

Paul's First Epistle to the

CORINTHIANS

# STUDY NOTES

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**C H A P T E R            I N D E X**

**1. - 4.            HUMILITY - HALLMARK of MATURITY**

**8. - 10.           THE DANGER of IDOLATRY**

**12. - 14.           USE AND MISUSE of SPIRIT GIFTS.**

## PAUL'S EPISTLES TO CORINTH

### THE CITY OF CORINTH.

#### 1. HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY.

The city of Corinth was situated nine miles from the port of Cenchrea at the south-western end of the Isthmus of Corinth, or as the region was known in Paul's day, Achaia. Corinth was a large city nestling at the northern base of the Mountain of Acrocorinthus, which towered above it 1,818 feet.

It was the central point of trade between Europe and Asia, and as such, its streets teemed with men and women of all nationalities and creeds. The storms at the southern shore of the isthmus forced the shipping through the two ports of Corinth, Lechaenum on the west, and Cenchrea at the north. Lechaenum was only one mile from Corinth, and the strip of land between the two ports was only three miles at its narrowest point. Over this neck of land the lighter boats could be dragged, and it is from this geographical feature that the word "isthmus" ("bridge of the sea") has been derived.

Corinth became a Roman province when it was overcome and destroyed by the Roman General, Mummius, BC146. It was rebuilt by Julius Caesar in BC44, and subsequently placed under a Roman Proconsul. Hence, in the days of Paul, Corinth was relatively a new city, the buildings being mostly the recent work of Caesar. Scattered, however, throughout the city were some houses of older origin, which had survived the ravages of Mummius' destruction, still bearing the scars of that holocaust. Thus Corinth was a city of contrast: ancient and new architecture, lavishly decorated, and poor dwelling places were often seen side by side. Poverty rubbed shoulders with prosperity. Buildings of "gold, silver and precious stones," and dwellings of "wood, hay and stubble," were a background skilfully used by Paul to press home great moral truths (I Cor. 3v10-13).

#### 2. RELIGION AND SOCIAL LIFE.

Corinth was peopled mainly by Greeks who delighted in tawdry rhetoric and hollow philosophy (I Cor. 1v17). In the streets of the city, traders from Italy and Asia abounded. By the decree of Caesar freedmen of Rome were sent to the Province to consolidate it for the Roman Empire. As would be expected, the commerce of the city attracted a large colony of Jews, who followed the trade of the Empire as blood follows the arteries of the body, and of course it gave them easy access to Judah from the sea.

Besides those who found a permanent residence in Corinth, there was a huge multi-racial floating population, bringing to this centre all the ideas and abominable practices of a world which lay in wickedness.

On a nearby hill stood the temple of Aphrodite dedicated to the worship of Venus, the Goddess of Love, a worship that was notorious for its shameless licentious rites.

This was the most abominable religion of the day, and extremely popular as can be imagined from the abominations which it not only allowed, but openly and shamelessly encouraged. It is important to fix this feature in our mind, as much of the Epistles have been based upon the confutation of this way of life of which it was emblematic. The worship conducted in this idolatrous temple, was presided over by women priestesses to the number of a thousand, all of whom were completely dedicated to the fundamental basis of their religion, which was fornication. Such immoral conduct was a common everyday sight in Corinth, so much so that when Paul had originally written to the Corinthians not to company with fornicators, their answer was that such a strict rule would mean that they had to leave the city itself! (I Cor.5v9-10).

Every second year, the Isthmian Games were held at Corinth. These were so named because they were held on the Isthmus of Achaia. To these were attracted the best athletes of the age, and a huge crowd of bawdy spectators gathered to witness one of the most outstanding spectacle of the times. These games provided Paul with many metaphors from which he drew his moral truths, the true basis of Christian living. The amount of space Paul devotes to his illustrations from the Games, is a testimony of the interest which they had aroused. The modern Olympics are but a poor representation of what was then a huge international and social attraction.

Corinth was proverbial for its profligacy, and to the people of that age in which Paul lived, to "Corinthianise" was to corrupt, and that in the most degraded sense. Even so, the Lord had "much people in this city" (Acts 18v10).

#### THE FOUR LETTERS TO CORINTH.

Much has been written concerning these letters, and as yet commentators have not come to an agreement on the question of whether Paul compiled three or four such epistles in all. The majority of commentators suggest that three have been written, and there is positive evidence that there were at least three. However, when the whole character of the two preserved epistles is considered, it is more than probable that there were four originally. Although two of these epistles were not preserved for us in the range of the Holy Scriptures, there are allusions to them in the existing letters and evidence for the Four Letter Theory is submitted below. The four letters will be designated as follows:

1. An earlier letter.
2. The First Epistle.
3. An Intermediate Letter.
4. The Second Epistle.

1. AN EARLIER LETTER.

Paul makes reference to this in his 1st Epistle (I Cor.5v9-11), and it would seem from this reference that he is correcting a misunderstanding which had arisen from their reading of this earlier letter. We sense from his reference to it that this letter was brief and limited in its scope, designed to urge separateness. This is understandable having considered the character of the city of Corinth. Paul's high sense of morality would be greatly disturbed by what he saw in this vile city, hence a brief note urging separateness was written.

2. THE FIRST EPISTLE.

This was written in reply to a letter from them (I Cor.7v1, 8v1, 12v1), at a time when Paul preached at Ephesus (Acts 19v1, I Cor.16v8-9, 15v32). Paul answers questions raised, but also includes much admonition and rebuke concerning other matters upon which he had "inside information," but which the Corinthians had astutely failed to mention in their letter. It was "commonly reported" to him concerning the incestuous person (I Cor.5v1), and he probably gained this information from three members of the Corinthian ecclesia, Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, who were with Paul at Ephesus (I Cor.16v17). These may even have brought the Corinthian letter which excluded information of this outrageous matter. Besides this, he had heard from a sister named Chloe concerning the development of party factions in the Corinthian ecclesia (I Cor.1v11). Apollos, recently returned from Corinth, would doubtless also offer information (Acts 19v1, I Cor.16v2). Other matters not mentioned by them, but far more serious, were known to Paul. There was a question of wrong doctrine, the resurrection of the dead being called in question (I Cor.15v12), the breaking of bread meeting was in serious disorder because of their lack of appreciation of its principles (I Cor.11), and besides these questions, there was one which was to occupy the greater part of the second epistle, a matter having tremendous implications if it was allowed to grow; it concerned the undermining of his own apostolic authority among the Corinthians (I Cor.9v1-2).

3. AN INTERMEDIATE LETTER.

In his second epistle Paul makes reference to an earlier correspondence. The two major passages in question are: II Cor.2v1-14, 7v4-13. At first glance it might seem that Paul is here referring to his first (preserved) epistle, and to the matter concerning the incestuous brother (I Cor.5). However, closer examination of the context indicates that they refer to an incident which occurred at Corinth whilst Paul was there on a brief, but painful visit, not recorded in Acts, but falling into the period of his 3 years stay at Ephesus (see notes on Chronology). At that time, it is suggested, a Judaistic element made its appearance in Corinth in order to undermine Paul's work, and he found it necessary to take a stand. It seems that an Intermediate letter was then written. That the letter referred to in the two passages (II Cor.2v1-14, 7v4-13) was not the first epistle, and did not concern the matter of incest (I Cor.5) should be proved by the following considerations:

- (1) Paul repented of writing this correspondence (7v8) which could not be his feeling in respect of the first epistle.
- (2) He lived in agitated concern for the return of Titus to see their reaction to this letter (2v13). The first epistle is quietly confident in its tone.
- (3) He wrote this in tears "out of much affliction and anguish of heart" (2v4), and whilst the first epistle would contain much that was troublesome for Paul, it was not all written in this feeling, and is comparatively serene (I Cor.1v1-9).
- (4) Titus reports the tremendous effect for good that this letter had, implying that the question raised was a doubtful issue (7v11). Could the matter of incest be a doubtful issue?
- (5) Paul's chief motive for writing was to demonstrate his care for the Corinthians without much regard for the offender or the injured party (7v12). Now this is very peculiar if the matter of incest was the question, because Paul was certainly concerned over the parties involved, i.e. both the offender and the injured party. The whole text of this verse would imply that the matter concerned some personal offence committed by the Corinthians, Paul being the sufferer.
- (6) He earlier instructed them to excommunicate the incestuous brother (I Cor.5v5). Here he counsels refellowship (2v6-8) and forgiveness of the offence on the basis of his feeling for them! (2v10). This would hardly be the case in respect of such an abominable crime as incest, and his appeal for refellowship is peculiar considering that there are no directions as to the necessary steps to be taken by the offending brother.
- (7) He wrote to secure better relationships before he visited them again (2v1-4). This could not apply to their feelings over the first epistle as there he closes with the joyous anticipation of visiting them for a prolonged stay (I Cor.16v5-7).
- (8) The language of 7v11 and the tenor of each of the two passages, strongly suggests that there was only one issue dealt with in the correspondence. Many and various were the topics raised in the first epistle.
- (9) Note carefully the language of 2v5 which is now given from the Moffatt Translation in order that the sense might be better understood: "If a certain individual is causing pain, he has been causing pain not so much to me as to all of you." Now this is certainly peculiar language if the matter is the matter of incest. In that issue the very reverse was the case; the individual concerned certainly did cause Paul a great deal of pain, but conversely, the Corinthians seemed to care little for the matter (I Cor.5v1-2), but looking at the wording of this verse, it seems that the individual referred to by Paul was pressing his claims heavily upon the Corinthians, and that those claims implied an offence against Paul, detrimental to his standing in the sight of the Corinthians. This being the case, we can understand, why Paul readily forgave the personal offence, being only concerned with the effect of such undermining influence upon the ecclesia as a whole.

Summing up the evidence given, it is quite likely, as has been suggested, that certain individuals, who had visited Corinth with the express purpose of hindering Paul's work, had questioned his authority. Paul might then have paid a hurried visit to Corinth in order to face these brethren, and their pernicious teaching. This brief visit was followed up by his "Intermediate Epistle." II Corinthians chapters 10 and 11 particularly seem to fit such previous history.

4. THE SECOND EPISTLE.

This was evidently written after he left Ephesus for Troas, where he was supposed to have awaited the arrival of Titus, with news concerning the result of his intermediate letter. In anxiety he crosses to Macedonia where he meets Titus, and writes his second epistle (II Cor. 2v12-13, 9v2). It was written approximately 12 months after the first epistle (II Cor. 8v10, 9v2).

CHRONOLOGY - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CORINTHIAN ECCLESIA.

In all, Paul made three visits to Corinth. Two of these are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and reference to the third visit is made in the epistles. Those recorded in Acts we shall call his "first" and "second" visits. The other we shall style "Intermediate Visit" for it appears to have been made between those recorded in Acts.

FIRST VISIT.

This was made during the course of his second missionary journey on which he was accompanied by Silas and Timothy (II Cor. 1v19). The visit extended over a period of 18 months. At this time the Corinthian ecclesia was established (Acts 18v1-22).

INTERMEDIATE VISIT.

Paul makes reference to a "third" visit to be made from Ephesus (II Cor. 12v14, 13v1), which of course, implies that he made a second visit after he had founded the ecclesia as recorded in Acts 18v1-18. He speaks of this intermediate visit as having been a painful and humiliating experience (II Cor. 12v21, II Cor. 2v1, 13v2) which was certainly not the character of his first visit.

SECOND VISIT.

Made during the course of his third journey; he abides in Corinth for three months (Acts 20v1-3).

For the sake of convenience, we list a chronology:

- AD52 ?
1. Paul establishes the Corinthian ecclesia on his second missionary journey (Acts 18v1-18). He labours there for 18 months, then travels to Ephesus for a short visit. From here he sails to Antioch in Syria, from whence he commences his third journey through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18v18-23).
  2. Meanwhile, Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, a man "mighty in the Scriptures," but "knowing only the baptism of John," arrives in Ephesus. His forthright and exact interpretations of the Old Testament teaching of Messiah, which he boldly gave in the Synagogue, attracted the attention of Aquila and Priscilla, Paul's companions in Corinth, who had travelled with him to Ephesus. This married couple take Apollos, educate him as to the Messiahship of Jesus, and send him to Corinth to continue the work commenced by Paul (Acts 18v24-28).
  3. While Apollos is in Corinth, Paul arrives back in Ephesus (Acts 19v1). Here he stays, in all about three years (Acts 20v31), delaying his promised visit to Corinth because of the opportunities presented at Ephesus (I Cor. 16v8-9).

EVENTS AFFECTING CORINTH DURING PAUL'S SOJOURN OF THREE YEARS.

- AD54 ?
- (1) He despatches his earlier letter.
  - (2) Apollos joins him from Corinth (I Cor. 16v12).
  - (3) Timothy and Erastus are sent ahead of Paul to



Macedonia with the object of making for Achaia and Corinth (Acts 19v21-22, I Cor.16v10).

- (4) Despatch of the first epistle; Paul still detained at Ephesus.
- (5) The Judaisers reach Corinth bringing with them letters of recommendation (II Cor.3v1-3).
- (6) Paul makes his brief and painful visit to Corinth in order to combat their influence.

AD57 ?

- (7) Despatch of his intermediate letter by the hand of Titus (II Cor.7v13-15) - He departs from Ephesus, heading for Troas.

- 4. Paul preaches at Troas then anxiously crosses into Macedonia to find Titus, and to hear of reception of intermediate letter (II Cor.2v12-13).
- 5. Reunion with Titus. Despatch of second epistle.
- 6. The tour of Macedonia.
- 7. He arrives in Corinth for a stay of three months (Acts 20v1-3).

AD58 ?

- 8. Back to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentacost, via Philippi and Miletus (Acts 20v6-15, 21v17). Paul arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21v33).

COMPARISON OF THE TWO EPISTLES.

The following comparison, illustrates the difference in character between the two Epistles, illustrative of the developing crisis with the advent of the Judaisers and the serious decline in Paul's influence at Corinth.

<u>1ST EPISTLE</u>	<u>2ND EPISTLE</u>
<p>Deals with a greater variety of topics and it is noticeably systematic, and its preoccupation decidedly practical.</p> <p>Answers to questions, where his opinion was solicited and gladly accepted (7v1, 8v1, 12v1).</p> <p>Answers given are authoritative, e.g. "As I have given order," (16v1).</p> <p>He had instructed them in the Jerusalem Poor Fund, and it seems their initial response had been good (16v1-3 - II Cor.8v10).</p> <p>There had been no need to deal with the comparison between Law and Grace. This was not a problem.</p>	<p>Complex and repetitive and more personal in character. Greater part of his letter deals with apostleship.</p> <p>Second Epistle devoted to long passages of half apologetic explanations.</p> <p>No such authority appears, rather does Paul resort to apologetic appeal, "I speak not by commandment" (8v8).</p> <p>Paul obviously dismayed, reminds them of their good start, tries to revive flagging interest (9v2).</p> <p>A large and vehement section is devoted to the Gospel being greater than the Law, and to warnings concerning "false apostles" boasting of being "Israelites," "Hebrews" (3, 4, 11).</p>

THE 1ST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.THE EPISTLE SUMMARISED.

<u>Section 1:</u>	1v1-9	<u>Salutation and Thanksgiving.</u>
<u>Section 2:</u>	1v10-6v20	<u>Disciplinary Counsel on basis of reports received.</u>
	1v10-4v21	The evil of factions.
	5v1 -6v20	Moral disorder - one severe case of incest.
<u>Section 3:</u>	7v1-14v40	<u>Authoritative answers to questions submitted.</u>
	7v1 -7v40	Questions on the marriage state.
	8v1 -11v1	Questions relating to the partaking of meat offered unto idols.
	11v2-14v40	Conduct of ecclesial worship - proper use of spirit gifts.
<u>Section 4:</u>	15	<u>The Resurrection - a vital doctrine.</u>
<u>Section 5:</u>	16	<u>Epilogue.</u>
	v1-4	Instruction about the collection for the Jewish Fund.
	v5-12	Announcement of travel plans. He promises to visit the Corinthians.
	v13-24	Final exhortation, salutation and blessing.

1v1-9. SALUTATION AND THANKSGIVING.

The salutation was designed to call to mind that the Corinthians had been called by Grace and not because of their own virtues (cp. 1v26-27). It seems that they were beginning to lose sight of this fact. Self-satisfaction and party factions endangered the state of unity with God which they had attained unto through Christ.

v1. "Paul, called to be an Apostle."

Paul establishes his authority. It was by the will of God that he had been called ("Kletos" - "called by invitation" Gal. 1v15-16, Acts 9v10-18). On the same basis the Corinthians had been invited to separate themselves, to become "heirs of salvation" (Heb. 10v10). To question or oppose Paul's authority was equivalent to rejection of God's principles in their own lives.

"Sosthenes, our brother."

Greek, "the brother" - definite article included. This implies: (a) he was an important convert, or (b) he was not an apostle. Being mentioned so prominently here, Sosthenes could be the ruler of the Synagogue, who succeeded Crispus (cp. Acts 18v8 - v17).

On his first visit, Paul had been ejected from this Synagogue. He then preached in an adjoining house, there converting Crispus (18v9), and perhaps Sosthenes. If so, what a triumphant victory of the Gospel over Law.

v2.

"The ecclesia of God."

Paul had established this ecclesia (3v6, 4v15, 9v1), not in his own strength, but by the power of God working in him (2v1-5). They were God's heritage (I Peter 5v2-3).

"Sanctified in Christ."

Sanctification is separation from the world to God (Compare their former way of life (6v10-11). The motivating power is the word of Truth (John 17v17), which the believer sees manifested in the man Christ Jesus (John 17v19). He is the leader of the ecclesia of God (Heb.2v10-11). No other man can sanctify (I Cor.1v30). Party factions were out of place and destructive.

"Called to be Saints."

Called by invitation, (same word as v1), to show forth the virtues of Him who had called them out (I Peter 2v9). They were only "constituted separate" on this basis.

"With all that in every place . . . "

Reminder that there was only one Lord, who was head of all the sanctified members of the body, and that Christ was not confined to Corinth. How petty were their party factions (v12).

v3.

"The Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ."

R.V. "In Christ by God's grace." Self-satisfaction and party spirit based upon names of men were out of harmony with this principle (v13).

v5.

"Ye are enriched by him."

These riches of which the Apostle speaks, were confirmed to them by the spirit gifts which had been distributed amongst the ecclesia at Corinth, and of which they had boasted. However, Paul points out that these gifts were God-given, and therefore, form no basis for boasting.

"In all utterance, and in all knowledge."

Or more literally, "In power to speak and understand." This came about through the influence of the spirit gifts (12v7-10). However, the privilege also brought responsibility (II Cor.8v7). They accused Paul of being "rude (unlearned - ignorant) in speech," but he excelled them in knowledge (II Cor.11v6).

v6.

"The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."

