the fornicator becomes one body with the harlot, we become identified with our wilful sin, whether as an individual or as a church. Thus we sin against our personal bodies, which are dedicated to Christ, and we sin against our united body, the church, which is also the body of Christ, when we sin wilfully either as individual members or as a church. The fornicator of the fifth chapter sinned against himself and his church. The church sinned against herself in allowing fornication in her midst. The church is the temple in which the Holy Spirit came to abide on the day of Pentecost. The church, both as individuals and as a group, is obligated to keep this temple pure.

We have been bought with the price of the blood of Christ, first as individuals unto salvation, and second as a group to be the body and representative of Christ in the world. Since we have been bought into an infinitely better position and destiny we are unalterably obligated to glorify God both in body and in spirit.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How should church members settle their differences?
2. When will the saints judge the world?
3. How will the saints judge angels?
4. Why should the least esteemed in the church judge in worldly matters?
5. What evil practice were the church members following?
6. What should they have done instead?
7. What had been the nature of the saints before they were saved?
8. How were they freed from sin and guilt?
9. How did Paul view the sins of the flesh?
10. Why is it not logical for a church member to practice sin?
11. What is a sin without the body?
12. What is a sin against one's own body?
13. What is the temple of the Holy Spirit?
14. How are we obligated to live clean lives?

Lesson 9

THE MARRIAGE OF BELIEVERS

I Corinthians 7:1-40

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we are faced squarely with the issue of marriage and divorce as it pertains to church members. This is an embarrassing subject to our people for two reasons. One of them is the many cases of divorce and remarriage in the membership of our churches. The other is the fact that there is no uniformity of belief and practice among our churches on the subject. Not all will agree with the position which will be set forth in this lesson on the vexing subject, but this view of the situation is worthy of the most serious consideration by those who are puzzled as to just what the Scripture rule on this matter is for church members. The introduction will consist of an effort to lay down a fundamental rule concerning different statements of the Scriptures. If the student sees and accepts the point here, he will be prepared to follow the viewpoint through the lesson. If he does not understand this principle, or if he rejects it as incorrect, then he likely will not agree with the interpretations of the various situations that are discussed.

At Matthew 19:3-12, the pharisees attempted to array Jesus and Moses against one another on the subject of divorce and remarriage. In verse eight Jesus would seem to set Moses in the light of a compromiser because of the hardness of the hearts of the people. That is, it would appear that Moses departed from the original law on this subject simply because the people refused to be governed by that original law which was given to Adam and Eve in Eden before the fall. But the matter appears in a different light when we go to Deuteronomy 24:1 and read the law of Moses on this subject. He says that a man may put away his wife if he finds some uncleanness in her. The Hebrew text likely means sexual uncleanness, the statement being stronger than is shown in the common version of the Bible. In other words, if a man found that he had married a harlot, he might put her away by divorce. This is probably the law Joseph meant to invoke when he found that Mary was with child before the birth of Jesus.

When God gave the law to Adam in Eden he said nothing at all about divorce, adultery, uncleanness, or any other sinful eventuality, for man was in a state of innocence, holiness, and purity of mind and heart. God did not say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," for man would never think of committing adultery in the state in which he then was. God simply laid down an ideal law for an ideal situation, and that was all there was to it at that time. Let each one fully decide whether he believes this latter statement is true or not before we go on. If he accepts it, then we are ready

to lay down a fundamental principle of Bible study.

There are two kinds of law expressed in the Bible. One of them sets forth the perfect will of God for a sinless situation. This kind of law prevailed in Eden before the fall, and it will prevail among the saints after we are glorified. The other kind of law does the best it can to patch up the details of a sinful order. Moses gave this latter kind of law to Israel; and, it is the kind of law that has prevailed in the world since the fall of man. God did not give Adam a rule for putting away his wife because Adam would not find any fault in her. Moses gave Israel a law for putting away their wives because many of them would find fault of sexual uncleanness in their wives. It is this very fact which Jesus was driving at when He told the Pharisees that Moses gave them the law of divorce because of the hardness of their hearts. He also told them it had not been so in the beginning. This original ideal law was called up by Jesus to show the self-righteous Pharisees they were not perfect before God as they claimed to be.

Jesus made appeals to this perfect law on a number of occasions. For instance, when He told the Jews that the one among them without sin should first cast a stone upon the adulterous woman, John 8:7, He certainly was not teaching about church discipline. He was again convicting the self-righteous that they were sinners.

In the fifth chapter of Matthew in the sermon on the Mount, Jesus said much in the way of comparing the perfect or ideal law of God with that given to Israel through the hand of Moses. His purpose was to show believers how we must stand on the foundation of grace, and not on one of law as we live our lives in the world. It seems Israel one time declared that they would live up to the perfect law of God, but the result was that an Israelite almost immediately was stoned to death for gathering sticks to build a fire on the Sabbath day, Numbers 15:32-36.

All this discussion has been given for the purpose of leading up to the proposition that we will find the practical laws for marriage and divorce in such passages as the one we are now studying, and not in the sayings of Jesus when His purpose was to show the Jews their imperfections. Taking this view of things the Scriptures seem to harmonize perfectly on the subject under discussion. Otherwise they seem to be a mass of hopeless contradictions.

I. The Rule Concerning Celibacy, verses 1-9.

When the Corinthians became church saints and changed from their old manner of life, many perplexing questions arose among them. Since they were to devote their lives first and foremost to the service of Christ, they were puzzled about a number of questions that pertained to the marriage relationship. Paul says it would be better for a man to leave off relationships with a woman, but to avoid fornication every man should have his own wife. Paul here recognizes the need of normal people for the normal family relationship and makes provision for it. Let no one forget this fact who is inclined to take an extreme view of these matters.

When the people became Christians they were not to forsake the normal marriage relationship. He warns that if they did so they were likely to fall into the snare of the devil by their incontinence.

Paul himself seems to have been a celibate, or one who did not have the normal desire for a family relationship. He wished that all men were like himself, but warned that a man should not attempt this manner of life unless he were properly constituted to go through with it successfully.

It is better for the unmarried to remain that way, but if they have strong desire then it is better to marry.

II. Believers and Divorce, verses 10-16.

A believing husband and wife are not to separate. If they do separate, they are to remain single. There seems to be no New Testament permission for them to divorce and marry someone else, unless adultery caused the separation.

If an unbeliever will dwell in peace with a believer, the believer is not to put away the unbeliever simply because he is an unbeliever. But, if the unbeliever leaves the believer, then the Christian is not bound by the marriage obligation. It seems the believer so forsaken is free to marry again among the church membership.

The church member should try to live with the unbeliever in the hope of leading him to the Lord. But, perhaps, if there is discord over the life of the believer, the unbeliever involved is reckoned as breaking the marriage tie. Notice this latter is a suggestion and not a positive assertion.

III. Remaining As One Is Called, verses 17-31.

Barring the matter of making moral restitution wherever it is demanded and wherever it is possible, one should remain in the condition in which he is called. Applying this rule to the marriage relationship, it would seem the wife a man is living with when he unites with the church is the one with whom he must continue.

Christians should not be bound by law, because they have been brought to freedom by the blood of Christ. They should live in the spirit of the New Testament, which is the spirit of love towards God and man and free from bondage to any code of laws.

Worldly matters should be secondary because life here is troublous, and we are all rushing on into eternity. Do not be weighed down by fleeting things.

IV. Whether to Marry a Virgin, verses 32-40.

It is better not to marry because the individual will have more of time, affection and resources to spend in the service of the Lord. This is the only

argument which Paul makes in favor of celibacy. He does not make it binding on any Christian - preacher or otherwise.

It seems the case of the virgin which is introduced at verse 36 is the case where a man is engaged to be married to a virgin when he becomes a church member. The question is should he go on and marry the virgin, or should he refuse to do so and devote his life wholly to the cause of Christ?

Verse 39 specifies that a church member is to marry only in the Lord, which seems to mean among the membership of the church. In about nine cases out of ten, this rule proves to be expedient as well as Scriptural. Much heartbreak could be avoided by the observance of this rule.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why should every man have his own wife?
2. Should a Christian deny the marriage obligation?
3. What manner of man was Paul as to the family relationship?
4. Should any unmarried Christian marry?
5. What is the law of separation for believers?
6. What is the law concerning an unbelieving husband and wife?
7. Why should a Christian try to live with an unbeliever?
8. What is meant by remaining as one is called?
9. Why should Christians not be bound by law?
10. Why should worldly things be secondary?
11. Why is it better not to marry?
12. Who is the virgin in verse 36?
13. Should a Christian marry an unbeliever?
14. Was Jesus laying down a practical rule in the 19th chapter of Matthew?

Lesson 10

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

I Corinthians 8:1-13

INTRODUCTION

I Corinthians deals with vital points of doctrine and practice of the church all the way through. First, there was the matter of divisions in the church over preachers. Second, there was the case of the notorious adultery in the membership of the church. Third, the church members were going to law with one another before Gentile judges when they should have settled their matters among themselves as Christians. Fourth, the questions of the details of the marriage relationship came upon them, Paul giving the details of this relationship as it applies to church members. The fifth item, which we are to study in this lesson, has to do with eating meat which had been dedicated to the worship of idols.

It appears that in the pagan religion an animal would be offered in sacrifice to the idol. Instead of burning all of the flesh on the altar as the Israelites did in some of their offerings, they would save part or all of the edible flesh. This flesh was delivered to the markets, where it was sold to the general public. It would appear that some people bought and ate this flesh as a matter of worship to the idol god. With others it was a matter of indifference. They ate the meat in the same attitude in which they would eat any other. It will be recalled that the people of Greece, where Corinth was located, were idolatrous. The buying and eating of this meat dedicated to idols must have been a very common thing among the people.

No doubt, all of these church members had in the past eaten such flesh as an act of worship to some idol God. Therefore, it was a burning question to them as to what to do about the practice now that they no longer worshipped the idol and had dedicated their lives to Christ.

In dealing with the issue Paul runs into the same difficulty he has previously encountered in dealing with this church. They were fleshly rather than spiritual in their approach to the issues that arose among them. Once again Paul lays down the principle that they have been bought out of bondage to the world, and now they are free men in Christ Jesus. They are no longer bound by superstition and the carnal commandments of men. This being true, such a question as the eating of flesh offered to idols should not be a problem to them at all. They could eat the dedicated flesh just as they ate any other flesh, disregarding the idol, for an idol is nothing. But, they shrank back from that new freedom they had gained in Christ and worried themselves about the carnal ordinances of men. This was because they were yet carnal themselves and had not advanced to that spiritual walk which is attained by a true understanding of New Testament principles. Multitudes

who imagine they are the most spiritual are laboring under the same kinds of questionings and fears as those which beset the fleshly Corinthians.

Will we ever hear the end of what one must do or must not do in the way of fleshly observances to have a part in the bride of Christ? The understanding man realized it was a matter of indifference as to whether he ate or did not eat the idol sacrifice. It was of far more importance that the people should understand the true spirit of the New Testament which would set them free from all carnal ordinances of men. In this spirit love displaces hate; humility displaces pride; zeal for Christ displaces zeal for the world and a simple faith displaces the haughtiness of fleshly knowledge. Against such things as these there is no human law at all. Paul labored diligently to get the Corinthians to **see** these things, but with indifferent results even so, it is true with us today when in the pride of our fleshliness we refuse to be convinced we are not highly spiritual.

I. Charity Better Than Knowledge, verses 1-3.

Stated in modern day terms, the problem of eating meat dedicated to idols has to do with our attitude toward those things that are not sinful within themselves, but which may be made sinful by our attitude in our indulgence in them. As an illustration of what is meant, the following is offered: Dancing within itself is no more sinful than running a foot race. It becomes sinful because of the lust that is usually associated with it.

Paul says that knowledge puffs up. He means that manner of knowledge by which a Christian might be enabled to walk by intellectual light. It is attractive because it enables one to walk in the pride of his own virtues and accomplishments. The Corinthians were seeking knowledge so that they would not be forced to walk in the charity which is begotten by humility.

Charity, which is love, builds up. Guided by charity, the strong Christian would already have known what to do about the meat offered to idols. He would have left it off for fear of casting a stumbling stone in the way of his weak brother. Seeking the welfare of others, our own problems have a way of taking care of themselves.

Verses 2 and 3 tell us of the manner of our connection with God. If anyone thinks he knows anything, that is, if he takes pride in his knowledge, he does not know anything aright. Our connection with God is love and not knowledge. The blind man of the ninth chapter of John did not know anything theologically speaking, but he had connection with God. The Jews who accused him had much theological learning, but they did not have connection with God. Their knowledge was vain; his ignorance was fruitful.

II. Only One Real God, verses 4-6.

We should regard an idol as nothing at all, for it is nothing but the

imagination of deluded minds. We should not give it the consideration of honoring it. Furthermore, we should not even give it the consideration of dishonoring it except to lead people out of their error of worshipping it. Would it not be better many times if people would ignore such pagan observances as Christmas and Easter rather than giving them the notice of preparing elaborate arguments against them? It is admitted, of course, that the people should occasionally be told the truth about these things, as Paul here tells the people the truth about idol sacrifices.

Other gods are the imagination of the minds of men and the works of their hands. Our God is the eternal planner of the universe and its inhabitants. He is the universal producer of all things and we have our existence in Him. He manifests Himself to us in His Son in such terms that we may know and worship Him in perfect confidence and not in the blind, vague and fleshly ways that others worship their gods. In other words, He is real and not a figment of a deluded imagination. He draws us to Him by love and not in the fear that dominates all others to worship their gods.

III. Freedom from Superstition, verses 7, 8.

There were some of the brethren who yet regarded the idol as a real god, and they ate the dedicated flesh with regard to the non-existent idol. This is because they had not grown in the knowledge of Christ as they should. They were like those saved people who fear the Devil as a god who can get them if they do not live clean, ceremonial lives.

The Christian was free to eat or not to eat according to his good pleasure and the expediency of the situation, for meat does not commend us to God, nor does refusing to eat commend us to Him.

The Lord's supper is different from the idol sacrifice in that it is commemorated to a real God and not an imaginary one. However, the spirit is more vital than the letter even in the matter of the Lord's supper, as we may learn from I Cor. 11:29. It consists of a church eating unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine; but, each member must discern the body and blood of the Lord if it is done properly.

IV. Being Our Brother's Keeper, verses 9-13.

The Christian is urged to walk in liberty with reference to such matters as idol sacrifices. Then he is warned to be careful what he does, for the sake of his weak brother, who does not understand his freedom and his motives in this freedom.

This weak brother would surely think the strong brother was worshipping the idol. He would follow his example and likewise worship the idol. The weak brother would not lose his salvation in worshipping the idol, but he would lose all the joy of salvation. He would believe an error and teach an error to others. All of his reward would perish and he would be the cause of other people going to Hell.

When we offend or deceive a weak brother, we do not merely sin against him, but also against the Christ who died for him.

Because of the effect in those weak people who beheld his actions and might wrongly interpret them, Paul would not eat an idol's meat as long as he lived. Notice he did not fear any evil consequences upon himself, but rather those that were sure to fall upon the weaker brother. We should all examine our conduct long and thoroughly from this standpoint. One of our greatest problems is getting people to understand our position and motives in Christ. Paul urges that it is best done by living above reproach in the sight of all men.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is the problem in the lesson?
2. What does knowledge do to us?
3. What does love do for us?
4. How do we have contact with God?
5. How should we regard an idol?
6. List some ways in which our God is different from all others.
7. How did some regard the idol sacrifices, and why?
8. Why was the Christian free to eat or not to eat?
9. Does verse 8 apply to the Lord's supper?
10. How should the Christian not use his liberty?
11. What would be the result of his eating the idol sacrifice?
12. Explain about the weak brother's perishing.
13. When we lead a weak brother astray, whom do we offend?
14. Why would Paul not eat the idol sacrifice?

