

First Corinthians

Lecture Notes

By

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Lecture Notes

1st Corinthians

INTRODUCTION

1a. The Author

1b. There is no question that Paul was the writer of the epistle.

1c. Internal evidence. See 1:1, 16:21.

2c. External evidence. Clement of Rome (c. A.D. 95) calls 1 Corinthians "the letter of the blessed Paul, the Apostle."

3c. "Both the external and the internal evidence for the Pauline authorship are so strong that those who attempt to show that the Apostle was not the writer succeed chiefly in proving their own incompetence as critics." [Archibald Robertson, and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC, 2d ed. (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), xvi.].

2b. Paul (formerly Saul of Tarsus) was a persecutor of the church (Acts 7:58-8:3). He was one of those responsible for the death of Stephen. But after a personal encounter with the Lord Himself, he turned into a preacher of Christ (Acts 9:1-31).

2a. The City

1b. Corinth was situated at the southern end of a narrow isthmus (about 4 miles across) which linked the Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece (locate Corinth in a map). It was a commercially strategic position because all traffic between Athens and northern Greece had to go through Corinth. The isthmus also functioned as a bridge between the Aegean and Adriatic seas. To get from one sea to the other, sailors would often go by way of Corinth, hauling their ships through the land rather than sailing round the

dangerous Cape Malea. There were a couple of sayings concerning the treacherous route, "Let him who sails round Malea forget his home," and, "Let him who sails round Malea first make his will." Hence, North-South, and East-West movements had to be carried out via Corinth.

2b. Corinth was notorious for her immorality. The Greek word *korinthiazesthai* was a bad word. It meant to live in sensual abandonment. To call a woman, a *Korinthia kore*, "a Corinthian girl," is to call her a prostitute. "The very name Corinth was synonymous with debauchery and there was one source of evil in the city which was known all over the civilized world. Above the isthmus towered the hill of the Acropolis, and on it stood the great temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. To that temple there were attached one thousand priestesses who were sacred prostitutes, and in the evenings they descended from the Acropolis and plied their trade upon the streets of Corinth, until it became a Greek proverb, 'It is not every man who can afford a journey to Corinth.' In addition to these cruder sins, there flourished far more recondite vices, which had come in with the traders and the sailors from the ends of the earth, until Corinth became not only a synonym for wealth and luxury, drunkenness and debauchery, but also for filth." [William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, The Daily Bible Series, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 2-3.].

3a. The Church

1b. The Apostle Paul was the founder of the Corinthian Church. His efforts are recorded in Acts 18:1-8. It was at the tail-end of his second missionary trip.

2b. The first congregation consisted of (1) Titus Justus, a God-fearing Greek (Acts 18:7), (2) Crispus, a Jewish leader (Acts 18:8a), and (3) "many of the Corinthians," (Acts 18:8b) probably proselytes (egs, Gaius [1 Cor 1:14, Roman name], and Stephanas [1 Cor 1:16, Grecian name]). It was thus a mixed congregation of both Jews and Greeks. Considering the hostility of the Jews to Paul and the Gospel, the majority of the converts seems to come from the latter.

3b. Not long after Paul's departure to Ephesus, Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, who was skilled in the knowledge of the Scripture, became the pastor-teacher of the Corinthian Church (Acts 18:24-19:1a cf 1:12). So, while Paul was in Ephesus, Apollos was in Corinth. We do not know exactly how long Apollos stayed in Corinth but a reasonable guess would be around 2-3 years, about the same time Paul spent in Ephesus, (Acts 19:1-10, 20:31, 1 Cor 16:12; thus c. A.D. 52-55).

4b. Problems soon developed in the young church. Paul heard of the various problems through (1) household of Chloe (1:11), (2) Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus who brought a love-gift to Paul on behalf of the church (16:17), and (3) Apollos (1:12, 16:12).

5b. Since Paul was not able to personally visit the church at that time, he wrote a long letter. The letter had a two-fold purpose: (1) to address the problems within the church (1-6), and (2) to answer the questions they have enquired of him (7-16). The epistle was written in Ephesus in about A.D. 55.

4a. The Apostle's Interactions with the Corinthians (Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Paul's Relations with the Church at Corinth: As Reflected in the Corinthian Correspondence." Writer's personal lecture notes, Grace Theological Seminary, Spring 1990). The following seeks to answer the questions: (1) Did Paul write only two epistles (ie 1 & 2 Cor) to the Corinthian Church (see 1 Cor 5:9)? (2) Did Paul pay only two visits to the Corinthian Church (see 2 Cor 12:14,21)?

1b. First Visit: Founding of the church at Corinth (A.D. 50-52) during the second journey (Acts 18). He was 18 months in Corinth and met a certain Jew by the name of Aquila. Worked as a tent-maker. Preached in the synagogue on weekends. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Timothy brought a gift from Philippi which enabled him to spend full-time in the work of the gospel. Set up his headquarters in the house of Justus. After he left Corinth, he went to Ephesus before returning to Jerusalem (Acts 18:23).

2b. First Letter: Lost Letter (1 Cor 5:9). After this letter word

came to Paul from the household of Chloe (1 Cor 1:11) and Apollos (1 Cor 16:12) that “there are contentions among you.” He also received a letter, probably through Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17 in context of v15-18; cf 1 Cor 7:1, 1 Cor 8:1). He sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Timothy also went to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17). Timothy may not have arrived at Corinth prior to the letter of 1 Corinthians.

3b. Second Letter: 1 Corinthians (A.D. 55). Written from Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8) on his third missionary journey (Acts 19). But the party spirit continued.

4b. Second Visit: The painful visit. This visit is not mentioned at all in Acts but reflected in 2 Corinthians. (1) 2 Cor 2:1: “But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.” (2) 2 Cor 12:14,21: “Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you;... And lest when I come again,...” (3) 2 Cor 13:1-2: “This is the third time I am coming to you... I told you before, and I foretell you, as if I were present, the second time;...” The “comings” seem to be actual visits. They, apparently, have been unsuccessful.

5b. Third Letter: The severe letter. Mentioned in 2 Cor 2:4,9, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears... For this end also did I write...” This letter was carried by Titus (2 Cor 12:18). Paul later regretted sending it but was glad that it brought forth fruit from the Corinthians. This good news was received by Paul when he was in Troas, off Macedonia, where he was met by Titus (2 Cor 2:12-13 cf 7:5-16).

6b. Fourth letter: 2 Corinthians. It was written a few months later from Macedonia (late A.D. 55-6). See 2 Cor 8:1, and 9:2-4.

7b. Third Visit: Third missionary journey. Acts 20:1-4, 2 Cor 12:14, and 13:1 which says, “This is the third time I am coming to you.”

EXPOSITION

1a. The Prologue (1:1-9).

A Greek epistle normally contains these 5 sections: (1) The greeting, (2) the prayer, (3) the thanksgiving, (4) the content proper, and (5) the concluding salutations. In the prologue, we are dealing with the first 3, the greeting (1:1-2), prayer (1:3), and thanksgiving (1:4-9).

1b. The Epistolary Introduction (1:1-3)

1c. The writer (1:1)

1d. The writer is Paul. He introduces himself in 3 ways:

1e. As an Apostle.

The Greek word *apostolos* can mean 2 things: (1) the normal sense of “messenger.” For example, Barnabas (Acts 14:14). And (2) the special sense of “Apostle,” i.e. an Apostle of the Lord. (Eph 1:1, 1 Pet 1:1) The latter sense is the usage here. He is an apostle “of Christ Jesus.” (1:1). Paul is asserting his apostolic authority . It seeks to tell the reader that the content of the letter is wholly inspired and demands his complete obedience. The Apostles command such authority because they are infallible in both (1) their preaching (1 Thess 2:13), and (2) writing (2 Tim 3:16) .

2e. As a called Apostle.

Paul was not a self-appointed apostle. Like the OT prophets, and the rest of the Apostles, Paul received a personal call (Acts 9).

3e. As a called Apostle by God’s will.

Paul’s apostleship was by the decreative will of God. This makes his intimation of a divinely conferred apostleship doubly emphatic. He was

not called by the other Apostles, but by the Lord Himself.

2d. The mention of Sosthenes.

1e. This Sosthenes who is called "the brother," and therefore a believer, is probably the same Sosthenes found in Acts 18:17. Some have suggested that he was Paul's amanuensis, but we cannot be sure of it.

2e. It is important to note that only Paul was the author of the epistle. Only the Apostles were under the Spirit's inspiration to pen Holy Writ. Note the singular "I give thanks" (1:4), "I beseech" (1:10).

2c. The recipient (1:2)

The letter was addressed to the Corinthians. They were described in 6 ways:

1d. They were a church of God.

The Greek *ekklesia* is derived from the preposition *ek*, "out of," plus the verb *kaleo*, "to call." Etymologically, it has the idea of "to call out." The Church is an assembly of "called out" people (cf John 17:13-19).

Anti-fundamentalists and neo-evangelicals today refuse to see the etymological connotation of the word. Louw and Nida writes eisegetically, "Though some persons have tried to see in the term *ekklesia* a more or less literal meaning of 'called-out ones,' this type of etymologizing is not warranted either by the meaning of *ekklesia* in NT times or even by its earlier usage." This writer would fall under Louw and Nida's category of the "some." Even though it can be demonstrated that the word *ekklesia* means "a congregation," or "an assembly," the idea of a "called

out,” or “separated” entity is intrinsic to the word. See Spiros Zodhiates, *A Richer Life for You in Christ: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 1 based upon the Original Greek Text* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1972), 18-19.

2d. They were a local church.

They were a body of believers located in the city of Corinth.

3d. They were sanctified by Christ Jesus

le. This is positional sanctification, not sinless perfection. The sin nature is very much a part of believers even after conversion. Observe the problems in the Corinthian Church!

2e. Christ is the Sanctifier. We are made righteous before God the Father through His active and passive obedience.

4d. They were called saints.

Like Paul, who was called into the office of apostleship, they were called into the position of sainthood. Their salvation was wholly a divine act.

5d. They shared the same sainthood as other believers.

This position of sainthood belongs to every Christian, not just a special few as the Roman Catholics claim. How does one become a saint? By calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38, 4:12)

6d. They have the same Lord as other believers.

Paul is laying the foundation for his coming rebuke of the party-spirit within the Church. They

have forgotten that they have only one Lord.

3c. The Salutation (1:3)

1d. The pronouncement of blessing.

The Christian salutation usually consists of these 2 words: (1) Grace, and (2) Peace.

1e. Grace is the undeserved love of God to sinful mankind through the condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ whose life-sufferings and cross-work made it possible for man to be reconciled to God.

2e. The idea of peace here has to do with messianic salvation. It is a peace with God when a person acknowledges his sin and places his trust in Christ (Rom 5:1) .

3e. The word order is logical. Grace must come before there can be peace.

2d. The source of blessing

The dual blessings of grace and peace come from God Himself. The mentioning of the Father and the Son seeks to indicate the intimate relationship within the Godhead.

2b. The Apostolic Thanksgiving (1:4-9)

1c. The basis of thanksgiving (1:4)

The basis of the thanksgiving is grounded upon the fact that the Corinthians have experienced the grace of God. He is reminding them of the time when they received Christ as their Saviour.

2c. The reasons for thanksgiving (1:5-9)

Because:

1d. They have been richly blessed with both the utterance and the understanding of spiritual truths.

2d. The testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in their midst. The gospel preached to them was authenticated by the apostolic signs (Mark 16:20, 2 Cor 12:12).

3d. They have been bestowed with all the different kinds of spiritual grace-gifts mentioned in 12:4-11.

4d. The Lord will keep them blameless until the day He returns. The word "blameless" is a legal term. They were blameless on account of Christ's righteousness, not their's (Rom 8:33-34).

5d. The Lord is faithful to keep all His promises. Once he saves us, he saves us to the very end (Rom 8:30-39).

2a. The Problem of Division in the Church (1:10-4:21)

1b. The Reaction to Divisions in the Church (1:10-17)

1c. The appeal for unity (1:10-12)

1d. Unity of speech

They were told to "speak the same thing." In other words, "be in agreement (in the things of the Lord)."

2d. Unity of body

The Greek word *schismata* (English, "schism") is used. There were factions within the church. Paul is calling for harmony.

3d. Unity of mindset

They were told to think the same attitude and opinion; to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:3-8). The word *katartizo*, "to join together," was used by the Greeks for "the setting of broken bones and for reconciling political factions." [Robert G. Gromacki, *Called to be Saints* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 10.]. In Matt 4:21, it is used for the mending of fishing nets.

2c. The nature of division (1:11-12)

1d. There was fierce rivalry.

The word *erides* is a strong word for conflict. The conflict was characterized by loud shoutings, name callings, and table-banging. The confrontations were verbal rather than physical in nature. People full of *eris* are always saying bad things about other people.

2d. There was a party spirit.

Apparently, the Church was split into 4 groups:

1e. The Paul-party. Paul was founder of the church. These were the members who were loyal to him.

2e. The Apollos-party. Apollos was their pastor. Some were drawn to him because he was a polished speaker. A man of letters (i.e. degrees).

3e. The Cephas-party. Peter was the chief Apostle, leader of the Jerusalem Church. This group had Judaizing tendencies. They probably questioned Paul's apostleship also.

4e. The Christ-party. Could be indicative of a group who discerned the errors of the above groups. Or they could be those who had a pride

complex, a holier-than-thou attitude.

3c. The rebuke for division (1:13-17)

The rebuke came in a series of 3 rhetorical questions:

1d. "Is Christ divided?" To give a better idea, the question could be phrased, "Does Christ disagree with Himself?!" The obvious answer is "No!" Throughout His earthly ministry, Christ manifested a oneness of purpose. The question could also refer to the hypostatic union of Christ. He is 1 person with 2 natures (fully human and fully divine; "without mixture, without change, without division, without separation"). He is not and cannot be divided.

2d. "Was Paul crucified for you?" Of course not. The people did not owe their salvation to Paul. He was a sinner saved by grace, just like them.

3d. "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Again the answer is "No." Baptism is performed only in the name of the triune God (Matt 28:19). Paul was glad that he only baptized a handful in the church, probably because this might have given the Corinthians more reasons for division. The essence of Christianity is its message, the gospel of Christ; "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom 1:16). The crux of Christianity is not in its external rites. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward faith. It is the faith that saves, not the sign. Read my tract on "Baptismal Regeneration Examined."

2b. The Causes of Divisions in the Church (1:18-4:21)

There were 2 causes:

1c. A wrong understanding of the gospel message (1:18-3:4)

1d. The gospel message is not based upon humanistic rationale (1:18-25)

1e. Thesis (1:18)

Paul's thesis is that it is the "word of the cross" (*ho logos tou stauros*), and not the "wisdom of words" (*sophia logou*), that saves. It is the Cross-word that has power, not worldly philosophy.

2e. Proof-text (1:19)

For proof, Paul cites Isa 29:14 (cf Isa 19:12, 33:18). At that time, Assyria had threatened Judah. Judah could go to 2 places for help (1) Jehovah, or (2) Egypt. She chose the latter (2 Kgs 18:21). The irony is that it was Egypt who forsook Judah, and God who saved her. God miraculously slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night. The rest of the Assyrian army, terrified by the onslaught, fled home in the morning (Isa 37:36-37).

3e. Application (1:20-24)

Paul applies his teaching with 4 rhetorical questions:

1f. "Wise?" These are the Greek philosophers (see Acts 17:22-32).