"Bebaioo," "to make firm, stablish, make secure." When Spirit gifts were bestowed upon a man, this was a sign of God that he was confirmed and established as a true believer of the testimony concerning Christ (Gal.3v2). Such Spirit power granted to Paul, confirmed his preaching "through miracles and wonders" (Acts 15v12,

I Cor.2v4), and presented irrefutable credentials as to his authority, at the same time placing responsibilities upon the gifted. Paul reminds the Corinthians of these facts.

v7. "Ye come behind in no gift."

R.S.V. has "Not lacking." This foundation placed them in a position to receive everything necessary for their walk in Christ. It was of paramount importance that they did not leave that basis.

"Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Coming" - Greek "Apokalupsis," "a revealing, an uncovering." Here, either a reminder of the Judgment Seat, where the Lord was to reveal all things (II Cor.5v10), or the stressing of the actual imminence of the second coming itself. The former is obviously the meaning here.

v8. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end."

Note: Although the testimony had been confirmed in them (v6), there was further constant need for strengthening and stablishing "unto the end." The Lord would do this if they acknowledged their dependence. Selfconfidence was out of place. Their eventual salvation depended upon the favour of God (Heb.3v14, N.B. Phil.1v16).

"Blameless."

"Anenkletos," that is, with nothing laid to one's charge. R.V. "Unreprovable" (same word as Col.1v22, I Tim.3v10). A position which can only be acquired in and through Christ (Jude 24-25).

v9. "God is faithful."

He will perform His part if they trust in His grace (Eph.2v8).

"Ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son."

The Corinthians had fellowship with Christ; that fellowship involves implicit trust in the Divine promise because this was the basis of the Son's exaltation (Heb.5v7). That same fellowship required that a similar spirit be manifested in them. If Christ had to look to the Father "to save him out of death," how much more should the Corinthians lean upon Him, and not place confidence in self.

This ends the opening section of "Salutation and Thanksgiving." Note, that Jesus Christ is mentioned nine times in as many verses. This was to impress upon the minds of the Corinthians that "there was only one Name given under heaven whereby we must be saved," (Acts 4v12), namely the Name bestowed upon Jesus Christ after his exaltation (Phil.2v9-11), the Name of Yahweh Himself (Isa.45 v23-25). Only those found in Christ could be victorious. Other "names" were ineffectual for this purpose, even that of "Paul" v13.

Introductory Note.

This party spirit was the root cause of much of the evil at Corinth. Hence, it is the first matter dealt with, and is constantly alluded to throughout the whole two Epistles.

v10. "Ye all speak the same thing."

They had been enriched in utterance by the same spirit (v5), how then could they possibly be of different opinion.

"Divisions."

Note margin, "Schisms." The word literally means "a cleft, a rent," and is rendered in this sense in Mark 2v21. It is used in the sense of a difference of opinion (John 7v43, 9v16, 10v19).

"Be perfectly joined together."

Literally, "To repair something that was torn," and is rendered "mending their nets" (Mat.4v21). Christ had been put on by them as a garment (Gal.3v27). Now that garment had been rent apart as if it could actually be divided and "apportioned out" (v13).

"In the same mind."

"Nous," the mind, is the seat of the knowledge which they had received (v5).

"In the same judgment."

"Gnome," primarily a means of knowing; here, opinion expressed in utterance, (I Cor.7v25 same word). Here Paul exhorts to harmonious use of the gifts in the manner intended. Certainly "diversities of operation," but the same God who worked in all (12v5-6, Eph.4v4-7).

v12. "Now this I say."

R.S.V. "What I mean is."

"I am of Paul."

Paul's own party would have included those who saw his original work, and such who found in his gospel of Liberty licence to sin. Doubtless, some members of his own party were genuine, and the fact that they had given their allegiance by name, would make this matter an extremely delicate one for Paul to handle. True to the cause, however, the Apostle Paul condemned out of hand, the party spirit, even though it did manifest itself in his own name.

"I of Apollos."

Apollos would attract the lovers of rhetoric. His powerful eloquence would greatly contrast to the determined simplicity of Paul's preaching (compare Acts 18v24, I Cor.2v1-4). Whilst Peter is also mentioned, his name is mentioned incidentally, and Paul transfers in a figure, the whole factious spirit to himself and to Apollos (4v6); because these two being opposites, stood as it were, as federal heads of the party spirits in Corinth. Paul would doubtless acquire Apollos' permission to his use of the "figure," and it is a testimony to the humility of both men, that

they should parade their own names in a somewhat derogatory sense to themselves, in order to impress the greatness and the superiority of Christ.

There is no suggestion whatever of any feeling between Paul and Apollos. As our study proceeds, it will be apparent that they were on the best of terms, and thoroughly united in the work of the truth (compare 16v12).

"I of Cephas" (Peter).

This party would doubtless be leaning towards Judaism, as Peter was the Apostle to the Circumcision (Gal.2v7).

"I of Christ."

There is abundant evidence of many who made this direct claim of owing allegiance to none, but Christ, and yet by their very demeanour proved this to be fictitious. A verbal claim meant nothing to the Apostle Paul. Evidence of this direct claim is seen in II Cor.11v13.

v13.

"Is Christ divided?"

"Merizo," "Apportioned out." He actually is the "one body," they all "members in particular," and each member with its functions was necessary to the other. To think that they could apportion Christ into various sections was to destroy this basic truth in their midst (12v12).

"Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

Notice the related doctrines of crucifixion and baptism. Baptism is but a token of our acceptance of Christ's death and our agreement to die with him (Rom.6v1-6). The fact that they had died "in Christ" meant that they now had to live also in him, and the life which they now lived was the life of Christ and not their own. In this way, Paul had lost his individuality, how then could they be baptised into his name when he himself was living the name of Christ! (Gal.2v20).

v14.

"I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius."

These were important converts. Crispus is mentioned in Acts 18v8 as the ruler of the Synagogue (See note on "Sosthenes" 1v1). Gaius also appears to be a very important convert; obviously a rich man and one who exercised great influence amongst the Corinthians. Paul's description of him in Romans 16v23 shows him to be of a generous and hospitable character, whose house had become the home and the shelter not only of Paul, but of the whole ecclesia.

v15.

"In mine own name."

Rotherham, "Into mine own name."

v16.

"The household of Stephanas."

Obviously the first of the Corinthian converts, and an example (16v15-17). His name reminds of the "coronal wreath" (Greek, "Stephan"), the prize given to the victors of the Greek Games, evergreen and emblematic of triumph and victory. Both Paul and Christ use this symbol (II Tim.4v8, Rev.2v10).

v17.

"Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

Here again is Paul's insistence upon his apostleship: "Christ sent me."

"Not with wisdom of words."

But in simplicity (2v4), for which these lovers of rhetoric despised him (II Cor.10v10).

"Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

This was his motive, one which dominated his whole life (Gal.6v12-14). He suffered as a slave, spoke plainly and "considered as dung" human glory and dignity, that he might manifest Christ in his mortal body (II Cor.4v11, Phil.3v4-8). The way in which Paul contrasts in this verse mere "words" with "the cross," must impress the reader. The entrance into the Kingdom could not be gained by preaching or listening to words but by action. It is the preaching of the cross that becomes a motivating power in a person's life (v18). It is Christ "crucified" (v23) that magnifies God's power (v24). By this example we are "healed" (I Peter 2v21-24).

v18.

"The preaching of the cross."

Literally, "Word of the cross." Compare v17.

"Is to them that perish foolishness."

To those who exalt human pride and dignity, the condemnation of the flesh upon the cross was the height of folly.

"But unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

To those who recognise the worthlessness of flesh, the doctrine of the cross is reasonable and logical (Heb.2v14, Rom.7v18, v24-25).

v19.

"For it is written."

Quotation from Isa.29v14. Consider background to get the impact: Isa.29v1 addressed to "Ariel" - i.e. Lion of God, which was Judah. These eminent men of Judah, as well as the wise men of "Ephraim" - the ten tribes, ought to have been instructors (Isa.28v1v7). Lacking the word in them, they had nothing to teach (v11-12). v13 was applied by Christ to the "wise" of his day (Matt.15v8-9). When filled with one's own wisdom, there is no room for the principles of God.

v20.

"Where is the wise?"

Greek "Sophos," from whence we derive "sophistry," and this term applies to the wise in general. Paul then proceeds to define them more clearly.

"Where is the scribe?"

This refers to the Jewish Scribe.

"The disputer of this world?"

The word "disputer" is again "sophist," and applies to the Greek philosopher of this age ("world," "aion"). Hence the Apostle is now calling their attention to the wise in their midst, to the wisdom of the Judaiser and to the wisdom of the Greek philosopher, both of whom played a large part in the divisions which were



rampant at Corinth.

- v21. In this verse a Divine paradox is set forth, and will be appreciated by those whose childlike disposition has caused them to see the beauty of the truth. That which the world esteems to be foolishness, is the very basis of salvation.
- v22. "The Jews require a sign."  
To the Jews anything claiming to be divine had to be spectacular and prodigious. He refused to believe without such demonstrations (Mat.12v38, Mark 8v11, Luke 11v16).
- "The Greeks seek after wisdom."  
That is, speculative wisdom of man which appeals to the mind of the flesh (cp. Rom.8v5-7).
- v23. "We preach Christ crucified."  
Such preaching was contrary to all fleshly ideals and reasonings.
- "Unto the Jews a stumbling-block."  
This is the stumbling-block of Isa.8v14 (same word in both cases in Septuagint Version). A crucified Christ offended the national pride of Jewry.
- "Unto the Greeks foolishness."  
See their reaction in Athens (Acts 17v18v32). A doctrine which denied all fleshly prowess and demanded subjection was to them the height of folly.
- v24. "But unto them which are called."  
"Kletos" - "called by invitation." God issued it and they heard. Seeing that the preaching "of the cross" was contrary to fleshly ideals, it followed that God Himself had introduced it. Those who accepted the invitation, showed that they had been "taught of God" (Consider John 6v44-45, with Isa. 54v13).
- "Christ the power of God."  
Christ's victory over the sinful inclinations of the flesh was proof that God's power was effectively working in him. It is not in man to accomplish this in his own strength. God "made him strong" (Psa.80v15, II Cor.5v19). Only an enlightened man can see this accomplishment in it's true perspective. The Jews expected a Messiah who would subject nations, not considering Prov.16v32.
- "The wisdom of God."  
The sublime doctrine of Atonement surpasses the philosophy of the Greeks.
- v25. "The foolishness of God."  
Not foolishness as a personal attribute, but that which is considered by the ignorant as a foolish policy; lit. "the foolish thing."

"The weakness of God."

As they considered it "weak." Paul demonstrates that human fleshly valuation runs contrary to the divine. This he stresses throughout both epistles. Only a divinely enlightened man sees himself in all his weakness and God's power and strength is magnified. Paul's later statement in relation to Christ's own sacrifice emphasises this fact: "He was crucified through weakness, yet liveth by the power of God" (II Cor.13v4). The same hope is held out to us, if we follow the set example.

v26. "For ye see your calling, brethren."

Examine the facts. Does your calling justify self-glorification? Did you attain unto the wisdom of God unaided?

In v26-27, the contrast is shown between the wise and the foolish, the mighty and the weak, the noble and the base:

<u>WISE</u> (sophos, clear)	<u>FOOLISH</u> (insipid, simpleton).
<u>MIGHTY</u> (powerful, capable)	<u>WEAK</u> (sick, without strength).
<u>NOBLE</u> (well born)	<u>BASE</u> (unknown descent).

v27. "God hath chosen."

Thrice repeated, undeniable.

"To confound the wise."

Literally "to bring to shame."

"To confound the things which are mighty."

Again the same expression, "to bring shame."

v29. "That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Rotherham, "That no flesh should boast before God." Note how this principle worked in the life of Abraham (Rom.4v2).

v30. "But of him."

R.S.V. "Who is the source of your life," that is, God is the source of your life, the author of their salvation. He has done the calling and the choosing. In this respect, the Corinthians had done nothing. The point that Paul is now about to make is that all flesh is subservient to God, that on the basis of evidence seen and heard among them, none who are of the human race including Jesus Christ himself, has any ground for boasting.

"Are ye in Christ Jesus."

You stand and fall by acknowledging or denying the principles revealed in his life, death and resurrection.

"Who of God."

R.S.V. "Was made wisdom for us from God," i.e. he also owed his wisdom to the Father (cp. Isa.11v1-3). The words which he spoke did not spring from fleshly reasoning, but were the expression of the Divine mind, imbibed from the Scriptures of Truth (John 5v30-44).

"Unto us wisdom."

The Son of God has been made three things unto us, all of which are unattainable by the application of human wisdom:

(1) Righteousness.

That is, justification. Man cannot justify himself. Jesus Christ revealed by what attitude of mind justification can be attained (cp. Rom.4v5).

(2) Sanctification.

That is separation. It is the result of an application of the Word of God. Christ's life is the example. He "sanctified himself" and his brethren (Heb.2v10-11, John 17v19).

(3) Redemption.

Unattainable by human efforts. "No man can redeem his brother" (Psa.49v7, "but God shall redeem" (Psa.49v15) through Christ (Eph.1v7).

v31.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Quotation from Jer.9v23-24, a warning and an exhortation.

Jeremiah 9 reveals that Judah, although circumcised, failed to live up to the principles of circumcision: repudiation of the flesh. Thus they were equated with Egypt (v26), the symbol of all that is sinful and base. They were also likened unto Edom, (descendants of Abraham, Gen.36v1), Moab and Ammon (descendants of Lot, Gen. 19v36-38), whom they despised and considered lowborn. In God's eyes there was no difference between them, when Judah failed to live up to Divine ways. Only one thing could sanctify them: "to understand and know Yahweh, who exercises loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness. All these things Christ had manifested in his life, and the believers at Corinth were called upon to do likewise, or else their baptism into Christ would avail them little. Just as circumcision could not commend the people of Judah to God, when it failed to have effect upon their hearts (Jer.9v26).

CHAPTER 2.Introductory Note.

This chapter is almost entirely devoted to the simplicity of the Gospel as opposed to the intellectual reasoning of the Greeks. Paul's quotation of Isaiah 40 in v16 of this chapter, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord," suggests the presence of some in Corinth who thought that God could have defined a better scheme of redemption than by means of the cross; a scheme more in harmony with human intellect and in keeping with human dignity.

v1-5. In these verses, he sets out the simplicity of his message, the weakness of the preacher himself, and the Divine method of communicating salvation.

v1. "I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom."

Paul arrived in Corinth after a short stay at Athens (Acts 18v1). At Athens, the centre of Greek philosophy, he had endeavoured to shake his audience with a speech of surpassing eloquence (Acts 17 v22-31), but failed to impress (v32). After this salutary lesson, he determined to preach plainly "Christ crucified," a powerful example and the central figure of the Gospel, which was the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom.1v16).

"The testimony of God."

Paul preached with simplicity, but his words were confirmed in manifold ways (see notes chapter 1v6). Thus they bore the seal of Divinity.

v2. "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

To the Jews and Greeks of that age, crucifixion was a revolting and degrading punishment. To Paul it was God's salvation (Rom. 1v16). As to the Galatians, Christ had been placarded before them (Gal.3v1). This statement does not mean that this is all that Paul preached at Corinth, rather that this was the foundation and the motive behind all that he said.

v3. "I was with you in weakness."

"Astheneia," "strengthlessness," in general a characteristic of sinful flesh (I Cor.15v43, II Cor.13v4). By stressing this fact, Paul magnifies the power of God which worked mightily in him. Without it, man would be lost (Heb.11v34, II Cor.12v9, I Cor.1v27). Here probably also a reference to Paul's illness, which he may have contracted whilst in Galatia (Gal.4v13, II Cor.12v7-11), a physical weakness upon which his enemies thought to capitalize (II Cor.10v10).

v4. "My speech."

"Logos" - outward expression.

"My preaching."

"Announcement in demonstration," Gr. "manifestation," divinely revealed (Gal.1v10-13).

v5. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Paul shows the Corinthians' faith to be founded on truth, and not upon the popularity of the preacher.

v6. "Howbeit we speak wisdom."

Diaglott rendering, "Wisdom, however, we speak." Paul invites the reader to learn to discern between Divine and human wisdom and reveals the difference in subsequent verses.

"Among them that are perfect."

"Mature," the Greek word "teleios." These are mature in a spiritual sense. Note the use of this Greek word, and its meaning of "mature" in Phil.3v15 (rendered "perfect,") Heb.5v14 (rendered "full age"), I Cor.14v20 (rendered "men," i.e. in contrast to babes).

"Not the wisdom of this world."

"Wisdom of this age." - a particular reference to the Greeks. See notes on 1v20.

"Nor of the princes of this world."

This has reference to the Jewish princes or rulers (see v8). See also John 12v31 - 14v30).

v7. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery."

The word "mystery" is better understood in the sense of a "secret." It literally means "to shut the mouth." Whilst the Corinthians were captivated by the mystery cults, particularly of the "higher-thinking brand," the Gospel contained a mystery all of its own, the key to which was spiritual and not fleshly discernment (v14). This revealed secret had been whispered to all those who were mature, Col.1v26, Rom.16v25, Eph.3v9. Paul claimed to be a steward of this mystery (4v1).

v7-15. In relation to this mystery, three facts are now stated:

- (1) It was marked out from the beginning to bring those who searched it out and understood it unto glory (v7). This wisdom then, embedded in a secret, had existed from the beginning of the ages, thus it could not originate from man, for he had but a short existence.
- (2) It was not searched out by the Jews, and therefore not known to them. They refused to hearken and showed their ignorance by crucifying Christ, the very personification of Divine wisdom.
- (3) It can only be understood by those who know God's mind, which is revealed in the Word of Truth (v14).

v7. "The hidden wisdom."

Hidden from the "wise" (I Cor.1v26), and the "prudent," but revealed unto babes (Matt.11v25). These "babes" were people with a childlike disposition, a quality which indicates spiritual maturity, i.e. the recognition of man's insignificance and God's superiority and wisdom.

"Which God ordained before the world."

"World" - "Aionon" - "ages," i.e. before the Greek or even Jewish era, thus the Gospel is proved to be much older than Greek philosophy.

"Unto our glory."

"Glory," - "Doxa," This word is primarily used to express:  
 (a) the nature and acts of God in self-manifestation (Eph.1v17),  
 (b) the character and ways of God as manifested through Christ to believers,  
 (c) the state of perfection into which believers are to enter through being brought into the likeness of Christ (II Cor. 3v18 with 4v6, John 8v18). The revealed mystery shows the way to glorification.

v8.

"Had they known, they would not have crucified."

The crucifixion of the Messiah was proof positive of Jewish ignorance in regard to Old Testament prophecies (John 5v39). Read Acts 13v27, where Paul reveals with grim irony the ignorance of the custodians of the Law.

"The Lord of glory."

