

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO

THE CORINTHIANS

The Corinthian church contained some Jews, but more Gentiles, and the apostle had to contend with the superstition of the one, and the sinful conduct of the other. The peace of this church was disturbed by false teachers, who undermined the influence of the apostle. Two parties were the result; one contending earnestly for the Jewish ceremonies, the other indulging in excesses contrary to the gospel, to which they were especially led by the luxury and the sins which prevailed around them. This epistle was written to rebuke some disorderly conduct, of which the apostle had been apprised, and to give advice as to some points whereon his judgment was requested by the Corinthians. Thus the scope was twofold.

1. To apply suitable remedies to the disorders and abuses which prevailed among them.
2. To give satisfactory answers on all the points upon which his advice had been desired.

The address, and Christian mildness, yet firmness, with which the apostle writes, and goes on from general truths directly to oppose the errors and evil conduct of the Corinthians, is very remarkable. He states the truth and the will of God, as to various matters, with great force of argument and animation of style.

CHAPTER 1

A salutation and thanksgiving. (1-9) Exhortation to brotherly love, and reproof for divisions. (10-16) The doctrine of a crucified Savior, as advancing the glory of God, (17-25) and humbling the creature before him. (26-31)

1 Corinthians 1:1

Vs. 1-9: All Christians are by baptism dedicated and devoted to Christ, and are under strict obligations to be holy. But in the true church of God are all who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, and who call upon him as God manifest in the flesh, for all the blessings of salvation; who acknowledge and obey him as their Lord, and as Lord of all; it includes no other persons. Christians are distinguished from the profane and atheists, that they dare not live without prayer; and they are distinguished from Jews and pagans, that they call on the name of Christ. Observe how often in these verses the apostle repeats the words, Our Lord Jesus Christ. He feared not to make too frequent or too honorable mention of him. To all who called upon Christ, the apostle gave his usual salutation, desiring, in their behalf, the pardoning mercy, sanctifying grace, and comforting peace of God, through Jesus Christ. Sinners can have no peace with God, nor any from him, but through Christ. He gives thanks for their conversion to the faith of Christ; that grace was given them by Jesus Christ. They had been enriched by him with all spiritual gifts. He speaks of utterance and knowledge. And where God has given these two gifts, he has given great power for usefulness. These were gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which God bore witness to the apostles. Those that wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be kept by him to the end; and those that are so, will be blameless in the day of Christ, made so by rich and free grace. How glorious are the hopes of such a privilege; to be kept by the power of Christ, from the power of our corruptions and Satan's temptations!

1 Corinthians 1:10

Vs. 10-16: In the great things of religion be of one mind; and where there is not unity of sentiment, still let there be union of affection. Agreement in

the greater things should extinguish divisions about the lesser. There will be perfect union in heaven, and the nearer we approach it on earth, the nearer we come to perfection. Paul and Apollos both were faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, and helpers of their faith and joy; but those disposed to be contentious, broke into parties. So liable are the best things to be corrupted, and the gospel and its institutions made engines of discord and contention. Satan has always endeavored to stir up strife among Christians, as one of his chief devices against the gospel. The apostle left it to other ministers to baptize, while he preached the gospel, as a more useful work.

1 Corinthians 1:17

Vs. 17-25: Paul had been bred up in Jewish learning; but the plain preaching of a crucified Jesus, was more powerful than all the oratory and philosophy of the heathen world. This is the sum and substance of the gospel. Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joys. And by his death we live. The preaching of salvation for lost sinners by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, if explained and faithfully applied, appears foolishness to those in the way to destruction. The sensual, the covetous, the proud, and ambitious, alike see that the gospel opposes their favorite pursuits. But those who receive the gospel, and are enlightened by the Spirit of God, see more of God's wisdom and power in the doctrine of Christ crucified, than in all his other works. God left a great part of the world to follow the dictates of man's boasted reason, and the event has shown that human wisdom is folly, and is unable to find or retain the knowledge of God as the Creator. It pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. By the foolishness of preaching; not by what could justly be called foolish preaching. But the thing preached was foolishness to worldly-wise men. The gospel ever was, and ever will be, foolishness to all in the road to destruction. The message of Christ, plainly delivered, ever has been a sure touchstone by which men may learn what road they are traveling. But the despised doctrine of salvation by faith in a crucified Savior, God in human nature, purchasing the church with his own blood, to save multitudes, even all that believe, from ignorance, delusion, and vice, has been blessed in every age. And the weakest instruments God uses, are stronger in their effects, than the strongest men can use. Not that there is foolishness or weakness in God,

but what men consider as such, overcomes all their admired wisdom and strength.

1 Corinthians 1:26

Vs. 26-31: God did not choose philosophers, nor orators, nor statesmen, nor men of wealth, and power, and interest in the world, to publish the gospel of grace and peace. He best judges what men and what measures serve the purposes of his glory. Though not many noble are usually called by Divine grace, there have been some such in every age, who have not been ashamed of the gospel of Christ; and persons of every rank stand in need of pardoning grace. Often, a humble Christian, though poor as to this world, has more true knowledge of the gospel, than those who have made the letter of Scripture the study of their lives, but who have studied it rather as the witness of men, than as the word of God. And even young children have gained such knowledge of Divine truth as to silence infidels. The reason is, they are taught of God; the design is, that no flesh should glory in his presence. That distinction, in which alone they might glory, was not of themselves. It was by the sovereign choice and regenerating grace of God, that they were in Jesus Christ by faith. He is made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; all we need, or can desire. And he is made wisdom to us, that by his word and Spirit, and from his fullness and treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we may receive all that will make us wise unto salvation, and fit for every service to which we are called. We are guilty, liable to just punishment; and he is made righteousness, our great atonement and sacrifice. We are depraved and corrupt, and he is made sanctification, that he may in the end be made complete redemption; may free the soul from the being of sin, and loose the body from the bonds of the grave. And this is, that all flesh, according to the prophecy by Jeremiah, ²⁰²³Jeremiah 9:23-24, may glory in the special favor, all-sufficient grace, and precious salvation of Jehovah.

CHAPTER 2

The plain manner in which the apostle preached Christ crucified. (1-5) The wisdom contained in this doctrine. (6-9) It cannot be duly known but by the Holy Spirit. (10-16)

1 Corinthians 2:1

Vs. 1-5: Christ, in his person, and offices, and sufferings, is the sum and substance of the gospel, and ought to be the great subject of a gospel minister's preaching, but not so as to leave out other parts of God's revealed truth and will. Paul preached the whole counsel of God. Few know the fear and trembling of faithful ministers, from a deep sense of their own weakness They know how insufficient they are, and are fearful for themselves. When nothing but Christ crucified is plainly preached, the success must be entirely from Divine power accompanying the word, and thus men are brought to believe, to the salvation of their souls.

1 Corinthians 2:6

Vs. 6-9: Those who receive the doctrine of Christ as Divine, and, having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, have looked well into it, see not only the plain history of Christ, and him crucified, but the deep and admirable designs of Divine wisdom therein. It is the mystery made manifest to the saints, Colossians 1:26: though formerly hid from the heathen world; it was only shown in dark types and distant prophecies, but now is revealed and made known by the Spirit of God. Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory; a title much too great for any creature. There are many things which people would not do, if they knew the wisdom of God in the great work of redemption. There are things God hath prepared for those that love him, and wait for him, which sense cannot discover, no teaching can convey to our ears, nor can it yet enter our hearts. We must take them as they stand in the Scriptures, as God hath been pleased to reveal them to us.