2f. "Scribe?" The Jewish scholars of the Law.

3f. "Disputer?" The debaters (see Acts 6:9, 9:29, 17:18, 28:29).

4f. "Wisdom?" The above people whom the world considers "scholars" are foolish before God (learn from Jesus; see Luke

2:46-47, 20:1-47).

5f. All the wisdom of the world combined has failed to find God. It is God who found man through the simplicity of the gospel which the world considers foolish. The Jews look for the miraculous. The Greeks look for the esoteric. But- God is pleased to use an ordinary method - preaching, and a simple message - gospel, to save His people. This prevents man from boasting. God receives all the glory because salvation is totally His work. It is the power and the wisdom of God.

4e. Restatement of thesis (1:25)

This verse really drives home the point of the passage: the foolishness of wisdom. What the wisdom of the world could not accomplish, the foolishness of God did. Surely, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

2d. The gospel message is not for the intellectually proud (1:26-31)

1e. The nature of God's calling (1:26)

The Corinthian church did not consist of these 3 main groups of people:

1f. The wise. The university professors, or Ph.Ds.

2f. The mighty. The members of parliament, and the colonels, or generals.

3f. The noble. The royal family. The Greek word is *eugenes*, which literally means "of

good parentage," or "well-born."

2e. The purpose of God's calling (1:27-28).

1f. The purpose is two-fold: (1) to put to shame the wise, and (2) to render inoperative their wisdom.

2f. The people used by God for this purpose are in direct contrast with those of v26.

1g. The foolish, or unlearned. This word used is *moros* where the English "moron" is derived.

2g. The weak, or physically handicapped. The word *asthenes* generally refers to a person with limited abilities or capabilities, be they moral (Rom 5:6) or physical (Matt 25:43).

3g. The base, or ignoble. The Greek *agene* (the alpha privative, which means "not," plus *gennao*, to be born), means "of lowly birth."

3e. The result of God's calling (1:29-31)

1d. The right to glory does not belong to man (1:29).

Paul in another place says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph 2:8-9).

2d. The right to glory belongs only to God (1:29-30)

The work of salvation (justification, sanctification, and glorification), is totally the work of God. Christ saved us through His active obedience (i.e. His keeping of the Law on our behalf), and His passive obedience (i.e. His dying on the cross in our place). We owe our past, present, and future redemption to Christ. Paul says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Tit 3:5).

3d. The gospel message is not based upon oratorical skills (2:1-5)

Paul now reminds the Corinthians of the power of the gospel they experienced when he first preached to them (Acts 18:1-18).

1e. The simplicity of his preaching (2:1-2).

Paul did not add to or subtract from the gospel. He did not try to embellish the gospel. He simply preached the message as it is: "Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

2e. The frailty of his appearance (2:3-5)

The power of God and the power of His gospel were demonstrated in Paul's ministry. The physical odds were against Paul for he was before them ...

1f. In poor physical condition.

There are 2 interpretations:

1g. He was in poor health due to the many beatings he had received (eg. Acts 16:22-24).

2g. He was physically unimpressive (2 Cor 10:10). Tradition has it that Paul was a short and ugly man.

2f. In poor emotional condition.

There are 2 interpretations:

1g. He was extremely mindful of the awesome responsibility of the ministry (cf Phil 2:12).

2g. He was afraid of being verbally and physically abused by the people (cf Acts 18:9-10, 23:11, 27:24)

4d. The gospel message is perceived by divine illumination (2:6-16)

The Word of God is wisdom (Prov 2:1-6). In this passage, the Apostle describes this wisdom.

1e. Divine wisdom can only be known by believers (2:6).

The word *teleios*, which means “perfect,” is normally used to indicate spiritual maturity. Here it is used of those who have been spiritually enlightened, ie, those who are born again.

2e. Divine wisdom is a mystery to the lost (2:7-10)

The word “mystery” is a modified transliteration of the Greek word *musterion*, meaning “secret.” A mystery is often used with reference to a truth that has been hidden in the past, but now revealed in Christ. Here, it refers to the salvific truth of the gospel which remains hidden to the lost whose minds are blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:3-4). The natural man receives not the things of the Holy Spirit (2:13). [To have a proper understanding of the epistle, it is important to note that Paul divides men into 2 categories: (1) The unbeliever or the worldly man (*psuchikos*, v.14), i.e. the unspiritual man; one who is totally given over to sinful sensual desires. (2) The Christian or the spiritual man (*pneumatikos*, 3:1), i.e. one who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This includes the carnal man (*sarkikos*, 3:1), i.e. the backslidden Christian or the babes in Christ.]

Human philosophy cannot lead a person to the living and true God. For example, Socrates talks about a Universal Law or Reason that holds everything together, and identifies it as the soul of man. According to him, Reason permeates all things, and so God is in everything. Hailed as one of the greatest thinkers, he is unable to know who God really is.

3e. Divine wisdom is revelation to the saved

(2:10-16).

Only Christians by illumination of the Spirit can know and understand the mystery of the gospel (Eph 3:5,9, Col 1:26). This is because the content of the gospel is spiritual. Thus, only spiritual men (i.e. those who are Spirit endued) are able to understand it. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned (cf John 16:13). The Spiritual man is capable of understanding all spiritual truths. The unspiritual man is not able to assess or critique him because he does not have the mind of Christ (2:15-16).

The clause in verse 13 “comparing spiritual things (*pneumatika*, neuter) with spiritual (*pneumatikois*, masculine or neuter)” speaks of the following things: (1) Explaining spiritual truths to spiritual men; (2) Interpreting spiritual truths in the light of other spiritual truths, i.e. comparing Scripture with Scripture; and (3) Combining spiritual things with spiritual words, i.e. “making the utterance correspond to the thought, using spirit-taught words to express spirit-given truth.” (James L. Boyer, *For A World Like Ours: Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1971), 41. See also S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., “The First Epistle to the Corinthians,” *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer, and Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), 1233. Johnson comments, “The apostle received his truth from God and clothed it in language given by God’s Spirit. His claim is that his utterance was God-given and Spirit-led.” This is, thus, one proof-text for the infallibility of the preaching ministry of the Apostles.

5d. The gospel message should cause spiritual growth (3:1-4)

A believer should progress from the milk of

God's Word to the meat. The Corinthians have displayed that they were still infants in the faith because of their carnality. It would be about 3 years since they have received Christ, and they are still not able to go beyond the elementary teachings of the faith (cf Heb 5:11-6:2). They were backsliding Christians, i.e. the *sarkikos* type.

2c. A wrong understanding of the Christian ministry (3:5-4:5)

By creating factions around leaders, they have shown that they have a faulty perspective of Christian leaders and their ministry. Paul had to instruct them concerning the position of Christian leaders.

1d. The instruction (3:5-17)

Ministers are mere servants of God. To explain this, Paul gives 2 illustrations:

1e. A farmer (3:5-9)

Paul and Apollos are but farmers in the Lord's vineyard. They simply plant the seed and water it. They had nothing to do with its growth. God is the one who causes the growth. He is the Creator. Paul preached the gospel, and Apollos taught them the Word, but it was God who saved them. He is their Saviour.

2e. A builder (3:10-17)

1f. An Architect (3:10-11)

Paul was the architect. Christ, the chief Architect (who Himself is the key foundation, the cornerstone), has given him the blueprint of the church. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he has laid the

foundation. In other words, he has given to them the inspired Word of God which is all-sufficient for faith and practice (cf Eph 2:20, 2 Tim 3:16-17).

2f. The sub-contractors (3:12-17)

1g. Those who build upon that foundation must be careful how they do it. There are 2 sets of building materials, one is good, the other is bad.

1h. First set: gold, silver and precious stones; materials which are expensive, beautiful, and durable.

2h. Second set: wood, hay and stubble; materials which are cheap, ordinary, and easily destroyed.

2g. There will be a day of judgment (cf 2 Cor 5:10, the *bema*), when every servant's work will be tested. This judgment is a judgment of service not salvation (3:15). Some will be rewarded, others will be shamed (Matt 6:1-6, 25:1-40).

2d. The admonition (3:18-4:5)

The admonition is directed to 2 groups of people:

1e. The believers (3:18-23).

Paul reiterates his warning against:

1f. Worldly wisdom (cf 1:18-25).

To be wise in the world is to be a fool in God's sight. If anyone wants to be wise before God, he must become a fool to the world. To support his point, Paul cites 2 OT passages (Job 5:13, and Ps 94:11) .

2f. Exalting leaders (cf 1:12, 3:5).

Everyone, and everything belongs to God. Only He deserves all the glory. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism's answer to question 1 states, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

2e. The ministers (4:1-5)

1f. The job description (4:1)

1g. A lowly labourer (4:1a)

Instead of using the more common *diakonos*, Paul uses *huperetes*, "an under-rower." Slaves were usually used for this work of propelling a ship through the water by means of rowing. In the NT, the word is used to refer to various types of servants, like, attendants to a king, officers of the Sanhedrin, attendants of magistrates, and Jewish Temple guards. Paul is therefore saying that he is a nobody; just a lowly servant who is willing to do the Master's bidding.

2g. A housekeeper (4:1b)

The word *oikonomos* is a combination of 2 words, *oikos*,

“house,” and *nomos*, “law,” hence “house law.” So, it refers to a slave in charge of the whole administration of the house or the estate; he controlled the staff; he issued the supplies; but, however much he controlled the household staff, he himself was still a slave where the master was concerned. The Lord had given him the awesome responsibility of guiding the church. He must, thus be careful to follow the Lord’s every directive with reference to imparting divine revelation.

3f. The job requirement (4:2)

There is only one requirement, “faithfulness.” The servant of God must be absolutely loyal to his calling and to his Lord by keeping the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). The Lord commands, “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Rev 2:10).

4f. The job accountability (4:3-5)

The word for “judge” here is *anakrino* a legal term, meaning to conduct a judicial inquiry – to investigate in court, to hear a case, to interrogate, to question. The assessment of one’s ministry is not through

1g. Man (4:3a)

Gromacki comments, “Paul knew that the approval or disapproval of his stewardship did not rest upon their acceptance or rejection of his ministry. They had not

commissioned him; therefore, he was not accountable to them. He was not bothered by the fact that they did attempt to evaluate his ministry and that they compared him to others....Success by the world is viewed outwardly and quantitatively." (*Called*, 52).

2g. Self (4:3b)

Paul says he does not even appraise himself. As Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9). Though Paul knows nothing against himself, he admits that his own self-appraisal is not what ultimately counts.

3g. Christ (4:4-5)

What ultimately counts is the Lord's assessment of him. Only the Lord can see the heart of a man. Only the Lord can answer his own questions: "What are his motivations in serving me?" "Is it to seek glory for himself, or does he sincerely want to glorify Me?"

3c. The solution to the problem (4:6-21)

1d. The application (4:6-13)

1e. The chiding (4:6-8)

Their pride was manifested by their party-spirit; their desire to associate with men of high status, and to take sides. They should not

consider men above what they actually are according to the Scripture (cf 3:5-7, 4:1-5).

The word *meteschematisa* ("I have applied") here can be better translated "I have adapted." (Johnson, "Corinthians," 1235). Paul here uses his name and Apollos' in place of the names of the culprits of the division. I can think of no other reason than the fact that he wants to temper his admonition with gentleness (cf Eph 4:15, Col 4:6). He wants to give them a chance to repent. Paul usually reasons and pleads before he rebukes and punishes (see 4:14-15). However, with false teachers, he minces no words to denounce them and their heresies (see Gal 1:8, Tit 1:10-11, 1 Tim 1:20, 2 Tim 2:17-18). There are two purpose clauses introduced by *hina* following *meteschematisa*: (1) "that ye might learn in us." Paul here refers to what he has already written in chapters 1-3 concerning the position of the servants of God (e.g. Paul an Apostle [1:1], God's messengers who have taught you God's Word [2:1], merely servants as under-rowers, bond-slaves, stewards or butlers [3:5]. Paul was trying to tell them, "Do not think of us more highly than you ought to. God is the One who gives the increase." And (2) "that no one of you be puffed up." Paul speaks against the party-spirit, the power struggle, political intrigues found in the Corinthian Church. He is against those who say, "I am of Paul, and so I am greater than those of Peter or Apollos."

2e. The role-model (4:9-13)

They ought to consider the example of the apostles. For their sake, the apostles had endured tremendous hardship. As apostles, they were looked down by the others and were treated as scum (v.13 *perikatharmata*—the dirt that is collected after the floor is swept, or the .scum on

the walls of dirty toilets; and *peripsema* – the dirt rubbed off from the body). Paul exhorts them to have the same self-denying attitude. The world's view of greatness is money, status, power, degrees; but God's view of greatness is poverty, weakness, simplicity, lowliness, servanthood (cf Phil 2:5-11).

2d. The appeal (4:14-21)

1e. For the present (4:14-17)

1f. Paul pleads with them as a *paidagogos*, "an instructor" (v.15). This word occurs in the NT in only 2 places: (1) 1 Cor 4:15, and (2) Gal 3:24. Barclay supplied some historical insight to the word: "Up to the age of seven the Greek boy was almost exclusively in his mother's charge. But even then, if there was a *paidagogos* in the household, he had his say....It was when he went to school that the *paidagogos* really took over the management of the boy and retained it till the boy was eighteen. The *paidagogos* was not in our sense of the word a teacher at all. His duty was to accompany the boy to school each day and to see that he got there safely; to carry the boy's books and his lyre; to watch his conduct in school; to see to his conduct in the streets; he must see that he gave place to older people and becomingly silent in their presence; he must teach him to be well-mannered at table and to wear clothes with grave. He had to teach him all the Greek meant by *eukosmia*, good manners, good deportment, pleasantness of life. K.J. Freeman says of the *paidagogos* that he was a 'mixture of nurse, footman, chaperon and tutor'" See William Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook*

(New York: Harper and Row, n.d.), 87-8. A *paidagogos* was more than a lecturer, he was a mentor. He was responsible for both the intellectual and moral development of the child. See Norman H. Young, "The Figure of the *Paidagogos* in Art and Literature," *Biblical Archaeologist* (1990): 80-6.

2f. As their mentor, Paul instructs them to imitate him (v.16). The word "be followers" here is the Greek *mimitai* where we get the English word "mimic." The present tense of the verb indicates continuous, progressive action. They were commanded to begin imitating Paul, and to do so habitually.

2e. For the future (4:18-21)

Paul gives a very stern warning here. The proud ones better repent and humble themselves before he visits them again. Paul intimates that he will not spare them a "spanking" when he comes if they refuse to change. But he would like to visit them under better circumstances.

3a. The Problem of Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)

1b. The Nature of the Immorality (5:1)

The report of immorality in the church was not a rumour. The sin committed was actually committed. The sin is identified as "fornication." The word used here is *porneia* where the English "pornography" comes from. It generally refers to any kind of sexual immorality. Here, it is specifically used with reference to an incestuous relationship; a man was sleeping with "his father's wife." It does not say explicitly that the woman is his mother (cf. Lev 18:7-8), possibly the stepmother.

2b. The Indictment for the Immorality (5:2-5)

1c. Upon the church (5:2)

The church did not do anything about the sin. They had become dull to the problem. They were probably so engrossed with their internal dissensions that they paid no attention to the fornication that was going on. They were totally indifferent to it. There was no mourning. The shameful sin described as “not so much as named among the Gentiles” (v.1) was tolerated. Morality among the heathens was already very bad. In those days, the men had such thinking, “Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, but wives to bear us legitimate children.” What this person did was worse than what the unbelievers were doing. They ought to be sorrowful over the situation and rectify the problem. Since no disciplinary measures were forthcoming Paul had to act.

