

1 Corinthians

INTRODUCTION

The church at Corinth was established by Paul about A.D. 50-51 when he was there about a year and a half during his second missionary journey. Later, about A.D. 56, he wrote this letter as a corrective, pastoral instruction to them since he had received disturbing reports about moral laxity among believers in the church. Corinth was the most important city of all Greece at that time, and extremely wealthy, and it attracted many foreigners from the East and West. However, luxury and public immorality were rampant in this industrial and seafaring city due to the lust and licentiousness of its Greek culture. Its principal god was Aphrodite (Venus), and a thousand prostitutes served in her temple dedicated to worship.

As is true in most cities, there was a large colony of Jews who had kept a strong moral standard, holding to their religious beliefs. When Paul was there in person, he was accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla and they used tent making as a means of living, while at the same time endeavoring to counter ten separate problems in their preaching and teaching. These ten were: a sectarian spirit, incest, lawsuits, fornication, marriage and divorce, eating foods offered to idols, wearing of the veil, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection of the body.

Perhaps Paul's most notable teaching while there and also in his letter to them, was his total emphasis on Christ as the center and head of the church, for many believers had slipped off-center and failed to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord. The use of the name "Lord" therefore is very prominent in this book.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

From the apostle's letter to this church we are able to form a very good idea of its condition. Living as they did in a city of extraordinary wealth and culture, they were remarkable for their intelligence and for the extent and variety of the gifts of the Spirit which they exemplified, but we do not find the same recognition or commendation of the graces of the Spirit. It seems probable that their intellectual culture was far in advance of their spiritual culture, and the result was a condition of sectarian strife and division which drew from the apostle the most earnest and affectionate admonitions and appeals, and which became at length the occasion for the most sublime picture of the supremacy of love which the Holy Scriptures contain.

Let us notice at this time some interesting and instructive points connected with the membership and the gifts of the Corinthian church, and more especially the unity of that church.

They are described first as those "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:2). This refers no doubt to our standing with Jesus Christ as those who are set apart as belonging to Him, and who are recognized by God as saved and sanctified through the purchase of His redemption and by virtue of their standing in Him. Every believer who has become truly united to Christ is recognized by the Father as one with Christ in all the fullness of His grace. When we take Him by the initial act of faith, we take Him in all His fullness, and we are accepted in Him and recognized as one with Him, even in the things which have not yet been realized in our experience. Therefore we are recognized by God as not only crucified with Christ, but risen with Him, and even sitting with Him in heavenly realms.

All this has not yet come into our actual experience, but all this belongs to us by right of our redemption and union with our glorious Head. We are therefore spoken of as "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1:2).

But, secondly, they are next described as those that are "called to be holy" (1:2). We are to enter in personally and experientially to all which belongs to us by right. We are to be saints in our hearts and lives, and live up to the high standing which we have in Christ Jesus.

There is a miner who has found a piece of ore richly veined with gold, but still mingled with coarse rock and sand. He takes it to some wealthy assayer or dealer in the precious mineral and offers it for sale. The man examines it and knows its mixed condition; but knowing also its inherent value, he purchases it perhaps for several hundred dollars and it becomes his property. Then he puts it through the processes of the mill, crushing it, washing it, melting it and refining it until at last it flows out a stream of unalloyed gold worth five times what he paid for it, without a particle of mingled rock or sand. It is much cleaner now than when he purchased it, but it is not any more his own now than it was then. It belonged to him in its mingled state; it belongs to him still, but it has been cleansed, separated and prepared for its true use.

This describes the two processes of salvation and sanctification, our standing and our state, our acceptance in the Beloved first, and then our conformity to His Image later. Just because we are accepted in Him, we are to press forward into all to which He has called us. This is our high calling: "called to be holy" (1:2).

But, in the third place, there is still another clause which must be included in the circle of fellowship to whom the apostle addresses his letter: "together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ their Lord and ours" (1:2). There must be no narrow sectarianism about the church in Corinth or anywhere else. It includes all who belong to Christ, and He belongs to them as much as He does to us. There is no place in the apostle's mind for denominationalism or bigotry of any kind. Christian fellowship must in the very nature of things be as large as the whole household of faith; for the body is one, and if you restrict it you narrow yourself and cut off your own very life.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What is the true definition of "saints" (1 Cor. 1:2), and who may be included in this name? What should be shown to those who believe that a saint must be canonized by a church head, and that these only are saints?

Acts 9:13 Rom. 6:3, 4 Rom. 6:18, 19 Rom. 8:1 2 Cor. 1:1 Eph. 1:3-5 1 Pet. 1:13-15 1 Pet. 2:5

The church at Corinth was a defiled church, filled with sexual immorality, drunkenness and worldly living, but they did claim to know Christ. **Was Paul using wise diplomacy when he told them they did not come short in gifts? Do you believe he got their attention by showing them that they were set apart for God, but their practice was not in accord with their position?**

Phil.3:17-21 2 Cor. 11:1-4 Eph. 4:8-12

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

The unity of the Church is essentially part of her constitution as the body of Christ. Just as the human body cannot be divided without death, so schism and separation are fatal to the life of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The system of denominationalism is essentially human, and contrary to the highest will of our glorious Head. No single doctrinal principle is important enough to displace the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as the one name that alone should dominate His Church. The fact that God has overruled and used a divided Church is no sort of reason for supposing that He approves

of it. But there are far worse evils than denominationalism. Within the same denomination and congregation there are frequently greater dissensions and divisions than among the various churches and sects. It is not union but unity that God wants, and that is a matter of life and love.

The true unity of the Church is broken not only by open schisms, but by social and secret strifes, strains, envying, jealousies and grievances among the Lord's people. As sins against love, which is the supreme grace of Christianity, these are carnal signs and grievous wrongs against the body of the Lord.

One of their chief causes is the lack of sanctification. They are the evidence of a carnal state. They all spring from the old sinful nature, whereof the apostle says: "For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly (carnal, KJV)? Are you not acting like mere men?" (3:3). By another figure he describes them as a result of immaturity and an infantile condition: "Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ" (3:1).

Again, another cause of these divisions is the undue attachment to men as men; human leadership with earthly hero worship is the source of this great evil which has weakened and divided the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is altogether wrong.

The apostle has given us a blessed remedy for the strifes and strains of Christians. "So then," he says, "no more boasting about men! All things are ours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours" (1 Corinthians 3:21-22). We are to make common cause with them, and so take them in that we shall feel ourselves responsible even for their very faults. Then there will be no place for rivalry, jealousy or separated interests. You know if your child does wrong and even greatly tires you; you feel it is your child and almost as if it were your own disgrace and failure, and instead of condemning mercilessly and throwing off the erring one, you take the fault to yourself and lovingly seek to help and to save. If another's child did the same thing you would condemn and blame and feel no such responsibility. The whole question is whose child it is. Make it yours and love immediately comes into play.

Now this is what the apostle means by recognizing not only all things as ours, but all people as ours, yea, our brethren. When therefore we see good in them we rejoice as if it were our own. When we see evil we mourn, pity, forgive and forbear and help and deal just as we would with ourselves.

It was thus that Daniel took upon himself the sins and faults of his own people and confessed them as if they were his own transgressions, and in this he was imitating Christ, for "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

(*The Christ in the Bible Commentary*, A. B. Simpson)

Has there always been division in the church? Does the following poem speak to this, even to the 12 apostles getting along together?

To live above, with saints we love,
Will certainly be glory!
To live below, with saints we know,
Well, that's another story!

How would you attempt to resolve differences such as those mentioned in these verses? Should the emphasis be on *one Savior* and *One God* and *one Gospel*? (Gal. 1:6-9)

1 Cor. 3:4 1 Cor. 3:9-11 Acts 18:24-26 Rom. 1:18-32

A great flywheel on center moves quietly – but off center it shakes the building to pieces. –Henrietta C. Mears

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The city of Corinth was a center of Greek culture and philosophy. It is to this the apostle alludes when he speaks of the Greeks as seeking after wisdom. The word for wisdom is *sophia*, which is the base of our word philosophy. They were very proud of their *sophia*. The apostle comes to them with a new doctrine. He has a *sophia* too, but it is not like theirs. It is contrary to all human ideas and conceptions, but it is as high above the wisdom of man as the heavens are high above the earth. He unfolds it in the first and second chapters of this epistle.

It is contrary to all human ideas and notions. Just as the wisdom of men is foolishness with God so the wisdom of God is foolishness with men. They cannot understand it nor appreciate it that God has no interest in their finely spun webs of philosophical speculation. How little God cares for things that man most highly esteems appears from the apostle's statement that God has not called the wise men after the flesh, the mighty and noble, but He has gone out of His way to choose "the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him" (1:27-29).

It is not merely that the wise and the mighty have not chosen Him, but He has not chosen them. He has passed them by intentionally, and has taken the instruments that man despises and acted contrary to all human probabilities and modes of judging.

It is not a mere connection of philosophical principles and abstract ideas, but it is the revelation of a Person. Christ is the wisdom of God. It is not a chart of the way He gives us, but it is a guide to lead us all the way. It is not a volume of ethics, but it is a true and living Friend. It is not even a new experience in our own hearts, but a real living and indwelling Christ, who comes to be to us all that we cannot be and do for us all that we are unable to do. "It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1:30). It is not that we are made wise, but Christ is made our wisdom. It is not that we are made righteous, but Christ is made our righteousness. It is not that we possess a self-contained sanctity, but Christ is made unto us sanctification. It is not that we are enabled to deliver ourselves from our circumstances and disabilities, but Christ is made unto us redemption.

Suppose that I were carrying on a business under financial difficulties and with insufficient capital. I go to a friend who is wealthy and ask him to help me by advancing \$1,000. My friend listens to me and gives me his check for the amount. But after a year I return to him, and am compelled to tell him that I am still as much embarrassed as before, and that I am under the painful necessity of asking him to help me again, and I struggle on as before. At last I am compelled once more to seek help, and ashamed and embarrassed I promise him that I will never ask for help again if he will once more relieve me. He looks me frankly in the face and says, "I will not help you, for my help is useless. You will again fail as you have already done." Then he gives me a kind, encouraging look and adds, "But I will tell you what I will do: I will come into your business, and I will put my brains, my experience, my credit and my boundless capital into it, and I will carry it on myself for you. And all that you will have to do will be to give me the control and then share the profits." I would be a very foolish man if I declined this generous offer. And so I hand my business over to my friend, and take him and all he has instead of his help.

That is what Christ does for us. It is not His blessing He gives us, but Himself. The gospel is the revelation of Jesus. The good news that God has sent us is that God Himself has come in the person of His dear Son to be our All in All.

It teaches us not idle theories, but real needs, and makes complete provision for all the most important conditions of our life.

The philosophy of Plato, the loftiest of the Grecian thinkers, had in it three great elements: namely, the true, the beautiful and the good. But of what use are these things to the human heart in the struggle with sin, sorrow and the grave? What good will it do the guilty, dying man to paint for him the vision of the true, the beautiful and the good when he is sinking in despair? He wants somebody that can comfort, forgive and save him. What use is it to that poor passion-driven soul struggling against the demon within, to hold out to him your finespun theories of sentiment and poetry? He wants the power that can overcome the power of sin and lead him into righteousness and peace. What use is it to a life involved in sorrow, failure and adverse circumstances to sing your golden dreams and talk in the air about the true, the beautiful and the good? He wants some mind to help, some way of escape, some power that is stronger than himself and stronger than death. Here is where the supremacy of the divine *sophia* comes in.

A Chinese man has told us the testimony of his conversion and his acceptance of Christianity. "I was in a deep pit," he said, "sinking in the mire and helpless to deliver myself. Looking up I saw a shadow at the top, and soon a venerable face looked over the brink and said, 'My son, I am Confucius, the father of your country. If you had obeyed my teachings you would never have been here.' And then he passed on with a significant movement of his finger and a cheerless farewell, adding, 'If ever you get out of this, remember to obey my teachings.' But, alas, that did not save me and I sank deeper in the mire.

"Then Buddha came along, and looking over the edge of the pit he cried, 'My son, just count it all as nothing. Enter into rest. Fold your arms and retire within yourself and you will find nirvana, the peace to which we all are tending.' I cried, 'Father Buddha, if you will only help me to get out I will be glad to do so. I could follow your instructions easily if I were where you are, but how can I rest in this awful place?' Buddha passed on and left me in my despair.

"Then another face appeared. It was the face of a man beaming with kindness and bearing marks of sorrow. He did not linger a moment, but leaped down by my side, threw His arms around me, lifted me out of the mire and brought me to the solid ground above. And even then did not bid me farewell, but took off my filthy garments, put new robes upon me and bade me follow Him, saying, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' That is why I became a Christian. It was because Jesus Christ did not come to me with theories and speculations, but practical help in time of need."

And so this divine *sophia* is a complete supply for all our needs. "Christ ... who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1:30). The Greek construction allows us to translate the first "and" after wisdom by the word "even" or "that is." It is like a bracket containing a number of particulars under a general head. Wisdom is a generic term including all the others, and under it the three great elements of this wisdom are righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Just as the Platonic philosophy had three things in it—the true, the beautiful and the good—so the Christ *sophia* has in it three things—namely, justification, sanctification and complete deliverance.