A LESSON ON MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

I Corinthians 9:1-18

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this lesson is the financial support of the ministry. Some other questions also are treated briefly. It seems some had even injected the question as to whether Paul were a legitimate apostle. The question was raised as to whether the apostles should follow the same practices of eating and drinking as other people. Again, it seems some thought the apostles should not marry as the other church members were accustomed to do. In other words, there was a tendency to set the ministers apart in a different class from the general run of the people much as the Catholics do. Let it be noted that Paul vehemently denies all such separation of the ministry from the masses. There were still others who appear to have thought it was the duty of Paul and Barnabas to work at secular labor for their living. This seems very strange in view of the fact they had apparently supported other preachers willingly. Perhaps Paul had been too lenient with them on this matter. There is such a thing as a minister's being badly mistreated in this detail because he refuses to uphold the Scripture rule and assert his own rights.

There are still many people among us who need to use common sense in the matter of the financial support of the ministry. They strenuously object to any arrangements whereby the pastor of the church may work on a businesslike basis. Their plea is that the servant of the Lord ought to walk by faith and look to the Lord for his sustenance. In their own business affairs they strictly demand guarantees and assurances on the part of those with whom they do business. But according to them it is a scandalous thing for the minister to make any such demands for assurance concerning his material affairs. These people simply want the minister to live by one standard and themselves by another. This may represent the holiness and hardshell philosophy of things; but it is certainly not the scriptural viewpoint. The Bible way is strictly the way of common sense where common sense will meet the demand.

Paul proves the principle of the financial support of the ministry both from logic and from the teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures. He adds his own inspired statement at the close of the lesson: *'Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel,'* verse 14. He draws several illustrations to prove his point from logic. He then proves his logic from the Old Testament principles. The law said that

the ox that tread out the corn would not be muzzled, and Paul interpreted it as meaning that spiritual ministers should be supported. The ministers of the Temple in Israel lived of the offerings which the other people brought to the Temple. He left the deniers of ministerial support without a word to answer.

Despite his conclusive proof that the ministry should be supported, Paul goes on to state, in effect, that he would support himself and preach the gospel without charge if the people would not support him freely. It seems that some evil results followed his doing this in that the people came to feel they had no obligation to support him. As a general principle, the minister who fails to encourage the support of the ministry hurts himself, his people, and the work in general. The ministry is a full-time job for those who can and will make it so. Any time spent working at secular labor is time wasted in the cause of Christ.

On the other hand, there is no excuse for a minister to live wastefully and idly among his people. We cannot very well blame hard-working people for being reluctant to support liberally a minister who spends irresponsibly. Here is another instance wherein all things should be done in decency, order, and moderation.

I. Paul Answers His Accusers, verses 1-6.

The evidence is that in his absence some of the Corinthian brethren had made strong complaints about the conduct of Paul. It seems some had denied the authority of his apostleship. In answering their charges he claims apostolic authority and bolsters his claim by pointing out that he had seen Jesus Christ the Lord.

He did not stop with asserting his authority but went on to prove it by the fact that the Lord had blessed his efforts in saving the Corinthians and establishing the church among them.

Some of the brethren were criticizing the manner of eating of Paul and Barnabas, denying their right to marry a wife, and arguing that these two brethren should work at secular labor for a living.

II. He Proves Ministerial Support by the Law, verses 7-14.

The first argument Paul makes for the support of the ministry is from the logic of common sense and the propriety of things. They all know a soldier did not go to war for his country and work at some productive labor to support himself at the same time. It would be a physical impossibility as well as a grave injustice. Those who stayed at home, for whom the soldier was fighting, should support him. Likewise, if a man spent his time and efforts at keeping a vineyard, or feeding a flock, he would live of the fruits of his labors. So why should the minister of the gospel not live the same way?

He made his appeal to the Scriptures of the Old Testament wherein the

law said a man should not muzzle the mouth of the ox that tread out the grain. The ox should be allowed to eat what he required as he labored. Paul says the real import is that laborers for God should be fed. Again the members of the tribe of Levi lived from the offerings of the other tribes which they brought to the house of God. It was perfectly ^wright and logical that they should do so, for they labored for the other tribes in matters of their religion.

Paul had sown spiritual things for the Corinthians and it was right that he should reap from them the fleshly things which he might need. This is a perfectly fair argument any way one may wish to examine it.

The strange thing is that other ministers had received material support from these brethren without protest. It looks suspiciously as though Paul had been too lenient with this church in his own spirit of independence. The pastor has no one to blame but himself when he suffers financially if he has not taught the people to support him.

We must regard the views of Paul in the same light as those of some of our present-day brethren. Our brethren are not inspired, hence their views are faulty. But Paul was inspired of God, and what he says is the command of God, unless the context shows it to be otherwise; e.g. I Cor. 7:6; II Cor. 8.8. Therefore we are to take it as the pure Word of God when Paul says, *'Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel'* "This one statement should be the end of all controversy on this subject of whether the ministry should be supported.

III. Paul Desired the Better Reward, verses 15-18.

Paul says he had used none of these things, meaning either that he had received no financial support or that he had not used Scripture authority to demand such support. Probably he meant the latter. He says he did not write the argument for ministerial support in order to gain support for himself. He would rather die than have anyone make his glorying in the gospel void. It seems his desire is that no one would have any occasion to accuse him of preaching for money.

He goes on to explain about his glorying in the gospel. He does not glory in himself nor in his attainments in the gospel because the necessity was laid upon him to preach the gospel. He says that woe would be his if he did not preach the gospel. Some men say they preach because they have a burning desire to preach. Others say preaching was virtually forced on them. Each group is inclined to accuse the other of not having a legitimate call to preach. Both are wrong in making such accusations because the call to preach arouses different reactions in different men.

If he preached willingly he would receive a reward. If he preached against his will, then a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him. From the Greek text this dispensation of the gospel means that he is placed in the position of a servant fulfilling an obligation.

He wanted to preach the gospel without charge in order that he should not by any means misuse his authority in the gospel. We can both admire

his effort to make the gospel without blame or reproach from the world and at the same time deplore the bad precedent he seems to have set among the Corinthian brethren. Supporting the ministry should have gone without an argument among them.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What authority did Paul claim?
2. What was the proof of his authority?
3. What things were denied Paul and Barnabas?
4. What is the first argument for the support of the ministry?
5. What is the Scripture proof of his argument?
6. What did the apostles sow, and what should they expect to reap?
7. Had other ministers claimed support from this church?
8. What is the positive statement of Paul on the subject of ministerial support?
9. What was the personal attitude of Paul?
10. Was he right in it?
11. Why could he not glory in his preaching?
12. What would be the result of preaching willingly?
13. What if he were unwilling to preach?
14. Why did he desire to preach without charge?
15. Was his motive in this good or bad?
16. Do you believe a pastor should live on an equal level, above, or below that of the average of the church members?
17. Can the ministry involve expenses in education, travel, clothing, insurance, and retirement which are not equal to those of the average member?

PAUL WILLING TO BE A SERVANT OF ALL

I Corinthians 9:19-27

INTRODUCTION

Viewed merely on the surface of things, one is likely to get a very bad impression of the personal motives of Paul from the things he writes to the Corinthian brethren. The surface view would be that he was much interested in promoting himself and that he took great pride in preaching the gospel at his own expense. We know from the revelation of his character and motives as stated elsewhere in the Scriptures that this view is not the right one. Hence, we need to take a careful view of what he says about his preaching and his attitude towards being supported by the brethren where he preached.

At the close of the last lesson he raises the question as to what his reward shall be. His answer is that he may preach the gospel of Christ without charge so that he might not abuse his authority in the gospel. This was not that he himself might be held in high esteem by the brethren, but that the gospel which he preached might be highly esteemed. It was not that he wished to avoid the accusation that he was a preacher for money, but it was that he wished to avoid the accusation that the gospel of Christ is a gospel for commercial gain on the part of those who preach it. It makes all the difference in the world that Paul was jealous for the gospel rather than being jealous for his own reputation. It made no difference what people thought of him as a personal matter, but it is very hard to separate a man from the cause which he represents. Hence, on the surface of things, there is a hint of Paul's being much concerned about his own popularity, when in truth his sole interest was that the cause of Christ should not suffer from any personal benefit he might claim from the people.

As a minister of the gospel, he became a servant to all. As he goes into the details of his work as a servant of the gospel to all people, one may very easily jump to the conclusion that he has become a compromiser in order to gain the favor of sinners. Many modern preachers have done precisely this, but we know that Paul stood firmly for the truth of God under all circumstances. This being true, there are certain limitations to his statement that he became all things to all men in order to win them to Christ. He went as far as he could in that direction without compromising moral and spiritual principles.

This is one of the most treacherous problems which any Christian worker has to meet and cope with. The question is just how far may we

meet the world on equal terms in our effort to win them to the Lord. If one goes too *far* in making friendly overtures to the world, he becomes a compromiser of the truth of God. If he does not go far enough, he defeats his own purpose of trying to find a meeting ground with the sinners whom he wishes to lead to Christ.

Paul says he was free from all men. He was free in two respects. He had been made free from all carnal ordinances of men in his submission of himself to Christ for salvation. He was not a slave to any man's code of laws. Again, he was free in the sense that he had not obligated himself to any in material things as he had preached the gospel to them.

Yet he counted himself a servant of all. At Rom. 1:14 he tells us: "*I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise.*" He goes on to explain his obligation was to preach the gospel to all men so far as he had opportunity to do so. He did all these things for the gospel's sake, that he might be partaker of the gospel with them. This casts a new light on the whole situation. He wanted them to be partakers of the gospel in the true sense so that he might have fellowship with them in the pure gospel. This is one view of our ministry which we should not overlook. When we turn one from the world to salvation and the service of the Lord, we change an enemy to a friend and an opposer to an understanding helper. No wonder then that Paul would go to such great lengths to win Jew and Gentile to Christ.

The last part of our lesson consists in illustrations from the field of athletic games to prove the point of moderation and discipline in life. One of the most far-fetched ideas ever advanced is that these illustrations are given to advocate athletic games sponsored by churches. By the same absurd line of reasoning one could arrive at the conclusion the Scriptures advocate murder on the part of the saints simply because they make reference to the crime of murder.

I. Accommodating Himself to the People, verses 19-23.

Paul was free from all men in that salvation had given him freedom from the ordinances of men, just as is the case with every saved person. He did not live in fear of losing his salvation if he did not in every detail obey the gospel. Again he was free in that he had not made himself a burden to the people to whom he had preached the gospel. Some preachers go into homes and make unreasonable demands in the way of entertainment, seemingly to impress on the folks that somebody great has come their way. Paul had not done these things.

Paul was a Jew and he had formerly been fully involved in their way of thinking and acting. Thus it was easy for him to see the Jewish viewpoint and agree with them so far as he could do so without compromising the new knowledge and experience he had gained in Christ. We will come much nearer to winning a person if we agree with him in everything we can than we will by condemning everything about him. He became a Jew again and put himself under the Jewish law for their sakes in so far as it did not clash

with his new freedom from law in Christ.

When he came to deal with Gentiles, who had never been under the Law of Moses, he discarded the discussion of law entirely and approached the way of salvation from their particular background. This feat is beautifully illustrated in the sermon preached to the Athenians on Mars' Hill. Paul says nothing there about the Law of Moses, nor even the Old Testament *prophets*. *He says rather, "(the unknown god) whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you,*" Acts 17:23. So his becoming without law to those without law is not that he became what we would term an outlaw, but so far as conscience would allow he stood and reasoned from their viewpoint.

Let it be clearly understood that such indefinite statements as Paul's becoming all things to all men must be limited by the teachings of the Scriptures where the statements are more specific on subjects of morality and contending for the pure faith. We must never destroy the force of plain statements by setting what we may imply from obscure statements in array against them. This is the way most false doctrines are upheld.

His ultimate goal in all these things is to win sinners to Christ and, finally, to bring them around to his viewpoint in all things. Many pastors could learn a valuable lesson here in diplomacy.

II. The Illustrations from Athletic Contests, verses 24-29.

Paul is writing primarily to a people with Greek background. Athletic contests had long been very popular among them. There were the arenas and the stadiums where great multitudes gathered to witness the contests of running, jumping, boxing, etc. Therefore, the illustration of the foot race was well understood by the people to whom he was writing. As is the case today, a number of individuals engaged in the race but only one came out winner. It was not a matter of indifference to the runner when he entered into the race. He ran with all his might with his whole energy directed toward the goal. The Christian is running for the prize of comfort and assurance in the present life and a bountiful reward at the resurrection. These things demand constant alertness and the very best effort of which one is capable.

He next reverts to the period of training of the runner: he is temperate in all things. He carefully guards his diet to put himself in the best of physical condition. He leaves off everything that would weaken his body in any way. Since we are running to obtain an incorruptible crown which lasts forever, we should strive even harder than the Greek runner of a foot race who sought a temporary crown of laurel leaves.

A straight line is the shortest distance between two given points. Naturally, then, the runner would be alert to run in a straight line directly towards the goal. The boxer directs his blows toward his opponent and does not waste his energy beating the air. Likewise, the Christian must have his eye set on the goal of advancing the cause of Christ and defeating the enemies of that cause.

Paul sets himself up as an example to the brethren in this respect. It

seems he was as completely devoted to the cause as a man could possibly be.

He expresses the fear that, having preached and led others to Christ and in the way of rewards, he himself might become a castaway. This means that he might become unprofitable as a servant. This can happen to anyone in several different ways. One can become involved in a sin of the world and lose his influence. He can become involved in business or other worldly affairs to the extent of becoming unprofitable in the work of the Lord. Or, he can start compromising the Word until his work becomes unprofitable. Probably this last is the most common way of becoming a castaway. We must never slacken in our contending for the faith.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How was Paul free from all men?
2. In what sense did he become a servant to the Jews?
3. How did he become without law to the Gentiles?
4. To what extent did he become all things to all men?
5. What was his ultimate goal in all these things?
6. What is the application from the foot race?
7. What argument does he make for Christian temperance?
8. What is running uncertainly and beating the air?
9. Did Paul practice strict self-discipline?
10. How may a Christian become a castaway?
11. Would our unfaithfulness likely be the cause of some sinner's going to Hell?

A WARNING TO CHRISTIANS

I Corinthians 10:1-15

INTRODUCTION

The key verse of the lesson is verse 12, which reads: "*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*" The position taken generally by the Protestant world is that if the saved person does not continue faithful to the Lord he will fall from grace in the sense of losing his salvation. The answer of Baptists generally has been that if one falls or turns away from the faith it is a sure indication he was not saved in the first place. This answer is right sometimes, but many times it is not the right explanation of the existing condition. This introduction will point out three ways in which people professing Christianity may fall. Baptists do not need to be embarrassed in the presence of advocates of falling from grace when we come to understand what the Bible teaches on this subject.

First, one may fall, and likely will do so, who has only a profession of salvation in the first place. Judas Iscariot is a good example of this situation. Acts, 1:17, 20 tells us Judas was numbered with the apostles and had a part of the ministry. Long before the betrayal, Jesus said Judas was a devil, indicating he was not saved, John 6:70. John 18:8 says that Jesus had lost none of His disciples, and John 17:12 says none was lost but the son of perdition. The only way these two verses will harmonize is to take the true view that Judas was lost from church membership, but not from salvation. Acts 1:25 says Judas fell that he might go to his own place, which was Hell, and it had been his place all the while. An intelligent view of these Scripture statements will not allow us to believe he ever was saved. This kind of person is described at II Peter 2:22 in the following terms; "... *The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*"

Second, a saved person may fall in the sense of turning away from the faith after he has committed himself to the Christian life. This is the case with the adulterous man of the fifth chapter of I Corinthians. This was the case with Moses when he smote the rock against the commandment of God. This is what Paul feared in the way of becoming a castaway, I Cor. 9:27. Finally, this is the kind of case that is meant at Heb. 10:26-31. In none of these cases is there any indication that anyone lost his salvation, but there is the fear in all instances of falling under the chastening hand of God.