2c. Upon the individual (5:3-5)

1d. Nature of the punishment (5:3-4)

Paul invokes his apostolic authority. He says that he has already judged the individual and his judgment stands. They were to excommunicate him from the church in the name of the Lord. This was to be done publicly before the whole church.

2d. Purpose of the punishment (5:5)

The purpose of the punishment was two-fold:

1e. For “the destruction of the flesh.” The man was to be given over to Satan for bodily chastisement, i.e. physical afflictions, or death (cf. 11:30, 1 John 5:15-17). This is excommunication. Satan rules outside the sphere of the church. So to be “delivered unto Satan” is to be put out of the church into the sphere where Satan has dominion (i.e. the world – 2 Cor 4:4, Eph 2:2). The

punishment involves physical illness or affliction (e.g. God allowed Satan to afflict Job [Job 2:6]; Paul's thorn in the flesh was called a "messenger of Satan" [2 Cor 12:7], the parable of the prodigal son is another case in point). God uses the devil to chastise His children towards holy living.

2e. For "the salvation of the spirit." The salvation of this individual was in no wise forfeited. It is hoped that the physical sufferings he will go through will cause him to repent of his sin and be restored to the fellowship of the church.

There is a chiasmus in this verse:

A Satan
B Destruction
C Flesh
C1 Spirit
B1 Salvation
A1 The Lord

If a person is truly saved, the punishment will lead to repentance (e.g. David). But if he is unregenerate to begin with, the punishment may lead to rebellion (e.g. Pharaoh). In this case, in the light of 2 Cor 2:5-11, we know that this person repented. Compare this with 1 Tim 1:20 on Hymenaeus and Alexander who was also delivered unto Satan.

3b. The Causes of the Immorality (5:6-13)

1c. Their pride (5:6-8)

Paul says that their boasting is not good. Prov 16:18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and haughty spirit before a fall." If they allowed this sinful attitude to persist, it will lead them to a multitude of sins as was already evident among them. Pride is cancerous. Leaven is used as an

illustration to make the point clear. "Paul uses leaven as a symbol of the pervasiveness of evil (1 Cor 5:6) and makes an allegory on the casting out of leaven at Passover. Here malice and evil are the leaven which need to be replaced by sincerity and truth that the festival may be celebrated (1 Cor 5:7-8). Paul also uses leaven as a symbol of evil which has power to influence the whole as he cites the proverb "a little leaven leavens the lump (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9). See ZPEB, s.v. "Leaven," by J.P. Lewis.

2c. Their non-separation (5:9-10)

The Greek *sunanamignumi* literally means "to mix up together," or "to mingle." It has the idea of close-knit fellowship, or cooperative activity. They were associating with bad company. Bad company corrupt good morals. The bad company were of 2 kinds:

1d. The unbelievers (5:10)

Apparently, they had misunderstood Paul's previous instruction not to company with fornicators. They were not practising separation but isolation. Paul here corrects the misconception. He tells them that they need to be among sinners in order to reach them for Christ (cf John 17:14-15). Christians need to be in but not of the world.

2d. The believers (5:11-13)

The Corinthians have been keeping company with professing Christians who are still living like unbelievers. Paul applies a different standard on disobedient Christians. The church, as a disciplinary measure, should not have fellowship with a sinning believer until he repents of his sin. The degree of separation is definitely more intense. The members are told not to even have dinner with him (v.11).

4a. The Problem of Lawsuits Before Unbelievers (6:1-20)

The problem of Christians suing one another before unbelievers is a reflection of a deeper set of problems. They have so little understanding of (1) their position in Christ Jesus, and (2) their need to present a good testimony to the world.

Paul was extremely angry with the Corinthians. This is seen in his (1) expression of horror (vv.1,6), (2) series of rhetorical questions (vv.2-4,5b-6,7b), (3) sarcasm (v.5), and (4) rebuke (vv.8-11).

1b. The Reasons against Lawsuits before Unbelievers (6:1-11)

Because:

1c. Christians are able to handle their own disagreements (6:1-6) The issue which they had brought up to unbelieving magistrates had to do with material possessions rather than spiritual matters. The word *biotika* is used twice (v3,4). It refers to things “pertaining to daily life or existence.” (Louw and Nida, 1:506). The point Paul was making is very clear. Gromacki comments, “If believers in the future day are to have such an important task of judging, why do they view themselves as incompetent to make decisions about petty issues? This word for ‘matters’ (*kriterion*) is different than that in verse 1 (*pragma*). It refers to the least important courts or the smallest tribunals. Their future responsibility (“judge the world”) was like the Supreme Court in comparison to a justice of the peace (“judge the smallest matters”)” (*Called*, 75).

Paul said that they will judge angels (v.3). The word “angels” is used 4 times in this Epistle (4:9, 6:3, 11:10, 13:1). Question: Are these good angels or bad angels? Here it is probably referring to apostate angels (Calvin). Only fallen angels are said to be judged (2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6).

2c. Christians should learn to sacrifice their rights (6:7-8)

Christ taught non-resistance, or non-retaliation. The Lord said, “resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have

they cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (Matt 5:39-41). There is no reason for Christians to squabble with one another. The Lord is Judge and He will ultimately vindicate the innocent. The Christian's duty is to love. Paul says, "if a man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (Col 3:13-14).

3c. Non-Christians do not belong to the kingdom of God (6:9-11)

Unbelievers are already fundamentally flawed in their spiritual condition and conduct. How can those who are in spiritual darkness judge those who are in spiritual light. [The root meaning for *malakoi* is "soft." Here it means "male prostitutes" (men who sell their bodies dressed up like women) The word *arsenokoitai* refers to the homosexuals or sodomites.] The ones who have a right code of ethics are Christians because they have the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit applies that Word into their lives. They have been "washed," "sanctified," and "justified." Believers possess the moral code of God and are able to pass correct judgments. Unbelievers, on the other hand, judge according to man's standards, not God's.

2b. A Reminder that their Bodies belong to God (6:12-20)

Johnson writes, "The principle of liberty is stated with two limitations: (1) expediency i.e. *sumpherei*—useful or beneficial (italics mine), (cf. 10:23); (2) self control. **Lawful** and **power**, from the same root, form a designed play on words: 'All things are in my power, but I will not be brought under the power of anything.' The indulgence in a habit which has one in its grip is not liberty but slavery" (*Wycliffe*, 1238)

1c. The body is not meant for sin (6:12-18)

The reference to the body has to do with both the physical, and the spiritual aspects of it. Paul speaks of both

outward sins like gluttony, and inward sins, like fornication (v.13). Paul warns against using our bodies for sin. Since Christ lives in us, how can we even think of sleeping with a prostitute. This includes not only the physical adultery but also spiritual (cf. 10:16-22). Paul therefore commands, "Flee fornication" (v.18). The present tense of the imperative verb can be translated, "Keep on fleeing." Consider the example of Joseph who fled from the presence of Potiphar's seductive wife (Gen 39:10,12). Note Joseph's good theology when he said, "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9 cf v.15). But what does the words "sinneth against his own body" mean? Johnson admits the difficulty in the verse. He suggests, "Perhaps the meaning is that other sins, such as drunkenness, have effects on the body, but fornication is a sin wrought within the body and involves a monstrous denial of union with Christ by union with a harlot." (*Wycliffe*, 1239). Ironside gave a further insight, "Other sins do not affect the body, but this one sin is ruinous to body and soul alike." See H.A. Ironside, *Addresses on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (New Jersey: Loizeux Brothers, 1938), 195.

In his 'Confessions' St Augustine tells how in his unconverted days he had allowed himself to become the willing victim of wile and fleshly lusts. He lived his careless life as the pagans of that day, and associated with the corrupt and wicked members of society. When he got converted, the great question upon his mind was this, 'Will I every be able to live according to the Christian standard of holiness, will I ever be able to keep myself from the vile, sensuous life in which I have lived so long?' When he first yielded himself to Christ, he took as his life-text Romans 13:13,14, where the apostle exhorts the believer to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts. For long after his conversion he did not dare even to go near that part of the city where his godless companions of former days lived. But one day a matter of business called him there, and as he was walking along the street he suddenly saw one of the beautiful yet wicked companions of his folly. The moment her eyes lit upon him her face was illuminated with delight, and she came running with outstretched arms and

said, 'Austin! where have you been for so long? We have missed you so,' and he turned and gathered up his long philosopher's gown and started to run. It was not very dignified proceeding for a doctor, a professor of rhetoric, to run up the street with a godless girl running after him. She called to him, 'Austin, Austin, why do you run? It is only I!' He looked back and exclaimed, 'I run because it is not I.' And he was off again." Cited by Ironside, *Corinthians*, 195-6.

2c. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19-20)

The very reason why the body should not be used for sin is because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The word "temple" is significant. There are 2 words which can be used for temple: (1) *hieron*, and (2) *naos*. The former has a more general sense. It is often used to refer to the whole sanctuary. The latter has a more specific sense. It is normally used to indicate the inner sanctuary, the most holy place. The holy of holies is the place where God dwells. Likewise, the body of a believer is where the Holy Spirit dwells. The Spirit literally resides within the Christian and is given by God. Christians have been redeemed by God. The penalty of sin have been paid with a price - the blood of Jesus Christ. They are totally God's possession. The believer has no right of his own. The only thing required of him is to glorify God by means of his body.

5a. Instructions on Marriage (7:1-40)

From here begins the *peri de* section where questions raised by the Corinthian Church is answered by Paul one at a time (7:1,25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1).

1b. General Instructions (7:1-7)

1c. For the unmarried (7:1)

The words *gunaikos haptesthai*, literally, "to touch a woman," is an idiom which means "to marry a woman." Paul says it is "good" in the sense that it is "better" not to

marry. It must be clarified that marriage is not bad. In fact it is good and is well-spoken of in Scripture (Gen 2:18, Prov 18:22, Heb 13:4). It is a divine institution. It is good to get married, but better not to (vv.26,28,29,30).

2c. For the married (7:2-5)

1d. The need for marriage (7:2)

Marriage is necessary to avoid falling into sexual sins. Corinth, as already noted in the introduction, was a sexually promiscuous city. The Christians at Corinth were no doubt subjected to many temptations. Marriage is the only means whereby a man may avoid fornication. The text also stresses monogamy. Note the use of the singular throughout, "Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband."

2d. The obligations of marriage (7:3-5)

Both husband and wife are to meet each other's sexual needs. The word *opheile*, has the root idea of "to owe," or "to be in debt." Here, it refers to marital or conjugal duties. Both parties should willingly consent to have each other's sexual needs met. Abstinence from sexual activity between spouses should be based on mutual agreement, and for a short period only. Hodge's application of this passage is appropriate: "There is abundant evidence in the New Testament of the early manifestation of those principles of ascetism which soon produced such wide-spread effects, and which to so great a degree modified the reigning spirit of the church. The idea that marriage was a less holy state than celibacy, naturally led to the conclusion that married persons ought to separate; and it soon came to be regarded as an evidence of eminent spirituality when such separation was final. The Apostle teaches that neither party has the right to separate from the other; that no separation is to be allowed which is not

with mutual consent, for a limited time, for the purpose of special devotion, and with the definite intention of reunion. Nothing can be more foreign to the mind of the Apostle than the spirit which filled the monasteries and convents of the medieval church." (Hodge, *Corinthians*, 110).

3c. The choice of marriage (7:6-7)

The apostle is mindful to add that marriage or celibacy is a *may*, not a *must*. Nowhere does the Bible command a person to be married or to be single. Paul expresses his wish that everyone would remain single, not because it is a holier estate but because one may be unhindered to serve the Lord (cf 7:32-33). Nevertheless, the bottom line is "every man hath his proper gift of God." The word for "gift" here is the Greek *charisma*, "grace gift." It is the same word used for spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4). The gift of celibacy may be considered one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' words are appropriate here: "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." (Matt 19:11-12).

2b. Specific Instructions (7:8-40)

1c. On singlehood (7:8-9)

Paul is addressing virgins and widows. The word *agamois*, literally means "unmarried ones." It could therefore refer to single men as well. Paul encourages the singles to remain single but if they cannot control their sexual urge, then they better get married (although *gamesai* may be taken as an imperative, it is best to take it as an infinitive in conjunction with *purousthai*). The word *purousthai*, "to burn" has the sense of strong passion (cf Rom 1:27). It is to experience intense sexual desire - to burn with passion, to be

sexually aroused.

2c. On Christian marriage (7:10-11)

The Lord's injunctions are very clear. Marriage is for life (Matt 5:32, 19:3-9, Mark 10:2-12, Luke 16:18). Paul reiterates the permanency of marriage here. He lays down 4 directives. "First, the wife should not 'depart from' or be separated from her husband. The papyri contain references where this verb ('depart') is a technical term for divorce. Second, if the departure has already taken place or if it occurs in spite of the directive, the wife is to 'remain unmarried.' No cause for the departure is given here. There is no implication for a remarriage to a different partner in case of adultery or willful desertion. Third, the wife should attempt to be 'reconciled to her husband.' Fourth, the husband should not initiate separation or divorce by 'putting away' or leaving ... his wife. The first three commands focus on the wife, whereas the fourth centers on the husband. The term 'married' actually implies that marriage is a permanent relationship." (Gromacki, *Called*, 90).

3c. On mixed marriages (7:12-16)

The passage begins with Paul saying, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord." What did Paul mean? Hodge commented, "With regard to these mixed marriages our Lord had given no specific command; therefore Paul says, I speak, not the Lord." (Hodge, *Corinthians*, 114). As an Apostle, Paul speaks under divine inspiration. His words are no less important than the Lord's.

1d. The injunction to remain married (7: 12-13)

The permanency of the marriage bond applies to mixed marriages as well. It is a universal rule laid down by God. It must be noted that Paul is not intimating that believers are allowed to marry unbelievers. The Bible is clear that Christians should only marry those "in the Lord." (7:39, 2 Cor 6:14). The situation here has to do with a person who got married

while he was still an unbeliever but later received salvation. Should the marriage end because his/her spouse is still a heathen? Paul's immediate answer is in the negative. If the unbelieving mate is willing to remain married, he/she should not get a divorce.