1 Corinthians 2:10

Vs. 10-16: God has revealed true wisdom to us by his Spirit. Here is a proof of the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, 2 Peter 1:21. In

proof of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, observe, that he knows all things, and he searches all things, even the deep things of God. No one can know the things of God, but his Holy Spirit, who is one with the Father and the Son, and who makes known Divine mysteries to his church. This is most clear testimony, both to the real Godhead and the distinct person of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were not guided by worldly principles. They had the revelation of these things from the Spirit of God, and the saving impression of them from the same Spirit. These things they declared in plain, simple language, taught by the Holy Spirit, totally different from the affected oratory or enticing words of man's wisdom. The natural man, the wise man of the world, receives not the things of the Spirit of God. The pride of carnal reasoning is really as much opposed to spirituality, as the basest sensuality. The sanctified mind discerns the real beauties of holiness, but the power of discerning and judging about common and natural things is not lost. But the carnal man is a stranger to the principles, and pleasures, and actings of the Divine life. The spiritual man only, is the person to whom God gives the knowledge of his will. How little have any known of the mind of God by natural power! And the apostles were enabled by his Spirit to make known his mind. In the Holy Scriptures, the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in Christ, are fully made known to us. It is the great privilege of Christians, that they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by his Spirit. They experience his sanctifying power in their hearts, and bring forth good fruits in their lives.

CHAPTER 3

The Corinthians reprov'd for their contentions. (1-4) The true servants of Christ can do nothing without him. (5-9) He is the only foundation, and every one should take heed what he builds thereon. (10-15) The churches of Christ ought to be kept pure, and to be humble. (16, 17) And they should not glory in men, because ministers and all things else are theirs through Christ. (18-23)

1 Corinthians 3:1

Vs. 1-4: The most simple truths of the gospel, as to man's sinfulness and God's mercy, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, stated in the plainest language, suit the people better than deeper mysteries. Men may have much doctrinal knowledge, yet be mere beginners in the life of faith and experience. Contentions and quarrels about religion are sad evidences of carnality. True religion makes men peaceable, not contentious. But it is to be lamented, that many who should walk as Christians, live and act too much like other men. Many professors, and preachers also, show themselves to be yet carnal, by vain-glorious strife, eagerness for dispute, and readiness to despise and speak evil of others.

1 Corinthians 3:5

Vs. 5-9: The ministers about whom the Corinthians contended, were only instruments used by God. We should not put ministers into the place of God. He that planteth and he that watereth are one, employed by one Master, trusted with the same revelation, busied in one work, and engaged in one design. They have their different gifts from one and the same Spirit, for the very same purposes; and should carry on the same design heartily. Those who work hardest shall fare best. Those who are most faithful shall have the greatest reward. They work together with God, in promoting the purposes of his glory, and the salvation of precious souls; and He who knows their work, will take care they do not labor in vain. They are employed in his husbandry and building; and He will carefully look over them.

1 Corinthians 3:10

Vs. 10-15: The apostle was a wise master-builder; but the grace of God made him such. Spiritual pride is abominable; it is using the greatest favors of God, to feed our own vanity, and make idols of ourselves. But let every man take heed; there may be bad building on a good foundation. Nothing must be laid upon it, but what the foundation will bear, and what is of a piece with it. Let us not dare to join a merely human or a carnal life with a Divine faith, the corruption of sin with the profession of Christianity. Christ is a firm, abiding, and immovable Rock of ages, every way able to bear all the weight that God himself or the sinner can lay upon him; neither is there salvation in any other. Leave out the doctrine of his atonement, and there is no foundation for our hopes. But of those who rest on this foundation, there are two sorts. Some hold nothing but the truth as it is in Jesus, and preach nothing else. Others build on the good foundation what will not abide the test, when the day of trial comes. We may be mistaken in ourselves and others; but there is a day coming that will show our actions in the true light, without covering or disguise. Those who spread true and pure religion in all its branches, and whose work will abide in the great day, shall receive a reward. And how great! how much exceeding their deserts! There are others, whose corrupt opinions and doctrines, or vain inventions and usages in the worship of God, shall be made known, disowned, and rejected, in that day. This is plainly meant of a figurative fire, not of a real one; for what real fire can consume religious rites or doctrines? And it is to try every man's works, those of Paul and Apollos, as well as others. Let us consider the tendency of our undertakings, compare them with God's word, and judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Vs. 16, 17: From other parts of the epistle, it appears that the false teachers among the Corinthians taught unholy doctrines. Such teaching tended to corrupt, to pollute, and destroy the building, which should be kept pure and holy for God. Those who spread loose principles, which render the church of God unholy, bring destruction upon themselves. Christ by his Spirit dwells in all true believers. Christians are holy by profession, and should be pure and clean, both in heart and conversation.

He is deceived who deems himself the temple of the Holy Ghost, yet is unconcerned about personal holiness, or the peace and purity of the church.

1 Corinthians 3:18

Vs. 18-23: To have a high opinion of our own wisdom, is but to flatter ourselves; and self-flattery is the next step to self-deceit. The wisdom that worldly men esteem, is foolishness with God. How justly does he despise, and how easily can he baffle and confound it! The thoughts of the wisest men in the world, have vanity, weakness, and folly in them. All this should teach us to be humble, and make us willing to be taught of God, so as not to be led away, by pretenses to human wisdom and skill, from the simple truths revealed by Christ. Mankind are very apt to oppose the design of the mercies of God. Observe the spiritual riches of a true believer; "All are yours," even ministers and ordinances. Nay, the world itself is yours. Saints have as much of it as Infinite Wisdom sees fit for them, and they have it with the Divine blessing. Life is yours, that you may have a season and opportunity to prepare for the life of heaven; and death is yours, that you may go to the possession of it. It is the kind messenger to take you from sin and sorrow, and to guide you to your Father's house. Things present are yours, for your support on the road; things to come are yours, to delight you for ever at your journey's end. If we belong to Christ, and are true to him, all good belongs to us, and is sure to us. Believers are the subjects of his kingdom. He is Lord over us, we must own his dominion, and cheerfully submit to his command. God in Christ, reconciling a sinful world to himself, and pouring the riches of his grace on a reconciled world, is the sum and substance of the gospel.

CHAPTER 4

The true character of gospel ministers. (1-6) Cautions against despising the apostle. (7-13) He claims their regard as their spiritual father in Christ, and shows his concern for them. (14-21)

1 Corinthians 4:1

Vs. 1-6: Apostles were no more than servants of Christ, but they were not to be undervalued. They had a great trust, and for that reason, had an honorable office. Paul had a just concern for his own reputation, but he knew that he who chiefly aimed to please men, would not prove himself a faithful servant of Christ. It is a comfort that men are not to be our final judges. And it is not judging well of ourselves, or justifying ourselves, that will prove us safe and happy. Our own judgment is not to be depended upon as to our faithfulness, any more than our own works for our justification. There is a day coming, that will bring men's secret sins into open day, and discover the secrets of their hearts. Then every slandered believer will be justified, and every faithful servant approved and rewarded. The word of God is the best rule by which to judge as to men. Pride commonly is at the bottom of quarrels. Self-conceit contributes to produce undue esteem of our teachers, as well as of ourselves. We shall not be puffed up for one against another, if we remember that all are instruments, employed by God, and endowed by him with various talents.