Third, there is the matter of a whole group turning away from the faith. The evidence of this type of falling is so abundant in the Scriptures as to need little in the way of illustration or proof. This is what happened to Israel as a nation. God rejected them finally for the crucifixion of His son.

At Rev. 2:5 Christ threatens to remove the candlestick from the church at Ephesus, which is equivalent to saying He would forsake them and they would utterly fall as a church. Most of the man-made religious bodies have originated out of groups that have fallen in the sense of group departure from the faith.

In none of these instances can it be proven that anyone lost his personal salvation. Where the details are given, saved people lost their rewards, as in Moses and the Israelites falling in the wilderness. After falling in the wilderness for disobedience to God, Moses appears in glory with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. This proves to any reasonable mind that he did not lose his salvation. Judas merely fell back to what had been his real place as an unsaved man all the while. Sinners fall from a false profession. Saved people fall from a steadfast walk by faith. Groups fall from a system of doctrines and practices. But saved people do not fall from salvation, and there is no Bible proof that they do.

I. Committed unto Christ, verses 14.

The crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites is told mainly at Ex. 14:19- 31, where we have the account referred to by Paul in verses 1 and 2 of our Scripture lesson. The water of the sea stood as walls on either side of them, and the cloud covered them. Thus they were buried in water in the crossing of the sea. This is a perfect type of an immersion, which is the only Scriptural form of baptism. In fact, baptism means immersion.

The Israelites were baptized unto Moses. This apparently means that they committed themselves to go along with Moses on the journey to Canaan. This was to be a dangerous and impractical journey if viewed from human reasoning. It could be followed successfully only by faith. When we are united with the church in our baptism, not only do we declare ourselves as dead to the old life, but also we dedicate ourselves to walk in newness of life, which is essentially to walk by faith contrary to the dictates of worldly wisdom.

Literally, the spiritual food, or meat, was the manna, the sweet bread that came down from Heaven for the Israelites in the wilderness. Paul refers to it in the figurative, or typical, sense. This way the spiritual food was the type of communion with Christ as we go through the world. Notice that the Israelites who later fell in the wilderness also ate of this spiritual food. This signifies that they were not unreal professors but those who departed from their walk and communion with God through the Spirit. The account of the manna is given in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus. Jesus was using this figure when He spoke the parable of the bread of life in the sixth chapter of John.

The spiritual drink was the water that came from the rock, Ex. 17:6. In the twentieth chapter of Numbers we have the account of the Lord's commanding Moses to speak to the rock to gain water for the people to drink. Because he smote the rock a second time he received the judgment of death in the wilderness. Paul says this rock was Christ. Moses falsely

typified that the Israelites had fallen from grace and that Christ needed to be smitten a second time to save them again.

II. Turning Away from Christ, verses 5-10.

God was not well pleased with many of the Israelites and He overthrew them in the wilderness. We are plainly told we are to view them as types of ourselves. Israel is the type of the church. Since these people had eaten the spiritual food and had drunk the spiritual drink, evidently we are to regard them typically as saved people. In reality, doubtlessly, some of them were saved and some were not. Their overthrow was the chastisement of the people of God.

We are told that they were our example to the end that we, as the people of God in church capacity, should not lust after evil things as they lusted.

At Mount Sinai Israel made the golden calf and proclaimed it as the god that had brought them out of Egypt. This was idolatry in its rankest form. The New Testament tells us repeatedly that covetousness is idolatry. See Col. 3:5. Therefore covetousness is as rank a sin as worshipping the calf of gold.

At Num. 25:1-9 we are told that the Israelites committed fornication with the daughters of Moab. The fornication consisted in the fact that Israel was a separated people and should not mix with heathens. It is the type of our associating religiously with apostate religious groups.

Israel tempted Christ by murmuring and desiring to go back to Egypt; see Ex. 17:2-7. It is like going back to the ways of the world after we have united with the church.

III. An Admonition to Faithfulness, verses 11-15.

The things that happened to Israel were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The ends of the world are the ends of the ages wherein the Devil is the god of the world. In other words, we have the warning examples of all past ages making it a more serious offense for us to depart from the faith.

According to verse 13, all of the people of God are tempted in a similar manner, but there is no temptation which can overwhelm us if we will look to God for help, Who makes a way of escape from every temptation. No man, or group, can stand in human strength and wisdom. Therefore, it is essential that we remain humble and submissive before God at all times and in all situations.

It seems the peril of idolatry upon the Corinthian brethren lay in their looking to human leadership almost to the point of worship. They were divided over the true preachers of the gospel and they had also come to support false brethren who had come in among them.

Let us not leave this lesson without again scanning the three ways in which people may fall. First, unsaved people fall from a false profession.

Second, saved people fall from their resolve to walk by faith after the New Testament pattern. They do not lose salvation. Third, religious groups depart from the faith as groups. For instance, Israel departed from the worship of God to idolatry and other evils. To say anyone ever fell from salvation is to deny many emphatic statements of Scripture. Let us see the truth and not say such a horrible thing.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Where and how were the Israelites typically baptized?
2. What does "baptized unto Moses" mean?
3. What was the spiritual food?
4. What was the spiritual drink?
5. Were the Israelites overthrown in the wilderness saved?
6. What examples do they furnish us?
7. How were the Israelites idolaters?
8. How did they commit fornication?
9. How may we commit spiritual fornication?
10. How did they tempt Christ?
11. What meaning do these experiences have for us?
12. What are the ends of the world?
13. Are all people tempted alike?
14. How can we escape temptation?
15. How were the Corinthians in danger of idolatry?
16. Name three senses in which people may fall.
17. Does the Bible teach eternal security of the saved?

EATING AND DRINKING

I Corinthians 10:16-33

INTRODUCTION

The present lesson takes up the matter of the Lord's supper. It seems Paul has a double purpose as he discusses this church ordinance. In the first place, he uses it by way of comparison and illustration to show the fallacy of eating idol sacrifices. An idol is nothing; Christ is the author of eternal life to those who believe in him. Therefore it is nothing to eat food dedicated to an idol who does not really exist. It is an act of great moment to commemorate the death of Christ for our sins in eating the Lord's supper. In the second place, Paul uses the opportunity to set some matters right in the manner the church at Corinth had been observing this memorial supper to the Lord. This subject is discussed in the eleventh chapter.

We have a very elusive point of Christian conduct to deal with, and unless we follow through carefully, it may appear that Paul advocates contradictory positions of what to do and what not to do. He first recommends that Christians go to feasts and eat meat that had been dedicated to idols; then he warns them not to go to a feast and eat such meats. But there is a limiting condition. If those present did not regard the Christian as worshipping the idol in his eating the meat, then he might freely eat it, for an idol is nothing, and if the Christian was honoring the idol in his eating the dedicated meat, then he was not to eat of it by any means for conscience sake. It was not the conscience of the Christian himself that would be offended, but, that of the uninstructed spectator.

The fact of the matter is that there are some things which are sinful within themselves, and they are sin to whoever commits them. There are other things that are sin only if we make sin out of them. Meat was meat, and an idol was nothing. Therefore the meat was as acceptable as any other for food. But if an uninstructed person thought the eater was honoring the idol in the eating, then the Christian eater sinned in so eating. This is the case with reference to many things which people commonly practice.

I. Separated unto Christ, verses 16:22.

The cup and the bread, called up by Paul by way of illustration, refers to the elements of the Lord's supper, which is given to us as one of the two ordinances of the church, the other being the ordinance of baptism. The church can no more afford to neglect or pervert the Lord's supper than it can afford to neglect or pervert baptism. Many churches among us today have

not observed the Lord's supper in years. Such churches must ultimately lose all of their spiritual power.

Catholicism teaches that the content of the cup actually becomes the blood of Christ and the bread actually becomes the body of Christ in those who partake. The truth is that we partake of His body and blood in a figure, and those who partake in the right manner and in the right spirit receive a special guidance of the Holy Spirit in church capacity. This is the real practical value in keeping this ordinance.

The one bread is the church in the institutional sense, which is the body of Christ in the world.

Israel offered sacrifices to God. Then they ate of the flesh of the sacrifices. Thus they became beneficiaries of the offerings they made. This physical situation illustrates the spiritual benefits we receive from making our offerings of service in a Scriptural manner.

We as Christians should ignore idols because we know full well that an idol is nothing in the world but the product of the deluded imagination of men. One ancient writer said an idol could not even lift a finger to wipe the dust out of his own eyes. Then how could that idol help its worshippers in any need?

The Bible everywhere testifies that there is no point of agreement or common ground between God and the Devil. Therefore it is utterly impossible for us to serve God and the Devil at the same time.

II. Eating Idol Sacrifices, verses 23-27.

All things were lawful to Paul which were not sinful within themselves. He certainly did not mean it would be right or lawful for him to commit murder. He would not sin against his own conscience if he ate meat dedicated by heathens to a non-existent god.

Paul was free so far as he himself was concerned to eat meat from an idol sacrifice. But he had a responsibility toward those whom he might influence in their thinking and acting. We would do well if we would think more of our influence on others and less about establishing ourselves on a legal basis of acceptance with God.

The shambles refers to the public markets where meats, as well as other articles of food, were sold. Some of the meat of the animals offered in sacrifice to idols was placed in these markets to be sold to the general public. It is likely there was also the idea the meat might be bought and eaten as an act of worship to the idol to whom it had been dedicated.

A Christian might eat such meat with an unbeliever if nothing was said about the feast being dedicated to an idol. The Christian need not exert himself to make sure the meat he ate had not been dedicated to an idol. There is a highly common sense basis of Christian conduct laid down in the New Testament. Ours is not a religion for impractical fanatics.

III. Refusing to Eat Idol Sacrifices, verses 28-30.

The Christian should refuse to eat the idol sacrifice when it is specified that the feast was devoted to the idol. It is suggested that one might attend an unscriptural religious service to see what is going on, but he should not act in such way as to give the impression he gave his approval to what was being done.

As the bearers of the light of the world, we are responsible for the right training of the consciences of those about us.

As Christians we are subject only to the judgment of God, but men will judge us nevertheless. The only way we can escape condemnation in the eyes of men is to walk uprightly before the world. This should be our guiding principle in matters that are not sinful within themselves.

IV. Glorifying God in Our Conduct, verses 31-33.

Paul was not seeking self-profit when he walked without blame before the world. He was seeking the salvation of many. This is entirely different from the motive of establishing ourselves in self-righteousness.

Some sins are sinful within themselves because they encroach on the rights of others. There cannot be murder without sin.

Other acts are what we make of them. Eating is necessary to the maintaining of life. Therefore it is no sin to eat, but it is a sin to over eat.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What are the cup and the bread of verse sixteen?
2. In what sense do we partake of the body and blood of Jesus?
3. Is the Lord's supper strictly a church ordinance?
4. What bread and body are we?
5. Explain the illustration of the sacrifices of Israel.
6. Why should we ignore such things as idol sacrifices?
7. Can we serve God and the Devil at the same time?
8. To what extent were all things lawful to Paul?
9. Whose welfare should we guard?
10. What was sold in the shambles?
11. Under what conditions should Christians eat with unbelievers?
12. When should a Christian refuse to eat?
13. Whose conscience should we protect?
14. How can we escape judgment by men?
15. What should be our guiding principle?
16. Why did Paul seek to please all men?

CHRISTIAN LORDSHIP

I Corinthians 11:1-16

INTRODUCTION

The real subject of this lesson is the relative positions of man and woman in public worship. There is also a reference to their positions in the family relationship. There are three headships mentioned. Unless we get the idea of these headships we will be left in the dark completely on the teachings of this lesson.

First, there is the headship of God over Christ as the Son of God. Verse three plainly states that the head of Christ is God. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Christ is the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of his person. Colossians 1:15 tells us Christ is the image of the invisible God. I Peter 1:20 speaks of Christ as foreknown before the foundation of the world, and John 17:5 speaks of the glory that Christ had with God before the world was. These latter two indicate the eternal existence of Christ with the Father. The question then arises as to how a son could have equal existence with the father. This **seems** to be a question beyond the comprehension of the human mind. It is a thing we accept by faith. However, we are told that Christ as the Son is the expression of the glory of the Father. We can grasp something of this fact. Jesus exhibited the glory of the invisible God to men when he came into the world in a body of flesh. If we will remember that any son is the expression of what the father is and what the father can produce, then we can see something of the import of the father-and-son relationship between God and Christ. This headship is a part of the picture in our lesson.

The second headship is Christ as the head of man. The Bible clearly teaches that in the creation Christ gave the form to everything that was made. John 1:3, for instance, says all things were made through Him. Christ gave man a form like unto Himself in the creation, and He gives man a complete likeness to Himself in full redemption. It is too weighty a subject to discuss here as to why man in the likeness of God could fall into sin. It is stated that Christ was a man child-not a woman child, though born of a woman. Jesus took the physical likeness of His brethren when He came into the world. Each one must answer for himself as to whether Christ had any material substance before He came into the world. It is far easier to raise such questions than it is to answer them. By virtue of creation and redemption Christ becomes the head of man.

The third headship of our lesson is the headship of man over woman. When we begin to look for the fundamental "why" and "wherefore" we again get beyond our depth. We know that God first created the man

Adam. Then He created woman from a rib taken from the side of man, and He created her as a counterpart and assistant and companion for man. This is the basis of Paul's argument for the headship of man over woman. This headship does not imply any superiority of man over woman in the sum total of things, but it certainly does give man a certain ascendancy over woman by virtue of the fact she was created from him and for him.

Evidently the practical lesson in our Scripture discussion is the position of men and women in the working of the church. The women are commanded to - "keep silent in the church." This seems to mean that men are to have the places of leadership and responsibility in business affairs of the church. No woman is mentioned as taking part in the weighty doctrinal conferences held in the early churches. We are fortunate indeed when we are content to remain in our God-appointed place.

I. Keeping the Ordinances, verses 1, 2.

Paul admonishes the brethren to follow him as he follows Christ. This is the only claim anyone can justly have for inviting a following in matters of religion. It is true that men have gathered religious followings on various grounds, but none of them is legitimate except as the leaders walk in the footsteps of the Lord. Furthermore, it is the duty of those who follow to know whether the leader is directing in the right path.

The church was to remember Paul in the doctrines he had taught and in the example he had set before them. The tendency today is to build a work on the personality and ability of the leader. This is entirely contrary to the pattern of the New Testament. A work is really successful only as those in leadership succeed in putting themselves in the background and keeping Christ foremost in the minds and hearts of the people.

The ordinances here embrace far more than the two church ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. Here is meant the whole system of doctrines and practices which Paul had taught to the church. The New Testament is not a book from which we may choose what suits us and discard the rest. We must receive and practice all of it in its particular setting and meaning or we open ourselves to being led away into complete error.

II. The Position of the Man, verses 3, 4.

The three headships are man as the head of the woman; Christ as the head of the man; and God as the head of Christ. In this chain woman was taken from the side of man, having her origin in him. Man is in the image of Christ, who furnished the pattern for the creation of man, and man is being fully conformed to the image of Christ in the process of full redemption. Christ is the Son and the material expression of the invisible God of Spirit. Therefore He has His headship in God.

The man who prays or prophesies in church should have his head

uncovered. In this figure he signifies that his real head, Christ, is worthy of full exhibition to all the intelligences of the universe. This nothing about our head, Christ, that needs to be veiled or covered from view. This figure suggests to us that we do not need to defend Christ or apologize for him; we need to fully exhibit Him to the world at every opportunity.

