

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE CORINTHIANS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
BACKGROUND OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

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TO
RAY FRANK ROBBINS II
and
CECIL HARWELL ROBBINS

My sons, who were born while I was
pursuing this study.

PREFACE

One day while I was discussing thesis writing with Dr. James S. Stewart, Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature, The New College, University of Edinburgh, he suggested that I investigate another aspect of the same general field in which I had done my thesis for the Doctor of Theology degree. Dr. William Manson, Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature, The New College, University of Edinburgh, agreed to this suggestion and helped me formulate a subject. He suggested that I make a critical examination of First Corinthians, and that I investigate the background of the Corinthian Church.

The proposal that I use this as a subject for my thesis was accepted by the Senatus Academicus of the University of Edinburgh, and the subsequent months have very largely been occupied with an effort to critically examine First Corinthians and to understand the background and environment of the Corinthian Church. This thesis is the fruit of my labor.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, no other work deals directly with my subject. I have sought to find every critic of First Corinthians and to investigate what he produced. I have tried to make my conclusions only as the evidence permitted. I have investigated many commentaries on the subject; however, for the most part they are concerned more with what is written than with why it was written. Most of them give some background and environment as an introduction to the commentary and then deal with the material as if there were no

background!

For their practical suggestions, encouragement, supervision, and guidance I wish to express my grateful appreciation to Professor William Manson and to Professor James S. Stewart, whose teaching has inspired and challenged me to search the Scriptures and to seek to keep an open inquisitive mind. I am also deeply indebted to Dr. William Hersey Davis and to Dr. Edward A. McDowell, Professors of New Testament Interpretation in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A. For the helpful suggestions and criticisms from Dr. Karl Barth, Basel, Switzerland; Dr. Emil Brunner, Zurich, Switzerland; Dr. R. H. Lightfoot, New College, Oxford; Mr. Ernest A. Payne, Regent's Park College, Oxford; and my colleagues in the Department of Bible and Religious Education, Howard College, Birmingham, Alabama, U.S.A., I shall ever be grateful. To Miss Eddie Lee Daily, my secretary, whose skill as a typist brought this thesis to its final form I am indebted. To these and to all others who have helped to make my study worth while I express my gratitude. Also I am thankful for every contribution The New College, University of Edinburgh, has made to my life to make it useful in the Kingdom of God.

Ray Frank Robbins

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

Was First Corinthians a part of a correspondence carried on between St. Paul and the Christians in Achaia? Is the extant letter in the same form as the one St. Paul wrote? When did epistolary relations exist between the Corinthians and St. Paul? Are we listening, as we read First Corinthians, to one party of two engaged in a continued dialogue? What is the relationship of the Corinthian Church to its environment?

Our main purpose in this thesis is to seek answers to these questions. We shall seek to discover who wrote First Corinthians, in what form it was written, and when it was written. We shall also investigate the influences of the Province of Corinthia on the church that grew up in its capital city. We are to learn what we can about society in that great wealthy, and luxurious city located on the great highway of imperial communications: a meeting place of many roads, thronged always by travelers and by resident strangers.

II. THE SOURCES

The primary sources for this study have been of three kinds. The critical works of many scholars on St. Paul have been investigated. Probably the most helpful have been those of Johannes Weiss, W. C. van Manen, Alford Loisy, Ernest W.

Barnes, H. J. Haltzmann, Rudolf Steck, Ernest Renan, and Thomas Whittaker. The works of the ancient writers have delineated the conditions of Greece in general, and Corinth in particular, during that period. The most helpful of these writers were Pausanias, Strabo, Athenaeus, Thucydides, and Polybius. Valuable source material was also found in the archaeological reports of excavations at Corinth.

The secondary sources are largely of a historical nature. Numerous histories covering this period and also commentaries on First Corinthians have been consulted. The most valuable of these have been Rostovtzeff's Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, Ramsay's article, "Historical Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians" in The Expositor 1900¹--1901¹, T. W. Manson's, "St. Paul in Ephesus; the Corinthian Correspondence" Bulletin of the John Ryland Library, Manchester, and Johannes Weiss', Der erste Koivtherbrief, Series of Meyer Kommentar Zum N. Testament.

With but few exceptions, all the quotations of passages of scripture appearing in this thesis are from the American Standard Version of the Bible. In the cases of the exceptions, the translations are the writer's. I have used American spelling throughout the thesis. In the use of Greek and Latin writers, wherever possible, I have quoted an established translation, generally the Loeb Classical collection. In the bibliography and footnotes I have sought to give recognition to my sources.

III. THE SCOPE

It is not the purpose of this thesis to deal with every critical theory and hypothesis about First Corinthians, nor is it the purpose to discuss in detail all the different phases and developments of the Christian movement in Corinth, nor to write the complete story of the church in that city. Neither is it a commentary on First Corinthians.

In the first chapter we seek to determine the authorship of First Corinthians. The second chapter deals with the integrity of First Corinthians. In chapter three we endeavor to determine the date of First Corinthians and arrange in sequence St. Paul's activities regarding Corinth. The fourth chapter furnishes the background and environment of the geography, topography, history and politics necessary to an understanding of the church. In the fifth chapter the cultural background is investigated in order to find its effect upon the church. In the light of the findings of the first five chapters, we seek to understand in the three remaining chapters the Corinthian Church, especially as revealed in the two canonical Epistles. A brief summary appears in a conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

THE AUTHENTICITY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

I. CRITICISM OF PAULINE AUTHORSHIP

Problems many and various have confronted theological science when it has attempted to evaluate the Pauline writings. To understand these writings theological science has sought to answer the questions raised by literary critics, to examine in detail in these writings the individual conceptions and trains of thought, to make clear the unity and inner connections between the ideas used, to show what part St. Paul played in the development of the early Christian theology, to determine the relationship between his ideas and the early Christian community, and to solve the question of the sources of the materials employed.¹

1. Earlier Criticism.

Criticism in the first half of the nineteenth century led by Dr. Ferdinand Christian Baur, the founder of what was called, from the university in which he taught, the Tübingen school, gave to the study of Paulinism a new direction. Dr. Baur advanced the opinion that the Apostle had developed his doctrine in opposition to that of the primitive Christian community.² The development of Christianity and of Christian

1. Albert Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, p. 25.

2. Ferdinand Christian Baur, Paulus, Der Apostel Jesu Christi, p. 275.

literature in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic age was forced by Baur to obey the Hegelian formula of thesis, antithesis, and higher unity. In his view, therefore, whatever accorded with the history thus interpreted was to be accepted; otherwise, however great its claim to be considered historical, it had to be rejected, even though a more fitting place for it could not be discovered.¹ However, Baur declared that there could be no reasonable doubt as to the genuineness of the Corinthian Epistles.² He accepted only four Epistles of St. Paul, without some reservation, as being genuine. This conclusion of Baur's, if divergences of subordinate importance are left out of account, was accepted in Germany, Switzerland, France, Netherland, England, and America by many scholars.³

2. Transitional Criticism.

From the first the Tübingen criticism met with strong opposition as well as with cordial acceptance. The right wing of scholarship protested against it in defense of tradition, spared no effort to recover the invaded territory and to protect it from further attack. Those who were not so timid about breaking with traditional views or with conclusions that had been judged no longer tenable, inclined, nevertheless,

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1. R. J. Knowling, The Witness of the Epistles, p. 135.
 2. F. C. Baur, op. cit., p. 276.
 3. Encyclopedia Biblica, III, Article "Paul".

to consider that F. C. Baur had gone to the extreme limit of criticism and they thought that some retreat from his 'extravagances' was necessary.¹

3. Later Criticism.

This proposed retreat, however, was not accepted by all scholars. Some critical scholars rejected the Pauline letters as a whole, including Corinthians, and these critics professed to have derived from F. C. Baur the principle which led them to this conclusion. His criticism had been occupied with the Corpus Paulinum, the epistles which remained after the exclusion of the Pastoral Epistles. Even within the Corpus Paulinum Baur professed to find differences on the basis of which some epistles were to be assigned to the Apostle, and others to a school which took its rise from him.²

Once the rights of such criticism were admitted, nothing could prevent it from working itself out to conclusions. It was Professor Bruno Bauer who, about the middle of the nineteenth century, carried the process to its logical consequences and opened the way for all the so-called Pauline Epistles to be considered the work of a school with Greek sympathies within Christianity. This type of criticism, which had a wide acceptance, may fairly enough be called "advanced" in the

1. Ibid., Article, "Paul."

2. Schweitzer, op. cit., p. 118.

sense that its conclusions differ more than those of others from traditional opinion. This "advanced" criticism started from the same principle that F. C. Baur started from.¹

This negative direction of scholarship was followed by many critics who held that the quasi-historical life and death of Jesus did not take form until after the year 70 A.D.² It was contended that "the period of gestation--of oral myth making--lasted till about the end of the first century. Then began the production of the New Testament literature--without exception pseudepigraphic--which was approximately completed by the middle of the second century."³

According to the critical analysis of Professors W. C. van Manen and Rudolf Steck the New Testament, though written in Greek, belonged to the Oriental type of literature. The New Testament ideas sprang, they said, for the most part, out of an Oriental religion.⁴ The literature that immediately preceded it, the apocryphal literature of Judaism with its Messianic expectations, is admitted to be pseudepigraphic. They claimed that after the death of Jesus his followers soon began to think of him as the Messiah. This "stumbling-block" to the Jews caused a division between the Jews and the followers

1. Op. cit., Article "Paul."

2. Thomas Whittaker, The Origins of Christianity, p. xxxi.

3. Loc. cit.

4. W. C. van Manen, St. Paul, Translated by Thomas Whittaker in The Origins of Christianity, p. 149f.

of Jesus. A man named Paul, who taught in the dispersion, was a leader of the more liberal followers of Jesus. His teaching and his practice of antinomianism caused a division among the followers of Jesus. This division continued into the second century, when the two extremes became very apparent and antagonistic. This method of reasoning led van Manen and Steck to the conclusion that in the second century this "Paul" was "made to write" letters in order to try to bridge the divisions of the church.

II. SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

This more radical criticism, recognizing the arbitrariness of the division made between the genuine and spurious Epistles, found itself necessitated to deny altogether the Pauline origin of any of the writings in the New Testament, including First Corinthians.¹ In the following paragraphs some of the arguments that have been adopted by this school of critical theologians to decide against the genuineness of First Corinthians will be examined and the answers to these objections will be given.

1. The Character of the Document.

The Title. Professor W. C. van Manen² claimed that the title showed that the writer intended First Corinthians to be a letter. He said that a little examination revealed

1. Rudolf Steck, Der Galaterbrief, Vorwort, p. v.
2. Op. cit., Article "Paul."

the epistolary form to be merely external. It does not matter, said van Manen, that the document presents itself as an epistle; this is not its character in the ordinary and literary meaning of the word. It is not a document originally intended for definite persons, despatched to these, and afterwards by publication made the common property of all. On the contrary, he said, it was from the first, a treatise for instruction and especially for edification, cast in the form of a letter. Professor van Manen surmised that the object of the writer was to make it appear that Paul was still living at the time of the composition of the Epistle, though in point of time he belonged to an earlier generation.

Answer to the Objection. In First Corinthians 1:2 the $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\nu$ is not simply connected with $\tau\eta\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ as if the writer were addressing the Corinthians along with all other Christians, but with $\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\iota}\omicron\iota\varsigma$. The document is not conveying greetings to the whole Church in Spirit, but commending to the Corinthians the fact that in being "called" they formed a part of a larger body of select persons consisting of all who "invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." The thought of some to possess Christ for themselves alone, explains $\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\ \eta\ \mu\omega\upsilon$. Throughout the Epistle it is the Corinthians alone that are addressed, not all Christendom. The writing can best be understood if taken

in this way.¹

Peculiar Phenomena. Professor van Manen² in a very broad, vaguely stated summarization asserted that there are to be detected phenomena in First Corinthians which, whatever be the exact explanation arrived at in each case, all point to a peculiarity in the manner of origin of this document which is not usually found and which indeed is hardly conceivable in ordinary letters.

Answer to the Objection. This summarization is a superficial generalization and the conclusion will not be made until the facts have been considered. In the following considerations these phenomena will be discussed individually. F. C. Baur came to the conclusion that the Epistle carried the seal of its authority within itself; for him more than any other writing of the New Testament, it transports the reader into the living center of a Christian Church in formation, and presents a view of the circumstances through which the development of the new life evoked by Christianity had to pass.³ Thus to all scholars First Corinthians does not present peculiar phenomena.

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, International Critical Commentary, First Corinthians, p. 3.

2. Op. cit., Article "Paul."

3. Ferdinand Christian Baur, Op. cit., p. 260.

2. Later Than the Apostle Paul.

The Corinthians Familiar with Contents of Old Testament. Professor van Manen¹ in his endeavor to show that the Epistle was not written by St. Paul contended that the members of the Corinthian Church who are here addressed were formerly heathens and had had time to become familiar with the contents of the Old Testament. The community had its traditions, imparted as it appears, a long time before. He also saw in the series of recognized functions mentioned in First Corinthians 12:28-30, performed by different persons, a second century development. The religious services² in which the members took various parts, and in which abuses had arisen and needed setting in order, indicated to van Manen a second century development.

Answer to the Objection. The organization of the church is evidently still at an early stage. There is no mention of bishops, presbyters, or deacons. There is no reference to any such permanent officers, not even when the context would suggest the mention of responsible officers, (5:1f; 6:1f,5; 14:32.) The low place in the list occupied by administrative gifts seems to imply that administrative offices are still voluntarily undertaken, (16:15.) It is possible

1. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., p. 166.
 2. I Corinthians, 14:6,26.

that in First Corinthians 11:2,23; and 15:3, an allusion is made to some rudimentary teaching given to young converts. This *παράδοσις* contained the leading facts of the Gospel and the teaching of Christ and the Apostles. The *μνήσθηθε*¹ implies a considerable time but not beyond the possible time of St. Paul's absence from Corinth.²

Position of Christian Community. When this Epistle was written the Christian community had, according to van Manen³, won for itself a place in the world, and that place was so great that the relation of its members to those outside had to be regulated.⁴

Answer to the Objection. The Christian community in Corinth was made up of people who lived in the world. As soon as they became Christians, if they remained in the world, their relations with those outside the community would have to be regulated immediately. It is not necessary to assume that a long period of time had to elapse before this regulation with those outside the church took place.

The Position of St. Paul. St. Paul was, according to van Manen,⁵ a power at the time this Epistle was written. He

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1. I Corinthians 11:1
 2. F. C. Baur, Paul, The Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings, I. p. 209.
 3. Op. cit., Article "Paul."
 4. I Corinthians, 6:1-11.
 5. Op. cit., Article "Paul."

is represented as standing so high that he could threaten with his coming, (4:19-21); could make his spirit act at a distance, (5:3); could deliver sinners to Satan, (5:5); and could bless with his love. This love of St. Paul was represented as being next after the grace of Jesus Christ, (16:24).¹

Answer to the Objection. There is no need whatsoever to construe the writer's words in First Corinthians 4:19-21; 5:5; 16:24, to mean anything other than the simple historical visit to Corinth that he was then contemplating.

Gnosticism. In First Corinthians, said Professor A. D. Loman,² it is clear that points of contact with Gnosticism have already come into prominence, (cf. 1:9,25; 2:5,6,8; 5:5; 15:26.) In fact, Loman viewed the Epistle as a product of the Anti-Judaic and universalistic Gnosis of the early part of the second century. The chiefs of this movement, said Loman, made Paul, or Saul of Tarsus, their hero, whose history with the exception of some few incidents, is unknown. Thus the "Paul-legend," said Loman, arose in the interest of the true Gnosis; i.e., in the interest of the spread of a universalistic Christianity. First Corinthians, wherein the equal rights of Peter, Apollos, and Paul were

1. Ibid.

2. R. J. Knowling, The Witness of the Epistles, pp. 147,8.

defended, was written in St. Paul's name to recommend this Christianity.

Answer to the Objection. No doubt the writer of First Corinthians used philosophico-religious terms, expressions kindred to Gnostic ideas. However the more the Gnostic element is insisted upon, the more inconceivable does it become that a forger, writing with the purpose of spreading universalistic Christianity in the name of the church should have imagined that the best way of effecting such a purpose was to introduce language obnoxious to the Church. Nor must it be forgotten that the borrowing may ^{part of it,} _{have been} have been often on the other side, as Renan¹ has admitted; and that, instead of rejecting the Pauline Epistles because they contain traces of Gnosticism, the approach should be to reason inversely, and seek in these passages the origin of the Gnostic ideas which prevailed in the second century. ?

The Exalted Place of Christianity. Professor van Manen² came to the conclusion that in First Corinthians Christianity was no longer thought of as a Jewish sect, but an independent confession, standing over against both Jews and Greeks. It expected, he said, justification neither from obedience to

1. Ernest Renan, The History of the Origins of Christianity, Book III, Saint Paul, pp. x, xi, 275, 77, 83, 85-90.

2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., Article "Paul."

the law nor from conscience void of reproach.¹ He saw in this an indication of a late date because a considerable time had to elapse before this development could take place.

Answer to the Objection. St. Paul never thought of Christianity as a Jewish sect.² To him from the beginning it was the "Israel after the Spirit." In First Corinthians 4:4, however, he was not stating a fact, but a hypothesis. He was conscious of many faults; yet, even if he were not aware of any, he was saying, that would not acquit him. Professor T. W. Manson stated it in this way:³

....he [Paul] declares that Christianity is not primarily a new form of Jewish nationalism or a new development of Greek culture, but an act of God: a proclamation of God's saving intervention in human affairs, leading to faith in God, which in its turn issues in man's confession of his faith in God through Jesus Christ, and a new life proper to those who stand in a new relation to God.

Catholicity. The idea of "catholic," according to van Manen,⁴ did not arise until the middle of the second century and the writer of First Corinthians emphasized the one collective church, standing above the particular churches.⁵

1. I Corinthians, 4:4.

2. James S. Stewart, A Man in Christ, pp. 298-301.

3. T. W. Manson, "St. Paul in Ephesus; The Corinthian Correspondence," p. 104. Bulletin of the John Ryland Library, Manchester, Vol. 26. No. 1. October-November, 1941.

4. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., Article "Paul."

5. I Corinthians, 10:32; 12:28.

He even demanded uniform customs of all the churches.¹ It is true, said van Manen, that the writer was cautious not to use the word "catholic" in any of these passages because the use of the word would have betrayed him.

Answer to the Objection. In First Corinthians 10:32 there is no harsh note of ecclesiasticism. The writer was not making this document "catholic," but he was commending to the Corinthians the fact that their call was not for themselves alone, but into the unity of the Christian brotherhood; a thought that was especially necessary for them.² In the passages in which van Manen saw a demand for uniform custom in all the churches, the writer is simply saying that there is a general consistence in his teaching. He is not requiring more of the Corinthians than he does of others. There is no suggestion that there is a hierarchical Church standing above the churches. The Corinthians are reminded, however, that they are members of a much greater whole.

Advanced Christology. Regarding the Christology in First Corinthians, Professor Rudolf Steck³ said that in this Epistle, Jesus was no longer merely what he became after his death for his first disciples--the promised Messiah, who had

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1. I Corinthians, 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33.
 2. A Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 3.
 3. Rudolf Steck, op. cit., pp. 276-287.

to suffer and die so that he might be raised from the dead and taken up into heaven, whence he would come to establish his kingdom on earth. Jesus was now thought of as being from heaven as Adam was from earth.¹ He was now Christ, the Son of God, the One Lord,² the Lord of Glory,³ the power and wisdom of God.⁴ The Christological development was, therefore, according to Steck, far greater than can be conceived in a contemporary of the earliest disciples, who had gone over to them from Judaism.

Answer to the Objection. It is true that in the later New Testament writings the divine side of the Person and work of Jesus is more and more developed, and his significance in the scheme of the universe unfolded more completely. However, the Christology referred to by Steck in First Corinthians is similar to that which St. Peter⁵ attributed to the risen Jesus in his sermon on the day of Pentecost.⁶ "It is certain that the Church from the first [even before St. Paul's conversion] preached Christ as Messiah and Lord and Judge."⁷ The actual basis of Christological development in the early Church has been expressed in the words of Professor William

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1. I Corinthians 15:47.
 2. I Corinthians 8:6.
 3. I Corinthians 2:8.
 4. I Corinthians 1:24.
 5. C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Development. pp. 20f.
 6. Acts 2:34-36; 5:31
 7. James S. Stewart, op. cit., p. 295.