1 Corinthians 4:7

Vs. 7-13: We have no reason to be proud; all we have, or are, or do, that is good, is owing to the free and rich grace of God. A sinner snatched from destruction by sovereign grace alone, must be very absurd and inconsistent, if proud of the free gifts of God. St. Paul sets forth his own circumstances, vs. 9: Allusion is made to the cruel spectacles in the Roman games; where men were forced to cut one another to pieces, to divert the people; and where the victor did not escape with his life, though he should destroy his adversary, but was only kept for another combat, and must be killed at last. The thought that many eyes are upon believers, when struggling with difficulties or temptations, should encourage constancy and patience. "We are weak, but ye are strong." All Christians are not alike

exposed. Some suffer greater hardships than others. The apostle enters into particulars of their sufferings. And how glorious the charity and devotion that carried them through all these hardships! They suffered in their persons and characters as the worst and vilest of men; as the very dirt of the world, that was to be swept away: nay, as the offscouring of all things, the dross of all things. And every one who would be faithful in Christ Jesus, must be prepared for poverty and contempt. Whatever the disciples of Christ suffer from men, they must follow the example, and fulfill the will and precepts of their Lord. They must be content, with him and for him, to be despised and abused. It is much better to be rejected, despised, and ill used, as St. Paul was, than to have the good opinion and favor of the world. Though cast off by the world as vile, yet we may be precious to God, gathered up with his own hand, and placed upon his throne.

1 Corinthians 4:14

Vs. 14-21: In reproof for sin, we should distinguish between sinners and their sins. Reproofs that kindly and affectionately warn, are likely to reform. Though the apostle spoke with authority as a parent, he would rather beseech them in love. And as ministers are to set an example, others must follow them, as far as they follow Christ in faith and practice. Christians may mistake and differ in their views, but Christ and Christian truth are the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Whenever the gospel is effectual, it comes not in word only, but also in power, by the Holy Spirit, quickening dead sinners, delivering persons from the slavery of sin and Satan, renewing them both inwardly and outwardly, and comforting, strengthening, and establishing the saints, which cannot be done by the persuasive language of men, but by the power of God. And it is a happy temper, to have the spirit of love and meekness bear the rule, yet to maintain just authority.

CHAPTER 5

The apostle blames the Corinthians for connivance at an incestuous person; (1-8) and directs their behavior towards those guilty of scandalous crimes. (9-13)

1 Corinthians 5:1

Vs. 1-8: The apostle notices a flagrant abuse, winked at by the Corinthians. Party spirit, and a false notion of Christian liberty, seem to have saved the offender from censure. Grievous indeed is it that crimes should sometimes be committed by professors of the gospel, of which even heathens would be ashamed. Spiritual pride and false doctrines tend to bring in, and to spread such scandals. How dreadful the effects of sin! The devil reigns where Christ does not. And a man is in his kingdom, and under his power, when not in Christ. The bad example of a man of influence is very mischievous; it spreads far and wide. Corrupt principles and examples, if not corrected, would hurt the whole church. Believers must have new hearts, and lead new lives. Their common conversation and religious deeds must be holy. So far is the sacrifice of Christ our Passover for us, from rendering personal and public holiness unnecessary, that it furnishes powerful reasons and motives for it. Without holiness we can neither live by faith in him, nor join in his ordinances with comfort and profit.

1 Corinthians 5:9

Vs. 9-13: Christians are to avoid familiar converse with all who disgrace the Christian name. Such are only fit companions for their brethren in sin, and to such company they should be left, whenever it is possible to do so. Alas, that there are many called Christians, whose conversation is more dangerous than that of heathens!

CHAPTER 6

Cautions against going to law in heathen courts. (1-8) Sins which, if lived and died in, shut out from the kingdom of God. (9-11) Our bodies, which are the members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, must not be defiled. (12-20)

1 Corinthians 6:1

Vs. 1-8: Christians should not contend with one another, for they are brethren. This, if duly attended to, would prevent many law-suits, and end many quarrels and disputes. In matters of great damage to ourselves or families, we may use lawful means to right ourselves, but Christians should be of a forgiving temper. Refer the matters in dispute, rather than go to law about them. They are trifles, and may easily be settled, if you first conquer your own spirits. Bear and forbear, and the men of least skill among you may end your quarrels. It is a shame that little quarrels should grow to such a head among Christians, that they cannot be determined by the brethren. The peace of a man's own mind, and the calm of his neighborhood, are worth more than victory. Lawsuits could not take place among brethren, unless there were faults among them.

1 Corinthians 6:9

Vs. 9-11: The Corinthians are warned against many great evils, of which they had formerly been guilty. There is much force in these inquiries, when we consider that they were addressed to a people puffed up with a fancy of their being above others in wisdom and knowledge. All unrighteousness is sin; all reigning sin, nay, every actual sin, committed with design, and not repented of, shuts out of the kingdom of heaven. Be not deceived. Men are very much inclined to flatter themselves that they may live in sin, yet die in Christ, and go to heaven. But we cannot hope to sow to the flesh, and reap everlasting life. They are reminded what a change the gospel and grace of God had made in them. The blood of Christ, and the washing of regeneration, can take away all guilt. Our justification is owing to the suffering and merit of Christ; our sanctification to the working of the Holy Spirit; but both go together. All who are made righteous in the sight of God, are made holy by the grace of God.

1 Corinthians 6:12

Vs. 12-20: Some among the Corinthians seem to have been ready to say, All things are lawful for me. This dangerous conceit St. Paul opposes. There is a liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, in which we must stand fast. But surely a Christian would never put himself into the power of any bodily appetite. The body is for the Lord; is to be an instrument of righteousness to holiness, therefore is never to be made an instrument of sin. It is an honor to the body, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; and it will be an honor to our bodies, that they will be raised. The hope of a resurrection to glory, should keep Christians from dishonoring their bodies by fleshly lusts. And if the soul be united to Christ by faith, the whole man is become a member of his spiritual body. Other vices may be conquered in “fight”; that here cautioned against, only by “flight”. And vast multitudes are cut off by this vice in its various forms and consequences. Its effects fall not only directly upon the body, but often upon the mind. Our bodies have been redeemed from deserved condemnation and hopeless slavery by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. We are to be clean, as vessels fitted for our Master’s use. Being united to Christ as one spirit, and bought with a price of unspeakable value, the believer should consider himself as wholly the Lord’s, by the strongest ties. May we make it our business, to the latest day and hour of our lives, to glorify God with our bodies, and with our spirits which are his.

CHAPTER 7

The apostle answers several questions about marriage. (1-9) Married Christians should not seek to part from their unbelieving consorts. (10-16) Persons, in any fixed station, should usually abide in that. (17-24) It was most desirable, on account of the then perilous days, for people to sit loose to this world. (25-35) Great prudence be used in marriage; it should be only in the Lord. (36-40)

~~401~~ 1 Corinthians 7:1

Vs. 1-9: The apostle tells the Corinthians that it was good, in that juncture of time, for Christians to keep themselves single. Yet he says that marriage, and the comforts of that state, are settled by Divine wisdom. Though none may break the law of God, yet that perfect rule leaves men at liberty to serve him in the way most suited to their powers and circumstances, of which others often are very unfit judges. All must determine for themselves, seeking counsel from God how they ought to act.

~~410~~ 1 Corinthians 7:10

Vs. 10-16: Man and wife must not separate for any other cause than what Christ allows. Divorce, at that time, was very common among both Jews and Gentiles, on very slight pretexts. Marriage is a Divine institution; and is an engagement for life, by God's appointment. We are bound, as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men, ~~420~~ Romans 12:18, therefore to promote the peace and comfort of our nearest relatives, though unbelievers. It should be the labor and study of those who are married, to make each other as easy and happy as possible. Should a Christian desert a husband or wife, when there is opportunity to give the greatest proof of love? Stay, and labor heartily for the conversion of thy relative. In every state and relation the Lord has called us to peace; and every thing should be done to promote harmony, as far as truth and holiness will permit.