III. The Position of the Woman, verses 5-10.

The woman who prophesied or prayed with her head uncovered dishonored her head. It was the same as though she had her head shaved, and this was a mark of dishonor in Bible times. In the figure, the head of the woman is the man. If the head of the man is uncovered, he is revealed as a sinner. Therefore the woman should keep her head covered to signify that man needs a covering for his sins.

This is one of the arguments used against women wearing short hair. It would seem the practice within itself is like the eating of meat offered to idols, a thing that makes no difference one way or another. There may have been a bad motive in introducing the practice in the first place, and it is a sign or a wrong tendency among women, but within itself there seems to be no more sin in short hair among women than there is in shaven faces among men. This latter custom was not practiced in Bible days.

Man is the glory of God in that he was created in the image of God. In the man Jesus Christ was seen the fulness of the glory of God. This glory is without flaw in every detail and should not be covered but exhibited to the universe.

Woman, taken from the side of man, is the expression of man. Since man is very imperfect, then this expression of man needs to be veiled or covered to hide this imperfection.

Man was created to be the Lord of the earth, see Genesis 1:26, and woman was created, not as the Lord of the earth, but as a helpmate to man. Therefore, woman is subject to man by every line of Bible reasoning.

The woman is to have power, or authority, on her head because of the angels. This is a hard saying, but it probably means the same thing already indicated: as the representative of the sinless Christ, man needs no covering; as the representative of sinful man, woman needs a symbolic covering for his glaring imperfections in the eyes of angels.

IV. Mutual Dependence, verses 11-16.

Neither man nor woman should exalt himself above the other because neither can have an existence without the other. Furthermore, neither can attain the fullest things in life without the other.

Nature teaches it is a shame for a man to have long hair. It has been said a man's hair will not grow long even though it were not cut. If this is not true, the burdens of life will bring baldness to a man and they will not do so to a woman.

Nature teaches that long hair is the glory of a woman, for it is a covering to her as the representative of sinful man.

In effect it would seem that Paul says in verse sixteen that long hair among men and short hair among women is not a thing to tear up the church over.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. On what basis were the brethren to follow Paul?
2. In what sense should they remember him?
3. What are the ordinances mentioned in the lesson?
4. Name three headships given in the lesson.
5. Does this passage forbid women to wear short hair?
6. How is man the glory of God?
7. How is woman the glory of man?
8. What is the relative position of man and woman in creation?
9. Should either man or woman exalt himself above the other?
10. What does nature teach about long hair for a woman?
11. What does verse sixteen mean?
12. Do you think modesty is better than boldness in women?

Lesson 16

THE LORD'S SUPPER

I Corinthians 11:17-34

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's supper is one of the two ordinances of the church. There is not uniformity of opinion and practice on this subject in the religious world by any means. Protestants in general believe it is to be observed by all saved people without regard to church affiliation. They constantly bring the charge of narrow mindedness against Baptists because we do not agree with this viewpoint. Those who take the New Testament as the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice believe it is a local church ordinance. The church should restrict the supper to her members over whom she has the power of discipline: see I Cor. 5:11-13; and she does not have this power of discipline over the members of sister churches.

As to the meaning of the supper, Catholics teach the blessed bread and cup literally become the flesh and blood of Jesus inside those who take these elements into their stomachs. The Bible teaches that we take Christ in through the heart in the figurative usage of heart and not through the stomach. Of course, it would be very easy and convenient if sinners could receive Christ in the same way they eat a piece of pie. Surely this view needs no refuting in the minds of Baptist people.

It is to be a memorial observance to the Lord, referring to His broken body and shed blood as the price paid for our sins. Jesus tells us to do it in remembrance of Him. We do it because He commands it. In addition to this, we use it as an opportunity to meditate on the fact of His sacrifice for us. We may do it to picture the broken body and shed blood to the world, although some believe it was not observed in the presence of unbelievers in New Testament times and in the early centuries of the church.

As to the elements to be used, all will agree that unleavened loaf of the Hebrew passover was used by Jesus in instituting the supper. This unleavened bread signifies the sinless body of Jesus as He lived in human flesh. But when we come to the other element there is no agreement among us. Some, seemingly influenced by the temperance idea, insist that the cup and the fruit of the vine must be grape juice. Others have argued at length that wine is the only legitimate fruit of the vine. A weighty item of evidence is that people in Bible times kept the fruit of the vine in wine skins. The grapes were harvested in the summer and fall. It appears the Lord's supper

was instituted in the early spring, too early for there to be any new grapes from which to make grape juice. The juice of last year's crop would long since have become either vinegar or wine, depending on the sugar content. It is possible inspiration left this matter in doubt to give all the leeway for their preference between the two.

The whole of the Scripture evidence is that the Lord's supper is a church ordinance. The apostles represented the church as Jesus traveled about the country and it was with them alone He instituted the supper. In our present lesson Paul is dealing with the Church at Corinth and churches of like faith and order, I Corinthians 1:2. This supper is inside the church, and one must logically as well as scripturally come in a legitimate way into there in order to be in a position to partake of it.

I. Perversion of the Lord's Supper, verses 17-22.

In the beginning of the lesson Paul charges the church members with coming together not for the better but for the worse. Certainly this charge should bring us into the realization that we should not come together for self glorification or with any envy or malice towards any other church members. No one is bettered, but all are hurt by such an attitude.

Having heard the general charge, Paul next says he has heard there are divisions among the membership. In the purpose of Christ, the church is the most closely bound group of people who have ever lived upon the earth. We have mutually been born again of the Spirit of God. Then we have been bound together by New Testament rules of faith and practice with the avowed purpose of preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth. Hence there should be no place for divisions among us.

But, he goes on to say there must be heresies, or divisions, among us that the approved ones may be manifest. This suggests to us that we may well expect some of the people of the Devil to come in and labor among us to produce discord.

The evidence is that the Corinthian brethren had turned the memorial supper into a feast of revelry. Some of the members were rich and some were extremely poor. It seems that the rich would spread their rich food in the presence of the poor and eat it themselves, thus bringing great humiliation on the poor of the flock. Also, some became drunken on the wine used in the observance. One wonders that God did not immediately strike them dead for such a brazen perversion of this ordinance of Christ.

II. Revelation Concerning the Lord's Supper, verses 23-26.

Paul declares that he received his knowledge of the Lord's supper by revelation. The other apostles had received their knowledge of it being present and partaking when Jesus instituted the supper. It is of great weight that Paul did receive this knowledge by revelation. He also writes much about baptism by inspiration. He says nothing at all about foot

washing as a church observance. Many Baptists have believed foot washing to be a church ordinance. Though Jesus did it and told his disciples they ought to do it, it seems strange that Paul and the other apostles expounding on church doctrines in general make no mention of it as such. From this fact some of us do not believe foot washing is a ordinance enjoined upon the church.

The elements of the Lord's supper are bread and the fruit of the vine. Some believe wine is the fruit of the vine, others believe grape juice is just as good or better. The great majority will agree that unleavened bread should be used.

The broken loaf of unleavened bread represents the sinless body of Jesus which was broken for our sins. The fruit of the vine represents His blood that was shed for many for the remission of sins.

The Scriptures apparently do not specify how often a church should observe this memorial supper. Because of neglect and because of the idea a church is not in a fit condition many churches have not obeyed the Lord in this matter for years. It is not believed it is possible for such churches to prosper in spiritual things. The church should set regular intervals for this observance that it may not be neglected or abandoned entirely.

III. Eating and Drinking Unworthily, verses 27-30.

The one who eats unworthily becomes guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. That is, he treats these things lightly and by so doing he despises the dying of Jesus for his sins. This is a terrible condition indeed.

A man is to examine himself before he eats. The Protestant world is quick to rush forward at this point and say it means any saved man; but, Paul says it is the church of God, I Corinthians 1:2, whose members are to examine themselves before eating.

The church member is to examine himself. Some say it is to see if there is any fault in his actions or thoughts. If this were the case no human being would ever get into a condition to eat. Others will look on the faults of their brethren and refuse to eat with them. Paul says a man is to examine himself to make sure he is discerning or meditating on the broken body of his Lord as he eats.

For eating in a careless, loose, or perverted manner, some of the church members were sick and some of them were dead. This is an instance of God's killing his people for disobedience as He did to many Israelites in the wilderness. Would it not be better for a saved person to die than to go on insulting God in the bold disobedience of His Word?

IV. Judging Self, verses 31-34.

As saved people and church members, if we would judge ourselves we would not be judged of the Lord. We should repent of the sins we commit and never seek to hide or excuse them, for God is working with us and

upon us to produce out of us a peculiar people to Himself.

We are judged and chastened of the Lord so we will not be condemned with the world. The unsaved world will be condemned for unbelief. The saved world outside the church will be condemned in the sense of the rejection of their works according to the false doctrines and practices which they follow. No, person who sprinkles babies will have such works accepted of the Lord.

If a man is hungry he should eat at home and not come to the Lord's supper to satisfy his appetite. That is not the purpose of this observance. It is an ordinance of the local church to remember Christ. It is not a community social for all religious people to entertain themselves.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What charge did Paul bring against the church?
2. What evil existed in the church?
3. Why must there be heresies in the church?
4. Explain how the supper was perverted.
5. How did Paul learn about the Lord's supper?
6. How did the other apostles know about it?
7. What are the elements of the Lord's supper?
8. What do they represent?
9. How often should a church observe this supper?
10. What is the penalty for eating unworthily?
11. What man is to examine himself before eating?
12. What is eating unworthily?
13. Why are we judged and chastened?
14. Is the Lord's supper a love feast among all religious people?
15. Is it to be observed by all brethren of like faith or by the membership of a local church?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I Corinthians 12:1-11

INTRODUCTION

The twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of I Corinthians deal with the subject of spiritual gifts. In connection with this study there are two points which Baptists should settle in our minds once and for all. One of them is that the age of miracles was withdrawn by the hand of God at the close of apostolic days. The other is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon the church and that the resultant gifts of this baptism of the Holy Spirit are within the church alone. It is time that we begin to claim all the ground that is given to us in New Testament teachings. We have been far too charitable to the Protestant world in granting to them the promises that God gives to us alone. The New Testament is a Baptist church book.

As to miracles, they were given for two specific purposes. First, they_ were given to prove that Jesus is the anointed one of God spoken of by the prophets, Acts 2:22.

Second, miracles were given specifically to Israel to show them what the fulness of the kingdom was which John and Jesus preached to them, Luke 11:20. In a general way, these miracles operated as a temporary expedient until a fuller order should be established. This fuller order was established in the faith. Then they were withdrawn by the hand of God as being no longer needed and were supplanted by a better order of things.

Of course, there are those who go about proclaiming that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. No one denies this in the sense in which it is meant, but every intelligent person knows that God changes His ways of dealing with men. If such people actually believe what they preach, then they would logically go about expecting God to send another flood as He did in the days of Noah. Or, they would be offering animal sacrifices as God demanded of Israel under the law. Such claims are not worthy of the consideration of intelligent people. One may fast until his bones pierce through his skin and he may pray until his tongue hangs out, but he will not see a vision from God nor do a miracle by His power today. His visions and miracles, if he has any, will come from the flesh and the Devil. Let anyone who is prone to deny this strong language beware of the wiles of Antichrist. Let such a one try to understand what the second chapter of Colossians really means. Such matters as the new birth and the providential care of God do not come under the heading of miracles.

As to the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit, most will claim they came to all believers on Pentecost. There is not one item of evidence to support their claim. There is an abundance of evidence which denies it. It is

repeatedly stated that **those** who **were** baptized in water should be baptized in Holy Spirit after a short time, **see** Acts 1:5.

This Spirit baptism came on the church on Pentecost, and the Spirit abode on the church as a constant gift to the church, and so it remains until today. When the church had **been** baptized in the Spirit on Pentecost, it then had two baptisms—water and Spirit. But Ephesians 4:5 says **of** our day that there is only one baptism. This one is water baptism, but it places the individual in the body, the church, which received Spirit baptism once for all nineteen hundred years ago on Pentecost. Then the new church member essentially receives the benefits of the Spirit baptism, or its necessary results, when he comes into the church. It is not repeated either to individuals or to churches.

In the church, where the baptism of the Holy Spirit prevails, various gifts are meted out to members as the Holy Spirit pleases. No man within himself has the right to demand a call to preach, to be a Sunday School teacher, or anything **else**. These things are the business of God, working through the agency of the Spirit. **We** should **be** careful of the demands **we** make of God in this particular field. Let us not call any preachers to the ministry.

I. The New Position, verses 1-3.

It is not evident in our lesson just why the subject of spiritual gifts comes into the discussion, but we shall learn later that the Corinthian brethren were beset by many questions concerning this matter. Spiritual **gifts** as used here refers to special gifts of abilities to do certain works in the New Testament church such as prophesying, speaking in tongues, and interpreting the Word of God. The church as a body received the gift of the Holy Spirit along with the baptism of the Spirit on Pentecost; see Acts 2:38.

The church at Corinth was what we usually designate as a Gentile church. They had formerly followed some form of the Greek religion. This religion taught the worship of gods who were perverse in character and hardly more than exalted men. The people made images and idols of these gods and worshipped them. Paul gives us some light on this Greek worship in his encounter with the Athenians on Mars Hill, as told in the seventeenth chapter of Acts.

Verse three may seem hard to understand until we take into account the former religious background of these people. They had many gods, and these gods did not always agree among themselves. In fact there was often war and fighting among them. Therefore, when one was worshipping one god he might be casting insult in the face of some other god. It would seem these Greeks were inclined to bring some of this tradition into the workings of the church after they became Christians. This would inevitably bring a certain amount of confusion and disagreement among them as to the carrying on of public worship. Some of them had spiritual gifts to exercised in the church, but, in the exercising of these gifts the people clashed and often contradicted one another. It seems some of them went so far in their

claimed authority as to pronounce a curse upon Jesus. Others proclaimed Him as Lord who did not know what they were saying. Paul was telling them that the Holy Spirit brought unity of testimony among those who were really swayed by the Spirit. The Spirit did not bring denial of Christ nor confusion among the brethren. Those who are trying to unite the religious world today should learn from this verse that the only possible harmony and unity is to be found in the church and under the sway of the New Testament and the Holy Spirit.

II. The One Spirit, verses 4-6.

Diversities of gifts means various or different kinds of gifts. Notice that the different members of the church were endowed with different kinds of gifts.

Diversities of administrations refers to different works to do and different services to perform. The gifts refer to abilities, and administrations refer to opportunities to exercise the gifts.

Diversities of operations seems to refer to varying degrees of Spirit power which was given to the church members. That is, it would take a greater amount of Spirit energy to enable one to foretell the future than it would to believe the Word of God when it was spoken.

The Spirit, the Lord, and God are mentioned in connection with these diversities of operations. Here we encounter the matter of the unity and trinity of God. Three are mentioned, but Paul is speaking specifically of the work of the Holy Spirit. There is one God, but there are three offices, three positions, and three personalities in the Godhead. It is the Spirit who is actually working here, but the Father and the Son are in full harmony and agreement. It seems we must await the resurrection to understand these matters. The main point is that the Spirit would not give one gift or office to one church member and an opposing gift or office to another. Can you imagine the Lord sending out one man to preach salvation by grace and the security of the saved and sending another to preach salvation by works and falling from grace? That is what Protestantism claims. The Corinthians were trying to build up the same kind of contradictory system in the church.

III. Diversities of Gifts, verses 7-11.

The Spirit was given to the various members of the church, not to produce rivalry and wrangling in the church, but for the whole church and not only for him who has the gift.

Probably faith is the only one of the gifts enumerated in these verses which remains in the church today. The others have passed away as not being needed any more.

We are specifically told that the gifts were apportioned out as the Spirit willed. Therefore a man had no choice in whether he prophesied or spoke in

tongues, or whether he had any special gift at all. We would do well to pay more attention to this principle of God's dealing with men today. It is not always the eloquent, brilliant, and educated preacher who makes a real success in the ministry.