(*The Christ in the Bible Commentary*, A. B. Simpson)

Many intellectual people today believe that Christians are very narrow minded by their believing the Bible to be the inerrant word of God and sometimes get very upset. **Why can the Bible be offensive to non-believers?**

Ps. 78:1, 7, 8 Ps. 85:8-11 Ps. 93:5 Ps. 94:8-11 Prov. 6:20-23 Isa. 28:13 Jer. 8:9 Jer. 13:15, 22, 23
Jer. 15:16 Mark 4:20 John 5:24-29 Heb. 4:12 Jas. 1:21-23 1 Pet. 1:22-25

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

This divine *Sophia*, this glorious message which God has given to His Church, is too vast to be received in a moment, but it leads on into the depths and heights of God and all the possibilities of Christian growth and maturity. And so in the second chapter of First Corinthians the apostle leads us into the deeper development of the Christian doctrine and experience. He says there are fundamental truths which are intended for beginners, but there are deeper teachings for the maturer minds. Just as the ancient philosophy had its simpler and profounder teachings, the one for the public and the other for the initiated, so Christianity has the simple gospel for the world, and to them we are to know nothing but "Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). But "we do ... speak a message of wisdom among the mature" (2:6). There are deeper truths for those who are able to understand and receive them, but, as he expresses it later, we must adapt these to the capabilities of our hearers. The secular mind cannot understand them at all. The babes in Christ can only be fed with milk, and it is to the mature disciple alone that we can give the deeper truths of God's complete revelation, presenting "spiritual truths to spiritual men" (2:13, margin).

There are three classes of minds spoken of in this passage.

First, there is the natural man, which literally might be rendered the "psychical man," or "soul man." This is the man of merely intellectual development, but he has no spiritual life. This man cannot perceive or receive the things of the Spirit of God; indeed, they are foolishness unto him. He has not the capacity to apprehend them. He would need a divine mind in order to grasp them. This is the reason why men of genius and the highest culture are often unable to apprehend the more spiritual truths of Christianity and are strangers to many of its deeper experiences.

Next, there is an infant or child stage of Christian experience—babes in Christ—with much of the worldly mind in them. These, he tells us, cannot grasp the deeper things of God, but they must be fed with a spoon and nourished on the milk of the Word: the simplest principles of the gospel, Christ the Savior, the doctrine of forgiveness of sins, the primary truths of Christianity.

But, thirdly, there is the spiritual mind. This is a mind to think His thoughts and see with His eyes. He calls it in another part of the passage "the Spirit who is from God" (2:12). "We have ... received ... the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.... The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (2:12,10).

(*Christ in the Bible Commentary*, A. B. Simpson)

To know spiritual things, one must be spiritually revived, re-created, and born again. Without the new birth, man never rises above the physical and the psychic. Here is right where modern psychology and psychiatry break down completely. They recognize only the physical and the psychic, and explain all of man's troubles as either physical or psychic, bodily or mental. But there is another realm, a superior realm, a third plane, a higher plane, the spiritual plane which is completely ignored, yet this spiritual plane is just as real, and even more so, than the physical and psychical, and transcends it so far that only the spiritual man is able to apprehend it. This realm is entered through a new birth, by personal faith in the Word of the living God concerning the Lord Jesus.

(*Studies in First Corinthians*, M. R. DeHaan)

In the light of all of the above, what are some of the reasons why many fail to rise higher into God's revelations and thus grasp His great mysteries? Is your heart's desire to go all the way with God—into His upper realms?

1 Corinthians 2:13-16

When the mind is renewed, the Spirit of God fulfils the promise of God, where He says, "I will put My laws in their hearts, and *in their minds I write them*" (Heb. 10:16). Thus we obtain the "mind" of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). What the mind is we read in Phil. 2:5-8. The practical life is changed so far as we are "transformed" by the "renewing" of the "mind." Christ's "mind" was to obey God, even unto the death of the Cross. That "mind" in us becomes an armor. "Arm yourselves with the same mind" (1 Pet. 4:1), i.e., Christ's mind towards the Cross. "*Christ suffered*," we say, and as our minds dwell upon His sufferings, and the Holy Spirit shows us the separation from sin which fellowship with Him brings about, we too choose to suffer, and we are "armed" by having His mind. Thus the new mind becomes "stayed upon God," instead of being tossed about by distracting thoughts. And a mind stayed on God means perfect peace.

In Eph. 1:18 we read, "The eyes of your understanding 'being' filled with light." Here is the mind illumined by the Spirit. It is the vehicle of light. You see with the mind, you *feel* with the spirit. David said, "My *spirit* made diligent search." The mind is filled with light from God in the spirit, illuminating the mind. This brings into action the perceptive faculty of the mind, whereby the believer is able to spiritually discern spiritual things. The various marginal readings of 1 Cor. 2:13, show the new mind in use. It is able to "discriminate," "examine," "combine," "compare" and "explain" spiritual things which the "natural" man knows nothing about. The perceptive faculty of the mind renewed by the Spirit of God enables us more clearly to know how to prove the good and acceptable will of God. "If a man walketh in the day he stumbleth not," said the Lord. In broad daylight a man does not need to fall over stones in his path before he sees them. And so it is spiritually. With a new mind filled with light by the Spirit, the believer sees the path wherein he should walk, and discerns the will of God clearly without the confusion and perplexities of the partially renewed mind.

There is no part of the renewed believer which does not require guarding. This is especially true of the mind which has been renewed. First there is a "girding" up of the "loins of the mind" (1 Pet. 1:13), which is necessary. This means that you must never let the mind become "slack," or careless in its thinking, or it will soon fall a prey to the watching enemy. The "mind" should never be idle, or without "grist for the mill!" It must be active if it is in a normal condition. The Apostle also bids the believer see that he does not admit an "anxious" thought (Phil 4:6), but at once to transmit any that come, to God. If he does this, the "peace of God" will garrison his mind, and keep it in peace. But he must do more, *he must give the mind work to do*, and let it have true, honest, just, pure and lovely things to "think" about (see Phil 4:8).

Then again, the believer with the new mind must "think soberly" (Rom. 12:3), especially about himself. He must avoid dwelling on "high things" (Rom. 12:16), and in the path of soberness take no step which is not the outcome of deliberate judgment and decision. Every "thought" led captive, means the deliberate weighing of every word and action in the light of God. Thus we shall be able to walk with God in these days of peril, and be sober when others are carried away by the spurious workings of the enemy. Do not follow or trust what we may describe as "flashes" of light to the mind, because the Holy Ghost in your spirit works out into the mind His light in calm, intelligent, deliberate, illumination from *within*. Because of the dangers today *we cannot trust anything that comes from without*. It is not that these "flashes" are necessarily wrong, but that you cannot trust them. Neither can anything said on the impulse of the moment be trusted. Supposing a thought comes, it should be turned over and over and pondered over in the presence of God. "Am I to take this thought as from Thee, if so please bring it back to me again and again, and show me." Thus you will learn to walk carefully or accurately in the will of God. We need to be encased in the armor of Christ. God dwelling in our spirit, pouring the light into our mind, according to His Written Word, will enable us to carefully and prayerfully walk with Him.

(*The Battle For The Mind*, Jessie Penn-Lewis)

The mind, or understanding, is the detective, so to speak, of the whole man. The "spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," and the spirit needs the "understanding" for expression, or perception, of what is revealed to it. The mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God and the Word of God, should be able to examine everything that is presented to it, and know whether it is truth or error (1 Corinthians 2:15, m.).

The renewed mind is therefore the perceptive faculty for discerning between good and evil (see Hebrews 5:14). A "blank" mind (A "blank" mind in all supernatural experiences opens the door to satanic workings—e.g., a blank or passive mind is the primary condition demanded in *Spiritism* for all manifestations.)—whether induced or not—makes a man mindless—a non-intelligent and irresponsible being, just as a darkened mind makes the man deceived, and unable to see clearly what he is doing, or where he is going.

The Holy Spirit needs the "understanding" to fill the mind with the light of the knowledge of God; but the spirits of evil desire to displace the mind, or reason from its place, or else to inflame or exalt the "imagination" until it overpowers the "understanding." When the latter occurs, the believer is kept in a realm of fantasy over earthly and he lives in an unreal world, in which he is blinded to the true facts of life. A large majority of Christians have never discovered their need of *renewed mind*, and never asked themselves why their minds are subject to uncontrollable thoughts, imaginations, objectionable pictures, lapses of memory, unaccountable prejudices, intermittent concentration, heaviness, sluggishness, heat, or fever. They are in normal health, and would not dream of going to a doctor about these things, for it only means that *they have no control of their minds*, even in the small things of life! But let them ask themselves the question, "Who controls my mind? Is it in my own control? Is it in God's control? If neither, then *who* controls it?"

When the truth dawns upon the child of God that his mind has never been fully set free from the power of the god of this world, he finds that the weapons he must wield for "casting down" the exalted imaginations and bringing the thoughts into captivity, must be divine and not carnal. He discovers that no process of "resolution," or "memory," or mind-training, will set him free, and that the mind and imagination are held by supernatural power beyond the reach of carnal weapons to destroy.

The central helm of the ship of man is the will. It is the seat of government *through which God governs His redeemed subject*. It must control the mind and *choose* what shall enter it, or go out.

The renewal of the mind can alone come about through the entry of TRUTH. Each wrong thought placed in the mind by the enemy, and by which he holds the mind as his fortress, must be cast down as it is unveiled, and DISPLACED BY TRUTH, until the entire spirit of the mind is renewed (Ephesians 4: 23).

The casting down of the exalted imaginations, and the removal of countless reasonings—not REASON—may be done very quickly, or the battle may rage for a prolonged period. In some souls not one sentence of divine *truth* can penetrate without a battle, such as confusion in the mind, prejudiced thoughts, rebellious thoughts, and an unreasoned and unreasonable disturbance over what should, and would be, easily and calmly considered, if the mind were free to act without the interference of the enemy.

(Hints for Workers, Jessie Penn-Lewis)

When the heart receives the Holy Spirit, divine truth is made clear to the mind and the written word confirms this new revelation. Our minds are now open to what God says and also open to Satan's deceptions. **I am sure science cannot explain this strange phenomenon that has happened to the believer, but why don't you try to explain what has happened to the "natural man" that has become a "spiritual man"? Has God provided that which we need to maintain a higher walk in the Spirit, free of Satan's condemnations and imaginations?**

Isa. 11:2 Jer. 31:31-34 Ezek. 36:27 Luke 12:12 John 4:14-15 John 6:45, 63 John 14:16-17, 26 John 16:7-14 Rom. 11:33-34 Gal. 5:16-18 Eph. 2:4-6 Eph. 3:16 1 Tim. 4:1 Rev. 2:7

Now that we have the mind of Christ, do we still have the power of choice? Is it still possible for a Christian's mind to be controlled by Satan or be strongly influenced by him?

Eph. 4:22-24 1 Cor. 11:31 1 Cor. 14:20 2 Cor. 2:14-16 Col. 1:9 Phil. 1:9-11 Phil. 4:6-8 2 Tim. 4:2 1 Thess. 5:21

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

Now, the apostle is calling upon these Corinthians to press forward into all the depths and heights of this divine progression, and to be no longer babes but men in Christ Jesus. It is the same lesson that he afterwards gave to the Hebrew Christians, "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity" (6:1).

A babe is a very beautiful thing in its time and place, but a very ridiculous thing when dressed in an old man's clothes, and rendered preposterous and absurd by an old man's years. It is one thing to be a babe. It is another thing to be a dwarf. The Church is full of dwarfed Christians today, and the result is childish infirmities, childish follies, the disposition to fight or the disposition to play, and the lack of suitable earnestness and power.

Now, the wise teacher or preacher will adjust himself to the conditions of his hearers. To one class he will know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, to another he will give the unsearchable riches of Christ, feeding milk to babes, and presenting spiritual things to spiritual minds.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Even though the Corinthian believers had the mind of Christ, many of them understood only the elementary teachings of God's Word. This limited knowledge became apparent in the fruit of their works which Paul considered to be as wood, hay and stubble. **What spiritual knowledge is required in order for one to build his foundation of "gold, silver and precious stones?"**

Jer. 9:23, 24 Hos. 4:6-11 Matt. 7:15-20 John 15:1-17 Gal. 2:20 Gal. 3:1-5 Gal. 4:10, 11 Gal. 5:22-26 Gal. 6:1 Eph. 1:15-19 Eph. 2:1-13 Phil. 1:11 Phil. 4:13, 14

What kind of loss will be suffered if a person's works, spoken of in 1 Cor. 3:15, are burned?

Matt. 5:13 Luke 8:18 Eph. 4:30 2 John 8

1 Corinthians 4:1-17

Paul points out that we are patterns and examples. "We have been made a spectacle," he says, "to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9). We stand, as it were, in an arena, and the galleries are filled with invisible beings. The world is looking at us, the angels are looking at us, the demons are watching us, the Lord Jesus Himself is surveying us and expecting us to do our duty. In every thought we think, every action we perform, every battle we lose or win, Christ is honored or dishonored. There is a devilish leer on the devil's face and a shadow upon the face of Jesus when we do ill, but when a shout of victory comes from angel watchers, then the call, "Well done," comes from our loving Lord.

Perhaps this is the greatest work we do: to be gazed at, to be living examples of what we teach and preach. Paul recognized it, and how nobly, patiently and humbly he lived his life! He tells us modestly in this passage, he fought with others not to have the best place, but to be the greatest sufferer and the lowliest and most self-sacrificing of all. This is the silent testimony that every life is either recording or missing. This is the book that men will read whether they read our

tracts or not; and this is the illustration of our teachings and testimonies, which adds 10 thousandfold to their force and effectiveness.

Those in the ministry are spiritual fathers. So deeply sympathetic, intense and personal was the apostle's ministry that he even imparted, as it were, his own very life to his children in the Lord. "In Christ Jesus," he says, "I became your father through the gospel" (4:15). What he meant was "I am more than your teacher, I am more than your example, I am more than the servant who waits upon you and the steward who feeds you. I am the very progenitor and medium through whom your life has been derived."