Manson,¹ "There was never any time when the Church thought of Jesus otherwise than as Priest, Mediator, and Atoning Sacrifice." Thus the risen Jesus was called both Lord and Christ by a contemporary of St. Paul and an earlier apostle than was St. Paul; and this earlier apostle was expressing the views of the early Christian community. As Professor James S. Stewart has cogently expressed it,² "For Paul's mind and heart and conscience there was no hiatus between Christ in glory and the Jesus who had 'lived on earth abased'." It is evident, however, that the writer of this Epistle considered the death of Jesus as "essentially and exclusively an event of transcendental significance, foreknown before the aeons by God and accomplished, unwittingly and to their own detriment, by the daemonic forces of the universe (I Cor ii. 7-8)."³

Too Broad and Deep for Paul. Professor van Manen⁴ came to the conclusion that it was very improbable that Paul, the tentmaker and traveling preacher, should in the short time of three and one half years after leaving Corinth, amid all his preoccupations, have been able to lay down the lines of the Christian life so broadly and deeply that his writings

1. William Manson, The Incarnate Glory, p. 125.
 2. James S. Stewart, op. cit., pp. 284,5.
 3. S. G. F. Brandon, The Hibbert Journal Article, "The Logic of New Testament Criticism," Vol. XLVII, No. 2 January 1949.
 4. Op. cit., Article, "Paul."

could serve as text-books, not only for the particular community to which they were addressed, but for all other Christian communities wherever they might have been. Thus for van Manen First Corinthians can be better explained as the result of the Christianity of the second century.

Answer to the Objection. This argument simply does not take into account the intense earnestness, the vast mental power of the writer nor the reality of the historical situation.¹ If such preaching is denied to St. Paul how can its rise and diffusion be explained? Is it reasonable to suppose that time or accident first laid down the lines of the Christian life as expounded in this Epistle? The hour called for a man endowed with original talent, and a man of decision and action, and the writer of this Epistle grasped the idea of a world-wide religion and answered the call. This Epistle could only be the production of an original powerful spirit, which had learned, in its independence and freedom, to recognize in the cross of Jesus the revelation of a might that overcame the world, and in his resurrection, not merely a vindication of the Nazarene rejected by the Jews, but the triumph of life over death.² Many of the political and ethical documents whose laws

1. Statement by William Manson, personal interview.
2. I Corinthians, Chapter 15.

govern the lives of millions of people were written in less time than was required to write First Corinthians.¹

Attitude of Community: Attitude of Paul. The only way, said van Manen,² to understand the attitude of the community toward Paul and the attitude of Paul toward the community is to assume a wide gap between the time of Paul and the composition of the writing.

Answer to the Objection. There is no reason to assume a gap between St. Paul and the composition of the Epistle. There would be no point whatsoever in creating a historical situation with the elements that are in this Epistle to teach Christians of a later time. In fact, the Corinthians of a later time would have resented such representation if the situation had been created. This Epistle could not have passed into general acceptance if the Church, which had a continuous history, had been in a position to say that such a letter was not in their archives; and furthermore they had never heard of it before.³ The proof of its authenticity is contained in the severe and humiliating rebukes addressed to the church. No church would so easily and without rigorous investigation have accepted and preserved the "monument

1. J. A. Beet, St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, p. 5.

2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., pp. 161,2.

3. A. S. Peake, A. Commentary on the Bible, p. 832.

of its degradation."¹

Impressions on Different Readers. If the letter had been written, asked van Manen,² to the whole church what impression would have been made on the "weak"³ by the tone in which the "strong," the men of "knowledge"⁴ are admonished to have patience with the weak? The effect would have been the opposite to what was intended by the writer. The weak would have become humiliated; and the strong would have become proud, or more proud. In a letter written at a later time, said van Manen, the admonition presents no difficulty.

Answer to the Objection. The "weak brother" whom the writer had in view was a Christian, who, though himself troubled by unfounded scruples, would be likely to follow the lead of others in spite of his scruples. It is of real importance to notice what it is that the writer means by wounding the conscience of another. The wound that he has in mind, is the wound which the strong man causes to the weak man's conscience by the strong man's unfaithfulness to his duty in the conception of the weak man. In a cosmopolitan community, as the Corinthian Church certainly was,⁵

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1. J. A. Beet, op. cit., p. 5.
 2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., p. 163.
 3. I Corinthians 8:7,9,10,11,12.
 4. I Corinthians 8:1,7,9,10,11.
 5. See Chapter Five.

this admonition was natural. The writer is also using this method to help the "weak" to become strong as much as to teach the "strong" to be charitable.¹

Parties. No trace of a Jewish Christian party led by St. Peter has been found. The true explanation, according to van Manen,² is that the parties were not historical, or at least were not of the place and time to which they were assigned. The writer himself, said van Manen, did not treat their existence as serious; he merely wanted to point a moral against parties in his own day.

Answer to Objection. After the crucifixion of Jesus the positions of leadership can be doubtless traced in Acts and Galatians. In the first half of Acts, St. Peter appears as the leader. During this time James, a brother of Jesus, joined the Christian community in Jerusalem. It is clear that he soon took an important, and eventually perhaps the most important, place of leadership in the church. What happened to St. Peter after this rise of James to power is not stated, but it is unlikely that followers of St. Peter would accept this "demotion" without some effort to reinstate him in the position of leadership. Professor T. W. Manson

1. H. L. Goudge, Westminster Commentary, First Corinthians, pp. 72,3.

2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., p. 164.

had this to say on this development.¹

It may be mere coincidence, though I think it is more than that, that soon after we get the evidence of the primacy of James, we also get the evidence of attempts to assert the authority of Peter in the sphere of Paul's work. Whether Peter in this was seeking a new sphere for himself outside the supervision of James, or acting as James' agent, I do not attempt to determine.

Opponents Outside Community. The usual view is that the opponents of St. Paul in First Corinthians are Jewish Christians, yet, said van Manen,² no sign of it appears in the document itself. The opponents, he said, that are spoken of in First Corinthians 9:1-18, who contest St. Paul's right to the privileges of an Apostle, did not present themselves as members of the Christian community at Corinth, but as outsiders.³ This passage, he asserted, is not a defense of the Apostle's rights--which he did not mean to exercise--by himself before his recent converts, but a vindication of those who regarded themselves as his successors against some who, in a later age, were refusing to admit that he had really been an Apostle. According to van Manen this is the only way to explain the warmth of tone.

Answer to the Objection. The writer of First Corinthians 9:1-18 did not begin a new discussion. It is a continuation

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1. T. W. Manson, St. Paul in Ephesus, op. cit., p. 107.
 2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., pp. 164, 5.
 3. I Corinthians 9:2.

of the admonition to the weak and strong in the community. He paused to point out that he himself considered the profits of others instead of insisting upon his rights. He met all the qualifications of an Apostle, still he did not demand all the privileges of an Apostle. Because of this self-denial there were some among the Corinthians who denied his Apostleship. The reference in First Corinthians 9:2 is probably to the Judaizing teachers who had come to Corinth.¹ The writer seems to be thinking especially of the Judaizing teachers, and their Corinthian supporters in First Corinthians 9:3f.

Opponents Inside Community. The only opponents within the community, concluded van Manen,² are no lagging Judaizers, but Paulinists of the extreme left; men who, in the opinion of the writer, go too far in his own direction; who arrogate to themselves too much liberty, who fancy themselves superior to their teachers. The existence of such opponents is simply inconceivable, said van Manen, in a newly formed community consisting of insignificant people³ in the time of the historical Paul.

Answer to the Objection. There is evidence in First Corinthians that some of the opponents of the writer were taking

1. See Chapter Six.

2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., pp. 164,5.

3. I Corinthians 1:26-28.

his views too far in his own direction. To come to this conclusion, however, that they were the only opponents of the writer is to take a far too simplified view of the Corinthian Church, and the divisions within the church.¹ The writer stated in First Corinthians 1:26-28 that the Corinthians had been "called" into the church. The church contained but few with a reputation for wisdom, either of the Jewish or Greek kind; it counted few influential men. However, there were some persons of culture and position. Some of the opponents were Judaizing teachers and their Corinthian supporters. These divisions and opponents will be examined later in this thesis.²

Inconsistent. Many phrases and sayings, asserted van Manen, indicated a later time than is consistent with the genuineness of the writing.³ A passage such as 4:17, quite incomprehensible from the pen of the actual Paul, he said, betrayed the late writer even in his choice of words.

Answer to the Objection. The phrases and sayings mentioned as indicating a later time, and disproving the genuineness of First Corinthians can all with reasonable assurance be placed within the historical situation. No reasons have been given by van Manen to suggest that First

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1. See Chapter Six, pp. 170-208.
 2. See Chapter Six, pp. 170-208.
 3. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., p. 169.

Corinthians 4:17 did not belong to the historical situation purposed in this verse. First Corinthians "is the more valuable because Paul was evidently writing to meet the immediate needs of a community, and not composing a treatise or epistle with an eye to posterity."¹

Baptism for the Dead. According to van Manen² the custom of being baptized for the dead who had died unbaptized is first heard of among adherents of Cerinthus and Marcion. Paul could not, said van Manen, have known of this practice and not opposed it; yet, he said, the usage is mentioned with the approval of the writer.³

Answer to the Objection. The writer is not referring to the later custom of baptizing for the dead. The meaning of this passage will be discussed later.⁴

Spiritual Attainment of Members. In First Corinthians 1:17-31 van Manen⁵ inferred that the highly developed minds mentioned possessed a wisdom that far transcended the simplicity of the first disciples with their absorption in Messianic expectations. These members, he said, possessed a special kind

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1. E. J. Foakes-Jackson, The Life of St. Paul, p. 170.
 2. W. C. van Manen, Loc. cit.
 3. I Corinthians 15:29.
 4. See Chapter Eight, pp. 256-7.
 5. Op. cit., Article "Paul."

of $\gamma\nu\hat{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$. Already there were, van Manen continued, "perfect" members who could be spoken to about matters of the higher wisdom, spiritual members who can digest strong nourishment, understanding members who have knowledge. Originally, however, the church, he said, was in no position to sound such depths, consisting of a company of but little developed members. The majority are now, though still in a certain sense "carnal," able to follow profound discussions on questions so difficult as the resurrection of the dead.

Answer to the Objection. In this section the author of this Epistle showed how God's method of salvation humbles the pride of man. "The world, Jewish no less than Greek, had hoped through its own wisdom to attain to the knowledge of God, yet ignorance of God characterized it everywhere....When once Christ was accepted, Jews and Greeks found in Him a perfect answer to their longings. In Christ, the power of God, that the Jews desired to see, was found actually to work among men. In him also the Divine wisdom was seen dealing with perfect success with the real needs of men. Jews and Greeks alike found in Him even more than they had asked. But it was the power and wisdom of God, not those of men, that satisfied them."¹

Exalted Tone of the Writer. Professor Rudolf Steck²

1. H. L. Goudge, op. cit., pp. 9,10.
 2. Rudolf Steck, op. cit., p. 159.

reasoned that it was not likely that St. Paul, a man of authority and recognized as such at the time, would have taken so exalted a tone, while at the same time forcing himself to all kinds of shifts in writing to his spiritual children.

Answer to the Objection. The writer is a man of authority; a condition had arisen that made it necessary for him to use that authority. The "shifts" that Steck mentioned were caused by the condition of the church. It is improbable that this Epistle, addressed to so complex a situation with such varied needs, should have assumed a systematic and logical construction. It was the interest of the Corinthian Christian community for which the writer was concerned, and that in a general way. Dr. T. W. Manson stated it in this way:¹

The root of the matter is that all the time Paul is fighting on two fronts. He struggles against those who would assign to the Gentile Christian an inferior status in the Church. As against all such he insists on the absolute equality of all Christians before Christ. On the other hand, he has to contend with those inside the Gentile Christian community who are inclined to play fast and loose with the precious privileges that are theirs as Christians. He fights against those who value Christianity so highly that they grudge its full benefits to the Gentile, and against those Gentiles who fail to realize just how valuable Christianity is, and try to eke it out with remnants of their old pagan inheritance.

As Professor James S. Stewart has well expressed it:²

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1. T. W. Manson, op. cit., p. 107.
 2. James S. Stewart, op. cit., p. 4.

The line he [Paul] followed, the themes he dwelt upon were largely determined by local circumstances....the development of irregularities of practice and discipline at Corinth....these were the factors which gave Paul in his epistles his starting point and his direction.

Condemning in Absentia. A special difficulty was raised by chapter five of First Corinthians for van Manen,¹ where the writer is represented as condemning on a mere report. He condemns a person, said van Manen, whose life apparently was at stake,² although he was absent from Corinth but expected to visit the city speedily. If, however, reasoned van Manen, the epistolary form of the writing is looked upon as a fiction, all becomes transparent.

Answer to the Objection. The Apostle claimed an authority superior to and independent of that of the local church in all the disciplinary cases in which the records of his dealing with them are extant. However, the consent of the individual church is demanded by him if the sentence was to have its required effect upon the private conscience of the offender and upon the public conscience of the church. The purpose of the church meeting was not merely to register the Apostle's decree but under his guidance and in the unity of the Spirit to concur in it.³

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1. Op. cit., Article "Paul."
 2. I Corinthians, 5:5.
 3. Ernest Evans, Clarendon Bible, Corinthians, p. 85.

Dependent upon Gospels. In Professor Steck's¹ judgment First Corinthians 1:11,19,22; 3:10; 4:1-5; 7:10,25; 9:14; 10:27; 11:23-26; and 13:2 present such a resemblance in all essential particulars to the written Gospels that the writer of First Corinthians can be regarded as dependent upon the written Gospels for his source. Although from no single passage can certainty be derived, confessed Steck, the dependence of the author of the Epistle upon the written Gospels is sure. Steck came to the conclusion that the only reason the dependence upon the written Gospels is denied is because the Gospels are supposed to date from a much later period than First Corinthians.

Answer to the Objection. The circumstances mentioned by Steck in these passages from First Corinthians do not prove the dependence of First Corinthians upon the written Gospels, but they do prove the accuracy of the tradition which the writer of the Epistle had received. In each case, as Steck admits, the writer may have derived these similarities with the written Gospels from the tradition of the character and teaching of the historical Jesus. Even the cumulative evidence does not prove dependency. Steck admitted that each passage upon which he had relied to establish the dependency of First Corinthians on the written Gospels could have been

1. Rudolf Steck, op. cit., pp. 163-172; 203-210.

derived from oral sources.¹ He did not hesitate to affirm that the frequent points of connection between the Gospels and First Corinthians do not appear in any single case to signify the dependence of the former upon the latter; yet in some cases a reverse dependence may with probability be shown. And this dependence is not of a kind which would be formed by recourse to old and recognized authorities, but it is occasional and by no means slavish, and points to no great interval of time between the writings.²

3. The Writer Not a Jew.

Praying With Covered Head. van Manen stated that it was evident to him that the writer was a Greek. He came to this conclusion because in First Corinthians 11:4 the writer revealed his Greek nationality in holding it unfitting for a man to pray with covered head.³

Answer to the Objection. In this passage the word "prophesying" means public teaching; admonishing, or comforting; proclaiming God's message to the congregation.⁴ The head covered "dishonors his head" because covering it is a usage which symbolizes subjection to some visible superior.

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1. Rudolf Steck, Ibid.
 2. R. J. Knowling, op. cit., pp. 189ff.
 3. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., p. 172.
 4. Cf. I Corinthians, 13:9; 14:1,3,24,31,39.

In common worship the man has none. There is no reason to suppose that men in Corinth had made this mistake. "The conduct which would be improper for men is mentioned in order to give point to the censure on women, who in this matter had been acting as men."¹ There is no need to suppose that the writer was advocating the Greek custom of praying bareheaded in opposition to Jewish practice; he is arguing on independent Christian principles.

The Word Barbarian. The use of the word "barbarian" in First Corinthians, said van Manen, revealed the writer to have been of Greek nationality because the Greeks used this word when speaking of non-Greeks.²

Answer to the Objection. A barbarian, primarily was one who spoke in an unintelligible manner. The word was used by the Greeks when referring to one outside the pale of their civilization. The use of the word, however, became so customary that it was used actually by Romans and other people to denote peoples of other races. It was used by Jews in referring to their own race as classified by ordinary secular standards. Philo³ and Josephus⁴ whose Jewish extraction no one doubts, spoke of "barbarians."

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1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 229.
 2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., p. 172.
 3. Philo, De vita Mosis, Lib. II, p. 206.
 4. Josephus, Ant. XI., 7.1.

III. EVIDENCE FOR PAULINE AUTHORSHIP

1. Internal Evidence.

Style. "If there is a 'Pauline style' in the writings of the New Testament it is found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians."¹

True Correspondence. As will be shown in Chapter Four the character of the people and the dangers confronting the Corinthian church as revealed in First Corinthians correspond with all that is known of the people themselves, and the circumstances in which the church was placed.²

Doctrinal Ideas. St. Paul's central doctrinal ideas are presupposed throughout First Corinthians.³

Harmonious. There is nothing artificial about the writing. The document, in spite of its varied contents, is harmonious in language, purpose, and character.⁴

Agreement with Acts. There is a minute and undesigned agreement between the historical statements in First Corinthians and those in Acts. As Schleirmacher said:⁵

1. H. L. Goudge, op. cit., p. 10.
 2. F. C. Baur, op. cit., I, p. 268.
 3. T. C. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. xviii.
 4. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. xviii.
 5. Friedrich Schleirmacher, Einleitung in das neue Testament, p. 148.

When we compare, many passages of the Acts (Chaps. 18-20) with the personal details which begin and close the two Epistles to the Corinthians, everything fits in, all is perfectly complete, and that nevertheless in such a way that each of the documents follow its own course, and the facts contained in the one cannot be borrowed from those of the other.

2. External Evidence.

Epistle of Barnabas. The writer of the Epistle of Barnabas shared the Alexandrianism diffused throughout the Mediterranean world. This had an effect upon the way he dealt with the New Testament writings. On the whole, when he alluded to any Biblical writing it was in a free and glossing way. In spite of this, there are in this Epistle, obvious resemblances in words and ideas, to five passages of First Corinthians and two passages of Second Corinthians.¹

Didache. The date of the Didache is uncertain. In these writings, the words *μαρὰν ἀθά*² are used to enforce a warning in the same way as they are used in First Corinthians 10:22.

x 33
16.22

Clement of Rome. The date of the writing of Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians is usually fixed near the end of the first century; and it is generally accepted as being

1. J. V. Bartlet, A Member of a committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology who prepared, The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, p. 3-11.

2. Didache 10:6. p.36.

authentic. However, according to Rudolf Steck,¹ the whole field of literature from the end of the Old Testament even to the Christian Apocrypha, was dominated by what he calls "the law of pseudepigraphic composition," and, in his view, it would have been miraculous if this law had not prevailed in the province of the growing Christian literature. Without denying Steck's supposition of pseudepigraphic composition, it is, however reasonable to suppose that the writer, whoever he was, who composed the First Epistle of Clement disregarded this law,

and how then could he have been guilty of such an inconceivable piece of trifling as to describe in the most confident manner a letter which had only been written, and with which he himself could only have been recently acquainted, as 'the letter of the blessed Paul the Apostle'?"²

It is evident that First Corinthians would not have been spoken of in such terms if it had not been known and valued in the Corinthian Church as an Apostolic Epistle for a long time past. In the opening paragraph of Chapter 42 of this Epistle the writer began:³

Take the Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle into your hand. What was it that he wrote to you at the first preaching of the gospel among you? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because that even then ye had begun to fall into parties and factions among yourselves.

1. Rudolf Steck, op. cit., pp. 384, 385.
 2. R. J. Knowling, op. cit., pp. 185, 6.
 3. J. B. Lightfoot, S. Clement of Rome, The Two Epistles to the Corinthians, pp. 144, 5.

This letter was written to the same church that St. Paul's Epistles purports to be addressed. Clement's Epistle is commonly accepted as written at a time when probably some of the members of the Corinthian Church remembered St. Paul's ministry there. Professor Paul W. Schmiedel¹ declared that this one passage was proof enough to guarantee the Pauline authorship of First Corinthians. Besides this direct reference by name to "Paul the Apostle" as the writer of an Epistle to the Corinthians, there are more than twenty passages in Clement's Epistle and First Corinthians that are almost verbally agreed.²

Ignatius. (cA.D. 70--cA.D. 107)³ "Ignatius must have known this Epistle [First Corinthians] by heart. Although there are no quotations (in the strictest sense, with mention of the sources) echoes of its language and thought pervade the whole of his writings in such a manner as to leave no doubt whatever that he was acquainted with the First Epistle to the Corinthians."⁴

1. Encyclopedia Biblica, Article, "Galations," p. 1622.

2. A. J. Carlyle, A member of a Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology who prepared, The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, pp. 37-61.

3. W. Smith and H. Wace, A Dictionary of Christian Biography, 4 Vols. All of the following Patristic dates of this chapter will be given from this source.

4. W. R. Inge, A member of a Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology who prepared, The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, p. 67.

Polycarp. (c. 70 A.D.--c. 156) In Polycarp there are two certain echoes of First Corinthians. In one of these Paul is mentioned but not First Corinthians, "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world, as Paul teaches?"¹ There is unmistakable evidence here of First Corinthians 6:2. There are more than six possible references to First Corinthians in Polycarp.²

Shepherd of Hermas. (Second century) The author of the Shepherd of Hermas nowhere quotes directly from First Corinthians. He seems, however, consciously to borrow ideas from it and veil the reference by an intentional change of words. There are three such allusions to First Corinthians in the Shepherd of Hermas.³

Justin Martyr. (Converted c. A.D. 132-136--Died c. 162,3) Justin Martyr did not directly attribute First Corinthians to the Apostle, however, there are ten references to the Epistle in these writings.⁴ Besides these references in Apologia 1:19 the growth of a seed is used to illustrate the resurrection

1. Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philipppians, XI. 2. p. 334.