Verse eleven does not make a complete sentence as it appears in the King James version of the Bible. The Greek text seems to say: "The one and same Spirit is the energizing force in all these things (the working out of the gifts), dividing out to each one his own according to His own counsel." This is an interpretative rendering, and no claim is made that it is a literal one. At least it makes complete sense and is logical rendered this way.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by Spiritual gifts?
2. What had been the former condition of the Corinthians?
3. What is the meaning of verse three?
4. What are diversities of gifts?
5. What are diversities of administrations?
6. What are diversities of operations?
7. Who gives spiritual gifts?
8. Why was the Spirit given to men?
9. Do the Word and the Spirit of God ever cause confusion?
10. What causes divisions and strife in the religious world?
11. How many of the gifts mentioned are still in operation?
12. Was anyone baptized by the Spirit on Pentecost who had not been baptized in water?
13. Do men perform miracles today by the power of God?

THE BODY OF CHRIST

I Corinthians 12:12-21

INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals directly with the church as the body of Christ. We are told at Ephesians 1:22-23 that Christ is the head of the church, and that the church is the body and fulness of Christ. No student should pass over this lesson without noting some definite Scripture teachings concerning the church of our Lord. This is especially true in view of the fact that the doctrine of the great universal, invisible, spiritual church is being taught ever more prominently among the religious denominations.

One thing we should note is that this letter to the Corinthian church is addressed to the church of God which is at Corinth, I Corinthians 1:2. Again it should be noted that the membership of this church had been baptized in water, I Corinthians 1:14. A third point not to be overlooked is the fact that the whole book is occupied with the discussion of practical problems which arise in the workings of a local body, which is the only kind of church set forth in the New Testament. These things being true, then the baptism mentioned at I Corinthians 12:13 is water baptism since Ephesians 4:5 says there is only one baptism. Adherents of the universal church theory say that all believers are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit when they are saved. This would be equivalent to saying the disciples of Jesus were not saved until the day of Pentecost, for they were not baptized in the Holy Spirit until that day. The fact of the matter is some of them had been saved for several years before they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Let it be settled in our minds permanently that the birth of the Holy Spirit is a different matter. The church which was baptized in the Holy Spirit consisted entirely of members who had been previously scripturally baptized in water. This baptism came once for all upon the church on Pentecost and it remains upon the church until today. So far as results are concerned, the church today is as much baptized in the Holy Spirit as was the church which was assembled in Jerusalem on Pentecost. Of course, there is not the kind of demonstration in the church which was present on Pentecost. This is because the miraculous element has been taken away as a gift of the Spirit. But all of the necessary help and power are present in the church as much as they were present on that day when the church first received this baptism of the Holy Spirit. Church members receive a part in the baptism of the Holy Spirit the moment they are scripturally baptized in water, for when this is done they have fulfilled all the requirements of church membership. One cannot be scripturally baptized in a scriptural

church without having the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and he cannot possibly receive it under any other conditions.

The result is that I Corinthians 12:13 does not tell about the submerging of all saved people into a great invisible spiritual body. It was a literal assembly of real people who were baptized in the Spirit on Pentecost, and there is no scriptural reason to believe the situation has changed from the days of Jesus.

Where many people go astray on these matters is with the reference to those passages of Scripture which deal with the church from the institutional standpoint. Wherever two or more persons or things of a like kind exist a species, a kind, or an order of things comes into being. When we speak of the characteristics of man we mean simply those qualities which all men have in common, which things set man apart from other living things. We do not mean any particular man, but just man in general. Cows form a species which walk on four legs, eat forage, have horns, give milk, and are covered with hair. Then when we talk about the cow we do not mean a specific cow, but just any cow in general. What the efforts of the Protestant world actually amount to is taking all the goats, sheep, hogs, horses, and cows and adding them together and saying they form the real, great, universal cow. They do this after the cow (the church in the figure of this illustration) has been clearly described and distinguished from the other animals. Let us not be fooled by that imaginary monstrosity, the great universal church.

I. The Church Is the Body of Christ, verses 12, 13.

The later discussion will make it clear that the human body is meant in verse twelve. The different organs and members of the human body and their functions are used to illustrate the working of the various members in the church.

Christ came into the world to manifest God to mankind. I John 1:1 *states: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life. As Christ was in the world to show to men the likeness and works of God, so He left the church in the world to manifest His own likeness and works when He was gone out of the world. Thus the different members of the church in their various works manifest the fulness of Christ as the different members of the body make up the body and perform their different functions together to represent and manifest the fulness of the body.*

Contrary to the popular teachings today, the baptism is baptism in water which every person must have to enter into the church. It is clearly indicated that all the people of whom Jesus formed the church had been baptized in water. I Corinthians 1:13-14 shows that the Corinthian brethren had been baptized in water. Then since Ephesians 4:5 says there is one baptism, it is of necessity water baptism that is meant. The church as a body was baptized once for all in the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost after

the ascension of Jesus from the Earth. This baptism remains as a constant gift to the church just as the great commission does.

The Corinthian brethren, and all other New Testament saints, were baptized into a local church. The **same** is true of all who are in the church today. One cannot be in the church either in the institutional or local sense without scriptural baptism, which is immersion in water of a believer on the authority of a local church. He can be saved without baptism, but he cannot be in the church without it.

In baptism and church membership we are made to drink of the Holy Spirit in that office in which He came on the church on Pentecost. Paul is not speaking of the new birth when he talks of church members drinking of the one Spirit. The Spirit in this office leads, comforts, and trains groups of saved people working in church capacity. The saved person outside the church is without this ministry of the Holy Spirit.

III. Each Member Has His Work, verses 14.17.

Paul begins to make the application of the likeness he has called to our attention. The human body has many members. So it is with the church. Each church member has his particular work to do. It has been truly said that no one else can fill our particular place. If we do not fill it, then things will not be done according to the will of God. He may raise up someone else to do what we refuse to do, but that does not release us from liability.

The ear should not complain because it is not the eye. Perhaps its work is not so prominent, but it is absolutely necessary to the welfare of the body. A church must have a janitor as well as a pastor to function to best advantage. There must be students as well as teachers to maintain a Sunday School. It is wrong for a member to refuse to work in the church because someone else can do things better, or because someone else has a position of more prominence.

Of course a body that was all eyes or all feet or all hands would be a monstrosity. The same is true of a church in which too many people want to be in the lead, or they refuse to do anything because others have more ability.

IV. God Appoints Work to Each Member, 18-21.

God sets the members in the church as it pleases Him. He does not inquire of us what our desires and abilities are. It is our business to seek His will when we are seeking a place to work for Him.

No church member should despise the office of another. God has set each of them in his particular place because the welfare of the church needed them there. The eye can see the misery of the downtrodden, but it takes the hand to minister to them. The head can learn of the Word of God, but the feet must carry the head as it goes forth to preach.

Remember that there is not rivalry, envy, or indifference in Christ. As a church, **we** by our various labors and offices represent Him in the world. Let us strive to represent Him rather than misrepresent Him. We do this by performing our own work in the right spirit.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What body is meant in verse twelve?
2. How is Christ like the human body?
3. What baptism is meant in verse thirteen?
4. Into what kind of body are we baptized?
5. Of what Spirit are we made to drink?
6. Who appoints the work of church members?
7. How may one know whether he is doing the work God would have him do?
8. Should a church member despise the office of another?
9. Is a local congregation the only kind of church there is?
10. Explain the relationship between water and Spirit baptism.
11. Is it necessary for one to be baptized to be saved?
12. Is it necessary for one to be baptized to be a scriptural member of a New Testament church?

UNITY AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS

I Corinthians 12:22-31

INTRODUCTION

The first great lesson about spiritual gifts is that there are many gifts but only one Spirit giving and administering them. The second idea is that there are many members but there is only one body formed of them, which body is the church. The great idea in this lesson is the necessity of unity among the membership of the church.

Let us note first some things that are not essential to such a unity. The apostolic situation teaches us that wealth or the lack of it has little to do with unity in the church. Zacchaeus was a wealthy man, and the Galilean fishermen were very poor, but they found unity in the church in Jesus' day. The Corinthian church drew a line of distinction on the basis of wealth, I Corinthians 11:21, and Paul severely rebuked them for doing so. Educational status is not an essential element of unity. Paul had a polished education and John was an unlearned fisherman, but they stand as unwitting rivals on the matter of the depths of doctrine contained in their writings. On the question of their nationality and related things, Paul tells us there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, in the body formed by Jesus. But let us note some details on the positive side of the question.

In the first place, the new birth is the foundation principle of unity in the church. There must be this common experience within itself, and it must prepare the church members for other things before they can ever have unity. For instance, it does not seem possible that one should embrace the New Testament as the all sufficient rule of faith and practice if he has not been born again. Taking the New Testament as the sufficient guide for the conduct of the church and our private lives is another essential of church unity. There cannot be unity in the church if there is disagreement on doctrine and practice. The only way we can agree on doctrine and practice is to draw them from the New Testament rather than from our worldly wisdom.

Again, we must have agreement on several goals if we are to have unity. One of these is to glorify God rather than ourselves. Another is to build up the church in faith and knowledge of the teachings of the Word. It makes little difference how much faith or knowledge one has unless he can impart it to others. It should be a definite goal to impart what we have of these to the membership of the church. The church has lived for nineteen hundred years on what one church member has imparted to another. It is a matter of give

and receive on the part of all. Every church member is strengthening his own position when he in any way builds up this brother in the church.

Another goal is the proclaiming of the pure truth to the ends of the earth. There are two ways to look at this goal. In the first place, all men everywhere are as worthy of receiving the knowledge of salvation as were we when it came to us. Thus we have a debt to discharge to sinners throughout the world. Also, we strengthen our own cause every time we make a new convert by adding one to our own camp as we draw him out of the camp of the Devil. Therefore, we should find perfect unity in the goal of making disciples to Christ of all men everywhere.

When we realize our common experience, the new birth; when we feel full responsibility for common cause, preaching the truth to all men; and when we meditate on our common hope, eternal glory; then unity will not be any problem at all. It will have come automatically.

I. Strengthening the Weak, verses 22-24.

In the previous verses Paul has been showing why the honorable members of the body cannot afford to glory over the weak and set them at naught, and how the weak members cannot afford to rebel because they are not of the honorable. Now he points out that the weak members are necessary both to the welfare and the very existence of the body. Even a body without toes is crippled and deformed and cannot function to full capacity. The church has members who cannot do anything very efficiently but fill a seat in the meeting house and silently pray. All can do these things, and the church is crippled if they do not do so.

There are those who know New Testament doctrines, but they cannot express them adequately. There are others who can sound forth these truths with force and beauty. When this is done, it is the church of the weak speaking as much as it is that of the eloquent. The most tongue-tied member is preaching, too, when he in any way supports the pastor in the pulpit. Thus he is performing the noblest work on earth as a part of the body, the church.

As already pointed out, the weak are made more comely by being identified with a body which is preaching the glorious gospel of Christ. A widow puts her ten cents into the collection for missions: her church as a whole puts in a thousand dollars. If she has done the best she can she has as honorable a part as the man who puts in a hundred dollars.

God has tempered the body, giving more honor to that which lacked. He has brought the church together on a basis such that there is a place of usefulness and honorable service for every member. Furthermore the part of each one is necessary to every other one and to the body as a whole.

II. The United Body, verses 25-27.

In the membership of the church there should be unity of conversion, of

receiving the New Testament as the guide for conduct both as a church and as individuals, of purpose to preach the gospel to all men, and of desire for the material and spiritual welfare of all. On this latter point, we should have the same care for our brethren we have for ourselves.

If one member of the human body suffers, the whole body suffers with it. If one has a severe headache, the whole body is sick. By the same token the whole church is harmed and suffers by the misfortune or spiritual downfall of one member. We hurt ourselves when we hurt or neglect a fallen brother.

As sorrow or hurt is diffused to all the body, so it is with joy. The whole body rejoices together with the rejoicing member. This is partly the reason why we get joy out of helping others.

The twenty-seventh verse says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." This is addressed to the church at Corinth and all like bodies. Every scriptural church is a body of Christ, being an expression of Him. In the resurrection all these bodies will be merged into one, which will be the finished body and bride of Christ. This body of Christ is a group of baptized believers working together to uphold New Testament teachings. In other words, the body of Christ is a scriptural local church.

III. Gifts to the Church, verse 28.

The first officers set in the church were the apostles. They were so set in during the early part of the ministry of Jesus in the world. The account is given at Luke 6:12-16. It will be a hard thing for those who claim the church did not begin until Pentecost to explain how Jesus set the apostles in the church which did not come into existence until several years later. How could you set a bed in a house which will not be built until three years from now?

In the apostolic age, during the time of miracles, some had the gift of healing. The third chapter of Acts tells about the healing by Peter and John of a man who had been lame from his birth. Peter denied that it was either their own power or holiness. God gave this gift to these two disciples because it pleased Him to do so, not because they had earned the right to wield such power.

Probably teaching and governments are all of the gifts mentioned here which remain in the church today. Perhaps even these refer to powers which passed away with the apostolic age. We are later told that faith, hope, and love are the spiritual gifts which remain in the church.

IV. Seeking the Best Gifts, verses 29-31.

One cannot expect to have all the best gifts, for they were distributed out among the membership as God pleased.

We are told to earnestly desire the best gifts, but this is not for self exaltation but for the edification of the whole church. Advancement of self is no worthy motive in any phase of church activity.

In the last verse of our lesson, Paul tells us he will show us a more excellent way. The next lesson will reveal that this better way is to allow love to be the dominating motive in our thought and actions. Love does not have any unworthy motives. Therefore it is a safe guide to follow.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why are the weakest members necessary?
2. How do we bestow honor on the less honorable?
3. How do we make the weak more comely?
4. How does God gain unity in the church?
5. List some details in which there should be unity.
6. What is the result if one member suffers or rejoices?
7. Who constitutes the body of Christ?
8. Who were the first officers set in the church and when were they installed?
9. Which of the spiritual gifts remain in the church?
10. Should we seek the most responsible place available?
11. What is more excellent than having the gifts named?

THE GREATEST GIFT

I Corinthians 13:1-13

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of weighty matters hinging on this chapter. We are dealing with three chapters which treat the spiritual gifts which came upon the church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The very heart of this discussion is contained in this lesson. The prominent word is charity. It does not mean what we conceive of charity as meaning. In the Greek text of the New Testament it means that manner of love which God has for men, and which saved people have for one another, for God and for the world. Love is emphatically set forth as the greatest of the spiritual gifts.

One interesting thing is the statement of the failing or doing away with most of the spiritual gifts. These are to be taken away when the perfect thing is come. Of course there is difference of opinion as to what the perfect thing is. Some believe it is Christ at His second coming. The trouble with this idea is that faith and hope are to continue after the coming of the perfect thing. Faith will be swallowed up in sight, and hope will be swallowed up in reality when Christ comes the second time, see Rom. 8:24 and Hebrews 11:1 on this point. Therefore the perfect thing could not be Christ at His second coming. Others say the perfect thing is ourselves in resurrection. The same argument exactly holds against this view that holds against the one that Christ is the perfect thing.

It is suggested that the perfect thing is the completed New Testament. James calls it the perfect law of liberty, James 1:25. Paul tells us that the word makes us perfect and throughly furnished unto every good work, II Timothy 3:17. Surely no Baptist will deny that the Bible is the perfect revelation of God to man. Remembering then that man did not have the completed Bible until the end of the apostolic age, we have a logical case to the effect that the Bible is the perfect thing which was to come. And when it did come the partial gifts should be taken out of the way.

