

1 CORINTHIANS

1 CORINTHIANS 1-4 — THE CAUSE AND CURE OF DISPUTES

This epistle was written by Paul probably during the latter part of his long visit to Ephesus, and it will add interest to its study to re-read ~~<480>~~Acts 18-20, which speak of his visit to both cities, Ephesus and Corinth. The occasion for its writing, as given in ~~<4011>~~1 Corinthians 1:11 and 7:1, was a visit to Paul of a member "of the house of Chloe," who brought a written communication to him as well as verbal reports of conditions in the church. These conditions were not good, as indicated in their party divisions (chaps. 1-4), their tolerance of gross immorality (chaps. 5-6), their erroneous views in regard to marriage (chap. 7), their abuse of Christian liberty (chaps. 8-10), their disorderly conduct in the assemblies of worship (chaps. 11-14) and their false teaching touching the resurrection of the dead.

Indeed, as one carefully reads the epistle he wonders how such people could be Christians at all, until he recalls the distinction, made clear in the New Testament, between the believer's legal standing before God in Christ, and his actual walk or experience in it. As we saw in Romans, the moment one believes on Christ, he becomes justified from all sin, i.e., the condemnatory guilt of it is removed, he receives a righteousness from God which perfectly satisfies God, and he is adopted into the Divine family. But now the work of grace begins in Him by the Holy Spirit, in distinction from the work of grace wrought for him by Christ on the cross, and in the measure in which he comes to know the will of God through His Word, and yields himself thereto, he becomes more and more conformed to the image of Christ. These Corinthians may have been in Christ, but they were walking inconsistently, and the purpose of this epistle is to set them right, and to set us right through them.

FALSE DIVISIONS, FALSE TEACHERS, AND GOSPEL TRUTH (CHAPS. 1-3)

After the salutation (1:1-3) and the thanksgiving on their behalf (vv. 4-9), the apostle enters into the difficulty of their party divisions. Some were Paulinians, some Apollonians, some Cephasites, and some, perhaps the most contentious of all, Christites. Paul was innocent of fomenting these discords (vv. 14-17), and so doubtless had been Apollos and Cephas, but the root of the matter lay in the false intellectualism of the Corinthians. They were Greeks for the most part, and the Greeks gloried in human philosophy and worldly wisdom. Applying those principles to the teaching of Christianity had made all the trouble.

In meeting the situation, Paul shows in three ways that the Gospel is not human wisdom (1:18-3:4):

(1) by the mystery of the cross, which "is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, the power of God." "The wisdom of the wise" had been unable to save men in the past, but the preaching of the cross had effectually accomplished it (vv. 18-25);

(2) by the elements composing the church, which were not for the most part the worldly-wise and great, but the opposite. God had made Christ to be unto them wisdom however, in the sense that He had become their righteousness, and sanctification and redemption (vv. 26-31);

(3) by the apostle's own example, who had not appealed to their intellectualism, but had simply preached Christ crucified (2:1-5). This last point must be guarded though, as there was danger of men esteeming the gospel to be destitute of wisdom of any kind; and

(4) it is therefore shown to be the wisdom of God (v. 7); which only the Spirit of God could reveal to men (vv. 8-11), but which had been revealed to Paul, and was being revealed through him to others (vv. 12-13). Only the spiritually enlightened however, were capable of receiving it (2:13-3:4).

In the verses last indicated, Paul speaks of three classes of men, the "natural," the "spiritual" and the "carnal." The first is man considered as fallen and unsaved; the second, as he who is saved and, being filled with the Spirit, is walking in fellowship with God; the third is saved, but still walking "after the flesh," a "babe" in Christ.

But the Corinthians had not only a false view of the Gospel, confounding it with human wisdom, but also a false view of their Christian teachers which had contributed to their divisions. Paul deals with this beginning at 3:5-4:2:

(1) Christian teaches are simply ministers (3:5-11), whose reward depends on their faithfulness (vv. 12-15); and

(2) the church should not glory in them, for out of Christ their wisdom is foolishness, and in Christ, they are all alike the possession of the whole church (3:16-4:2). In connection with the reference to rewards (3:14-15), remember that the subject applies only to those who are already saved by grace, and it is grace to which any saved soul is indebted for reward.