He who had made known God's glory amongst men (John 1v14), as foretold in Isa.40v5, a chapter that makes known Yahweh's plan of salvation.

v9.

"But as it is written."

Quotation from Isa.64v4. This verse in Isaiah cannot be regarded as completely fulfilled by the revelation of the Gospel message. It serves Paul merely to demonstrate a principle which he now proceeds to annunciate.

"Eye," "ear," "heart of man."

These three members of the body are those through which perception comes; the point being that man by the application of his own powers, unaided by the spirit Word, cannot discern the mystery of the Truth.

"God hath prepared for them that love him."

This is the fundamental requirement necessary for spiritual discernment; a humble submission in love (Matt.22v37-38).

v10.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

The latter part of v8. and all of v9. is parenthetical. The main statement (without parenthesis) reads: "None of the princes of this world knew, but God has revealed them unto us." The "us" in question are the apostles; compare v12-13 and 16 in contrast to chapter 3v3 "ye." Once this revelation was given to these men, they in turn revealed it unto others by the power of the Spirit (I Peter 1v12).

"The Spirit searcheth all things."

By humble, loving submissiveness to the Word, there is developed a unity of thought with God, so that we understand and are in turn, understood by God (Romans 8v27).

- v11. "The spirit of man which is in him."  
 This spirit is ambitious and proud, and principally no different from the beast's (Eccl.3v18-21). Man is carnally minded by nature, the Divine mind he must acquire. Note also the parallel expression "spirit of man" and "spirit of God." Man's spirit is part of man, and has no independent existence. The same applies to God's spirit. It is part of Him and certainly not an independent being, as Trinitarians would have us to believe.
- v12. "We have received."  
 The "we" are the apostles.
- "The spirit of the world."  
 This was the thinking the Corinthians were anxious to revive in themselves.
- "That we might know."  
 Paul's confidence (II Cor.11v6, 12v1).
- "Freely given to us of God."  
 Paul's wisdom is not the result of the exercise of the human intellect. He had "received it" (v12), and had accepted it in coming to "know" it. He had been given this wisdom "freely" or gratuitously, i.e. without any discrimination or regard to the possession of any intellectual power.
- v13. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual."  
 Diaglott: "Explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons," that is, to those of childlike disposition, willing to learn, whose very simplicity is evidence of spiritual maturity (v6). This rendering better suits the context, verse 14 following in natural sequence. This rendering is supported by Adam Clark, and the Greek word for "comparing" is used in the Septuagint in the sense of "expounding" or "teaching" (Gen.40v8, v16, v22, 41v12,13,15, Daniel 5v12).
- v14. "Natural man."  
 "Pshchikos," translated "sensual" (James 3v15, Jude 19); that which is natural to man; the animal of his nature; witness the serpent, who trusting in his own philosophy, spoke a lie because "there was no truth in him" (John 8v44). Paul likened certain minds in Corinth to that exhibited by the serpent (II Cor.11v1-3).
- "Spiritually discerned."  
 The word "discern" means to "scrutinise," and the idea conveyed is that spoken of in Isaiah 55v8-9: "My thoughts are not your thoughts."
- v15. "Judgeth all things."  
 The spiritual man judges ("discerns," margin same word as v14), all things spiritual. He himself cannot be critically examined (same word) by the unspiritual who are not competent to discern.

v16.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord."

To prove his position, Paul quotes Isaiah 40v13; the prophet describes man's incapability to pass critical judgment or to discern the wonder of creation (v12). How then can man "instruct him," (God), literally, "teach his counsel," or Diaglott, "that he may instruct it," that is God's counsels he does not understand, unless God makes Himself known to man by means which He regards most suitable (Isa.55). Paul applies this quotation to the equally wondrous work of redemption in Christ, as this has been the theme of this particular chapter (v2). Notice how he also uses this passage from Isaiah in regard to the mystery of God's dealing with Israel (Romans 11v25, v33, v36); another exhibition of Divine mercy beyond the comprehension of the carnally minded.

"But we have the mind of Christ."

And thus understand the mind of God. Having shown that God is high above man and their ways of thinking diverse, Paul now acknowledges once again the importance of Christ as the mediator, Christ revealed unto man the mind of God (Isa.11v1-2, John 1v18). Those who have been baptised into him are brought into conformity with his thinking (II Cor.4v6-7); their walk in life should witness to this fact (I Cor.1v10). Paul lays claim to spiritual maturity.



CHAPTER 3.Introductory Note.

Paul now reverts to the controversy regarding party factions, and proves that these are definitely retarding their spiritual growth.

- v1. "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal."  
Here are the two classes of chapter 2v13-14. Having annunciated his message of teaching spiritual truth to those who have the receptive powers to grasp it, he now shows that this could not be his method with them, seeing that they lacked the necessary maturity. Growth in Christ is as fundamental to our salvation as the acceptance of the first principles (Gal.4v3, Eph.4v13-14, 3v16-19, Rom.2v20).
- v2. "I have fed you with milk."  
Compare Hebrews 5v13-14.
- "For hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."  
Their infancy earlier could be excused because of their lack of experience, but they had not grown at all, which was reprehensible seeing that spiritual growth is essential (14v20, Col.1v28).
- v3. "Envyng, and strife, and divisions."  
Thought, word and deed. Notice the direct bearing of James 3v16, (Compare Gal.5v19-20).
- "Walk as men."  
Note margin: "according to men" (Diaglott). Contrast the opposite condition "according to Christ Jesus" (Romans 15v4).
- v4. "I am of Paul . . . I am of Apollos."  
Note that Paul condemns his own party. There is no jealousy against Apollos. Both men did repudiate to be set up as champions of two disputing parties which held up different ideals: (1) "Apollos" - Higher thinking coupled with eloquence of speech, (2) "Paul" - simple teaching. The choice of the two key figures is deliberate. "These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes" (4v6). The dispute caused both men great embarrassment, for there was perfect accord between them as to "the truth in Christ Jesus."
- "Are ye not carnal."  
R.S.V. "Are ye not merely men." They were as they walked (v3).
- v5-15. CHRISTIAN PREACHERS ARE ONLY SERVANTS OF MORE OR LESS EFFICIENCY, THE SUBSTANTIAL WORK IS GOD'S.
- v5. "Ministers."  
"Diakonos," primarily denotes a servant, whether as doing servile work, or as an attendant rendering free service. Probably connected with the verb 'dioko', to hasten after, pursue (perhaps originally said of a runner) - Vine's N.T. Dict.

(cp. II Cor. 6v4-7). See Gal. 4v7.

"By whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man."

Rotherham: "Through whom ye believed as the Lord assigned to each." Every convert either of them made, was given by God.

v6.

"I have planted."

Paul had established the Corinthian ecclesia (Acts 18). He expressly designates his work to be that of founding new ecclesias, leaving others to consolidate (Rom.15v20, II Cor.10v15).

"Apollos watered."

The history of Acts is in accordance with this (Acts 18v24-28). God gave the increase. For an illustration of this - II Cor. 9v10-11.

v8.

"Are one."

Planter and waterer are not rivals. They compliment each other and work to a common end: the harvest, which is the glory of God in Christ. The Corinthians tried to divide the two.

"Receive his own reward according to his own labour."

Now in proportion to their labour, so their rewards, but never to the exclusion of the other.

v9.

"We are labourers together with God."

R.S.V.: "Fellow workers for God." Employed by the same Farmer for a common interest. The Corinthians were for distinction, Paul for co-operation.

"Ye are God's husbandry."

"Georgion" - tillage, R.V. margin "tilled land," that is, they were God's farm, in which Paul and Apollos had toiled diligently, to the end that the Corinthians might bring forth spiritual fruit.

"Ye are God's building."

Note the quick change of metaphor which is characteristic of Paul (for example: I Cor.9v7, v24-27). He now speaks of architecture to amplify the great variety of work that can be undertaken in God's service. Note well that three times in this verse God is emphasised as the possessor, it is His work.

v10.

"The grace of God which is given unto me."

He is about to style himself a wise master-builder, and so is careful to qualify this with the recognition of God's superintendence and grace. See his attitude: Rom.1v5, 12v3.

"Wise masterbuilder."

R.S.V. "Skilled." Paul makes this claim to combat individualism. If he is the architect, and has gone further by laying a foundation, then others must follow by building upon the one basis.

"I have laid the foundation."

Paul admits his work was only a beginning, but what a significant beginning it was for no other foundation can be laid (v11).

"Another buildeth."

There were others who aspired to leadership beside Apollos (4v15).

"Take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

This now becomes the main thought to v15, and it is of extreme importance to note this train of thinking. They ought not to discuss the possibility of other foundations as was implied in their party schisms, but to concentrate on their own particular work on the one foundation. The question is, how are they building?

v11.

"Which is Christ Jesus."

The Christ foundation. Now Rotherham has it, "That which is lying," that is of its own accord. God Himself has laid the precious foundation stone (Isa.28v16), and in the context of the prophecy we notice that all other structures are to be "swept away" v17. Christ is that one foundation (I Peter 2v6, Eph.2v20, Psa.118v22). The fact that the Christ foundation had in effect been before laid by God, does not nullify Paul's claim to have laid that foundation in Corinth; the foundation, truly, had been lying of its own accord, in not being the work of men, but as far as the Corinthian ecclesia was concerned, Paul as the architect, had laid that same foundation in the city of Corinth.

v12.

"Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble."

These contrasts were seen in Corinth; modern and lavish buildings along side the hovels of the poor; the stark evidence of the conquests of Mummins, B.C.146, was still to be seen. Some of the more substantial structures had survived this fire. We note here that both classes of teachers are building on the Christ foundation, but their work is different: one permanent, the other transitory, (but none the less genuine). Paul is indicating here not differences in doctrine between him and his rivals, but he is urging them to consider the effect of his own labours.

v13.

"Fire shall try every man's work."

God's judgments are likened to fire (Deut.4v24, 9v3, Mal.3v2-3, Psa.50v3).

v14.

"Which he hath built thereupon."

R.S.V. "Which he hath built upon the foundation." This man shall receive a proportionate reward (v8). Compare Rev.22v12. We note the natural connection with v15, which implies that both parties are building upon the one foundation.

v15.

"He himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

A narrow anguished escape from pèdition, an unpleasant prospect. Compare the narrow escape of Lot (II Peter 2v5-9).

v16-17.

Having shown the calamity that will overtake poor workmanship, Paul now uses another figure, but just a building, but rather the very Holy Place of God itself.

- v16. "The temple of God."  
 Greek, "Naos" - "to dwell," "inner sanctuary," "the most holy."  
 All the ecclesia is the dwelling place of God (II Cor.6v16, I Tim.  
 3v15, Heb.3v6). There was an individual responsibility here,  
 besides that which rested upon the teachers.
- v17. "Defile the temple."  
 Note margin, "Destroy the temple."  
  
"Him shall God destroy."  
 For those whose work was definitely destructive, there would be  
 no anguished escape as that mentioned in v15. Poor workmanship  
 may be destroyed and the builder saved, but destructive workman-  
 ship will involve the builder himself in perdition. Illustrations  
 of how the temple can be destroyed are outlined by Paul in  
 chapter 6v18-19.
- v18-23. RETURN NOW TO THE PARTY FACTIONS DISPUTE.
- v18. "Let him become a fool, that he may be wise."  
 Humility is the great need with the eloquent teacher. He  
 submerges self for the sake of the simplicity of God's message,  
 even as Paul himself (1v21, 4v10).
- v19. "For it is written."  
 Two quotations given to show God's estimation of human wisdom  
 (Job 5v13, Psa.94v11) - "Let no man glory in men." Why  
 glory in men; all teachers exist for the Corinthian's  
 benefit (v5, v22). Why divide those teachers and so hinder  
 God's work in regard to their own personal salvation.
- v22. "All are your's."  
 They were the objects of God's care and providence. They had  
 tremendous privileges: "All things" were their's, not just  
 some things. They ought to see the work of each individual  
 teacher as being part of a composite whole. Compare Rom.8v28.
- v23. "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."  
 This is a re-statement of the main theme - the one vital truth  
 which they overlooked. Paul and others had wedded them to  
 Christ. To him they belonged, but even Christ had no glory  
 after the flesh. The instigator and culminator of the work is  
 God (I Cor.15v28).

CHAPTER 4.

Paul answers wanton criticism of himself.

- v1. "So account of us."  
R.S.V. "This is how a man should regard us," (Paul and Apollos).
- "Ministers of Christ."  
"Huperetes" - an underrower, assistant. Different word to 3v5. Here now Paul stresses his own and Apollos' subordinate position in relation to Christ. He considered himself literally as "an under oarsman," only responsible to his master.
- "Stewards."  
"Oikonomos" - housemanager, housekeeper (consider Gal.4v2 for an illustration of the tasks performed by such. There the word is rendered "governor"). It was his responsibility to bring his master's children to maturity, to feed them and give account to his master for expenses made (Luke 16v1-8). He had to apportion the food according to everyone's individual need and constitution (Mat.24v45, I Peter 4v10). Paul and Apollos were the appointed stewards of "God's house" (3v9).
- "Mysteries of God."  
These were the "hidden" things that God had provided for the maturity of His children (2v6-7). These were the riches dispensed out by the steward (Col.1v24-29).
- v3. "A very small thing that I should be judged of you."  
God was the householder (Heb.3v4), and every servant is answerable to his own master (Rom.14v4). The word "judged" same as in 2v14, v15, "to examine."
- "Man's judgment."  
Note margin, "Man's day." ("Hemera" - 355 times rendered "day" only one "judgment"). It is the Divine Judgment Day that counts (3v13, Romans 2v16).
- v4. "I know nothing by myself."  
R.S.V. "For I know nothing against myself." Paul's own judgment was imperfect even when applied to himself. How much more should they be careful in judging the motives of others. Paul's confidence was rooted in Christ (Gal.2v20, Rom.7v23-25, Phil.3v13-17).
- v5. "Judge nothing before the time."  
In relation to teachers this has an especial application. Our duty is not to judge motives, but "to test all things and to hold fast to that which is good" (I Thes.5v21).
- "Counsels of the hearts."  
The motive behind the preaching. The word "counsels" signifies "advice" or "will" and it is used not merely of that which is

hidden in the heart, but the will of the heart, or the advice it dictates as the underlying motive of all action.

- v6. "In a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes."  
 R.S.V.: "Have applied them to Apollos and myself." He had substituted his and Apollos' names for those of the real faction leaders, and this was done for the Corinthians' benefit to avoid a clash of personalities. The selection of these two great names highlighted the real evil of their party spirit. This reference speaks volumes of the wonderful relationship between these two men. Apollos must have been apprised of the situation, and given his permission for his name to be used in this matter.

"Ye might learn in us."

"His figure" was a lesson of humility.

"Which is written."

A general reference to the Scriptures as a whole, which reveal man's insignificance and dependence upon God.

"Be puffed up for one against another."

Their party spirit was a manifestation of their own pride. They, and not the teachers, were at fault.

- v7. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

Relative abilities were no justification for pride in party factions. Ability is God given (John 3v27).

- v8-16. PAUL REBUKES THEIR CONCEIT AND DRAWS A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SO-CALLED WISE TEACHERS AND HIMSELF.

- v8. "Now ye are full . . . rich."

"Ye are already." They acted as though they had already reached the crowning point of their Christian life. They were full, rich kings.

"Without us."

In their self-satisfaction they had forgotten those whose labours had given them these privileges. They had a lordly independence. Their attitude was Laodicean (Rev.3v17-18).

"I would ye did reign."

Paul knew that this could not become a reality until Christ returned (II Tim.4v1, with v8). In the meantime Paul had to suffer (I Cor.4v11). The Lord's return would have been relief for which he longed (Phil.3v20-21).

"We also might reign with you."

A sober reminder that not one of them would be glorified before the other. They all would receive their reward at the same time.

- v9. The spectacle of the arena; a figure taken from the Isthmian Games. See notes on background.

"God hath set forth."

"Exhibited," "demonstration."

"The apostles last, as it were appointed to death."

After the games the scene was one of savage treachery when condemned criminals "appointed unto death," were brought naked into the arena, first to be a "gazing stock" for the crowd (Heb.10v33), before they were publicly executed by being forced to fight as gladiators or to be torn apart by wild beasts (I Cor.15v32).

"Made a spectacle."

Note margin, "Theatre;" so rendered in Acts 19v29-31.

"To angels, and to men."

Spectators Divine and human. To God through the angels, an exhibition of faith; and to men, an example of faith, or a reproach.

v10.

"We are fools."

An ironical comparison. They were the spectators in this drama; Paul the fighter for the truth. "The foolishness of preaching" had brought all this disrespect upon Paul (1v21). Note how Paul continued with his ironical contrast: fools and wise, weak and strong, honourable and despised.

v11.

"No certain dwellingplace."

The manifest token of utter degradation (Mat.8v20, 10v23).

v12.

"Labour, working with our own hands."

This was the principle by which Paul lived (Acts 18v3, I Thes.2v9, II Thes.3v8), even to the extent of providing for his companions (Acts 20v34).

"Being reviled, we bless."

Following the example of his Lord (Mat.5v11, I Peter 2v23).

v13.

"Filth of the world."

"To be purged," and its only other use is in the Septuagint of Proverbs 21v18, where it is used of an expiatory sacrifice.

"Offscouring."

This word indicates a redemptive sacrifice (Adam Clark). Paul's reference is to the heathen custom of keeping a man of despicable character, feeding him for a year, and then ceremoniously burning him to death as an expiation of the sins of all the city.

v14.

"I write not these things to shame you."

The object was to amend their ways.

"My beloved sons."

His care for them was fatherlike. He only sought the good for His children (Heb.12v9-11).

v15.

"Ten thousand."

Rotherham, "Myriads."

"Instructors."

Greek: "Pedagogue" (Gal.3v24-25), the house-servant or boy-leader, as the word literally means, whose relationship to the children was distant. Such did not exercise the loving care of a father, nor could they bring the children to maturity as they wished.

"Not many fathers."

Paul was such unto them.

v16.

"Be ye followers of me."

"Mimetes" - imitators. Compare 11v1. From this Greek word we get our English "mimic."

v17.

"For this cause."

In order that they might imitate or mimic Paul, he sent Timothy who had learned by his experience with Paul, to imitate his father in the truth.

"Who is my beloved son."

Timothy was Paul's "son in the faith" (I Tim.1v2, v18, II Tim.1v2). He was absolutely like-minded with Paul his father. His chief concern was for others (Phil.2v19-22). There was no one better qualified to teach them "my ways which be in Christ" (II Tim.3v10). Knowing of Timothy's gentle, sensitive nature, Paul warns them later in his epistle, that when he should come to them, they must treat him carefully and with respect (16v10).

"As I teach in every ecclesia."

Paul showed no partiality; his ways were consistent wherever he went.

v18.