Great issues hinge on this point. Baptists believe the age of miracles absolutely came to an end with the end of the apostolic age. We believe the so-called miracles of today are pure fraud, or that they are accomplished by hypnotism, or that they are the work of demon spirits. We believe the large majority of them are rank deceptions. But there are religious sects who claim to work miracles today by the power of God. Their stock argument is that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Only a little intelligence will convince us God changes His ways of dealing with mankind. He never had a New Testament church in the world until Jesus came less than two thousand years ago. Again, no one claims to keep the fulness of

the law of Moses, which God strictly enjoined upon Israel. So the argument of the unchanging God is only a cheap dodge to catch the unwary. It is positively not good proof that God works miracles today.

The fact of the matter is that in miracles God showed to Israel and then to others what the fulness of the kingdom would be. The Jews rejected the king and the kingdom, and the physical side of it was withdrawn for the time being. The result is that the kingdom is defined at Romans 14:17 as not being food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This means the kingdom is spiritual in its reality during the present age. The material side of it is deferred until the Millennium. If this view of the matter is correct, then the miracle workers are as unscriptural as one could be. It is recognized that Baptists may misconstrue and deny what is said here, but it is easier to deny than it is to explain such passages as Luke 11:20 if one does deny what is set forth here. Lest some should think the universal church is being upheld, it is stated that real churches at work are the visible manifestations of the kingdom during the present age.

Love is the great moving principle that brought Christ into the world to die for the world. God gave His Son the church as a manifestation of His love for the Son. In the new birth the capacity to love is implanted in the heart of the child of God. The church is so constituted that it can work with perfect success if love is the moving principle. If love is not the guiding principle, then the church is thrown into a maze of perplexities from which it can never escape. Let us remember this always.

I. Love, the Greatest Gift, verses 1-3.

Though one should have the wise and eloquent words of men and of angels, if they are not seasoned with love, they become as the harsh sound of beating on metal, or as a senseless or unmusical blast of a trumpet. This teaches us we cannot win men with logical argument alone. We may defeat them in debate, but we will not win them to Christ without love flowing out from us to them.

We might have the knowledge to prophesy, we might understand all mysteries, or we might have a faith strong enough to move mountains, but without love to work with it, we are nothing, and our works will not accomplish anything.

Many have depended on sacrificial service to commend them to God, but the most strenuous of these will not profit anything without the love of God flowing from our hearts. Since the spiritual gifts to the church are no good without love, wherein do we have any cause for pride or glory in our human abilities?

As we look on the workings of churches we see some putting in much money, we see others exerting themselves to teach, and we see yet others contending strenuously for New Testament doctrine, but from what Paul says in these verses it is completely in vain if love of God is not the motivating force. Let us never attempt to exclude any member from the church until our hearts are burdened with love for the welfare of the erring

member and for Christ and His church. Otherwise our work will utterly fail to accomplish its desired purpose.

II. Virtues of Love, verses 4-7.

In these verses the virtues and accomplishments of love are enumerated. Little of Christian virtue is left out of this list. I Peter 4:8 says that the brethren should love one another diligently or zealously, for love covers over a multitude of sins. Human nature makes us to magnify the sins of those we hate. Love makes us to look with leniency or compassion on the sins of those about us. In this way their sins are covered over to our eyes.

When Christ contemplated coming into the world to save us, every man on earth was a sinner and an enemy of Christ. Then what inducement could he have to come, or what motive could the Father have in sending Him? There was no good at all in us to recommend us, so the conclusion is that the love of God covered over our sins to the extent He could give His Son to save us.

Christian experience teaches us that when the love of God is shed abroad richly in our hearts our faith and hope are much stronger than at other times. The First Epistle of John is written to tell us how to have assurance of our salvation. Two of the requirements are that we love God and love one another. This is equivalent to saying that love will strengthen our faith and hope. And faith and hope are the things that make salvation a reality to the child of God. Without these one comes to the condition that he has forgotten he has been purged from his old sins, as Peter puts it in one of his epistles.

III. The Failing Gifts, verses 8, 9.

A literal rendering of the eighth verse says love never falls away. Prophecies and knowledge shall be put out of operation, and tongues shall cease.

Prophecies are the foretelling of the future as well as the expressing of the hidden will of God. Knowledge is that kind of knowledge that enables men to know and tell the will of God. In other words it is the knowledge by which revelation comes. As to tongues, it is not certain as to whether they were the language of Heaven or the various languages of men. There is some evidence pointing to both.

These three and a number of others were expedients which were useful for a time, but the time came when they no longer served a useful purpose. Then they were taken away. When God had given all of His word to men there was no longer any use for prophecy and special knowledge. Therefore they were only partial gifts, or gifts for a limited time.

IV. The Perfect Thing, verses 10-13.

The Bible is the perfect will of God to man. The perfect thing came before faith and hope ceased to operate, so it must be the Bible.

With only a part of the Bible, and without the church and the special ministry of the Holy Spirit, the saved were like a child as compared with the man when these things were added.

As to the mirror, Old Testament prophets wondered about the things they wrote. But the revelation of these things came to the church, I Peter 1:12. The Old Testament saints were like one looking into a mirror; we are like those who see clearly face to face.

Faith and hope will come to their desired goal at the resurrection. Love will continue forever. The perfect thing comes before the end of faith and hope, so it could not be the second coming of Christ nor the glorification of the saints. When the Bible became the perfect rule of faith and practice these special gifts, which were only for a time, were taken away. Let us not seek to speak in tongues and perform miracles today, lest we should fall into the snare of the Devil.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What are wise words like without love?
2. Are knowledge and faith worth anything without love?
3. Is sacrificial service any good without love?
4. Can we win sinners if we do not love them?
5. Are we any help to the church if we do not love the saved?
6. How does love cover a multitude of sins?
7. Does love strengthen our faith and hope?
8. Will love ever cease to be a gift to the saved?
9. What are the gifts that would fail?
10. What is the perfect thing referred to?
11. What is the parable of the child and the mirror?
12. When will faith and hope cease?
13. Will love continue after faith and hope cease?

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

I Corinthians 14:1-22

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, prophecy is set forth as the greatest of the partial gifts. Let it be remembered that there are three gifts which should remain as a continual heritage to the church. These are faith, hope and love. Though the gift of prophecy is the greatest of the partial gifts, that is the gifts that were to continue only until the Bible was finished, the main theme of the lesson is tongues. There is not agreement among us as to the nature of tongues. Some think they refer to the different languages which men speak. Others think there really is such a thing as unknown tongues. In the Greek text of the New Testament the expression "unknown tongues" is never used. It is either "tongues," or "kinds of tongues." The prominent teachings on tongues are recorded in the second chapter of Acts and the chapter we are now studying.

As recorded in the second chapter of Acts, the church received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. There were tongues which looked like fire, and which may have been fire. These tongues were divided out among the various church members. The Greek text does not say cloven tongues; it says tongues that were divided or apportioned out in the church. The church members began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. There were seventeen language groups represented in the congregation. Every one of these heard the disciples speaking in his own language. The point of uncertainty is whether every man understood every disciple, or whether one man understood one disciple and another understood what another disciple was saying. If the whole group understood all the disciples, then the miracle was in the hearing as much so as in the speaking. In this case, the speaking must have been a language handed down from Heaven, or it may be that the disciples spoke the Galilean tongue, and the Holy Spirit interpreted in the various languages.

On the other hand, many Baptists are satisfied with the view that one disciple spoke Latin, another Greek, another Egyptian, etc., until there was one of them to deliver a message to every nationality present. An item of evidence against this view is the fact that Peter later spoke to the whole group, and they all understood what he said. The fact that the New Testament is written in Greek would indicate that Peter spoke in Greek when he addressed the whole group. Or it could be that he spoke Hebrew, for all present were Jews and likely understood the Hebrew language. The question is: Since all present could understand some given language, whether Hebrew or Greek, what would be the necessity of speaking the various languages known to those present in order to deliver a message to

them? Why not use the language Peter later used, whatever it was?

When we come to details in our present lesson, we are faced with more difficulties on the matters of tongues. According to verse fourteen the speaker himself did not understand what he said. Even he needed an interpreter to tell him what he had said, or he needed to pray that he himself might have the gift of interpreting it. This would not be an impossible situation except that the spirit of the speaker was built up by talking in tongues, though his mind did not know what he had said. How could speaking in a foreign tongue build up the spirit, if the mind did not understand what was being said? It seems this fact virtually forces us to the position that there were what are commonly called unknown tongues. These tongues were a language, or languages, of Heaven, for the tongues of angels is mentioned in the thirteenth chapter. Men were borne along by the Holy Spirit to speak these heavenly tongues and someone was needed with the gift of interpreting them into the tongues of men. Of course, some will strenuously object to the thing suggested here, but how else shall we explain the things said in the chapter about tongues? Often it is easier to deny a position than it is to show one that harmonizes better with all the Scriptures say on a given subject. Let each student try to figure out for himself what the nature of tongues is.

I. Prophecy, Better Than Tongues, verses IM.

Let it be understood that there are two kinds of gifts: those that remained for only a short time and those that continue throughout the church age. Those which lasted only a short time are referred to as partial gifts. We are told in verse one that prophecy is the best of these partial gifts.

The one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God. Notice the word "unknown" is in italic letters, meaning it is not in the original text. No man understands him, but he speaks mysteries in the Spirit. This indicates there were unknown tongues, though the word is not used. It seems they spoke a language of Heaven as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Prophecy is better than tongues because men understand what is said and it brings them edification, and exhortation, and comfort. In a practical way we should learn the lesson of trying to speak in terms that may be understood by people in general. Little understood words and complicated sentence structure leave the masses wondering what has been said by the speaker. However, people should study to understand more complex things.

In apostolic times there was another gift which went along with tongues. It was the ability to interpret the tongues. The interpreter was usually a different person from the speaker. These tongues differed in this respect from the fake tongues spoken today. The modern tongue speakers usually make no effort to interpret their tongues.

II. Tongues Illustrated, verses 7-11.

The effect of tongues is illustrated by musical instruments. If a musical instrument makes sounds in which there is no harmony, melody, or tune it becomes a senseless and useless thing.

The trumpet was sounded to summon an army to battle. There was a certain definite sound or tune known to the soldiers which was their summons to battle. If the trumpet gave a senseless or meaningless sound to the army, then they would not know to set themselves in array for battle. Likewise, if the church members talked in tongues, it would have no meaning to the others present, and they would not be instructed, admonished, or edified thereby. In the face of this evidence can anyone say there was no such thing as unknown tongues? Those on Pentecost may have been for instruction, but these here certainly were not, unless they were interpreted. Those on Pentecost did not need to be interpreted.

There are many voices in the world, and none of them is without meaning. The birds understand bird language; the animals understand animal language; men understand their language of men. So speaking in an unknown tongue is contrary to nature itself.

A barbarian is one who sounds as though he says, "bar, bar," when he talks. That is, he is one who speaks a language unknown to the listener. It is just another argument that an unknown tongue is only confusion to the listener.

III. Interpretation, a Better Gift, verses 12-17.

The Corinthians were zealous for the spiritual gifts. They should have directed their zeal toward the edification of the church. It looks as though they were desirous of self glory from what Paul says to them. The one who spoke in a tongue was to pray for the ability to interpret, a thing that would help the whole church.

When one prays in a tongue his spirit prays, but this understanding is unfruitful. Praying in a tongue did edify the spirit, but not the mind.

The church comes together to glorify God. If one speaks in a tongue, the unlearned does not know what he says and he cannot say "Amen" though God might be glorified in the tongue. They should desire to do something to help the unlearned glorify God also.

Paul says he spoke in tongues more than any other. It is to be wondered whether he spoke in tongues concerning the things recounted in the twelfth chapter of II Corinthians, where he tells us of having seen and heard unutterable things. The suggestion again is that tongues were an expression of heavenly things in heavenly language.

IV. Edifying the Church, verses 18-22.

Again in verse nineteen there is the intimation that the tongues were not understood unless they were interpreted. Interpretation came also as a gift from God. If the tongues had been in other known languages, an interpreter could have been secured from the nation whose language was being spoken. No, these tongues were unknown tongues in the sense of not being known by any race of people on the Earth.

We are not to be like children in understanding. It seems more or less of a childish desire to wish to speak in tongues.

We are to be like children in regard to malice. That is, we are to be without malice entirely.

A new element is introduced into the subject of tongues in the last verse of the lesson. Tongues are a sign to unbelievers. They are a sign that God had rejected those who have rejected His counsels. The situation is identical with that at Matthew 13:10-11, where parables became a sign of rejection to the unbelieving Jews. The parables became a source of enlightenment to the disciples of Jesus; they became dark and mysterious sayings to the unbelievers.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is the best of the partial gifts?
2. What is the nature of tongues?
3. Why is prophecy better than tongues?
4. What gift went along with tongues?
5. Is there any profit in speaking if words are not understood?
6. Are tongues contrary to nature?
7. What is a barbarian?
8. What should be the goal in seeking gifts?
9. What profit is there in speaking in tongues?
10. Should our worship help the unlearned?
11. Who spoke in tongues more than any other?
12. Is there such a thing as unknown tongues?
13. In what should we not be as children?
14. In what should we be like children?
15. How are tongues a sign to unbelievers?
16. Name two details that make modern speaking in tongues unscriptural.

CHURCH ORDER

I. Corinthians 14:23-40

INTRODUCTION

This concludes our study of the spiritual gifts which came on the church on Pentecost. These were special gifts and are not to be confused with the normal work of the Holy Spirit in the world since the creation of mankind. At John 7:39 there begins a series of prophecies of Jesus about a future coming of the Spirit upon the church. His later teachings on the subject reveal that the Spirit in this office was to take His place as leader of the church when He left the world. It would also comfort them and guide them into the way of all truth. The Spirit came with a great manifestation on Pentecost, and the promise of Jesus was that it would continue with the church until the end of the age. It is with gifts which came in connection with the coming of the Spirit in this office that these lessons have dealt.

Previous lessons have pointed out that here should be unity in the exercises of the church because there is only one Holy Spirit directing the exercise. The church is one body with all members working together, not in rivalry among themselves. Love is the greatest of the spiritual gifts, and it, along with faith and hope, should continue long after the others had ceased to operate. Of the partial gifts, which should continue only for a time, prophecy was the greatest and took preference over speaking in tongues. It seems the church members had a special desire to speak in tongues. Perhaps this was because they could make a greater public show. As a summary of the whole discussion, the great theme of the lesson is stated in the last verse: all things should be done decently and in order.

In connection with the study of these spiritual gifts, let every student also remember that a new order of God's dealing with His people came in with the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus. The church was established by Jesus as a new thing in the early part of His ministry. The full establishment and indoctrination of the church continued until the Bible was finished and the church became fully established in the faith. Anyone can recognize this gradual development by remembering that Jesus led and instructed his church in person as long as He was in the world. When He was gone new expedients must be used. These expedients came chiefly in the form of the special spiritual gifts which we have been studying. But the system was looking forward to a full and permanent establishment upon the completed word and the fully established faith.

When this result was accomplished, the gifts which were to serve in the meantime were taken out of the way as being no longer of any benefit. Anyone can see there would be no benefit in the gift of prophecy today, for

God has already given all the revelation He will ever give long ago. Then *why* repeat it by calling up new prophets? One would deny the Bible as the A sufficient rule of faith and practice if he claimed the, gift of prophecy today. Surely no one among us wants to take any such position as that. Having established this proposition, let us note next that whenever the gift of prophecy was taken away all the other partial gifts went along with it, including tongues. If we claimed tongues as a gift today, we would of necessity claim that prophecy still prevails, and in so doing we would deny the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures.

Let it be noted that disorder in worship service is a notable characteristic among those who claim the special spiritual gifts today. Paul not only insists that all things would be done decently and in order, but he also says the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, meaning that the Holy Spirit would direct in such ways that there would be order and decency in the way things were carried on instead of a babel of confusion.