These divisions somehow involved a question of Paul's apostolic authority, and to its defense he applies himself to the end of the lesson:

(1) all human estimates of men are inadequate, and for a just judgment we must await the Lord's second coming (4:3-5). Another calls attention here to the interesting point that four standards of judgment are referred to, those of our friends, the world, ourselves, and the Lord. Our own judgment is not to be depended upon absolutely, any more than that of other people;

(2) the question of his authority had arisen out of the vanity of their hearts (vv. 6-8). They were "puffed up" and vainglorious now that he was absent from them, and having begun to apply their worldly wisdom to the Gospel, they felt that they could get along without him, and boasted to it. They felt themselves to be "full" and "rich," and reigning "as kings" without him. There is irony, and yet an earnest longing in the words, "I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you," his allusion being to the second coming of Christ;

(3) the apostles, himself doubtless being chiefly in mind, were objects of contempt and suffering to the world both of angels and of men (vv. 9-13) — a testimony that other intelligences than ourselves, both good and evil doubtless, are interesting in the working out of God's purpose of redemption through His church; and

(4) His motive in thus writing was to warn them as his children in Christ, for which reason he was soon to send Timothy to them and

would ultimately visit them himself again. Upon their reception of this admonition would depend whether he would come to them "with a rod, or in love and the spirit of meekness."

QUESTIONS

1. What is the theme of this lesson?
2. When and where was this epistle written by Paul?
3. What was its occasion?
4. Describe conditions in this church?
5. Harmonize these conditions with the Christian profession.
6. In what did the root of their party divisions lie?
7. In what three ways does the apostle meet the situation?
8. How is the third point guarded?
9. Discriminate among the three classes of men.
10. What further had contributed to these party divisions?
11. In what two ways is this met?
12. How does Paul defend his apostolic authority?

1 CORINTHIANS 5-6 — SANCTITY OF THE HUMAN BODY

One of the demoralizing things reported to Paul was the incest dealt with in chapter 5, and aggravated by the fact that the church instead of excommunicating the offender had become "puffed up" over it! His was an illustration of what their worldly wisdom in the Gospel had resulted in (vv. 1-2). Paul had already "judged" this person and directed the church to come together and solemnly deliver him "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This means

- (1) that Satan is an executioner of Divine punishment upon the saints in the present time, the saints who live in disobedience;
- (2) that the church, considered as the body of Christ, has the authority to deliver such an one into his hands for that purpose;

(3) that the punishment is limited to the flesh, the human body, and can not touch the soul; and

(4) that the object is to affect the soul indirectly, by bringing the disobedient to repentance, confession, and the experience of that spiritual cleansing which will be the means of keeping him saved "in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ" (see [Luke 13:16](#); [2 Corinthians 12:7](#); [1 Timothy 1:20](#)). In other words, the punishment is the means of grace necessary to retain such a saint in the fellowship of God (vv. 3-5). Note "destruction" in verse 5, which is the Greek word used in [1 Thessalonians 5:3](#), [2 Thessalonians 1:9](#), [1 Timothy 6:9](#), etc., and does not mean annihilation. The bearing of this is important on the subject of the future retribution of the wicked.

But before leaving the case of incest note the warning (vv. 6-7), the exhortation (v. 8), and the added instruction (vv. 9-13). To permit sin to remain in the church unrebuked would mean the spread of it. The church was "unleavened" in that all who truly belonged to it had their guilt purged away by the sacrifice of Christ, therefore let them see to it that what was true of their legal standing before God, become true in actual experience. Paul had written them an earlier epistle of which we have no further record, but in which he had warned them not to keep "company with fornicators." This did not mean that they could shun such in the necessary business of the world, but that they must do so in the fellowship of the church. They were not expected to act as judge in regard to the people of the world, but it was their duty to do so in the church, hence the excommunication of this "wicked person" was demanded.

The allusion to "judging" brings up the question of lawsuits in chapter 6. Saints should not bring their disputes before the world's courts because of the incongruity of it (vv. 2-4). The language gives a most exalted conception to the dignity of the church when she shall be reigning with Christ in the ages to come. During the time being however, could they not find men among them competent to judge between their brethren? And if not, were it not better to suffer wrong?