"As though I would not come to you."

Some of his detractors said that Paul was not competent enough to come to them. Paul however, would show them by an imminent visit that this was not so (16v5).

v19.

"Not the speech."

At his coming he would not test them according to their eloquence.

"But the power."

True spiritual wisdom does not merely find expression in words, but rather transforms a person to become Christlike in character and action. Such a transformation is proof that the power contained in the Gospel (Rom.1v16) has had its due effect upon an individual. For such results Paul would look. "Power" here is probably used in the sense of "influence for good."

v21.

"With a rod."

Greek "In a rod," that is, in the spirit of correction. Compare Isa.11v4, "The rod of his mouth."



SECTION 2 - CHAPTERS 8v1 - 11v1QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PARTAKING OF MEAT OFFERED UNTO IDOLS.CHAPTER 8.

Controversy raged in the Corinthian ecclesia. Could they partake of idolatrous sacrifices or not? In this crisis Paul was consulted. There were brethren who felt so supremely confident in their knowledge of the truth that they did with impunity mix with the idolaters at their sacrificial feasts. This they thought was a demonstration of strength. On the other hand, those whose knowledge of the Divine ways was not so "perfect," felt contaminated by the least contact with anything that bore a semblance of idolatry. These "weak" brethren had become a subject of scorn to the strong.

Since the ecclesia, already torn by party factions, could scarcely afford a further division over this issue, Paul plainly shows that both parties are at fault in understanding and the application thereof.

CHAPTER DIVISIONS.

- v1-3. Knowledge must be balanced by humility and love.
- v4-7. Paul in principle agrees with the strong.
- v8-13. Liberty of conscience must not become a stumbling block to others.

v1. "As touching things offered unto idols."

They had turned from idolatry (compare I Thes.1v9), and yet lived amongst those who practised such rites or catered for them (10v25-27). Which stand were they to take? The following opinions were held:

- (a) The strong, that is, in knowledge, advocated that they should boldly eat and even frequent in the idol's temple as a sign of their contempt and disregard, (8v10).
- (b) And the weak, i.e. in conscience, demanded nothing less than total abstinence (v7).

Paul's viewpoint is found in these three chapters. He does not take sides in the matter. His objective was the edification and salvation of the whole ecclesia. Brother Barling, the author of "The Letters to Corinth," describes Paul's office as follows:

"Not the inflexible advocate of policies which are right because they can be justified intellectually, but the passionate champion of whatever best helps men and women to attain to the Kingdom of God."

"Knowledge."

Here only "gnosis," inferior to "epignosis," full knowledge. Knowledge can be mere theory, giving a feeling of superiority over others who are less quick of understanding. However, once man endeavours to practise and apply this basic knowledge he recognizes his own weakness and is humbled. No man can afford to stand still once he has acquired "gnosis," lest he be "puffed up." To "gnosis" he has to "add" self-control, endurance in self-control,

brotherly love, etc. If doing so, he shall attain unto "epignosis." (Consider II Peter 1v5-8, where these stepping stones are revealed: v5 "gnosis," v8 "epignosis.") Frequently Paul beseeched the Father on behalf of believers that they might be strengthened to attain unto such full knowledge (Phil.1v9, Eph.1v17, Col.1v9).

"Puffeth up."

The word signifies "to inflate."

"Charity."

"Agape," love, more fully described in chapter 13. The reader is asked to manifest Christlike characteristics. Both God and Christ extended such love to mankind (John 3v16, John 13v34). This love seeks the welfare of all and works no ill to any (Rom.13v8-14).

"Edifieth."

"Oikodomeo," lit. - to build a house, fig. - to promote spiritual growth by teaching or by example. Reminder that progress comes only as a result of patient labour. Each believer has the obligation to contribute to the upbuilding or edification of the ecclesia (14v3 v5 v 12 v17, Eph.4v11-16). Neither word nor action is of any value unless it strengthens or edifies the body of Christ.

v2. "He knoweth nothing as he ought."

A sobering statement for all who were "puffed up." True divinely imparted knowledge safeguards against arrogance (Prov.8v11-14, James 3v13), for it reveals to man his limitations.

v3. "If a man love God."

He must of necessity love his brother also (I John 4v21, 5v1), in the sense as defined above. Here was a touchstone for all who claimed to be mature. Were they?

"The same is known of him."

To find God's acknowledgement is most essential for a believer (Gal.4v9). It is a great prize worth aiming at (I Cor.2v9, I John 4v7-8).

Having thus sobered the seemingly "strong" brethren, Paul proceeds now to agree with them in principle only.

v4. "An idol is nothing in the world."

A matter of fact statement which springs from the knowledge of the omnipotence of God (see Isa.44v9-20).

v5. "Though there be that are called gods."

R.V., Diaglott, Rotherham: "Gods so called;" pagan deities, in reality non-entities, in which superstitions, heathens had been taught to believe.

v6. "But to us there is but one God."

Unity and not plurality - one True Living God, the source of all power (Isa.45v20-22).

"The Father of whom are all things, and we in him."

More than just the plain acknowledgement of God's unity is implied.

He is not only one, but He is a Father, and that of all His children both weak and strong. R.S.V. has, "From whom are all things and for whom we exist." This not only shows over fictitious gods, but at once involved the Corinthian responsibility.

"By whom are all things, and we by him."

R.S.V. "and through whom we exist." All creatures in general (Job 33v4, Eccl. 3v18-20), and the believers in particular (Eph. 2v10, James 1v18).

v7.

"Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge."

Some did not discern this fullness of meaning in the fact of God's absolute unity and creative source, and still considered idolatrous worship as an act of religion.

"For some with conscience of the idol."

R.S.V. "Hitherto accustomed to idols." Rotherham, "By their familiarity even now with the idol." These former heathens had frequented the idol's temple before coming to the knowledge of the truth. It was difficult for them to completely shake off their past superstition.

"Their conscience being weak."

Paul admits their weakness in being unable to shake off the personality of the idol, but they must act consistently with their conscience (Rom. 14v14).

v8.

"Meat commendeth us not to God."

"Commend" - "Paristemi" - to place near, set before, i.e. God. Not even the meat of the Mosaic sacrifices could do this (Heb. 9v11-12). Christ alone presents us to God (Eph. 2v13-18, Col. 1v22v28). The Greek word is rendered "to stand," i.e. in his presence (Rom. 14v10).

v8-9.

There were those who lacked understanding. The strong had to realise this and to consider the weak class, giving preference in their thinking to them. There were two good reasons why this should be so.

"Neither, if we eat not, are we the worse."

Reason 1: If the meat was as they admitted, innocuous, then there was no more intrinsic value in eating it any more than there was wrong in abstaining! The basis of their refusal to give way therefore, could only be pride and not principle.

v9.

"This liberty of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak."

Reason 2: Whether the strong ones ate or not made no difference to them, so, why not act in harmony with the weak and abstain? To demand of the weak to eat was detrimental for it burdened their conscience unnecessarily, or taught them to disregard their conscience. Once accustomed to do a thing despite of scruples, they would do the same when more vital issues were at stake, and thus head for spiritual ruin.

v10.

"Thee which hast knowledge."

Literally "possessor of knowledge," i.e. they were looked upon as an example.

"Sit at meat in the idol's temple."

Despite their knowledge, they were not aware of the danger of such practice. Paul was to warn them later (10v14-22).

"The conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things."

The word "emboldened" is the same as "edify" (v1); means to "build up." They argued that the force of their example would "build up" their weak brother. "Yes!" says Paul, "Build him up to do evil."

v11.

"Through thy knowledge."

Their knowledge proved to be destructive, not constructive. It had not resulted in love, and was thus vain (v1).

"For whom Christ died."

Christ sacrificed all for this weak brother, and for them (II Cor. 8v9). "He died for us while we were yet sinners" (Rom.5v8), and even in our present state he bears compassionately with our ignorance (Heb.5v1-2).

v12.

"Wound their weak conscience."

Diaglott: "Striking a blow on the weak conscience." In this argument with their weak brother, they could perhaps claim to have gained a victory on principle. Nevertheless, it was a serious offence against Christ.

"Ye sin against Christ."

Injure the least of the brethren, ye injure Christ (Mat.25v40), for he is at one with all his brethren (v6).

v13.

"I will eat no flesh."

Paul passionately states his pledge, which is in accordance with his practice in the past (cp. chapter 9). He was prepared to humble and deny himself according to the wishes of his Lord (Mat.18v6).

CHAPTER DIVISIONS.

- v1-14. Paul's liberty to receive payment for preaching the gospel. A liberty which he did not exploit.
- v15-23. He foregoes his rights for the sake of gaining others for Christ.
- v24-27. Personal dangers to the strong in their exposure to temptation. Their need to exercise self-discipline.
- v1. "Am I not free?"  
 (This statement appears first in the original). Their letter to him evidently contained pointed questions which arrogantly asserted their right to act in accordance with their new-found liberty. Paul now, in turn, reminds them of certain prerogatives which he could claim. He shows that his liberty is even superior to their's, and then puts them to shame by proving that he has never exploited this liberty, "lest he should hinder the gospel of Christ" (v12).
- "Am I not an apostle?"  
 He was, even though "born out of due time" (15v8). Ironically it was his refusal to accept payment, which he was at liberty to claim, that lead them to doubt his authority (II Cor.11v7).
- "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"  
 A necessary qualification for apostleship (Acts 1v22-23). The Lord had appeared to Paul (I Cor.15v8, Acts 9v4, 22v18, 26v15), even in Corinth (Acts 18v9).
- "Are not ye my work."  
 If they had a claim to liberty, his was superior.
- v2. "If I be not an apostle unto others."  
 These "others" were most probably Judaisers who had come to Corinth to hinder Paul's work (II Cor.11v22-23).
- "The seal of mine apostleship."  
 A seal attests a document as genuine (John 3v33, 6v27, Rom.4v11).
- v3. "Answer . . . examine."  
 These two words are legal terms. Paul was on trial. His chief witnesses were the Corinthians themselves! This verse concludes his thought and refers back to what he previously stated. In effect, he is saying, "This is my answer."
- v4. "Have we not power to eat and to drink."  
 Verses 1 - 3 are parenthetic. This is a direct connection with eating (chapter 8). If they had liberty to eat in an idol's temple (8v9), then he certainly had liberty to eat of their substance. Note the plural, "we" - other apostles were also included in this.
- v5. "A sister, a wife."  
 Paul was unmarried (chapter 7v7-8), and thus differed from the other apostles, who had to be supported, together with their wives.

"The brethren of the Lord."

Evidently relations of Jesus (Matt.13v55), who accepted the truth (Acts 1v14). Here is proof that some of them, if not all, had married, and toured on behalf of the truth.

"Cephas."

That is, Peter (Mat.16v17, John 1v42). He was married (Mat.8v14). Receives special mention since tremendously influential amongst the Jewish people in the ecclesias (Gal.2v8).

v6.

"I only and Barnabas."

Barnabas was an early companion of Paul (Acts 9v27, 12v25, 13v2). His close association with the Apostle probably lead him to follow Paul's own example in not accepting expenses. In any case he and Paul were not of the Twelve, and he was probably linked with Paul in the criticism of being "born out of due time."

"Have we not power to forbear working?"

R.S.V. "Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living."

v7-14.

Leaning upon lessons which secular practice, agriculture and the Mosaic Law had to teach, Paul now proves beyond doubt that the Apostles are entitled to accept maintenance.

v7.

"Warfare . . . vineyard . . . flock."

The soldier, the vinedresser, the shepherd, all of them benefit from their own labour. Why should not Paul, whose work for the Gospel resembled these three occupations. Here was a man who shouldered threefold responsibility. In his lifetime he had acted the part of the spiritual soldier (II Cor.10v4), of the vinedresser (I Cor.3v6), and the shepherd (Acts 20v28).

v8.

"As a man."

Illustrations from secular life would not impress Jews. To them this was merely human reasoning.

v9.

"Written in the law."

The Law says the same. Note the full term, "Law of Moses." Because of the gentile content of the Corinthian ecclesia, Paul had to be explicit in his terms.

"Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn."

Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 25v4 both here and in I Tim.5v18. In all places we note that the ox is in the act of threshing: R.S.V. "When it is treading out the grain."

"Doth God take care for oxen?"

The answer to this question is "Yes." (Psa.36v6, 147v9, Prov.12v10). Yet, Paul says, the ordinance was given "altogether for our sakes," that is, there is a lesson contained in this law. Notice, that the animal is not to be muzzled whilst working. This is against all commonsense, for an unmuzzled ox will stand and feed at will, thus causing delay when it should be threshing. Why could it not be fed when it had finished the work? This law was designed to make an Israelite question the wisdom of it, "Go, learn what this meaneth!" The lesson taught: "The labourer is worthy of his hire," as long as he does labour.

- v10. "Altogether for our sakes." (Greek: "entirely").  
Although the oxen benefited from this regulation, it had been addressed to men because of the principle at stake. There were plenty of other times for God to care for oxen. This law was given to teach man a lesson without any due regard for the ox at this particular time. This view of the apostle's quotation in this place clears away the difficulty involved in his quotation. It is impossible to view this law as having been arbitrarily included merely for man's benefit, and to believe that God does not care for His creatures.
- "Thresheth in hope."  
Diaglott: "It is the right of the plowman to plow in hope, and the thresher to participate in the hope." Both are entitled to an equal share (John 4v36). The word "thresheth" is the same as "treadeth out" (v9).
- v11. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things."  
His had been a basic work. He had planted (3v6), and the things sown were "spiritual," which if watered and cared for, would produce for them a corresponding harvest (Gal. 6v8).
- "Carnal things."  
The previous verse proved the right of the labourers to receive a reward in the same kind as the quality of his labours. The R.S.V. says, "Is it too much if we reap your material benefits!"
- v12. "If others be partakers."  
Paul was the original plowman and sower. Others were working in his field, reaping, i.e. receiving payment where he had sown. Paul never took advantage of other men's work (II Cor. 10v16).
- "We have not used this power."  
This is the whole point of his argument. Self-sacrifice of personal rights for the sake of a higher principle (compare 8v13).
- "Lest we should hinder the gospel."  
The all important factor. All things must be to the good of the gospel cause.
- v13. "They which minister about holy things."  
That is the Levites in general who were engaged in the Tabernacle service (Deut. 18v6-8, Nb. 18v21, Neh. 10v37). R.S.V. renders "Those employed in the Temple service got their food from the Temple."
- "They which wait at the altar."  
That is the priests. It was a priestly prerogative to receive a portion of the altar sacrifices (Lev. 6v16-17, 6v25-26, 7v32-34). Again two distinct classes are shown to receive payment according to their labour.
- v14. "Even so hath the Lord ordained."  
Paul's final authority is the Lord himself, who, having commissioned the apostles, gave permission for them to accept the necessities of life in return for their work (Mat. 10v10, Luke 10v7).
- v15. "But I have used none of these things."  
He was chargeable to no one (II Cor. 11v9). Although he had established his undeniable right, he would still forbear. He later apologises for any offence caused by such attitude and movingly

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- v20. "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew."  
To those steeped in the traditions of the Law of Moses, Paul made many harmless and unnecessary concessions (Acts 16v3, 21v26, 20v6).
- "To them that are under the law."  
Probably a reference to Jewish proselytes. Paul could also make sacrifices for this class. The better manuscripts add here:  
"Not being myself under the Law." (See Diaglott).
- v21. "To them that are without."  
A reference to the heathen (Rom.2v12). He did not demand of them to keep the Law, and adjusted his preaching to their needs (Acts 17). He did not unnecessarily insult their belief (Acts 17v22 R.S.V.), quoted their poets (v28), and the inscriptions of their altars (v23).
- "Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ."  
Never did he regard his liberty as an excuse for licence (Gal.6v2).
- v22. "To the weak became I as weak."  
Yes, even to the conscientious though mistaken brethren (8v7), he could adjust himself (Rom.15v1-2, II Cor.11v29). Why could not others do likewise.
- "All things to all men."  
He was all things to "all," but could only save "some." This is perseverance! The ingathering was only small in comparison to the labour invested. However, any success was regarded as a reward (II Tim.2v10).
- "Save some."  
That is, for Christ. His permanent reward was "stored in heaven" (I Cor.15v58).
- v23. "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."  
This was Paul's long range policy. If he could save them, then he must participate in their salvation.
- v24-27. Having shown the "strong" that their contemptuous attitude to the "weak" was wrong, he now reminds them that self-restrictions were more advisable than the exercise of liberty. Figurative speech alluding to the games emphasizes the need for self-discipline.
- v24. "Know ye not."  
"Take a personal warning." Concentrate on self and not on the brother whom you consider weaker than yourselves.
- "One receiveth the prize."  
The reader is reminded of the selection and elimination that takes place in any contest. A believer must constantly "run" to the best of his ability, as Christ will accept no less.
- v25. "Every man that striveth."  
"Agonizomai" - to agonize (same word in Luke 13v24).
- "Is temperate in all things."  
Self-restrained (same word as "to contain" in 7v9). Greeks knew of the rigorous training and the selfdenial of athletes in matters of diet and sensual indulgence. All contestants were under strict supervision for 10 months prior to the games, subjected to rules

concerning their moral and physical practices. They could be disqualified for any breach of regulations (II Tim.2v5).

"A corruptible crown."

"Crown" is "Stephanos," a coronal wreath woven from the leaves of the evergreen laurel wreath. Although it was evergreen, it was still a fading corruptible crown. To the spiritual victor, Christ promises an incorruptible stephanos of glory (I Peter 5v4, Rev.2v10, 3v11).

v26.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly."

Greek: "aimlessly." Paul's life was one of self-denial. He knew the course before him (Acts 20v24), and was confident to gain the stephanos (II Tim.4v8).

"One that beateth the air."

Paul's quick change of metaphor now relates to a boxing match. In this contest the opponent, i.e. the flesh must be hit. No good making a show and missing.

"I keep under my body."

Rotherham: "Beating my body." Diaglott: "Severely discipline." R.S.V. "Pommel my body." Paul's life was a constant boxing match with himself, in which the natural instincts of his flesh were pommelled into submission. What a contrast to the attitude of the "strong" brethren in Corinth! They aimed to strike at the conscience of others weaker than themselves.

"Subjection."

"To lead into captivity." This Paul endeavoured and accomplished through the dynamic power of God, and the encouraging example of Jesus Christ (Rom.7v23-25).

"When I have preached to others."

Rotherham: "Proclaimed the contest." The word signifies, "having heralded." The custom was for a herald to go forth into the arena at the opening of the games, heralding with the sound of a trumpet the official commencement. He then read the rules and regulations of the contests, and exhorted the athletes to compete lawfully and to the best of their ability.

"I myself should be a castaway."