2d. The reasons for remaining married (7:14)

Charles Hodge, the great Princeton theologian of the reformed tradition explained the text this way: "The assertion of the apostle is, that the unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified in virtue of the marriage relation with a believer. We have already seen that the word (*hagiazain*), to *sanctify*, means, 1. To cleanse. 2. To render morally pure. 3. To consecrate, to regard as sacred, and hence, to reverence or to hallow. Examples of the use of the word in the third general sense just mentioned are found in all parts of Scripture. Any person or thing consecrated to God, or employed in his service, is said to be sanctified. Thus, particular days appropriated to his service, the temple, its utensils, the sacrifices, the priests, the whole theocratical people, are called holy. Persons or things not thus consecrated are called profane, common, or unclean. To transfer any person or thing from this latter class to the former, is to sanctify him or it. 'What God hath cleansed (or sanctified), that call not thou common,'" Acts 10, 15. Every creature of God is good, and is to be received with thanksgiving, 'For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer,' 1 Tim. 4, 5. This use of the word is specially frequent in application to persons and communities. The Hebrew people were sanctified (i.e. consecrated), by being selected from other nations and devoted to the service of the true God. They were, therefore, constantly called holy. All who joined them, or who were intimately connected with them, became in the same sense, holy. Their children were holy; so were their wives. 'If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are also the branches,' Rom. 11, 16. That is, if the parents be holy,

so are also the children. Any child, the circumstances of whose birth secured it a place within the pale of theocracy, or commonwealth of Israel, was, according to the constant usage of Scripture, said to be holy. In none of these cases does the word express any subjective or inward change. A lamb consecrated as a sacrifice, and therefore holy, did not differ in its nature from another lamb. The priests or people, holy in the sense of set apart to the service of God, were in their inward state the same as other men. Children born within the theocracy, and therefore holy, were none the less conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. They were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, Eph. 2, 3. When, therefore, it is said that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband, the meaning is, not that they are rendered inwardly holy, nor that they are brought under a sanctifying influence, but that they were sanctified by their intimate union with a believer, just as the temple sanctified the gold connected with it; or the altar the gift laid upon it, Matt. 23, 17. 19. The sacrifice itself was merely a part of the body of the lamb, laid down upon the altar, though its internal nature remained the same, it became something sacred. Thus, the pagan husband, in virtue of his union with a Christian wife, although he remained a pagan, was sanctified; he assumed a new relation; he was set apart to the service of God, as the guardian of one of his chosen ones, and as the parent of children who, in virtue of their believing mother, were children of the covenant (Hodge, *Corinthians*, 115-6). Study on infant baptism in the light of covenant theology (Gen 17:4-14, Acts 2:38-39) in Buswell's *Theology*, II:259-66.

S. Lewis Johnson is correct to say that "The union is lawful and confers privilege on the members..., privileges such as the protection of God and the opportunity of being in close contact with one in God's family. This might ease the path to conversion for the unbelieving." (*Wycliffe*, 1240).

3d. The excuse not to remain married (7:15-16)

The only excuse for breaking the marriage bond is when the unbelieving spouse desires a divorce. In such cases, the believer should not continue to keep his spouse. The Westminster Confession allows for divorce only on 2 grounds: (1) adultery (Matt 19:9) and (2) desertion (1 Cor 7:15). This situation is clearly under the latter category. The word used in v.15 is *dedoulotai*, literally, "has not been enslaved." But it seems to apply only to mixed marriages ("unbelieving depart").

The Confession states "Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a publick and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case." (XXIV, 6). Williamson has this commentary: "Since, in the context, to be 'bound' means to be bound to a person in the institution of marriage, to be 'not bound' would mean to be free from the same institution. Thus we see no alternative than to believe that wilful desertion of a believer by an unbeliever which cannot be remedied is just cause for divorce. And a Christian who has secured a divorce on such a ground, or who has been divorced for such a reason, is free to remarry." G.I. Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), 185-6. Having considered this, the interpretation of v.16 becomes a problem. Johnson writes, "The third reason for no separation is that the salvation of the other member may be accomplished through preservation of the union. Others understand the statement to mean that separation should be willingly agreed to, since one can never know whether

the partner will be converted or not. The general context favors the former view. But it is difficult to determine what Paul meant." (Wycliffe, 1240).

4c. On one's present estate (7:17-24)

The issues which have been discussed are amoral in nature. The question is not between right or wrong, but between good or better. Since it is not a moral issue, Paul's advice is, "Stay where you are." The instruction, "as the Lord hath called every man, so let him walk," occurs 3 times in this passage (v.17,20,24). The Lord has a purpose for placing you where you are. Until such time the Lord calls you to do something else, continue doing the work he has given you to the glory of His name.

5c. On the advantages of singlehood (7:25-40)

1d. Advice to virgins (7:25-35)

Concerning this matter, Paul again says that Christ did not discuss it during His earthly ministry. On the basis of his knowledge gained through observation and experience, he now gives his advice. There are 3 reasons for remaining a virgin:

1e. Marital hardships (7:25-28) What is this "present distress" that Paul was referring to? The context indicates that it is possibly referring to the "trouble in the flesh," (v.28), and the "time is short." (v.29). Paul was trying to say that this earthly life we have is full of suffering, not only because of weaknesses within but also afflictions without. The word *thlipsin* denotes "trouble involving direct suffering." (Louw and Nida, 1:243). It is a physical suffering, like persecution (Acts 11:19). Here, it probably refers to problems within marriage and difficulties which marriage would bring.

2e. Brevity of time (7:29-31)

The Lord's coming is imminent. The Christian ought to live his life in light of this great event, lest he is caught unprepared and be ashamed when the Lord comes. The word for time here is *kairos*, "opportune time," instead of *chronos*, "actual time." The opportunity to make our lives count for God while we are still in this world is meagre. All our earthly services to the Lord ends when we die or when He returns, whichever is sooner.

3e. Divided attention (7:32-35)

Johnson's observations are noteworthy: "Marriage is a distracting thing. This he states definitely at the end of verse 35. The words 'that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction' suggest the Lucan account of the incident of the Lord's visit to the house of Mary and Martha in Bethany. There are also several verbal connections in the Greek text between Luke's account and Paul's words (cf. Luke 10:38-42). It is as if Paul were tacitly saying that marriage makes Marthas out of Marys, thus preventing the choice of 'that good part'—occupation with the Lord and his Word (*Wycliffe*, 1241).

2d. Advice to fathers (7:36-38)

The difficulty of the passage lies in the fact that the man and his virgin are not identified. It could therefore refer to (1) an engaged couple, or (2) a father and his daughter. Most commentators hold to the latter view. Robertson and Plummer wrote that the verb *gamizo* "everywhere in N.T. (Matt. Xxii. 30, xxiv. 38; Mark xii. 25; Luke xvii. 27, xx. 35) means 'give in marriage' In spite of this, some make it mean 'marry'; while others accept the absurdity that the man

who has formed a special union with a woman may give her in marriage to another man. The *gamizon* is decisive: the Apostle is speaking of a father or guardian disposing of an unmarried daughter or ward." Archibald Robertson, and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), 159. The cultural mindset of the people then also favours this view. Paul here "addresses himself especially to the fathers, since, according to the custom of the Jews and Greeks, and most oriental nations at this day, the disposal of daughters in marriage rested with them" [Christian Friedrich Kling, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, trans Daniel W Poor, in *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, ed John P Lange (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 163.] Again, it is not a case of moral necessity but social expediency. It is good for a father to give his daughter away in marriage, but it is better if he keeps her from it.

3d. Advice to widows (7:39-40)

A woman can remarry only after her husband has passed away. But she should only choose a man who is "in the Lord." (i.e. a believer). Paul wisely counselled that she will be happier if she remained single. Paul says, "and I think also that I have the Spirit of God." This is not a statement of doubt, but of fact. It is an affirmation that his personal judgment is motivated or inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Question: To marry or not to marry?

7:1 Beneficial not to marry.

7:2 Nevertheless, marry if

7:7a Remain as I unmarried

7:7b But every man has his own gift

7:8 Abide as I (i.e. single)

7:9 But . . . better to marry than to burn

7:27 Single remain single

7:28 But if you marry, you have not sinned

7:35 Single; serve the Lord without distraction

7:36 Let them marry

Answer?

Question: Can I marry again?

7:11 Between Christians: divorce or separation allowed, but no remarriage (cf Matt 5:31; 19:3-10)

7:14 Between Christian and non-Christian: divorce or separation. Remarriage? Or reconciliation!

7:39 Christian and Mixed marriages: Death only clear reason for remarriage.

What does Westminster Confession teach?

6a. Instructions on Food Offered to Idols (8:1-11:1)

This section is extremely relevant to our Asian context where idolatry is rampant. In Western societies, idolatrous temples are virtually non-existent. In an Eastern setting, a Hindu, or Buddhist temple can be spotted just round the corner. Ancestral worship is also prevalent. Christians in idolatrous homes are inevitably confronted with the problem of eating food offered to idols. The situation in Corinth was no different. The questions they asked then are still being asked today: (1) Can I eat food offered to idols in a temple feast? (2) Can I buy and eat food offered to idols? (3) When I am invited for dinner, can I eat the food given by my friend when it is already offered to his gods? (4) When my mother sets food on the table which has been offered to idols, can I eat it?

1b. The Basic Principles (8:1-13)

1c. Knowledge must be applied by love (8:1-3)

It is important for a believer to know his doctrines. Every Christian in varying degrees possesses knowledge. But knowledge when imbibed incorrectly inflates the mind. The word *phusioi* means to cause someone to be proud, arrogant, or haughty. It causes one to be "puffed up." The attitude of pride ought to be replaced by love (*agape*, cf 1 Cor

13). Pride destroys, but love edifies. The word *oikodomei* means “to increase the potential of someone or something, with focus upon the process involved.” Used in this sense, it can often be translated “to strengthen, to make more able, to build up.” Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15). And “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” (John 15:12). True knowledge involves 2 criteria, (1) loving God, and (2) loving man. If a believer says he loves God, his love for God should be manifested in his love for his fellow-man. John says, “But whoso keepeth his word in him (i.e. not just theory but also practice) verily is the love of God perfected.... He that loveth his brother abideth in the light (i.e. the truth), and there is none occasion of stumbling (i.e. that which causes others or himself to sin is not) in him.” (1 John 2:5,10; parenthesis mine).

2c. There is only one living and true God (8:4-6)

1d. An idol is nothing (8:4a) The English word “idol” is derived from the Greek *eidolon*. It refers to an object of worship which has the image of a person, an animal, or a god. An idol is just a piece of sculptured wood or metal. It is not a god at all. There is no life within it. It has no intrinsic power. An idol is therefore a big zero.

2d. There is only one God (8:4b-6)

Paul is invariably referring to the *Shema*: Deut. 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” (cf John 17:3, 1 John 5:20). There is only one living and true God who is the Creator of the world (cf Col 1:16-17). “There is no God but one” (v.4). The world says that there are many gods and many lords (Polytheism). The Bible, on the other hand, says that there is one God and one Lord (Monotheism). Note a parallelism here: One God the Father // One Lord Jesus Christ. Implications? (1) God the Father and God the Son are equal (i.e. Father is God, and Son is God). (2) God the Father and God the Son are united.

3c. Mature Christians should take care not to stumble young Christians (8:7-13)

1d. The situation with young Christians (8:7-8)

Paul says that not everyone has that knowledge; i.e. the knowledge that an idol is nothing. These brethren have a weak conscience. What does “a weak conscience” mean? Hodge wrote, “A weak conscience is one which either regards as wrong what is not in fact so; or one which is not clear and decided in its judgments.” (*Corinthians*, 146). There are young Christians who have just been saved from an intensely pagan background. These still consider eating food offered to idols in every circumstance wrong. And if they see a mature Christian eat idol-offered food, their faith would be shaken. Paul reminds them that food does not make one more spiritual, love does. So in the next section, Paul enjoins the older Christians to abstain from eating food offered to idols if it stumbles younger believers.

2d. The responsibility of mature Christians (8:9-13)

The apostle chides Christians who should know better for having meals in idolatrous temples. It must be noted that liberty spoken of here refers to the right we have in eating all kinds of food, the *kosher* laws no longer apply to us (cf Acts 10:11-15, Col 2:16). A rhetorical question is then posed to them: “shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?” (v.10). The answer is, “Of course! The young Christian would think that it is alright to eat food offered to idols since he sees you, a more knowledgeable Christian, doing it!” Paul, in no uncertain terms, says that it is a sin not to set a good example for younger believers to follow (v.11-12). In eating food offered to idols, they not only encourage young believers to sin by doing likewise,

they also sin against Christ because they are in effect trying to undo what Christ has already done and has been accomplishing in their lives, namely, the work of salvation. It is imperative that we be very careful not to “scandalize” a brother. The word *skandalizo* is causative. It has the idea of doing something that would cause another person to sin. The stronger Christian must never cause a weaker believer to sin. Christ was equally emphatic about this: “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matt 18:6). It is bad enough to sin oneself, but to cause someone else to sin is worse.

2b. The Testimony of the Apostle (9:1-27)

1c. The genuineness of his apostolic ministry (9:1-2)

In a string of 4 rhetorical questions, Paul argues that he is a true apostle, and as a true apostle he possesses certain rights and privileges, Christian liberty being one of them. The genuineness of his apostleship is attested by the fact that (1) he has personally seen the Lord (cf Acts 9), and (2) the Corinthian church was a result of his ministry in the Lord (cf Acts 18). As a matter of fact, they (the members of the church) were his apostolic seal. The word *sphragis* means a signet, seal, mark, inscription, proof. It is that which confirms or attests to the genuineness of something. Hence the text can be translated, “you are the certification for my being an apostle” or “you show clearly that I am an apostle.”

Note that the Greek negative *ou* expects the answer yes! Therefore to the questions: (1) “Am I not an apostle?”, the answer is, “Of course I am!” (2) “Am I not free?” “Of course I am free!” (i.e. Christian liberty). (3) “Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” “Of course I have!” (i.e. an eyewitness of the Lord’s resurrection). (4) “Are not ye my work in the Lord?” “Of course you are!” (i.e. the fruit of his ministry).

2c. The delineation of his apostolic rights (9:3-12a)

Pauls defends (*apologia*) his rights:

1d. Through his apostolic office (9:3-6)

In a series of 4 rhetorical questions, Paul argues that, as an apostle, he has the right to a normal life like having physical needs provided for him, getting married, and having a regular income from the church. The reputable men of the church like Peter, the other Apostles, and the Lord's brothers had exercised these rights. He is no less an Apostle. These rights are available to him too. Barnabas and him have been working with their hands for a living so that they would not be a burden to the churches in their missionary endeavours (cf Acts 18:1-3, 2 Thess 3:5-10). They had every right to demand that the church pay their way since they are doing the Lord's business (but this is not the spirit of Paul, and should not be ours either; cf. Phil 2:5-8).

2d. Through societal norms (9:7)

Through another combination of 3 rhetorical questions, Paul argues that even secular society dictates that when a person works, he must be given his dues. An argument from a secular perspective is only valid when it can be supported by Scripture.

3d. Through the Mosaic law (9:8-12a)

Paul quotes Deut. 25:4 to draw a divine principle of remuneration (v.9). God has included in the law of the land the care of animals. The Jews were not suppose to prevent the ox from eating the corn that it treads. The principle applies to human situations; "the labourer is worthy of his hire." (Luke 10:7). The Old Testament text was definitely recorded for our benefit (v.10). Let no one malign the Apostle's hermeneutic. As

Johnson correctly observes, “the passage in Deuteronomy has a deeper significance than the literal sense. Both senses, the literal and the allegorical (both are spiritual senses), are found in this passage.” (*Wycliffe*, 1243). Paul therefore had every right to expect physical returns for his spiritual labour (v.11-12a).

3c. The restriction of his apostolic rights (9:12b-18)

The reasons why he voluntarily gave up his rights are:

1d. He does not want to hinder the gospel (9:12b-14)

Paul willingly forfeits all financial aid. The hindrance to the gospel might refer to damaging allegations that he was preaching the gospel for the sake of money (cf. 2 Cor 4:1-2). The Lord has made provisions for His servants to earn their living through the ministry (cf Num 18:8-24, Deut 18:1-8). But Paul refuse to take advantage of it. How is it then that Paul received gifts from Philippi (Phil 4:10-19)?