There is ground for thinking that the law suit eliciting this rebuke, was linked in some way with the incest under consideration, as Paul now returns to the subject of the sanctity of the human body. The body is holy,

(1) because in the sight of God it is washed, sanctified and justified. Therefore, while certain liberty in the use of it might be allowable to a Christian, it were inexpedient to press that liberty for the reason (as in Romans 14), that it would bring him under the power of carnality (vv. 9-12). But the body is holy,

(2) because it is the Lord's. The worldly-minded Greeks considered the law of adjustment as settling the matter. Meats were for the belly, and so the belly must have been made for meats, on which principle they would justify the gratification of any bodily passion. But meats and the physical organ to receive and assimilate them were temporary and would be destroyed, while the body in its essentiality would be raised from the dead. This was true because our bodies are the members of Christ who was raised from the dead. How could we employ the body in fornication under such circumstances (vv. 13-18)? Finally, the body is holy,

(3) because it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, for which reason, and because we "are bought with a price" we are to glorify God in our body (vv. 19-20). It is not the seventh commandment which the apostle invokes in this case, but the sacredness of the believer's new relationship to Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the sin dealt with in this lesson?
2. What is the teaching of verses 5:4-5?
3. What may be learned from the use of "destruction" in 5:5?
4. What is the meaning of "unleavened"?
5. What allusion shows the great dignity of the church?
6. Of what three grounds is the body holy?
7. What is the meaning of chapter 6:13?

1 CORINTHIANS 7 — THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

It seems a strange inconsistency that a church "puffed up" over an incestuous person in their midst, should have scruples about the lawful

marriage of a Christian, but such seems to have been the case. Paul yields the point on which some insisted, that it was desirable for a Christian man to remain single (v. 1), at least at that period and in those circumstances, provided he could do so without sin. But as the temptation in that case would be strong, he advised marriage (v. 2), and also that married persons should live together as becometh the conjugal relationship (vv. 3-4). Exceptions to this for religious reasons, should be but temporary, lest the same temptation should overtake them as the unmarried (v. 5). By this however, he meant not to command them to marry, but to assure them as Christians of permission to do so (v. 6). He himself was unmarried, but all men did not have the same gift of control in that particular as he (v. 7), hence the advice following (vv. 8-9).

SEPARATION OR DIVORCE

From the general subject of marriage, he proceeds to that of separation or divorce as between two parties who are believers, which he forbids (vv. 10-11). As he quotes our Lord in this instance he doubtless has in mind ~~4082~~ Matthew 5:32, which makes the one exception of adultery. He next touches the question where one is a believer and the other an unbeliever (vv. 12-16). Here he is himself speaking because the particular aspect of the subject is one on which our Lord had not expressed himself while in the flesh. This shows that he places his own words on the same level of authority as those of our Lord, thus making the strongest claim of inspiration for them. Two such persons, he teaches, were not to separate simply for religious reasons. If a pagan wife wished to remain with her husband who had become converted to Christianity, he was not to divorce her. And if a pagan husband wished to remain with his wife after she had become converted she was not to leave him. The unbelieving partner in either case would be "sanctified" by the other in the sense, that the other might continue in the relationship without impairing his or her sanctification (compare ~~5005~~ 1 Timothy 4:5). The clause, "else were your children unclean" is difficult, but may mean that such children were by the faith of the Christian parent brought into a nearer relationship to God than otherwise. Remember that this was when marriage was contracted before either husband or wife was converted. Christians are forbidden to contract such marriages. (Compare verse 39 with ~~4764~~ 2 Corinthians 6:14).

Continuing the theme, the apostle says, if the unbelieving partner departs let him or her depart: "a brother or sister is not under bondage in such

cases." His meaning is again doubtful. Not under bondage to renounce the Christian faith, or not under bondage to remain unmarried, which? Both views have advocates, but the latter is to be accepted with caution and with the understanding that human courts have rights in the case which Christians are bound to respect (compare Romans 14). The interpretation of verse 16 depends somewhat on the accent in reading it. If emphasis be laid on "save," it is a plea to hold on to the unbelieving partner as long as possible in the hope that he or she may be saved. If it be laid on "knowest," it is to relieve the mind of the Christian partner from an undue anxiety in the premises.

From the separation of married couples on religious grounds, the apostle digresses to speak of separation in other relationships for the same reason, apply it to Jews and Gentiles (vv. 18-19), and to bondmen and freemen (vv. 20-24). The idea is that Christianity interferes only indirectly with existing institutions. It makes men free in but not from the responsibilities of their present positions, where those positions are not in themselves sinful. It teaches us to be indifferent in a sense to our external relations.