True ministry will not stop short of giving its very self, and God will give to us the power through the Holy Spirit to love and win and draw to Jesus the lost to whom He sends us with a soul-begetting power. If the Church is the Bride of the Lamb, her children are the fruit of this divine union, and when our hearts are filled with Christ's great love we will find an outstretching longing and affection for sinful men which will really communicate to them the very life of God. Then they shall be to us even as our own life, and like Paul we shall bear them upon our hearts, suffering for their temptations, trials and even sins, and nourish and cherish them as we would our very children. The true minister is a real father. Falsely has the name been appropriated by a false ecclesiastical system, but nonetheless ought it to be true because the caricature and counterfeit has misused it.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

A high position achieved in the world differs from a high position earned in the church. The one having the high position in the world usually has authority, wealth and is well respected. Paul as an apostle held an exalted position in the church, but many times was scoffed at, despised and often went hungry as he faithfully preached the whole Gospel. Paul, who admitted to being a fool for Christ's sake, tells his listeners, "Be ye followers of me" (1 Cor. 4:16). **On what was he basing this command?**

Phil. 3:1-21

Since Paul had been a murderer of Christians early in his life, does this command in any way seem audacious at this much later stage of his life?

Rom. 1:16, 17

1 Corinthians 4:18-21

"I will know not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power" (1 Cor. 4:19).

"That was a good speech." "He is a very eloquent speaker." Such language is common, but Paul has another way of judging such tongue deliverances. "I will know not the speech, but the *power*." Unspiritual minds can only judge the speech, the outward form—they know not the power. What power is this, by which the very heart-life of Christians is revealed? It is that holy, gracious, gentle, heart-melting, inscrutable something called "anointing," that makes eternal and spiritual things very real and precious and powerful to those who hear. The Holy Spirit acts through the heart and speech of the preacher. Without this power, all preaching is but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. May our speech be always seasoned with such salt.

(Handfuls on Purpose Series IX, Smith-Lee)

What usually happens to the listeners when someone speaks with power from on High?

Matt. 10:1-42 Mark 3:1-6 Mark 7:1-13 Mark 10:17-22 Luke 10:17-20

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Corinth, we have already seen, was at the center of both the world's culture and moral and social corruption. The very name Corinth became the synonym of social dishonor. It was inevitable, therefore, that the Church of Christ should be in danger of contamination from the prevailing influences; and it is not surprising to find that, at a very early stage, gross and grievous instances of unholy practices reached the apostle's ear. Among them was a common report of an incestuous marriage among members of the church, and, what was much more serious, the toleration of this abuse by the public sentiment of the church itself. Therefore he proceeds in the early chapters of this epistle to deal with this question in no compromising way.

First, he reasserts in most emphatic language the absolute necessity of personal holiness on the part of all disciples of Christ, and the high standard of discipline in the fellowship of believers as a whole. He makes special provision for the extreme case which had risen among them. He gives explicit directions that the offending members be solemnly and publicly excommunicated from the Church of Christ, and handed over in the name of the Lord Jesus to the judgment of

God, through Satanic power, even to the extent of the death of the offender, if necessary, in order that he may be brought to repentance even at the last moment, and his spirit saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Church discipline is here recognized as a very solemn thing, and some thing which is sure to bring, if properly exercised with due regard to the authority and will of God, the interposing hand of God Himself and the judgment from which no excuse or evasion can protect the false and daring offender.

How salutary it would be if this simple apostolic precedent should be more commonly followed and more divinely efficient than it is in the lax religions of this compromising age.

Still further in the same chapter, this apostle directs that they are to withdraw their fellowship at the Lord's table and in the communion of the saints from every brother who is licentious, covetous, idolatrous, a railer, a drunkard or an extortioner. It is not possible to separate ourselves from business correspondence or worldly association with ungodly men, but in the fellowship of the Church of Christ the atmosphere of His sacred sanctuary must be kept unsullied and heavenly (1 Corinthians 5:1-6, 11-12).

Having thus provided for the public discipline of obdurate and inconsistent members of the church, Paul proceeds to emphasize the necessity of personal holiness on the part of individual members by a series of vivid illustrations and impressive appeals.

He shows the importance of holiness on the part of the people of God by a forcible illustration, the Feast of the Passover, and its typical significance. He asks,

Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. (5:6-8)

The Paschal feast was the first of the annual ceremonial rites of the Jews, and was especially suggestive of the fellowship of Christ's redeemed people in all future ages. One of the most marked features of that great rite was the inexorable exclusion of all leaven from the feast and the household. Prior to the celebration of the Passover it was customary for the father, with lighted candle, to pass through the house, inspecting every chamber, even looking under every bed, chair, sofa and article of furniture, and then solemnly declaring that there was no leaven in any portion of the house or member of the household. Leaven has, therefore, always stood in the Word of God as the symbol of corruption. In our Lord's great parable in the 13th chapter of Matthew, it represents the introduction of impurity into the Church of Christ, until the whole house became saturated with the unholy elements of fleshly corruption.

One of the very first questions of the apostle in his great treatise on salvation is, "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" And his unqualified answer is, "By no means!" (Romans 6:1-2). "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness" (2 Timothy 2:19), is the very inscription we read stamped upon the cornerstone of the Church of Jesus Christ. He can save the sinner, but the sin must be utterly renounced and laid over upon the Lord Jesus Christ for crucifixion and eternal separation. Purge out the old leaven, the flesh, the carnal life, the whole of the old creation, and reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We are to be a new lump and God recognizes us as unleavened.

(*The Christ in the Bible Commentary*, A. B. Simpson)

For a clearer understanding of the word "leaven," the following is included here from Eerdman's *Dictionary of the Bible*:

Leaven was a common figure of speech. In Jesus' Parable of the Leaven, as leaven transforms dough, so God's rule transforms life (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20-21). Jesus also warned against the "leaven" of the Pharisees and Sadducees, whose teachings corrupt (Mark 8:14-21 par.; Luke 12:1). Paul admonished the Corinthians to remove the "old leaven" (cf. Exod. 12:15, 19), i.e., sin that could corrupt the whole Church, and begin anew with the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:6-8). He also warns against legalism, which, like leaven, will transform the "whole batch" (Gal. 5:9).

Edmon L. Rowell, Jr.

Explain how leaven affects the lives of Christians today.

Matt.16:6-12 Mark 8:15 Luke 12:1 Gal. 5:7-21

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

Paul's point is this: Even if a Corinthian were able to persuade the court to decide in his favor, he has lost. If he should get a judgment against a brother, he hasn't won anything. He has lost ground in his own spiritual life. When Paul speaks of defeat, he has in mind the high ground the believer could have attained, had he not gone to court. Had he simply accepted the loss for the Lord's sake, it would have been a great spiritual victory for him. On the other hand, were

two Corinthians to agree to have their dispute arbitrated by fellow Christians, the apostle would applaud that. Paul would insist that brothers should be more interested in each other's spiritual growth, than fighting for temporal gain. In such cases Satan, who is behind all such suits, is the clear winner.

(*Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians*, C. S. Lovett)

In 1 Cor. 4:5 we are told to "judge nothing before the time," yet in 1 Cor. 6:1-3 we are encouraged to judge things. **Regarding believers, what things are we permitted to judge, and, conversely, what matters are we not allowed to judge?**

Josh. 24:19 2 Chron. 19:7 Ps. 9:4, 7, 8 Ps. 58:1, 2 Ps. 82:2-4 Eccl. 11:9 Eccl. 12:14 Ezek. 44:24
John 7:24 Jas. 4:11

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

He next appeals to their past experience and their escape from evil through their conversion and consecration to God. "And," he says, "that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11). Is it not enough that you have once escaped this slough of sin? Can you bear to think of again being involved in the slime? Is not the very memory hideous enough to fill your soul with horror? Can you ever look upon it again with toleration or indulgence?

And yet, alas, how many, even after their salvation as brands from the burning, and their sanctification from the power of corruption, have allowed themselves, like Lot's wife, to look back to Sodom until they have gradually become accustomed to the vision of sin, and the picture has insensibly lost its terrors and the old sin begins to reassert its power. Before long it is true of them, as the apostle expresses it so sadly, they have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins; and, it is still more sadly true, they return like the dog to his nauseating feast and the swine to her wallowing in the mire, and their last state is worse than the first.

(*The Christ in the Bible Commentary*, A. B. Simpson)

What does it mean to be washed (or cleansed) according to Scripture?

Ps. 51:1-7 Prov. 30:12 Isa. 1:16 Isa. 4:4 Zech. 13:1 2 Cor. 7:1 Eph. 5:26 Titus 3:5 1 John 1:7-9 Jer. 4:14 Jer. 33:8

We all enter this world as a natural man, or flesh man (having inherited Adam's nature). In this unregenerate state, we were children of disobedience; we were ruled by the prince of the power of the air; and we walked according to the course of this world. Then, upon receiving Christ as our Savior and Lord, we are cleansed (or washed) of our sins, now still living in this world, but not of it. We are free from the law of sin and death, and are now living under the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.

The Bible tells us that once saved in Jesus, God desires to conform the Christian into the image of Christ. If the born-again Christian truly loves His Lord, he will desire only to live in Him and for Him by the power of the Holy Spirit, and he is then able to truly say with Paul, "For me to live is Christ!" **What does it mean to be sanctified, as taught in the New Testament, realizing that the word "sanctify" means "set apart for God?"**

Ex. 31:13 Ex. 33:16 John 17:17-19 Gal. 2:20 Eph. 1:3, 4 Eph. 2:10 Heb. 2:11 Heb. 9:14 Heb. 10:10, 14 Heb. 13:12, 21 1 Pet. 1:2 Jude 1:24

1 Corinthians 6:12

When Paul said, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be *brought under the power of any*" (1Cor 6:12), he signified that he was keeping his heart diligently, that he was jealous lest *things* should gain that esteem and place in his soul which was due alone unto the Lord. A very small object placed immediately before the eye is sufficient to shut out the light of the sun, and trifling things taken up by the affections may soon sever communion with the Holy One.

(*Practical Christianity*, A. W. Pink)

Satan is God's enemy and he is also the adversary of our souls, operating as an angel of light. **What will he be doing to hinder (if not stop) the work of Christ in our lives as the Lord's followers? Also, what are the weapons of our warfare? Does God's Word teach that we can be victorious over him and his demons? Here we request that you look up as many Scriptures as you are able to apply to this question, and list them with your answers.**

1 Corinthians 6:13-20

A day must come in our lives, as definite as the day of our conversion, when we give up all right to ourselves and submit to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ. There may be a practical issue raised by God to test the reality of our consecration, yet whether that be so or not, there must be a day when, without reservation, we surrender everything to Him—ourselves, our families, our possessions, our business and our time. All we are and have becomes His, to be held henceforth entirely at His disposal.

(A Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee)

Personally, what were you willing to yield, or surrender, when you came to Christ? And, as you grew in Him, were there more revelations of those things which stood between you and a sanctified life—one well pleasing to Christ?

Ps. 116:16-19 Matt. 16:24-26 Matt. 24:45-51 John 8:31-36 Rom. 6:16-22 1 Cor. 7:21-23 Gal. 2:20 Gal. 5:13 Phil. 1:21, 27-30 Phil. 3:7-10 Col. 3:1-3, 5-10 2 Pet. 2:19-22

Does this testing and teaching continue on, showing us where our affections lie? How do the temptations differ in the various ages (or categories) of our lives? And, in the Christian's overall view of life, can we find that the strength, the power, the wisdom, the confidence, the patience, the endurance, and the peace that passes understanding—all of these in abundance and in fullness and available to the true disciple of Christ—yes, all of this without measure is ours, purchased at the lonely hill of Golgotha? (Recall our blessings given to us by God, the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in Ephesians chapter one. Please note that these are all past tense.)

1 Corinthians 7:1-16

Clearly Paul desired everyone to be as free of needing marital relations as he was. A traveling missionary facing all kinds of dangers and hardships, it was blessing that he didn't need a female companion. At the same time he recognized that all men are not made the same. Some have needs that others don't. In view of the approaching distress however, he wished all believers could be celibate. Then they could serve the Lord without the distractions of marriage. But he knows that wish can't be granted, for continence is a gift from God. He would not tell those who don't have this gift to remain single. We observed how carefully Paul speaks on issues where he can appeal to a command of the Lord and where he must rely on the wisdom that God gives him.

It seems that one of the questions asked by the Corinthians was whether staying single was more spiritual than being married? While Paul thinks it is preferable to remain unmarried, he does not command it. That would fly in the face of God's own statement... "*It is not good for the man to be alone*" (Gen. 2:18). If it is not good for man to live alone, then celibacy can hardly be more superior to something God commands. Paul's preference for the single life doesn't make it more spiritual. He prefers it because it is more expedient—IN VIEW OF THE APPROACHING DISTRESS. This leads some to say Paul feels marriage is only necessary for those unable to deny themselves the physical satisfaction marriage brings. That low view of marriage is hardly supported by what the apostle teaches elsewhere. Besides, he has already said not everyone has the gift of celibacy.

(Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians, C. S. Lovett)

"Paul elsewhere (Eph. 5:22-33) represents marriage as a most ennobling spiritual union, which raises a man out of himself and makes him live for another; a union so elevated and refining as to render it the fit symbol of that bond between Christ and his people, by which they are exalted to the full perfection of their being. Marriage, according to Paul, does for man in the sphere of nature, what union with Christ does for him in the sphere of grace." (Charles Hodge) Paul gives some good practical suggestions to believers on matters of marriage, celibacy and divorce. Each of our situations is different, but we must all answer to the Lord for how we live our lives. **How do you interpret Paul's statement when he said, "I would that all men were even as I myself" (1 Cor. 7:7)? What view did he have about the conditions of the world as he saw them? Also, was he so concerned about reaching souls for Christ, that this goal became uppermost above all human or personal plans?**

Please note the following: Paul was extremely careful regarding the following in his teaching: a) In certain issues Paul could appeal to a known command of the Lord; b) there are other occasions where he must rely on the wisdom that God gives him. **Does this apply to us in our instructing as well?**

When either a man or woman is unfaithful to the marriage vows they made with witnesses under God, it is difficult for the end result to be other than destruction for all concerned. The following are study notes from *The*

***Spirit-Filled Life Bible (NKJV), 1 Cor. 6:15-20.* After reading them, state what thought regarding this specific unfaithfulness has affected you most deeply in the spiritual sense.**

- a. **Sexual intercourse is more than a biological experience; it involves a communion of life. Since Jesus is one with the believer's spirit, it is unthinkable to involve Him in immorality.**
- b. **Sexuality is a uniquely profound aspect of the personality, involving one's whole being. Sexual immorality has far-reaching effects, with great spiritual significance and social complications.**
- c. **Such immorality is not only a sin against the body; it is a sin against the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the body.**
- d. **Because believers have been purchased by the blood of Christ, they should honor Him to whom they belong.**

What is the effect on our personal relationship with God if we are unfaithful to Him?

Judg. 2:11-13 2 Chr. 7:22 Neh. 9:16, 17, 30 Ps. 78:17-20, 31 Ps. 106:6, 7, 21, 32, 33, 43 Mal. 2:14-16

1 Corinthians 7:17-40

One other point is worthy of important emphasis, and that is that those who are married, and married in the Lord, be very careful that they do not make their happiness and affection a selfish end, or a restraint upon the freedom of the other in the Master's work. It is in this connection the apostle says, with much practical solemnity, "You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men" (7:23). Many a woman has brought upon herself spiritual leanness and even bitter sorrow by trying to hold her husband for her own gratification and encompassing his Christian work with so many strains, entanglements and jealousies as to prove a hindrance instead of a helpmate, and a stumbling block in both their paths. And many a man has made a tremendous mistake in thinking his wife existed for his own pleasure, and that he had the right to control her conscience, her religious freedom, her time and her life, and absorb her as part of his own gross and earthly life.

That which we thus cling to, we are sure to lose, and what we trustfully and lovingly give to God we shall doubly gain in the end. Marriage should not be a weight and restraint upon either life, but a blessed addition of strength and an impulse toward high and heavenly things.

Dr. Arnot has compared these unhappy unions to two ships at sea chained together about 20 feet apart, and dashing into each other's sides with every rolling wave, until they rasp and tear each other to pieces and go down to the bottom together. If they were close enough to be one they would sail the billows together, or if they were miles apart they would surmount the waves alone; but they are just near enough and far enough to be a mutual curse and a source of destruction. God help us to hold our friends, affections and our social ties as sacred trusts for Him, and as avenues of unselfish blessing to and through each other.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

In this Scripture Paul presents a general principle for all new Christians: Even though Christians are all one in Christ, each believer should remain in the same calling he was in when the Lord saved him. We often think that a change in circumstance is the answer to a problem—however, the problem is usually *within* us and not *around* us. **What was the general rule, according to Rom. 12:18, to cover all situations?**

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

The apostle speaks in the same series of paragraphs about the attitude of Christians to the social gatherings of life, with special reference to the heathen feasts and social entertainments. He lays down a number of principles in connection with this subject which have still a very practicable application to our present-day life. It is true we are not concerned with the question of meat sacrificed to idols, but we are concerned with the principle on which that particular matter was to be regulated and that applies to all questions of our social life.

One of these principles is, "'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is constructive" (10:23). That will settle a great many questions. Is it for the good of others? Is it for the glory of God? Is it the most practical use of my time, that I should engage in this thing?

The next principle is, "'Everything is permissible for me'—but I will not be mastered by anything" (6:12). This applies to a great many indulgences which easily become engrossing; any amusement, yes, even any legitimate occupation that absorbs us too much and becomes necessary to our happiness, is dangerous. Any social friendship, which possesses us and takes away our perfect liberty of conscience and will, is wrong, especially if you find yourself under another's undue influence and power. There is a social hypnotism which has perverted many a true life, and to which you have no right ever to expose your freedom in the Lord.

Another principle and one of far-reaching application is,

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.... Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall. (8:9, 13)

This principle ought to settle most of the question relating to our indulgences in things which we believe to be for us harmless and lawful.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What things in life might a strong Christian do that later could bring condemnation upon himself and also cause a weaker brother or sister to sin?

1 Corinthians 9:1-23

Paul had no choice but to preach. He didn't voluntarily choose to preach the gospel. He was fighting God when the Lord stopped him in his tracks on the Damascus Road and commissioned him. That's the only reason he was serving the Lord. The energy with which he persecuted the church instantly turned into a compulsion to preach Christ. He feels something in him will die if he doesn't preach. So he can take no credit for preaching the gospel. Neither can he boast. What's more, there is no pay in answering God's call. It's a duty. Ah—but he didn't have to preach without accepting support. That was his own idea and not part of his call. That was his boast. Now that does have a reward. His reward was a fabulous one—the privilege of serving without pay! The preacher, who receives no pay, cannot be told what to preach.

When a person becomes the slave of Christ, there is no way he can be anyone else's slave. Paul considers that being IN CHRIST not only transfers him out of Satan's kingdom, but also delivers him from bondage to all men. How then can he say he is a slave to everyone? Here again he is showing how he uses his freedom in the interest of others. He can make himself a slave if he wants to, he's free to do that. And he tells us why—that he might win more people to Jesus. He figures that is a great use of his freedom. He invests his freedom in Christ knowing the more he can produce for Jesus, the greater will be his reward. He is shrewd enough to know what is the best investment of his freedom. With the judgment seat of Christ before him always, he is willing to accommodate himself to people's customs and beliefs, going so far as to become their slave. He will gladly abandon his freedom to win more souls for Jesus. He was conscious of what awaited him at the Lord's return.

Paul was Jewish and liked being Jewish. He remained a Pharisee and a rabbi, but he was willing to suspend his Jewishness for the sake of the gospel. And he gladly did that to reach the Gentiles. So while he would behave as under the Law to reach the Jews, he would sometimes behave as outside the Law to reach the Gentiles. Paul knew where he stood with God. He had a heart bond with Jesus. Bound to Jesus, he was under the law of pleasing God with his life. But he was willing to abandon the outward provisions of the Mosaic code to reach the Gentiles who were "outside" the Jewish Law. In this way he could become one of them and have better access to them.

(Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians, C. S. Lovett)

What was Paul's response when he was questioned regarding his apostleship, and also on whether or not he should receive any compensation for his labors? If Paul had insisted on his rights (as an Apostle), would his motives have been questioned, and would the work of Christ have been hindered?

Paul identified with the people to whom he ministered in order to win them to Christ. We hear and read stories of many missionaries who lived in the same manner and customs as the people to whom they were sent, by their eating, dressing and housing, mainly speaking only the native language, and sharing in similar sufferings and persecutions. **Can you name or give examples of any of God's servants who truly identified themselves with the people to whom they ministered? We would name Hudson Taylor who began the China Inland Mission; can you add others?**

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

The Christian life, the life AFTER salvation, is a race. It is not a competition against others, for we compete only against ourselves. The way the Judge views our efforts is by weighing what we have done, as compared with what we could have done.

The Greek games were held in the vicinity of Corinth. Today we refer to them as the Olympics. Those competing in the games employed routines of discipline that demanded total self-control. In this, they had to deny themselves things that were proper in themselves, but not suitable for an athlete who wanted to win. In the Christian race, the spiritual race, believers must also exercise strict, moral discipline when it comes to what they allow in their lives. Lots of things are lawful for believers to do, but anything that interferes with winning the prize has to be rejected. The competing Christian

maintains strict self-discipline, often denying his rights and liberties. Witnessing and Bible study can be tremendous workouts for believers if they put themselves under the discipline it takes to win. The casual Christian hasn't a chance of winning the prize, but the committed Christian allows nothing to interfere with his dash for the finish line.

(Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians, C. S. Lovett)

Are there hills or obstacles in your life that should not be regarded as hindrances or blockades, but rather as opportunities for higher goals and victories in order to keep your sight on the final goal? If so, what are they?

Does a determined runner let up or slack off when approaching the finish line?

Explain what Paul meant when he spoke of the possibility of his becoming a castaway (1 Cor. 9:27).

1 Corinthians 10:1-10

The apostle Paul never had any fear of losing his salvation, but he did fear losing his place in the race if he became careless in maintaining self-discipline. He feared being disqualified from sharing the blessing of the gospel with others. All believers should have that same fear. In Israel's history, idolatry kept an entire generation out of the promised land, even though God had blessed that generation with awesome revelations of Himself. Paul will use Israel's failure to warn the Corinthians that if they should again become idolatrous, they would be disqualified from the race and forfeit the power of the gospel and the rewards it can bring. He particularly warns the mature believers not to be overconfident in thinking they can easily handle temptation, and he will use Israel's history to show why their confidence must be a balance by caution. They may think they have a secure place in the race, but they need to be on guard against temptation. If they drop their guard, they could fall and be disqualified for service.

Apparently the history of Israel was familiar to the Corinthians and the apostle meant to relate lessons from that history to the Christian life. He doesn't want the Corinthians to forget the great blessings to the Israelites received from God, and yet those blessings didn't keep them from evil and they had to be punished. In spite of their awesome deliverance from Egypt and the amazing things God did for them after that, these were not sufficient in themselves to cement their hearts to the Lord and keep them from falling into sin. The great privileges of the Jews provided no guarantee of their success as the people of God. In spite of their confident belief that they were the chosen people, they fell away easily. Paul hopes the Corinthians will pick up on this fact and not be too confident of their place in God's program.

(Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians, C. S. Lovett)

The instructions, wisdom and counsel written in the Bible are given, not only to clearly show us the way of salvation, but also to guard us against the pitfalls in life. The account of the Israelites' 40-year journey to the promised land is a good example of this, since their journey could easily have been accomplished in 11 days (Deut. 1:2), had they walked in the way of full obedience to God. **Do those of us who name the name of Christ, truly recognize His purpose for our lives, and are we walking in daily obedience to God fulfilling it as He desires? Could we be in danger of spiritual wandering as the Israelites were? What measures has God freely provided for us in order to prevent this?**

Gal. 5:13-18, 22-26 Eph. 4:17-32 Eph. 5:1-21 Phil. 2:1-5

Phil. 4:8-9 Col. 3:1-17

1 Corinthians 10:11-15

Human will, is not enough by itself to resist the clever and experienced demons with thousands of years of experience. Even knowledgeable Christians can be trapped when their feelings are involved. Stirred feelings most always overpower reason. But God does not ask His people to stand up to these things alone. He is always at their side when they TRY to resist. He is faithful and can always be trusted to do His part when the believer does his. However, God does NOT promise there will be no temptation. This is one of His primary ways of strengthening His children. He allows the testing to come so as to develop their spiritual strength. With no temptation, there is nothing to overcome. And God wants His children to be overcomers. Seven times in the Revelation God promises astonishing blessings to overcomers (Rev. Chapters 2 and 3).

Temptation and the strength to meet it go hand in hand. This is what God guarantees. The strength HE gives is the WAY OF ESCAPE. He guarantees that the testings of circumstances will never be such that it is impossible for the believer to resist. When a believer sins, it is not because he doesn't have the power to resist, but because he doesn't use it. Paul is saying, God supplies the power for you to resist evil so that you don't sin. There is a great danger for the Christian who thinks he can stand up to evil. For the stronger he thinks himself to be, the more severe his testing will be.

The person who thinks himself to be strong, sets himself up for real trouble. How many Christians suffer severe trials because they believe themselves strong enough to cope. That's foolish. How much wiser to acknowledge one's weakness and trust the Lord to provide the strength. Later we'll hear Paul say... "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

(*Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians*, C. S. Lovett)

The Bible, in contrast to many books of today, does not sugar-coat or soft-pedal the frequent and various sins of the Jewish people, and it is also recorded that God dealt with their sins severely. Because we now live in the age of grace, we are tempted to think that our sins will be dealt with more leniently. The following illustration may help to shed light on this: A preacher was giving a series of sermons on "The Sins of the Saints." One lady member disapproved of these as being too harsh, and told the pastor so. "After all," she said, "sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of an unsaved person." To which the pastor replied, "Oh, yes, it is—it's worse!" **Please comment on the following statement, whether you agree or disagree: "God can enable us to overcome temptation if we heed His Word".**

1 Cor. 10:13

1 Corinthians 10:16-33

Two things are needed for genuine salvation—a death and a life—and we get both of these from Jesus. When we open our hearts to Him we receive a death we didn't die and a life we didn't live. That death puts us beyond the "Law of sin and death," for the law cannot touch a dead man. It is the death of Jesus that removes the guilt of our sins. This is accomplished by His dying in our place. But it is not enough to have our sins cared for. Forgiveness will not get us to heaven. We need something else—righteousness. That comes with the LIFE of Christ. Jesus lived a righteous life and in receiving Him, we receive the "gift of righteousness" (Rom. 5:17;21). It is this righteousness that allows us to live in the presence of a holy and righteous God. The communion celebrates the literal partaking of these blessings when we receive Christ.

(*Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians*, C. S. Lovett)

How could "we provoke the Lord to jealousy" (1 Cor. 10:22)?