2d. He wants to make the gospel free of charge (9:15-18)

Paul has knowledge. He is aware that it is his God-given right to receive financial support from the church. But “knowledge “puffeth up, but charity edifieth.” (8:1). Love dictates that he should surrender that right for the sake of the gospel. Pay or no pay, he will continue to preach the gospel faithfully. In so doing, he places no stumblingblock for those who would believe; the gospel is free. Furthermore, he would have given his enemies no cause to slander him or the gospel. That is why Paul can boldly say, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (11:1).

4c. The goal of his apostolic ministry (9:19-27)

1d. The outer goal (9:19-23)

Verse 22 is the key verse: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Johnson rightly says that Paul was espousing "mobility in methods, not mobility in morals." (*Wycliffe*, 1244). A modern day example would be Hudson Taylor, missionary to China. He even wore a "pigtail!" "Wearing a Chinese dress in those days involved shaving the front part of the head and letting the hair grow long for the regulation queue. No missionary or other foreigner conformed to such a custom....

"That night he took the step which was to have so great an influence on the evangelization of inland China! When the barber had done his best, the young missionary darkened his remaining hair to match the long black braid which, at first, must do duty for his own. Then in the morning he put on as best as he might the loose, unaccustomed garments, and appeared for the first time in the gown and satin shoes of the 'Teacher,' or man of the scholarly class.

"Everything opened up after that in a new way. On the return journey to Shanghai he was not even recognized as a foreigner, until he began to preach or distribute books and see patients. The women and children came around much more freely, and the crowds were less noisy and excited. While missing some of the prestige attaching to Europeans, he found it more than made up for by the freedom his changed appearance gave him in moving among the people. Their homes were open to him as never before, and it was possible to get opportunities for quiet intercourse with those who seemed interested. Filled with thankfulness for these and other advantages, he wrote home about the dress he had adopted, 'It is evidently to be one's chief help for the interior.'" Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* (London: China Inland Mission, 1935), 46-8. Surely, Taylor must have applied Paul's philosophy of missions as spelt out in 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

2d. The inner goal (9:24-27)

Gromacki has an excellent exposition on this passage: "Next to the Olympic games, the Isthmian games held at Corinth every three years were the most highly acclaimed athletic contests of the first century. To compete, an athlete had to have Greek citizenship. Paul saw in the games an excellent analogy of the Christian life. To him, life was like a race. To compete, a person had to be a regenerated Christian. The reward for running was not heavenly citizenship, but the praise of the Savior at the judgment seat of Christ. To win this reward, Paul determined to give up the exercise of some of his rights to achieve excellence in his life and ministry.

"In the Olympic and Isthmian games, there could be only one winner among the many participants in any given race (9:24a). In the Christian life, however, all believers are participants and all can be winners. In the physical contest men compete against others, but in the spiritual race a man competes against himself as he obeys or disobeys the will of God for his life. Thus, a believer should have the motivation to win (9:24b). Christianity is not a spectator sport.

"Everyone who strives or agonizes (*agonizomenous*) to win goes through a strict training program before the race (9:25). As the athlete prepared for the games with strenuous exercise, proper diet and sleep, and mental concentration to gain a 'corruptible' pine wreath placed upon his head, should not the believer discipline himself to win an incorruptible crown (9:25b)? In contrast to the corruptible crown given for self-mastery, four spiritual rewards are mentioned in the Scriptures: the crown of rejoicing for faithful witnessing (I Thess. 2:19); the crown of righteousness for loving the coming of Christ (II Tim. 4:8); the crown of life for enduring trials (James 1:12); and the crown of glory for faithfully pastoring churches (I Peter 5:4).

“Paul, then, saw himself as a Christian runner with a definite goal guiding his life (9:26). He did not see himself as a shadow boxer; rather, he saw his Christian life as a fight and victory to be gained over sin, flesh, and Satan. Near to martyrdom, he could shout triumphantly: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (II Tim. 4:7). He sensed a tremendous responsibility to minister to himself and to keep himself in the will of God, lest, in preaching to others, God would detect flaws in him and remove him from the ministry (9:27). The word ‘castaway’ literally means ‘disapproved’ (*adokimos*). An Olympic athlete who won a race did not lose his Greek citizenship if he was subsequently disqualified; however, he did lose the honor and forfeited his wreath crown. Christians, like Paul, should not want to lose the opportunity to serve Christ and the subsequent praise at the judgment seat of Christ (cf. 3:14-15).” (Gromacki, *Called*, 113-5).

3b. The Example of Israel (10:1-13)

This section is linked to the previous one. Paul is furthering his argument for the importance of holy conduct and faithful ministry by using the nation of Israel as an illustration.

1c. A reminder (10:1-5)

One thing striking about this passage is that the word “all” is used 5 times. Paul is emphasizing the fact that everyone in the wilderness experienced the providence of God. Although all of them experienced God’s mighty blessings in the wilderness, not all of them entered the promised land. The flow of argument from 9:24-27 to 10:1-5 is clear, as pointed out by Johnson, “All, repeated five times, emphasizes the universality in Israel of divine blessing, and, when considered with the fact that almost all (Caleb and Joshua excepted) perished, links this section very closely with 9:24. There Paul said, ‘Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?’” (*Wycliffe*,

1245). Now, let us consider the 5 “all”s.

1d. They were all under the cloud.

The Lord led Israel through the wilderness by means of a supernatural pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.” (Exod. 13:21-22 cf. Num 14:14).

2d. They all passed through the sea.

The Lord opened the Red Sea (not Reed Sea, cf Heb 11:29) and all of them crossed over to the other side, saved from the Egyptian attack. “And the children of Israel went in to the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” (Exod. 14:22). The waters held up like walls on both sides of the dry river bed subsequently collapsed upon the Egyptian army when they tried to cross the sea.

3d. They were all baptized.

Gromacki hints that immersion is the mode of baptism through this text. He says, “Baptism signifies a believer’s identification with Christ in His death and resurrection and publicly manifests a death to the old life and desire to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4). In a sense, the Israelites experienced baptism. They were completely immersed.” (*Called*, 118; italics mine). Hodge wrote that, “The cloud and the sea did for them, in reference to Moses, what baptism does for us in reference to Christ. Their passage through the sea, and their guidance by the cloud, was their baptism. It made them the disciples of Moses; placed them under obligation to recognize his divine commission and to

submit to his authority. This is the only point of analogy between the cases, and it is all the apostle's argument requires. One class of commentators says that they were immersed in the sea, and therefore it was a baptism; another says, the cloud rained upon them, and on that account they are said to have been baptized. Both suggestions are equally forced. For the people were baptized as much in the cloud as in the sea; but they were not immersed in the cloud nor sprinkled by the sea. There is no allusion to the mode of baptism. Neither is the point of analogy to be sought in the fact, that the cloud was vapour and the sea water. The cloud by night was fire. The point of similarity is to be found, not in any thing external, but in the effect produced. The display of God's power in the cloud and in the sea, brought the people into the relation of disciples to Moses. It inaugurated the congregation, and as it were, baptized them to him, bound them to serve and follow him." (*Corinthians*, 171-2). In any case, this cannot be a proof text for immersion because the water did not immerse Israelites, but the Egyptians!

4d. They all ate the same spiritual food.

The Lord fed the Israelites with bread made in heaven; manna. It is spiritual bread not only because it comes from heaven, but also because it points to Christ. Jesus said, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:32-33). Jesus is the "bread (or manna) of life" (John 6:35 cf 6:48,51).

5d. They all drank the same spiritual drink.

The Lord quenched the thirst of the Israelites by miraculously providing water through a rock (Exod 17:1-6). It is spiritual water because it refers to the

supernatural origin of the water and the spiritual application of the event. Jesus said, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in the him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). The water in the wilderness came from a rock, and Paul says "the rock was Christ." What does Paul mean? S. Lewis Johnson explains, "Actually, the apostle says, that Rock was Christ, i.e., it was the visible means of the supply of water which came ultimately from Christ. Since the people of Israel obtained this water in the opening years of their wilderness wanderings (Ex 17:1-9) and in the closing years (Num 20:1-13), it is only natural to infer that he, Christ, the Supplier of the water, was with them all along the way. The literal sense of that Rock was Christ is no more to be pressed than is the literal sense of "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). The was, rather than is, may, however, point to Christ's pre-existence (cf. II Cor 8:9; Gal 4:4)." (Wycliffe, 1245).

2c. A warning (10:6-10)

Paul says that the things that happened are our examples, or literally types (*tupoi*). The word *tupos* can mean "a model of behavior as an example to be imitated or avoided." It is important to read history so that we might not repeat the errors of our forebears. The Corinthians were warned against these five errors of the Israelites:

1d. They lusted after evil things (10:6)

The Israelites, instead of being grateful for the delicious manna that the Lord had provided them, coveted the foods of Egypt. "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel who wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our

soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." (Num 11:4-6). This Pauline principle applies, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Tim 6:6).

2d. They were idolatrous (10:7)

They were not satisfied with an invisible God. So they made a golden calf to represent Jehovah. "And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molton calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." (Num 32:3-4).

3d. They committed fornication (10:8)

This is a reference to Balaam's doctrine. Balaam, the false prophet, was the one "who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to unto idols, and to commit fornication." (Rev 2:14). Num. 25:1-3 records, "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel."

Paul wrote that 23,000 people were killed while Moses recorded it as 24,000. There is an apparent discrepancy. The solution to the problem is inherent in the context. Paul said 23,000 died "in one day," while Moses said 24,000 died "in the plague." (Num 25:9). S. Lewis Johnson explains, "Three and twenty thousand is not a mistake, although Moses wrote the number 24,000. Paul's one day should be noted. He refers to those slain by the plague in one day, whole Moses' figure includes the ones who died later from the effects." (*Wycliffe*, 1245-6).

4d. They tempted Christ (10:9).

They tempted God by questioning his faithfulness. The people were accusing God for not keeping His Word (Num 21:5). The author of Hebrews issues the same warning: "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Heb 3:7-12; italics mine). It is significant to note that when the Israelites tempted Jehovah, they were actually tempting Christ. This is one proof-text for the preexistence of Christ.

5d. They murmured (10:10)

The Israelites grumbled throughout the journey to register their discontentment with God (Exod. 15:24, 16:2,7-12, Num 16:41-50). The Lord was extremely longsuffering towards the people of Israel. God kindly met the demands of their repeated complaints. Still, they did not learn to trust in the Lord. For their unbelief, they were destroyed.

3c. The application (10:11-13)

The warning is especially issued to those who think they are strong in their Christian faith. Paul says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (into sin)." (v.12; parenthesis mine). It is basically a warning against pride. It is also a call to humility. The only escape from sin is total dependence upon the strength of God.

4b. The Significance of the Lord's Table (10:14-22)

This section begins with the command to flee from idolatry (v.14). The word "flee" is written in the present tense. Hence, it conveys the idea of a continual fleeing from idolatry. The reason why we need to keep away from eating food sacrificed to idols is because we are already participants of the Lord's table (i.e. the Holy Communion).

1c. The meaning of the table of the Lord (10:16-17)

When a Christian partakes of the Lord's supper, he is in fact identifying himself to Christ. He is acknowledging the efficacy of the Lord's work for him on the cross. He confesses that Christ was his Representative and Substitute by taking upon Himself the penalty of his sins. By eating the bread and drinking the cup, the Christian is saying, "Christ died for me and I belong to Him."

2c. The meaning of the table of demons (10:18-22)

When a person participates in such cultic feasts, he is indicating his union with that particular God or gods (v.18). Although Paul had earlier taught that an idol is nothing, he wants to make himself very clear that: "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to the devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should fellowship with devils." (v.20). In other words, demons are behind all idolatrous activity. They are the recipients of the worship given to idols. Eating of food offered to idols involve participating in the worship of demons. That is why Paul vehemently admonished: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." (v.21). Paul's bottom line is this: Do not eat food offered to idols! It is spiritual adultery! (v.22). At this juncture it is good to commit to memory the first commandment of the decalogue: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under

the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exod 20:1-5). Two other testimonies concerning the abstinence of food offered to idols are noteworthy: (1) Acts 15:20, 29. The Apostolic Council in Jerusalem decided in A.D. 52 the following directive: "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." (2) Rev 2:14,20. The Lord issued the following warnings against eating idol-offered food. To the Church at Pergamos, he said, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." To the Church at Thyatira, he said, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

[Note that there are 3 views on the significance of the cultic meals: (1) The Sacramental view, This view states that "in the cult meal the worshippers consumed their deity who was contained (really or symbolically) in the sacrificial meat. The worshippers thereby appropriated for themselves his peculiar traits and powers and established a most intimate union with him." This view is held by Chinese idolators today. Eating food offered to idols is literally referred to as "eating the gods." (2) The communal view. This view states that "the cult meal was a solemn occasion of worship in which the god and the worshippers together consumed the sacrifice." This is no different from the oriental religions where the eating of food offered to idols over the dinner table is part and parcel of the worship of the family deity. (3) The social view. This view states that the focus of the meal "is on the social relationship among the worshippers." See Wendell Lee Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10*, SBL Diessertaion Series 68 (California: Scholars Press, 1985), 17-19.]

5b. The Final remarks (10:23-11:1)

1c. The principles summarised (10:23-24)

Paul restates the love principle here. All things (as long as they do not infringe upon Christian morals) are lawful (the Christian has the authority to make his own decisions) but not all things are expedient (they may not be advantageous and will bring no benefit). The word "expedient" is explained by the word "edify" in the next clause. It may be alright to do a certain thing but it may not necessarily be useful. In fact, it may even be damaging to either oneself or someone else. When a certain act is contemplated, it is always good to consider the consequences: Will it hurt others? Will it hurt us?

2c. The principles applied (10:25-30)

Paul gives 2 case studies here:

1d. At the market (10:24-25)

Since idol-offered is sold in the market, is it alright for Christians to buy and eat them? Paul says yes. He then gives a caution and then a reason. (1) He cautions that the buyer should ask no question. There is no need to. Just buy and eat. There is no guilt in doing it. (2) The reason is because all food belongs to the Lord and He has provided them for our enjoyment. Paul says in another place, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

2d. At a banquet (10:27-30)

A Christian is free to go to a dinner hosted by his unbelieving friend. There is a possibility that the food served has been offered to idols. There is no need for

the believer to question whether the food is offered to idols or not. Ignorance is bliss. Having given thanks to the Lord for the food, enjoy the meal. However, if the host brings to your attention that the food has been offered to idols, then politely refrain from eating because the implication is very clear; if you partake of it, you are participating with your host in the worship of his gods. The meal is a part (usually the final part) of the idolatrous ritual. In order to bear a good Christian testimony, the believer should not partake of the food. In so doing, he sets a good example for younger Christians who may be present. Not only that, he gives no opportunity for his host to criticize his faith. His message is clear: there is only one living and true God.

3c. The principles commanded (10:31-11:1)

Paul issues 3 commands:

1d. Do all things to God's glory (10:31)

The glory of God should be the chief consideration in all the activities of a Christian. "All" means "all" here. In all that we think, speak, or do, we must do it to the glory of God. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism aptly puts it: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

2d. Give no offense (10:32-33)

The word *aproskoptoi* has the idea of "not causing trouble." Paul is calling Christians to give no reasons for unbelievers to malign the faith, neither place a stumblingblock for believers who would progress in the faith. The Christian should do all he can to win as many as he can to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Trace the arguments of Paul: 8:1-3 8:12-13 → 9:18-22 → 10:23-24 → 10:33.