R.S.V. "Disqualified." Disqualification could be the apostle's lot, even though he had heralded the rules and had exhorted all to play lawfully and well. What a powerful lesson to strong brethren! They could be disqualified for lack of selfcontrol. In this regard they could take a lesson from the weak whose conscience did at least exercise restraint.

CHAPTER 10.INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The over-confident Corinthians are now taken to the Jewish Scriptures to show the danger of exposing themselves to temptation. Paul now speaks of the fathers' "lust and fornication" associated as it was with "idolatry," in order to point out to the Corinthians how easily such things can become a snare. Did Paul know that they were more interested in these feasts than they admitted? The selection of the "ensamples" seems appropriate, in view of the thousand sacramental prostitutes who acted as priestesses in the idol's temple which they visited frequently.

CHAPTER DIVISIONS.

- v1-6. Israel, as a warning example. All had privileges - few proved faithful.
- v7-11. Tempting God is fraught with peril.
- v12-14. Selfconfidence is false security.
- v15-22. The question of fellowship. Consistency comes before expediency.
- v22-23. The final question: Is total abstinence therefore necessary in principle?

- v1. "I would not that ye should be ignorant.

This is a characteristic expression when Paul speaks on important issues (12v1, II Cor.1v8, Rom.1v13, 11v25, I Thess.4v13). It was the spiritual import of which they were ignorant. The issue is vital, for even in Israel "all" had privileges, but "many" (v5) failed.

"Under the cloud."

The cloud that lead Israel out of Egypt did "stand over them" (Num.14v14), and acted as a cover (Psa.105v39). However, neither the cloud nor baptism in itself could provide immunity from temptation.

"Passed through the sea."

There was a wall of water on both sides of the Israelites at that occasion (Ex.15v8, Psa.78v13), and with the cloud acting as a cover, they were completely encased by water. Note the two principles of baptism:

- (1) Under the cloud, baptised into death.
- (2) Passed through the sea, that is, to a newness of life - resurrection (Romans 6v3-6).

Baptism therefore, is a declaration of both positive and negative principles. If we have been baptised into Christ's death, it follows then that we are dead to ourselves and must live a new life in terms of his commandments (II Cor.5v14-15, Gal.2v20).

- v2. "Baptized unto Moses."

The verb is in the middle voice, "and all immersed themselves" (Rotherham). They had voluntarily joined "the ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7v38), and this national baptism had been an act of faith (Heb.11v29), by virtue of which they had accepted

"In the cloud and in the sea."

Total immersion signifying death to Egypt's idolatry (Ez.20v6-8).

v3.

"Spiritual meat."

Literally, "food." This was the manna (Ex.16) which was a type of Christ's body (John 6v32-35). It was also styled "The bread of the mighty" (Psa.78v25) (A.V. "angel's food"). The Israelites partook of this one bread (compare v17). Also note that Nehemiah associates food and drink (Neh.9v15), thus permitting a parallel to bread and wine of the memorial feast.

v4.

"Spiritual drink."

Water was provided miraculously on two separate occasions (Ex.17 v1-6, Numbers 20v11).

"Spiritual Rock."

God was the rock of their "salvation" (Deut.32v4,v15,v18,v30,v31, Psalm 18v2, Isa.32v2). He was manifested in the wilderness Rock, (Compare Ex.17v6, with Deut.33v8). Christ is the antitypical "Holy One" (Acts 3v14) mentioned in Deuteronomy, and as such was identified with the Rock "upon which he stood." That Rock represented Christ who was smitten to provide living waters (John 4v14, 7v37-39).

"That followed them."

There are two interpretations to Paul's statement: (1) It is suggested that the water which was provided on the first occasion (Ex.17), gushed copiously forth, providing a continuous stream from which the Israelites benefited throughout their wilderness journey. This theory is based upon such quotations as Psa.78v16, 105v41, Isa.48v16-22, Deut.9v21. The other view which the writer of these notes favours, is that the rocks being spoken of at the beginning, and at the end of the wilderness journeys, represent the journey as a whole, and in this sense, the rock followed them.

"That Rock was Christ."

The incidents recorded in Ex.17 and Numbers 20 are highly typical of the work of Jesus Christ; the first, in relation to his sacrificial mission, and the second, in regard to his functions as a high priest at God's right hand. The following diagram may serve to contrast the two incidents which differ vastly in detail, each having a typical significance of its own.

EX.17 - <u>REPHIDIM</u>	NUM.20 - <u>MERIBAH</u>
<p>v5. <u>"Take with thee the elders of Israel."</u> Representing the leaders of the Mosaic system (Matthew 23v2).</p>	<p>v8. <u>"Aaron thy brother."</u> Typical of the High Priest after the Order of Melchisedec (Heb.5v4).</p>

EX.17 - <u>REPHIDIM</u> (Cont'd)	NUM.20 - <u>MERIBAH</u> (Cont'd).
<p><u>"Thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river."</u> This was the rod that turned into a serpent. The serpent, a symbol of sin in the hands of Moses, represents the Jewish leaders as a generation of vipers (Mat.23v33), in their hour of triumph over the Son of God (Luke 22v53).</p>	<p><u>"Take the rod"</u> (Aaron's rod that budded.) This rod was the one which, among the other eleven, was "laid up before the Lord" (Num.17v7), and which budded into life, affirming the Divine appointment of the tribe of Levi in supplying the priesthood. Christ, as the rod out of the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11), although put to death, blossomed forth into life again, so determining his continuous priesthood (Heb.10v11-14, 7v23-25).</p>
<p>v6. <u>"Smite the Rock."</u> This speaks typically of Christ's crucifixion. He was "smitten for our iniquities" (Isa.53v5-6).</p>	<p><u>"Speak ye unto the rock."</u> We cannot crucify Christ afresh (Heb.6v6). Once smitten, he must now be spoken to.</p>
<p><u>"The Rock."</u> Hebrew "Tzur." The word indicates a huge rock, a boulder as being set in the earth, providing shelter and shade for man and beast. This is one of the Divine titles (Deut.32v4,15,18), and in the context of Cor. represents Christ's earthly ministry.</p>	<p><u>"The Rock."</u> Hebrew "Selah." This word indicates a cliff or a crag, high up and inaccessible, and is used in the sense of a fortress (Psa.31v3, S.of S. 2v14, II Sam.22v2). It represents Christ as the risen Lord.</p>

- v5. "Many of them."  
R.S.V. "Most of them," that is the greater part (Num.26v64-5, Heb.3v16-19). This echos the Lord's warning, "Many are called, but few are chosen," (Mat.20v16, 22v14).
- "Overthrown."  
The greek word is "Katastronnumi" from which root we derive the english "Catastrophe." The word literally means "strewn along" (Rotherham) (Numbers 14v29).
- v6. "Our examples."  
"Tupos" primarily denoted a blow (from a root "Tup," seen also in "Tupto - to strike) hence, an impression, the mark of a blow (John 20v25), a stamp as impressed or engraved. A reminder that Israel's past experiences should engrave themselves upon the reader's mind, leaving a warning impress "to the intent that he should not lust" as they did.
- v6-11. Paul now selects four incidents in the history of Israel's wanderings. Although we have legitimately applied these "types"

of Israel's failure, to our own generation, we must note that in the context of Paul's words, the four incidents he now reviews were remarkably applicable to the Corinthian situation, and the application to the believers of Corinth is Paul's primary meaning. However, though primarily chosen to warn the Corinthians, we do well to take the lesson personally.

"Lust after evil things."

Paul's quote is from Numbers 11v4. In this incident, we have a complaint lodged against the plain diet of Manna. The Manna was typical of the upbuilding word of life, the basis of which is the simple and yet proven truths of the Gospel message. Like Israel of old, the Corinthians despised this simple teaching and desired some more mysterious way of communicating the truth (I Cor.2v1-7 - see notes). Mysteries were an important part of idolatrous sacrifices. Israel desired to return to the idols of Egypt. Did the Corinthians see something more appealing at the idolatrous feasts at the Temple of Aphrodite?

v7.

"Neither be ye idolaters."

The free thinkers in Corinth would protest that to eat and drink at feasts was quite harmless, but as these things were preliminaries to actual idolatry in Israel's case, Paul now cites the incident recorded in Ex.32v6. This incident has a remarkable application to Corinth and reveals the depth of the Apostle's mind as he brought Scripture to bear upon a situation where an identical principle was at stake. First of all, we notice that eating and drinking were the adjuncts of burnt offerings and peace offerings (Ex.32v6), which offerings were emblematic of the state of fellowship. The big question was, with whom were the Israelites (and by implication, the Corinthians!) in fellowship? Doubtless those Israelites who participated in the golden calf worship instituted by Aaron, did so in the firm conviction that they were worshipping Yahweh. This they would have assumed on the basis that the calf represented Yahweh, for example, the calf was used as one of the Cherubic figures (Ex.25v18-20). Also, we note that Aaron proclaimed a feast unto Yahweh in conjunction with the calf worship (Ex.32v5). Careful reading of Psa.106v20 shows that the calf was intended to represent the similitude of the glory of Yahweh.

However, whether it was known to them or not, the calf Aphis, was one of the gods which the Egyptians formally worshipped. The bull was looked upon as the strength of Egypt; "Thy bull has been swept away" (Jer.46v15 - Youngs literal). Jeroboam, who subsequently lead Israel into apostacy, previously spent a long time in Egypt (I Kings 11v40), before he came back to actually establish calf worship (I Kings 12v28). Jeroboam's worship was intended to present a likeness to the worship of Yahweh, but had a strong mixture of actual Egyptian idolatry. Hosea the prophet, roundly condemns this calf worship (Hos.8v5-6, 10v5, 13v2, 14v2).

The whole point of Paul's argument is now summarised. It is obvious when reviewing Ex.32, that a man of Aaron's standing and calibre - Compare Psa.106v16, did not make a calf merely as an object of idolatry. Like the people, he intended it to convey the worship of

Yahweh, but in reality, "they rejoiced in the work of their own hands" (Acts 7v41). What both he and the people were quite unconscious of, was the fact that by so partaking of bread and wine in conjunction with the burnt and peace offerings, they were in fellowship with the idol which they had previously been associated with back in Egypt (Ezek.20v4-6). THIS WAS EXACTLY THE POSITION WITH THE CORINTHIANS. In frequenting the idol's temple, they thought they were demonstrating their immunity to idolatry, when in actual fact, they were participating in the abomination.

"Rose up to play."

The Hebrew word "to sport," and "to laugh." The name Isaac (laughter) is derived from the same root. R.S.V. has "to dance."

v8.

"Neither let us commit fornication."

Here again the correspondence with the Corinthian situation is remarkable. Paul's quote is from Num.25, and reference to the occasion when Israel, at the instigation of Balaam, committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab. These daughters found their counterpart in the priestesses in the Temple of Aphrodite. How did Israel come into the proximity of this sinful generation? It was through their attendance at a sacrificial meal! (Num.25v2, compare Psa.106v28-31). Did the Corinthians feel that they could enter into this idolatrous feast with immunity? This carnal sin into which Israel were drawn was to bear the title of "Peor" (Num. 25v5). We note there that they were "joined unto Baal-peor," a word which indicates a yoke, i.e. as used to pair oxen. Paul warned the Corinthians to be "not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Cor.6v14, I Cor.6v15-16.) The title of Baal-peor is once again peculiarly applicable to the worship of the goddess of love as practised in Corinth. The word "Baal" means "Lord," whilst the word "Peor," without mentioning its derivations, signifies prostitution. The goddess of Corinth was its counterpart.

v9.

"Neither let us tempt Christ."

The fourth incident mentioned by Paul. This occasion was near the end of their Wilderness journey, as Paul quotes Num.21v4-5. Israel had become "discouraged in the way," and once again in this quotation we see them loathing the simple, but wholesome food provided in the Manna (v5). Were the Corinthians becoming discouraged because of the very simplicity of the truth they had accepted? Like Israel of old, did they wish to return to the more interesting and exciting things provided on the table of Egypt (Num.11v5)? The lesson to them was, be satisfied with the simple but wholesome truths of the Gospel, and to stand fast in the truth.

"Destroyed of serpents."

Literally "THE serpents," indicating it as a well known incident. On this occasion, it was faith in God in beholding the "lifted up" brazen serpent that saved those that believed (Num.21v8). If Christ was represented by the Rock, he was also by the brazen serpent (John 3v14-15). The believers in Corinth would likewise be saved if they saw him being lifted up as a demonstration of the power of the spirit over that of the flesh. In the Wilderness, this

act of beholding the serpent, would have been to many foolishness, as was the crucifixion to the philosophising Corinthian (1v23).

- v10. "The destroyer."  
In actual fact they were destroyed by serpents (Num.21v6), but Paul uses a general term here to cover all incidents. The Angel of Death was called "the destroyer" (Ex.12v13).
- v11. "Happened unto them for ensamples."  
Same as in verse 6. Diaglott has "typically." Note the repetition of the phrase, "some of them" from verses 7 to 10. Nearly all were involved in one way or another.  
"Upon whom the ends of the world are come."  
This refers to the end of the Jewish age or era (Heb.1v2, 9v26), and was a grim warning to the Corinthian brethren. Here they were involved in the very temptations which brought about the failure of Israel, and doing so in the very epoch of God's judgment upon that guilty nation. Paul's warning therefore, is manifestly clear. If they partook of Israel's sins; beware lest they partake of Israel's judgment!
- v12. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."  
The practical conclusion! (Also Rom.11v20). They were self confident in their privileges. So was Israel after the flesh (Judges 1v28). They were flirting with death in unnecessarily exposing themselves to temptation (Judges 2v3, 14, 15).
- v13. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man."  
Diaglott: "Belongs to man," i.e. adapted to human powers; in other words, Paul is saying to them that Israel's experience is their's. The temptations were common to both.  
"Above that ye are able."  
Whilst Israel's failure was typical, it was made public mainly that others might beware and avoid similar mistakes. There is a way to escape.  
"Temptation."  
The word "temptation" can be used also in the sense of being tried (cp. Jam.1v13-15 with Heb.11v7, same Greek word). God tempts no man by exciting his propensities to sin (James 1v13-15), but can allow the circumstances whereby a man has the opportunity either to succumb or to succeed. Thus God "did tempt Abraham" (Gen.22v1).  
"Way to escape."  
This way is through the power of the inspired Word (John 17v15-17, II Peter 2v9). However, we must avail ourselves of that way. Temptation can be selfimposed.
- v14. "Flee from idolatry."  
(For practical example see Gen.39v12). Prevention is better than cure. Paul elaborates on this when he says, "Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom.13v14).
- v15. "I speak as to wise men."  
"Wise" - "Phronimos" - mindful as Matt.7v24, 10v16, 25v2, Luke 12v42! Paul now turns to a new subject. The use of the term "wise" is not ironical, but serious. Appeal is now made to their reason.



- v15-22. He now shows that quite apart from expediency for their personal safety, their action in attending the idol's temple was inconsistent with their union with Christ. Their lack of appreciation of the purpose of the Lord's supper (11v20) blinded them also as to the implications involved in partaking of idolatrous feasts. The matter was extremely serious. It was a question of fellowship.
- v16. "We bless."  
 Note the plural "we." This is something they did together; "Drink ye all of it" (Mat.26v27).  
"Communion of the blood of Christ."  
 R.S.V., Diaglott, "participation." It was because they partook of the crucified Lord that they were in fellowship. He was the whole basis of fellowship (I John 1v5-7).
- v17. "We being many are one bread."  
 R.S.V., "Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body for we are all partakers of the one loaf." This indicates an important fact, namely that they did not engage in this act because they were one, but that they were made one by their participation in this ordinance. In other words, it was participation itself that unified them.
- v18. "Behold Israel after the flesh."  
 Learn of them, ye Israel after the Spirit (Gal.6v16, I Cor.10v11).  
"Partakers of the altar."  
 This illustration was already used in 9v13, but there with a different purpose. "Partake" is the same as "communion"(v16). Part of the sacrificial offerings under the Law were burnt upon the altar (Lev.4v34-35), the rest of the flesh was eaten by the priests in the precincts of the court, (Lev.6v24-26, 10v12-13). The altar was typical of Christ, (Heb.13v10). It was to be kept holy (Ex.20v24-26), and whoever came in contact with it through a sacrificial offering, was made holy by that contact (Ex.29v37, 30v28-29). Here was an act of complete identification. What did the Corinthians contract when they came into contact with heathen altars!
- v19. "What say I then? that the idol is any thing."  
 They would argue, "But an idol is nothing in the world" (8v4), to which Paul had agreed. Has he now changed his mind?
- v20. "The thing which the gentiles sacrifice."  
 Paul's answer is this: Look at it from the gentile viewpoint. To them "demons" were real. What would they conclude by seeing a Christian partake of their offering. Could a brother denounce idolatry under such circumstances? Besides this, the evil rites associated with the idol worship were dreadfully real even if the idol wasn't.  
"They sacrifice to devils, and not to God."  
 Paul quotes from Deut.32v17, where in the context, we note Israel were in actual fellowship with demons. Were the Corinthians none the less so? They would reply "No," proving thus their lack of understanding of what constituted fellowship.

"Fellowship with devils."

Same as "communion" v16.

v21.

"The cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils."

By his quotation of Ex.32v6, the Apostle drew attention to the fact that there was a marked resemblance between the worshipping of the golden calf, and that of the worship of the calf of Egypt. This was a "type" of the Corinthian situation, and this is born out by the fact that the ritual carried out in the idolatrous temple of Aphrodite, followed almost exactly that of the Memorial Supper of the Lord. Not understanding the true principles of the Lord's Supper, they saw no wrong in participating in the idol's temple. Their lack of understanding of that which was right made their perception dim of that which was the converse of truth. With their limited understanding of the Lord's Supper, to claim fellowship through its participation, was in fact to claim it with demons with whom they also participated.

v22.

"Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy."

(Quotation from Deut.32v16). This chapter seems to provide the basis for Paul's argument. Israel forgot "the Rock of salvation" (Deut.32v30-31) - were the Corinthians forgetting their Rock, which was Christ (10v4)? Israel was unmindful of "the Rock that begat them" (Deut.32v18), what about the Corinthians (chapter 8v6 "One Lord Jesus Christ and we BY him")?

"Are we stronger than he?"

These brethren were classified among the "strong." Were they strong enough to resist God by playing loose with His Gospel.

v23-33.

Having taught that participation in the idolatrous feasts is tantamount to fellowship with the idol AND those who believe in it, Paul must now answer the final question, "Is total abstinence therefrom necessary in principle?" Paul's answer is perfectly balanced, a demonstration of Divine wisdom as comprehended by a mature mind. It must be remembered that in answering, he has to be careful as he has already agreed in principle with the "strong" that "an idol is nothing."

v23.

"All things are lawful for me."