CELIBACY

Celibacy is the theme of verses 25-35, which the apostle opens by saying he is giving his own a "judgment" or "opinion," having received "no commandment from the Lord." This means that the Holy Spirit has granted him no revelation or instruction on this particular point, which, while it qualifies the authority by which he speaks on it, does not qualify his inspiration. In other words, he is as truly inspired to say that he is simply giving his own opinion as he is inspired to say anything else. This has an important bearing on the whole question of inspiration, and is an assurance that where the apostle does not state to the contrary, he is always giving us the mind of the Holy Spirit. On general terms he would recommend celibacy because of the "present distress," i.e., the persecution and affliction being experienced by the church (vv. 25-27). While to marry was not sin for either sex, yet he would spare them in the trouble just ahead, and which would bear harder upon the married than the unmarried (v. 28). In this light the verses following are to be interpreted (vv. 29-35).

But as verse 36 he is referring to a Christian father's responsibility as to the marriage of his virgin daughter. It was humiliation in a Greek household for such to "pass the flower of her age" unmarried, and if a father felt the

need of doing so he might give her in marriage without incurring sin in so doing. Nevertheless, if he acts in the opposite way he is also doing well, or better (vv. 37-38).

The second marriage of widows is the last subject (vv. 39-40), where the important clause is added that they are to marry "only in the Lord" — Christians are at liberty only to marry Christians. Paul's opponents in Corinth who held a different view of this matter, claimed to be acting by the Spirit of God, hence the irony of the closing remark, which is an irrefutable testimony to the authority with which he spoke, "I think that I also have the Spirit of God" (RV).

To avoid misunderstanding, it should be said that we have not here the whole of the apostle's views on marriage, much less the whole of the New Testament teaching about it, but only so much as connects itself with the questions put to him at this time.

QUESTIONS

1. What is here taught about marriage and the conjugal relation?
2. What strong claim of inspiration is here made?
3. What explanation of verse 14 is suggested?
4. What of verse 15?
5. How would you read verse 16?
6. What is here taught concerning the relations of Christianity to existing institutions?
7. Why does the apostle advise celibacy?
8. How would you explain verse 36?

1 CORINTHIANS 8-10 — CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND ITS ABUSE

The Christian church was composed largely of Gentiles, who, when they were pagans, worshipped idols, with animal sacrifices and feasts in the idols' temples. Having become Christians, their practices were discontinued, though pagan neighbors might occasionally invite them, in a social way, to join in such feasts. The question had arisen as to their

Christian liberty to accept such invitations. A "liberal" party in the church not only favored it, but indeed regarded the acceptance of such invitations as necessary to testify their freedom in Christ. There is no such thing as an idol, said they, and hence Christians are as much at liberty to eat meat offered in sacrifice to idols as any other meat, and in an idols' temple as well as any other place.

In reply, Paul admits the fact and the inference arising from it (8:4-6). They were at liberty to eat this meat and in an idol's temple, provided they had only themselves to consider. But there was their weak Christian brother, the man not gifted with as much spiritual knowledge as they, and who, though trusting Christ for salvation, still had a lingering idea that "an idol was something in the world." If the "strong" brother, he who was spiritually enlightened, ate this meat in the idol's temple, the weak brother might do likewise, but what the one might do with impunity the other could not do without sin. Hence the liberty of the one became the stumbling-block of the other (vv. 7-10). This made it serious for the strong brother to press his "knowledge," or his "liberty" to that point (vv. 11-12). Personally, Paul's example was different from this (v. 13).

Continuing the reference to his own example in chapter 9:1-23, the apostle reminds them of the grounds on which he might claim all the liberty they had, or more. He was an apostle, he had seen Jesus Christ (~~and~~ Acts 9), they, the Corinthians, were the fruit of his ministry (vv. 1-2). He was at liberty to eat and drink as he pleased, to marry, and have a wife accompany him on his itineraries as others did (vv. 3-6). He had a right to claim pecuniary support from the churches in his labors on their behalf (vv. 7-14). But he had foregone all these privileges for the gospel's sake (vv. 15-18). For the same reason had he accommodated himself to Jewish prejudices (vv. 19-20), and to Gentile peculiarities (vv. 21-23).