2. P. V. M. Benecke, A member of a Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology who prepared, The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, pp. 84-86.

3. J. Drummond, A member of a committee of the Oxford Society of the Historical Theology who prepared, The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, p. 67.

4. S. Justini, Dialogus Cum Tryphone, 14; 35; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 111; and Apology 60.

in the same manner as First Corinthians Chapter fifteen.

Athenagoras. (Wrote about 166,7) There can be no reasonable doubt that Athenagoras knew First Corinthians because of this indication of his use of 15:53. "It is therefore manifest that, according to the Apostle, this corruptible must put on incorruption."¹

Irenaeus. (c. A.D. 97-147--c. A.D. 202,3) Irenaeus is the first writer who expressly cites the Epistle as St. Paul's:²

Et hoc autem apostolum Paul in epistola, quae est ad Corinthios, manifestissime ostendisse, dicentem; Nolo enim vos ignorare, fratres, quoniam patres nostri omnes sub nube fuerunt, et omnes in Mose baptizati sunt in nube et in mari....etc.

He quoted the whole of First Corinthians 10:1-12 as belonging to St. Paul. There are more than one hundred references in Irenaeus' writings and more than sixty quotations from First Corinthians.³ He quotes from every chapter except chapters 4, 14, and 15.

Clement of Alexandria. (c. 150-160--203?) In Clement's writings there are more than 130 quotations from First Corinthians. He says,⁴ "The blessed Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians has solved the question, when he writes thus:

1. Athenagoras, De Resurrectione Mortuorum, XVIII, 88., p. 78.

2. Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdenensis, Vol. III. Contra Omnes Haereticos, Book IV. 3., p. 652.

3. Ibid., Vols. I-LV.

4. Clementis Alexandrini, Paedagogi Lib. I. 42. p. 289.

'Brethren be not children in understanding'."

Tertullian. (150-160--220-240) Tertullian¹ speaks of himself as writing about 160 years after the date of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, i.e., c. A.D. 215.² He repeatedly ascribes it to St. Paul. He said:³ "Paulus in prima ad Corinthios notat negatores et dubitatores resurrectionis" and⁴ "Ipsum Paulum dixisse, factum se esse omnibus omnia, Judaeis Judaeum, non Judaeis non Judaeum, ut omnes lucrificaret."

Others. Besides these writers mentioned above, Basilides (Second Century) certainly knew it.⁵ First Corinthians is strongly attested by Marcion's Apostolicon. That Marcion, who withdrew from the Roman Church and became the head of a separate organization, probably in the year 144, did not himself write the Epistle, is clear, from the fact that, in the year 180, the Catholic Church accepted First Corinthians as Pauline and used it in their religious services. Now it is simply impossible to suppose that this Epistle could have been borrowed from this "firstborn of Satan" by a church

1. Op. cit., De Monogamis. 3. pp. 113-115.

2. Cf. Chapter Three

3. Quinti Septimii Florentis Tertulliani De Praescriptione Haereticorum ad Martyr ad Scapulam, de Praescriptione Haereticorum, XXXIII. p. 76.

4. Op. cit., XXIV. p. 63.

5. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. xviii.

whose bishops and their faithful followers summarily rejected Marcion's teachings and treatment of the apostolic writings.¹ Tatian (c. A.D. 110-120--c. A.D. 200) cited First Corinthians 15:22 to prove that Adam was not saved.² The Fragment of Muratori said, "The Epistles of Paul, from whatever place and for whatever cause they were drawn up, themselves declare to those who wish to understand. First of all to the Corinthians forbidding the division of sect....etc."³ It is clear, therefore, that First Corinthians was known and accepted without a shadow of doubt before A.D. 200 in places so far apart as Carthage, Egypt, and Gaul. Therefore, there is no fair reason, on the ground of external testimony to doubt the Pauline authorship of First Corinthians; and the late date which some scholars ascribe to this document is an utter impossibility.

3. Documentary Evidence.

Greek Uncial Manuscripts. First Corinthians is preserved in whole or in part in the following main Greek Uncial Manuscripts:⁴ \aleph ; A; B; C; D; E; F^a; G; H; I²; K; L; M; P; Φ ; Ψ ; S; and Ω .

Cursive Manuscripts. First Corinthians is found in

1. Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, I, p. 156.
 2. T. C. Edwards, op. cit., p. xvi.
 3. Beet, op. cit., pp. 3,4.
 4. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., pp. lvii, lviii.

some 480 Cursive Manuscripts of the New Testament.¹

Versions. The document is found in the most important Latin, Egyptian, Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Gothic Versions of the New Testament.²

Authentic. The above evidences, conclusive as they are, by no means exhaust the whole. But they are sufficient to show how substantial the attestation for Pauline authorship is. Reviewing, therefore, the subjective arguments against Pauline authorship and considering the answers to these objections; with the evidence for Pauline authorship of this Epistle so abundant and unquestionable, First Corinthians is accepted as genuine. It was written by St. Paul the Apostle. Renan called it "incontestable and uncontested."³ Professor A. Robertson called it, "Unimpeached and unimpeachable."⁴

1. Beet, op. cit., p. 3.

2. Beet, op. cit., p. 3.

3. Ernest Renan, The History of the Origins of Christianity, Book III, Saint Paul, p. viii.

4. Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, Article "I Corinthians", p. 485.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTEGRITY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

In Chapter One the conclusion has been reached that the arguments against the Pauline authorship of First Corinthians cannot be substantiated. It now remains to ask whether the extant Epistle is a single composition, or has it been put together from various writings, some by the Apostle, others possible from other hands.

Professor Alford Loisy¹ accepted First Corinthians as containing elements bearing on the relations of St. Paul with the community during the years 50--56 and said that it could not be explained on any other hypothesis than that of its authenticity. However, he said the Epistle in its existing form is not free from editorial changes but has been altered by the addition of letters and instruction of various kinds at a date considerable later than the years in which epistolary relations existed between St. Paul and the Corinthian Church. Loisy concluded that the original letter of First Corinthians, in the main, was composed of Chapters 1-6, 16, and that they were "filled with ill-assorted matter" of various kinds "without real cohesion," "awkwardly adjusted." Furthermore Chapters 7-15, he said, were an "assemblage of miscellaneous instructions"² and rules of discipline later in origin than

1. Alford Loisy, The Birth of the Christian Religion, pp. 21-24.

2. Loisy, loc. cit.

the time of St. Paul.

Bishop Ernest W. Barnes accepts the Epistles as Pauline. It embodies, he says, "Portions of several letters written by him [Paul] during his stay at Ephesus, together in all probability with later material...."¹ He also says, "in some anxiety as to the position at Corinth he [Paul] wrote what is genuine of our First Epistle to the Corinthians."

There are others who, while accepting First Corinthians as ultimately Pauline in origin, cannot recognize true unity of composition in the extant text, but split it up into letters and fragments put together by an editor or editors. These critics treat the extant Epistle as a conglomeration of several letters, or portions of several letters or even portions of fragments of later traditions.

1. Interpolation Hypothesis.

This hypothesis claims that there has been deliberate alteration by substitutions, additions, or omissions, or rearrangements of the original letter by a later hand or hands for some purpose. It is claimed that the most frequent motives for interpolations were the removal of some difficulty in the sense of the text, obvious gaps or corruptions which the interpolator endeavored to fill or to heal, and

1. Ernest William Barnes, The Rise of Christianity, p. 210.

disagreement or disapproval of what stood in the text.

It will not be necessary to regard each fragment that the critics break the Epistle into; to do so would require the examination of practically every verse, and in some critics' opinion every word, to determine if it is connected with what precedes and with what follows it. The more noteworthy passages, however, are as follows:

S/ First Corinthians 1:1-3. In these verses, according to Johanne Weiss,¹ Alford Loisy,² and others, there is a double address. These verses, for them, produce the impression of being an interpolation by means of which universal validity for all Christians was imparted to the letter. They see in these verses the introduction to a letter first addressed to the Corinthians in particular and then later a new edition intended for all Christians. W. C. van Manen stated that the author, "if we are to call him so"³ probably added Sosthenes to the new edition in order to place by the side of the authoritative Apostle a second witness to the Epistle, then considered indispensable, to assure its acceptance

These verses have been examined already,⁴ and the

1. Johanness Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, Vol. II., p. 681.

2. Alford Loisy, op. cit., p. 362.

3. W. C. van Manen, St. Paul, Translated by Thomas Whittaker, in The Origins of Christianity, p. 151.

4. See Chapter One, p. 6f.

examination led to the recognition that not only in the introduction but throughout the Epistle the Corinthians alone were addressed, and not all Christians. However, as has been shown, the $\sigma\upsilon\nu\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ does not belong to $\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$, so that the readers were to be made sensible of the greatness of the fellowship in which they, as called saints stood. But $\sigma\upsilon\nu\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ belongs to the superscription as a part of it; yet neither so as to mark the Epistle as a catholic one, nor so that St. Paul would be held, while greeting the Corinthians, as greeting in spirit also the universal church.¹ The Epistle is simply commending to the Corinthians the fact that in being "called" they form part of a larger ministry consisting of all who, "invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." If, as appears from Acts 18: 8,17, and as was customary,² there was only one ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, then Sosthenes was probably the successor of Crispus. It is very probable that the Sosthenes of First Corinthians 1:1 is the Corinthian Jew who headed the deputation to Gallio³ and who had subsequently become a Christian.⁴ This person with St. Paul must have been well known and respected by the Corinthians if it carried weight

1. A Robertson and A. Plummer, International Critical Commentary, First Corinthians, p.3.

2. E. Schurer, A History of the Jewish People, II. ii. p. 65.

3. Acts 18:12-17; See Chapter Three, p.80f.

4. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 2., footnote.

with them to know that he was with him, and agreed with what he said in the Epistle. Thus there is no necessity to regard the address, nor part of it, as an interpolation. In the present form it can be recognized as a harmonious whole and the contents in harmony with what follows.

First Corinthians 1:12e. Professors Johannes Weiss¹ and Alford Loisy² took the words *ἐγὼ δὲ κριστοῦ* as an interpolation. For Weiss the:

....enigmatical Christ-party never existed, and its alleged watch word is no part of the original text. This conclusion logically follows from the words that come after: if some party has made exclusive use of the name of Christ and had claimed him for itself alone, Paul could not have proceeded with the question, "Is Christ divided?" He reproached all the parties with rending the one Christ. If there had been a Christ party, he would have to have said: How can you make the sole claim to Christ, since he belongs to all of us? But he does nothing of the kind; on the contrary, his last argument runs: 'How can you say, I am of Paul or of Apollos or of Cephas, whereas ye are really of Christ' (3:23). The same idea is also found in 1:13: 'Was Paul (or Apollos or Cephas) crucified for you? No, you should all say, 'I am of Christ'. Were ye baptized into the name of Paul (or Apollos or Cephas)? No, ye are Christ's'. The particular catchword, 'I am of Christ', has in fact no place here, and is a reader's gloss, perhaps taken from II Cor. 10:7. Thus there is no room for a Christ-party in First Corinthians, no where is there the slightest trace of it, never elsewhere does Paul refer to it.

The parties will be considered later.³ It should be

1. Johannes Weiss, op. cit., I, p. 340.
 2. Alford Loisy, op. cit., p. 362.
 3. See Chapter Six, pp. 173ff.

remembered that this exegetical expediency of Weiss and Loisy to get rid of the Christ-party is wholly without MSS evidence. This cry $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{\omega}\ \delta\grave{\epsilon}\ \kappa\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\hat{\upsilon}$ seems to voice a party which can be identified with some ultra-spiritual devotees or incipient gnostics who made a mystical Christ, no human leader, the center of religion. This $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{\omega}\ \delta\grave{\epsilon}\ \kappa\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\hat{\upsilon}$ party is condemned, by St. Paul, quite as much as the others mentioned in this verse. The fact that this party is not mentioned again by name can be explained by the tendency of the whole Church to an exaggerated sense of independent knowledge. St. Paul endeavored to bring the whole church to the consciousness that everything of which the members were boasting had been received from God through other men.¹

First Corinthians 2:9. Professor Loisy came to the conclusion that "the quotation in verse 9 probably comes from some Apocrypha and must be a gloss."²

In answering this supposition it is admitted that the source of this quotation is a much debated question, but St. Paul's usual freedom of citation allows a reference to three passages from the Old Testament.³ It is also admitted that the ideas in these passages are not very close to St. Paul's

1. Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 294.

2. Alford Loisy, op. cit., p. 362.

3. Isaiah 64:4; 65:17; 52:15.

meaning here. But the Apostle often quotes with great freedom, often compounding different passages and altering words to suit his purpose.¹ If this quotation was made from some Apocrypha it is more reasonable to suppose that it was quoted by St. Paul because a writer of a later time, wishing to add something that would be acceptable, would be more careful in quoting from the Old Testament and would hardly quote from the Apocrypha.

First Corinthians 7:36-38. "The case presented in verses 36-38, of the believing guardian of a virgin, who is given permission to marry her if he feels it necessary, does not," said Loisy,² "belong to the earliest Christian age." Bishop Barnes³ concluded, "The writer of the passage is alluding to a queer practice of 'spiritual marriage' in which a man and a woman lived together as celibates. This custom existed in the Christianity of the second and third centuries; but it was an ascetic growth which could hardly have arisen at the very beginning of the spread of the Christian faith."

This passage will be discussed in another connection.⁴ It is clear that the Corinthians had asked the Apostle about

1. Cf. I Corinthians 1:19, 20, 31: Romans 9:27, 29, 31; 10:6, 8, 15.

2. Alford Loisy, op. cit., p. 362.

3. Ernest W. Barnes, op. cit., p. 229.

4. See Chapter Five, pp. 132ff.

the duty of a father with a daughter of age to marry. He is not referring to the later custom of 'spiritual betrothals' between unmarried persons. This later custom was probably partially due to a misunderstanding of this very passage. It was the father or guardian's duty that is referred to. The question was what the father or guardian ought to do, not what the daughter ought to do. "There is no need to place a comma after *ἡ ἀγαθή* : her being of full age is what suggested to the father (who may have been warned also by friends) that he is not behaving becomingly toward his child in not furthering her marriage.¹ In Corinth there was danger that a girl, who was old enough to marry and anxious to marry, might go astray if marriage was refused.² Therefore when the meaning of the passage is understood there is no need to hold that it "does not belong to the earliest Christian age."

First Corinthians 9:12b-14. Alford Loisy said that this section "may be another editorial addition."³

There would be no point for a writer of a later time inserting these verses into the text with ulterior motives. The example of St. Paul, as given in this passage, would have been contrary to a later writer's purpose. The Apostle elaborately demonstrated his right to the privilege of maintenance

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1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 158.
 2. Ibid., p. 159.
 3. Alford Loisy, op. cit., p. 362.

and then declared that he had never accepted it and did not mean to do so. This passionate determination of the Apostle to keep himself independent of the Corinthians is in harmony with the other references to his maintenance while he was in Corinth.¹

First Corinthians 9:24-27. Professor D. P. W. Schmiedel² suspected these verses of comprising a misplaced passage because of its loose connection with the preceding and succeeding paragraphs. He claimed that the conception of "herald" and "runner" contradict each other; and that verse 26 depends on verse 24 rather than verse 25. He saw confusion in the whole conception.

This procedure of Schmiedel's presses the details too far. St. Paul's thought was that his own salvation was bound up in the mission to his fellowmen.³ The self-denial practiced for his fellowmen was necessary for both. His example, therefore, should teach the Corinthians the need of stern self-discipline on their personal account, as well as in the interest of the weaker brethren. From 9:24 to 10:22 St. Paul pursued this line of warning; he addressed men who were imperiling their own souls by self-indulgence and worldly conformity.⁴

1. I Corinthians 9:18; II Corinthians 11:9,10; 12: 13-18; Acts 18:3; Philippians 4:15.

2. H. J. Holtzmann, Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament, II, pp. 145,6.

3. I Corinthians 9:23.

4. G. G. Findlay; The Expositor's Greek, II, I Corinthians, p. 855.

He is keenly sensible in his own case; he conveyed his apprehension under the picture so familiar to the Corinthians, the Isthmian games.¹

First Corinthians 10:12,13. This section of admonitions to those who were so self-confident that they thought they had no need to be watchful; and to those who were so despondent that they thought it was useless to struggle with temptation in Alford Loisy's² opinion, "looks like an editor's addition. The whole passage is a homily on the sacrament on the Supper as understood in xi, 23-26."

These verses follow examples that are full of warning and they are connected with what goes before by $\Omega\sigma\tau\epsilon$ with an infinitive, which marks the transition from explanation to exhortation. Verse 13 follows closely on verse 12 correcting a depressing fear that would arise in some minds. These verses follow logically what precedes and they are in harmony with the whole context. It is purely and grossly arbitrary to regard them as interpolations.

First Corinthians 11:17-18. Alford Loisy suspected these verses as editorial.³

In considering this suspicion of these verses by Loisy it should be remembered that the reading in this section is

1. See Chapter Four, pp. 105ff.
 2. Alford Loisy, op. cit., p. 362.
 3. Loc. cit.

somewhat doubtful, as also is the antecedent of *TOÛTO* . However *TOÛTO* can be explained as referring to the charge which he gives respecting the Lord's Supper; but this interpretation makes the interval between this preface and the words anticipated awkwardly prolonged. It can also be explained by *TOÛTO* referring to the charge about women wearing veils, because the connection is very close. Thus with either interpretation the section can as easily be understood as coming from the pen of St. Paul as from an editor. A change of writer will not make the passage nor its connection less doubtful, but conversely.

First Corinthians 11:17-34. Bishop Barnes¹ came to the conclusion that the text of Luke has been expanded by the use of this passage. Moreover, because none of the "gospels originally stated that Jesus said, 'This do in remembrance of me'" the omission of this statement from the gospels was extremely difficult for Barnes to understand. Also, the total omission of any record of the Last Supper in the Fourth Gospel, with its emphatic sacramental teaching, for Barnes, was inexplicable. The form of prayer at the eucharist given in the Didache, to him, "is completely bewildering." These arguments led Barnes to conclude:²

Some Christian late in the first century may have given

1. Ernest W. Barnes, op. cit., p. 227.
2. Loc. cit.

his development to the same story in a tract ascribed to Paul. This tract with alterations must ultimately have been joined to the Corinthian letters and will have become the central portion (verses 17-34) of I Corinthians xi.

The curious speculation of Bishop Barnes which places this passage of the Last Supper in the second century and regards it as a later addition is more ingenious than convincing. Drs. Robertson and Plummer expressed the conclusion that is fairly generally accepted among scholars in this way:¹

Of the four accounts of the Institution this is the earliest that has come down to us, and the words of our Lord which are contained in it are the earliest record of any of His utterances; for this Epistle was written before any of the Gospels. It is however, possible that Mark used a document in giving his account, and this document might be earlier than this Epistle.

All that the Corinthians had learned about the Lord's Supper had been what the Apostle had told them. There is no suggestion that this tradition had been called in question by anyone at Corinth, or that the offenders were reverting to some more primitive type of ritual. If St. Paul had been suspected of introducing any novelty into the service, affecting the historical memories of what Jesus had said or done, the eyewitnesses to the historical event would have objected to it. In this section the Apostle exhorted the Corinthians to maintain one of the traditions which he had passed on to them and reprimanded them for their abuse of the practice of

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 244.

it. The misconduct was due to the fact that the worship in this community, simple as it was, gave opportunities for class feeling and private grouping which violated the very object of fellowship with God. It seems better, therefore, to consider this section, (11:17-34) as an early account of the primitive tradition that was common to the whole Christian Community, and which St. Paul passed on to the Corinthians. Professor Moffatt has expressed it thus:¹

If the three synoptic records do not include the command for the repetition of the rite, it is not because the churches were living on a merely social meal which was supposed to be held in the presence of their host, the invisible Christ. Even the feast in the second-century Didache, which departs so strongly from all four of the New Testament traditions, is more than a meal. The probability is that the eucharist in the love-feast was so regular a feature of Church life, when the Gospels were written, that its repetition could be taken for granted. The same reason explains the absence of the details in the account in the Fourth Gospel. In which case, Paul would be no more than making explicit what was implicit in the other traditions, whose primary interest is to record the last supper in its historical significance as a feast where the Host did not merely provide for his guests or friends, but provided himself as the food they required for their individual and corporate life within the new community of God. It was a table-fellowship indeed, such as Jews understood, but table-fellowship with a content of divine self-sacrifice, which differentiated the covenant as the new distinctive basis of the Christian Church.

First Corinthians 13:13. This verse, according to Loisy,² contradicts what has gone before, and therefore seems

1. James Moffatt, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 166.

2. Alford Loisy, op. cit., p. 362.



to have been added to the song. Holstein¹ asked why St. Paul brought in the comparison of charity with these other two virtues, whereas, considering the passage as a whole, he was not called upon to compare it with anything but gifts.