◀177▶ **1 Corinthians 7:17**

Vs. 17-24: The rules of Christianity reach every condition; and in every state a man may live so as to be a credit to it. It is the duty of every Christian to be content with his lot, and to conduct himself in his rank and place as becomes a Christian. Our comfort and happiness depend on what we are to Christ, not what we are in the world. No man should think to make his faith or religion, an argument to break through any natural or civil obligations. He should quietly and contentedly abide in the condition in which he is placed by Divine Providence.

◀178▶ **1 Corinthians 7:25**

Vs. 25-35: Considering the distress of those times, the unmarried state was best. Notwithstanding, the apostle does not condemn marriage. How opposite are those to the apostle Paul who forbid many to marry, and entangle them with vows to remain single, whether they ought to do so or not! He exhorts all Christians to holy indifference toward the world. As to relations; they must not set their hearts on the comforts of the state. As to afflictions; they must not indulge the sorrow of the world: even in sorrow the heart may be joyful. As to worldly enjoyments; here is not their rest. As to worldly employment; those that prosper in trade, and increase in wealth, should hold their possessions as though they held them not. As to all worldly concerns; they must keep the world out of their hearts, that they may not abuse it when they have it in their hands. All worldly things are show; nothing solid. All will be quickly gone. Wise concern about worldly interests is a duty; but to be full of care, to have anxious and perplexing care, is a sin. By this maxim the apostle solves the case whether it were advisable to marry. That condition of life is best for every man, which is best for his soul, and keeps him most clear of the cares and snares of the world. Let us reflect on the advantages and snares of our own condition in life; that we may improve the one, and escape as far as possible all injury from the other. And whatever cares press upon the mind, let time still be kept for the things of the Lord.

◀179▶ **1 Corinthians 7:36**

Vs. 36-40: The apostle is thought to give advice here about the disposal of children in marriage. In this view, the general meaning is plain. Children

should seek and follow the directions of their parents as to marriage. And parents should consult their children's wishes; and not reckon they have power to do with them, and dictate just as they please, without reason. The whole is closed with advice to widows. Second marriages are not unlawful, so that it is kept in mind, to marry in the Lord. In our choice of relations, and change of conditions, we should always be guided by the fear of God, and the laws of God, and act in dependence on the providence of God. Change of condition ought only to be made after careful consideration, and on probable grounds, that it will be to advantage in our spiritual concerns.

CHAPTER 8

The danger of having a high conceit of knowledge. (1-6) The mischief of offending weak brethren. (7-13)

1 Corinthians 8:1

Vs. 1-6: There is no proof of ignorance more common than conceit of knowledge. Much may be known, when nothing is known to good purpose. And those who think they know any thing, and grow vain thereon, are the least likely to make good use of their knowledge. Satan hurts some as much by tempting them to be proud of mental powers, as others, by alluring to sensuality. Knowledge which puffs up the possessor, and renders him confident, is as dangerous as self-righteous pride, though what he knows may be right. Without holy affections all human knowledge is worthless. The heathens had gods of higher and lower degree; gods many, and lords many; so called, but not such in truth. Christians know better. One God made all, and has power over all. The one God, even the Father, signifies the Godhead as the sole object of all religious worship; and the Lord Jesus Christ denotes the person of Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh, One with the Father, and with us; the appointed Mediator, and Lord of all; through whom we come to the Father, and through whom the Father sends all blessings to us, by the influence and working of the Holy Spirit. While we refuse all worship to the many who are called gods and lords, and to saints and angels, let us try whether we really come to God by faith in Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:7

Vs. 7-13: Eating one kind of food, and abstaining from another, have nothing in them to recommend a person to God. But the apostle cautions against putting a stumbling-block in the way of the weak; lest they be made bold to eat what was offered to the idol, not as common food, but as a sacrifice, and thereby be guilty of idolatry. He who has the Spirit of Christ in him, will love those whom Christ loved so as to die for them. Injuries done to Christians, are done to Christ; but most of all, the entangling them in guilt: wounding their consciences, is wounding him. We should be very tender of doing any thing that may occasion stumbling to

others, though it may be innocent in itself. And if we must not endanger other men's souls, how much should we take care not to destroy our own! Let Christians beware of approaching the brink of evil, or the appearance of it, though many do this in public matters, for which perhaps they plead plausibly. Men cannot thus sin against their brethren, without offending Christ, and endangering their own souls.

CHAPTER 9

The apostle shows his authority, and asserts his right to be maintained. (1-14) He waved this part of his Christian liberty, for the good of others. (15-23) He did all this, with care and diligence, in view of an unfading crown. (24-27)

1 Corinthians 9:1

Vs. 1-14: It is not new for a minister to meet with unkind returns for goodwill to a people, and diligent and successful services among them. To the cavils of some, the apostle answers, so as to set forth himself as an example of self-denial, for the good of others. He had a right to marry as well as other apostles, and to claim what was needful for his wife, and his children if he had any, from the churches, without laboring with his own hands to get it. Those who seek to do our souls good, should have food provided for them. But he renounced his right, rather than hinder his success by claiming it. It is the people's duty to maintain their minister. He may wave his right, as Paul did; but those transgress a precept of Christ, who deny or withhold due support.

1 Corinthians 9:15

Vs. 15-23: It is the glory of a minister to deny himself, that he may serve Christ and save souls. But when a minister gives up his right for the sake of the gospel, he does more than his charge and office demands. By preaching the gospel, freely, the apostle showed that he acted from principles of zeal and love, and thus enjoyed much comfort and hope in his soul. And though he looked on the ceremonial law as a yoke taken off by Christ, yet he submitted to it, that he might work upon the Jews, do away their prejudices, prevail with them to hear the gospel, and win them over to Christ. Though he would transgress no laws of Christ, to please any man, yet he would accommodate himself to all men, where he might do it lawfully, to gain some. Doing good was the study and business of his life; and, that he might reach this end, he did not stand on privileges. We must carefully watch against extremes, and against relying on any thing but trust in Christ alone. We must not allow errors or faults, so as to hurt others, or disgrace the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:24

Vs. 24-27: The apostle compares himself to the racers and combatants in the Isthmian games, well known by the Corinthians. But in the Christian race all may run so as to obtain. There is the greatest encouragement, therefore, to persevere with all our strength, in this course. Those who ran in these games were kept to a spare diet. They used themselves to hardships. They practiced the exercises. And those who pursue the interests of their souls, must combat hard with fleshly lusts. The body must not be suffered to rule. The apostle presses this advice on the Corinthians. He sets before himself and them the danger of yielding to fleshly desires, pampering the body, and its lusts and appetites. Holy fear of himself was needed to keep an apostle faithful: how much more is it needful for our preservation! Let us learn from hence humility and caution, and to watch against dangers which surround us while in the body.