THE CHRISTIAN RACE

He shows that there is a practical motive for Christians acting on this principle (9:24-10:15), by employing an illustration from the Olympian games. Christian believers were like men running a race, but it was one thing to run and another thing to win the prize. Here again comes in the distinction between salvation and the rewards of faithfulness (see chap. 3). The athlete knew the need of curtailing his liberty in certain directions in order to gain the race, and Paul appreciated the principle in spiritual things.

Did he not deny himself he would be unfit for service, and lack of service meant, in the end, loss of reward (vv. 24-27). "Castaway" here does not mean loss of salvation, but loss of the opportunity to serve as one who is saved. The thought is continued in chapter 10, where a leaf is taken from the history of Israel. All the Hebrews originally were partakers of the same privileges — the guiding cloud, the passage through the Red Sea, the manna, the smitten rock, type of our salvation through the smitten Christ (vv. 1-4). But many of them failed of the ultimate goal and never entered Canaan, because of their after conduct in the wilderness (vv. 5-11). A warning follows (v. 12) with accompanying encouragement (v. 13), and then an exhortation (vv. 14-15).

The practical motive however, is more than the thought of reward for fidelity, it is that of positive danger in the face of the opposite (vv. 16-23). This is suggested already in the story of Israel, but more than suggested in what follows. The idolatrous feasts are in contrast with the Lord's supper, the one the worship of demons, the other the true God, between which there can be no fellowship. One or the other must be renounced. To tamper with demons is to challenge Divine wrath, with which we are unable successfully to contend. While the exercise of the fullest Christian liberty in these matters may be lawful for me, says the apostle, nevertheless it is not expedient, it will not be found to edify or build me up in Christ, for which reason it will not be acted upon.

The conclusion of the matter is:

- (1) do not seek your own advantage but another's (v. 24);
- (2) if the sacrificial meat is offered for sale in the public market, you may buy and eat it without compunction (vv. 25-26);
- (3) if a pagan neighbor asks you for a meal at his private house you are at liberty to partake of it (v. 27);
- (4) but if in the course of the meal it is referred to as of a religious character, desist from eating, not for your own sake so much as that of the other (vv. 28-30). In other words,
- (5) act on the principle of verses 31-32, and
- (6) follow my (Paul) example (10:33, 11:1).

QUESTIONS

1. State in your own words the occasion Paul had for writing these chapters.
2. What is the main argument Paul presses against the abuse of Christian liberty?
3. In what respects did his example agree with his precept?
4. What motive governed him?
5. What is the significance of "castaway" in this case?
6. What further motive does Paul refer to?
7. How does he conclude, or sum up, the case?

1 CORINTHIANS 11 — CHURCH DISORDERS

This chapter begins properly at verse 2, and treats of disorderly conduct of the women in the church assemblies, and of the misuse of the Lord's supper. "Head" is used in the sense of source of dominion because it is that which directs the body, and the man is the "head of the woman" because he is under authority to him, the reference being to married women and their husbands. "The head of Christ is God," when Christ is considered in the mediatorial sense, and from the point of view of the God-man. Of course both men and women are equal in God's sight when salvation and all the spiritual blessings in Christ are under consideration (~~cf.~~ Galatians 3:18), but human society could not exist without certain distinctions. It is evident that from this standpoint, the Christian women at Corinth went too far, and misinterpreting their newfound liberty in Christ, were overstepping bounds in an unbecoming way. Large principles when taken up by ardent and enthusiastic minds, without the modifications of experience, are almost sure to run into extravagance, and hence the spirit of law is by degree reduced to rules, and guarded by customs.

The offense of these women was praying and prophesying with uncovered heads, or rather unveiled faces, contrary to the custom of the times for both Jews and Gentiles, the head-covering being a symbol of the woman's subordination to the man. It is difficult to say what is meant by the man dishonoring his head, since it is uncertain whether by his "head" is meant the Lord Jesus Christ. And in the same way we do not know whether the "head" which the woman "dishonoreth" is her own head, or her husband

regarded as her head. We only know that it is the true glory of every creature to fulfill the law of its being (vv. 3-6).