3d. Be imitators of me (11:1)

The word used here is not the usual word for “follower” which is *mathetes*, “a disciple.” The word is *mimetai* where our English word “mimic” comes from. They were commanded to copy the conduct of the Apostle Paul.

7a. Instructions on Ecclesial Matters (11:2-34)

Paul discusses these 2 issues related to the proper functioning of the church:

1b. The Subordination of Woman in the Church (11:2-16)

Apparently, there are ladies in the church who are usurping or are trying to usurp the authority of men in the governing of the church. This problem is very common today. Women are demanding for the right to be ordained as elders and pastors. They want to be in a position of authority. We are glad that Paul gives very explicit instructions concerning a woman’s role and status in the church. He gives 3 reasons why women should be subordinate to men:

1c. The theological reason (11:2-6)

1d. The Godhead (11:3a)

God has established a functional hierarchy. It is functional because the Persons within the Trinity are in essence deity; the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Not 3 gods but 1 God in 3 persons. They are distinguished, not divided; the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit. As the Westminster Confession succinctly defines: “In the Unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.” (II, 3). The

head of Christ is the Father. Jesus Himself said, "my father is greater than I." (John 14:28). He was on earth to do His Father's bidding (cf. John 4:24, 14:31).

2d. The human race (11:3b)

Likewise, the Lord has set a hierarchy in the human race (see also Eph 1:22, 4:15, 5:22-24, Col 1:18, 2:10,18,19). "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man." The word "head" (*kephale*) has 2 senses: (1) Literal sense of head, and (2) figurative sense of superiority (see Wayne Grudem, "Does KEPHALE ['Head'] mean 'Source' or 'Authority over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples" *Trinity Journal* 6 [1985]: 38-59). The latter is used with reference to "one who is of supreme or pre-eminent status, in view of authority to order or command." (Louw and Nida, 1:739). The superiority is in terms of function, not essence.

3d. The church (11:4-6)

It may be inferred from the text that the wearing of a veil by women was a sign of their subordination to men. Women were supposed to pray or prophesy with their heads covered. Men were to wear no such covering. The problem in the church had nothing to do with the men but the ladies; at least the liberated ones who desired the same standing as men. Some in the church have removed their headcovering while worshipping in church and have thereby dishonoured their husbands. Their act was tantamount to saying that their husbands were not their authority in the church. The Apostle advocated discipline for such behaviour. Gromacki explains, "The discipline for this violation is set forth in two imperatives: 'let her also be shorn' and 'let her be covered.' In the first, Paul stated that if she wanted to act like a man, then let her hair be cut in a manly style. In the second, he referred to the cultural custom. If it was shameful or embarrassing for

a woman to have short hair or to be bald, then let her wear the veil. Thus, culture had to dictate the punishment." (*Called*, 135-6).

2c. The scriptural reason (11:7-12)

1d. The creation (3.1:7-9)

From the creation account in Gen 1:26-27, Paul gives 3 arguments why man is the head of the woman.

1e. Man is the image and glory of God (11:7)

Both man and woman are created in the image of God. When Paul says that man is the image of God here, he means that God has made man ruler over the earth (Gen 1:28-30, cf 2:19-20). Man bears the authority badge with God. Man is the glory of God because he is the apex of God's creative work. The woman is not placed in this authoritative position. She is the glory of man (note that it does not include "image"). Woman is the glory of man in the sense that she is the best thing God could create out of man (Gen 2:21-22).

2e. Man is not of the woman (11:8)

God did not create Adam out of Eve. Adam was created from the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7). Eve came from Adam (Gen 2:23). Without Adam, Eve would not have existed.

3e. Man was not created for the woman (11:9)

The purpose for the creation of Eve was so that she could help Adam (2:18). Adam could not multiply and fill the earth all by himself. The procreation process involves the male and the female. Paul's point is that man was not "created for (the sake of, the benefit of) the woman but the

woman for the man.”

2d. The angels (11:10)

S. Lewis Johnson explains this difficult verse: “Power, or authority, means, by an unusual metonymy, sign of authority. The veil is the sign of the man’s authority. The word for angels in the expression because of angels ... refers to the good angels who are present in worship meetings, since they live in the presence of God (cf. I Cor 4:9; Luke 15:7,10; Eph 3:10; I Tim 5:21; Ps 138:1). The insubordination of women in refusing to acknowledge the authority of their husbands would offend the angels who, under God, guard the created universe (cf Col 1:16; Eph 1:21), and know no insubordination.” (*Wycliffe*, 1247).

3d. The balance (11:11-12)

Paul did not want his male audience to get carried away here. He reminds them that in terms of function, it is true that man is the head of the woman, but in terms of value, both are equal in the sight of God. They are both equally important to the Lord. Further, the man should not forget that he comes from the womb of a woman. Both are indispensable to each other.

3c. The physical reason (11:13-16)

The natural physiological make-up of the male and female bodies especially with reference to hair length attest to the divinely established hierarchical positions of man and woman. MacArthur comments, “Men and women have distinctive physiologies in many ways. One of them is in the process of hair growth on the head. Hair develops in three stages--formation and growth, resting, and fallout. The male hormone testosterone speeds up the cycle so that men reach the third stage earlier than women. The female hormone estrogen causes the cycle to remain in stage one for a longer

time, causing women's hair to grow longer than men's. Women are rarely bald because few even reach stage three. This physiology is reflected in most cultures of the world in the custom of women wearing longer hair than men." John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1984), 262. That women wear longer hair than men is a universal phenomenon. It is unnatural for men to sport long hair. In the same way, it is strange for women to have crew cuts. Paul says that God gave women longer hair for a natural covering. Her hair intimates her subordinate role.

What does the last verse of this section mean? "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have so such custom, neither the churches of God." S. Lewis Johnson explains, "No such custom, i.e., no such custom of women worshipping without coverings. Some say that the custom was peculiar to Corinth, but Paul's words, neither the churches of God, argue against this view. Still others insist that the custom is not to be applied today.... It should be noted, however, that each of the reasons given for the wearing of a veil is taken from permanent facts, lasting as long as the present earthly economy.... Paul did carry his point, for early church history bears witness that in Rome, Antioch, and Africa the custom became the norm. A final word: In the final analysis, the hat, or veil, is not the important thing, but the subordination for which it stands. The presence of both is the ideal." (*Wycliffe*, 1248).

2b. The Abuse of the Holy Communion in the Church (11:17-34)

Before we enter into the text proper, we ought to consider how the early church conducted their holy communion. Barclay wrote, "The ancient world was in many ways much more social than ours is. It was the regular custom for groups of people to meet together for meals. There was, in particular, a certain kind of feast called an *eranos* to which each participant brought his own share of food, and in which all the contributions were pooled to make a common meal. The early Church had such a custom, a feast called the *Agape* or Love Feast. To it all the Christians came, bringing what they could, the resources were pooled and they sat

down to a common meal. It was a lovely custom; and it is to our loss that the custom has vanished. It was a way of producing and nourishing real Christian fellowship." (Barclay, *Corinthians*, 100).

1c. The nature of the abuse (11:17-22)

1d. The cause (11:17-19)

The holy communion was to be a solemn time of worship where believers get together to commemorate the Lord's death. It is meant to be a spiritual exercise. Instead of deriving benefit from the occasion, they were worse off for attending. There was no unity in the worship. The church was split into different sects, each holding to their brand of unorthodox teaching. One can imagine the bickerings and fightings that must have characterized the whole meeting. The holy communion was probably observed at different tables; each group breaking their own bread and drinking from their own cup.

2d. The result (11:20-22)

The church did not meet to keep the Lord's Supper. It was supposed to be a love feast, but it was far from being one. There was certainly no love, only selfishness. "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." The rich in the church was supposed to take care of the poor. The rich ate and drank before the poor, and the latter is left without food. The wealthy absolutely despised the poor, and because they could only afford a few loaves of bread or maybe even came empty handed, the rich sneered at their meagre contributions. Paul, no doubt, was fuming with anger. "What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

2c. The meaning of holy communion (11:23-34)

1d. The significance of the bread and the cup (11:23-26)

What Paul taught here was not something new. The Lord had instituted the holy communion during his last passover, before he went to the cross (Matt 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20). The holy communion is one of 2 sacraments in the church. What is a sacrament? "Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ, and His benefits; and to confirm our interest in Him: as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word." (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, XXVII, 1). Concerning the Lord's Supper, the Confession states: "Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body, and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His Church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and, to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body.

"In this sacrament, Christ is not offered up to His Father; nor any real sacrifice made at all, for remission of sins of the quick and the dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all: and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God, for the same: so that the popish sacrifice of the mass (as they call it) is most abominably injurious to Christ's one, only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of His elect.

"The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the people; to pray, and bless the

elements of bread and wine, and thereby set them apart from a common to an holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

“Private masses or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise, the denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about, for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

“The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ have such relation to Him crucified as that, truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.

“The doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ’s body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense, and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions; yea, of gross idolatries.” (XXIX, 1-6).

2d. The punishment for abusing the bread and the cup (11:31-34)

The partaking of the holy communion is a spiritual exercise. As the Westminster Confession of Faith explains, “Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements, in this sacrament, do then also, inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally but spiritually, receive, and feed upon,

Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses." (XXIX, 7). There is no place for frivolity. It is a serious occasion. Those who partake of the bread and the cup ought to do so with a correct attitude. Those who partake of it unworthily, i.e. without giving due regard to the significance of the sacrament, are liable to be chastised by God. The Westminster Confession of Faith states, "Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements of this sacrament; yet, they receive not the thing signified thereby; but, by their unworthy coming thereunto, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore, all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table; and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto." (XXIX, 8). The punishment for abusing the holy communion is severe. Many of the Corinthian Christians suffered physical ailments, and there were a number who actually died (11:30). It is imperative that we search our hearts, and confess our sins to the Lord before we partake of the bread and the cup.

8a. Instructions on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (12:1-14:40)

The matter of spiritual gifts, especially, the more spectacular ones like tongues-speaking, prophesying, and healing, have engendered tremendous debate in the Christian world. What did Paul teach concerning the charismatic gifts? What is tongues-speaking? What is the purpose of sign-gifts? Have they ceased? These are some of the questions we will attempt to answer in this study.

1b. General Principles on Spiritual Gifts (12:1-31)

Before Paul deals with the problem at hand, he lays down the fundamental principles about the gifts of the Spirit which the Corinthians should know.

1c. Only Christians can have spiritual gifts (12:1-3)

The word “spiritual gifts” is derived from the word *pneumatikon*, which means “spiritual things.” These are gifts given by the Holy Spirit to Spirit-indwelt men. An idolator (i.e. one who is literally captivated by idols) can never have a genuine spiritual gift even though he may seem to possess one. It was not uncommon for the temple priests to speak ecstatically while he was in a trance. Everyone in the Corinthian Church was speaking in tongues even though some of them do not have the gift (cf. 12:30). Gromacki’s insight to the situation may well be true. Paul “informed them that no person ‘speaking’ under the influence of the Holy Spirit would proclaim a heretical doctrine about Jesus Christ. Any person who would do so would either have to be unsaved or be under the influence of demons.

The phrase ‘speaking by [literally, ‘in’] the Spirit of God’ could refer either to a supernaturally given prophetic announcement (cf. Matt 22:43; Acts 28:25; II Peter 1:21) or to a tongues-utterance (cf. II Thess. 2:2), or to both. The word ‘accursed’ (*anathema*; cf. Gal. 1:8-9) is very similar to the Greek word for ‘offering’ (*anathema*, translated as ‘gift’ in Luke 21:5). Also, notice this closeness of sounds in this verse: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha’ (16:22). Thus. it could have been that a person tried to simulate a real tongues utterance with faulty pronunciation. resulting in a heretical declaration.” (*Called*, 149,51; underscoring mine). Only a believer who possess the Holy Spirit can confess that Jesus is his Lord.

2c. The Holy Spirit is the giver of spiritual gifts (12:4-11)

1d. The origin of all spiritual gifts (12:4-6)

In no uncertain terms, Paul says that all the different spiritual gifts are sourced in God alone. The

word “diverse” occurs 3 times (“diversities of gifts,” “differences of administrations,” and “diversities of operations”). There are a variety of gifts, and they are selectively dispensed to different individuals. These gifts are given to be used, not admired. The One who decides what to give and to whom it should be given is the triune God (“the same Spirit,” “the same Lord,” and “the same God”).

2d. The purpose of all spiritual gifts (12: 7-11)

Every believer will have at least one gift. No one will have all the gifts. It is given for the benefit of not only the individual but also the whole church. Different individuals will possess different gifts: (1) The word of wisdom, i.e. the ability to impart God’s revelation. (2) The word of knowledge, i.e. the ability to explain the practical ramifications of spiritual truth. (3) Faith, i.e. not saving faith but faith that will trust God for things impossible. (4) The gifts of healing, i.e. the supernatural ability to restore health to the sick instantaneously. (5) The working of miracles, i.e. the ability to perform things which are not humanly or naturally possible, like walking on water. (6) Prophecy, i.e. the ability to foretell the future. (7) Discerning of spirits, i.e. the ability to distinguish a truth from a lie. (8) Tongues, i.e. the ability to speak in foreign languages never learned by the speaker. (9) Interpretation of tongues, i.e. the ability to translate the content of what was spoken by the tongues-speaker. The Holy Spirit is the immediate agent in distributing the spiritual gifts. The kind of gift or gifts we will receive is not determined by us, but by Him.

3c. Every spiritual gift is important to the body of Christ (12:12-31)

1d. The illustration of the physical body (12:12-26)

1e. The diversity and unity of the body (12:12-

13)

Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that though the church is made up of many individual members, it is still a spiritually unified entity. This is because Christ is one. All believers have been baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit of God.

2e. The necessity of each member of the body (12:14-20)

God is the One who created the physical body. The perfect God designed a perfect body. Each part of the body serves a particular purpose. There is no part which is redundant. Every part is needed to make up a complete, functioning body.

3e. The interdependency of the members of the body (12:21-26)

Every part of the body is equally important. The eye needs the hand and the head needs the feet. The seemingly less dignified parts are given more attention. No member of the body is to be despised, all are equally honoured. There is therefore a need for mutual care and concern, for when the toe hurts, the whole body feels the pain.

2d. The application of the physical body (12:27-31)

Paul applies the analogy to the church. In the same way God created the human body with its many parts, so also the church, with its many members. Just as each part of the body has a different function, so also every member of the church has a different ministry. The Lord appointed some in the church to be in order of rank, apostles first, prophets second, and

teachers third. behind them come the rest of the gifts. In a series of rhetorical questions which expect the negative answer, Paul tells them that not everyone has the same gift. Virtually everyone in the Corinthian church were speaking in tongues. Those who do not have the gift, induced themselves to speak in tongues. "Do all speak with tongues?" Paul's response is, "No! So those of you who do not have the gift, do not pretend to have it. But if you really desire the best gifts, desire rather this - love." As S. Lewis Johnson also noted, "The clause of chapter 12 has been misunderstood. Many feel that Paul is here showing *how* the gifts are to be ministered, i.e., in love. However, the use of way (*hodos*) in the sense of 'road' instead of way (*tropos*) in the sense of 'manner,' and the statement of 14:1, indicate that Paul is, rather pointing out a path of life superior to a life spent in the seeking and displaying of spiritual gifts." (Wycliffe, 1251).