CHAPTER 10

The great privileges, and yet terrible overthrow of the Israelites in the wilderness. (1-5) Cautions against all idolatrous, and other sinful practices. (6-14) The partaking in idolatry cannot exist with having communion with Christ. (15-22) All we do to be to the glory of God, and without offense to the consciences of others. (23-33)

1 Corinthians 10:1

Vs. 1-5: To dissuade the Corinthians from communion with idolaters, and security in any sinful course, the apostle sets before them the example of the Jewish nation of old. They were, by a miracle, led through the Red Sea, where the pursuing Egyptians were drowned. It was to them a typical baptism. The manna on which they fed was a type of Christ crucified, the Bread which came down from heaven, which who so eateth shall live for ever. Christ is the Rock on which the Christian church is built; and of the streams that issue therefrom, all believers drink, and are refreshed. It typified the sacred influences of the Holy Spirit, as given to believers through Christ. But let none presume upon their great privileges, or profession of the truth; these will not secure heavenly happiness.

1 Corinthians 10:6

Vs. 6-14: Carnal desires gain strength by indulgence, therefore should be checked in their first rise. Let us fear the sins of Israel, if we would shun their plagues. And it is but just to fear, that such as tempt Christ, will be left by him in the power of the old serpent. Murmuring against God's disposals and commands, greatly provokes him. Nothing in Scripture is written in vain; and it is our wisdom and duty to learn from it. Others have fallen, and so may we. The Christian's security against sin is distrust of himself. God has not promised to keep us from falling, if we do not look to ourselves. To this word of caution, a word of comfort is added. Others have the like burdens, and the like temptations: what they bear up under, and break through, we may also. God is wise as well as faithful, and will make our burdens according to our strength. He knows what we can bear. He will make a way to escape; he will deliver either from the trial itself, or at least the mischief of it. We have full encouragement to flee from sin, and

to be faithful to God. We cannot fall by temptation, if we cleave fast to him. Whether the world smiles or frowns, it is an enemy; but believers shall be strengthened to overcome it, with all its terrors and enticements. The fear of the Lord, put into their hearts, will be the great means of safety.

1 Corinthians 10:15

Vs. 15-22: Did not the joining in the Lord's supper show a profession of faith in Christ crucified, and of adoring gratitude to him for his salvation? Christians, by this ordinance, and the faith therein professed, were united as the grains of wheat in one loaf of bread, or as the members in the human body, seeing they were all united to Christ, and had fellowship with him and one another. This is confirmed from the Jewish worship and customs in sacrifice. The apostle applies this to feasting with idolaters. Eating food as part of a heathen sacrifice, was worshipping the idol to whom it was made, and having fellowship or communion with it; just as he who eats the Lord's supper, is accounted to partake in the Christian sacrifice, or as they who ate the Jewish sacrifices partook of what was offered on their altar. It was denying Christianity; for communion with Christ, and communion with devils, could never be had at once. If Christians venture into places, and join in sacrifices to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, they will provoke God.

1 Corinthians 10:23

Vs. 23-33: There were cases wherein Christians might eat what had been offered to idols, without sin. Such as when the flesh was sold in the market as common food, for the priest to whom it had been given. But a Christian must not merely consider what is lawful, but what is expedient, and to edify others. Christianity by no means forbids the common offices of kindness, or allows uncourteous behavior to any, however they may differ from us in religious sentiments or practices. But this is not to be understood of religious festivals, partaking in idolatrous worship. According to this advice of the apostle, Christians should take care not to use their liberty to the hurt of others, or to their own reproach. In eating and drinking, and in all we do, we should aim at the glory of God, at pleasing and honoring him. This is the great end of all religion, and directs

us where express rules are wanting. A holy, peaceable, and benevolent spirit, will disarm the greatest enemies.

CHAPTER 11

The apostle, after an exhortation to follow him, (1) corrects some abuses. (2-16) Also contentions, divisions, and disorderly celebrations of the Lord's supper. (17-22) He reminds them of the nature and design of its institution. (23-26) And directs how to attend upon it in a due manner. (27-34)

1 Corinthians 11:1

Vs. 1: The first verse of this chapter seems properly to be the close to the last. The apostle not only preached such doctrine as they ought to believe, but led such a life as they ought to live. Yet Christ being our perfect example, the actions and conduct of men, as related in the Scriptures, should be followed only so far as they are like to his.

1 Corinthians 11:2

Vs. 2-16: Here begin particulars respecting the public assemblies, ch. 1 Corinthians 14. In the abundance of spiritual gifts bestowed on the Corinthians, some abuses had crept in; but as Christ did the will, and sought the honor of God, so the Christian should avow his subjection to Christ, doing his will and seeking his glory. We should, even in our dress and habit, avoid every thing that may dishonor Christ. The woman was made subject to man, because made for his help and comfort. And she should do nothing, in Christian assemblies, which looked like a claim of being equal. She ought to have “power,” that is, a veil, on her head, because of the angels. Their presence should keep Christians from all that is wrong while in the worship of God. Nevertheless, the man and the woman were made for one another. They were to be mutual comforts and blessings, not one a slave, and the other a tyrant. God has so settled matters, both in the kingdom of providence and that of grace, that the authority and subjection of each party should be for mutual help and benefit. It was the common usage of the churches, for women to appear in public assemblies, and join in public worship, veiled; and it was right that they should do so. The Christian religion sanctions national customs wherever these are not against the great principles of truth and holiness; affected singularities receive no countenance from any thing in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 11:17

Vs. 17-22: The apostle rebukes the disorders in their partaking of the Lord's supper. The ordinances of Christ, if they do not make us better, will be apt to make us worse. If the use of them does not mend, it will harden. Upon coming together, they fell into divisions, schisms. Christians may separate from each other's communion, yet be charitable one towards another; they may continue in the same communion, yet be uncharitable. This last is schism, rather than the former. There is a careless and irregular eating of the Lord's supper, which adds to guilt. Many rich Corinthians seem to have acted very wrong at the Lord's table, or at the love-feasts, which took place at the same time as the supper. The rich despised the poor, and ate and drank up the provisions they brought, before the poor were allowed to partake; thus some wanted, while others had more than enough. What should have been a bond of mutual love and affection, was made an instrument of discord and disunion. We should be careful that nothing in our behavior at the Lord's table, appears to make light of that sacred institution. The Lord's supper is not now made an occasion for gluttony or reveling, but is it not often made the support of self-righteous pride, or a cloak for hypocrisy? Let us never rest in the outward forms of worship; but look to our hearts.

1 Corinthians 11:23

Vs. 23-34: The apostle describes the sacred ordinance, of which he had the knowledge by revelation from Christ. As to the visible signs, these are the bread and wine. What is eaten is called bread, though at the same time it is said to be the body of the Lord, plainly showing that the apostle did not mean that the bread was changed into flesh. St. Matthew tells us, our Lord bid them all drink of the cup, ^{4B27}Matthew 26:27, as if he would, by this expression, provide against any believer being deprived of the cup. The things signified by these outward signs, are Christ's body and blood, his body broken, his blood shed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and sacrifice. Our Savior's actions were, taking the bread and cup, giving thanks, breaking the bread, and giving both the one and the other. The actions of the communicants were, to take the bread and eat, to take the cup and drink, and to do both in remembrance of Christ. But the outward acts are not the whole, or the principal part, of what is to be done

at this holy ordinance. Those who partake of it, are to take him as their Lord and Life, yield themselves up to him, and live upon him. Here is an account of the ends of this ordinance. It is to be done in remembrance of Christ, to keep fresh in our minds his dying for us, as well as to remember Christ pleading for us, in virtue of his death, at God's right hand. It is not merely in remembrance of Christ, of what he has done and suffered; but to celebrate his grace in our redemption. We declare his death to be our life, the spring of all our comforts and hopes. And we glory in such a declaration; we show forth his death, and plead it as our accepted sacrifice and ransom. The Lord's supper is not an ordinance to be observed merely for a time, but to be continued. The apostle lays before the Corinthians the danger of receiving it with an unsuitable temper of mind; or keeping up the covenant with sin and death, while professing to renew and confirm the covenant with God. No doubt such incur great guilt, and so render themselves liable to spiritual judgments. But fearful believers should not be discouraged from attending at this holy ordinance. The Holy Spirit never caused this scripture to be written to deter serious Christians from their duty, though the devil has often made this use of it. The apostle was addressing Christians, and warning them to beware of the temporal judgments with which God chastised his offending servants. And in the midst of judgment, God remembers mercy: he many times punishes those whom he loves. It is better to bear trouble in this world, than to be miserable for ever. The apostle points out the duty of those who come to the Lord's table. Self-examination is necessary to right attendance at this holy ordinance. If we would thoroughly search ourselves, to condemn and set right what we find wrong, we should stop Divine judgments. The apostle closes all with a caution against the irregularities of which the Corinthians were guilty at the Lord's table. Let all look to it, that they do not come together to God's worship, so as to provoke him, and bring down vengeance on themselves.