I. Convicting Unbelievers, verses 23-25.

In the exercising of the spiritual gifts in the church, consideration should be given to any unbelievers who might be present. One of the primary motives of the church is to convict unbelievers of sin and lead them to salvation. If such unbelievers came into the church meeting and heard only speaking in tongues, it would make no sense to them and they would say the church members were mad, or crazy. Thus they would be driven away instead of led to Christ.

On the other hand, if the unbeliever heard the members prophesying, which means proclaiming the Word of God clearly, he would be convinced and judged of his sins. A great obligation of the church is to make sinners fully realize their sinful condition.

The result would be that the sinner, convinced of his sin, would fall down and worship God and proclaim that God was among them as they carried on their services. It is said that in prophesying the secrets of the heart of the sinner would be made manifest. We should not fail to get the lesson that it is the teaching of the Word of God alone that will bare the hearts of sinners. Much of the teaching in the religious world today is calculated to soothe the consciences of sinners rather than to convict them. When we do such a thing, we aid the progress of the sinner towards Hell. We should never cease to remind sinners of what they are and that they are journeying surely towards a place of eternal punishment.

II. The Order of Gifts, verses 26-33.

When the brethren came together each had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, or an interpretation. It seems the church would be thrown into an uproar by the eagerness of each to exercise his gift. Paul

tells them the right goal was not for each one to show himself off in the exercising of his gift before the company, but rather to edify the members of the assembled group.

Instead of several speaking in tongues at once, they were to speak one at a time, and when two or three had so spoken they were to give way for one to interpret the things that had been spoken. If there were no interpreter present, then they should not speak in tongues at all. It would do no one any good.

The order of prophesying was practically the same as for tongues. Two or three should utter their prophecies, then they should desist until one should explain what they had said. It seems that if one brother were speaking and a revelation came to someone sitting by, the speaker should yield the floor to the one who had the new revelation. (This would be a fine cue for some of our preachers to follow at our general meetings.)

The spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets. That is, they were not driven to speak in a way that would throw the assembly into confusion. Though they had a revelation, they could wait until an opportune time to tell it.

It is true in all times and under all circumstances that God is not the author of confusion but of peace. When we have confusion in the church it is a sure sign the Devil is moving someone or perhaps all who are involved.

III. The Place of Women, verses 34, 35.

The whole discussion in our lesson has to do with the exercising the spiritual gifts in the church. It is a fair conclusion then that it is the exercising of spiritual gifts in which the women were to keep silence.

In this period of grounding the church in doctrines and practice, if the women did not understand what they heard, or if some question in their minds was not answered in the discussions, they were not to enter publicly into the discussion. But they were to wait until they arrived home and ask their husbands there for further enlightenment.

There are two extreme views of the place of women in the church, and an extreme view is rarely the right one. One is that women should not speak under any circumstances in church. The other is that they should have all the liberty of men. Let it be said that woman was made subject to man in the curse in Eden. This rule still holds. The greatest graces of womanhood are modesty, a retiring nature, etc. On the other hand, the very necessity of the situation demands that women speak in church at times.

IV. Giving Deference to Others, verses 36-40.

Verse thirty six intimates a thing hinted elsewhere in the discussion. It is that the Corinthians seemed to think all wisdom and revelation began and ended with themselves. We sometimes have people who fall in love with their own ability and importance even today.

Paul advises them to measure their wisdom and experiences with what he had written to them. He was writing the Word of God under inspiration and his teachings would be safe to follow and to test their ideas by. We need always to measure our conclusions by this same Word of the Lord.

Verse thirty-eight seems to suggest that if there were those who were headstrong and determined in their own worldly wisdom, they should be left alone rather than raising an uproar in the church about it. Of course, this view is to be accepted with some limitations, for there is such a thing as excluding people from the church for heresy.

The sum of the whole thing is that all things are to be done decently and in order. Excesses and extremities of any nature have no part in the workings of a church of our Lord.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What would unbelievers think if they heard only speaking in tongues in church?
2. What would they think if they heard the members prophesying?
3. What would be the effect of prophesying on such unbelievers?
4. What was the goal in exercising the gifts?
5. What was the order for tongues?
6. What was the order for prophesying?
7. What is meant by the spirits of the prophets being subject to the prophets?
8. Is God ever the author of confusion?
9. Under what circumstances were the women to keep silence?
10. How were they to be instructed?
11. Just what is the place of women in church work?
12. What attitude does verse thirty six reveal?
13. What test does Paul suggest to the Corinthians?
14. What principle is involved in verse thirty eight?
15. What is the sum of the whole matter?

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

I Corinthians 15:1-19

INTRODUCTION

We now begin a three lesson's study of one of the very fundamental issues of Christianity, and even of life itself. It is the question of the resurrection of the dead. To people who hear only Baptist teaching it might seem strange that an issue should be raised on this subject, since we confidently believe in a literal bodily resurrection of the dead. But we find even before the New Testament was finished two errors had crept in. The one that prompts the present Scripture discussion is that there is no resurrection of the dead. The other is intimated at II Thessalonians 2:2; namely, that the day of the Lord, or the resurrection, had already come. Despite what Paul says in our lesson material and in the epistle to the Thessalonians, these two related falsehoods from Hell are being prominently taught among religious bodies today.

There is a great so-called liberal movement sweeping the religious world and gaining momentum every day. Its first demand is that we all lay down our peculiar beliefs and practices for the sake of unity and harmony in religion. Of course, the idea is dressed up in beautiful words and ideals, but its underlying purpose is to induce all of us to deny the Bible as the literal truth of God and the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. This movement is one of the surest signs that the day of Antichrist is very near at hand, for the movement is of him. Having undermined the Bible in this general way, the movement goes on to many details. The most vital ones come out in the denial of a literal resurrection. In this introduction, let us start with the resurrection and work back to some other conclusions which we will ultimately reach if we deny the literal bodily resurrection.

Paul says if there is no resurrection, then Christ is not raised from the dead. Our modernist preacher rushes forward with the explanation that there was a resurrection of the beautiful moral teachings of Christ among His followers after He was crucified. This preacher would never say Jesus was literally raised from the dead. The great world historian John Clark Ridpath, a prominent Methodist, leaves Jesus lying dead in Joseph's tomb in his account of the incident.

If Christ was not raised from the dead, then surely there will be no resurrection for us. Modern infidelity has no hope of a bodily resurrection of individuals. This is one of the most amazing deceptions of Antichrist—how he can instill hope into the minds of people when there is no hope. He draws the minds of his victims away from their own personal fate by pointing out the ideal conditions which will exist in the world when the moral conditions arise in all the world which Jesus championed. In the meantime, he seems

to make people forget that they as individuals will have been dead a long time when these ideal conditions are established. There is no hope for them, but there is a vain false hope for the remote generations of the future. Just how Antichrist and his preachers should satisfy multitudes of people with a false and utterly vain thing like this is truly amazing. However this is exactly what he is doing for multitudes in the religious world today.

Working **on** back from where infidelity has started us, having concluded that the Scriptures do not mean what they say about the resurrection, it is easy enough then to arrive at the conclusion Jesus did not die as a willing sacrifice for the world, but that He died a martyr's death because the world was not then ready to embrace His teachings of morality. It is an easy step from this point to the idea that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary, and that He was a son of God simply because He was a better man morally than were His brethren. Thus we have the deity of Christ cleverly cut out of the Bible entirely. The Bible becomes simply the account of religious evolution among the Hebrew people. The world is left without truth except as we find it by human wisdom. Brethren, this is exactly where the religious world is seeking to lead us today. It is no pipe dream; it is the most grim and terrible reality humanity has ever faced.

I. The Gospel, verses 14.

From the technical standpoint, the gospel is the good news. In the broader sense, it is the announcement of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world and what He accomplished for men in His coming and work.

Paul sets forth an order which had been accomplished among the Corinthians by the gospel. The gospel had been preached, they had received it, they were saved by it, and they stood in it.

There is a peculiar expression about their being saved if they kept in memory what had been preached to them and about their possibly having believed in vain. If they kept the details of the gospel in mind they would be saved from such errors as believing there is no resurrection. Perhaps believing in vain means only a surface or historical belief which would not save them in the first place. But the New Testament also says much about being saved from error and consequent judgment after we have been saved in the sense of the new birth.

The famous Bible definition of the gospel is given in verses three and *four*, "*.. how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*" Of course there are thousands of details which hinge around these facts, but this is essentially the gospel: the story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

II. Witnesses of the Resurrection, verses 5-8.

The Gospels do not tell us definitely about Jesus in the resurrection being seen by Cephas alone. It is to be understood that Cephas, Simon and

Peter are all the same man. In Luke 24:34 we read that He was seen of Simon, but we are not told just when, unless it was when Peter and John ran to the tomb early on Sunday morning.

On the night of the day of the resurrection Jesus appeared to all the apostles except Thomas, John 20:19-24. Eight days later He was seen by all the apostles, John 20:26. On one occasion He was seen by more than 500 brethren at once.

It seems the gospels do not mention this appearance specifically. Probably it was the appearance described at John 20:19-23. No sinners saw Jesus in His resurrection body.

Paul did not become a disciple until some time after the resurrection of Jesus. Paul was saved under rather peculiar circumstances on the road to Damascus. It was here that he saw the Lord. He speaks of his being born out of due season. This means a premature birth. Perhaps the salvation of Paul is a type of the birth of the nation Israel at the second coming of Christ. His premature birth refers to his being born in the manner of his Israelite brethren, but a long time earlier than they.

III. The Testimony of Paul, verses 9-11.

Paul was unworthy to be called an apostle because he had persecuted the church of God before he was saved. It is a bad thing to persecute anyone, but it is an especially fearful thing to persecute the special people of God. Paul tells us in another place that he received mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. It is a far more serious offence to sin wilfully than it is to sin ignorantly.

As he looked back upon his life of unbelief and opposition to the cause of Christ, Paul was made to realize in a vital way how far the grace of God had gone to bring him to the place where he was at the time of the letter to the Corinthian church. But can we not all look back upon our past and see how abundant the grace of God toward us has been?

Paul became the greatest apostle because he labored more abundantly than any of the others. Hard work is the most important ingredient in success to anyone in any endeavor. But he hastens to add that the grace of God was with him, reminding us that we cannot do anything in the cause without this help from the Lord, Phil 2:13.

IV. The Issue Involved, verses 12-19.

It is amazing that even before the end of the apostolic age some were denying the doctrine of the resurrection. This makes it easier for us to see how so many are doing the same thing today, though we have an open Bible accessible to all.

If the dead do not rise, then Christ did not rise from the dead. If He did not rise, then the Bible practices a deception when it insists time and again that He did rise. If we cannot believe the Bible in this matter we cannot

believe it in anything. Do not let modernists deceive us on this matter.

If Christ is not risen, then our faith is a vain thing, for it looks forward entirely for better things in a future life. There is no hope of such in the present world.

If Christ did not rise, then the dead are perished. We should never hope to see those who are dead again. Modern religion offers no hope whatever in this matter. All it promises is better conditions in the world long after we are all dead.

To believe the Bible we must believe in a literal bodily resurrection. If we take this part of it as figurative, then we may by the same token reckon all the rest of it to be figurative and we are left without any source of ultimate truth. We become the victims of the faulty wisdom of men.

The social gospel denies all the essential facts about Christ and makes Him simply a good man who died a long time ago. He is dead forever so far as this gospel is concerned. Likewise when we are dead we are dead forever, and all we can hope for is what we can get out of life the little time we shall remain here. Are you surprised that so many people should believe a thing like that?

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What does the word "gospel" mean?
2. What experiences had the Corinthians had with the gospel?
3. Name two ways in which we are saved.
4. What is the gospel?
5. When was Jesus seen by Cephas?
6. When was He seen by the eleven?
7. How many people saw Jesus after the resurrection?
8. Explain Paul's being born out of due season.
9. Why was Paul unworthy to be called an apostle?
10. By what principle did he become an apostle?
11. How did he become the greatest apostle?
12. What claim were some making?
13. What about Christ if there were no resurrection?
14. What does our faith amount to if there is no resurrection?
15. How are the dead perished if there is no resurrection?
16. Do you believe in a literal body resurrection?
17. Is there any hope in the social gospel?
18. Do you believe the world is being prepared for Antichrist?

OUR RESURRECTION

I Corinthians 15:20-38

INTRODUCTION

Let us try to fix in our minds the order of the resurrection. In former times there grew up the idea of one general resurrection and judgment. In the light of the Scriptures it is somewhat of a puzzle as to why such an idea should have prevailed. It is likely however, that teachers did not feel capable of discussing the different phases of the resurrection and they passed over the whole matter as though there were to be one general resurrection.

First, there is the resurrection of Christ. This took place three days after His death on the Cross. Matthew 27:52-53 tells about many sleeping saints who came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus. The Bible nowhere tells us what became of these. Perhaps they went into Heaven along with Jesus as a firstfruits of the resurrection. This would prove that Christ could raise not only Himself, but the dead saints also.

The next phase of the resurrection is commonly called the first resurrection. According to Revelation 20:5 it takes place somewhere near the beginning of the Millennium. I Thessalonians 4:15-17 describes this resurrection and represents that all the dead and living saints will be in it. The living saints will be translated at the same instant the dead saints are raised in glory. It seems peculiar that Revelation nowhere seems to tell us definitely when this event occurs with reference to other Tribulation events. Many Baptists believe this first resurrection takes place at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. I believe it will be in the middle of the Tribulation period. This belief is founded on Daniel 9:27 compared with II Thessalonians 2:3-8 and several related pictures to be found in Revelation. The argument is this: the church is the one which is withstanding the man of sin; when the church is gone the man of sin is revealed as the son of perdition; Daniel tells us he is so revealed in the middle of the Tribulation week. Anyway, the resurrection of the saints takes place somewhere in the time relative to the Great Tribulation and near the beginning of the Millennium.

It is peculiar that Paul does not mention the resurrection of sinners in our present lesson. At least he does not mention it specifically, but he does seem to refer to it in the conquering of death. However, Revelation 20:5 tells us the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were expired, and Revelation 20:11-15 tells about the resurrection, judgment, and consignment of sinners to the lake of fire. This evidently is at the end of the Millennium. Thus there is a lapse of at least a thousand years between the resurrection of the saved and the unsaved.

There is still the matter of the people who are born, live, and perhaps die between these two resurrections. The Scriptures appear to tell us very little about them. Of course, the sinners who die in this period will be raised along with all other sinners at the end of the Millennium. But what about the multitudes who will evidently be saved during the Millennium? The following is merely a suggestion. The Septuagint version of Isaiah 65:20 says this: *"There shall not by any means be any more a baby born dead, nor an old man who shall not fulfill his time: for he shall be a youth at a hundred years of age, but the sinner shall die at a hundred years of age and be accursed"* Let everyone remember this is not from the inspired Hebrew original, but from a Greek translation. The Hebrew could be construed as the Greek plainly gives it. If so, then this is a perfect explanation of what will happen in the Millennium. There will be no babies born dead, for the principle of righteousness instead of sin is reigning. A righteous man will not die before his time for the same reason. He will still be a youth when he is a hundred years of age. It does not say what then becomes of him, but the implication is that he is translated into a glorified body. The sinner dies when he is a hundred years of age and is accursed. He awaits the second resurrection and the White Throne Judgment and consignment to the Lake of Fire.

These make four phases of the resurrection, all of which we must follow if we consider all that the Scriptures say concerning them.

I. The Resurrection of the Saved, verses 20-23.

Christ is called the firstfruits of the resurrection because He was the first to rise from the dead and the resurrection of all others is dependent on his resurrection. Others who came out of the graves after his resurrection may constitute a part of the first fruits.