The argument against this conduct on the women's part follows in verses 4-7:

(1) the woman has present a visible superior in man created in God's image. He as the highest earthly being represents God's glory. Woman, as such, is not the representation of God's glory on earth, but to all inferior beings represents man's glory sharing his superiority over them (v. 7);

(2) woman was created second to man as to substance (v. 8), and service (v. 9); and

(3) woman should consider the presence of the angels who are invisible spectators of Christian assemblies. This last is a mysterious subject, not merely that angels are present, but that women should exhibit modesty or submission in their presence. Dean Stanley comments on this passage that it may refer to evil angels and their unlawful intercourse with human flesh as spoken of in Genesis 6. Immodesty on the women's part might give them unholy opportunity, for it is impossible to decide how much of our public morality and private purity is owing to the spirit which refuses to overstep the smallest bound of ordinary decorum.

The apostle balances the whole subject as between man and woman in verses 11-12, and sums up so far as the latter is concerned by a couple of questions, the bearing of which is that the absence of a veil is uncomely (vv. 13-15). If however, they continue to be contentious in the matter despite his rebuke, he would have them know that their conduct is without precedent (v. 16).

THE LORD'S SUPPER

It is not a far cry from this to the disorder associated with the Lord's supper, and which the apostle approached by a general statement (vv. 17-19). It should be said that the divisions here are not doctrinal so much as social cliques. They came together for a general meal prior to the Lord's supper, and made it a sort of indoor picnic. The rich brought plenty to eat and drink while the poor had nothing. If this was what they desired to do it

should be done in their own houses and not in the general assembly. The original institution of the rite is now referred to and its significance enlarged (vv. 23-26). A warning follows (vv. 27-37), in which "unworthy" is not to be understood as discouraging penitent sinners from partaking of this blessed feast, but to be taken in the sense of "an unworthy manner." To be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" means to commit an offence against him, while "damnation," (v. 29), is to be taken in the sense of judgment as illustrated in verses 30-52. "Not discerning the Lord's body," means not appreciating the significance of his atonement, or the mystical relationship in which they as believers stand toward him their Head, and which the Lord's supper so peculiarly makes manifest. Their erroneous practice in this particular had brought chastisement of a physical kind upon them; from which if they had "judged" themselves by putting away the sin, they would have escaped. Nevertheless, it was a mercy of God that they were thus chastened, which showed that they were His children, and not the people of the world, for there is a great distinction between chastisement and condemnation.

QUESTIONS

1. Where does this lesson begin, and what two things does it treat?
2. What does "head" mean, and what is the significance in each case of the "head of the woman" and the "head of Christ"?
3. Can you quote Robertson as to the application of large principles?
4. What was the particular offense of these women?
5. Give the three-fold argument against their conduct.
6. Define and describe the "divisions" referred to in the second case.
7. What does each of the following expressions mean: "unworthy," "guilty of the body and blood"; "damnation"; "not discerning," etc.?
8. What two things does Paul discriminate in this lesson?

1 CORINTHIANS 12-14 — SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The theme of this lesson is closely related to the preceding, for the church disorders included not only unbecoming conduct of the women in the public assembly, and an unworthy observance of the Lord's supper, but an unholy emulation in the matter of spiritual gifts.

After a brief introduction (vv. 1-3), the apostle discusses the origin of these gifts as not natural to the believer, but the special bestowment of God. God the Father is the worker of them, God the Spirit their distributor, and God the Son the One on Whose behalf they are administered (12:4-6).

As to their nature, there are nine — wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues (vv. 7-11). Of course, the above means "wisdom" and "knowledge" in the things of God; "faith," not merely for the acceptance of Christ, which is assumed, but for special purposes or objects, "prophecy," not in the sense of foretelling, but forth-telling, speaking "to edification, exhortation and comfort" (14:3).

The object and use of the gifts is for the profit of the whole body of Christ, into which believers have been baptized by the Holy Spirit (vv. 12-13). They are in Christ what the foot, the hand, the ear, the eyes are in the human body (vv. 14-21). Hence honor, unity, sympathy, and mutual joyfulness should pervade and prevail (vv. 22-26). There are differences among these gifts, and the best are to be coveted, but all depend on the spirit in which they are exercised (vv. 27-31).