Job 40:7 Ps. 31:10

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

If Paul's words come across as putting down women, that is not his intention. He doesn't want man to vaunt his PRIORITY anymore than he wants woman to parade her spiritual EQUALITY in the congregation. He seeks to show that a partnership exists, with neither independent of the other. He finds there is a mutual dependence on each other, which can be seen in ordinary life. Men and women really need each other, especially when it comes to establishing a home. Since all believers are one IN CHRIST where there is neither male nor female, neither should be contemptuous of the other. As members of the BODY of Christ no one enjoys a higher dignity than any other. But in ordinary life, the male clearly has the dominant role. The natural order can be seen all across the creation, yet both the natural and spiritual realms have their source in God. He created both orders.

(*Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians*, C. S. Lovett)

Men and women cannot be happy or satisfied unless they attain the role God has meant for them. The following, taken from notes in the *Spirit Filled Life Bible (NKJV)*, 1 Cor 11:3-16, may be of help in interpreting 1 Cor 11:1-16: A proper understanding of this section is based on understanding Creation principles and Corinthian social customs. Adam and Eve were created mutually interdependent (v. 11). Together they make up humanity in its completed form. The order and design in their creation reveals the glory of God (v. 7) and headship of Christ (v. 3). In addition, woman is the glory of man (v. 7) in that she was created as his suitable companion (v. 9) and endowed with a nature to match her role (v. 15). These creational truths became associated with the social custom of a head covering for women, even in pagan cultures. Both the permanent spiritual truth and the temporal cultural habit then enter into this topic, the essence of which deals not with a physical covering but a woman's submissive inner self, especially to her husband. Also, according to v. 10, by use of the term "angels" it may also be recalling that the original authority was lost over the Garden of Eden because Eve was "uncovered." That is, that she acted independently of Adam, causing their privileged authority and access to be lost (Gen. 3:24).

When men and women of today fully desire to come under the authority and headship of Christ and His teaching, will this tend to "work out peacefully" all cultural differences and distinctions as each one fully yields and obeys?

What do you think Paul is telling the Corinthian Christians when he says, “judge among yourselves” (11:13)? Does lingering over, or continuing to dispute differences keep them from an understanding of the more perfect truths of God? What does this teach us as individuals who desire to come into fullness of the knowledge of God?

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

When do things work out as the Lord desires? Rarely. When the apostle learned how the Corinthians were abusing the sacred moment, he was shocked. In rebuking them, he says, “*You’re not participating in the Lord’s supper, you’re eating your own supper. And your meal, instead of picturing the unit of our family (the one loaf), is actually a picture of disunity!*” The pagans sometimes had religious celebrations with participants enjoying a meal together, but with them it was a matter of rich sharing with the poor. This made the Corinthian celebration even more awful. The contrast between the rich indulging themselves to the point of drunkenness and the poor going away hungry made a mockery of the Lord’s supper. There is no way the apostle would commend them for this kind of behavior. So to instruct them, he will take them back to the night when the Lord instituted the memorial.

(Lovett’s Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians, C. S. Lovett)

From this account it follows, first, that the Lord’s supper was designed not as an ordinary meal, but as a commemoration of the death of Christ. Secondly, that to participate in this ordinance in an unworthy manner was an offense against His body and blood, the symbols which were so irreverently treated; thirdly, that no one ought to approach the Lord’s table without self-examination, in order, with due preparation and a proper understanding of the ordinance, he may receive the bread and wine as symbols of Christ’s body and blood, vs. 26-29. In this way they would escape the judgements which the Lord had brought upon them on account of their profanation of his table, vs. 30-32. In conclusion, he exhorts them to use their homes for their ordinary meals, and to make the Lord’s supper a real communion, vs. 33-34.

(1 and 2 Corinthians, Charles Hodge)

What was the Lords object in instituting the Lord’s supper?

1 Cor. 11:26

Choose the correct wording in the following sentences:

Most of us try to forget how those we love died, but Jesus wants us to (remember/forget) how He died.

Everything a Christian has centers in Jesus’ (life/death).

It is the (life/teachings/death) of our Lord that will save sinners.

Therefore we remember (when/why) He died.

Christ died (because of/for) our sins.

He was our (Friend/Substitute) (Isa 53:6).

He paid the (debt/ransom price) that we could not pay.

He gave His (soul/body) into the hands of wicked men.

He bore (above/on) His body the sins of the world.

By (faith/prayer) we reach out and fellowship with Him in that (suffering/death).

Although Jesus had to (swoon/die) for our sins on the cross, He then arose from the dead three days later and is (ascended/alive) forevermore! And we can worship a (breathing/living) Savior!

From *Studies in First Corinthians* by M. R. DeHaan are the following seven great Lessons in the Lord’s Supper:

1. A Divine Command
2. A Blessed Privilege
3. A Necessary Memorial
4. A Wiling Testimony
5. A Humbling Confession
6. An Act of Faith
7. A Solemn Warning

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

If there were danger of ignorance concerning the spiritual gifts of the Church in the apostle’s day, how much greater the danger today! The tendency of modern religious thought is to eliminate the supernatural from the Bible, the Church

and the life of the Christian, and reduce religion to a form of human culture and the Church to a religious club, bound together by social affinities, entertained by intellectual culture and sacred art, and moderately exercised and occupied in respectable forms to benevolence and usefulness. It is scarcely respectable to recognize any such thing as a personal or present Deity, the supernatural answer to prayer, or any extraordinary occurrence which claims to be miraculous and is not subject to scientific explanation.

Meanwhile the devil is producing and exercising his supernatural gifts, and so endeavoring, with not a little success, to palm himself off as God, to establish his claims on the credulity of those who will not receive the divine and holy religion of Christ.

The only way to meet the counterfeit is by the true. The facts of spiritualism and its kindred errors are undoubtedly real, and they can only be met by the divine realities which are as much mightier than they, as they are more pure and consistent with the character of God and the well-being of man.

Closely related to the manifestations of Satanic power are the extravagances, fanaticisms and mistakes of honest and well-meaning Christians who are in danger of accepting delusions for divine manifestations, and thus throwing doubt upon the real facts of God's supernatural power which do exist. On the one hand there is danger of utter naturalism, rejecting all that is supernatural; and, on the other, there is danger of a false supernaturalism, counterfeiting the workings of God's power or substituting for them the workings of demon power, which are to be the most marked features of the last days.

The only security for the balance of truth between these two extremes lies in our not being ignorant concerning spiritual gifts, but rightly understanding, exercising and exhibiting to the world the real power of God in harmony with the Scriptures and guarded from the extremes and extravagances of human error and Satanic delusion.

First we must look at the supernatural gifts bestowed upon the Church by her ascended Lord. The Greek word for these gifts is *charismata*, and it is used to denote the gifts of power for service which constituted the Pentecostal endowment of the Church.

It was customary for Roman conquerors, when they entered the city in triumph, or for great potentates, when signaling their coronation or entrance upon some great office, to distribute largesses and scatter costly gifts of treasure along the avenues through which they passed. So when Christ "ascended on high . . . [He] gave gifts to men" (Ephesians 4:8), and abundantly distributed to the waiting disciples the rich and varied gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jewels they were in the costly robes of His glorious Bride, the insignia and tokens of her high honor and fellowship in His kingly glory and mighty power. These *charismata* are specifically described in this chapter.

The first of these gifts is wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8), that divine quality which discerns the actual situation, and knows how to act under all circumstances. It is distinguished from knowledge, the next gift, in respect, that knowledge has to do with truth and wisdom with conduct. Knowledge is intellectual; wisdom is practical. Knowledge enables us to understand God's Word, wisdom, to apply it to the case in hand. The two together constitute our perfect investiture for intelligent and effective service

The next of these gifts is faith. This does not mean faith for our personal salvation, for that is the privilege and duty of all believers and, in fact, is essential to salvation. This is the special faith given by the Holy Spirit to enable us to exercise our Christian ministries, to claim the answers to our prayers and to take the power of God which is awaiting our appropriation.

Then come the gifts of healing. They are spoken of in the plural. There are various forms and ministries of healing. They are distinguished from miracles in the next clause. These also are gifts of the Spirit. They are undoubtedly recognized here as included in the Church's endowment of power. There is no hint here, or indeed anywhere in the New Testament, that the age of miracles is past. That is one of the axioms of modern theology, but it has no countenance from the Scriptures. God always intended His Church to be as supernatural and as divine as the host that marched through the wilderness of old behind the pillar of cloud and fire, and left the footprints of the Deity all along their unearthly way.

But miracles and gifts of healing are not necessarily the same. There are many cases of healing that are not miracles, and there are some that are. There is a quiet, normal receiving of divine life for our physical frame which becomes as natural as breathing, and almost as spontaneous. It is not mere constitutional strength. It comes from God, but it comes through the operation of the spiritual law into which we may rise, and through which we can appropriate supernatural strength from our living Lord just as freely as we take the oxygen from the air and absorb the sunshine from the sky.

A miracle is somewhat different. It is more bold and startling, involving a suspension of natural law and an effect so impressive as to become to all observers a distinct manifestation of the presence and power of God. These meteor flashes of supernatural power would lose their very emphasis if they were to become so frequent as to cease to be extraordinary. Both have a place in the economy of the Church and among the gifts of the Spirit.

Then we have the gift of prophecy specially denoting the ministry which gives to men the direct messages of God. It is not always the power to foretell future events. A prophet is rather a divine messenger, the man who catches the mind of his Master, and gives it out to his fellowmen at the divine direction. He is not so much a teacher of the written Word as a messenger of the very thing that God would say at the time to the generation to which He speaks or the community to whom He bears witness. The definition of a prophet given by the apostle in the 14th chapter of First Corinthians is very satisfactory. "But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort" (14:3).

The prophet, therefore, while including the office of teacher in this chapter, more especially carries with it, we believe, the idea of specially witnessing, in the immediate power and unction of the Holy Spirit, the messages of God to men.

Then come the gifts of distinguishing between spirits and speaking in different kinds of tongues with the associated gift of interpretation of tongues, which was the power to translate and understand the message given by another in an unknown tongue. This makes it very certain that the language in which the ministry of tongues was exercised was not always the language of the people who were addressed. It could not, therefore, be a vehicle for missionary work. In that case no interpretation would be needed, and the necessity for an interpreter would obviate its very intention. It was not for this purpose that it was given, but rather as an expression of lofty spiritual feeling and the intense moving of the heart, the subject of this gift, by the divine Spirit leading him to express the state of spiritual elevation by which he was moved in some utterance, which, while not always intelligible, yet always left the impression of divine presence and power.

This gift seems to have been abused from an early period and turned rather to the display of spiritual pride than to the edification of the Church, and appears to have been withdrawn, in a great measure, at least, at an early day. Its apparent revival in modern times has been associated with much confusion, and created grave doubts respecting its preeminent value as compared, at least, with other gifts of the Spirit. In the classification of the *charismata* at the end of this chapter it is quite significant that it is mentioned last, and we find the apostle himself declaring in another place, "I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Corinthians 14:19).

The Holy Spirit is the source of all these gifts, and is the divine Agent who exercises them in the Church and through its members. We are deeply thankful to the Holy Spirit for a single verse in this chapter which shuts out all possibility of spiritual pride and human glory in connection with the gifts and the ministries of the Spirit. It is the 11th verse, in which we are told that all these gifts "are the work of one and the same Spirit" (12:11). Literally this means all these gifts the Spirit Himself works. The man is but an instrument. Even the gift is not a permanent quality in man, but the divine Presence uses him for the time in the exercise of the ministry in which God holds the power, and the subject is but His humble instrument. No man, therefore, can call these works his works, or these gifts his gifts, or this power his own. Very wisely the Master has said in anticipation of this very danger, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18, 20). He is the power and we have Him.

Whenever, therefore, we see the spirit of self-display, human exaltation and adulation, the advertising of men and the disposition to glory in even the most honored servants of God, we may know that we are on forbidden ground and in danger of sacrilegiously abusing the very grace of God and worshiping the creature more than the Creator. Every gift and ministry is dependent upon our contact with the Holy Spirit every moment. We have no strength apart from Him, and if we had, our power would become our curse and our own weight would sink us where once the archangels fell through their own self-conscious brilliancy and self-centered pride.

The Holy Spirit in His supernatural powers is given to every disciple who will receive and use His supernatural powers for the purpose intended. "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7). This supernatural endowment is not an exclusive privilege of favor to the few. The Holy Spirit is poured today upon all flesh. You cannot have a private wire to your office or the use of a telephone without some expense, but every disciple can have the car of heaven at any moment and draw from the infinite resources of the skies all needed strength for all emergencies and ministries.

The mina in the parable of Luke 19, was given to all the servants equally; yet the time came when the single mina had, in the case of one of these servants, been multiplied to 10 minas. They all started on equal footing, but they did not so end their service or stand before their judge. What was the secret of the difference? The faithful and profitable servants invested their mina and added interest by trading.

Is not this the meaning of the apostle in this chapter when he speaks of the manifestation of the Spirit being given to every man "for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7)? Does it not mean that we may use or neglect this great investment, and that it may become a spiritual fortune or a spiritual default as we improve it or neglect it? To each of us is given, not part of the Holy Spirit, not a touch of His finger, but the Holy Spirit Himself in His personal and undivided fullness. We may have just as much of this power as we will utilize and expend for His glory and the service committed to our hands. Those who wisely use it will find at last that their efficiency has multiplied tenfold, while those who simply hoard it will stand condemned before their Lord and lose even that which they for a little seemed to have.