CHAPTER 12

The variety of use of spiritual gifts are shown. (1-11) In the human body every member has its place and use. (12-26) This is applied to the church of Christ. (27-30) And there is something more excellent than spiritual gifts. (31)

◀111▶ **1 Corinthians 12:1**

Vs. 1-11: Spiritual gifts were extraordinary powers bestowed in the first ages, to convince unbelievers, and to spread the gospel. Gifts and graces greatly differ. Both were freely given of God. But where grace is given, it is for the salvation of those who have it. Gifts are for the advantage and salvation of others; and there may be great gifts where there is no grace. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were chiefly exercised in the public assemblies, where the Corinthians seem to have made displays of them, wanting in the spirit of piety, and of Christian love. While heathens, they had not been influenced by the Spirit of Christ. No man can call Christ Lord, with believing dependence upon him, unless that faith is wrought by the Holy Ghost. No man could believe with his heart, or prove by a miracle, that Jesus was Christ, unless by the Holy Ghost. There are various gifts, and various offices to perform, but all proceed from one God, one Lord, one Spirit; that is, from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the origin of all spiritual blessings. No man has them merely for himself. The more he profits others, the more will they turn to his own account. The gifts mentioned appear to mean exact understanding, and uttering the doctrines of the Christian religion; the knowledge of mysteries, and skill to give advice and counsel. Also the gift of healing the sick, the working of miracles, and to explain Scripture by a peculiar gift of the Spirit, and ability to speak and interpret languages. If we have any knowledge of the truth, or any power to make it known, we must give all the glory of God. The greater the gifts are, the more the possessor is exposed to temptations, and the larger is the measure of grace needed to keep him humble and spiritual; and he will meet with more painful experiences and humbling dispensations. We have little cause to glory in any gifts bestowed on us, or to despise those who have them not.

1 Corinthians 12:12

Vs. 12-26: Christ and his church form one body, as Head and members. Christians become members of this body by baptism. The outward rite is of Divine institution; it is a sign of the new birth, and is called therefore the washing of regeneration, ^{508B} Titus 3:5. But it is by the Spirit, only by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that we are made members of Christ's body. And by communion with Christ at the Lord's supper, we are strengthened, not by drinking the wine, but by drinking into one Spirit. Each member has its form, place, and use. The meanest makes a part of the body. There must be a distinction of members in the body. So Christ's members have different powers and different places. We should do the duties of our own place, and not murmur, or quarrel with others. All the members of the body are useful and necessary to each other. Nor is there a member of the body of Christ, but may and ought to be useful to fellow-members. As in the natural body of man, the members should be closely united by the strongest bonds of love; the good of the whole should be the object of all. All Christians are dependent one upon another; each is to expect and receive help from the rest. Let us then have more of the spirit of union in our religion.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Vs. 27-31: Contempt, hatred, envy, and strife, are very unnatural in Christians. It is like the members of the same body being without concern for one another, or quarreling with each other. The proud, contentious spirit that prevailed, as to spiritual gifts, was thus condemned. The offices and gifts, or favors, dispensed by the Holy Spirit, are noticed. Chief ministers; persons enabled to interpret Scripture; those who labored in word and doctrine; those who had power to heal diseases; such as helped the sick and weak; such as disposed of the money given in charity by the church, and managed the affairs of the church; and such as could speak divers languages. What holds the last and lowest rank in this list, is the power to speak languages; how vain, if a man does so merely to amuse or to exalt himself! See the distribution of these gifts, not to every one alike, ver. 29, 30: This were to make the church all one, as if the body were all ear, or all eye. The Spirit distributes to every one as he will. We must be content though we are lower and less than others. We must not despise

others, if we have greater gifts. How blessed the Christian church, if all the members did their duty! Instead of coveting the highest stations, or the most splendid gifts, let us leave the appointment of his instruments to God, and those in whom he works by his providence. Remember, those will not be approved hereafter who seek the chief places, but those who are most faithful to the trust placed in them, and most diligent in their Master's work.

CHAPTER 13

The necessity and advantage of the grace of love. (1-3) Its excellency represented by its properties and effects; (4-7) and by its abiding, and its superiority. (8-13)

1 Corinthians 13:1

Vs. 1-3: The excellent way had in view in the close of the former chapter, is not what is meant by charity in our common use of the word, alms giving, but love in its fullest meaning; true love to God and man. Without this, the most glorious gifts are of no account to us, of no esteem in the sight of God. A clear head and a deep understanding, are of no value without a benevolent and charitable heart. There may be an open and lavish hand, where there is not a liberal and charitable heart. Doing good to others will do none to us, if it be not done from love to God, and goodwill to men. If we give away all we have, while we withhold the heart from God, it will not profit. Nor even the most painful sufferings. How are those deluded who look for acceptance and reward for their good works, which are as scanty and defective as they are corrupt and selfish!

1 Corinthians 13:4

Vs. 4-7: Some of the effects of charity are stated, that we may know whether we have this grace; and that if we have not, we may not rest till we have it. This love is a clear proof of regeneration, and is a touchstone of our professed faith in Christ. In this beautiful description of the nature and effects of love, it is meant to show the Corinthians that their conduct had, in many respects, been a contrast to it. Charity is an utter enemy to selfishness; it does not desire or seek its own praise, or honor, or profit, or pleasure. Not that charity destroys all regard to ourselves, or that the charitable man should neglect himself and all his interests. But charity never seeks its own to the hurt of others, or to neglect others. It ever prefers the welfare of others to its private advantage. How good-natured and amiable is Christian charity! How excellent would Christianity appear to the world, if those who profess it were more under this Divine principle, and paid due regard to the command on which its blessed Author laid the chief stress! Let us ask whether this Divine love dwells in

our hearts. Has this principle guided us into becoming behavior to all men? Are we willing to lay aside selfish objects and aims? Here is a call to watchfulness, diligence, and prayer.