This supposition and this question are answered by the fact that this verse is a natural and logical conclusion to St. Paul's digression from his discussion of spiritual gifts. To exalt ἀγάπη supremely, the Apostle contrasted it not only with the gifts which pass away, but also with virtues which remain, and declared it's superiority over them also. The particle *κυνὶ δέ* is not temporal, but logical, and expresses the contrast between the transitory gifts just mentioned and the permanent virtues in this verse. In fact the meaning of the verse becomes unintelligible when separated from what precedes it, and especially verse 7, "believeth all things, hopeth all things" where ἀγάπη is the root of the other two.

Bishop Barnes² expressed some doubt about the Pauline authorship of the whole "praise of love" but he gives no reasons to substantiate his hypothesis.

First Corinthians 14:33b-36. In some Manuscripts

1. F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, II, p. 258.

2. Ernest W. Barnes, op. cit., p. 230.

(DEFG), verses 34-35 are inserted after verse 40. Because of this and also because he thought verse 33b went better with the following than with the preceding words, Professor C. Holstein¹ saw in these verses a marginal gloss. Dr. Drummond² believed these verses to be a prohibition borrowed from the synagogue and therefore he bracketed them. Bishop Barnes' reasons for maintaining the interpolation view of these verses are the abruptness with which the reference to women at this point is introduced, and St. Paul's alleged inconsistency between this passage and First Corinthians 11:5-13.

These arguments, though ingenious, are not decisive. The overwhelming weight of Manuscript evidence places the verses here. The problem of the Apostle's enforcement of silence upon the women in the churches will be examined in another part of this thesis.³ There is, however, a considerable difference of opinion as to the connection of the clause in 14:33b. By some it is regarded as an appendix to the regulative section concerning the gifts of the Spirit; by others it is held to be a prefix to the passage which follows. To both of these arrangements there seem to be valid objections.

1. C. Holstein, Das Evangelium des Paulus, Teil I, pp. 495,6.
 2. J. Drummond, International Handbook of the New Testament, II, p. 118.
 3. See Chapter Seven.

It seems on the whole, however, better to connect the clause with what precedes, and to regard it as supplying a concluding semi-argument. The fact of its loose connection testifies to its genuineness; a later writer, wishing to have his teaching accepted would have been more careful in the manner in which he inserted it into the Epistle.¹ Moreover, this section, verses 33b-35, is not inconsistent with the statement of First Corinthians 11:5. This statement when taken in its context, seems to be hypothetical. The women who were ready to speak in public were also ready to lay aside their distinctive head-dress.

First Corinthians Chapter 15. This chapter, according to Bishop Barnes, was written one or two generations after the time ascribed to St. Paul. This decision was reached because of four considerations:²

First. In First Corinthians 15:32 it is stated, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me?" "Paul, writing from Ephesus", said Bishop Barnes, "would never thus have spoken of an experience there. Moreover, as a Roman citizen, he would not have been condemned to face wild beasts in the arena...."

Second. Bishop Barnes said that, "Furthermore, the account of the post-resurrection appearance of the risen Christ

1. H. A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, The Epistle to the Corinthians, II, pp. 30, 31.

2. Ernest W. Barnes, op. cit., p. 228.

includes an appearance to 'above five hundred brethren at once...(xv.6)'. Here is evidence for the fact of the resurrection which, by reason of the number of witnesses, is far more conclusive than we get elsewhere. Had such an account been authoritative in Paul's teaching in A.D. 54, the gospel records...would not have been as meager as they are."

Third. Bishop Barnes also said that, "as a third argument we may recall that it is most unusual for Paul to show any sign of classical Greek culture.... But, in the chapter which we are now considering, the verse (xv.33), 'Evil company doth corrupt good manners', is thought to be quoted...from the poet Menander (c. 320 B.C.)."

Fourth. "As a fourth consideration," said Bishop Barnes, "we may mention the appearance of the risen Jesus to 'the twelve': the writer has forgotten the treachery of Judas Iscariot.... We are thus tempted to attribute our resurrection tract to some early second-century Christian apologist."

An examination of these four considerations reveals in the first place that the meaning of $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\omega\pi\omicron\nu$ ¹ depends on its context.² In First Corinthians 15:32 it is placed first for emphasis, to show that St. Paul is speaking

1. I Corinthians 15:32a.
 2. I Corinthians 3:3; 9:8; Romans 3:5; Galatians 1:11; 3:15.

hypothetically. Ἐθνηριμάχισσα is metaphorical. Sir William Ramsay¹ regarded it as "an interesting mixture of Greek and Roman ideas," the Greek idea that a mob is a dangerous beast, and the Roman idea of fighting with beast in the circus. St. Paul simply means that he was near being torn to pieces by infuriated men.² Moreover, it is likely that the appearance to the five hundred had been previously cited to the Corinthians. The occasion of the appearance is unknown, but the fact that living witnesses could testify to the resurrection explains the "meagerness" of the Gospel records. Furthermore, it is quite impossible to determine whether Menander quoted a proverb already popular or that it became popular after his use. However, it is argumentum absurdum to say that St. Paul, a Hellenistic Jew of Tarsus, did not have any sign of classical Greek culture. Also in First Corinthians 15:5 "the twelve" is used for an official name for the Apostolic body. If this appearance corresponds to the account in the Gospel narrative there were eleven apostles present;³ if it corresponds to another there were ten apostles present.⁴ This method of reckoning was not unknown for "the decemviri and centumviri were so called,

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1. William Ramsay, St. Paul, p. 230.
 2. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 362.
 3. Mark 16:14; John 20:19-23.
 4. John 20:26-29.

whatever the exact number may have been. The name centumviri was retained after the number was increased beyond the hundred."¹ St. Paul here is simply repeating a traditional formula.² Thus Bishop Barnes' reasons for rejecting First Corinthians Chapter 15 as Pauline will not stand.

First Corinthians 15:15. Dr. Friedrich Blass suspected the clause Εἴτε ... ἐχέρονται of being an interpolation. He stated it thus:³

....the clause Εἴτε ... ἐχέρονται is absent (though homoeoteleuton?...) in DE and other witnesses; the sense can perfectly well dispense with it, and is better without it; moreover the classical use of ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν ('as they say') is remarkable. Here also Εἴτε means 'if on the other hand' (as they say).

The textual evidence for regarding this clause as an interpolation is so small as to have no weight. The whole verse, in its extant form, may be held to admit of clear explanation. The difficulties in textual criticism and exegesis are not insoluble in the present textual condition.

First Corinthians 15:56. Dr. Drummond stated that this verse was in the Pauline manner but was inappropriate here.⁴ He argued that it was originally inserted in the margin as an anti-legal gloss. He held that sin and law had no special bearing upon the mental situation of the Corinthians at that

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. 336.
 2. Matthew 19:28; Acts 6:2; Revelation 21:14.
 3. J. Drummond, International Handbook of the New Testament, II, p. 118.
 4. Loc. cit.

moment. Their problem was death in its apparent antagonism and contradiction to the resurrection.

This argument has perhaps never been better answered than in the words of Drs. A. Robertson and A. Plummer:¹

The thought of death deprived of its sting suggests the thoughts of sin and of the law; for it was by sin that death acquired power over man, and it is because there is a law to be transgressed that sin is possible (Rom. v.13; vii.7). Where there is no law, there may be faults, but there can be no rebellion, no conscious defiance of what authority has prescribed. But against law there may be rebellion, and rebellion merits death. Christ by His obedience had law on His side and conquered death, because death was not His due. When the Christian is clothed with immortality, and all that is mortal is dissolved or absorbed, then sin will be abolished and the restrictions of law will be meaningless. The verse harmonizes with the context, and there is no need to suspect that it is a gloss.

First Corinthians 16:22. Professor Holstein² considered this verse to be probably a Jewish Christian gloss.

All the textual evidence is in favor of this verse being genuine. When St. Paul's meaning in this verse is understood and his mental processes are taken into consideration, the passage seems perfectly natural and in the right place.

Other Passages. As has been said it is not necessary to examine each verse and word against whose integrity captious and untenable objections have been brought. J. W. Straatmann³

1. Op. cit., p. 378.

2. Holstein, op. cit., pp. 449-451.

3. Cited by van Manen, op. cit., p. 149.

in his Critical Studies on First Corinthians treated 11:23-28 and 15:3-11 as interpolations of the second century. His theory, however, never succeeded in gaining assent, and a separate investigation of these theories would be superfluous. Besides these passages mentioned, there have been "on quite insufficient, and (in some cases) trifling, or even absurd, grounds, some sections, verses, and parts of verses, ...suspected of being interpolations, e.g., xi. 16, 19b, 23-28, xii. 2, 13, parts of xiv. 5 and 10, ...xv. 23-28, 45."¹

These passages, though some might have the appearances of being interpolations, can be understood as they now stand in the extant text and can be accepted as coming from the mind of St. Paul himself. From the literary point of view, however, it is necessary to keep in mind that the Epistle is not a logical discussion of Christian principles about faith and ethics and worship, but a letter written out of a pressing shifting situation. This shifting situation is reflected in its very style, which is the rapid, viva voce method of the contemporary diatribe or discussion, where the writer cites some word of an opponent, only to refute it.² "First Corinthians has no fewer than ninety-six questions, some in citations, many rhetorical. It is as though the Apostle dictated with a

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. xviii.
 2. James Moffatt, Commentary, op. cit., p. xxv.

vivid sense of having his hearers before him. The rhythmical, sustained style is frequently interrupted by eager short sentences, like that of a preacher addressing his audience."¹

2. Redaction Hypothesis.

The more radical critics of the redaction theory hold that the extant Epistle of First Corinthians is a composite document pieced together from essentially independent fragments. The redactor, who was not St. Paul, was little more than a collector. He had before him older documents which he reedited or changed to suit his purpose. The fragments with which the redactor worked were independent of the influence and writing of the historic Paul. In fact, some of these radical critics deny the historicity of the Apostle and his connection with the Corinthian Church at all. This theory was disproved in Chapter One where the conclusion was reached that First Corinthians was written by St. Paul.

Besides these radical critics of the redaction hypothesis there are those who, while accepting the Epistle as ultimately Pauline in origin, do not recognize true unity of composition in the extant text. They split it up into letters and fragments of letters by the Apostle, put together by St. Paul himself or later by an editor or editors.² Thus ingenious

1. James Moffatt, Commentary, op. cit., p. xxv.

2. W. C. van Manen, op. cit., p. 149.

attempts have been made to reconstruct the letters from which the Epistle is supposed to have been put together from the Corinthian correspondence. A hypothesis of this kind naturally involves the supposition that there are a number of interpolations which have been used to cement the fragments of the different letters together.¹ The attempt has been made to show that with the consent of St. Paul, or even with his assistance, his correspondence with the Corinthian Church was edited during his three months visit to Corinth following the reconciliation.² The reason given by the critics to recommend the redaction hypothesis is the alleged unintelligible, disconnected, contradictory matter they see in the extant Epistle.

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Probably not long after the Apostle's arrival in Ephesus he sent a letter to the Corinthians warning them of the moral danger arising from their environment.³ This letter is distinctly mentioned in First Corinthians 5:9. From 5:9ff something of the contents of the letter can be discovered. It dealt with the attitude which the Corinthian Christians should hold towards immoral persons. With such they were advised not to associate. However, there arose a difference of opinion among the Christian Community as to St. Paul's precise meaning. Some thought that

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1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. xix.
 2. J. T. Dean, St. Paul and Corinth, p. 91.
 3. See Chapter Five.

he had forbidden any association whatever with immoral persons, while others held that such a line of conduct was too drastic to be carried out by men who had to live in the world,¹ and particularly in Corinth.

Most scholars who agree that St. Paul wrote such a letter to the Corinthian Church hold that it has been lost. But others, are of the opinion that part of it has been preserved in the extant canonical Epistles.

Because of the rigorous fashion in which a thorough breach with heathenism is demanded, Professor Johannes Weiss² took Second Corinthians 6:14-7:1 to be a fragment of the letter referred to in First Corinthians 5:9. These six verses, however, were not enough to make a letter so he found some fragments to complete it in First Corinthians. He said:³

The section 11:2-16 begins as if it were part of a first letter after a long separation. 'I praise you, that ye remember me in all things and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them unto you.' This does not sound as if it had been preceded by the re-proofs of ten preceding chapters, some of them severe blame, or by its warnings and instructions, it sounds more like the beginning of a letter. We therefore assume...that 11:2-34 was the first long section of the first letter written after Paul's departure.

Weiss' theory led him to continue his search for more fragments to complete the letter referred to in First

1. J. T. Dean, op. cit., p. 27.
 2. Johannes Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, pp. 324ff.
 3. Johannes Weiss, op. cit., p. 332.

Corinthians 5:9. His next discovery was:¹

...it seems to us that we are still able to complete the letter mentioned in First Corinthians 5:9. We read, for instance, in I Cor. 10:1-23 a warning against idolatry and unchastity (cf. especially vv. 7,8), that is, against taking part in idolatrous feasts, and this warning is considerably stronger than the similar sections in Chapter 8 and 10:24-11:1But quite apart from this literary possibility, the fact that I Cor. 10:1-23 is a document which takes a more rigorous view of the matter arouses speculation in various directions. ...Thus our supposition seems to have something in its favor: viz. the section I Cor. 10:1-23 was written at a time when Paul was still firmly convinced that the reins of discipline must be drawn tighter in order to meet the criticism of the Jewish Christians, that the quite harmless and unobjectionable intercourse of the Gentile Christians with their fellow-countrymen must be checked, and especially that participation in heathen religious feasts must be once for all forbidden. However, he was not always of that opinion, and anyone who considers First Corinthians as a unity must assume that he wavered in his judgment from chapter to chapter, for in chapter 8 and in 10:24-11:1, his outlook is fundamentally different.

This argument of Weiss is ingenious, but the difficulty in this section does not lie in the difference between First Corinthians 10:1-23 and its context, nor in the different points of view among the Corinthians, but in deciding whether St. Paul is dealing with both groups at the same time. In his Commentary on First Corinthians² Weiss thought that St. Paul dealt with one group in the "previous letter" and

1. Ibid, pp. 325,6.

2. Johannes Weiss, Der erste Kointherbrief, Series of Meyer Kommentar Zum N. Testament, pp. 249-262.

the other group later in consequence of a misunderstanding of his advice. The point of view of the Apostle in First Corinthians 8:1-13 can hardly be regarded as completely consistent with that in First Corinthians 10:20. He accepted the proposition of the party of freedom that an idol was nothing, and that food sacrificed to idols had not been polluted, but he did admit, as a concession to the scrupulous, that the sacrificial meal did contain the possibility of "infection" from demons. His position here is not wholly logical but complete consistency is never reached by anyone and it seems that the solution to the difficulty here is psychological, not literary.¹

Weiss continued his search for fragments and he assigned First Corinthians 6:12-20 to the letter mentioned in First Corinthians 5:9. The arguments used for this decision were:²

He [Paul] gives a higher place to the true moral freedom, which keeps the will in control and does not permit personal honor to be covered with filth, than to the specious freedom which has cast aside every law and every conventionit is not true that fornication is something that concerns the body only; not only the lower members of the body, but the whole body as the form and mode of the personality, belongs in the case of Christians no longer to themselves but to their exalted Lord. Christ is dishonored if the Christian is joined with a harlot. Therefore 'flee fornication' (6:18; cf. 10:14), keep out of the way of temptation. This section forms a complete parallel to the one on idolatry (10:1-23). There is correspondence not only in the earnest, serious tone of the whole, but especially in the profound religious

1. Kirsopp Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul, pp. 199-200.

2. Johannes Weiss, History, op. cit., pp. 329, 330.

argument that fellowship with the exalted Lord is violated by participation in idolatry and fornication.

It is clear that in this section, First Corinthians 6: 12-20, the Apostle was clearly warning the Corinthians against a laxity of morals, of which he had heard either from the "household of Chloe" or from some other source. Obviously it is possible that this is connected with the case of incest, which might not unnaturally have given rise to inquiries by St. Paul from his informant on this subject as to the general level of morality among the Corinthian Christians. It is equally possible that there is no connection between the two sections. If there was a connection between the case of incest dealt with in First Corinthians chapter 5, and the tendency to litigation reprovved in the following passage, it is extremely probable that this section dealing with the tendency to immorality is still connected with the same incident; if on the other hand, there was no such connection, it is less probable that the Apostle, after dealing with the case of incest and going on to another topic, should return to that subject again. Further than this it is impossible to go and it is unreasonable to expect that all the circumstances to which it refers can be reconstructed. Certainly there can be no better reason for removing this section to the "previous letter," the letter mentioned in First Corinthians 5:9, than for leaving it in its present position. On the contrary, it

seems that this section is adapted to the whole context and suitable in its present position.

Weiss also assigned First Corinthians 16:7, 8f, 20f, with much hesitation to the letter referred to in First Corinthians 5:9.¹ He seemed to have realized that his theory had become so involved and arbitrary that it was no longer tenable.

St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. When the Corinthians received the Apostle's letter it was misunderstood. They sent a reply to him pointing out an ambiguity in his instructions and asking for an explanation. In consequence of this reply and also because of other reports of the moral conditions of the church St. Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians. This letter is generally accepted as identical with the extant Epistle of First Corinthians.

Weiss, however, divided this second letter, or what was left of First Corinthians after he had extracted the fragments supposed to represent the letter alluded to in First Corinthians 5:9, into two parts.² The first part, which he called B1 is a vigorous exposition on marriage, eating idol meat, St. Paul's renunciation, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection. This first division is found in First Corinthians 7; 8; 9; 10:24-11:1; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16:1-6 (7?), 16-19?

1. Op. cit., p. 341.

2. Ibid.

The next part of this second letter, which Weiss called B2 deals with the parties at Corinth, the incestuous person, and the law-suits before heathen magistrates. This section is found in First Corinthians 1:1-9; 1:10-6:11; 16:10-14, 22-24?. His conclusion:¹

B1 and B2 go together in that they had their origin after the first letter, but it appears doubtful that they were written at the same time since they differ in tone and mood. The theory is attractive that B1 was already written as an answer to the letter of the church (7:1) when Paul received from the household of Chloe fuller reports about the parties (1:11) and thereupon composed B2. Possibly he had already given B1 to Timothy as an exposition on his 'way', that is, his Christian teaching, when he sent him to Corinth (4:17).

The case as presented by Weiss is far from convincing. He seems to come to the conclusion that parts of the second letter were written at different times but were combined by the Apostle himself before he sent the parts to Corinth. This is his method of explaining the different tone and mood. If this method or reasoning will explain the differences in the tone, mood, and points of view in these fragments why will it not explain the same in the extant Epistle of First Corinthians?² Weiss concluded his argument by admitting:³

Whoever does not find this division of the material into two or three letters convincing must at any rate admit that different points of view or attitudes are apparent in the discussion in these three groups.

1. Ibid.

2. Statement by William Manson, personal interview.

3. Johannes Weiss, op. cit., pp. 329, 330.

To expose the "different points of view or attitudes" is not the purpose of this investigation. The different points of view can be explained by Weiss' own method of reasoning. Therefore, the attempts of Weiss to break First Corinthians into fragments are not convincing. The Epistle can be accepted in its extant form as one document if Moffatt's wise words are kept in mind:¹

Two considerations also have to be borne in mind. One is the subtlety of Paul's mental processes, these do not work always in a very obvious fashion, but imply fluctuations of his temper, his habit of going off on a word, his repetitions and allusions, and what Irenaeus once called the velocitas sermonum suorum. Consequently, when the question is one of purely internal difficulties, it is only fair to remember that 'in a writer so subtle and abrupt as St. Paul, obscurity is not a strong ground of objection'. (Jowett) Otherwise one is apt to do injustice to the writer's arguments and illustrations by too hasty recourse to a method which tends to become easy rather than accurate, courageous rather than sympathetic. Beside, there is the mechanical condition, Paul merely wrote postscript or occasionally the benedictions to his epistles when he wrote anything....It is useful to think of his style as a 'stenographed conversation'. But that is a feature which explains its occasional obscurity as well as its vivacity. Further, the digressions and pauses which appear disjointed to a modern reader, lose something of their strangeness when it is recollected that the ancient writer...lacked many of those aids which a modern author possesses, in the forms of notes and parenthesis. In ancient MSS the whole is fused together. There is no accessible means of correcting or amplifying what is once written. Consequently, the argument has occasionally an appearance of being interrupted by pieces of foreign matter which really have only to be interpreted as asides, or read apart, in order to let their secondary connection with the central idea become visible.

1. James Moffatt, The Historical New Testament, pp. 613, 4.

The same reasons which have been given¹ to show that St. Paul wrote First Corinthians argue against the assumption that the Epistle was materially altered after he wrote it. The hypothesis of redaction and interpolation presuppose that up to the time the letter passed into general circulation, it remained quite unnoticed and was not much copied. But this is an assumption which is improbable, and contrary to known facts. The New Testament itself makes it clear that St. Paul's letters made a profound impression at the time they were written.² It was expressly enjoined in one case that his letters should be exchanged and read,³ and it is probable that this must have happened in other cases where there was no express direction. It is hardly likely that the Apostle's letters created less interest than the Epistles purported to be by Ignatius to the churches of Asia Minor, for which request was made of the bishop of Smyrna by the church in Philippi shortly after the martyr passed through Philippi.⁴

Moreover in the post-apostolic age the churches made a great deal of any special relations they had had with the Apostles, and letters addressed to them were regarded as

1. Chapter One.

2. II Corinthians 10:9-11. cf. II Peter 3:15f. Prof T. Zahn in his Introduction to the New Testament said, "we have as proof the fact that the author of I Peter, ... had read Ephesians and Romans, and was influenced by them in the composition of his own letter."