This, in all probability, was a cry which they made and which had been borrowed by the Apostle Paul (compare 6v12). In regard to the eating of meats, this was basically correct (I Tim.4v4), but in the exercise of this principle, there are limiting factors. Paul asks them two questions. In effect he says, in exercising your liberty of partaking of sacrificial meat, is it:

- (1) Expedient, that is, spiritually helpful in a personal sense?
- (2) Does it edify? That is, is it upbuilding ecclesially?(for "edify" see note on 8v1).

v24.

"Let no man seek his own."

This is the cardinal principle in the exercise of liberty - a consideration of others. Paul concludes this chapter on this note v32-33.

v25.

"Whatsoever is sold in the shambles."

R.S.V. "Meat market." Note, not in the temple!

"No question for conscience sake."

R.S.V. "Without raising a question on the ground of conscience."  
That is, no need for questions when buying in the market.

v26. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

The fact that the meat had been offered to idols meant nothing to those who recognised the sovereignty of God over His creation. Paul is here quoting from Psa.24v1; he does so with the whole context in mind. The Psalm deals with those who have clean hands and a pure heart. These shall enter into God's holy place (v4-5). What concord have these with the idol's holy place?

v27. "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast."

A private meal. Again the temple is excluded. The same principle applies here as in the market place.

## v28. Note: All of v28 and v29 up to the word "other" are in parenthesis. The basic context from v27-30, omitting the parenthesis, reads as follows:

Weymouth: "If an unbeliever invites you, and you consent to go, eat whatsoever is put before you, and ask no questions for conscience sake. For why is my personal freedom to be decided by another man's conscience. If I partake with a grateful heart, why am I to be maligned in regard to a thing for which I give thanks."

The words in parenthesis are added as advice for exceptional circumstances.

"But if any man say unto you."

This could be the host or a fellow guest. He could be a Jew, a "weak" brother, or a devout idolator. Should he mention that the meat had indeed been offered to idols, the eating thereof became a matter of principle, and had to be recognised as such.

"Eat not for his sake."

That is, do not give a false impression of your discrimination between the truth and error. Make it quite clear where you stand. This is for his sake.

"And for conscience sake."

That is, not your conscience, because to you idol sacrifice is nothing, but as v29 says, "Conscience I say, not thine own, but of the other." The R.S.V. puts it, "I mean his conscience not your's." A Jew's conscience could be grievously affected and his sentiments turned against the truth by seeing a believer partake of that which was abhorrent to the Jews. A "weak" brother who advocated total abstinence, could be emboldened to follow the example of eating, and so defile his weak conscience (8v10). A devout idolator, would doubtless be pleased to see the Christian participate, and conclude in his own mind, that there was no difference between his belief and their's. All this could be avoided: "Eat not."

v30. "For if I by grace be a partaker."

Margin, "Thanksgiving." Upon this condition all meats are sanctified for the Christian's use (I Tim.4v5).

v31. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Not the action that is visible to man's eyes, but rather the MOTIVE behind the action counts. What does it profit a man when he abstains or participates in order to establish his own righteousness in the sight of others? Remember, that you have been called to glorify GOD in all your actions. If this thought is the motivating force prompting all your decisions, it shall be well with you (4v5).

v32. "None offence, neither to Jew nor to the Gentiles."

"Offence" - "Aproskopos" - no occasion for stumbling" (R.V.). Both outside the truth and yet their feelings must be taken into consideration, as advised in v28-29. A positive lead must be given to all and a mature believer must have this objective in mind.

"The ecclesia of God."

How important to give a good lead here (Rom.14v13).

v33. "Even as I please all men."

This statement must not be misunderstood, or else it will be an obvious contradiction to Gal.1v10 and I Thes.2v4. Paul's desire to please was relative, and often not recognised as "pleasing" by his fellowmen. He desired to be of use to all, even to the end that they might be saved. This was the prime motive of his actions. However, never did he lower his standard when he "pleased men," but rather did he endeavour to lift them up by way of preaching and example, that they also might come to experience the "goodness of God."

"Not seeking mine own profit."

Further proof that Paul was not a "man pleaser" in the common sense of the term. A man-pleaser commends himself to others that he might win their favour for personal advantage or satisfaction of ambition. Paul could expect no such reaction from fellowman. He did "good" to others by preaching and living "Christ crucified", and often reaped contempt and hatred in return. ("The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" II Cor.12v15). What did it matter? He sought not his profit but their's, namely their salvation.

11v1. "Be ye followers of me."

This verse is the actual conclusion of Chapter 10. It is the second time that Paul invites others to "imitate" his attitude (Chapter 4v16 notes). Why?

"Even as I also am of Christ."

To imitate Paul was to follow the SUPREME example, "For even Christ pleased not himself." (Rom.15v1-3).

CHAPTERS 12 - 14.

In Chapter 11, Paul had to deal with the disorderly manner in which the Memorial Meetings were conducted at Corinth. The Corinthians, by nature Gentiles of various nationalities, with many excitable characters, had thrown the solemn Memorial Meetings into confusion. They failed to grasp the solemnity of the occasion, and as a result, their organised ecclesial life was in a state of chaos. Contributing to the confusion was the misuse they made of the spirit gifts which had been bestowed upon some members of the early ecclesia for its edification. The manifestation of the gifts was to them a spectacular display of Divine power, and whilst these gifts were partly intended to be such, the Corinthians' misunderstood their proper use. Thus, when displaying them, they turned what should have been serious considerations of the salvation wrought in Christ Jesus, into meetings of chaotic bedlam (14v23). Paul therefore, devotes this section of his epistle to a sober and intelligent consideration of the true purpose of Spirit gifts.

CHAPTER 12 - DIVISIONS.

- v1-3           The spectacular is not always a manifestation of the true spirit of Christ (consider the frenzy of pagan worship!)
- v4-11.       Diversity in the operation of the spirit gifts, but all emanated from a common source.
- v12-30.      Analogy of human body to illustrate the mutual inter-dependence of individual ecclesial members.
- v1.           "Now concerning spiritual gifts."  
               This was a matter of enquiry. The gifts were not fulfilling their function of promoting unity and harmony, but were the cause of divisions arousing envy in those who did not possess them, and vanity amongst those that did. Although there were at least nine gifts (v8-10), Paul concentrates mainly on two: the gift of prophecy, and that of speaking with tongues (Consider chapter 14). Both of these gifts involved incidentally, the gift of knowledge, and these three are thus mentioned in his opening salutation (chapter 1v4-5 - see notes). (The Corinthians coveted the gift of tongues, much to Paul's dismay, which was evidently spectacular and noisy, and appealed to their excitable natures).  
               The word "gifts" is not in the original, and so we have "spiritual brethren" (compare Gal.6v1), i.e. those who possessed the gifts. Rotherham has "the spiritual." For the sake of clarity we must remember that there were two classes in the ecclesia "the spirituals" (those with gifts), and the "privates" (those without them).
- v2.           "Ye know that ye were Gentiles."  
               R.S.V. "When ye were heathen." Paul stresses their present exalted position by way of contrast with their past (Also Rom.11v30, Col.1v21, Eph.2v11-13). Before answering their queries concerning spiritual brethren and their importance, he reminds them clearly of their past idolatrous worship with all its spectacular show and frenzy, which however, as they knew, was absolutely valueless.

"Dumb idols."

Paul had to emphasize the non-existence of the idol (8v7), compare v4-8. They had previously been "carried away," and "led." It was the custom of pagan priests to speak from inside the idol by means of a speaking tube to its parted lips. A display of the gift of tongues in unintelligent language, resembled this idolatrous madness (14v23).

"Even as ye were led."

R.S.V, Rotherham, "However you may have been moved." The character of the heathen worship was unintelligent frenzied emotion (compare I Kings 18v26-29). Their use of the gifts of tongues bore a marked resemblance to this. It appeared that they acted abnormally and without rational consideration of what they were saying. Unless they were careful, this gift would be of no more value than their former worship.

v3.

"I give you to understand."

Some of the weak were doubtful concerning the veracity or otherwise of idol teaching. It was the duty of the spiritual brethren to edify them. How could anyone prove sound doctrine except he could compare the things heard with other portions of the Word of God (I John 4v1-3). The gospel had to be preached intelligibly to be of use to the hearer.

"Calleth Jesus accursed."

Greek, "Anathema." Some of the Corinthians in the exercise of tongues found themselves in this class, being unconscious of the fact that in what they were saying (compare 16v22) they implied that Jesus was a curse and not a blessing.

"Jesus is the Lord."

However unimpressive this confession was made, its sincerity marked it out as a conviction wrought by the Spirit power. Plain intelligent language was all that was necessary to make such a conviction (Rom. 10v9-10).

v4-6.

They had previously associated among gods with various activities. Here the Apostle leads them to a consideration that the various activities of the spirit, the diversities of its operation were witness to the unity of the One who gave them, i.e. because these diversities presented perfect balance in operation, complimenting each other, it witnessed to the Oneness of Him through whom these various functions originated (Eph. 4v3-6).

v4.

"Diversities of gifts."

Same Greek word as "differences" v5, and "diversities" v.6. R.S.V has "variety." Note the three distinct thoughts in v4-6:

1. Diversity of gifts, but one spirit causing their operation (v4).
2. Service made possible to One Lord - note margin of v5.
3. Distinctive modes of operation reveal activity of one God (v6).

v6.

"Operations."

Greek "energeo," from whence we derive "energy." Same as "worketh" (This verse and v11). R.S.V. "Who inspires them all in every way."

v7.

"Manifestation."

Greek, "Phanerosis," "exhibit." This they delighted in, but this "Phanerosis" was intended for the purpose of edification, not for display.

"Profit withal."

"Profit" i.e. as to others. R.S.V. "For the common good." Their use was not merely for personal benefit or distinction.

v8-9.

Nine gifts. In the following illustration, compare the two lists given by the Apostle Paul:

v8-10:

Word of Wisdom  
 Word of Knowledge  
 Faith  
 Healing  
 Miracles  
 Prophecy  
 Discerning of Spirits  
 Tongues  
 Interpretation of tongues.

v28:

Apostles  
 Prophets  
 Teachers  
 Miracles  
 Healings  
 Helps  
 Governments  
 Diversities of tongues.

Note also the general classification of Romans 12v6-8. In both lists in Corinthians, the gift of tongues is placed last. In v28, it is done so with stated intent. The gift of tongues, admired and sought after by the exhibitionists in Corinth, was for the practical purpose of the ecclesia, the least esteemed. This would have been a blow to their pride.

v11.

"Dividing to every man severally as he will."

God selected each individual for the gift he would bestow upon them. HE placed the members in the body (v18). Boasting and envy is excluded. The Spirit "worketh" not "is worked;" He worketh "at His will," not as he is bidden.

v12-26.

The unity of the body of Christ is organic, i.e. it is dependent for its functions upon related organisms. Paul teaches a spiritual lesson by giving a natural example: the human body.

v12-14. Diversity of operation is a prerequisite to organic maturity.

v15-20. Encouragement to those who felt they did not belong.

v21-24. Rebuke to those who despised the less gifted.

v25-26. An appeal to both parties to exercise loving sympathy.

v27-30. Application of the analogy to the body of Christ.

v12.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members."

This is a common figure with Paul (Rom.12v4-5, Eph.4v16, Col.2v19).

"Being many, are one."

This is a continuance of the theme of "one bread." (10v17), but this time it is not many in one, but as of one, made up of many. Unity is organic, not arithmetical. Diversity is its prerequisite. The analogy is addressed to Two classes. On the one hand those who despaired of ever receiving the so-called "special gifts" whose cry was "I am not of the body," (v15), and on the other hand, those who boasted of these gifts, and who said, "I have no need of you," (v21).

v13.

"By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

Literally, "In one spirit." - A great comfort for the less gifted! The same power of the Holy Spirit which bestowed the gifts was also operating as the breath of inspiration (I Peter 1v21). This Spirit moved the prophets to testify concerning Christ (I Peter 1v11) and operated in the Word of Life (John 6v63). This is that Spirit of truth which manifested itself in various ways (I John 5v6, John

15v26). All believers partook of it, whether endowed with gifts or not. Their baptism was evidence to that fact.

"Jews or Gentiles . . . bond or free."

Compare Galatians 3v28, where the theme is the same: many in the one Christ seed. Note however, the omission here of "male and female." The equality of women was a contentious issue in Corinth which had arisen out of a misunderstanding of the statement "there is neither male nor female." Consequently, the Apostle made separate and distinct statements concerning the woman's status in the ecclesia in another place (Chapters 11 and 14).

"To drink into one Spirit."

Same as "watered" (3v6). Christ alone can give us the Spirit Water of Life (John 7v37-39). The same Word not only washes us from past sins through baptism, but it must have a continual cleansing effect throughout our lives. Note well I Cor. 6v11, John 17v17, Eph. 5v26-27.

v15-17. "If the FOOT shall say, Because I am not the HAND, I am not of the body -  
If the EAR shall say, Because I am not the EYE, I am not of the body."

The cry of the depressed was: "I am not of the body," in spite of the fact that the ecclesia was organically united and dependent. Belittling and excluding oneself from the body showed lack of spiritual discernment, and had its root in fleshly pride and envy. To demonstrate the principle of envy among those who possessed gifts, Paul associates members of action (~~hand~~ and foot), and members of sensation (ear and eye), and represents each within the group as complaining against his associate. Men are apt to envy those who possess SUPERIOR but similar gifts to their own.

v18. "But now hath God set the members."

"Set," Greek "theo," "to place," Note same phrase in v28, where the application of the analogy is made. As in the physical, so in the spiritual. God is the Creator of both bodies; our natural body and the body of Christ. With nature there is a perfect balance. We are indeed "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139v14-16). So should it be in the body of Christ, to which the Psalm alludes.

"As it hath pleased him."

Not "As it hath pleased THEM." Compare: Romans 12v3-11.

v21-24. The boast of those who were endowed with gifts: "I have no need of thee."

v21. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee . . . Head to the feet, I have no need of you."

Paul here associates the principle of action with a principle of sensation (eye - hand, head - feet). The very opposite to the associations in v15 and 16. Those who were puffed up with some great gift saw no need for any other than that which they themselves possessed. They tolerated those with a SIMILAR though lesser gift, whilst despising those who possessed DIFFERENT, and in their opinion, decidedly inferior gifts.

v22-24. Not only are all members necessary, but the body teaches the need for active solicitude.

v22. "More feeble, are necessary."

R.S.V. "The weaker are indispensable."



- v23. "We bestow more abundant honour."  
 "To place around," the R.S.V. "To invest." Note margin "to put on."  
"Uncomely."  
 "Shapeless" or "Unelegant." R.S.V. "Unpresentable." The word carries the idea of shame. Those parts which we cover up because we are ashamed of them, perform some of the most vital functions of the body.  
"More abundant comeliness."  
 Greek: "Decorous," "well formed."
- v24. "For our comely parts have no need."  
 This concludes the thought. "Comely" here is the same as "comeliness" in v23.  
"God hath tempered the body together."  
 "Mingled together." R.S.V. has "Adjusted." The same word is rendered "mixed with" (Heb.4v2), the margin of which quote indicates that the rest of Israel were not mixed with Caleb and Joshua by faith, and were therefore rejected.  
"More abundant honour to that part which lacked."  
 The word signifies "to be inferior," "to fall behind," and is rendered "come behind," (1v7), where it is used in regard to the gifts.
- v25. "There should be no schism in the body."  
 Same as "division" (1v10). The gifts were given to bring maturity and unity (Eph.4v13). Human nature made them a cause of disunity.  
"The same care one for another."  
 The care bestowed upon the weak and unsightly portion of our human frame, should teach compassion upon the weaker members of Christ's body: "No man ever hated his own flesh" (Eph.5v28-9).
- v26. "One member suffer, all the members suffer with it."  
 The onus on the endowed brother to feel compassion on the unendowed and to share his sorrow.  
"One member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."  
 The unendowed to participate gladly in the joy of the endowed. This mutual sympathy required self-forgetfulness, something unknown to the Corinthians. So Paul proceeds to remove the basis upon which their smugness and envy rested: SELF-CENTREDNESS.
- v27. "Members in particular."  
 Diaglott: "Members in part." R.S.V. "Individually." Rotherham: "severally."
- v28. "God hath set."  
 "Placed" as in v8, but this time used more specifically as Paul now shows in what order of importance the members have been placed in the body.  
"First apostles."  
 The gift of prophecy first - tongues last. In chapter 14 Paul is to outline the reasons why this should be so. The fact that God placed tongues last in order of importance whilst they had placed it first, was humiliating. Their envy and their desire was misplaced and obviously had its foundation in a wrong motive.

v31.

"Covet earnestly."

Greek "zeloo," "to have warmth of feeling," "desire," "envy," "jealous," the word is rendered "zealously effect" (Gal.4v17-18), "envy" (Acts 7v9, 17v5, I Cor. 13v4). This verse indicates how the Spirit gifts, although distributed according to God's will (v11) were given to those who sincerely desired them for the common good, and who were capable of receiving the higher gifts; Prophecy being the highest, and most useful gift, they should desire (14v1).

"The best gifts."

"Stronger" from a root word "to have dominion." R.S.V. has "Higher gifts." The word is rendered "better" where it obviously teaches the greater (Heb.1v4, 7v19, 8v6, 9v23).

"A more excellent."

Greek "Huperbole," "a throwing beyond," "super eminence." The word is rendered "beyond measure" (Gal.1v13). Paul had admonished them to be tolerant. He had shown that they all stood by grace, and that they had been called to further and not to hinder the gospel of Christ. The best gift, then, to be desired was prophecy for its edifying value upon all. But what if they would desire this now with wrong motives, simply because it was "the best?"

"Way."

"A road of progress." Figuratively "a mode or means of;" used of the "way into the Holiest" (Heb.9v8, 10v20).

CHAPTER 13.

We come now to the most sublime of all the passages in the Epistles to Corinth, Paul's eulogy of love. Having spoken of a more excellent way than that exhibited in the manifestation of the gifts, he now moves on to the exposition of that way. To see certain members of an ecclesia possessing the various spirit gifts was an indication of the Divine approval of their standards of truth. To see ALL members of the ecclesia dominated by the principles of faith, hope and love, was an indication of the ecclesia's acceptance of these Divine principles as a way of life. To Paul, this was the ultimate that could be expected this side of the Kingdom of God. It clearly surpassed all the showy manifestations of the spirit gifts. It was something far more enduring, and was the hallmark of maturity in Christ. Love can neither be compelled nor acquired by physical or mental effort. It is the end of a process, the crowning glory of all Divine virtue (II Peter 1v5-7). This is what the Corinthians ought to have coveted.

CHAPTER DIVISIONS.

- v1-3. Gifts valueless without love.
- v4-7. The pre-eminent characteristics of love; its negative and positive qualities.
- v8-13. The operations of gifts were intermittent and transient. The virtues of faith, hope and love have an uninterrupted operation, and of the three, love is eternal.

v1. "Tongues of men."