1 Corinthians 13:8

Vs. 8-13: Charity is much to be preferred to the gifts on which the Corinthians prided themselves. From its longer continuance. It is a grace, lasting as eternity. The present state is a state of childhood, the future that of manhood. Such is the difference between earth and heaven. What narrow views, what confused notions of things, have children when compared with grown men! Thus shall we think of our most valued gifts of this world, when we come to heaven. All things are dark and confused now, compared with what they will be hereafter. They can only be seen as by the reflection in a mirror, or in the description of a riddle; but hereafter our knowledge will be free from all obscurity and error. It is the light of heaven only, that will remove all clouds and darkness that hide the face of God from us. To sum up the excellences of charity, it is preferred not only to gifts, but to other graces, to faith and hope. Faith fixes on the Divine revelation, and assents thereto, relying on the Divine Redeemer. Hope fastens on future happiness, and waits for that; but in heaven, faith will be swallowed up in actual sight, and hope in enjoyment. There is no room to believe and hope, when we see and enjoy. But there, love will be made perfect. There we shall perfectly love God. And there we shall perfectly love one another. Blessed state! how much surpassing the best below! God is love, ^{4:8}1 John 4:8, 16. Where God is to be seen as he is, and face to face, there charity is in its greatest height; there only will it be perfected.

CHAPTER 14

Prophecy preferred to the gift of tongues. (1-5) The unprofitableness of speaking in unknown languages. (6-14) Exhortations to worship that can be understood. (15-25) Disorders from vain display of gifts; (26-33) and from women speaking in the church. (34-40)

1 Corinthians 14:1

Vs. 1-5: Prophesying, that is, explaining Scripture, is compared with speaking with tongues. This drew attention, more than the plain interpretation of Scripture; it gratified pride more, but promoted the purposes of Christian charity less; it would not equally do good to the souls of men. What cannot be understood, never can edify. No advantage can be reaped from the most excellent discourses, if delivered in language such as the hearers cannot speak or understand. Every ability or possession is valuable in proportion to its usefulness. Even fervent, spiritual affection must be governed by the exercise of the understanding, else men will disgrace the truths they profess to promote.

1 Corinthians 14:6

Vs. 6-14: Even an apostle could not edify, unless he spoke so as to be understood by his hearers. To speak words that have no meaning to those who hear them, is but speaking into the air. That cannot answer the end of speaking, which has no meaning; in this case, speaker and hearers are barbarians to each other. All religious services should be so performed in Christian assemblies, that all may join in, and profit by them. Language plain and easy to be understood, is the most proper for public worship, and other religious exercises. Every true follower of Christ will rather desire to do good to others, than to get a name for learning or fine speaking.

1 Corinthians 14:15

Vs. 15-25: There can be no assent to prayers that are not understood. A true Christian minister will seek much more to do spiritual good to men's

souls, than to get the greatest applause to himself. This is proving himself the servant of Christ. Children are apt to be struck with novelty; but do not act like them. Christians should be like children, void of guile and malice; yet they should not be unskillful as to the word of righteousness, but only as to the arts of mischief. It is a proof that a people are forsaken of God, when he gives them up to the rule of those who teach them to worship in another language. They can never be benefited by such teaching. Yet thus the preachers did who delivered their instructions in an unknown tongue. Would it not make Christianity ridiculous to a heathen, to hear the ministers pray or preach in a language which neither he nor the assembly understood? But if those who minister, plainly interpret Scripture, or preach the great truths and rules of the gospel, a heathen or unlearned person might become a convert to Christianity. His conscience might be touched, the secrets of his heart might be revealed to him, and so he might be brought to confess his guilt, and to own that God was present in the assembly. Scripture truth, plainly and duly taught, has a wonderful power to awaken the conscience and touch the heart.

1 Corinthians 14:26

Vs. 26-33: Religious exercises in public assemblies should have this view; Let all be done to edifying. As to the speaking in an unknown tongue, if another were present who could interpret, two miraculous gifts might be exercised at once, and thereby the church be edified, and the faith of the hearers confirmed at the same time. As to prophesying, two or three only should speak at one meeting, and this one after the other, not all at once. The man who is inspired by the Spirit of God will observe order and decency in delivering his revelations. God never teaches men to neglect their duties, or to act in any way unbecoming their age or station.

1 Corinthians 14:34

Vs. 34-40: When the apostle exhorts Christian women to seek information on religious subjects from their husbands at home, it shows that believing families ought to assemble for promoting spiritual knowledge. The Spirit of Christ can never contradict itself; and if their revelations are against those of the apostle, they do not come from the same Spirit. The way to keep peace, truth, and order in the church, is to seek that which is good for

it, to bear with that which is not hurtful to its welfare, and to keep up good behavior, order, and decency.

CHAPTER 15

The apostle proves the resurrection of Christ from the dead. (1-11) Those answered who deny the resurrection of the body. (12-19) The resurrection of believers to eternal life. (20-34) Objections against it answered. (35-50) The mystery of the change that will be made on those living at Christ's second coming. (51-54) The believer's triumph over death and the grave, An exhortation to diligence. (55-58)

1 Corinthians 15:1

Vs. 1-11: The word resurrection, usually points out our existence beyond the grave. Of the apostle's doctrine not a trace can be found in all the teaching of philosophers. The doctrine of Christ's death and resurrection, is the foundation of Christianity. Remove this, and all our hopes for eternity sink at once. And it is by holding this truth firm, that Christians stand in the day of trial, and are kept faithful to God. We believe in vain, unless we keep in the faith of the gospel. This truth is confirmed by Old Testament prophecies; and many saw Christ after he was risen. This apostle was highly favored, but he always had a low opinion of himself, and expressed it. When sinners are, by Divine grace, turned into saints, God causes the remembrance of former sins to make them humble, diligent, and faithful. He ascribes to Divine grace all that was valuable in him. True believers, though not ignorant of what the Lord has done for, in, and by them, yet when they look at their whole conduct and their obligations, they are led to feel that none are so worthless as they are. All true Christians believe that Jesus Christ, and him crucified, and then risen from the dead, is the sun and substance of Christianity. All the apostles agreed in this testimony; by this faith they lived, and in this faith they died.

1 Corinthians 15:12

Vs. 12-19: Having shown that Christ was risen, the apostle answers those who said there would be no resurrection. There had been no justification, or salvation, if Christ had not risen. And must not faith in Christ be vain, and of no use, if he is still among the dead? The proof of the resurrection of the body is the resurrection of our Lord. Even those who died in the

faith, had perished in their sins, if Christ had not risen. All who believe in Christ, have hope in him, as a Redeemer; hope for redemption and salvation by him; but if there is no resurrection, or future recompense, their hope in him can only be as to this life. And they must be in a worse condition than the rest of mankind, especially at the time, and under the circumstances, in which the apostles wrote; for then Christians were hated and persecuted by all men. But it is not so; they, of all men, enjoy solid comforts amidst all their difficulties and trials, even in the times of the sharpest persecution.

◀150▶ **1 Corinthians 15:20**

Vs. 20-34: All that are by faith united to Christ, are by his resurrection assured of their own. As through the sin of the first Adam, all men became mortal, because all had from him the same sinful nature, so, through the resurrection of Christ, shall all who are made to partake of the Spirit, and the spiritual nature, revive, and live for ever. There will be an order in the resurrection. Christ himself has been the first-fruits; at his coming, his redeemed people will be raised before others; at the last the wicked will rise also. Then will be the end of this present state of things. Would we triumph in that solemn and important season, we must now submit to his rule, accept his salvation, and live to his glory. Then shall we rejoice in the completion of his undertaking, that God may receive the whole glory of our salvation, that we may for ever serve him, and enjoy his favor. What shall those do, who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Perhaps baptism is used here in a figure, for afflictions, sufferings, and martyrdom, as

◀111▶ **Matthew 20:22, 23.** What is, or will become of those who have suffered many and great injuries, and have even lost their lives, for this doctrine of the resurrection, if the dead rise not at all? Whatever the meaning may be, doubtless the apostle's argument was understood by the Corinthians. And it is as plain to us that Christianity would be a foolish profession, if it proposed advantage to themselves by their faithfulness to God; and to have our fruit to holiness, that our end may be everlasting life. But we must not live like beasts, as we do not die like them. It must be ignorance of God that leads any to disbelieve the resurrection and future life. Those who own a God and a providence, and observe how unequal things are in

the present life, how frequently the best men fare worst, cannot doubt as to an after-state, where every thing will be set to rights. Let us not be joined with ungodly men; but warn all around us, especially children and young persons, to shun them as a pestilence. Let us awake to righteousness, and not sin.