3. Colossians 4:16.

4. Polycarps Two Epistles to the Philippians, p. 121.

being of special importance.¹ This idea, important enough to determine the whole development of the Church, could not have grown up suddenly, nor could it have been the immediate effect of the introduction of a collection of the letters by St. Paul. If the church at Corinth could boast that it was the first to receive First Corinthians, this Epistle would not be forgotten. But if that be so it is next to impossible that in the process of passing First Corinthians into general circulation, material changes should have been made in the text. If changes and alterations were made they must have been before the letter began to be copied and circulated; but at that stage in its history such alterations are not at all likely to have been made.² It is constantly asserted that the early Church lacked critical discernment, that forgeries could easily win their way into acceptance. However, it is more reasonable to prefer the description set forth in the words of Dr. Bernhard Weiss:³

Die Kirche die ihrigen keineswegs erst aus schriftlichen Denkmälern abgeleitet hatte, sondern aus einer lebendigen mündlichen Ueberlieferung, die ihr vielmehr der Massstab wurde für Alles, was sich als echtes Schriftdenkmal der Apostelzeit ausgeben wollte. Und wie ernstlich die Kirche

1. J. B. Lightfoot, The Two Epistles of St. Clement of Rome, 44:2-6, pp. 138-9; 47:1-18, pp. 144-6; and William Cureton, Corpus Ignatianum, "To the Ephesians," 11:2; 12:2; and P. N. Harrison, Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians 3:2; 11:3.

2. Theodor Zahn, op. cit., pp. 161, 2.

3. Cited by R. J. Knowling in The Witness of the Epistles, p. 144, footnote.

darüber wachte, dass nicht Unechtes unter dieselben eingemischt wurde, zeigt das Beispiel jenes asiatischen Presbyters, der die "Acts Pauli et Theclae" verfasst hatte und doch, obschl er aus Liebe zu Paulus gethan zu haben behauptete, abgesetzt wurde (Tert. De. Bapt. 17)

There are none of the Apostle's writings in which the cross-currents of feelings and circumstances are more violent and frequent than in First Corinthians. Again and again he is swept from his argument in thought and grammar. He seems to struggle back again, only to be carried away in some other direction. It was not his method in this Epistle to exhaust a subject when he handled it. He often returned to the same subject with the light of fresh information or after further reflection and approached it from another side. He knew better than to imagine that one telling would do for the Corinthians.¹

The arbitrary character of the theory of redaction and interpolation, which appears to beset the integrity of the Epistle is, therefore, in reality due to the misunderstanding of St. Paul's relations with the Corinthian Church, which are very intricate and subtle. These theories are based on conjecture, and the choice lies simply between a reconstruction of less probability and the extant Epistle as coming from the mind of the Apostle as it is.

There is no trace of redaction or interpolation in

1. James Moffatt, Commentary, op. cit., p. XXVI.

any of the Manuscripts¹ or versions which contain the Epistle. As has been shown² the Church Fathers were acquainted with every chapter of the Epistle. There is no indication that they considered the document to have been a compilation of fragments, Pauline or non-Pauline.

The extant Epistle reads quite smoothly and intelligibly, and it does not follow that it would be improved by omissions, emendations, or rearrangements. Therefore, First Corinthians is accepted as being substantially in the form in which St. Paul dictated it.

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1. See Chapter One, p. 37.
 2. See Chapter One, pp. 31-37.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLACE AND DATE OF FIRST CORINTHIANS AND THE SEQUENCE OF ST PAUL'S ACTIVITIES

I. ST. PAUL'S FIRST VISIT TO CORINTH

One of the critical problems that has been confronted by scholars of the New Testament has been the chronology of the Apostolic Age and the life of St. Paul. There has been no date in this period in which the possible margin of difference between scholars has not been at least five years.¹ The known histories of this period have been of little assistance. For years it was held that if the date of either of the three Roman officials, Felix, Festus, or Gallio, mentioned in Acts could be determined it would give a definite point from which to calculate the chronology of this period. Archaeology has provided a relatively fixed date for the proconsulate of L. Junius Gallio, who held office as Proconsul of Achaia while St. Paul was in Corinth.² The source for this information is a stone found at Delphi, which was originally set up on the outer wall of the south side of the Temple of Apollo. Seven fragments (or four) of the stones have been found,³ horribly mutilated, but fortunately the parts which

1. Adolph Deissmann, Paul, p. 261.

2. Acts, 18:12.

3. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 269.

relate to Gallio's period of office are clearly legible and quite usable.

The stone is evidently a copy of a letter from Claudius to Delphi granting some favor. The second line of the inscription dates the letter in the 26th acclamation of Claudius as Emperor; and then states that Gallio was pro-consul at that time. From Deissmann's text¹ the first three of the twelve lines of the inscription are given:

1. Τιβέρ[ιος Κλαύδιος Κ]αῖσ[αρ Σεβαστ]ὸς
Περμανικός, ἀρχιερεὺς μέγιστος, δημορχικῆς ἐξου-
2. σίας[τὸ β', αὐτοκράτωρ τ]ὸ κς', π[ατρί]δος, ὑπάτος
τὸ ε', τιμητῆς, Δελφῶν τῆι πόλει χαίρειν].
3. Πάλλ[κι μὲν] τῆι πόλει τ]ῶν Δελφ[ῶν προθ]υμο[ς
ἐγενομένην . . . καὶ εὐνοῦς ἐ[ξ ἀρ.]

According to Deissmann evidence has not been found to determine when the 26th acclamation was but there is evidence that the 27th was not later than August 1, 52 A.D. which gives a definite terminal point. No records have been found of the 26th and 25th acclamations but the 22nd and the 24th acclamations might have been in the 11th tribunician year which places them before January 25, A.D. 52.² The 26th acclamation might have been in the 11th tribunician year just before this date or

1. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 269.
2. Op. cit., p. 272.

soon after it in the 12th tribunician year; the inscription is faulty here but the margins in either case are very small. "The small margin of uncertainty in dating the 26th imperial acclamation does not matter as far as our question is concerned. Claudius addressed his letter to Delphi at some time between (the end of 51, or more probably) the beginning of 52 and August, 52."¹

The Romans called all governors of Senatorial provinces proconsuls and they served for one year, beginning July 1. The Senate could prolong a man's term of office in a province for one year.² This, however, was uncommon. About this time Gallio complained that his health was bad and he blamed the Achaean climate. This would point to a minimum tenure in this office.³ Dio Cassius records the order of Claudius in 43 A.D. that officials must leave for their provinces before the middle of April.⁴ If Gallio left about this time, he would normally have assumed office about the first of July 51 A.D. which harmonizes with the date of Claudius' letter. So Archaeology as interpreted by Deissmann, has provided the surest date in New Testament Chronology; and from this date the chronology of other events can be more correctly determined.

1. Ibid, p. 272.

2. William F. Arnold, Roman Provincia Administration, p. 48.

3. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 279.

4. Dio Cassius, 60:17.3.

In this trial before Gallio the Jews did not accuse St. Paul of transgressing the Mosaic law, but the law to which they appealed was the law by which the proconsul was to decide the case. In the accusation the Jews argued that Christianity was not to be identified with Judaism, which was tolerated by Roman law, but rather it was to be treated as an apostasy from Judaism. It would have been folly to seek the defense of Jewish orthodoxy at the hands of a proconsul, especially outside of Palestine before a judge whose religious worship was opposed to Mosaism.¹ The real accusation of the Corinthian Jews against St. Paul was essentially identical with that of Acts 17:7; cf. 16:21; Luke 23:2; and John 19:15. The encouragement which Gallio's attitude afforded the Apostle confirmed him in his conception that the impartial administration of the Roman law was not antagonistic to Christianity.

In dealing with the chronological part of the investigation it has been found that the information available allows only a relative chronology. It is clear that the strength of the whole scheme of chronology depends on the inner coherence furnished by the extant Epistles to the Corinthians themselves, and also their correspondence with the evidence supplied by Acts and other sources.

It is probable that the year and six months mentioned

1. Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, I. p. 267.

by the writer of Acts¹ are meant to mark the duration of St. Paul's undisturbed ministry up to the time of the arrival of Gallio, which immediately follows the mention of the year and six months. The writer, after relating the scene before Gallio, evidently intended a further period, when he wrote that the Apostle "stayed on" *προσμείνας*,² a good many days. The word "stayed on" imparts an addition to the interval of a year and six months previously mentioned.

II. ST. PAUL'S VISIT TO EPHESUS VIA JERUSALEM-ANTIOCH-GALATO-PHRYGIA

Some time after the attempted trial before Gallio, probably in February or March 52, St. Paul, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, left Corinth and sailed for Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila were left in Ephesus. While here the Apostle seized the opportunity for a brief visit to the synagogue, where he reasoned with the Jews.³ He departed from Ephesus and made the journey probably via Jerusalem, and then 'went down' to Antioch. He soon redeemed his promise to the Ephesians by returning to Ephesus, via Galato-Phrygia, probably in September or October 52.

III. St. PAUL IN EPHESUS (AND ASIA)

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1. Acts, 18:11.
 2. Acts, 18:18.
 3. Acts, 18:18, 19.

The first three months of the Apostle's ministry in Ephesus he preached in the synagogue.¹ After this for two years² or more³ he used the School of Tyrannus as his central preaching place, while preaching in and around Ephesus. Sometime near the beginning of St. Paul's Ephesian ministry Apollos left Corinth and returned to Ephesus. Probably because of the report brought by Apollos or because of St. Paul's own knowledge of the environment in which the church had to live the Apostle wrote a letter to the Corinthian Christians and warned them not to associate intimately with the immoral. This letter has been lost.⁴

The Corinthians sent a reply to St. Paul's letter, probably by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus,⁵ pointing out an ambiguity in his letter and requested an explanation. Also the Corinthians took the opportunity of referring certain questions to the Apostle⁶ about which there were differences of opinion in the Corinthian Church. Besides this information, the people of Chloe brought a report of the spirit of factiousness in the church.⁷ There were also reports to him of the moral condition of the church.⁸

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1. Acts, 19:8.
 2. Acts, 19:10.
 3. Acts, 20:31.
 4. Cf. Chapter Two, pp. 61, 62.
 5. I Corinthians, 16:17.
 6. I Corinthians, 7:1.
 7. I Corinthians, 1:11.
 8. I Corinthians, 4:18; 5:1f; 9:3; 11:18; 15:12.

IV. FIRST CORINTHIANS

St. Paul wrote his second letter in consequence of these reports and in answer to the letter from the Corinthians. In this letter he dealt with certain abuses in the life and worship of the Corinthian Christians, the alleged ambiguity in his former letter¹ and answered the request for guidance in various matters affecting the members of the Christian community. This letter is known as First Corinthians. It is the longest extant Epistle that bears the name of Paul the Apostle, and it is in many respects the most varied and versatile. None of his other letters reflect such a variety of topics and problems of a primitive church planted in a pagan environment.²

1. Place of Writing First Corinthians. From First Corinthians 16:8,19 it is certain that the Apostle wrote this Epistle while he was in Asia, probably in or near Ephesus. This fact is recognized by the MSS, B³ and P in their subscription. The subscriptions of MSS, D⁶, K, L.d^{Corr.} all agree in giving "Philippi in Macedonia" as the place of writing. This is, however, a careless inference from First Corinthians 16:5.

1. I Corinthians, 5:9-11.

2. Cf. Chapter Five, pp. 129f.

2. The Date of First Corinthians. St. Paul left Corinth in the early part of 52 A.D., probably in February or March. His journey to Jerusalem and Antioch, and the return through Galato-Phrygia would ensure his arrival in Ephesus about September or October 52. This is the latest month probable, for after this time the travelling season for the highlands of Asia Minor was over and travelling would be improbable.¹

It is also certain that First Corinthians was written after this visit to Galatia when the order for the collection for the saints was given.² The first three months in Ephesus he preached in the synagogue, and then for two years or more he preached in the School of Tyrannus. The whole stay in Ephesus is loosely, but quite properly described as

Τριετίαν.³ If the Apostle arrived in Ephesus in September-October, 52 and remained for approximately three years then he left Ephesus in the latter part of 55. Sometime within this period he wrote First Corinthians.

Apollos' Visit to Corinth. The date of First Corinthians must allow time for the work of Apollos to develop in Corinth. Apollos first reached Ephesus after St. Paul left for Jerusalem in the spring of 52. Time must be allowed for him to arrest attention in Ephesus, to associate himself with

1. Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, Article, "Chronology of the New Testament."

2. I Corinthians, 16:1.

3. Acts, 20:31.

Priscilla and Aquila, and to receive instruction from them.¹ Time must also be allowed for him to pass over to Corinth and establish his position there. He remained there long enough to gain a place and hearing, to create a following, and to leave his impress permanently upon the beliefs and tendencies of the church. Not only must these considerations be kept in mind when determining the date of the writing of this Epistle but there must be time allowed for news of this development to reach St. Paul in Ephesus and for Apollos to join him there before the writing of First Corinthians. The inference from the language of First Corinthians 16:12 is that the return of Apollos to Ephesus was no recent matter. In the same connection the aorists of First Corinthians 3:6 throw the work of St. Paul and also Apollos into an accomplished past. The imperfect $\eta\upsilon\zeta\alpha\nu\epsilon\nu$ concerning the results of both as known to the Apostle, implies an intermediate period, gradual and progressive, and so far as it goes suggests that the return of Apollos from Corinth to Ephesus was not of very recent occurrence.² These developments and travels could not very well have taken place within one year but within two years the whole scheme can be set in harmonious sequence.

The Development of the Dissensions. When St. Paul wrote First Corinthians the tendency to factions had begun, but they

1. Acts, 18:24f.

2. Rendall, op. cit., pp. 96f.

had not yet approached the acuteness and intensity revealed in Second Corinthians 10-13. The differences in First Corinthians had arisen on disputed points of doctrine, but they were still more concerned with questions of social and ecclesiastical order, precedence and decorum. First Corinthians is addressed to the whole church and there is no hint of open rebellion against the authority and teaching of the Apostle himself. The church appealed to him collectively¹ to arbitrate their differences, to solve their spiritual doubts and difficulties, and to deal with questions of internal difficulty. Throughout First Corinthians St. Paul assumed the loyal allegiance of the whole church.² He nowhere contended for his Apostolic mandate or authority, they are admitted.³ There is no thought of apology or presumption. He has no fear or suspicion of his authority being called into question. He entreated them to be perfected in unity of mind, judgment and love. The "body" is still one.⁴

All of this is widely different from the state of things revealed in Second Corinthians 10-13. The differences here have developed into avowed and personal antagonism to St. Paul. He is charged with insignificance and cringing, with self-aggrandisement and greed; and it is difficult to associate the

1. I Corinthians, 7:1.
 2. I Corinthians, 5:11; 7:17; 9:1; 10:15; 11:1,2,3,4;
 15:1-4.
 3. I Corinthians, 9:2; 11:17,34; 15:1.
 4. I Corinthians, 12:12.

imputation of design and avarice with anything but the general subscription inaugurated a year before.¹ All of this demanded an interspace of time; of continuous and planned misrepresentation, sapping the faith and the affections of the members. And even when accomplished, an interval was needed for the transmission of the news to the Apostle. It is improbable that all these developments between First Corinthians and Second Corinthians 10-13 took less than several months. One year gives ample time but it is difficult to think that they could all take place in less time.

First Corinthians Precedes the "in Sorrow" Visit. In First Corinthians 2:1 St. Paul referred to his original visit as if it had been the only one that he had paid them up to that time. Moreover when he had visited a church more than once and had occasion later to refer to those visits, he specified which of them he meant.² If, therefore, the visit ἐν λύπῃ³ were paid before the writing of First Corinthians, the causes for its painfulness is not given. The absolute silence in First Corinthians concerning this visit is generally explained by the supposition that the matter had been so completely disposed of either in the lost Epistle which preceded First Corinthians, or by some other method, that there was no

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1. I Corinthians, 16:1.
 2. Galatians, 2:4.
 3. II Corinthians, 2:1; 12:14; and 13:1,2.

need to refer to it further. Then, to explain the development referred to in Second Corinthians a new and more formidable revolt is suggested. In consequence of this second revolt the Apostle wrote the painful letter which was connected with the mission of Titus, and which is supposed to have been lost. Then after the second reconciliation, which resulted from Titus' mission, came the extant Second Corinthians.¹

St. Paul at the close of this long series of events, according to this construction of history, enforced a warning to those who were still rebellious by omitting all reference to three previous letters and two previous reconciliations and revived the memory of words which had been spoken in a controversy long dead and buried. Instead of connecting the warning with anything in his recent letter, or anything which he had said during the prevalence of the later rebellion, he connected his present warning with the rebellion as if nothing had happened in the meantime to change the situation.² "I have warned, and I warn, as when present on my second visit, so also when I am absent now."³ This argument is not convincing as Professor James H. Kennedy has so forefully said:⁴

...throughout this Epistle [First Corinthians] everything is dated from this original visit. When St. Paul

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, op. cit., p. xxiv.
 2. James H. Kennedy, The Second and Third Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians, pp. xviii, xix.
 3. II Corinthians, 13:2.
 4. James H. Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 12,13.

praises the Corinthians, he praises them because they remember him in all things, and hold fast the traditions even as he delivered them (1st. Cor. xi.2); and when he blames them, it is for their want of progress since his visit; "I fed you with milk, not with meat, for ye were not able to bear it; nay, not even now are ye able."

An attempt has been made to explain away this by saying that the visit ἐν λύπῃ was so short that he here ignores it; but the change which a painful personal meeting between the Apostle and his converts (such as that visit plainly was) produced could not be measured merely by the number of days that the visit lasted.

But a still stronger proof is furnished by the fact that in 1st Corinthians the Apostle in three several passages¹ expressly says that he derives his information, both about their party spirit and their moral disorder, from hearsay evidence....Is it conceivable that he could thus speak if he had previously paid them a visit in which these matters had been discussed between him and them, face to face, so that he spoke of it as a visit ἐν λύπῃ, and if he had then uttered such a threat as that to which he refers in 2nd Corinthians xiii.2?

The internal evidence in First Corinthians is sufficient to prove that it was written before the second visit referred to. Throughout the Epistle, perhaps most specifically in 2:1, one previous visit only can be assumed. This specific case and the whole tenor of the Epistle show that it was written prior to the visit of Second Corinthians 12:14; 13:1-3. If it be urged that the phrase in First Corinthians 2:1 does not exclude a second visit, it is at least true that the reference must be to the most recent visit. Moreover if a distressing visit preceded First Corinthians, the painful occasion of it was dead and forgotten when First Corinthians

1. I Corinthians, 1:11; 5:1; 11:18.

was written and the reference to it in Second Corinthians becomes inexplicable. There is no hint of a painful visit in First Corinthians, on the contrary, some gainsayers were sceptical as to his coming at all.¹ The whole description of the visit recorded in First Corinthians 2:1ff. naturally suggests the first visit, the visit of conversion and founding, given in Acts 18:1-18. Besides this it is also irreconcilable with the kind of visit referred to in Second Corinthians 2:1; 12:14; and 13:1,2. Moreover, the language in First Corinthians 11:2 excludes the idea of recent personal intercourse, still less a brief and stormy meeting with strained relations.²

First Corinthians "a Year" Before Second Corinthians
8:10; 9:2. In First Corinthians 16:1-4 the Apostle mentions the collection for the saints, and he gives orders³ for the procedure in the gathering of the collection as about a new thing. The instructions to the churches of Galatia were evidently given on his journey through that region when coming to Ephesus, yet the weekly collection was to continue for some time; in fact, that was the whole object of the method adopted. The whole passage makes it clear that if the Corinthians knew about the collection they did not know how it

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1. I Corinthians, 4:18.
 2. Rendall, op. cit., pp. 95,6.
 3. Contrast II Corinthians, 8:8, 10f.

was to be gathered; and the Apostle certainly did not consider them in readiness.¹ Evidently upon receiving First Corinthians the members of the church immediately expressed their readiness to participate in the collection for the saints and St. Paul boasted about it to the Macedonians.

The mood of First Corinthians 16:3,4 is not coincident with, but prior to, the mood of Acts 19:21, and the ascription of First Corinthians to a year before Second Corinthians leaves time for the elaborate arrangements contemplated in First Corinthians 16:2. This earlier date removes a contradiction and brings the records into harmony. Moreover if the note of time in Second Corinthians 8:10; 9:2 is to be taken in its natural sense as describing the duration of the time which had elapsed since the Corinthians could be pronounced willing, or as having already acted, First Corinthians must have been written at least a year earlier.²

The Apostle's Immovable Resolution to go to Jerusalem.
It is clear that when St. Paul wrote First Corinthians he was hesitating between two alternatives, and between these two alternatives a journey to Jerusalem held second place.³
The first plan that he suggested was that of sending the delegates with the collection with letters of introduction to

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1. Cf. II Corinthians, 9:2.
 2. James H. Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 15-33.
 3. I Corinthians, 16:3-6.