The gift they esteemed highest is first dismissed.

"And of angels."

These celestial beings seem to have an exalted form of speech (John 12v29) - See Daniel 8v13-16, where angels in conversation speak "in a man's voice," implying a contrast with their own.

"Charity."

Greek "agape." The English expression of "charity," is misleading. "Charity" as we now understand the term, was not what Paul had in mind. He dismisses this sort of "charity" as also being valueless without true love (v3). Dr. Strong defines "Agape" by comparing it with another Greek word "phileo" which is also translated "love" in the New Testament. His enlightening definition reads as follows:

"Phileo means "a friend," "having an affection for," denoting a personal attachment as a matter of sentiment or feeling. "Agape" is wider, embracing especially the judgment, the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle duty and propriety. The two stand thus related, the former being chiefly of the heart, the latter of the head."

True agape love manifests itself in various ways according to circumstances. It is not always sympathetic, nor yet sentimental but as the above definition has it, it expresses itself out of a pure motive based on the solid foundation of truth, with always the good of others as its objective. A classical illustration of

the meaning of this word is found in II Cor. 11 v12, where it is translated "love." The word is peculiar to the New Testament with the exception of a few places in the Septuagint version.

"Sounding."

"To make a loud noise," "to reverberate." The word is rendered "roaring" (Luke 21v25).

"Brass."

This term is used of metal (Rev. 18v12), money (Mark 12v41).

"Tinkling cymbal."

"To shout halloo," "to wail," "to clang." These instruments in themselves only create noise. They can harmonize in association with others, but even then, are only spasmodic and supplementary. Paul here contrasts these harsh dominating sounds with the melodious performance of a well disciplined orchestra, such as described in Psalm 150 where all instruments with one accord praise and extol Yahweh. A brother, taking pride in the gift of tongues, using it for self-glorification is appropriately likened unto a tinkling cymbal, but where love dominates an ecclesia, will resound with praises to the glory of God. The Septuagint Version of Psalm 150v5 has almost the same Greek phraseology. Later on in chapter 14, Paul is to extend this idea and to speak of his own part in this grand orchestral rendition of praise in which every instrument must play its own portion in harmony with the others.

v3. "I bestow all my goods to feed the poor."

Literally, "Bestow to feed," and the Greek term indicates the putting of morsels in the mouth, placing them there one by one. In other words, the most careful disposal of goods in charity is valueless if it has not love for its basis.

v4-7.

These verses are an exposition of the virtues of love, and in order to gain the full meaning, they must be considered against the background of the whole Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul has in mind the relationships between the bitter factions which had arisen in the Corinthian ecclesia, which he had identified as being the parties of the weak, versus that of the strong. In his use of the analogy of the human body in chapter 12v25, he had called for mutual sympathy in their care one for the other. Their desire for spiritual gifts or even their envy for those who possessed them was sadly misplaced if members of both sects did not possess the highest of all Divine virtues, that of love. In setting out the characteristics of love, Paul in effect is asking the pertinent question, "Can they practise these things?"

v4.

"Suffereth long."

"To be long spirited," rendered "long suffering" (II Peter 3v9), "patiently endured," (Heb. 6v15). This is a challenge to the strong brother. Could he be long spirited towards his over-scrupulous weak brother? Love can.

"Is kind."

"To show oneself useful." A practical manifestation of spiritual virtues.

"Envieth not."

Greek "Zeloo." Same as "covet earnestly" (12v31). Here is a challenge to the weak brother. Does he bear any envy against one more highly endowed than himself? Love wouldn't.

"Vaunteth not itself."

"Boast." Moffatt renders this "to parade." What was the use of parading gifts for self-glorification?

"Puffed up."

"to inflate." Compare 8v1.

v5.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly."

"To act uncomely" (Compare 7v36). It also carries the idea of shame; rendered "uncomely" (12v23). The word is rendered "shame" (Rev.16v15), hence the meaning is "to be rude." Love is never this.

"Is not easily provoked."

The term here literally means "to sharpen along-side," i.e. to get on one's nerves, to exasperate. How often are these feelings engendered among those whose varying abilities create no natural affinity one with the other. Love learns to tolerate and get along with others who are unlike in nature or characteristics.

"Thinketh no evil."

Literally, "To take an inventory" (estimate). "Logizomai" - to reckon. R.V. renders: "Taketh not account of evil." Something more than refraining from imputing motives. The word is rendered "impute" (Rom.4v6-8, II Cor.5v19). Love will never take an inventory, i.e. to calculate the evil done against it, and because it does not so calculate, it cannot and will not impute that evil against others: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom.12v21). This is a marvellous characteristic.

v6.

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity."

"To sympathise in gladness," "to congratulate." How easy is it to rejoice in the downfall of an opponent, even when such a one may be a brother in Christ. Love will never act in this fashion.

"Rejoiceth in the truth."

Note the margin, "With the truth." Moffatt renders this verse as follows: "Love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness."

v7.

"Believeth all things."

The word means "to entrust," "a disposition to believe;" once again Moffatt seems to catch the idea with his rendering, "Always agree to believe the best."

"Hopeth all things."

"Expect" "to confide," "expect with pleasure and confidence," that is love does not dwell upon a bad report, but rather expects with confidence the repentance of the individual concerned. Flesh is inclined to harden when a controversy flares up. It nurses a grudge and does not even wish the opponent to repent. Love forgets the ill done, and is confident that a change to good shall come.

"Endureth all things."

"Hupomeno" - to abide under, to bear up courageously (under suffering) (II Tim. 2v10-12, Heb. 10v32, Heb. 12v2v3v7). This military term implies not merely a passive submission to evil, but that which goes quite beyond, a sustained outlook, "assault," for good to those who provoke us.

v8.

"Charity never faileth."

"Faileth to be driven off course," "ineffective;" rendered "of none effect," (Rom. 9v6).

"Prophecies, they shall fail."

"Katargeo" - to reduce to inactivity, "to be entirely idle." Same word rendered "done away" (v10), "put away" (v11), "vanisheth away" (v8).

"Tongues, they shall cease."

"to pause," "to stop," "desist;" word is rendered "refrain" (I Peter 3v10).

v9.

"We know in part."

A section or allotment, division or share. The word is used in 12v27, "members in particular," and is also rendered "piece" (Luke 24v42). The gifts contributed sporadically and partially to their knowledge and spiritual growth. They could only develop the individual to a certain status beyond which, they were not designed to carry them. In a similar way the Old Testament was a revelation "in many ways and many parts," but the ultimate revelation was embodied in Jesus Christ as the manifestation of God (Rev. 1v1).

v10.

"That which is perfect is come."

The word is "teleios" - complete, and indicates maturity. Rendered "full age" (Heb. 5v14 margin), "men" (I Cor. 14v20 margin). The specific purpose of the gifts was to stabilise the early ecclesia, and to provide teachers and writers capable of bringing the record of Scripture to a completion. The Scriptures, when properly understood can bring about that ultimate maturity which the gifts could never provide (Eph. 4v11). We note that Paul here (v8), only speaks of the two gifts, prophecy and that of tongues, as these were first and last, respectively, in order of importance, and Paul's illustrations throughout this whole section have been limited to these two particular gifts. They, and the rest of the gifts, would cease when at the fulness of time, the Divine record had been completed. Love would ensure as being the central theme of that record.

v11.

"When I was a child."

Greek "Nephios," an infant, a simple minded person; rendered "babe" (I Cor. 3v1, Heb. 5v13).

"I spake as a child."

The child speaks immaturely in a few broken inarticulate words. To Paul this was comparable to their use of the gift of tongues.

"I understood as a child."

The child understands little. Its knowledge is limited. To Paul this was comparable to their use of the gift of knowledge.

"I thought as a child."

Note margin, "reasoned." The child reasons without experience. Its mind is prompted solely by instinct. To Paul this was comparable to their use of the gift of prophecy, not dictated by the Will of God, but by the instincts of their carnal mind.

v12.

"See through a glass."

The glass here is the same as that in James 1v23. These were mirrors made up of polished metal which gave an imperfect image to the person looking into it. The word rendered "glass" in II Cor. 3v18, is different although from the same root. There, it conveys the idea of reflection. We ourselves become the mirror reflecting the Lord in our lives.

"Darkly."

Greek "enigma," obscurely. The same word is rendered by the Septuagint Version, "dark saying" (Num.12v8, Prov.1v6). Paul compares the present with the future manifestations in the Millenium. However, there is a relevance to what he is saying with the Corinthians. The spirit gifts were a means to an end. Through them the ecclesia understood in part the Divine purpose, but by the manifestation of revealed truth in the Apostles, that which the spirit gifts could not reveal was now brought to light (I Cor.2v9-10).

"Face to face."

To "hide the face" is a sign of God's displeasure (Isa.8v17, 54v8, Deut.31v17-18, Psa.69v17). The converse of this is also true; to see face to face is to experience the Divine blessing (Num.6v25, Psa.80v1, v3, v14).

This is evidently a quotation from Num.12v8, and is extremely interesting in the context of Paul's controversy with the Corinthians. In that quotation, Moses is singled out by Yahweh as being more closely related to the Divine revelation than even the members of his own family. He received a revelation from God which they did not, and was clearly the more mature among the prophets of his age. Just as Moses was to Israel, Paul was a father to the Corinthians (4v15), and like the Patriarch Moses, he had been the recipient of visions and revelations far in excess to his contemporaries (II Cor.12v1-5).

Despite the fact that Moses was singled out by Yahweh to be the recipient of Divine manifestation, Paul later shows that he was still inferior to the Lord Jesus. If Moses had a glory, as a result of the giving of the Law, then that which Christ received, as a testimony of God's grace expressed in the Gospel message, was infinitely greater (II Cor.3v13-18, 4v6).

"Now I know in part."

Greek, "anagnoskoo," knowledge.

"Then shall I know."

Greek, "epi-gnosis," exact knowledge.

v13.

"The greatest of these is love."

"Larger." The word is used in the sense of an elder, and is so rendered in Rom.9v12. Love is the greatest because it is the elder, being the hallmark of maturity. It supersedes all other virtues simply because it comprehends them. In this way, it is a royal law; by virtue of its function it rules over all others (James 2v8, I John 4v8, Rom.13v8-10). God Himself, is the essence of love (I Jn.4v16).

CHAPTER 14.INTRODUCTION.

Chapter 14 is a continuation of the theme of the spirit gifts dealt with in Chapter 12, whilst Paul digressed in Chapter 13, to expound the virtues of love. In both of these chapters, Paul compares the relative value of such gifts, selecting two in particular for comparison. He concludes, that prophecy is by far the most useful of the gifts, since it is the ability to expound the word of truth clearly. The gift of tongues, however, is limited in its usefulness, and therefore is relegated by the Apostle to the position of least important of the spirit functions. Chapter 14 is devoted to this comparison in order to persuade the Corinthians to a more extensive use of the gift of prophecy, in preference to the gift of tongues in which they had over-indulged with the impure motive of attracting attention to themselves.

The nature of the gift of tongues is difficult to determine, but as it is important to the considerations of chapter 14, some definitions are appended below. Certain obscurities in the Record, and lack of information, force us to leave these notes somewhat inconclusive. However, seeing that spirit gifts ceased in succeeding generations, knowledge of the exact nature of the gift of tongues is not absolutely essential to our considerations. The principles involved in Paul's comparison of prophecy and tongues are clearly discernable and are no less applicable in this generation as they were in the days of the Corinthians. There are three main theories on the gift of tongues:

1. That the gift was the ability to speak in the original Hebrew language.
2. That speaking in tongues was an experience limited to individuals, serving no other purpose than to stimulate the faith of the gifted. It is suggested that the person concerned spoke without comprehending precisely what he was saying, that whilst so speaking, he was in a state of ecstasy when the normal operation of the mind was suspended, and he was caught up in a trance.
3. It is suggested that the gift was granted for the practical purpose of expounding the truth to people speaking other languages, that is, for a wider distribution of the Gospel message amongst the many nationalities of the Roman Empire. In this view, allowance is also made for a secondary purpose of this gift, namely as the means of confirmation to a believer upon his reception of the Gospel. What he now believed, was thus given the Divine Seal of approval. In this case, the gift was only a token without practical value to others.

This third view is the most logical, and one to which the writer of these notes is inclined. However, whilst the reasons below may seem to support the latter theory, significant difficulties must be admitted and the matter left inconclusive.



THE GIFT OF TONGUES.1. PURPOSE OF THE GIFT - TWO FOLD.(1) AS A SEAL OF TRUTH RECEIVED.

- (a) Examples of this seen in Cornelius (Acts 10v46), and in the conversion of the disciples of John (Acts 19v6). In both cases the recipients of Divine truth spontaneously speak in tongues, and seeing that they had already been conversing in a common language, this experience would serve no other practical purpose than to confirm these people in their belief.
- (b) Christ's promise was that tongues were to be for a sign to be manifest among all those that believed (Mark 16v17). Here again indicating the gift as being a token of received truth.

(2) TO EDUCATE OTHERS IN MORE INTELLIGIBLE LANGUAGE.

- (a) People of many different dialects heard the disciples speak "the wonderful works of God," at Pentacost (Acts 2 v8-11). This excited their interest and prepared them for Peter's speech which was probably delivered in the common tongue of Aramaic. Acts does not say that Peter spoke in foreign languages.
- (b) Paul counsels interpretation of those tongues for the purpose of edification (I Cor. 14v5-13). This implies that the utterances were intelligible foreign languages calculated to enlarge the understanding, and not inarticulate sounds without meaning, as uttered by some who claim to possess the gift of tongues in these days.
- (c) Paul also made appeal for interpretation in regard to communal prayer where all the congregation was involved (v14-17).
- (d) Paul himself spoke in tongues (v18), but we never read of him speaking unintelligibly.
- (e) Paul's quotation of Isa. 28v11-12 (v21) in which he refers us to the Assyrian tongue, gives us to understand that the language is intelligible when interpreted. In all these instances, unintelligible jargon, such as exhibited by the Pentacostals is never an indication of the person speaking by the power of the Spirit.

2. MEANING AND THE USE OF THE WORD "TONGUES."(1) USED IN THE SENSE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

- (a) The Greek word is "glossa" ("a language as naturally acquired"). The word "unknown" in the text does not appear in the original. The common word for "foreign languages" is "dialektos." However, the two words are used interchangeably (Acts 2v4 - "glossa"), (v8. "dialektos.") The phrase, "Men of other tongues" (I Cor. 14v21) in the Greek is "Heteroglossos."

- (b) The Greek word "glossa" ("tongues"), being clearly associated with foreign languages. This is also suggested by the phrase, "kinds of tongues," (I Cor. 12v10, 14v10). The word "kind" (see notes 14v10), expresses "kin," "nation," "offspring," "kindred," "nationality," rendered "kindred" in Acts 7v19, "diversities" in I Cor. 12v28. In the following references "glossa" is used in the sense of a foreign language: Acts 2v11, Rev. 5v9, 7v9, 10v11, 11v9, 13v7, 14v6, 17v15.
- (c) The gift would have enabled foreigners to speak in the Hebrew tongue, a language which commanded respect (Acts 21v40, 22v2, 26v14).

(2) USED IN THE SENSE OF INTELLIGIBLE SPEECH.

- (a) The following references: Rom. 14v11, Phil. 2v11, Acts 2v11, I John 3v18.

CHAPTER DIVISIONS.

- v1-5. Comparison between the gift of tongues and that of prophecy; prophecy greater being the more useful.
- v6-11. Practical illustrations of the benefits of intelligible communication:  
 (a) v6. Paul's imminent visit.  
 (b) v7-9. Musical instruments.  
 (c) v10-11. Foreign languages.
- v12-19. The benefits of common intelligible speech in ecclesial meetings.
- v20-22. The lesson from the Old Testament.
- v23-25. Prophecy the only means of preaching to an outsider.
- v26-33. An appeal for order and self-restraint.
- v34-35. The position of sisters in organised worship.
- v36-40. Authoritative concluding statement - the need for a perfect balance. Pure motives in the exercise of the gifts.

- v1. "Follow after charity."  
 Greek "to pursue," rendered "press towards" (Phil. 3v14).

"Desire spiritual gifts."  
 "Desire" same as "covet earnestly" (12v31). The gifts were bestowed by God's will (chapter 12v11), and could be obtained through effectual, fervent prayer (14v13). The pursuit of love did not exclude the receiving of the gifts of secondary importance.

"But rather."  
 R.S.V. "especially." They were to desire the most edifying.

"Prophecy."  
 That is, not only to "foretell events," but "to speak under inspiration," the principles of truth. Tongues could excite interest (Acts 2v12), prophecy convinced (Acts 2v36-42).

- v2. "In the spirit he speaketh mysteries."  
 "Mysteries" same as I Cor.2v7, 4v1, see notes. "A thing hidden," to be made known only by Divine revelation (Rom.16v25, Eph.3v9, Col.1v26-27).
- v3. "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification."  
 For "edification" see notes 8v1.
- "Exhortation."  
 "Implore," "Paraklesis" - a calling to one's side; "consolation" (Heb.6v18, II Cor.1v6).
- "Comfort."  
 "Paramuthia," - a speaking closely to anyone, consolation with greater degree of tenderness. Hence prophecy is designed to: (1) "build up," (2) "stir up," (3) "cheer up," calling a man and bringing him closer to Christ.
- v5. "I would that ye all spake with tongues."  
 R.S.V. "Now I want you all to speak with tongues, but even more to prophesy." Paul is careful to avoid misunderstanding. In relegating the gift of tongues to the lowest position, he did not wish to depreciate that particular gift.
- "For greater is he that prophesieth."  
 Greater - "Meizon," same as 13v13, i.e. more important, maturer.
- v6. Paul was about to visit them. What benefit would they derive if he came speaking unintelligibly? None! However, prophecy comprising four important features shall profit them. The same are:
- (1) Revelation.  
 "Apokalupsis," "a disclosure," that which has been Divinely revealed to a person (Rev.1v1).
  - (2) Knowledge.  
 Greek: "gnosis," the acquisition of knowledge by study (Col. 2v3, Luke 11v52).
  - (3) Prophecy.  
 The forthtelling of the knowledge acquired. The outward expression involving mainly exhortation (v3).
  - (4) Doctrine.  
 Greek "Instruction," "systematic religion," (Acts 2v42, Mark 12v38, John 7v16), the word is rendered "taught," Acts 15v1, 18v25, II Thess.2v15). This systematic doctrine would also be taught by those possessing the gift of teachers (12v28), which word is derived from the same root. Note in this place a distinction is made between teachers and the prophets, the latter being named first in rank.
- v7. Using the figure of musical instruments, Paul reminds that words without distinct message are as unprofitable as sound without distinct melody.

"Pipe."

Literally a "flute," from a word which means "as blown." This instrument was a symbol of joy and celebration (I Kings 1v40, Isa. 30v29, Rev.18v22).