This leads the apostle to speak of the abuse of the gifts of which the Corinthians had been guilty, and which consumes the whole of chapter 13. Of what value is any of these gifts to their possessors without "love," which is the meaning of "charity" in this chapter (vv. 1-3). Love is now defined (vv. 4-7) and its supremacy and permanency affirmed (vv. 8-13). A time is coming when prophesying and speaking with tongues will be no longer required, and the knowledge we now have will appear childish in comparison with what we shall have, but not so with love, which, like faith and hope, is eternal. Therefore follow after love (14:1).

SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

Returning to the choice among gifts the preference is given to prophesying (14:1-25), especially as compared with "tongues," because the latter had been the chief cause of the unholy emulation referred to, and also of gross disorder in the public assembly. The value of prophesying is stated in verse 3. "Tongues" should not be exercised unless an interpreter is present (v. 5), and for the reasons indicated (vv. 6-14). Paul's own custom or example is now stated (vv. 15-19), an exhortation follows (v. 20), and a declaration of the purpose of "tongues" concludes this part of the subject (vv. 21-25).

"Tongues" are a sign not for believers but unbelievers, and not for their conversion evidently, but simply as a demonstration of Divine power. It is far different with prophesying, which practically is identical with preaching and testimony, for this serves both for believers and unbelievers.

The order in which the gifts are to be publicly exercised is now given (vv. 26-35). The form of worship was very democratic, the people generally participating, reciting psalms, giving instruction, speaking with tongues, interpreting tongues, uttering a "revelation." As to this last, it would appear that until the New Testament was written, new revelations suited to the new dispensation were given to certain of the prophets. Care was to be taken that not more than two or three should speak in an unknown tongue, and not all at once, but one by one. Moreover, in the absence of an interpreter they should not speak at all. The same method should be followed by the prophets. Nor let any say when he felt a desire to speak, that he could not wait until another had concluded (vv. 32-33).

In such meetings when the whole church came together in one place, women were to keep silence. This is the interpretation Scofield puts on verses 34-35, but there is a difficulty here in light of 1 Corinthians 11, where women are not forbidden to pray and prophesy in public.

The contentious spirit of the church is rebuked as in chapter 11. They were evidently seeking to establish a precedent of their own in these matters (v. 36), but that which Paul is writing to them is the commandment of the Lord (v. 37). Whatsoever they did was to be done "decently and in order" (v. 40).

QUESTIONS

1. Name the seven divisions in the text of this lesson.
2. Name the nine spiritual gifts.
3. What is meant by "prophesy"?
4. How should "charity" be rendered in chapter 13?
5. Which of all the gifts is to be preferred, and why?
6. What restriction is placed on "tongues" and why?
7. What is the meaning of "revelation" in this case (v. 26)?
8. What principle is to be maintained in the public gatherings?

1 CORINTHIANS 15-16 — RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

They were not only questions of casuistry that disturbed this church, but deeper ones — especially that of the resurrection of the dead. We may gather the real nature of this difficulty by the manner of Paul's treatment of it.

He dwells on the fact of Christ's resurrection (vv. 1-11), in which he furnished incidentally a definition of the Gospel he preached. This consists of just three counts, Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. The proof that he rose again is two-fold, the Old Testament scriptures (v. 4), and human witnesses. Just where or how the former testified to his resurrection is not apparent to the casual reader, but a student like Paul found it in both type and prophecy. Compare also Christ's words to the two disciples en route to Emmaus (Luke 24). The proof from the human witnesses (514 in all) is given in detail (vv. 5-8). "Born out of due time," some would translate "before the due time," as though Paul were thinking of the national new birth of Israel which is to be. His conversion by the appearance of the Lord at Damascus (^{<490>}Acts 9), was an illustration before the time of what will take place when the Lord reveals Himself to that people at the end of this age (^{<318>}Ezekiel 20:35-38; ^{<320>}Zechariah 12:10-13:6; ^{<512>}Romans 11:25-27).

Passing from the fact of Christ's resurrection he proceeds to the inference from and the importance of it (vv. 12-19). Christ having arisen, the fact of a resurrection can no longer be disputed (vv. 12-13, 16). To dispute it would render nugatory the whole scheme of the Gospel on which depended their salvation and future life (vv. 14, 17-19). Strange that Christians should find it possible to question the resurrection of Christ, but still are there some inconsistent and ignorant enough to do so.