Jerusalem. It is also clear that he contemplated the possibility of not going with them himself. He showed in the same connection that he was doubtful about the direction in which he would travel when he left them.

However, near the end of St. Paul's work in Ephesus, the writer of Acts describes the Apostle's resolve to go to Jerusalem with an expression formed with intense earnestness, "purposed in the spirit."¹ Also in Second Corinthians 1:16 there is no hesitation when the Apostle himself mentioned Judea as his goal after he had left Corinth. This emphatic mention of his resolve and the mention of his definite plan show that St. Paul was not uncertain about the journey as he was when he wrote First Corinthians. The circumstances had changed and this change caused him to resolve to go to Jerusalem. Some time must have elapsed between these two contrasted plans. Even after the immovable resolution was made to go to Jerusalem he stayed "in Asia for a while."²

St. Paul Charged with Fickleness. In Second Corinthians 1:15-17 the Apostle in writing from Macedonia just before his visit of three months to Corinth³ and therefore just a little more than three months before a Passover,⁴ alluded to a charge

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1. Acts, 19:21.
 2. Acts, 19:22.
 3. Acts, 20:3.
 4. Acts, 20:6.

of lightness which had been brought against him. The plan laid down here was different from that which he proposed in First Corinthians 16:5.

In replying to this charge he did not deny that he had delayed his visit. Because the evidence is so scanty there can be no certainty as to the reason why the intention was not carried out; but it is likely that it was the extension of his evangelistic work in and about Ephesus. The intention was not carried out, but was, however, actually put into effect in the following year, when he found himself at last set free from Ephesus, and able to fulfill his long cherished design. If, however, First Corinthians was written in the spring of the same year that Second Corinthians was written, St. Paul was carrying out the program of First Corinthians 16:5,6 without any delay and the charge of fickleness would have been without any foundation, and the Apostle would have shown this in his reply. The assumption that the intentions expressed in these verses were at once carried out in the movements recorded in Acts 20:1,2 has been the one reason for ascribing the composition of First Corinthians to the traditional date of 55 A.D.¹ The cumulative evidence, however, for placing it in 54 A.D. seems overwhelming.

1. Gerald H. Rendall, The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians, p. 109.

"The Passover." First Corinthians was written at or near the time of a Paschal feast.¹ The Apostle pointedly alludes to the preparation for the celebration of it as in observance at the time. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Moreover, the phrase in First Corinthians 16:8, Ἐπιμενω δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς, clearly implies that the Passover season was approaching. It also certainly precludes the theory that the Epistle was written in the autumn.

Conclusion. St. Paul arrived in Ephesus in the autumn of 52 A.D. and remained for approximately three years. Second Corinthians (Chs. 1-9) was written soon after the close of this period. First Corinthians was written more than a year before Second Corinthians and near the Passover. The Passover came on April 10 in 54 A.D.² Therefore, First Corinthians was written on or near April 10, 54 A.D.

V. THE MISSION OF TIMOTHY

Professor Deissmann³ said that in First Corinthians 4:17 St. Paul used the epistolary aorist, "I send." However, the Apostle's writings admit of both usages. In First Thessalonians 3:2,5 the ordinary aorist is indisputable. And in First

1. I Corinthians, 5:6-8.

2. Rendall, op. cit., p. 117.

3. Adolf Deissmann, Light From the Ancient East, p. 157.

Corinthians 4:17 the context makes it clear that it refers to a previous despatch of Timothy.

It is further clear that the Apostle himself was not certain whether Timothy would reach Corinth before or after the receipt of First Corinthians, or whether he would even fulfill this part of his mission.¹ The one natural inference is that Timothy had gone around by the Macedonian overland route before the Aegean was open and later the Epistle was sent directly by sea. There have been no good reasons found for supposing that Timothy did not proceed to Corinth and then return from Corinth to Ephesus² with the brethren, who had been charged with the conveyance of First Corinthians. The Apostle's choice of Titus as his envoy to convey the "harsh letter" instead of Timothy, who had been his messenger before, can be explained by the fact that their missions were to some extent different in aim. Also it probably was Timothy, along with others, who brought St. Paul news of the turn things had taken at Corinth. Besides these visits of Timothy and Titus were separated by an interval of approximately one year, and the change of envoys was probably prompted by the development in Corinth during that year which called for a man with the endowments which Titus possessed.

1. I Corinthians 16:10f.
2. I Corinthians 16:11.

VI. THE "IN SORROW" VISIT

Sometime after the writing of First Corinthians, probably several months or in the spring of 55, the Apostle learned from some report or reports that things had taken a turn for the worse in Corinth.¹ He heard that the members of the church were going back to the practices of heathenism, that sexual disorders were rife among them, that his warnings were being scoffed at, that it was being said that he would never come to Corinth again, and that if he did come, he would not find the submission formerly paid to him. The information led him to know that strong measures were necessary to save the Corinthian Church from slipping back into heathenism. This knowledge of the Corinthian situation and the Apostle's desire to help them led St. Paul, himself, to make a visit to Corinth. He later described this as an "in sorrow" visit. Some have thought that no such visit was paid, but the evidence in the Second Epistle is conclusive for it.

II Corinthians 12:14. ΤΡΙΤΟΝ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΤΟΙΜΩΣ
 ἔχω ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς . The words, "for the third
 time" apply to the word "come" and not to "I am ready." St.
 Paul did not mean that he was making his preparation for the
 third time, but that he was coming on his third visit.² This

1. Allan Menzies, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, p. xx.

2. Allan Menzies, op. cit., p. 97.

interpretation is demanded by the fact that he had been in Corinth at least one time before. If he had never visited Corinth, but had twice before made preparation to come then, "This is the third time that I am making preparation to come to you" would be acceptable; but it is not a natural thing for him to have said if he had paid one visit, had only prepared to come again, and now for a second time he was making preparation to come.¹ This interpretation is made clear by the sentences which immediately follow. In them St. Paul informed the Corinthians that during his coming visit he would live at his own expenses and that he would make no demands upon them for assistance. He further reminded them that all his messengers to them had acted in the same way. Therefore a reference to previous visits in which he had adopted the same independent course would have been appropriate but visits which had been paid only in intention could not possibly have made demands on the hospitality of the Corinthian Church.²

II Corinthians 13:1. *Τρίτον τοῦτο*
ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς . These words indicate not a
 third intention to visit them but a third visit as is made
 clear from the following verse. The supposition that this

1. Alford Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, p. 361.

2. James H. Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 15-33.

previous warning¹ was given in a letter or through a messenger is inadmissible but if it refers to an announcement delivered during a visit which was really paid by St. Paul to Corinth the mode of enumerating becomes consistent and intelligible. "The Apostle had," said Dr. Kennedy,² "warned the Corinthians when he was present with them on the second visit 'If I come again I will not spare.' He is about to come again, and on the eve of his third visit he reiterates the warning which he had given on his second." If the visit which the Apostle was contemplating after leaving Ephesus was the third visit, there must have been a second visit before it.

II Corinthians 12:21. μή πάλιν ἔλθόντος μου ταπεινώσει με ὁ θεὸς μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πενθήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προσημασθηκότων . "Almost

certainly," said Professor Plummer,³ "the μή depends on φόβουμαι : 'lest, when I come, my God should again humble me.'" The edifying may have to begin, St. Paul feared, with something very unpleasant. As he looked forward to his visit, it appeared to him that there was much for him to do that would not be pleasant. It was not an easy matter to build up the Corinthians into what a body of Christ should be. The Apostle took great pride in his converts and he felt that

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1. II Corinthians, 13:2.
 2. James H. Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 6,7.
 3. Alford Plummer, op. cit., p. 369.

anything that disgraced them was a humiliation to him. Therefore he feared lest he should again be humbled on visiting them, and again have to mourn their sins. Hence, there must have been a former visit, in which he was humbled and made to mourn.

II Corinthians 2:1. ... τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔλθεῖν. "There had been a painful visit to Corinth at a former time; this appears clearly from our verse; [Second Corinthians 2:1] as the words are placed in the best text the Apostle does not say that if come to Corinth again he would see that it should not be a painful visit, but that he would not pay a second visit of that character, as apparently would be the case if he went at that time."¹

Other Statements. There are other statements in Second Corinthians which imply that the "in sorrow" visit was paid. St. Paul called God to witness that it was to spare them that he came no more to Corinth.² He had gone to Corinth in the belief that his presence would settle matters, but things turned out differently from what he had expected. The visit proved to be a painful one. There are also references in Second Corinthians of obscure and veiled significance which suggest special reasons why this visit was painful. He spoke of a

1. Allan Menzies, op. cit., p. 14.
2. II Corinthians, 1:23.

certain individual who had caused pain,¹ not to the Apostle alone, but to the Corinthians as well. (This was not the incestuous person of First Corinthians Chapter 5) In Second Corinthians 7:12 St. Paul spoke of one who was wronged in such a way as to suggest that he himself was the wronged one. These obscure references are best explained on the supposition that one of the Corinthian members had publicly affronted the Apostle, and that the others had acquiesced in the action by failing to offer any protest at the time. Probably the situation so different from what St. Paul expected, paralyzed him for the moment. The situation caused him great perplexity and led to a change of plan. To have gone to Macedonia as he proposed, leaving Corinth behind in revolt would mean that on his return from Macedonia he probably would find matters worse than ever, and that he would have a repetition of the painful visit. He decided,² and "the word suggests that he came to the decision, after weighing the matter carefully, not to face the possibility of another painful visit."³ He returned to Ephesus. This change of plan gave his enemies a new handle against him. They charged him with fickleness or levity, with making plans according to the manner of men of the world in such a way that he could carry them out or depart

1. II Corinthians, 2:5.

2. II Corinthians, 2:1.

3. J. T. Dean, St. Paul and Corinth, pp. 49,50.

from them as it suited him. That St. Paul felt indignant displeasure at this taunt is shown by the care with which he repudiated the charge.¹

VII. LETTER OF DEFENSE (OR PAINFUL LETTER)

Soon after this "in sorrow" visit to Corinth, probably immediately upon his arrival back in Ephesus, St. Paul wrote a "painful letter" to the Corinthians. In Second Corinthians 2:3 the aorist ἔγραψα could refer to the letter in which it is placed, then it would be translated "I write as I do." However, in verse 4 and verse 9 this rendering of the word is not acceptable. Besides in Second Corinthians 7:12 where the incidents seem to be the same as in 2:3,4,9, the letter fitted to cause pain is a former one. The Apostle then had written a letter between First Corinthians and Second Corinthians 2:3,4,9; and 7:12, in which he announced that he would not visit them again as things then stood.

The arguments for and against the unity of Second Corinthians have been stated by Professor Alford Plummer² and by Professor James H. Kennedy.³ As this field of investigation lies outside the scope of this thesis it will not be considered

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1. II Corinthians 1:12ff.
 2. Alford Plummer, op. cit., Introduction, pp. i f.
 3. James H. Kennedy, op. cit.

here. However, the arguments used by these two scholars and others¹ constitute a strong case for the theory that Second Corinthians 1-9 and Second Corinthians 10-13 are the main portions of two different letters, and that the latter is part of the severe letter which the Apostle sent to Corinth before he wrote the former. This theory solves in a reasonable and complete manner a grave difficulty by supplying a satisfactory explanation of the extraordinary change of tone which begins suddenly at Second Corinthians 10:1. Nevertheless, this useful theory, supported though it be by a remarkable amount of corroborative evidence drawn from the documents themselves, is doubted or rejected by a considerable number of scholars.

VIII. ST. PAUL'S FINAL DEPARTURE FROM EPHEBUS

The Apostle sent the harsh letter to Corinth by Titus, instructing him to bring the answer by way of Macedonia. St. Paul was aware that his ministry in Ephesus was about over, and that the time was not far distant when, in the interest of the church there, he would have to leave the city. When the crisis came and the hostility of the craftsmen ended in a sudden outbreak,² St. Paul left Ephesus in the autumn of 55

1. John Knox, Chapters in a Life of Paul, pp. 34, 43, 51, 58, 77, 80, 86, 87, 91, 92, 94, 99, 100, 101, 102, 106, 111, 112, 113, 121, 123 and 142.

2. Acts 19:23ff.

and traveled to Troas to meet Titus upon his return from Corinth.¹ Titus, however, had not arrived when the Apostle reached Troas.² And, though there was much work to be done in Troas, St. Paul's anxiety with regard to the effect of the "painful" letter would not let his spirit have relief from strain. The Apostle left Troas and traveled across to Macedonia hoping to meet Titus. However, Titus had not arrived in Macedonia;³ and St. Paul got no relief from his anxiety. There was wrangling all around him and within his heart there were fears.⁴ It had taken longer than he had anticipated for his "painful" letter to sink into the hearts of the Corinthians so as to make the desired impression.⁵

IX. LETTER OF RECONCILEMENT

At length Titus did arrive with the welcome news of the effectiveness of St. Paul's last letter, and the change of attitude in the Corinthians toward him,⁶ and this message brought the comfort of God to the Apostle. It was an altogether happy message. With a joyful heart he told St. Paul how the Corinthians were longing for him to come to them, how

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1. II Corinthians, 2:12.
 2. II Corinthians, 2:13.
 3. II Corinthians, 7:5.
 4. II Corinthians, 7:5.
 5. J. T. Dean, op. cit., p. 53.
 6. II Corinthians, 7:6ff.

sorry they were for the pain which they had caused him, how eagerly they had taken his part against his opponent (or opponents), and had so dealt with him that his voice was heard no more. The letter had effected just what he had desired. It brought the better side of the Corinthians to the front. It made them realize before God how seriously they cared for the Apostle.¹ St. Paul immediately dispatched another letter to the Corinthians, the letter of reconciliation, (Second Corinthians 1-9) to inform them of his joy at the message which they had sent to him. In this letter the Apostle set forth in order the details of what had happened between him and them. He also sent this letter by Titus, with the brothers, to prepare the Corinthians for his coming. Acts 20:3 relates in the briefest way that he was in Greece for three months, and that instead of sailing directly to the East, he was induced, by hearing of a Jewish plot against him, to return to Asia by the way he had come through Macedonia. He was in Philippi² at the Passover of 56, which came on March 19, or April 18.³

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1. II Corinthians, 7:12.
 2. Acts, 20:3.
 3. Rendall, op. cit., p. 117.

CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORICAL-ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

I. GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF THE CORINTHIAN TERRITORY

The investigation has led to the conclusion that First Corinthians was written by the Apostle, St. Paul, in the spring of 54 A.D. in substantially the same order as it now stands. In this chapter the historical environmental background of the Corinthian Church will be investigated to determine what part these factors contributed to the distinctiveness of the church in Corinth.

The Greeks called the southern portion of their country the Isle of Pelops. According to Curtius¹ "Der Korinthische Isthmos ist so schmal in Verhältnisse zu der breit entwickelten Blattform des Peloponnesus, dass die alten ihn als Insel Ansahen und benannten." Had the Peloponnesus really been an island, the whole course of Greek history would have been different. The narrow neck of land which makes it a peninsula possesses an importance not to be measured by its scanty area of approximately 248 square miles.² Corinth then was pre-eminently the product of its geographical position. Its location on the small isthmus of land separating the Aegean and

1. Ernest Curtius, Peloponnesus, I, p. 21.

2. Fasti Hellenica, II, p. 514, Cited by J. G. O'Neill, Ancient Corinth, p. 2.

Adriatic seas, and which at the same time connected Northern Greece to the Peloponnesus, made it the crossroads for the whole of the Greek Peninsula. This fact was well known in ancient times and the poets, both Greek and Roman spoke of it as: Πόντου τε γέφυρ;¹ Πελοποννήσου τὰς πύλας,² Αμφιθάλασος,³ Κορυφᾶν Ἰσθμιον,⁴ bimarise Corinthi Moenia⁵ and Ephyrem bimarem.⁶

The classic representation of Corinth as seen by coins of all periods is a female figure on a rock between two other figures, each of whom bears a rudder, the symbol of navigation and trade.

1. Extent and Boundaries of the Corinthia.

The territory of Corinth extended some distance to the north and south of the Isthmus and was called the Corinthia. South of the Isthmus Corinth possessed the part of the Peloponnesus extending as far as the northern slopes of the Argive mountains, and along the coast of the Saronic Gulf as far as the territory of Epidaurus. The direct distances in English

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1. Pindar, Nemean Odes, 6:40.
 2. Xenophon, Eulogy of Agesilaus 2.17 Oeconomicus.
 3. Julius Pollux, cited by Conybeare and Howson, Life and Epistles of Saint Paul, Unabridged Edition, 1906, p. 413, note 5.
 4. Euripides, Opera Omnia, I. Troad. 1097.
 5. Horace, Opera Omnia, I, 7. 2. 3.
 6. Ovid, Heroides and Amores, 12. 27.

miles, from Corinth to its frontiers, as measured by Clinton¹ are: to the river Nemea, which divided the Corinthia from Sicyonia, seven and one-half miles; to the confines of Epidauria, thirteen and one-half miles; to the confines of Megaris, twelve miles. South of Cenchreae the Oneium runs out into the Saronic Gulf, forming a promontory called Chersonesus.

The Corinthian territory that lay to the north of the Isthmus may be divided into two parts, the eastern half consisting of a series of small plains between the Gerareian mountains sloping down to the Saronic Gulf, while the western half is composed of a mass of mountains, running out into the Corinthian Gulf, in the form of a quadrangular peninsula. The northeastern point of this peninsula was called the Promontory Olmia which lay opposite Creusis, the port of Thespieae, in Boeotia, and formed along with the latter the entrance to the bay called Alcyonis. The southwestern point on the peninsula was the promontory Heraeum, which along with the opposite Sicyonian coast formed the entrance to the bay of Lechaeum. This district bore the general name of Peraea, or the country beyond the Isthmus.² The possession of it was of great importance to the Corinthians who obtained from its mountains

1. William Smith, Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography, I, p. 684.

2. Smith, op. cit., I, p. 685.

their supply of timber, and found here pasture for their cattle, when the grass in the plains was burned up.

Towards the Saronic Gulf the Geraneian mountains are not nearly so lofty and rugged as in the Peraea. Between the flat ground of the Isthmus and the Scironian rocks there are three plains upon the coast. The chief town in this district was Crommyon, and the name Crommyonia was given sometime to the whole district between Megara and Schoenus. To the east of Crommyon, at the western extremity of the Scironian rocks, was a temple of Apollo Latonus, which marked the boundaries of the Corinthia and Megaris in the time of Pausanias.¹

The Corinthia naturally divides into three sections:-- the barren Isthmus region, the fertile plain along the shore of the Corinthian Gulf, and the highlands to the south and east which slope down in successive terraces from the vast fastnesses of Acrocorinth and Oneium.²

2. Gulf of Corinth.

The modern measurement of the length of the Corinthian Gulf is about 78 miles with an average breadth of twelve and one-half miles.³ It resembles a large inland lake, surrounded

1. Pausanias, Description of Greece, I, 44. 10
 2. J. G. O'Neill, Ancient Corinth, p. 28.
 3. O'Neill, op. cit., p. 6.

by mountains. The heights towards the west shut out the view of the open sea. Its coasts are broken into an infinite variety of outlines by the ever changing mixture of bold promontory, gentle slope, and cultivated level, crowned on every side by lofty mountains of the most majestic forms. Sailing from Corinth the top of Erymanthus rises like a colossal pyramid on the left, and on the right the lofty heights of Helicon and Parnassus can be easily seen.¹

3. The Isthmus of Corinth.

The most important part of the territory of Corinth and the part to which Corinth owed its existence was the Isthmus. It was important because merchandise was carried across it, and more especially because it was the location of the celebration of the Isthmian games. The word *ἰσθμός* probably comes from the root *i*, which appears in *ἰ-έναι* "to go," and the Latin *i-re*, and hence originally meant a passage. Used as a proper name of this spot, it came to be applied to any peninsular neck.

The Corinthian Isthmus is a stony and sandy plain lying between the mountain barriers of the Geraneia on the north and the Oneia on the south. The only land suitable for agricultural purposes in the territory is the plain upon the coast, lying

1. Smith, op. cit., p. 674.

between Corinth and Sicyon.¹ The word, isthmus, was used both in a wider and a narrower signification. In its wider use it indicated the whole land lying between the two gulfs and hence Corinth is said to have been on the isthmus.² In its more restricted sense it was applied to the narrowest part of the land between Peloponnesus and Hellas proper, and especially to the neighborhood of the Poseideium and the locality of the Isthmian games.³ Most of the Greek writers state the width of the isthmus at this place, the narrowest part, 40 stadia,⁴ the real breadth is three and one-half English miles in direct distance.