What a responsibility this truth throws upon us! Are we using all the possibilities of grace? Are we improving the investments of the Master committed to our hands? Are we growing in spiritual usefulness and efficiency? Are we going to meet our Master to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things" (Matthew 25:21)?

The diversity of spiritual gifts and ministries is very clearly pointed out in this passage. The apostle speaks of three different things—gifts, ministries and works or operations. He says there are different gifts. There are also different ministries or spheres providentially assigned to us; consequently there are different works performed by us. There seems to be a distinct allusion to the three persons of the Trinity in these three classifications of gifts, spheres and services. Some persons are specially fitted by their gifts for one line of ministry. Then, their providential environments are different and call them to various duties. Consequently their work will be different.

One is called and fitted to be a businessman. To him is given wisdom, faith and service in the large field of usefulness, and it is not necessary for him to leave his sphere in order to exercise a Holy Spirit ministry. There is no need today so great in the Church as the need of men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, like Stephen of old, and fitted to represent Christ in the place where business experience, wise counsels, wide influence, are of peculiar value. In our great missionary operations and in the magnificent work committed to the Church of Christ, God has likewise His chosen ambassadors to mankind.

Another is called and fitted for the ministries of the home or school, or for the work of faithful helping and serving, or perhaps for superintending and the exercise of executive talent. There are no people so scarce as wise, well-balanced and sweet-tempered workers for the many departments of any great movement which requires capacity, and at the same time holy, loving character and unselfish fidelity and loyalty.

Again, another is called to the special ministry of understanding and teaching the Word of God. Another is more gifted for evangelistic work. Another is fitted to minister to the sick, and lead them to trust in God and take His healing power. Others again are called to the ministry of evangelization, to the bold, aggressive work of the foreign field, to the rescue home or mission, to the patient pastoral oversight of the flock of Christ, to the cry of the little ones, to the uplifting of the fallen. Each of these is legitimate, and for each of these the Holy Spirit supplies the necessary qualifications, and will accept and bless the works that follow. Let us, therefore, not lose our life in wishing we had some one else's work; but let us find the sphere to which we belong, let us take the gifts that will fit us for it, and let us present the works to God as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor. Be yourself, and be your best, and God will use you much more than if you try to be somebody else.

The principle of unity in all this diversity is essential. We are to recognize the work of others as part of our own. The most truly spiritual people are the people who can get on best with others, and very often God places us in the most uncongenial and difficult associations for the very purpose of teaching us to adjust ourselves to everything. We cannot afford to meet with anyone along life's pathway and fail to get along with them. He will probably keep us where we are until we have so learned His Spirit, and been rounded and mellowed by His grace, that we can keep rank in the host of God and walk in step with the most unsteady and uncongenial of our brethren.

Long ago God taught David to rejoice in a work which he was to plan and another was to perform, and in one of his first lessons on service the Lord Jesus taught His disciples that "one sows and another reaps" (John 4:37), and he that sows and he that reaps must learn to rejoice together.

The order of spiritual gifts is very instructive, encouraging and also humbling. The first-mentioned gifts are those of the apostles, prophets and teachers, the spiritual ministries of the Church. Next come the miraculous gifts of healing subordinate to spiritual ministry—important but not preeminent. Thirdly comes helps, people that just fit in, and by love, fellowship, prayer and often subordinate service, fill up the innumerable places and become the countless links without which all else would be in vain. After these, in a lower order, come the governments, the rulers, the people with authority, wisely placed near the bottom to keep them from falling over with the weight of their importance. No one can rule another until he has walked in the ranks and learned to keep his head low.

The last in procession are the gifts of tongues, the showy gifts that sometimes turn the heads of ambitious disciples, and have been least honored of all the supernatural enduements of the Christian Church.

A right ambition for the widest and highest usefulness is encouraged. "But eagerly desire the greater gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31). God wants us to be ambitious for service, and not only for one kind of service, but for as many kinds as we can faithfully add to the record of a useful life. If we fulfill one ministry well He will add another if we can be trusted with it, and the one mina may at last grow to 10. It is right that we should recognize this life as full of unspeakable prospects and possibilities for the higher ministries and the eternal honors of the age to come. We are candidates for the great government appointments in the mighty empire of the future. Let us be ambitious to show ourselves fitted for the highest place. Our lot is cast in times of most intense interest and importance. We are on the threshold of the coming kingdom. We are in the midst of a mighty competition. Prophets and martyrs are already waiting for their appointments. Busy and earnest lives today are sweeping on in the power of the Holy Spirit. Don't be left behind!

May God arouse us from lethargy, apathy and trifling. We have a glorious crown to win. We have a living age in which to win it. We have one short life to accomplish. We have the mighty Holy Spirit to enable us to win the conflict and gain the prize. Let us eagerly desire the best gifts, and let all our being be invested in the one stupendous opportunity of a life for God, for humanity and for an eternal prize.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

The church is the body of Christ consisting only of true believers. God has given these believers a blessed variety of gifts, making them a cohesive, vivifying body accomplishing the eternal purposes of Christ. In doing so, it gives as much honor to the feeble ones within the Body as to the strong. **Since God has determined that all true believers shall be one Body in Christ, what should the attitude of each individual believer be in contributing his part toward the fulfillment of it?**

Gal. 6:2, 3 Eph. 2:10 Eph. 2:19-22 Eph. 3:10-12 Phil. 1:6 Phil. 4:8 Col. 3:12-17 Col. 4:5-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The apostle, having spoken of the various other gifts of the Holy Spirit, next turns to the highest of all gifts, the crowning grace of love. The gifts of power are the jewels upon the robes of the Bride. Love is the robe itself, the very texture and tissue of the spiritual life. Those are things which we may have, but this is something which we must be. For love is not an accompaniment, an adornment, or even an attribute of character, it is character itself. As God is love so love is the substance of the believer's life. This sublime chapter is a portrait of the divine love and a delineation of the features of the Christ life.

We owe it, as we owe many other precious things, to the very faults which it was intended to correct. The chief fault of the Corinthian Christians was the lack of love and the spirit of disunion, division and strife. Just as Christ's most gracious words were often called forth by the very aggravations of human unworthiness and sin, so this most perfect picture of the ideal life has for its frame and its background a state of things as unlike the ideal here presented as it is possible to conceive, a situation which had its prototype in the Corinthian church, and its parallel, in too many instances, in the Church today.

It is delineation marked by the most acute analysis and the most skilled art. It is at once a portrait, a poem and a panegyric of love. It is always difficult to analyze a living organism without destroying life in the process of dissection. It is like pulling a flower to pieces, or dissecting a face to find its charm, and losing your flower and the general impression of your portrait in the analysis. And yet it is well for the purposes of practical application, and as a touchstone by which to search our own hearts, to follow the keen analysis of this picture into all the depths and ramifications of our own soul until we stand convicted and exposed in the light of divine love and the humiliating view of our own likeness.

It is very impressive to notice how much of character consists in what we are not and do not say or do. The Ten Commandments consist chiefly of "Thou shalt not." The first requirement that the Lord Jesus Christ laid down in connection with discipleship was self-denial. Now, to deny self is not to torment, lacerate and inflict penance on yourself. It simply means to say "No" to yourself, to suppress yourself, to refuse to obey yourself, your own will, impulse and preference. It is just a great *not* laid across human nature's path.

Now, love consists largely in *not*s. If you do nothing more than simply keep still, hold back and suppress yourself you will have lived the larger half of the life of love. You may think this very tedious, trifling and unnecessary trouble, but you will find that it is the little foxes that destroy the vines, and the little negligences of Christian watchfulness which perforate the organism of a holy life, and let your love and joy leak out as from broken vessels.

"Love ... does not envy" (1 Corinthians 13:4). She has no jealousy of others; she is not unhappy over their successes or happiness. She is not watching for their defeat or failure, nor criticizing their achievements and victories. She looks on with calm and artless simplicity and frankness when they are successful, appreciated, praised and honored. She is incapable of a mean or unworthy suspicion or treacherous blow at the character or happiness of any human being. It simply is not in her to feel and do such things. First in the brood of hell is the low, groveling serpent of envy, jealousy and suspicion.

The next negative quality is conceit, vanity and braggart vainglory. Love "does not boast" (13:4). She is modest. She never boasts. Love never wants people to advertise her, appreciate and praise her. This is the mildest form of the demon of pride. It is more concerned about what people think of us than about what we are, and it is satisfied with a name and a transient fame whether it deserves it or not. Love despises and disdains this spirit of vainglory, and shrinks instinctively from the glory of the public gaze and the arena of the world's empty fame.

Deeper and more dangerous is the quality of pride expressed by the next clause, "is not puffed up" (13:4, KJV). This describes an exaggerated idea of ourselves, an undue estimate of our abilities and worth. It is associated frequently with indifference to public applause or criticism. Satisfied with its own good opinion, it scorns either the blame or the praise of men; but it has an egregious estimate of itself, and it grows into an intolerable egotism. It is interested in everything chiefly as it concerns the mighty "I," which stands in the center of all its conversation, thought and plans. But love is removed from this false realm of exaggeration and pride. She estimates herself truly as nothing and less than nothing. Love has found out that human nature is a failure. She has sentenced herself to death. And she has buried herself forever out of sight, and taken her life and reputation on borrowed capital through the merits and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. You must reach the place where you have forever renounced your own rights and your own righteousness, and stand henceforth in humility and confidence in the name of Christ and righteousness alone.

It "believeth [trusts, NIV] all things" (13:7, KJV). That is, when things seem all contrary to love, love still believes in spite of the seeming, and by believing lifts its object up to that for which we believe. Thus God treated His ancient people. He said, "Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me" (Isaiah 63:8). They did not deserve His confidence, but He gave them His confidence, and by confidence and grace lifted them up to deserve it and loved them into it. So He takes the sinner who is unworthy of confidence, and, blotting out his sin, He takes him into the place of a child, and treats him as a sinner no longer, but as a child of His love. So He takes the earthborn soul, the fallen child of Adam's race, and He speaks of him as in the heavenly realms, and counts him as if already glorified and seated with

Christ upon the throne. God believes for us and treats us as He believes. So let us believe for others, and love by faith where we cannot love by sight.

Love "always hopes" (1Corinthians 13:7). When faith fails and seems long to wait in vain for the realization, then hope comes to her aid and says, "It is not, but it shall be." "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Some day this soul will be brighter than an angel and whiter than the snow. So love hopes forever and clothes her object with the glory of her expectation.

What a blessed uplift this is to our own discouraged hearts! God give us the love that believes all things and hopes all things.

The sublime picture of this heavenly grace is as the suffering one. She steps upon the stage, "suffering long" (1Corinthians 13:4) and she passes off of it, "bearing all things, enduring all things" (see 13:7, KJV). The long suffering has reference to her capacity for continued forbearance. The bearing has reference to the faults of others, and is translated sometimes, "covers all things," and the enduring has reference to the trials that come to us from the hand of God. Now let us remember that this is not stoical endurance, because we cannot help it, but loving enduring, because we do not look upon the dark side. We see it in the light of love.

This is the analysis of love; but how beautiful and divine it seems when we rise from the delineation, and see it full-orbed and shining in the face of Jesus Christ Himself. He is the impersonation of love. It was He who suffered long and was kind, who sought not His own, never was provoked, who made no account of evil, who believed all things, hoped all things, endured all things, and whose love never failed.

It is necessary for us to dwell on the preeminence of such a grace above tongues, above prophecy, above knowledge, above faith, above even hope itself. The chief reason of love's preeminence is that love is the very essence and inherent quality of the heavenly life. It is not said anywhere that God is faith, or power, or wisdom, or even holiness. God has these attributes, but it is said that "God is love" (1 John 4:16). And so Christian character is love. When you abstract love you abstract the very tissue and essence of life itself. Without love, the apostle says, "I am nothing" (see 1 Corinthians 13:2). There isn't anybody there to wear the quality or use the gift. Love, therefore, is essential because intrinsic, the life of our life, and the substance of our spiritual being, for God is our life and "God is love."

But it is necessary for us to ask, "How can we have this superlative gift?" And the answer is very plain. It is not a growth or development of human nature. It is wholly divine. It must come to us from above, and the only way to have it is by having Him. You cannot live in the 13th chapter of First Corinthians without having the experience of entire sanctification, and entire sanctification simply means the death of self and the union of the soul with God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is not possible for human nature to live this chapter out. It is not possible for a converted Christian to do it unless he has received the very gift of gifts, the Spirit of Jesus to dwell within him. Its first use is to search your heart and utterly discourage you from attempting it in your own strength, and so throw you at His feet that you will accept Him and let Him live His life in you. Let us do this here and now, and expiring at the feet of love take love to be our resurrection life and Christ to relive in us His own life once more.

But further, having done this, He will teach you, step by step, day by day, moment by moment, to watch against the things that militate against the life of love. And you will find that you must guard the crossroads, you must watch against the "nots," you must go down into the minutiae of life, and live out with Him in detail all the delineations of this chapter over which we have passed. This is where many fail. They want to have it come like some favoring gale, and bear them without a thought into the heavenly harbor. It is not so. Love must stand upon the bridge, and watch against the shoals and currents, and steer her course with ceaseless, patient toil untiring to the goal.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

The words and thoughts of this 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians are so divinely sublime—straight from the heart of the Master—and Pastor Simpson translated them down to our human understanding in such a cogent and illuminating manner that no other clarity is needed. **As our own spirits become quiet in awe of it all, the question is, how can that kind of love be simulated and seen in our own daily lives, and what must die first?**

Gal. 2:20 Gal. 5:22-25 Col. 3:2-3 Jas. 1:5, 6, 22-25 1 John 2:5-6 1 John 5:1-5, 20

1 Corinthians 14:1-33

We find in this chapter and in some paragraphs of the 11th chapter the apostle unfolding some important and practical principles relating to the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit in the worship and fellowship of the Church.