- 2b. The Superiority of Love over Spiritual Gifts (13:1-13)
 - 1c. The definition of love (13:1-7)
 - 1d. The preeminence of love (13:1-3)

The word used for love here is the familiar Greek word *agape*. While the English has only one word for love, the Greek has 4: (1) *Eros*. This word is not used in the NT. It is used in the Greek world to denote physical, or sexual love. (2) *Storge*. This word refers to family affection. It describes the love of parents for children and children for parents. The word *astorgoi* made up of the privative *a* ('without') and the noun *storge* ('love') is used by Paul in 2 Tim 3:3, where it actually means lack of family love. (3) *Philia*. This word is used in the English vocabulary, egs. philanthropist (literally, one who loves man) and Philadelphia (City of Brotherly Love). The root meaning of *philein* is 'to befriend.' In the NT, the word is used of love within family members (Matt 10:37), and love between friends

(John 11:3,36; 20:2). It is also a synonym for our next word *agape* (John 21:15ff). (4) *Agape*. This word is often used with reference to God's love. The love which God manifested through His Son (1 John 4:7,8,16). It is love in its purest sense.

Even if a person has all the spiritual gifts he can ever possess, but do not have love, Paul says, he is a big zero. Paul is using hyperbolic speech here. A hyperbole is an intended exaggeration to bring across a certain point. Bullinger defines, "Hyperbolic *Hypothesis*, which are impossible in themselves, but are used to express the greatness of the subject spoken of." E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, rep. 1968), 427. So, Paul is not saying that he is able to speak in angelic tongues, or to understand all mysteries, or to have all knowledge, or to move a mountain. He is saying that even if he can do all those things and does not have *agape*, he is nothing. Furthermore, even if he showed himself outwardly to be some great benefactor but did not have love, he is nothing.

Some have used the phrase "tongues of angels" as support for ecstatic utterances. As far as we can prove from Scripture, when the angels spoke, they either spoke in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek!

2d. The characteristics of love (13:4-7)

What is love? This is a good question. Paul defines what love is here. There are 15 characteristics:

1e. Longsuffering (13:4a)

The Greek word *makrothumei*. in the NT "always describes patience with people and not patience with circumstances. Chrysostom said that it is the word used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself and who yet will not do it. It describes the man who is slow to anger and it is

used of God himself in his relationship with men." (Barclay, *Corinthians*, 119).

2e. Kind (13:4b)

The word *chresteuetai* means to give something beneficial to a person in need as an act of kindness. It refers not merely to an inward disposition, but also to the outward demonstration. Origen said that this means that love is "sweet to all." (Barclay, *Corinthians*, 120). Yes, a kind action surely exudes such fragrance.

3e. Does not envy (13:4c)

The word *zeloi* here means "to covet," or "to be jealous." A person who is envious expresses his unhappiness when another person does better than him. Paul exhorts, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Phil 2:3).

4e. Does not brag (13:4d)

The word *perpereuetai* is only used here in the NT. It comes from its noun form which means "a braggart." The verbal denotation would be "to play the braggart." Hesychius says that the the 'braggart,' is the one who is stupidly proud. Origen applies the act of bragging to intellectual pride or conceit. Cicero uses the word of rhetorical display. The primary idea is that of ostentation, to show off. See Spiros Zodhiates, *To Love is to Live: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 13, based upon the Original Greek Text* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1967), 92,96.

5e. Is not proud (13:4e)

Barclay cites the story of William Carey to illustrate what it means to be humble. “The really great man never thinks of his own importance. Carey, who began life as a cobbler, was one of the greatest missionaries and certainly one of the greatest linguists the world has ever seen. He translated at least parts of the Bible into no fewer than thirty-four Indian languages. When he came to India, he was regarded with dislike and contempt. At a dinner party a snob, with the idea of humiliating him, said in a tone that everyone could hear, ‘I suppose, Mr. Carey, you once worked as a shoe-maker.’ ‘No, your lordship,’ answered Carey, ‘not a shoe-maker, only a cobbler.’ He did not even claim to make shoes--only to mend them.”

6e. Does not behave indecently (13:5a)

The word *aschemonei* means to act defiantly against social and moral standards resulting in disgrace, embarrassment, and shame. The word includes both spiritual graces (generosity, benevolence, graciousness, etc) and social graces (courtesy, politeness, etiquette, etc).

7e. Is not selfish (13:5b)

A loving person does not seek his own interests. He is considerate. He finds ways how he may advance the interests of others rather than himself. Jesus Himself set the supreme example, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matt 20:28).

8e. It is not easily irritated (13:5c)

The word *paroxunetai* means to be provoked or upset at someone or something

involving severe emotional strain (see Acts 17:16).

9e. Thinks no evil (13:5d)

This clause means that loving person does not harbour ill-feelings towards those who have done him wrong. The “evil thing” spoken of here refers to a particular injustice, or bad experience that the person is acquainted with, or has gone through. He does not store up his grievances and plots to get back at those who have caused him pain.

10e. Does not rejoice in iniquity (13:6a)

Love is saddened by all forms of unrighteousness. There is nothing to cheer about when a person sins. Sin should cause one to experience remorse, or regret, and an eager desire to repent (cf 2 Cor 7:10-11).

11e. It rejoices in the truth (13:6b)

The truth expressed here is the objective truth (i.e. the Word of God). It is glad when the Word of God is promoted or advanced. The saying, “doctrine divides, but love unites,” cannot be further from the truth. The love proclaimed by the ecumenical movement is a false love. This is because love will not call evil good. Love does not say that all religions lead to the same God. It must be understood that love must be defined by God, because God is love.

12e. Bears all things (13:7a)

The word *stegei* has the idea of putting up with annoyance or difficulty.

13e. Believes all things (13:7b)

The word *pisteuei* here means to consider true all things (i.e. all things as revealed in the Word of God).

14e. Hopes all things (13:7c)

The Christian faith is a faith of hope. We have a future to look forward to. This hope drives us along our pilgrim journey on earth.

15e. Endures all things (13:7d)

The word *hupomonei* is a strong word for endurance. It has the idea of enduring above and beyond one's ability. If *stego* is "to endure," *hupomeno* is "to super-endure." Spiros Zodhiates suggests that in all the 4 times when *panta*, the adjective-noun, is used, it should be translated adverbially; i.e. love "wholly bears, wholly believes, wholly hopes, and wholly endures." (Spiros Zodhiates, *Love*, 167-72).

2c. The eternality of love (13:8-13)

1d. Love will exist beyond the revelatory gifts (13:8-12)

1e. The permanency of love (13:8a).

Love will never end. It is an eternal virtue. The verb *pipto* normally means "to fall." But here it means "to cease to exist."

2e. The temporariness of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge (13:8b)

What will come to an end are these: prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, which are

used here as representative of all the sign gifts. These 3 gifts have one thing in common: they are all revelatory gifts. The nature of their cessation is not the same:

1f. Prophecy and knowledge

The KJV reads, “whether there be prophecies they shall fail...whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away.” The words “fail,” and “vanish away” are the same word in Greek, *katargeo*. It is a very strong word of cessation. It basically means “to destroy” (cf 15:24,26). Judisch concludes that “the immediate context compel us to affirm that according to I Corinthians 13, the cessation of the prophetic gifts was to be a complete obliteration beyond recall.” Douglas Judisch, *An Evaluation of Claims to the Charismatic Gifts*, Baker Biblical Monograph (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 83.

The verb *katargeo* is written in the passive voice. The passive voice indicates that there will be an outside agent which will cause the subject’s cessation. What is this outside force. Verses 9-10 give us the answer: “the perfect thing” (*to teleion*). What is this “perfect thing?” There are 2 popular interpretations: (1) It refers to the coming of Christ. This view is unlikely because not once in the NT is the word *teleios* used with reference to the coming of Christ or the end of the world (cf. Matt 5:48, 19:21, Rom 12:2, 1 Cor 2:6, 13:10, 14:20, Eph 4:13, Phil 3:15, Col 1:28, 4:12, Heb 5:14, 9:11, Jas 1:4,17,25, 3:2, 1 John 4:18). The 2 common words for these are *parousia* (1 Thess 4:15), and *telos* (1 Cor 15:24). The word *teleios* is an adjective, and when used

to modify a noun, it must agree with the noun it modifies in gender, number and case. *Teleion* here is written in the neuter. It does not agree with *parousia* which is feminine, or *telos* which is masculine. Gromacki argues, "the word *teleion* is set in contrast to that which is 'in part' (*ek merous*), it must refer to the culmination of a process. The second coming is not a process; it is an instantaneous event." Robert G Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967), 123. The second coming view is weak.

(2) It refers to the completed canon. This view is favoured because the immediate context has to do with revelation. As already stated, prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are revelatory gifts. Further, the word "mirror" is used only one other time in the NT, in Jas 1:22-25, with reference to the "perfect law of liberty," ie, the Word of God. The phrase "face to face" connotes direct revelation. God spoke to Moses "mouth to mouth" in the sense that God revealed His Word to him clearly, and directly (Num 12:6-8).

2f. Tongues

The text reads, "whether there be tongues, they shall cease." The word used for cessation here is different from the above. It is the verb *pauo*, "to stop." It is not written in the passive, but in the middle voice, which indicates that the gift of tongues-speaking will cease by itself. It will naturally fade away in the course of time when it has served its purpose (see notes on 1 Cor 14: 21-22) .

2d. Love will exist beyond the greater virtues (13:13)

This verse culminates Paul's 3 tier argument:

1e. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will cease upon the completion of Holy Scripture and the passing away of the Apostles.

2e. Faith, hope, and love are virtues which will remain during the entire Church age.

3e. Faith and hope will be realized when Christ returns. Love, being eternal, will remain forever. That is why "the greatest of these is love."

3b. The Misuse of the Gift of Tongues-speaking (14:1-40)

1c. The preference for prophesying over tongues-speaking (14:1-19)

In the beginning of this chapter, Paul reemphasizes what he has taught previously concerning love by giving the commandment: "Pursue love." The word *5imxm* can also be translated as "to persecute." It has the idea of strenuously seeking out someone or something. Having affirmed the supremacy of love, he now discusses the superiority of prophecy over tongues as a spiritual gift.

1d. The superiority of prophesying over tongues-speaking (14:1-5)

The gift of tongues is the gift of languages. The gifted man is able to speak in a foreign language which he has never learned or heard before. In this sense it is an unknown tongue (so KJV). It is not unknown in the sense that it is ecstatic speech which nobody can understand. When he speaks, he is speaking to God, because only God can understand every language, and not to men unless the men he speaks to know and

understand the language he is speaking in. In ordinary circumstances, no man understands him because he is speaking to his own native congregation in the local church. The one who speaks in tongues edifies only himself since without an interpreter he is the only one who understands what he is saying.

In contrast, the one who prophesies communicates to men. The gift of prophecy is the gift of being able to foretell and forthtell the will of God. When he prophesies, he speaks in the native tongue of the people. The members in the church benefit from it because they are able to understand the revelatory teaching that is given.

Paul prefers prophesying over tongues-speaking for reasons mentioned above. Spiritual gifts have been given for the common good of the church. The one who prophesies edifies the church. Everybody benefits through the prophet, but not everyone benefits through the tongues-speaker, unless he has an interpreter.

2d. The reasons for preferring prophesying over tongues-speaking (14:6-19)

1e. Because of the need to communicate with that which people can understand (14:6-12)

In a series of 4 rhetorical questions, Paul argues for the necessity to speak in a language that people can understand. This section is a build up from v.5 where he said, "I would that ye all spake with tongues." Paul desires that each and everyone of them be able to speak in different languages so that they can have the capacity also to function as prophets. Corinth was a busy trading post, and many foreigners go in and out of it. The opportunity for evangelism was tremendous. That is why Paul says, "I wish that every one of you spoke with languages other than your own, because this would enable you to

prophecy in more than your own native tongue.” Spiros Zodhiates, *Tongues?* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1974), 75.

Paul clarifies his point by using the illustration of music. Music is music only when there is a tune or a melody. How does one expect to appreciate music when the the pianist plays only one note throughout, or even a string of notes that do not make up a tune? So unless one speaks in a language that the other can understand, one is wasting one’s breath.

2e. Because tongues-speaking, unless there is an interpreter, is understood only by the person who is speaking it (14:13-17)

Paul is aware that there are those who do not have the gift of tongues-speaking and are speaking ecstatically, passing it off as genuine tongues. Since it is difficult to identify who is genuinely speaking in tongues and who is not, Paul instructs that those who would speak in tongues pray that they might also interpret (v.13). This is an attempt to get them to realize their own folly because genuine tongues-speaking involves true language-speaking and the ability to understand that which is spoken, else how can they be edified? Zodhiates, likewise, comments, “The ‘wherefore’ presupposes a concession on Paul’s part. Because of the insistence of these Corinthians that ecstatic speaking seems to do them good, that it is a gratifying experience although merely emotional, Paul does not dictatorially insist they they shall stop it altogether. Instead he makes recommendations that will persuade them that it is wrong and cause them to quit on their own. This is sound psychology. To tell people not to do something is seldom as effective as showing them the unhappy results of their actions, thus

motivating them to decide for themselves that it is not worthwhile." (*Tongues?*, 100).

3e. Because the apostle himself prefers to prophesy rather than to speak in tongues (14:18-19)

Verse 18 is better translated this way, "I give thanks to God more than all of you that I speak in tongues." This is suggested by Charles R. Smith, "Biblical Conclusions Concerning Tongues," Th.D. dissertation (Winona Lake: Grace Theological Seminary, 1970), 208. Paul is thus not saying that he is a prolific tongues-speaker, but just simply the fact that he does have the gift. Nevertheless, he makes it clear that "in the church (i.e. in a worship service) I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (i.e. foreign language)." (v.19). Hoyt remarks, "This is a categorical statement that has no exceptions attached to it, and it is almost equivalent to saying that speaking in tongues is practically worthless in the public gathering." Herman A. Hoyt, "Speaking in Tongues," *Brethren Missionary Herald* 25 (1963), 157.

2c. The purpose of the gift of tongues-speaking (14:20-25)

1d. The appeal to an Old Testament example (14:20-21)

Paul now draws the people's attention to the Old Testament. In verse 21, the Apostle cites Isa 28:11-12b. The context of Isa 28 is that of judgment. The Israelites have refused again and again the clear admonitions of the Lord through His prophet. Since they will not heed the Word of the Lord, they would now have to hear it in another language, namely, the Assyrian. "But the

word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." (Isa 28:13). It is a word of judgment against the unbelieving Israelites.

2d. The application of the Old Testament example (14:22)

Tongues, Paul says, are a sign to unbelieving Jews. The Jews thought they were the only people to whom God extended salvation. This is a misconception. The gift of tongues was meant to correct this misconception (cf. Peter's experience at Cornelius' house, and his subsequent defense before the Council [Acts 10-11]). To Peter, it was a sign of confirmation, but to those who refuse to believe, it is a sign of judgment. Gaffin writes, "Paul teaches, then, that tongues are a sign of God's judgment. Especially when unintelligible (that is, uninterpreted), they are an indictment against unbelievers. They show God's rejection of those who have rejected him in unbelief and at the same time confirm that unbelief. They are a mark of his turning away and alienation from those who have spurned the plain, intelligible message of the gospel. That is why Paul, while calling attention to this aspect of the gift (vv.21f.), nonetheless goes on immediately to caution against its use in the presence of unbelievers: uninterpreted tongues can serve only to harden unbelievers in their rejection of the gospel (v.23), and believers of sound mind (cf. v.20) will want to have no part in provoking such hardening in those that seek out their gatherings; therefore the exercise of tongues in public worship must be orderly and always interpreted (v.27)." Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979), 105.