Adam, the first man, was made the lord of the creation and the federal head of the race. By virtue of this position, whatever choice he made for himself was made also for all his race. Thus he brought in sin and death as the heritage of all men. Eve has not responsible for this condition.

As Adam brought death to all, the second man, Christ, brought resurrection to all. In addition, he brings eternal spiritual life to all who believe.

Only Christ and the saved at His coming are mentioned here, but we learn elsewhere of some who arose after the resurrection of Jesus. Also, there are those who will be saved during the Millennium. Probably they will be translated at some time during the Millennium.

II. The Millennium, verses 24-28.

Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father at the end of the thousand years reign. The Millennium is the period of His triumph and final conquest of sin and the Devil. He will finally bruise the head of the serpent

during this period; see Gen 3:15.

It seems that death, the last enemy to be destroyed, will prevail among sinners during the Millennium. At the end of this period, death and hades are cast into the Lake of Fire; Revelation 20:14.

All things were put under Christ during His personal ministry in the world, see John 5:22, but His actual triumph will begin with the first resurrection and the Millennial reign.

The eternal Son of God will not take a secondary place in the heaven ages as verse twenty-eight might seem to imply. It means the separate works of the Father and the Son will have been finished and they will come into unity of labors as they have been in unity of purpose from eternity.

III. Baptized for the Dead, verses 29-34.

Verse twenty-nine means that people are baptized with reference to the fact of death. Death and resurrection are pictured in baptism. Certainly no one is baptized to save those who are already dead; nor is it to save the living for that matter. Baptism pictures the death and resurrection of Christ, our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, and our hope of the bodily resurrection in the future. This latter is what Paul is talking about. It would be ridiculous to picture resurrection in baptism if there were no resurrection. This is the full force of his argument here.

Paul died daily in denying the things of the world and the flesh and risking his very life for the cause of Christ. He did it because of his hope of the resurrection.

In the arenas, men fought against wild beasts. If the man won he gained both life and freedom. Therefore, he fought with all his might. Paul simply uses this figure to express how he had fought with all his might for the cause of Christ.

Verse thirty-three is a scathing rebuke for listening to irresponsible babbling about what misguided men thought about the resurrection. Verse thirty-four is the interpretation of it.

IV. Resurrection Bodies, verses 35-38.

The Corinthians were making the same mistake about the resurrection as the Sadducees made; see Luke 20:27-36. They all knew that an apparently dead seed was planted and that a living, growing plant came forth from it. The seed is destroyed in the producing of the living plant; even so the old body does not come forth in the form in which it died, but it comes forth in a new body which God is pleased to give to it.

Jesus came forth from the grave in a body of flesh and bones, not flesh and blood; see Luke 24; 39. The life of the flesh is blood; see Deuteronomy 12:23. It is suggested that not only is the Holy Spirit the power of resurrection, Romans 8:11, but that it takes the place of blood as the life principle in resurrected bodies. Thus, in resurrection we shall have bodies

that are fully motivated and dominated by Spirit power. This is why the limitations to which we are now subject are to be removed. The Spirit is not bound by limitations of time and space, and bodies which live under Spirit power likewise are not to be bound by such limitations. This is how Jesus could float upward through the air in His body of flesh and bones when He went to Heaven. People will maintain their identity and personality after the resurrection, but this is about as far as we can go on the matter since we are incapable of understanding the details of heavenly things as yet.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What are the firstfruits of resurrection?
2. How did Adam bring death to all?
3. How does Christ bring resurrection to all?
4. What is the order of resurrection of the righteous?
5. When will Christ deliver the kingdom to the Father?
6. When will death be destroyed?
7. Will Christ have an inferior place in heaven?
8. What does "baptized for the dead" mean?
9. How did Paul die daily?
10. How did he fight as with wild beasts?
11. What kind of bodies will we have in resurrection?
12. Will our spiritual bodies conform to our ideas about ghosts?

REVEALED MYSTERIES

I Corinthians 15:39-58

INTRODUCTION

This concludes a three lesson study of the resurrection. The first dealt primarily with the resurrection of Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ was the gospel which had been preached to the Corinthians and by which they had been saved; yet some were denying there was any resurrection of the dead.

The second concerned the resurrection of the saved, called the first resurrection. Paul argues that death came by man, therefore resurrection should come by man also. There would not have been any death had Adam not transgressed the law of God. Then man—Christ—came upon the scene and accomplished resurrection for Himself and all men. He makes resurrection just as logical and necessary as is death. He carries them back again to the gospel which had been preached to them at first and asks them why they were baptized if they did not believe in resurrection. This lesson devotes itself mainly to illustrations of the nature of resurrected bodies.

Here we get an amazing insight into the frailty and fickleness of the human mind. They had gone back to the doubtful thinking of the world, and the resurrection had become a thing beyond belief to them. This is amazing until we look at ourselves and ask ourselves just how much of a reality the resurrection and Heaven are to us in our everyday affairs.

The deceptions of a sinful world are a mighty force in our thinking, whether we are saved or not. A man has the universal testimony of death, but he has no tangible evidence of resurrection. Therefore he comes to doubt its being a fact. The resurrection is perfectly logical as Paul brings out in the lesson, but many minds rebel at this idea and prefer to believe in annihilation.

Men in general have believed in a life after death. It has been individuals of perverted thinking who have denied a living God and a future life. Idolatry never started as the worship of images, but images have been the result of an effort to lay hold of the unseen God. It then degenerates into the worship of stone. Such degeneration of thought is how the Corinthians had come to deny the resurrection. By the same token, this is why we have so many perverted ideas of the resurrection today. Some things are best received by faith.

I. The Resurrection Illustrated, verses 39-44.

Verse thirty-five presents the question of how the dead are raised up and what kind of bodies they will have. Paul begins by illustrating

resurrection bodies. He says there are four manners of flesh. They are the flesh of men, of beasts, of fishes, and of birds. Of course anyone can see there is a wide difference among these kinds of flesh. These are given to make ready for the presenting of different kinds of resurrection bodies.

From the Greek text of the New Testament, the celestial bodies are heavenly bodies, or bodies of a heavenly nature. The terrestrial bodies are earthly bodies. These illustrations are not given so much to show distinction among resurrection bodies as bodies in the world.

The next illustration is from the sun, moon, and stars. They are called heavenly bodies in the sense that they are in the physical heavens. The first is the region of atmosphere about the earth. The second heaven is the region of the sun, moon, and stars. The third heaven is the abode of God. Of these bodies in the second heaven, the sun has the greatest glory or brilliance of light. The moon is second. Then there are bright stars and dim stars. So there are really four orders of glory in these bodies.

Bodies of men are buried in a condition which is subject to death; they are raised in a state which is not subject to death or decay. It is sown, or dies, subject to the limitations of the present world; it is raised free from the limitations of the sin cursed world. It has been previously suggested that resurrection bodies live by Spirit power instead of by flowing blood.

II. Contrast of the Two Adams, verses 45-50.

Adam was made a living soul when he was created. He was not subject to death until he became a sinner. We have natural life before we receive spiritual life in the new birth. This was true of Adam also in his creation. God created him a natural man, but meant for him to choose spiritual life in Christ. Possibly he could have received it then from the Tree of Life.

Paul takes the above facts and proves by analogy that as we have had the natural life we received from Adam, so also shall we have the glorious spiritual life which is received from the second Adam, Christ.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. This means the kingdom in its final form, Heaven. But the kingdom is in the world now operating in a partial way among the saints of God. It is spiritual now, but it will dominate the physical world in the final Heaven age.

III. The Change of Living Saints, verses 51-53.

In verse fifty-one sleep means the death of saints. Many times it is said of the patriarchs of Israel that they slept with their fathers when they died.

This shows beyond a doubt that the Bible teaches a literal bodily resurrection of the dead.

The dead and the living saints are the ones affected by the first resurrection. The dead are raised and the living are changed in an instant of time.

Mortality means dying or subject to death. We are really dying every moment we live in the world. Immortality means undying or not subject to death.

IV. Victory Over Death, verses 54-58.

We are taught in verse fifty-four that death is swallowed up in victory for the saved at the first resurrection. From that instant forever the saved will not be subject to any of the ravages of sin at all.

The first resurrection will evidently not be the end of death in the world, however, for people will go on being born throughout the Millennium, and the sinners among them will die as people do now. Perhaps those saved during the Millennium will be translated instead of dying.

Sin is the sting that produces death. When we are completely released from sin in the resurrection, there will be nothing in us to produce death and there will be nothing in us to be touched by sin. The law is the strength, or active power, of sin because it pronounces judgment on sin and sinners. Paul also says the law suggests the idea of sinning to people in that it names and condemns sin.

Victory comes through Jesus Christ, the only man who lived in the world without being overcome by sin in any detail.

Since victory over death comes entirely through Christ, it is logical to believe the works of man do not aid at all in the matter of the resurrection. The works of men bring a better resurrection in regard to reward, but they do not bring the resurrection itself.

Our labor in the Lord is not in vain because of the glorious resurrection which he shall give us in due time. It may be that our lot is a hard one in life, but life lasts a very brief time; then comes the resurrection to immortality and eternal life. Surely we can labor faithfully and courageously during the little time we are to remain here.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What are the kinds of flesh?
2. What are celestial and terrestrial bodies?
3. Name the degrees of glory in the heavenly bodies.
4. Will some have a better resurrection than others?
5. What changes come about in resurrected bodies?
6. What is the difference between a living soul and a quickening spirit?
7. Name situations in which the natural comes before the spiritual.
8. Is the kingdom of God in the world now?

9. What *two* groups are affected by the first resurrection?
10. What do mortality and immortality mean?
11. When is death swallowed up in victory?
12. Is this victory the end of death?
13. Through whom does victory come?
14. Can men in any way aid in this victory?
15. Why is labor in the Lord not in vain?

AN OPEN DOOR

I Corinthians 16:1-24

INTRODUCTION

One thing that has become evident many times in the course of this study is that Paul takes a highly practical view of things, as opposed to something utopian and unworkable. For instance, he advised Christians to eat meat dedicated to idols if it would not offend the conscience of onlookers; but if it would offend any they would refrain from so eating. He showed how it would be better for the servant of the Lord if he would remain unmarried, but if it would lead him into temptation he should marry. Christianity is one of the most practical and common-sense endeavors in the world as it is presented in the teachings and practices of the apostles.

Let us note some facts about cooperation presented in this chapter. It is freely recognized and admitted that Paul was an inspired apostle, which none of us are today. He met and dealt with the practical questions of his day, and someone must do the same in our day. Who is to deal with these practical matters, and how much liberty is to be taken where the Scriptures do not speak specifically?

Paul did not believe nor practice what is commonly called isolationism. If one church will send out one or more missionaries and fully supervise and support these missionaries herself, then it is easy enough to stay within the bounds of the New Testament. But the question immediately arises as to whether this church is doing her part to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. The answer is evidently no. A few churches closely grouped together can work together without elaborate machinery to carry on the cooperation. But here is the question which no isolationist seems to be able to answer with any assurance: if and when your project grows to any size, how are you going to avoid the cooperative difficulties all Baptists have met in the past under similar circumstances? If this question is persistently pressed, the isolationist leader will get around to admitting that with himself in the lead devices of cooperation will not be abused as they have been in the hands of others. In other words, he is something very special in the way of leadership.

If I may speak personally for once, I would rather risk the years of experience of the American Baptist Association and the many experienced, seasoned, and honest men, who give counsel on a basis of equality, than to risk any new "Moses" who has lately arisen to lead Israel out of the wilderness. Good men have been driven into positions of dictatorship in this way, and others have accepted positions of dictatorship because they thought they were justified in holding such position by virtue of their wisdom and integrity.

Paul recommends a number of preachers to a number of churches. He certainly does not present the churches as standing in isolation from one another, but as having fellowship and cooperation together. If preachers needed to be recommended to churches then by men who knew them, the same need exists today. There are no inspired apostles today, but there are brethren who are known and trusted who may meet together and counsel together and give out information to the churches and recommend ministering brethren to the churches for their cooperation and support. That is exactly what the American Baptist Association seeks to do—no more, no less. The one who strains at the gnat in this system is likely to find himself swallowing a camel in some other system not so well founded.

I. The Collection for the Saints, verses 14.

The collection mentioned in verse one was for the saints at Jerusalem. There had come a mighty famine in the land of Judea and the churches in various places were sending relief to the brethren at Jerusalem. We have references to this situation in the eleventh chapter of Acts and the eighth and ninth chapters of II Corinthians.

The church members were to contribute on the basis of how God had prospered them. Included in the law of Moses was the tithe law which required the tenth of the income of the Israelites to be used for the Levites and other religious purposes. Under this new system the individual is to determine the percentage of income contributed. A man is to give as he is able and as he is willing. The amount is to be laid by on the first day of the week, Sunday.

The Corinthian church was to determine who should carry their offering to Jerusalem. No one has a right to administer the offerings of a church except one approved by the church.

Paul signifies his willingness to go on this mission to Jerusalem if it seemed expedient for him to do so. Acts 11:30 tells us that both Paul and Barnabas did go on this mission.

II. Desire for Fellowship, verses 5-7.

Paul wrote this epistle from Ephesus in Asia Minor. Corinth was in Greece on the continent of Europe. He would visit Corinth when he should cross over to Europe after remaining in Ephesus until Pentecost.

Paul expresses the desire to spend the winter with the Corinthian church. Then they should bring him on his journey wherever he might go. This simply means they would furnish the financial assistance he would need. Remember that Paul evidently was not a member of the church at Corinth, but he was asking financial support from them. This is Scriptural cooperation.

He would stay at Corinth through the winter. **Elsewhere he tells us such**

visits were for the purpose of fellowship, strengthening the brethren, and being strengthened by them. Paul was not an isolationist.

III. The Open Door, verses 8, 9.

In the nineteenth chapter of Acts we have the account of the founding of the church at Ephesus. We gain the idea that the brethren there were steadfast and true at the time the church was planted. It was a thriving city, and this seems to be the nature of the open door there.

The nineteenth chapter of Acts also tells us about the great uproar which was raised by the silversmiths at Ephesus because Paul and his companions were destroying their business by teaching against the worship of idols. These silversmiths made their living by making and selling idols. They sought to kill Paul, and it is doubtlessly the conflict with them that he describes as fighting with the wild beasts at Ephesus. Certainly it was as perilous as actually fighting against wild beasts in the arenas.

IV. Fellowship among the Brethren, verses 10-25.

Besides Paul, there were five preachers recommended as worthy to the church at Corinth. They were Timothy, Apollos, Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus. According to Paul they were worthy to preach to the Corinthian church and they were worthy of their prayers and financial support as they labored elsewhere. This is co-operation in the preaching of the gospel.

The churches definitely mentioned are one in Achaia, the churches of Asia, and the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. This is communion and fellowship and co-operation in the gospel among churches situated in both Europe and Asia.

According to the thirteenth chapter of Acts, missionaries should originate in a church. In Paul's day there were some preachers whom he recommended, as in this lesson, and there were other preachers whom he condemned or refused to recommend to the brethren.

It is believed that anyone who wishes to leave off unworkable theories and follow the common sense pattern of the New Testament can find abundant authority for associated work in this chapter as well as elsewhere in the Scriptures.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What collection is meant in verse one?
2. On what basis should one contribute to the cause?
3. Who would carry the Corinth contribution to Jerusalem?
4. How would Corinth bring Paul on his journey?
5. Where was Paul at the time of this writing?
6. Describe the adversaries at Ephesus.

7. What collection is meant in verse one?
8. On what basis should one contribute to the cause?
9. Who would carry the Corinth contribution to Jerusalem?
10. How would Corinth bring Paul on his journey?
11. Where was Paul at the time of this writing?
12. Describe the adversaries at Ephesus.
13. How many traveling preachers are mentioned?
14. How many churches were communicating with one another?
15. Did Paul have any right to recommend churches and preachers to one another?