The Isthmian sanctuary was on a level spot, of an irregular quadrangular form, in which was located the temple of Poseidon and other sanctuaries, and it was surrounded on all sides by a strong wall. The northern and northeastern parts of the enclosure were protected by a wall, which extended across the isthmus called the Isthmian Wall. On the southern side it was shut in by its own walls, which were in some cases, more than twelve feet thick. The enclosure was about 640 feet broad on the northeast, but only 300 feet broad at its southern end.⁵ Outside the temple towards the south lay the stadium

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1. Athenaeus, I, p. 348 (Translated by C. D. Yonge)
 2. Strabo, Geography 8. 6. 20.
 3. Pausanias, op. cit., II, 1. 3.
 4. Smith, op. cit., p. 683.
 5. Loc. cit.

and the theatre towards the west; both were constructed of white marble. Here the Isthmian games were celebrated and these building were connected with the sacred enclosure by a grove of pine trees.¹ The main gate of the sanctuary appears to have been in the eastern wall, and the road leading from this gate to the temple of Poseidon was lined on one side by the statues of conquerors in the Isthmian games and on the other side by a row of pine trees. Upon the temple, which was not large, stood Triton, probably serving as a weather-cock.² An inscription discovered by Wheeler in 1676, and now preserved at Verona contains a list of the Isthmian edifices erected by Publius Licinius Priscus Junentianus, high priest for life at Roman Corinth.³

He built lodgings for the athletae, who came to the Isthmian games from the whole world. He erected at his own expense, the Palaemonium, with its decorations; the Ἐνὸς Ἰσθμίου probably the subterraneous adytum, spoken of by Pausanias; the sacred avenue;- the altars of the native Gods, with the peribolus and the pronos.., the houses in which the athletae were examined;-the temple of Elias, together with the statue of Peribolus;-moreover, the Peribolus of the Sacred Grove within its temple of Demeter, Core, Dionysus, and Artemis, with their statues, decorations and pronia. He repaired the temples of Eueteria, of Core, of Pluto, and the steps and terrace-walls which had fallen into decay by earthquakes and antiquity. He also decorated the portico at the stadium, with the arched apartments and the decorations belonging to them.

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1. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 22.
 2. Pausanias, op. cit., II, 1. 4-7.
 3. Smith, op. cit., pp. 683, 684.

4. The Diolkos.

The diolkos was a level ship road on which smaller vessels were transported by a system of rollers from one sea to another. The cargoes of larger ships were unloaded and taken across to other vessels on the opposite coast by this same roadway.¹ Some have thought that the diolkos was used only for ships of war. This view is not supported by the historical evidence. Though Strabo² in two passages refers to the use of the diolkos, he does not specify exactly the kind of ships hauled across, but in another place³ the word *πλορηκεῖα* indicates that he did not have in mind warships only. Besides, his anecdote⁴ about merchantmen avoiding the dangerous route around Cape Malea is conclusive. The ship-road ran across the narrowest portion of the isthmus from the Bay of Lechaëum to Schoenus, this portion of the isthmus was called the diolkos. It was superseded in modern times by a canal contemplated by various rulers since the days of Periander (Tyrant of Corinth 625-585 B.C.) but only carried out in A.D. 1882. Such a mode of conveyance would have had for the ancients two great advantages. It would have formed an additional line of defense for the Peloponnese and it would

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1. Thucydides, Book VIII, Year XX.
 2. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 4. and 8. 6. 22.
 3. Ibid., 8. 2. 1.
 4. Ibid., 8. 6. 20.

have obviated the danger and loss of time involved in the circumnavigation of Cape Malea.¹ This scheme did not materialize however. It was a difficult undertaking for the ancients, while it was an easy process to drag their light ships across the diolkos. What perhaps, more than anything else, prevented the proposal from being carried out was the belief of the engineers that the Corinthian Gulf was higher than the Saronic.² The Egyptians on Nero's staff told him the same story of the inequality of the heights of the two seas. Each attempt was also said to be an impious interference with the divine will.³

5. Lechaeum.

Lechaeum was the most important port in Corinthia, located on a bay with the same name; connected with Corinth by means of the Long Walls.⁴ The Long Walls ran nearly due north, so that the wall on the right hand was called the eastern and the one on the left hand the western or Sicyonian. The space between them must have been considerable; since there was sufficient space for an army to be drawn up for battle.⁵ The flat country between Corinth and Lechaeum is composed only

1. O'Neill, op. cit., p. 11,12.
 2. Strabo, op. cit., 1. 3. 11.
 3. William Ramsay, "Corinth", James Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, I, pp. 479-483.
 4. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 22.
 5. Smith, op. cit., p. 682.

of the sand washed up by the sea, and the port must have been originally artificial, though it was rendered both spacious and convenient by the wealthy Corinthians.¹ It was the chief station of the Corinthian ships of war, and during the occupation of Corinth by the Macedonians, it was one of the stations of the royal fleet. It was also the emporium of the traffic with the western ports of Greece, the Ionian Sea and Italy and Sicily.² The proximity of Lechaeum to Corinth prevented it from becoming an important town like Peiraeus.³

6. Cenchreae.

Cenchreae was the port of the Saronic Gulf, and was eight miles in a south-easterly direction from Corinth. Unlike Lechaeum the port was a beautiful natural bay harbor, protected by two promontories on the north and south, from which the Corinthians carried out moles, in order to render the harbor more secure. The town stood upon the slopes of the hill above the bay; between this hill and the heights to the north and to the south there were two small plains. Through the plain to the north ran the road to Schoenus and through the plain to the south the road leading to Corinth.⁴ The road from Cenchreae to Corinth ran in a north-westerly direction

1. Livy, The History of Rome, IV, Book XXXII. 23.

2. Smith, loc. cit.

3. Pausanias, op. cit., 2. 2. 3.

4. Smith, loc. cit.

through a narrow valley, shut in by two ranges of mountains, which almost served the purpose of long walls. On the north were the high ranges of the Oneian Mountains; on the south the continuation of the heights on which Cenchreae stood. Pausanias description¹ gives a good picture of Cenchreae:

In Cenchreae are a temple and a stone statue of Aphrodite, after it on the mole running into the sea a bronze image of Poseidon, and at the other end of the harbor sanctuaries of Asclepins and of Isis. Right opposite Cenchreae is Helen's Bath. It is a large stream of salt, tepid water, flowing from a rock into the sea.

7. Acrocorinthus.

The Acrocorinthus reared its majestic form immediately to the south of Corinth. It commanded the whole surrounding country for miles, and, in particular, the narrow pass which lay between it and the western end of the Oneian range, of which it was itself properly an offshoot. The area on the tip is of very considerable extent. There are three outstanding summits on the citadel plateau which, determined by a compass on the spot are south-west and north.² As Strabo³ observes:

A lofty mountain with a perpendicular height of three stadia and one half, and an ascent of as much as thirty stadia, ends in a sharp peak; it is called Acrocorinthus, and its northern side is the steepest; and beneath it lies the city on a level, trapezium-shaped place (This

1. Pausanias, loc. cit.
 2. O'Neill, op. cit., p. 50.
 3. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 21.

level is 200 feet above the plain, which lies between it and the Corinthian Gulf) close to the very base of the Acrocorinthus. Now the circuit of the city itself used to be as much as forty stadia, and all of it that was unprotected by the mountain itself, the Acrocorinthus, used to be comprehended within the circuit of this wallAnd so the whole perimeter amounted to about eighty-five stadia. On the other sides of the mountain is less steep, though here too it rises to a considerable height and is conspicuous all around.

The fortifications surrounding Corinth and the Acrocorinthus were very strong; and so lofty and thick were the walls, that Agis is reported to have exclaimed upon beholding them, "What women are these that dwell in this city."¹ The Acrocorinthus, rising abruptly and isolated in the plain is a striking object. This, it appears, is the view also of Colonel Mure² who remarks:

Neither the Acropolis of Athens, nor the Larissa of Argos, nor any of the more celebrated mountain fortresses of western Europe-not even Gibraltar-can enter into the remotest competition with this gigantic citadel. It is one of those objects more frequently, perhaps, to be met with in Greece than in any other country of Europe, of which no drawing can convey other than a very faint notion. The outline, indeed, of this colossal mass of rugged rock and green sward, interspersed here and there, but scantily, with the customary fringe of shrubs, although from a distance it enters into fine composition with the surrounding landscape, can in itself hardly be called picturesque;....Its vast size and height produce the greatest effect, as viewed from the seven Doric Columns, standing nearby in the center of the wilderness of rubbish and boulders that now mark the site of the city which it formerly protected.

1. Plutarch, Morals, I, pp. 374-375.
 2. Colonel Mure, Tour in Greece, II, p. 136, cited by Smith, op. cit., p. 679.

The view from the Acrocorinthus comprehends, as observed by Leake:¹

....a greater number of celebrated objects than any other in Greece....Hymettus bounds the horizon to the eastward, and the Parthenon is distinctly seen at a direct distance of not much less than 50 English miles. Beyond the Isthmus and bay of Lechaëum rise the Oneia beyond which are seen all the great summits of Locris, Phocis, Oryfi and Attica; and the two gulfs from the hill of Gonoessa on the Corinthiac, to Sunium at the entrance of the Saronic. To the westward the view is impeded by a great hill, which is called the $\lambda\hat{\eta}\mu\mu\alpha$, or eye-sore, of the Acrocorinthus....

In Roman Corinth no part of the Acrocorinthus appears to have been inhabited; there were only a few public buildings by the side of the road leading up to the summit. Pausanias² mentions in the ascent two sacred enclosures of Isis, and two of Serapis. Also he mentions an altar to Helius, and a sanctuary of Necessity and Force, which no one was allowed to enter; a temple of the Mother of the gods, containing a pillar and a throne, both made of stone. He also observed a temple of the Fates, and one of Demeter and the maid, which were not exposed to view and a temple of Hera Bunaea. Upon the summit of the mountain stood a temple of Aphrodite, to which the whole mountain was sacred. Pausanias does not mention the Sisyphæum, which Strabo³ describes as situated below the Peirene

The city of Corinth owed its very existence to its

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1. William Leake, Travels in Morea, III, p. 259.
 2. Pausanias, op. cit., II, 4. 6-5. 1.
 3. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 21.

geographical position. The location of the city on the small isthmus gave importance to the city and not the city to the isthmus. It was by nature the most favored location for a city between the East and the West. Corinthian geography and Corinthian history are important because of Corinth's position and close relation to the Mediterranean world. /e

II. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL

Corinth was one of the early Greek centers. Perhaps it was at first under the domination of Argos.¹ Before the days of marine communication it was on the only land route between Northern and Southern Greece. It was early connected with the sea. Neptune was its god and in his honor the Isthmian Games were held. Thucydides² says that the first Greek triremes were built at Corinth. From the isthmus her colonies spread over East and West. Her harbors were visited by ships from every sea.

In early history Corinth was allied with Sparta against Athens. She was the driving force behind Sparta in the final conquest of Athens during the Peloponnesian War. In turn Corinth was herself conquered by Macedonia and was Alexander's starting place when he began his world conquest.

1. G. A. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 220.
2. Thucydides, op. cit., Book I, p. 5.

The internecine strife in Greece offered opportunities for Rome to encroach gradually upon Greek freedom until the stern hand of Rome was law, and to deviate from Rome's will meant destruction. Many Romans were philhellenes but the general attitude of the Greeks was anti-Roman. A good illustration of this attitude is the fact that the Greeks hated Eumenes II when he was pro-Roman and they favored him later for no other reason than the fact that he had changed to an anti-Roman policy.¹

1. The Destruction of Grecian Corinth.

Polybius speaks of the Achean war as the "disaster of Greece," which he terms worse than that of Carthage because so many Greeks lived to witness their sad estate. He goes on to say that when men are victims of misfortune they are pitied not reproached "but those only whose own folly brings reproach upon them suffer disaster."² He blames their faithlessness and cowardice for their troubles.

The war began in this way. Sparta now weakened had been forced into the Achean League but had been granted the privilege of maintaining her own criminal courts and her own embassies to Rome. Such was the policy of Rome to divide and rule. The league, which was headed by Corinth, seeking to

1. Theodor Mommsen, History of Rome, III, p. 61f.
 2. Polybius, History, Book 38, VI, pp. 389-395.

dominate Sparta and enforce uniformity sent an army against Sparta to force her to give up her special privileges. Sparta was defeated but Rome intervened and sent commissioners who forced an armistice and attempted to settle the problem.¹

The Roman terms were rejected and the Acheans, with their allies the Thebeans, Boeotians, and Chalcidians, advanced through Thessaly against Heraclea. The popular slogan was "we want the Romans to be our friends but not our masters."² The Romans commissioned Mummius to subdue the Acheans, but before he arrived to take over the army, its captain, Metellus, defeated the Greeks in battle as they were hastening to get back to the Isthmus. Critolaus was slain in this battle. Metellus then defeated the reinforcements under Diaens and the resistance was over. Impregnable Corinth was not entered for three days for fear of ambush but then was entered without a blow.³ Mummius then condemned Corinth to a destruction so complete that it passed into proverb like Carthage. The exhibition of vases and statues in the triumph at Rome introduced a new era in the habits of the Romans.⁴ Polybius mentioned the contempt of the soldiers for the works of art and votive offerings at Corinth. He says he was present and saw paintings thrown on

1. Mommsen, op. cit., p. 63.

2. Mommsen, op. cit., p. 64.

3. Ibid, p. 66.

4. Muller's Archaologie Paragraph, p. 165, cited by Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 415, Note. 6.

the ground with soldiers playing dice on them.¹ So Corinth gave of its earlier treasures to a Rome which was unable to appreciate them. Mummius, after consigning Corinth to the flames, ordered that shippers of its treasures who lost or damaged anything must replace it with another "equally good." But as the cultures of Greece and Rome met the conquered issued as the conqueror, and it was called the "Graeco-Roman" world.

2. Roman Corinth Founded.

The very place of the Grecian Corinth remained desolate for many years.² The honor of presiding over the Isthmian games was given to Sicyon;³ and Corinth ceased even to be a resting-place of travellers between the East and the West.⁴ But a new Corinth rose from the ashes of the old; the same force which was responsible for the rise of old Corinth, worked for the reestablishment of the city--its commanding location. Julius Caesar, in B.C. 46 recognizing the importance of the Isthmus as a military and mercantile position, refounded the city with Italians, who were chiefly freed men.⁵ He called the city Colonia Laus Julia Corinthus and settled his veterans there as coloni. The colonists were called Corinthenses, and

1. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 23.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Pausanias, op. cit., 2. 2. 2.

4. Cicero, Treatise, 1. 38.

5. Strabo, loc. cit.

not Corinthii, as the ancient inhabitants had been named. It was given the constitution of a colony and became the metropolis of the province of Achaia. Achaia was governed by a proconsul from B.C. 27 when it was separated from Macedonia to A.D. 15, and from A.D. 44 onwards. It was a province of the second rank, and was administered by Roman officials, after holding the praetorship, and generally before the consulship.¹ Its size corresponded practically to the modern kingdom of Greece.

Under the Roman Empire Corinth became the most important city in Greece. It was the center of a great road network and occupied the most important position on the shortest route from Rome to the East. It was the center of government, commerce, political development, and thought in Greece. The Isthmian Games were revived.² They were of the usual Greek style with foot races, chariot races, boxing, etc. The victor's prize was a wreath of the foliage of the pine trees which grew in the region.³ Their coinage proves that they took pride in their heritage of history and mythology of the city in the Greek era.⁴

3. Relation to New Testament History.

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1. William Ramsay, St. Paul the Traveller, p. 258.
 2. Pausanias, loc. cit.
 3. Ibid., 8. 48. 2.
 4. Ramsay, Corinth, loc. cit.

Corinth was one of the most important bases from which the Apostle Paul worked. Acts tells us that he came to Corinth immediately following his stay in Athens.¹ Here he stayed about eighteen months and enjoyed large success. The importance of its situation and the influx of so many strangers, made a permanent lodgment for Christianity within it highly desirable, that the truth might pervade neighboring and distant nations. No station could have been selected more favorable to the diffusion of the new religion through the Roman Empire.² Paul remained at this mission post longer than at any of the stations where he had worked heretofore.

There are few inscriptions found in the excavations of Corinth but almost all of them date from the Roman era. Some of those found, however, are of great interest to the Bible student. One inscription gives honors to one "Titus...because of his noble character."³ St. Paul's companion, Titus, was especially interested in the church at Corinth and was sent by St. Paul to be his representative there at one time.⁴

Perhaps this is the same Titus as found on the inscription.

One simple inscription reads $\Delta\eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$
 $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$, "Demetrios, Christ's slave."⁵

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1. Acts, 18.
 2. Samuel Davidson, An Introduction to the New Testament II, p. 209.
 3. Camden M. Cobern, The New Archeological Discoveries, p. 500.
 4. II Corinthians, 7:6ff; 8:16-18, 23.
 5. Cobern, loc. cit.

Of great interest is a stone discovered in 1898 by the excavators on the Lechaem road, the main road of the city leading to the port, near the propylaea, or gateway leading to the market-place. This stone once formed the lintel of a door and bore an inscription in Greek letters. Although the beginning and the end of the two words written on it are broken away, $\Sigma\upsilon\nu\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\eta\ \text{Ἑβραίων}$,¹ it is clear that the inscription was "Synagogue of the Hebrews." The cutting of the block was very poorly done, on a second hand block of stone. The block was of considerable size and so was probably not found far from where the synagogue stood. This synagogue, then, which is probably identical with the one in which Paul preached² stood on the Lechaem road not far from the market place. Other discoveries in the neighborhood indicate that this was a residence quarter of the city. The house of Titus Justus which "joined hard to the synagogue"³ was probably near here, and the Lechaem road often echoed to the footsteps of Paul.⁴

Acts 18:12 relates that when Gallio was proconsul of Achaea the Jews of Corinth hailed St. Paul before him on the charge of teaching an illegal religion. This liberal minded

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1. Barton, op. cit., Fig. 275, Plate 99.
 2. Acts, 18:4.
 3. Acts, 18:7.
 4. Barton, op. cit., p. 221.

brother of the philosopher Seneca¹ judged Christianity to be legally a sect of Judaism, thus making Christianity religio licita. This established a precedent for the right of Christians to teach their doctrine without interference from the Roman law. The value of this decision to the early Christians is just beginning to be appreciated.²

It is noteworthy that Paul does not use the Latinized adjective Corinthiensis, but the simple Corinthius. In the case of Philippi, on the other hand, he used the Latinized adjective Philippensis. The Latinized form of the adjective is exceedingly rare in Greek, and occurs only where the city is distinctively Roman and Latin. When Paul addressed the people of Philippi as Philippenses, he signified by this term that he regarded them as Latins, not Greeks. In Acts 16:12 Philippi is described as a Colonia. In Acts nothing is said about Corinth being a colony, and St. Paul does not address the Corinthians as Corinthenses, he writes to them as Corinthii. Paul, therefore, probably followed the Corinthian usage, which was Greek, and the Philippian usage, which was Roman. That implies that Corinth had not become so thoroughly Romanized a place as Philippi; it was distinctively a Greek city, though a Roman colony. The presence of a Roman governor and his tribunal is a feature that belonged to Corinth, not as Colonia, but as

1. Archibald T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, III, Acts, p. 299.

2. Cobern, op. cit., p. 495.

capital of the province. There is little in Acts or in the Corinthian letters to show that Corinth was a Colonia, and its colonial dignity is not alluded to. Its rank as capital of the province entirely outweighs its rank as a Roman colony.¹

III. COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC

Corinth had boasted an antiquity of nine hundred and fifty years, and during the far greater part of that time had been the staple of general traffic, into which the mariners poured the corn of Sicily, the silver of Spain, the perfumes of Arabia, the spices of India, the ivory of Ethiopia, the manufactures of Egypt, of Babylon, and of Carthage. In addition, the Corinthian had many valuable manufactures and produced large quantities of goods to be exported. It was their highest glory that they had moulded the awkward and unsafe vessels of antiquity into the convenient form of trireme galleys.

The destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C. by Mummius was disapproved even by the apologist for the destruction of Carthage, and was far from justified, even according to Roman international law, by the abusive language uttered against the Roman deputation in the streets of Corinth.³ Yet it by no means proceeded from the brutality of any single individual,

1. William Ramsay, The Expositor, Article on "Historical Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians," 1900, Sixth series, I, p. 106.

2. Gillies, History of Greece, VIII, p. 90.

3. Robinson, A History of Greece, p. 423.

least of all of Mummius, but was a measure deliberated and resolved on by the Roman Senate. The same basic conflict that caused the destruction of Carthage, caused also the destruction of Corinth. It was the work of the Mercantile party, which even this early began to interfere in politics by the side of the aristocracy proper, and which in destroying Corinth got rid of a commercial rival. It is easy to understand why Corinth was singled out for punishment by the great merchants of Rome and why the Romans not only destroyed the city as it stood, but also prohibited any future settlement on a site so pre-eminently favorable for commerce.¹

The Hebrew prophet Ezekiel² looked down from the Judean hills upon the Mediterranean and enumerated the products of its shores and hinterlands which were to be seen in the markets of Tyre. There were horses and mules from Armenia, rams and lambs from the Syrian grasslands, spices from Arabia, wheat and oil from Judea, Egyptian linen, African wares, purple dye from the Greek islands, slaves from Ionia, silver, iron, and tin from Spain, wealth from everywhere; because "thy boundaries are in the midst of the sea." Ezekiel's list gives a geographical index of the known world of his time and epitomizes its economic development. In the first century these Tyrian wares were duplicated and multiplied in the markets of Corinth. The

1. Theodor Mommsen, The History of Rome, III, p. 70.
2. Ezekiel, Chapter 27.

commercial center shifted to the focal point of the sea routes.¹

The machine by which the potter fashions the most common materials into usefulness and beauty was an invention of Corinthians² and it had received its last improvement from their hands. The plastic shaping of pottery and its ornamentation by painting originated here. The potters' art was here, too, the mother of bronze founding; and no bronze was more widely found than that cooled in the waters of the spring of Pirene.