"Harp."

A harp is a symbol of gladness and praise (Psa.33v2, 137v2). When played in harmony, these instruments could not only stir the emotion, but were used to "prophecy" (I Chron.25v1-7). This they did by conjuring up in the minds of those who heard the music, the praises of the God of Israel. In the quote from I Chron.25, it is interesting to note that there are 288 musicians mentioned who answer to the 144 thousand of Rev.14v2, and 15v2 - Note the relationship of the numbers. Here are the true Israel of God lifting their voices in the adoration and praise of their Saviour. Like music, our praise must be in harmony with our heart (Eph.5v19). In this quotation, the word "melody" is the literal meaning of "to rub or touch the surface," "to twing or twang," "to play an instrument," and Rotherham renders this verse "Singing and striking the strings of your heart." In other words, unless the words which escape our lips are in harmony with those of our heart, no real purpose is served.

v8. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound."

The Scriptures use the trumpet as a symbol of a voice (Num.10v9, Isa.58v1, Rev.1v10, and 4v1). The trumpet is also used as an instrument of praise, and could blend harmoniously with the human voice so as to make "one sound" (II Chron.5v12-13).

"Prepare himself to the battle."

The trumpet also was an alarm in the event of war (Jer.4v19, Ez.33v3, Zeph.1v16).

v9. "Easy to be understood."

"Well indicated," "Significant." Rotherham "Intelligible discourse."

"Speak into the air."

Cp. 9v26! The words spoken were not to be uncertain (allusion to 9v26), but they were to hit the hearer forcefully, convincing him of his need of salvation.

v10. "So many kinds."

Greek: "genos," "kin" same as 12v10, "nation," "offspring", "stock."

"Voice."

Greek: "phone," "disclosure," "Tone," "sound." Both R.S.V. and Rotherham have "languages."

"Without signification."

Greek "Aphonos," "voiceless," rendered "dumb" (12v2, Acts 8v32, II Peter 2v16).

v11. "Meaning of the voice."

Greek, "Dunamis," "power" or "force of the language."

"A barbarian."

One whose language is unintelligible: "a foreigner." Compare Acts 28v2.

v12. "Zealous of spiritual gifts."

Same root as "covet earnestly." (12v31), and "desire" (14v1).

"Excel to the edifying of the ecclesia."

The word "excel" to "super-abound," (II Cor.8v7, I Thes.4v1). R.S.V. "Since you are eager for the manifestations of the spirit, strive to excel in building up the ecclesia."

- v14. "My understanding is unfruitful."  
Moffatt's rendering "My mind is of no use to anyone." Notice that the statement concerns communal prayer (v16). Most probably a person praying in an unknown tongue did understand his own prayer, but his mind did not produce fruit among those on whose behalf he was praying.
- "I will pray with the understanding also."  
Paul's desire at all times, was not self-satisfaction, but edification of the body. He admonishes the readers to have the same ideal, that their mind be of use to others.
- v15. "I will sing with the understanding also."  
Rotherham "Strike the strings of the mind." The word "sing" here is the same as "melody" in Eph.5v19. See notes on v7-8.
- v16. "How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned."  
"Occupieth."  
"To complete," "to fulfil." Rotherham, "filleth up."  
"Room."  
A spot or place. "Position."  
"Unlearned."  
"Idiotes" - "primarily a private person in contrast to a State official; hence, a person without professional knowledge, unskilled," (Vine's N.T. Dictionary). Here perhaps referring to the "ungifted" believers in contrast to those with spirit gifts. ("Idiotes" rendered "ignorant," Acts 4v13, "rude" II Cor.11v6). Paul mentions such in v23 and 24, but distinguishes them clearly from "unbelievers" and those "that believe not."  
"Amen."  
"So be it." The means of associating oneself with a prayer; an established precedent of the Old Testament (Deut.27v15, Neh.5v13, Rev.5v14).
- v19. "Five words."  
In the Scripture, ten is a basic number (Gen.31v41, Lev.26v26, Dan.1v20, Mat.25v1, Luke 15v8). Half of ten spoken with clarity and understanding, is better than a thousand times ten, ("Ten thousand words"), spoken in an unintelligible language. Note Paul's previous use of ten thousand as expressing the multiple aspect of things (I Cor.4v15).  
"My understanding."  
The meaning of "understanding" here seems to be "the understanding another has of what is said." Paul is anxious that the message is properly conveyed and received. Leaving out the words in italics in this verse, this view seems to be supported: "I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might teach others also."  
"Teach."  
Greek, "Katecheo," "Catechise." Literally meaning "to sink down in the ears." A word used in respect of the indoctrination with simple fundamentals. In Gal.6v6, the word is rendered "taught," and "teacheth," and in the context of Galatians, Paul is dealing with the same two classes as he has been dealing with at Corinth;

those possessed with the ability to teach, and those who are not. The principle here and in Galatians is the same; co-operation between both classes for mutual edification. The same word is rendered "instructed" (Acts 18v25, Rom.2v18).

v20. Using natural man in his various stages of development from baby-hood to manhood, as an example, Paul illustrates that maturity must be reached spiritually in order to be of full value to the body of Christ. Childish squabble over spirit gifts and the desire to speak in tongues revealed their immaturity.

"Be not children."

"Paidion," denotes children of various age groups: an infant just born (John 16v21), recently born (Mat.2v8, Heb.11v23), a girl of 12 years (Mk.5v39-42), a young man (Acts 20v12), figuratively applied to the disciples (John 21v5). Thus the scriptural use implies stages of growing up which should lead to manhood.

"In understanding."

(Different from v14,v15,v19). "Phren" - mind. This must develop to full maturity. Closely related to "Phroneo," (Phil.2v5): "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

"In malice be ye children."

"Children" here is "nepios," meaning an infant, not merely a child, but one incapable of exercising maliciousness. Only in this sense would the Apostle allow them to be infantile.

"But in understanding be men."

That is in your mind be "Teleios" - having reached its end of development. From "Telos" - finished, complete with ethical import. The gifts were not designed to impart that maturity. They were only a means to point the way; maturity would be reached at the end of that way, if faithfully walking in Christ and applying the lessons taught by him (see notes 13v10).

v21. "In the law it is written."

Quote from Isa.28v11. Note that this is termed "Law" by Paul. Thus all the Old Testament must be considered as such. See also John 10v34 (Ref. to Ps.82), John 15v25 (ref. to Psa.35), Gal.4v21 (ref. to Gen.21). Paul's quotation of Isaiah is intensely interesting. Once again the context of the prophet is applicable to the Corinthian situation. Isaiah had been endeavouring to feed the apostate and immature men of Judah with the milk of the word (v9-10). The Corinthians like the men of Judah, were still carnal in their thinking, and also had to be treated like babies (I Cor.3v1-2, compare also Heb.5v12). Both generations being proud, resented this type of teaching. The men of Judah turned their back on the simple, refreshing message (Isa.28v12), while the Corinthians had in effect done the same thing, depreciating the gift of prophecy which was designed for the believers' edification and comfort (v3, v22 of this chapter, compare also Isa.50v4). Both generations were very childish, they refused to grow up to maturity, and looked for the more spectacular manifestation of the Divine hand. For Judah, the Assyrian invaders with their strange dialect would prove to be a startling fulfilment of God's judgment (Isa.28v13). If the Corinthians continued in immaturity, "other tongues" could

well become the cause of their spiritual downfall.

"With men of other tongues."

Greek "Heteroglossos" literally, "many tongued." Ezekiel had been told to go to the House of Israel and to speak unto them "with MY words," "For thou art not sent unto a people of strange speech" (Ez. 3v4-6). Because of their refusal to hearken to this clear message, Yahweh sent to them a nation whose language they would not understand (Jer. 5v15); something of which Moses had forewarned them (Deut. 28v40).

"And yet for all that will they not hear me."

The coming of the Assyrian invader in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy proved him to be a reliable prophet. However, only those who had previously taken note of Isaiah's message would recognise the Assyrian invasion as Divine judgment, and would be strengthened in their belief. The unbelievers would not be enlightened by the "other tongues" which could be heard in their streets. They did not recognise these events as "Yahweh's doing," unless this was pointed out to them in intelligible language, after they had been shocked by invasion. This is the identical principle that Paul is pressing home to the Corinthians. If they were not mentally impressed and morally changed by the clear, simple logic of Gospel truth, the gift of tongues alone would be as much use to them as unintelligible jargon, such as spoken by the Assyrians. The Assyrians had only been brought on to the scene to turn a people back to their God, that they might hear HIM. The gift of tongues had been given for a similar purpose.

v22.

"Wherefore."

That is, learn your lesson from the historical example previously given! Therein were the following three facts concerning the gift of tongues revealed:

1. Tongues can be a token to a believer of Truth received,
2. Tongues, when heard by unbelievers can excite their interest, then however, they must be instructed intelligibly for edification.
3. Tongues in themselves are useless and can lead to destruction if their limited value as a means to an end is not discerned.

"Tongues are for a sign."

"Semeion" - an indication, token, which is designed to arouse interest in a certain object. Also rendered "miracles" in John 3v2, 4v54, etc. Such signs were not designed to be selfsufficient (Acts 14v3).

"To them that believe not."

"Believe not" - "Apistos" - same as "unbelievers" (v23, v24, I Cor. 6v6, and II Cor. 6v14). Such people could be attracted by the gift of tongues; but unless the unbeliever was a foreigner and the tongue spoken, his own mother-tongue, this gift was not profitable and strengthening to the hearer. Edification by way of prophesying had to follow.

"Propheying serveth for them which believe."

"Believe" - "Pisteuo," to be persuaded, to place confidence in. The same class of people which according to 1v21 is saved "by preaching." Thus the gift of prophecy is proved to be vital.

- v23. "Unlearned."  
 "Idiotes," same as v16 (see notes). Those who had to be considered as babes in Christ, ungifted and immature.
- "Unbelievers."  
 "Apostos," same as v22, "those who believe not" (I Cor.6v6.) For both these classes Paul cares, if by any means they might be fully enlightened (see notes 10v33).
- "Will they not say that ye are mad?"  
 Which some did suggest when on the day of Pentacost, they heard the disciples speaking in tongues, and did not understand the message (Acts 2v12-13).
- v24. "He is convinced of all."  
 "To prove by argument," rendered "rebuke" (Heb.12v5), "reprove," (John 16v8, II Tim.4v2).
- "Judged of all."  
 "To scrutinise, "to investigate." R.S.V. "called to account."  
 For the use of this word see 2v14-15, 4v3-4, 9v3, 10v25-27.
- v25. "Secrets of his heart made manifest."  
 The unbeliever can be convinced and convicted by the gift of prophecy being used in the ecclesia, but his final judge is God (4v5). The word "secret" ("Kruptos") here has the meaning of a thing covered up or hidden. The Scriptures reveal man's weakness in general (Mk.7v21 Jer.17v9-10). The word "counsel" ("Boule") as found in 4v5, means "purpose," "will," i.e. the motive. God only can determine that.
- "Falling down on his face."  
 This is a quotation from Isa.45v14. The principle in Isaiah is that "men of great stature" will finally be brought to recognise that insignificant Israel hold the key to the truth of God's word (v24-25). The humbled men in question are those whose lives were once marked by confusion brought about by their worship of dumb idols (Isa.45v16, with I Cor.12v2). Israel, the possessors of Divine truth, and those who acknowledge them "shall not be confounded world without end," (Isa.45v17). Saul was a typical example of one being convicted and humiliated through the ministrations of the gift of prophecy (I Sam.19v18-24).
- v26. "How is it then, brethren?"  
 Same force as in v15. "What should follow from these arguments."  
 Paul now summarises.
- "When ye come together, everyone of you hath . . ."  
 Moffatt, "Very well my brethren, when ye meet together, each contribute something . . good, but that everything be for edification."
- "A Psalm."  
 A song of praise (Eph.5v19).
- "A doctrine."  
 Systematic teaching as in v6.
- "A tongue."  
 The gift.
- "A revelation."  
 As in v6.



"Interpretation."

As in 12v10. (Note that this is closely linked with the gift of tongues, the tongues being useless without interpretation).

"Let all things be done unto edifying."

Once again the motive for the exercise of the gifts is of the highest importance. If everything said and done was calculated to upbuild the whole meeting, then there would be no cause for complaint or envy. Note the constant repetition of the term "edifying" (v3, v4, v5, v12, v17).

v27.

"If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three."

Paul gives practical advice for the use of the gift. Diaglott renders: "And if anyone speak in a foreign language, let it be by two or at the most three (sentences), in succession, and let one interpret." This rendering is supported when it is realised that Paul uses the singular in relation to the speaker in tongues. Interpretation is much easier when flow of words is restricted to "two or three sentences."

"And that by course."

The word "course," same as "particular" - (12v27).

v29.

"Let the prophets speak two or three."

Note the plural term "prophets." Here the indication is that three speakers would be allowed to occupy the time at any one meeting. If the Diaglott rendering of v27 is correct, then there is a balance in Paul's argument. The fact that he allows three speakers for the prophecy, and only one for the gift of tongues, and even then in short sentences, indicates the relative importance which both gifts had for the organised ecclesial meeting.

"Let the other judge."

In the Greek "other" is plural, and would appear to indicate the whole congregation. Paul constantly appealed to them to exercise their own intellectual powers (10v15, 11v13, 12v1-3, compare I John 2v20, 27). The word "judge" means "to separate thoroughly," "to withdraw from," "hesitate," "oppose," "discriminate." It is rendered "contend" (Acts 11v2), "doubting," (Acts 11v12), "be partial" (James 2v4), "stagger," (Romans 4v20), "waver" (James 1v6). From this usage the word conveys the idea of making up the mind one way or the other. Note carefully I Thess. 5v19-21, I John 4v1, the R.S.V. rendering, "Weigh what is said."

v30.

"If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by."

The purpose of this fresh revelation would either be to indicate that the first had been sufficiently explained, or that a further truth was necessary at this juncture.

v31.

"For ye may all prophesy."

That is, all those possessed of these gifts (12v28-31). These all had the right to take their turn.

"That all may learn."

"Learn," same as in v35.

"All may be comforted."

"To call near," "to implore." From this root word, we have "exhortation" (v3). The word is rendered "beseech" (4v16), "exhort" (Acts 2v40), R.S. has "encourage."

v32. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

That is, subject to the dominion of reason. The prophet had power to forebear. None could plead that he could not resist the influence to speak out at once. By so doing, he could disrupt the decorum of the meeting. This must be avoided (v40).

v33. "God is not the author of confusion."

Where confusion is, there is envying and strife (James 3v16, same word). An indication that flesh was still dominating (Gal.5v19-21). Those who claimed to be of God were peaceable.

v34. "Let your women keep silence in the ecclesias."

At ecclesial meetings, three prophets could speak, one only could exercise the gift of tongues, but women were not permitted to speak at all. This severe injunction of Paul became necessary because of the arrogant and domineering attitude that the Corinthian sisters had adopted. Their contention was that baptism into Christ had brought them equality with the brethren, and for this reason they had abandoned the distinguishing mark of a woman's humility, the covering for her head (11v3-16, see notes on 12v13).

However, Joel prophesied that the gifts would come upon women as well as men (Acts 2v17-18, quoting from this prophecy). Phillip had four daughters which did prophesy (Acts 21v9), and Paul speaks of women prophesying (11v5). Paul's prohibition is in relation to organised ecclesial meetings, and we note the clear emphasis to this fact, "as in all the ecclesias" (v33, v34, v35).

"Not permitted unto them to speak."

Paul tells Timothy that women are not suffered to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, and he obviously means at meetings where both sexes are involved (I Tim.2v12). He tells Titus that they could be teachers of good things among their own sex (Titus 2v3-5).

"As also saith the law."

See Gen.3v16, Num.30v3-12. Isaiah shows the desperate condition of an ecclesia when it has women for its counsellors (Isa.3v12). However, there have been outstanding exceptions to this rule, when a woman's faith, intelligence, and courage, have been an inspiration. There are many references in the Scripture to prophetesses (Ex.15v20, Judges 4v4, II Kings 22v14, Isa.8v3, Luke 2v36-38.)

v35. "For it is a shame for women to speak in the ecclesia."

The word "shame" is very strong in the Greek, and from a root meaning "filthy," "disgraceful." The Diaglott has "indecent thing." So strong indeed is this Greek word that it seems that Paul is making a comparison with these arrogant and proud sisters and the prostitutes who officiated in the Temple of Aphrodite. The latter were indeed filthy and indecent. In the custom of the day, prostitutes were noted for being unveiled (chapter 11), and those priestesses associated with the worship of the goddess of love had certainly ascertained their authority as the superior sex.

This forceful and very frank terminology need not shock us when we consider some of the licentious extremes into which the Corinthians had fallen. This was the only sort of language they would understand. Contrast the ideal behaviour of a sister, as set out by Peter (I epistle 3v1-6).

v36.

"What? came the word of God out from you?"

RSV., "What, did the word of God originate from you?" The answer to this was "No," Paul had founded them (II Cor.3v3).

"Or came it unto you only?"

These last two statements were prompted because the Corinthians were setting their own standards, dictating customs as if they were the mother ecclesia. Paul had delivered the correct "traditions" to them (11v2 margin), and these were based upon established customs of earlier ecclesias (11v16). Thessalonica, an ecclesia established before that of Corinth, had "sounded out," the word of God to them (I Thess.1v8). Paul would not allow them to set their own standards. They were all subject to the same principles. (v33).

v37.

"If any man think himself to be a prophet."

These were Divinely ordained (12v28).

"Or spiritual."

That is, a possessor of gifts.

"Let him acknowledge."

"Epignosis," "to fully acquaint," "to know thoroughly," i.e. to recognise a thing to be what it really is.

"The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

(Compare 7v10, 40, 11v2, contrast with 7v12).

v38.

"If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

The Greek word for "ignorant" means "not to know from lack of information or intelligence." This is Paul's final authoritative statement. Those who boasted of being spiritual, and yet who could not acknowledge the spirit working in Paul, would not be acknowledged by him (8v2,3, 13v2). R.S.V. "If anyone does not recognise this, he is not recognised!"

v39.

"Covet to prophesy."

"Covet" same as in 12v31.

"Forbid not to speak with tongues."

In these two statements we see the relative importance of the two gifts. The principle here stated, is that which the Lord annunciated in regard to the ordinances of the Law as compared with the weightier matters of grace. "This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Mat.23v23).

v40.

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

The word "decently" means "decorous" and is rendered "honestly" (Rom.13v13). From the same derivation we have "comeliness" (12v23, I Thess.4v12). Everything in its correct place. The word "order" signifies "regular arrangement," and also has the meaning of "fixed succession of rank or character," "official dignity." In this respect, prophecy first, the rest in order of rank (compare 12v28).