He emphasizes afresh the preeminence of love. "Follow the way of love" (14:1), he says. The verb is an intense one. Literally it means "pursue love" as the hunter pursues his game, as the miser pursues his gold. It is the most valuable of all attainments, therefore pursue it. It is the most difficult of all attainments, therefore pursue it. It is the crowning perfection of Christian life. It may sometimes seem very tedious that we should, after long experience in the school of Christ, have to be held down to little tests and conflicts from day to day, when it would be much more delightful to sweep out into the larger scope of some great achievement, or even to bear some tremendous trial and be done with it. And yet

the artist spends much more time in finishing the details of his picture than in drawing the outline. A few freehand touches will easily sketch the foreground and the perspective, but days and weeks and even months are spent in little touches, faint tints and deepening shades. And it is just these little touches that constitute the difference between the work of genius and the superficial attempt of an amateur. So, too, in the Christian life the finishing touches are the most important and often come very near the end. Let us not be weary in the school or easily give up the lesson, but let us follow after love, and so run that we may obtain. Let us always realize that more than all our works and words, our seemingly great achievements, our most heroic sufferings, it is patience that perfects love. And it is love that constitutes the essential quality and the crowning glory of all true character.

The place of prophecy is next discussed. While we are to pursue love we are also to desire spiritual gifts, and chief among them the gift of prophecy. Now this gift is very clearly defined in the next verse. It is not merely or mainly the power which foretells future events, nor is it at all the mission of receiving inspired revelations and adding to the already finished Word of God, but it is a simple and practical ministry of help to men. He defines it by three terms: "But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort" (14:3). In a word, the prophet's business is to build up men, to stir up men and to cheer up sorrowing and troubled hearts.

To strengthen (edify, KJV) includes the ministry of instruction. To encourage (exhort, KJV) belongs the important work of rousing, stimulating and awakening the consciences and hearts of men. This is quite different from unfolding the teachings of the Scriptures. This is the ministry which convicts men of sin and startles the slumbering conscience into action. This is the ministry which forces the heart and conscience to a sense of its shortcomings and failures. This is the ministry that arouses the will to decision and action for God and for duty. This is the ministry that inspires enthusiasm, stirs up high purposes and calls to noble sacrifice and service. It stands as the living mouthpiece of God, and kindles and sets on fire the truth that has been already unfolded.

Then the third element in prophecy is the ministry of comfort. It binds up the broken heart; it dries the failing tear, it cheers the mourner, it lifts up the depressed and discouraged; it quickens faith, hope and patience; it sends us forth like Barnabas as sons of consolation; it takes healing to the sick, hope to the mourner and opens the gates of heaven to the dying believer. What an attractive ministry is the prophetic office, following in the steps of Him who said,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

Next is presented the place of tongues. The gift of tongues represents the less practical and more brilliant enduements of the Spirit in the early Church. It was a divine influence which elevated the soul to a state of ecstasy and found expression in utterance of an elevated character, impressing the hearer with the manifest presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the subject of this influence. But the utterances were not always articulate or intelligible either to the speaker or hearer, and in many cases had to be translated by an interpreter. This gift of interpreting tongues was just as distinct as the tongues themselves, and, where it was lacking, the tongues were not understood, and the message was not immediately helpful to the hearers. Indeed, without a proper regard to edification and decorum it might become a stumbling block and even a cause of confusion and disgrace.

It is quite evident from some of the quotations in this passage that the gift of tongues was not primarily intended to be a vehicle for preaching the gospel to foreign nations: "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit" (1 Corinthians 14:2). Surely that is sufficient without any further argument to show that this was not usually a vehicle of intelligent instruction to a foreigner. Again, "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself but he who prophesies edifies the church" (14:4). Again, "He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified" (14:5). Here it is evident that there had to be another person to interpret the tongue, or else the man himself might if he understood his own tongue.

Again, in verse 13 we read, "For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says," i.e., let him ask God for a second gift namely, the gift of translating the tongue in which he has spoken into the tongue understood by the hearers. Again we read,

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.... how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? (14:14, 16)

The apostle himself had the gift of tongues, but he says with great emphasis, "But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue" (14:19). Let us notice carefully, by the way, that the word "unknown" used in the King James Version is not in the original, being printed in italics, and that the apostle is not here drawing a distinction between known and unknown tongues, but speaking generally of all tongues as unknown.

The whole argument is confirmed and summed up by the statement in the 22nd verse, "Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers." They are a sign of a definite influence present upon the speaker. But for that very reason they ought to be used with great caution. He illustrates this by a picture of an unbeliever coming into one of their meetings, when they were speaking with tongues, and concluding that they were mad. But, on the contrary, if he should come in and find them prophesying in intelligent speech he would fall down on his face and worship God, and report that God was in them of a truth. He adds, "If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God" (14:27-28).

This surely settles the question. If more is needed to be said it would be sufficient to add that the apostle preached the gospel to the people among whom he moved through the Greek, Latin and Hebrew languages which he had himself acquired, and on one or two occasions his audiences were surprised to find that he could speak their language through the large and liberal culture which he had received.

This gift of tongues being chiefly of the character of a sign, was liable to great abuse and seems to have been early withdrawn from the primitive Church. In modern times it has been revived, but with some liability of abuse.

The story of Edward Irving is well known. After a career of extraordinary brilliancy and power, in his last days he adopted the theory that the supernatural gifts of the early church should be claimed in our own day, and there were undoubted instances, not only of miraculous power, but especially in the exercise of the gift of tongues. But through exaggeration of this gift and the strong temptation to use it sensationally, it became a source of much confusion and even ridicule, and a work that had in it undoubted elements of truth and power was discredited and hindered.

In our own day there is the same strained and extravagant attempt to unduly exaggerate the gift of tongues, and some have even proposed that we should send our missionaries to the foreign field under a sort of moral obligation to claim this gift, and to despise the ordinary methods of acquiring a language. Such a movement would end in wild fanaticism and bring discredit upon the truth itself. We know of more than one instance where our beloved missionaries have been saved from this error and led to prosecute their studies in foreign languages with fidelity and diligence; and their efforts have been rewarded by supernatural help in acquiring foreign tongues in a remarkably short time, but not in despising proper industry and the use of their own faculties under God's direction in acquiring these languages.

Paul goes on to discuss the place of edification in the worship of the Church. "All of these must be done for the strengthening (edifying, KJV) of the church" (14:26). God's object in everything He does is the practical help and real benefit of His people. God never works a miracle for the sake of showing He can work a miracle. He is a wise economist of force. He has no machinery simply for the purpose of displaying it. When we use any gift in order to show that we have the gift, we are desecrating God's sacred trusts. The temptation of today is to the display of brilliancy, and easily runs into self-consciousness, vainglory and the worship of the creature more than the Creator. The true principle that should regulate all our words and acts is the glory of God and the good of our fellowmen. This will give attractiveness and sobriety to our words and acts in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The highest ambition that any minister can cherish is to supply plain, wholesome bread to the household of Christ. Let others go in for confectionery and pyrotechnic displays; let ours be the ambition to supply food to the children of God. There is nothing so popular and so sure to succeed as the simple gospel and the Word of the living God. Let us aim to reach the average man and leave it to others to attract the intellectual and the brilliant. Christ was a teacher for the common people, and we will find that His people in every age are still very simple, average people. The Church of Christ today is in danger of becoming a poor rival to the sensational journal and the extravagant modern stage. They can outdo us every time in this unequal competition, and we shall have not only the humiliation of defeat in bidding for the popular ear, but we shall have the displeasure and the curse of heaven for the sacrilegious abuse of an awful trust committed to us for the salvation and help of dying men.

Another practical principle Paul discusses is the place of testimony in the worship of God. Have we scriptural warrant for the testimony meeting, for the freedom of a service thrown open to the people and allowing everyone to have some part in the chorus of praises and witness bearing? Certainly we have. That is the very meaning of the remarkable verse which we have quoted above. "Everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation" (14:26). Let everyone come to contribute some part to the service. Break in with your chorus of grateful song, if the Spirit so impresses you, and let no one stare or sneer at the irregularity. Come out with your simple testimony of some truth that has helped you, and that you have been told to pass on for the help of others. Fear not to speak the message which the Holy Spirit has burned into your soul for the quickening and the rousing of your brethren. It will be a word in season for some weary soul.

Following the practice of freedom in testimony Paul points out the place of order in the worship of the Church. But along with all this we must never forget the reverence and decorum due to the house of God and the services of His sanctuary. "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (14:40) is the apostle's mandate. There is no need that devotion should run riot or that emotional excitement should carry us off our feet or lead us into extravagance and excesses of mere natural feeling. Let one wait for another. Let there be thoughtful deference and loving consideration. Even if the Spirit does impress you to speak, He can wait for the fitting opportunity. If you are controlled by Him you will wait, too. "The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets" (14:32).

The Holy Spirit does not ride roughshod over a sanctified judgment and a sensitive courtesy. He always recognizes the rights of others and your own sense of propriety. Some people are afraid to yield themselves to the Spirit for fear He

will make them do some crazy thing. He does not act in this way. He has given us an instance of delicacy, modesty, order, self-respect, and He never outrages it in His children. He is a gentle Spirit. He suggests, directs and even commands; but He wants our whole being to work in harmony with Him. A true regard to this would prevent many rude exhibitions of fanaticism or wild fire which are justified too often by the pretence of divine inspiration. "Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (14:40).

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What does the Bible teach regarding the meaning and use of prophecy?

Isa. 30:9-11 Isa. 41:22-23 Isa. 42:9 Jer. 5:30-31 Ezek. 12:25-28 Joel 2:28-29 Amos 3:7-8 Matt. 7:21-23
Matt. 11:13 Matt. 26:66-68 Luke 24:26-27, 44 Acts 2:17-18 1 Pet. 1:10-12 2 Pet. 1:20-21 Jude 14-15
Rev. 10:11 Rev. 22:10, 18-19

What does it mean to speak in tongues, and what can it add to what the Christian receives at salvation? Is it the opposite of that which took place following the building of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:6-9)? Would you agree that prophecy spoke to men, and tongues to God?

Isa. 45:23 Mark 16:17 Acts 2:3, 4, 5 Acts 2:14-40 Acts 19:6
1 Cor. 12:8-30 1 Cor. 13:1-13

1 Corinthians 14:34-40

Finally, Paul deals with the place of women in the work and worship of the Church. What right has a woman to minister in the Church of Christ, and how far is she restricted by the apostle's guarded regulation?

a. Let it be remembered that in previous passages (11:5) he has already recognized woman's right to prophesy and pray in public, simply requiring her to do it modestly and with simplicity, which was then recognized as her subordinate place as a woman. If, then, he recognized the right of ministry certainly it would be inconsistent to suppose that he withdraws it.

b. Women did exercise many vocations of Christian ministry in the apostolic Church without question. We read of those women that "labored with him in the gospel" (see Philippians 4:3), and we know that Phoebe was a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea (Romans 16:1).

c. Prophesying, which was recognized in First Corinthians 11:5 as a woman's legitimate ministry, included speaking unto men "for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). Therefore, a woman's right to speak to men as well as to women for their instruction, quickening and comfort is clearly recognized.

d. What then are the restrictions? Well, it is very certain that she is to so exercise her ministry as not to transcend the limits of modesty and womanly propriety. The wearing of the covering upon her head was the recognition of this in that day, and it simply means today that she is to act with such reserve that she will never unsex herself or try to take the place of a man.

The apostle distinctly recognizes not her inferiority to man, but her subordination to man. She is man's equal in ability and honor, but she is subordinate to his authority. Just as two judges who sit on the same bench are equal in ability and dignity, but one is the head of the court and the other is a member of it. "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man" (11:3). The head of Christ is God, and yet Christ is equal to God.

Every modest and sensible woman will clearly recognize the scriptural principle and save herself the loss of power that always comes from getting out of place.

Further, this was more marked in the case of the wives than of other women. In the relationship of home the woman voluntarily placed herself under the authority of her husband. Rotherham solves the difficulty in this passage by translating the word wife for woman. "Let the wives keep silence in the churches, and if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for the wives to speak in Church" (14:34-35). This translation throws much light upon the passage, which is increased by the word "disgraceful," which seems to refer to the social customs of that day, especially the discredit that would attach to a woman by bursting through the etiquette of their time. Were a woman in the East today to throw off her veil and appear with uncovered face to the public it would be a shame, and yet it would not be a sin. It would at once, however, brand her as a woman of bad character.

There is yet one more consideration which throws light on this passage. It is the technical sense of the word Church. It does not mean a church building, which they did not then possess, but it meant the ecclesiastical order, formal assembly of the congregation. In this view the passage might mean that woman was not to take an official place in the ecclesiastical organization, was not to be one of its elders, its rulers, its ecclesiastical leaders.

But within these modest and reasonable restraints, a woman has no restriction placed upon her highest usefulness. He who allowed a woman of old to be His preeminent instrument of witness and blessing to the world, has put no unreasonable barrier in the way of her testimony and service now. She was first to herald the Savior's resurrection, let her be the first to welcome Him

at His advent and to strike the note that will announce His coming. In a day when a woman is not ashamed to expose herself on the indecent stage, and in the wild and riotous revel of modern society, let her not be ashamed to stand for Christ as His loving and faithful witness, and be found when He comes not only with Mary at His feet, but with Anna of Jerusalem, and with the Magdalene of the resurrection morn going forth with flying feet to tell to men the glad story of His resurrection, ascension and coming again.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

The apostle made it clear in Chapter 11 that women could pray and prophesy in the church. **Do you believe that it also is clear that they were to be in submission to the men, using the Genesis account as his authority, since woman was created to be man's helper? What are your views, in line with the Word?**

1 Corinthians 15:1-19

No doubt there was a group in the Corinthian church who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Paul in answering this starts out by giving a wonderful statement in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 of what the gospel is. Paul did not give a new gospel. It was the old gospel, given in Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus.