The order of the resurrection follows (vv. 20-34). The resurrection of Christ insures that of all men (vv. 20-22), for both the wicked and the good, the unbelieving and the believing shall be raised, "some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt" (1 ^{<463>}John 5:28-29; ^{<540>}1 Timothy 4:10). But they will not be raised all at once. Christ is the first-fruits whose resurrection has already taken place. The second installment of the resurrection will consist of true believers, and come forth

at His second advent (^{<5043>}1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The third and last will consist of the rest of the dead which will come forth after the millennium and at the end of the world (v. 24 compared with Revelation 20). The "kingdom" spoken of is that promised to David and his seed (^{<1008>}2 Samuel 7:8-17; ^{<3818>}Zechariah 12:8; ^{<4033>}Luke 1:31-33). It is that which was announced as "at hand" when Jesus Christ came (^{<1047>}Matthew 4:17), but which was rejected by the Jews when they rejected Christ and crucified Him (^{<4112>}Matthew 11:20; 21:42-43). At His second coming, and after the church has been caught up to meet Him in the air, the King will restore the Davidic monarchy in His own Person, re-gather Israel, establish His power in the earth and reign with His church a thousand years (^{<127>}Matthew 24:27-30; ^{<4454>}Acts 15:14-17; ^{<6101>}Revelation 20:1-10). This is the kingdom which at the end of the millennium, will be delivered up to the Father, that God (i.e., the Triune God) "may be all in all" (v. 28). The subjection of the Son spoken of in this verse is not that of the Son as the Second Person of the Trinity, but as the mediatorial King of the earthly kingdom. The language in verse 29 is difficult, but is evidently a challenge of some kind to their reason, like that which follows. Why should Christians expose themselves to the peril of their Christian testimony, as Paul himself was doing daily, if the resurrection of the dead were not a fact? Why not live to please the flesh? Alas! Some seemed to be doing so whom he would warn (vv. 30-34).

THE NATURE OF THE RISEN BODY

Now comes the teaching as to the nature of the resurrection body (vv. 35-50), which, in a word, will be related to the mortal body as the harvest is related to the grain that is sown (vv. 35-38). That is to say, the body that is raised will be the same as to identity with that which was buried, but not the same in other respects — it will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, "the image of the heavenly." Verses 45-49 are deeply interesting. "The first man Adam was made a living soul." i.e., he derived his life from another, even God. "The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit," gives a truer meaning by omitting the italicized words "was made," so as to read, "the last Adam a quickening [i.e., a lifegiving] Spirit." He did not derive His life, but is Himself the fountain of life, and gives that life to others (^{<3004>}John 1:4; 5:21; 10:10; 12:24; ^{<612>}1 John 5:12). Because He lives we shall live also.

But all believers will not die (vv. 50-57). These verses should be read in connection with ^{¹ Thessalonians 4:13-18, as they similarly teach that the bodies of living believers will be instantaneously changed from corruptibility and mortality to the opposite, at the coming of the Lord.}

The theme is concluded by a reference to the practical effects of the doctrine, which carries us into the 16th chapter as far as verse 4. It should confirm our steadfastness in the Christian faith, at the same time that it quickens our service (v. 58). A good outlet for this service in the case of the Corinthians is that named at the opening of chapter 16, the means of whose execution are detailed in verses 2-4.

The concluding instructions and greetings in the epistle (16:5-22) hardly furnish material for another lesson, and may be included in this. Paul will not visit them at present though he is just across the Aegean Sea, but will pass through Macedonia first and come to them later, probably wintering there (vv. 5-9). He commends Timothy to them whose arrival en route to Ephesus they may expect (vv. 10-11). Apollos is also referred to in brotherly terms (v. 12), though he had spoken plainly about him in the body of the letter. Those who had specially ministered to him are named (vv. 17-18). The token of validity in his letter is important (v. 21). "Maranatha" means "Our Lord Cometh." With that hope before him he had begun his letter, and with that hope he laid down his pen.

QUESTIONS

1. Divide chapter 16 into six parts.
2. What is Paul's definition of the Gospel?
3. How many eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection does Paul indicate?
4. What may "born out of due time" mean?
5. When will the second and third installments of the resurrection army come forth, and of whom will they be composed?
6. What is meant by "kingdom" (v. 24)?
7. How will the resurrection body compare with the mortal body?
8. Give the meaning of verses 51-53.
9. What is the twofold practical effect of the doctrine of the resurrection?