3c. The regulation of tongues-speaking and prophesying

in church services (14:26-33)

1d. Rules on tongues-speaking (14:26-28)

There are 6 rules to keep: (1) Tongues-speaking must be done for the common edification. (2) No more than 3 persons can speak in tongues in any given service. (3) The tongues-speakers are to take turns to speak. (4) An interpreter must be present to translate the things that were spoken. (5) Tongues-speaking is forbidden if there is no interpreter available. (6) If no interpreter is present, the tongues-speaker may privately speak to himself and to God.

2d. Rules on prophesying (14:29-33)

There are 5 rules to keep: (1) Only 2 or 3 prophets are allowed to speak in a given service. (2) The prophets were to take turns to speak. (3) The other prophets, or those with the gift of discernment were to judge the declarations. The word used is *hupotasso* (v32) which literally means "to stand under" (i.e. to be placed under scrutiny and examination for orthodoxy and accuracy). (4) Prophesying must be done for the purpose of instruction. (5) There should be no confusion.

The revelatory gifts have a their respective counter-checking gifts. In other words, the gifts of prophecy and tongues-speaking are not used independently. The gift of prophecy for example is accompanied by the gift of discernment. The gift of discernment was given "to judge the (prophetic) declarations (whether they be genuine or not). Similarly, the gift of tongues has the parallel gift of interpretation. The person who has the gift of interpretation will be able to tell whether someone is speaking genuine tongues (i.e. languages) or not (i.e. gibberish which cannot be translated). Thus, the gift of prophecy is subject to the gift of discernment, while the gift of tongues is subject to the gift of interpretation.

3d. Rules for women (14:34-36)

There are 4 rules for the ladies: (1) They were to be silent. This probably has to do with tongues-speaking. (2) They were to be submissive to their husbands. (3) If they had any questions concerning what was said in church, they should ask their husbands in the privacy of their home. (4) They were not allowed to speak authoritatively in the church.

4c. Final charge (14:37-40)

A truly spirit-filled, or spiritually gifted man would recognize the authority behind the instructions of Paul, because they are the Lord's. The one who wants to remain ignorant, let him remain so. All things should be done in proper conduct and order.

9a. Instructions on the Resurrection (15:1-58)

1b. The Resurrection is Important to the Gospel (15:1-11)

1c. The preaching of the gospel (15:1-2)

The word *euangelion*, translated here as "gospel" literally means "good message," or "good news." It is not just a good news, but the good news; the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The word "preached" here is interesting. It is the verbal form of the nominal *euangelion*. Hence, it may be literally translated "good newsed." The Corinthians believed in the gospel and were saved. Note the use of the present tense for the word "saved." The present tense indicates that they were saved, is saved, and will be saved. The Apostle hopes that none have believed in vain. This does not mean loss of salvation. He is referring to those who may have not truly believed. True belief stems from correct knowledge. Possibly, there were some in the church who did not really know the gospel. There were some in the church who denied the resurrection of the Lord (15:12). Paul

is probably hinting that these were the people who “believed in vain.”

2c. The definition of the gospel (15:3-4)

Paul told the Corinthians that he did not add to or subtract from the content of the gospel. What he had originally received from the Lord, he preached to them. To the Galatians, Paul said, “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Christ.” What is the content of this gospel? It is the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the scriptures. The Old Testament has already predicted the redemptive work of the coming Messiah in such passages as Isa 53 and Ps 16:10. Jesus Himself chided the Emmaus disciples for puzzling over the resurrection event: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:25-27).

3c. The fact of the resurrection (15:5-11)

The fact that Jesus truly rose again from the dead is proven by (1) Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances, and (2) Paul’s miraculous conversion. Paul did not list all the resurrection appearances, only a representative few. He appeared to (1) Peter, the leader of the Apostolic band, (2) the twelve/Apostles (twice), (3) a group of 500, (4) James (the Lord’s brother), and (5) Paul himself, as one born prematurely. S. Lewis Johnson explains this clause this way: “Paul regards himself in comparison with the other apostles as a miscarried infant would be regarded among perfectly formed infants, because he was lifted out of his role of persecutor into his office of apostle. The others responded to the loving call of the Saviour, but Paul’s call on the Damascus Road had almost the element of force in it.

Therefore, he magnifies the grace of God which came to him (cf. Eph 3:8; I Tim 1:15)." (Wycliffe, 1256).

2b. The Resurrection is Crucial to the Christian Faith (15:12-34)

1c. The resurrection and salvation (15:12-19)

There are several serious implications if there was no resurrection: (1) Christ is still dead, (2) the preaching of the gospel is useless, (3) the gospel is empty of real content, (4) the Apostles are liars, (5) Christians have believed for no purpose. This means that they are still in their sins, those who have died are perishing in hell, and of all the people on earth, Christians are the most to be pitied.

2c. The resurrection and the kingdom (15:20-28)

Christ is the Prototype of the resurrection. His resurrection ensures the resurrection of all who belong to His kingdom. Adam was our federal head, and all men, on account of his fall, died. On the other hand, Christ was our Representative substitute, and all saints, on account of His death, lived (cf Rom 5:15-21). We like Christ will be resurrected in the last day. The end will only come after a certain period of time has passed. This interval is the period of the church age, Christ's kingdom on earth. S. Lewis Johnson explains, "Every Pauline use of *eita* involves an interval. Note that *epeita* of verse 23 has already covered an interval of 1900 years! The end refers to the end of the kingdom,... he cannot relinquish the kingdom until the end comes. The Son must reign as man under the Father (cf Ps 110:1). Following this reign, the mediatorial kingdom will be merged with the eternal kingdom of the triune God. The annulling of death will take place at the Great White Throne Judgment, after the kingdom and the final rebellion of Satan (cf Rev 20:7-15)." (Wycliffe, 1257).

3c. The resurrection and motivation (15:29-34)

The doctrine of the resurrection provides the impetus

for:

1d. Baptism (15:29)

This is an extremely difficult verse to interpret. Gromacki points out that there are no less than 30 different interpretations to this text (*Called*, 190). This writer will allow S. Lewis Johnson to explain, “**Baptized for the dead** is a difficult expression, which has been given many interpretations, some bizarre and heretical. For example, it is claimed by some that Paul refers to the practice of vicarious baptism, such as is observed by the Mormons, although he did not approve of it. The practice, however, is known only as early as the second century, and then among heretics. Others feel that the apostle refers to those who were baptized on the basis of the testimony of some who had died.... Still others feel that Paul refers to the baptism of young converts who took the place in the church of older brethren who had died.... (Other) expositors explained the expression as “baptized with an interest in (the resurrection of) the dead,” but this is unnatural.... The second and third suggestions are more in line with Pauline theology, but the interpretation remains difficult.” (*Wycliffe*, 1257).

2d. Martyrdom (15:30-32)

The fact of the resurrection gave Paul the courage to face death-threatening situations every day. If there is no resurrection hope, why place ourselves in such jeopardy. Enjoy life! Adopt the Epicurean philosophy of “eat, drink, and be merry; for tomorrow we die.”

3d. Personal holiness (15:33-34)

Their disbelief of the resurrection has logically led them into a careless Christian life. The Epicurean mindset was already creeping in. Paul cites a common proverb in those days as a warning: “Bad company

corrupts good morals.” (cf. 1 Cor 5:9-11, 2 Cor 6:14). He then issues 2 commands, “Wake up right now to righteousness, and do not go on sinning!”

3b. The Nature of the Resurrection Body (15:35-57)

1c. The uniqueness of the resurrection body (15:35-41)

The resurrection body is not the same as the natural body, nor is it totally different from it. “The fact is that there is continuity (v.36), identity (v.38), and yet diversity (vv.39-41).” (Johnson, *Wycliffe*, 1258). It is a special kind of body. A glorified one. The kind Jesus has (cf Luke 24:13-45, John 20:19-29, 21:12-14).

2c. The differences between the earthly body and the resurrection body (15:42-49)

1d. Between the earthly body and the spiritual body (15:42-44)

1e. Corruption versus incorruption (15:42)

Our present body is susceptible to diseases, illnesses, injuries, etc. It is decaying day by day. The future body will be totally immune to all bacteria, viruses, and biological breakdowns.

2e. Dishonour versus glory (15:43a)

The old body is made of dirt (Gen 2:7, 3:19). The new body will be glorious.

3e. Weakness versus power (15:43b)

Our earthly body experiences tiredness, thirst, hunger, etc. Our heavenly body will have no such wants. It is still capable of eating food but there is no necessity to. Eating will be purely a matter of enjoyment, rather than survival.

4e. Natural versus spiritual (15:44)

Our natural body is suited only for life on this earth. We need a spiritual body to live in heaven.

2d. Between the first Adam and the last Adam (15:45-49)

1e. Living soul versus quickening spirit (15:45)

The first man, Adam, was created a living being by the breath of God (Gen 2:7). Christ, on the other hand, became a life-giving spirit by His resurrection from the dead (John 5:26-29; cf. Col 1:17, Phil 3:20-21).

2e. Natural versus spiritual (15:46)

Adam possessed a soulish (*psuchikon*) body, but Christ received a spiritual (*pneumatikon*) body.

3e. Earthly versus heavenly (15:47-50)

Adam's body was made from the "earth" (Gen 2:7). Christ's body is of heaven. We originate with the earthly body through Adam, but we are destined for the heavenly body through Christ. We will be given a resurrected, glorified, and heavenly body one day to fit us for life in heaven.

3c. The transformation to the resurrection body (15:50-57)

Paul now answers the question: "What happens to those who are still alive when Christ returns; how are they going to live in heaven since they are still in their physical bodies?" Paul answers by first giving the

fact that there needs to be a transformation of our corruptible bodies into an incorruptible one because “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (v.50). Second, he tells them a “mystery.” It is a mystery in the sense that what was not explicitly known before is being clearly revealed now. There will be a rapture; a sudden catching up of saints to meet the Lord in the air (cf 1 Thess 4:13-17). This will happen in “a moment.” The Greek word used is *atomo* where we get our English word “atom.” In an atomic second, “in the twinkling of an eye,” at the sound of the last trumpet (cf Rev 11:15-19?) we shall all be changed and shall put on an incorruptible body. Death, has therefore, lost its sting. Christians need not fear death, for death brings glory. We know where we are going and what we are destined for.

4b. The Hope of the Future Resurrection (15:58)

This Christian hope is a strong motivating factor for holy living. Knowing that a glorious inheritance is awaiting us in the Lord Jesus Christ, we should abound in the work of the Lord. For we know that our service to the Lord will never be in vain.

10a. Instructions for the Collection of a Love-gift for the Poor Saints in Jerusalem (16:1-4)

This passage tells us that the collection was:

1b. A Joint Effort (16:1)

Paul gave orders that a sum of money should be collected from all the churches of Galatia. This collection was not for himself. It was a relief fund for the poor brethren in Jerusalem. It is not easy for a Jew to become a Christian. One can expect the Christian Jews in Jerusalem to be ostracised by family and friends, and persecuted by the Sanhedrin and the Roman government. Life in the holy city was extremely difficult. It is only right for daughter churches to extend help to the mother church.

2b. A Sunday Collection (16:2)

The collection was to be made on the first day of the week, which is Sunday. This tells us that the Christians in the Apostolic days met on Sundays for their worship services (cf Acts 20:7). Sunday, thus, became known as the Christian sabbath. It is a voluntary giving. Everyone gives as "God has prospered him."

3b. A Designated Gift (16:3-4)

The collection was specifically designated to the Jerusalem church. It is important to note Paul's carefulness over money matters. He left no grounds for people to slander him. Nobody can accuse him of pocketing the funds. He personally ordered that they appoint approved men to represent the church in handing over the money to the Jerusalem saints.

11a. Final Instructions and Remarks (16:5-24)

1b. Information on the Apostle's Itinerary (16:5-9)

Paul is now in Ephesus. He will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost because there is much work to be done there. Paul says that a tremendous door of opportunity has been opened for him. He has many adversaries; both from within (cf Acts 20:29-30), and from without (cf Acts 19:23-41). There is therefore the need for much teaching and preaching.

From Ephesus, he will go through the province of Macedonia, visiting such churches as Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea. This would enable him to renew his fellowship with them and also to receive their love-gift for the Jerusalem church.

From Macedonia, he would go to Corinth to visit them. It was not going to be a brief stopover. Paul intends to spend the winter there. No doubt, there were many more things to clear up.

2b. Instructions concerning the visits of Paul's co-workers (16:10-12)

1c. Timothy's visit (16:10-11)

Timothy was a young man of timid character (1 Tim

4:12, 5:21-23, 2 Tim 1:6-8, 2:1,3,15, 4:12). Paul told the Corinthians to be kind to him for he is a faithful servant of the Lord.

2c. Apollos' visit (16:12)

Paul greatly desired Apollos to return to Corinth. He had pastored the church and had a bad experience there. We do not know the reasons why Apollos preferred not to return to Corinth at that time. A possibility is that he felt inadequate to deal with the complex problems in that church and only hope to return when the problems have been resolved.

3b. Final commands (16:13-18)

1c. General commands (16:13-14)

Paul issues a series of 5 imperatives here. The first 4 are actually military words (cf. Eph 6:10-17). All the words are written in the present tense. They can all be translated with the words, "keep on ...".

2c. Specific commands (16:15-18)

Paul commands the Corinthian church to submit themselves to the house of Stephanas because they have on their own initiative, taken up the responsibility of Christian ministry. The Corinthians were also to give due respect to the Christian services rendered by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus who were their representatives to Paul.

5b. Epilogue (16:19-24)

1c. Closing salutations (16:19-21)

The churches in Asia minor sent their greetings to the Corinthian church. Aquila and Priscilla were no strangers to the Corinthians (cf Acts 18:2-3, 18:18-19, 24-28). They too send their greetings from Ephesus. The church in Ephesus met in their house. The couple may be considered the pioneers of household churches (cf. Acts 18:2, Rom 16:3-5).

The Ephesian church sent their regards as well. The Corinthians were instructed to greet one another with a "holy kiss" as well. It was their custom at that time that the gentlemen greeted one other with a kiss, and likewise the ladies. For us, a warm handshake is enough. Paul finally gives his personal greeting. Paul usually used a secretary to write his epistle as he dictates (cf. Rom 16:22). This portion was probably written in his own handwriting. This is one way of authenticating a letter and also to add a personal touch.

2c. Final warning (16:22)

The word *anathema* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *cherem* meaning "a object devoted to destruction," "a cursed thing" (cf Rom 9:3, Gal 1:8-9, 1 Cor 12:3). The next word "Maranatha" is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word meaning "Our Lord, come." It should be noted that it is possible to separate the 2 words may by a full stop. It is possible to view them as expressing 2 separate ideas. The thought is probably this: To those who do not love the Lord, Paul says, "Let them be cursed, the Lord is coming (to judge)."

3c. Concluding benediction (16:23-24)

The grace of God is the encompassing theme of the whole Scripture. It is solely by the grace of God that one receives salvation. The grace of God is key not only at the point of one's justification, but also present sanctification, and ultimate glorification.

His letter to them has been severe. Nevertheless, he expresses his love for them. Paul is applying 1 Corinthians 13.