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (15:3).
2. He was buried (15:4).
3. He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (15:4).
4. He was seen by many witnesses (15:5-6).

If we deny the Resurrection, we deny one of the greatest of all truths of the gospel. Preaching is vain; faith and hope are all vain. But more than all that, no resurrection would mean no gospel at all, for we would be worshiping a dead Christ. There would be no "good news," for there would be no proof that God had accepted Christ's death as an atonement for our sins. If a sailor on jumping overboard to rescue a drowning man were drowned himself, then we would know that he did not save the man after whom he went. If Christ did not come out from the grave, then He could not bring anyone with Him from the grave. Christ's body died, and it was His body that was raised again. His soul was committed into the hands of the Father.

Because Christ lives, we shall live also. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

(What The Bible Is All About, Henrietta C. Mears)

Paul, who formerly persecuted the church, had much to reconsider and reconcile in his mind after he came to the Lord, or—better said—when the Lord came to him. While some did not have a clear view of the gospel and grace of our Lord, Paul fully knew what it took to bring him from his former unfulfilled and rebellious condition to his present state of purpose and joy.

The gospel is described as being of God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. By the grace of God, the gospel makes up the Kingdom of God. The gospel brings complete peace and salvation, and will culminate in the glory of Christ.

Below are further statements pertaining to the gospel, each accompanied by a reference. Following each statement write what these words mean to you:

The gospel is of supernatural origin, Gal 1:10-12

The gospel is possible only by God's power, Rom. 1:16

The gospel is a great mystery, Eph. 6:19

The gospel is made known by revelation, Eph. 3:1-6

The gospel is the deposit of truth, 1 Cor. 15:1-4

What was Paul trying to convey in 1 Cor. 15:10 when he said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am?"

Rom. 3:22-24 Rom. 4:4, 5, 16 1 Cor. 1:4-8 Gal. 1:15, 16 Gal. 2:20 Gal. 5:22, 23 Eph. 1:5-9, 11, 12
Eph. 2:8, 9 Phil. 1:6, 9-11 Col. 1:10, 11 Col. 2:19 2 Pet. 1:5-9

1 Corinthians 15:20-58

The great theme of the chapter is namely, the hope of our resurrection. For Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours, and our resurrection is the precious hope that dispels the darkness of the grave, and illuminates the future with all the glory that shines from His exaltation. And while He is the pledge of our resurrection, He is its pattern, too; and as He is so shall we be when He shall appear.

In his long and majestic argument for the resurrection he covers a wide field, and it can only be briefly summarized within these limits.

He tells us that it is hinted at even in the analogy of nature. The seed that we plant in our garden and that springs out of the grave and develops its life out of death is a parable of the resurrection. The great Faraday, standing before an immense audience and dissolving a jewel of gold in a powerful acid, and then by another acid precipitating it and bringing it back, and then molding it into a more beautiful form and presenting it to the audience, was but giving them a little analogy of the resurrection as set forth in the processes of science. If man can do this much with an inert metal, how much more can God do with the human body formed for His glory and destined to immortality?

The resurrection is not our natural birthright, but it comes to us through our union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Head of humanity. There are two human races passing along the course of time. One is the race of Adam; the other the race of Jesus Christ. One was born from our fallen father; the other has been begotten out of the heart of the Son of God. From one we inherit death; from the other, life.

As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the Man from heaven.... For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:48-49, 52)

Receiving from Him a new spiritual life and a new physical life in embryo, it becomes the deathless seed of a more glorious life, which will burst from the tomb as the blossoms of the spring burst forth from the ground and unfold amid the imperishable glories of the summerland on high.

Which race do you belong to? Which nature have you received? Which life are you developing, the Adam or the Christ?

The figure of baptism is introduced in the 29th verse. "Those ... who are baptized for the dead," no doubt, simply means those that were baptized as a symbol of death. Baptism is the especial sign of death and resurrection, and this very ordinance of Christianity has no significance and is but a delusive mockery if the dead rise not.

The order of the resurrection is very clearly unfolded in verses 23-28. "Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him" (15:23).

There are three stages of the resurrection. The first is personal. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself, the lone Conqueror of the grave, as He stands at the open tomb, the Firstborn from the dead.

The second stage is coming when those that sleep in Jesus will be raised and the living translated into His glorious image. Not before are we to expect our resurrection. The departed dead are waiting the simultaneous hour when they will all alike be lifted from their long sleep in the dust, and will put on their robes of resurrection life and gather with Him in the air.

Then there is a third stage at the end when His millennial reign will be over, when He will have accomplished His victorious plan and put all enemies under His feet; then will the wicked dead come forth, death itself will be destroyed and cast into the lake of fire to slay no more the children of our race.

The glory of the resurrection is very clearly set forth in the natural analogy. He draws a splendid contrast between the bare seed that you put in the soil and the glorious harvest that crowns it on the golden field. As that harvest is much greater than the little seed that died, or as that splendid tree with its luxuriant foliage, its rich bloom and its abundant fruit is immeasurably more than the little dry seed from which it sprang, so shall our resurrection body surpass the earthly form that was laid down in corruption, dishonor and weakness. It shall come forth in all the glory of His resurrection, and share all His mental endowments and His perfect physical powers, and enter into the lordship of creation which was the inheritance of man at the first, and is given back in the Son of man and in the new creation.

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (15:58).

Three things will follow a realizing faith and hope of the Lord's coming.

First, we will be steadfast in the faith. We will stand firm in these days of doubt and disbelief, and take heed that we may be able to say at last, "I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Next, we shall be immovable from the right. We will walk the narrow path. We will keep our garments spotless. We will watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. We will be firm amid the seductions of the world, the flesh and the devil. We will stand with girded loins, spotless robes and shining lamps, awaiting His coming.

Thirdly, we will be busy in His service and occupied in holy activities to prepare the world for His coming. We will be working to finish what He has given us to do, to lead others to the partnership of this blessed hope, and especially to carry forth the invitations to the wedding, send out the gospel to the world, proclaim the witness to all the nations, gather out a people for His name from every country and tribe and tongue, and thus hasten His coming and prepare His way. This will be our joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ at His coming. Thus we are laying up our treasures yonder, and life is being invested in the glorious possibilities and prospects of the ages to come and the kingdom which shall never pass away. Let us then "stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord," for "You know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

1 Cor 15:22 states, "In Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." **Through the following scriptures, with prayer, explain the above scripture verse in a way to help a searching person to understand this process that God has provided to bring us into His kingdom:**

Rom. 5:12-21 Rom. 6:2-14 1 Cor. 15:51 Eph. 1:11-14 Col. 3:5-17 Rom. 8:1-17

When we come to Christ, we become new creatures because God has given us a new spiritual nature. This means that there is now residing in us an altogether new spiritual nature which was not there before. In this human life we still do retain within us the old carnal (or flesh, or self, or Adam) nature, which now battles against the spirit nature. However, God has also given us the Holy Spirit within, by whose powers we are kept daily walking in the power of the Christ-life. Also, this new holy life has the divine power (by the Holy Spirit) to overcome all of the temptations of this world that formerly plagued us, which we could not overcome in our own strength. God does not try to change or refine the old nature with which we were born as our inheritance from our father Adam. No, He has provided a "death" on Christ's cross for that self-nature when we are willing to accept it (Rom. 6:2-11). Then He tells us: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth, for you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3). Then, by Christ's resurrection power learning daily to "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), letting the Word of God be our daily guide, and opening our hearts continually in prayer to allow His instructions, love and guidance pour in, we come to know the peaceful, abiding walk in the Spirit—which is the fullness of Christ's own life within each one. And as glorious as this is, we are also then filled with a holy desire to spread this great joy by sharing the attaining of this Gift with all whom we know! (2 Cor. 4:3-7). **What happens to our old human (carnal, flesh, Adam) nature when we die (spiritually) and receive Christ's Life as our own?**

2 Cor. 5:17-19 Rom. 5:1 2, 8-11 Eph. 4:11, 12, 15, 16 1 Cor. 3:2 Rom. 8:5, 6 Col. 3:1-3 Rom. 8:9-13, 26

What should we do when we realize at any given time that it is not our new spiritual nature leading and moving us, but the old carnal (flesh) nature still attempting to control us?

Acts 17:28 2 Cor. 4:7-15 2 Cor. 12:9-10 Col. 3:15

Why do you think God allows this "yo-yo" (back and forth) struggle to go on within us, pulling us in two different ways?

Rom 7(all) Rom 8:1, 2 Rom 8:18-27

The Father and the Son are one and the same God, yet the Father has designated certain tasks for His Son to carry out. When Christ has "put down all rule and all authority and power and destroyed the last enemy, death, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). Christ is indeed anointed of the Lord, the Author and Finisher of our faith, Emmanuel (God with us), the Holy One of God, and King Eternal; yet He died for, and lives for the Church, His redeemed, of whom He is the Head. **When we pray, to whom should we address our prayers, to the Father or to the Son?**

Matt. 6:5-13 John 5:19-30 John 8:26-27 John 14:28 John 16:25-28 John 17:1-8, 13 John 17:21-26

When the Lord returns we shall be changed—our spirit, soul and body will change from corruption to incorruption, and from mortality to immortality. No longer will we fear death, for death will be swallowed up in victory! And we shall go to live with Him through all Eternity! **Why is it said in 1 Cor. 15:56 that the "sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law"?**

Rom. 7:7-25 Gal. 3:19-25

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income" (1 Corinthians 16:2). This clearly suggests systematic beneficence. It is not to be a matter of caprice or random impulse, but it is to be done regularly and periodically. It is to be done even when there is no urgent need appealing for help and no cause in distress addressing its claims to our sympathy. We are to have a fund always available for the Lord's claims and the Lord's cause. While we are to recognize all we spend even upon ourselves and our families as spent for Him, we are to take a proper proportion of it, and set it aside to be available whenever needed for the special needs of the Lord's work.

The advantages of this system are obvious. It prevents mere giving through excitement or haste. It makes our beneficence deliberate and conscientious, and it provides a fund which is always available, and which only makes it

necessary for us to determine where the greatest need is. It is delightful to receive letters, as we often do, with such statements as this: "I have some of the Lord's money, and I believe He wants it to go for China," or "for Africa," as the case may be. This makes us stewards and trustees of what the Lord commits to our keeping, and "God's fellow workers" (2 Corinthians 6:1).

The fact that it was to be offered on the Lord's day gives the transaction a distinctly sacred character, and makes it an act of worship quite as much as our praises and our prayers. How different this from some of the ordinary methods of so-called Christian societies to extort their needed financial supplies through the devices of the auction mart, the produce exchange or the theater, or, still lower, the cheap restaurant.

The standard is to be "in keeping with his income" (1 Corinthians 16:2). This is intended as a definite recognition of the fact that everything we have belongs to God, and our offering is just the tribute of glad acknowledgment of His proprietary right to us and all we call our own.

The expression, "so that when I come no collections will have to be made" (16:2), is a very suggestive hint that Christian giving should be so conscientious and deliberate that it would not need to be stimulated by special appeals or public excitement. Indeed, the apostle seemed desirous of having no appearance of his seeking their gifts. He wished rather the whole impression of his visit to be spiritual, and their offering to be so entirely spontaneous that it would be complete before his arrival.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

The Old Testament had defined rules for matters such as giving. It appears that these matters are not as clearly spelled out for us in the New Testament as they were for the Israelites in the Old Testament. Why? What covenant were the Israelites under, and what covenant are we living in today?

Gal. 3:3-5 Gal. 4:9-11 Eph. 1:12-14 Eph. 2:10, 13, 18, 22

1 Corinthians 16:3-24

Anathema This is a fierce, angry word for the apostle to use. It is a Greek word that has the effect of Paul pronouncing a curse on those trifling, counterfeit believers in the Corinthian church. The apostle has no patience with those whose hearts are casual or lukewarm toward the Lord. He doesn't see how any man can truly have Jesus and not have a heart that burns with love for Him, particularly in light of what the Lord sacrificed to save him. Paul has in mind someone or perhaps several people in the church who profess to love Jesus, but are more interested in the Christian life than they are in Him. It is clear that Paul had enemies in that church, and knowing that possibly triggered his use of this angry word. There were some who wanted Paul out of the picture so they could run things. But he would never apply this to anyone whom he knew to be IN CHRIST.

Maranatha is an Aramaic word meaning, "Our Lord, come." It is made up of two untranslated words: "Marana," meaning "Our Lord," and "Tha," meaning "come." Since the word is Aramaic and not Greek, it is an old word dating back to the days when the church was getting started in Palestine. From earliest time the word was an expression of longing in hearts for the return of the Lord. The earliest churches felt the Lord would be coming back very soon. When the word was passed on to the Greek speaking churches, it remained untranslated. It is probably safe to assume it was used as a prayer in connection with the communion or perhaps at the end of a service.

(Lovett's Lights on First Corinthians with Gems from Second Corinthians, C. S. Lovett)

Paul says to those who do not love the Lord, "let him be Anathema" (1 Cor. 16:22), and this is followed by the one word, "Maranatha." **Does this combined remark apply today, or should the preference be the words in the final book of our Bible, the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself:**

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.

And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him who hears say, Come. And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

Rev. 22:16-17