1 Corinthians 15:35

Vs. 35-50

1. How are the dead raised up? that is, by what means? How can they be raised?
2. As to the bodies which shall rise. Will it be with the like shape, and form, and stature, and members, and qualities?

The former objection is that of those who opposed the doctrine, the latter of curious doubters. To the first the answer is, This was to be brought about by Divine power; that power which all may see does somewhat like it, year after year, in the death and revival of the corn. It is foolish to question the Almighty power of God to raise the dead, when we see it every day quickening and reviving things that are dead. To the second inquiry; The grain undergoes a great change; and so will the dead, when they rise and live again. The seed dies, though a part of it springs into new life, though how it is we cannot fully understand. The works of creation and providence daily teach us to be humble, as well as to admire the Creator's wisdom and goodness. There is a great variety among other bodies, as there is among plants. There is a variety of glory among heavenly bodies. The bodies of the dead, when they rise, will be fitted for the heavenly bodies. The bodies of the dead, when they rise, will be fitted for the heavenly state; and there will be a variety of glories among them. Burying the dead, is like committing seed to the earth, that it may spring out of it again. Nothing is more loathsome than a dead body. But believers shall at the resurrection have bodies, made fit to be for ever united with spirits made perfect. To God all things are possible. He is the Author and Source of spiritual life and holiness, unto all his people, by the supply of his Holy Spirit to the soul; and he will also quicken and change the body by his Spirit. The dead in Christ shall not only rise, but shall rise thus gloriously changed. The bodies of the saints, when they rise again, will be

changed. They will be then glorious and spiritual bodies, fitted to the heavenly world and state, where they are ever afterwards to dwell. The human body in its present form, and with its wants and weaknesses, cannot enter or enjoy the kingdom of God. Then let us not sow to the flesh, of which we can only reap corruption. And the body follows the state of the soul. He, therefore, who neglects the life of the soul, casts away his present good; he who refuses to live to God, squanders all he has.

1 Corinthians 15:51

Vs. 51-58: All the saints should not die, but all would be changed. In the gospel, many truths, before hidden in mystery, are made known. Death never shall appear in the regions to which our Lord will bear his risen saints. Therefore let us seek the full assurance of faith and hope, that in the midst of pain, and in the prospect of death, we may think calmly on the horrors of the tomb; assured that our bodies will there sleep, and in the mean time our souls will be present with the Redeemer. Sin gives death all its hurtful power. The sting of death is sin; but Christ, by dying, has taken out this sting; he has made atonement for sin, he has obtained remission of it. The strength of sin is the law. None can answer its demands, endure its curse, or do away his own transgressions. Hence terror and anguish. And hence death is terrible to the unbelieving and the impenitent. Death may seize a believer, but it cannot hold him in its power. How many springs of joy to the saints, and of thanksgiving to God, are opened by the death and resurrection, the sufferings and conquests of the Redeemer! In verse

Vs. 58: we have an exhortation, that believers should be steadfast, firm in the faith of that gospel which the apostle preached, and they received. Also, to be unmovable in their hope and expectation of this great privilege, of being raised incorruptible and immortal. And to abound in the work of the Lord, always doing the Lord's service, and obeying the Lord's commands. May Christ give us faith, and increase our faith, that we may not only be safe, but joyful and triumphant.

CHAPTER 16

A collection for the poor at Jerusalem. (1-9) Timothy and Apollos commended. (10-12) Exhortation to watchfulness in faith and love. (13-18) Christian salutations. (19-24)

1 Corinthians 16:1

Vs. 1-9: The good examples of other Christians and churches should rouse us. It is good to lay up in store for good uses. Those who are rich in this world, should be rich in good works, ^{<5067>}1 Timothy 6:17, 18. The diligent hand will not make rich, without the Divine blessing, ^{<2000>}Proverbs 10:4, 22. And what more proper to stir us up to charity to the people and children of God, than to look at all we have as his gift? Works of mercy are real fruits of true love to God, and are therefore proper services on his own day. Ministers are doing their proper business, when putting forward, or helping works of charity. The heart of a Christian minister must be towards the people among whom he has labored long, and with success. All our purposes must be made with submission to the Divine providence, ^{<5045>}James 4:15. Adversaries and opposition do not break the spirits of faithful and successful ministers, but warm their zeal, and inspire them with fresh courage. A faithful minister is more discouraged by the hardness of his hearers' hearts, and the backslidings of professors, than by the enemies' attempts.

1 Corinthians 16:10

Vs. 10-12: Timothy came to do the work of the Lord. Therefore to vex his spirit, would be to grieve the Holy Spirit; to despise him, would be to despise Him that sent him. Those who work the work of the Lord, should be treated with tenderness and respect. Faithful ministers will not be jealous of each other. It becomes the ministers of the gospel to show concern for each other's reputation and usefulness.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Vs. 13-18: A Christian is always in danger, therefore should ever be on the watch. He should be fixed in the faith of the gospel, and never desert or

give it up. By this faith alone he will be able to keep his ground in an hour of temptation. Christians should be careful that charity not only reigns in their hearts, but shines in their lives. There is a great difference between Christian firmness and feverish warmth and transport. The apostle gave particular directions as to some who served the cause of Christ among them. Those who serve the saints, those who desire the honor of the churches, and to remove reproaches from them, are to be thought much of, and loved. They should willingly acknowledge the worth of such, and all who labored with or helped the apostle.

1 Corinthians 16:19

Vs. 19-24: Christianity by no means destroys civility. Religion should promote a courteous and obliging temper towards all. Those give a false idea of religion, and reproach it, who would take encouragement from it to be sour and morose. And Christian salutations are not mere empty compliments; but are real expressions of goodwill to others, and commend them to the Divine grace and blessing. Every Christian family should be as a Christian church. Wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, and he is among them, there is a church. Here is a solemn warning. Many who have Christ's name much in their mouths, have no true love to him in their hearts. None love him in truth, who do not love his laws, and keep his commandments. Many are Christians in name, who do not love Christ Jesus the Lord in sincerity. Such are separated from the people of God, and the favor of God. Those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ, must perish without remedy. Let us not rest in any religious profession where there is not the love of Christ, earnest desires for his salvation, gratitude for his mercies, and obedience to his commandments. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has in it all that is good, for time and for eternity. To wish that our friends may have this grace with them, is wishing them the utmost good. And this we should wish all our friends and brethren in Christ. We can wish them nothing greater, and we should wish them nothing less. True Christianity makes us wish those whom we love, the blessings of both worlds; this is meant in wishing the grace of Christ to be with them. The apostle had dealt plainly with the Corinthians, and told them of their faults with just severity; but he parts in love, and with a solemn profession of his love to them for Christ's sake. May our love be with all who are in Christ Jesus. Let us try whether all

things appear worthless to us, when compared with Christ and his righteousness. Do we allow ourselves in any known sin, or in the neglect of any known duty? By such inquiries, faithfully made, we may judge of the state of our souls.