With a history such as Corinth boasted and with its favorable location for commerce and trade, it was destined to become another great commercial center.³ Although the Roman colony was comparatively small at its beginning, it soon stood first in the industrial development in this period. Corinth had rapidly risen, and at the time of St. Paul it numbered from six to seven hundred thousand inhabitants, comprising, besides the Greek population that had returned to it, a strong colony of Roman citizens, and a rather numerous Jewish community. They estimated in that population two hundred thousand freemen and four to five hundred thousand slaves. This immense and rapid increase was chiefly due to the favored situation of Corinth on the Isthmus, which was the main route of an immense traffic.⁴ Because of her location, she possessed advantages

1. Semple, op. cit., p. 677.

2. Curtius, History of Greece, I, p. 291.

3. J. C. Stobart, The Glory That was Greece, p. 105.

4. F. Godet, Introduction to New Testament, p. 240.

as a trading center unequaled by those of any other city. Mariners were still reluctant to confront the dangerous voyage around the Peloponnesus, and, when they had cargoes to transport from east to west or vice versa, they preferred to sail into one of Corinth's two harbours and tranship across the isthmus. So common was this practice and so numerous was the amount of merchandise brought to the harbors of Corinth for portage, that the city held a leading place not only in commerce and trade but also in manufacturing.¹ Her territories were unable to feed her numerous population; foodstuffs therefore were imported from other places. The situation as regards manufactured goods was similar. Her artisans not only supplied the population of the city with their products, but also produced to meet the needs of the remainder of the state's territory and of foreign countries. This necessitated the importation of raw materials. At the same time the wealthy part of the population, not being content with the products of their own city and country, would naturally absorb large quantities of imported manufactured goods of finer quality.²

In view of the character of the evidence, it is not necessary to discuss all the occupations, crafts, industries, and manufacturers, one after another in Corinth, the greatest

1. G. M. Calhoun, The Business Life of Ancient Athens, p. 31.

2. M. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, p. 1273.

manufacturing and commercial center of this time.¹

The agricultural, industry, banking, toll, and the Isthmian Games were large sources of Corinth's extraordinary wealth but the greatest source of wealth of Corinth was the famous temple of Aphrodite. It was located on the northern summit of Acrocorinthus, and the whole citadel was sacred to Aphrodite, the charms of whose worship brought untold wealth to her shrine. Crowds of courtesans took part in the service of the goddess. Some have contended that this temple was not rebuilt after the destruction of Corinth by Mummius but Strabo² tells us that in his time it actually owned more than a thousand such *ἱεροδοῦλοι*, whom both men and women had dedicated to Aphrodite's service. When private persons made vows to her they promised that in thanksgiving for an answer to their prayers they would bring courtesans to the temple. As Strabo³ says:

And therefore it was also on account of these women that the city was crowded with people and grew rich, for instance, the ship captains freely squandered their money, and hence the proverb, 'not for every man is the voyage to Corinth.' (Moreover, it is recorded that a certain Courtesan said to the woman who reproached her with the charge that she did not like to work or touch wool: "Yet, such as I am, in this short time I have taken down three webs" (i.e. "finished three webs," but there is a word-play in *καθεῖλον ἵπτους* which cannot be reproduced in English. The words also mean "lowered three masts" i.e. "debauched three ship captains."

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1. Loc. cit.
 2. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 20.
 3. Ibid., Note 3.

Thus temple and city were both enriched by shipmasters and seamen who often squandered all their wealth on the sacred courtesans and thus put money into circulation. The economic result was an increase of the coined money, rising prices, and an enhanced reputation of the city as a desirable market, where the shipmaster could rely on the best return on his cargo. It mattered little that he had to buy a license to trade, because his profits were ample. He could find in this market all the products of the Mediterranean coastlands from the Caucasus to the Pillars of Heracles.¹

Economic Conditions of the Corinthian People.

A large majority of the people had very modest incomes. Most of the working classes lived from hand to mouth and their purchasing power was very low. What they bought on the market was mostly foodstuffs and a few products of industry of the cheapest sort: clothing, furniture, table, and kitchen utensils. And so it was with their few tools and instruments; poor peasants and artisans could not afford to buy expensive tools. The difficult task with which the industry of the time was confronted was therefore as follows: To meet the requirements of the working classes it had to produce the cheapest and plainest goods not in a very large or steadily increasing quantities. For the bourgeoisie it had to supply better goods and in a large but

1. Semple, op. cit., p. 670.

fluctuating amount. Here again it was mostly cheap goods that were in demand, inexpensive but pretentious, imitations in cheap materials of the luxury products used by the rich. And finally the best and finest goods were made for the few wealthy folk.¹

This city, Corinth, the meeting-place of eastern and western commerce, was selected by St. Paul as the center of his labors while in Greece. The city was the product of its location. In this chapter the historical-environmental background of the city has been investigated in order to make it possible to understand the problems that confronted the Corinthian Church.

1. Tostovtzeff, op. cit., p. 1204.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND

I. SOCIAL AND ETHNIC

In the judgment of all competent observers the Greeks are first among the nations which stand out in the course of history as having done most to promote human knowledge, human art, and human culture. The hold which Greek literature retains on modern education is not the mere result of precedent or fashion. At the beginning of the Christian era the peak of Greek civilization was more than three hundred years past, and for a century and a half Hellas had been under the political domination of Rome. Because of the Roman policy to interfere as little as possible with the internal affairs of the subject peoples, Greece was allowed to remain largely Hellenic, though not so verile and aggressive as in her former days. In some particulars there were wide variations among the various cities of the Greek people.¹ In this study some of the social customs that were general in Greece, and those belonging exclusively to Corinth during St. Paul's work there will be observed.

1. Slavery.

With the intervention of Rome in the affairs of the East,

1. J. P. Mahaffy, Social Life in Greece, 7th edition, p. 1.

a large slave buyer appeared in the eastern ports of the Mediterranean. The more luxurious character which Italian life now assumed, called for a large amount of labor, both skilled and unskilled. The demand for slaves in the West was therefore considerable. Part of the supply came from the West, but the best, the more civilized and more docile slaves, were shipped to Italy from the East. The slave trade centers were naturally the ports of the Hellenistic world. Corinth possessed great importance from being the terminus of one or more of the great trade routes that passed through several states and brought goods and slaves to the sea. Also, besides serving the above purpose, Corinth was more prominent as a center of a considerable transit trade, and at the same time, as a clearing-house in which slaves were herded, sorted out, classed, and reshipped according to orders placed with the merchants who resided at the ports. The turnover had to be quick, for food supply was scant, but the distance was short from Corinth to the other large markets where slaves found ready sale.¹

The large number of slaves in Corinth naturally fluctuated increasing in times of prosperity and decreasing in times of economic distress. The development of commerce and industry raised the demand for workers and servile labor was more to be

1. M. Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of The Hellenistic World, pp. 1261-1263.

relied on than free labor. The comparatively large supply of slaves made their labor on the whole cheaper than that of free men and helped to lower the price of labor in general.¹ No trustworthy accounts have been found as to the actual number of slaves in Corinth, but according to a statement in Athenaeus at one time there were 460,000.²

The supply of slaves on the Corinthian market came from various sources. The home-bred ones formed a large part of the slave population. This method of obtaining slaves was used extensively in Corinth. The owners of female slaves imposed prolificacy upon them to satisfy the large demand, without any regard to the women themselves. Slaves seldom knew who their parents were and the males used for breeding never knew how many children they had. The exposure of children and the institution of *ἄρπτοι* increased this home supply. But the most abundant source at this time was the regular traffic carried on by professional merchants with the northern neighbors of Greece and with some of the Hellenistic kingdoms of the East.³

The price of slaves varied according to supply, age, beauty, health, strength, skill in handicraft, and mental endowments. As many as 40,000 have been known to have been sold in one day,

1. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

2. Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, VI, 103, p. 428.

3. Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 1262.

at a nominal price per capita. At this time, however, the owners, on the whole, were not cruel to their slaves.¹

2. Women and Marriage.

The inferiority of women is a usual dogma of undeveloped peoples, probably because in the early stages of society brute strength was the supreme quality, and the women lacked it. This dogma of woman's inferiority finds a variety of expression. There was a peculiar physiological theory, said to have been proclaimed by Apollo, that the women had no essential part in the reproduction of life, but that her function in propagation the race was simply to nourish and protect the germ of life whose source was the male.² In the eyes of the law she was a minor all her days. "She was under a perpetual tutelage: first of all to her parents, who disposed of her hand, then to her husband, and in the days of her widowhood to her sons;"³ she must never be without a male, *Kύριος*, and representative. The woman's pre-eminent virtue was fidelity to her guardian. At Corinth men considered it beneath their dignity to dance with women.⁴ In their own restricted sphere their lives were probably not unhappy. The estimate of marriage is the necessary supplement of the

1. Athenaeus, op. cit., VI, 92, p. 419.

2. W. E. H. Lecky, History of European Morals, II, p. 280.

3. Ibid., p. 289.

4. Emil Reich, General History of Western Nations, I, p. 227.

estimate of womanhood. Demosthenes summed it up when he said the Greeks have wives to bear legitimate children and to be faithful housekeepers.¹ Marriage was thus a serious civil obligation. Marriage was also a religious duty; legitimate children were desired to perpetuate the family religion, and to give the proper burial to dead progenitors, without which a soul would become an unhappy, wandering spirit; to offer sacrifices and food to the shades of the departed ancestors.²

While the Greek marriage was religiously significant no religious dignitary had any function to perform in completing the bond between husband and wife. Nor was it civil in the sense of being a function of the state, no public officials were concerned and no public records kept. It was solely a private, family affair. There were few love matches. In competition with the seclusion of the unmarried girls from all male company, and the practical considerations that guided match-makers and guardians, love had but little chance.³ The betrothal was generally an oral contract, witnessed by the family and friends, by which the *Kύριος* of the girl gave her in marriage, with a specified dowry, to her suitor. Her husband enjoyed the use of the dowry, giving security for its return to

1. J. W. Decker, Thesis 1917, "Marriage and Divorce in the Early Christian Church," p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 4.

3. Botsford and Sibley, Hellenic Civilization, pp. 523-524.

her guardian in case of divorce or his death without issue. Forbidden degrees of relationship were few. Marriage with close kin was really encouraged by one of the laws of inheritance. A man might marry his cousin, niece, or even his half sister by the same father, though not by the same mother.

According to the old Roman imperial laws, which were certainly known in a general way in the Corinthian Colonia, "a man might not marry a direct ancestor or descendant; nor might he marry stepmother (cf. I Cor. 5:1) or stepdaughter, mother-in-law or daughter-in-law."¹ "Legal marriages between slaves were not possible, since they possessed no personal rights."² No disabilities were attached to second marriage either by law or custom. The females became nubile at an early age, and were married very young, not usually before fifteen, however. The man had to be eighteen.³

While the betrothal constituted the validity of marriage, the actual assumption of marital responsibilities and privileges followed the home-bringing of the bride. This latter was more public and elaborate in its form, and therefore held first place in the public mind, though legally the betrothal was all-important. The Greeks had no purely religious marriage like the Roman confarreatio, but the conjugal relation was not without religious

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1. J. W. Decker, op. cit., p. 5.
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. Ibid., p. 6.
 4. Loc. cit.

import, and the sanctions of religion were thrown around it. The wife was leaving the household gods of her father, she was to be introduced into the new circle of her husband's gods and ancestors; all had to be placated. Every important transaction needed the benediction of the gods, and the marriage was no exception.

The girl wife came from the conventual seclusion of her father's house, woefully ignorant of the affairs of the world, and lacking the semblance of any education save that in the domestic arts, totally unused to the opposite sex, she was in no way fitted to become anything but a sexual slave, and a household drudge.¹ Her new state did not furnish her a great many additional opportunities. She lived in the women's apartments, *γυναῖκων ἑστία*, which was more or less shut off from the rest of the house. She had some freedom in the main division of the dwelling; she usually ate with her husband, if he were alone, but she never appeared before his guests. She was very seldom expected to be seen in the streets, and then only when properly veiled and attended by a female slave. To use the words of a certain Greek, "The woman who goes out of her own house ought to be in that time of life when the men who meet her will ask, not 'whose wife is she?' but 'whose mother is she?'"² Married women might attend weddings and a few of the

1. Botsford and Sibley, op. cit., p. 501f.
 3. J. W. Decker, loc. cit.

great religious festivals; other assemblies were close to them. Women visited each other, but only when living close by, and even then infrequently.¹ The oversight of the domestic industries, the care of the home, children and sick slaves were the occupation of the wife. She was provided with female slaves who were really her most intimate companions. An industrious, thrifty wife, well trained for the performance of her domestic duties was deemed a most valuable asset. Her first care was the nurture and early rearing of the children; she was the only instructor of the girls, but the boys were early put under the care of teachers. The manners of the Greeks were gentle, and "domestic oppression is scarcely ever spoken of."²

It is already apparent that monogamy was the rule. It was "the institution of monogamy, by which from its earliest days, the Greek civilization proclaimed its superiority to the Asiatic civilization that had preceded it."³ The deviations from the letter of this rule are unimportant, and the deviations from its spirit are very marked. Of the wife the strictest chastity was demanded and exacted. Demosthenes reveals how the men requited the marital faithfulness of their consorts: "we have female companions (*ἑταίρας*) for our pleasure, concubines (*παλλαξιάς*) for daily attendance on our persons,

1. L. H. Morgan, Ancient Society, p. 242ff.

2. W. E. H. Lecky, History of European Morals, II, p. 288.

3. Ibid., p. 278.

but wives that we may beget legitimate children and that we may have a faithful guardian of our household."¹ The concubine was a female slave who was the domestic attendant of the husband, or a free woman who had entered a quasi-marital relation with a man already married. Concubinage was recognized by law and not proscribed by public opinion. The slave concubine enjoyed no special rights over any other slave; her children were presumably slaves.² The union of a man with an alien whom he might not make his wife was also considered a species of concubinage. The ἑταίρα, almost always a foreigner, was a harlot. They were patronized chiefly by unmarried men, who received no censure therefore, but illicit relations with married men were allowed by society. The common prostitutes of Corinth were licensed by law and taxed by the state, and the houses of prostitution were managed by regular traders in vice. Many of them did not live in the segregated quarters, and these were often employed as flute players and dancers at family sacrifices or gatherings of men.³

3. Divorce.

The marriage tie could be dissolved by mutual consent; without any further proceedings. A husband could rid himself

1. J. W. Decker, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Loc. cit.

of his wife by simply dismissing her, but he had to return her dowry, and in some cases pay alimony; the children, it seems, remained in his care. He was required by law to divorce an adulteress; because of the importance of an heir, barrenness was a frequent ground for breaking the union. The law regarding heiresses led to many divorces.¹ An heiress and her property, if her father left no will, fell to the next-of-kin. He might marry her himself, or give her with a dowry to someone else. Men would frequently abandon their own wives to marry a rich heiress who had fallen to them, rather than lose the property. If the heiress herself were married, the next-of-kin might compel her to divorce her husband to marry him. A wife might also leave her husband, this divorcing him, but she had to lodge a complaint against him with the Archon, apparently in order to settle the right to the dowry involved.² The difficulty in the way of a wife reaching the Archon, and the powerful public opinion rendered her right of divorce almost null. On the whole, divorce does not seem to have been nearly so prevalent at this time among the Greeks as among the Romans. The mildness of Greek manners, and the subjection of women, backed as it was by centuries of obedience, rendered it relatively infrequent among the Greeks.³ Moreover, Roman divorces were beginning to be very

1. W. J. Woodhouse, "Inheritance (Greek)" Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, VII, pp. 302-306.

2. J. W. Decker, op. cit., p. 14.

3. Loc. cit.

frequent and when husband or wife willed to withdraw his or her consent, then the relation ipso facto ceased. "The Jewish law was nearly as lax as the Roman; it did, however, prescribe a bill of divorcement, and gave the right of divorcing to the husband only."¹

4. Law.

In the complicated legal life of the Greek countries at this time, several codes of law were in force side by side. The courts often had to deal with conflicts among these laws and between the royal edicts and regulations, the parties in the lawsuits, and even the judges themselves, who were not professionally trained. There was a great demand for trained lawyers to advise and help the people. Such lawyers existed in Corinth at this time. The government gave them its recognition, but endeavored to restrict their activity so that they should not interfere with the collection of taxes.² They dealt chiefly with the serious questions of crime and fraud. The small matters, which were easy to be made into causes of disagreement and legal action, were ordinarily decided in Greece by umpires or arbiters chosen by the parties themselves. The umpires decided, not according to formal written law, but according to their conception of right and wrong. (1) The subjects

1. Ibid., pp. 199-200.

2. Rostovtzeff, op. cit., p. 1094.

brought up for decision were called "matters of everyday life" (βιωτικά'), the trumpery details of common life, which afforded many opportunities for the Corinthian Greeks to quarrel about prices and ownership, etc. (2) The litigants chose any person they pleased as arbitrators to judge the individual cases; the place where the arbitrator took his position became the κρίτηριον, the proceedings were ex tempore.¹

5. Amusements.

Criminals condemned to death or slaves purchased for that purpose were exhibited for the amusement of the populace in the arena of the Amphitheatre, and were forced to fight with wild beasts,² or to slay one another as gladiators. These victims were exhibited at the end of the spectacle as an exciting termination to an entertainment.³

6. The Rich and Poor.

In Corinth there were some who possessed great wealth. The merchants and other affluent traders had great quantities of wealth stored in the temples of Greece. These luxuriant and opulent men lived in sumptuous edifices of granite and

1. William Ramsay, The Expositor, Article on "Historical Commentary on the Epistle to the Corinthians," Sixth Series 1900, I, pp. 274-275.

2. W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, op. cit., Life and Epistles of Saint Paul, 1917, p. 431, Note 6.

3. Loc. cit.

marble, with ornaments of gold and silver.¹

The proportion of the wealth of Corinth possessed by members of the lower classes was very small. The large majority of the working class lived in indigence, with no savings and very little property of their own. They lived on what they earned by their manual labor as peasant landowners mostly overburdened with debts, as tenants of parcels of land owned by the city, the temples, various corporations and private persons; or as hired hands in agriculture and industry. The only difference between them and the slaves was their personal freedom and their more precarious situation as regarded work and food. Slaves were at least sure of receiving their regular food and the minimum of clothing from their masters.²

7. Nationalities.

Corinth was a newly created city, with a very mixed population of Italians, Greeks, Orientals, and adventurers from all the Mediterranean world. The population of this colony consisted (1) of the descendants of the Roman Coloni, established as a burgess-colony in B.C. 46, who would on the whole constitute a sort of local aristocracy; (2) of many resident Romans who came for commercial reasons, in addition to a few resident officials of the government; (3) of a large Greek population,

1. Julian, "Letters" No. 28, III, p. 85.

2. Rostovtzeff, op. cit., p. 1149.

who ranked as incolae; (4) of many Jews who were always drawn to mercantile centers;¹ (5) of many other resident strangers of various nationalities, attracted to Corinth for various reasons, amid the busy intercourse that characterized the Roman world.²

The people of Corinth were a typical European people, familiar with every device and invention of an over-stimulated civilization, essentially a worldly and material set of persons, seeking money and pleasure and success, excellent representatives of the worst side of rich "civilized" society, with little of the highest elements of Graeco-Roman civilization....In Corinth he [Paul] addressed himself to a people.... among whom a too prematurely developed civilization was entirely divorced from morality, a people keen-witted, pushing, self-assertive, conceited, highly trained, criticising all men, questioning all things, not apt to believe in anything or anybody.³

II. RELIGIONS

Because of its location and its position in commerce in the Graeco-Roman world, Corinth was a miniture of the empire. The people of the empire were all represented by nationality and by religion in this cosmopolitan metropolis on the isthmus. In such a place it is easy to understand why there were so many religions and also why the religions were intermingled, syncretized, and adapted to the desires of the Corinthian people. Since it was a Roman colony it would seem on first thought that

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1. Philo Judaeus, Vol. VI, Legatio AD Gaium, 37, p. 207.
 2. William Ramsay, "Corinth," loc. cit.
 3. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, p. 21.

Emperor worship thrived there, but the facts prove otherwise. Emperor worship was soon overshadowed by other forms of religion. In this investigation it will be necessary to notice briefly only a few of the leading representative religions in Corinth at the middle of the first century.

1. Aphrodite.

Origin. Aphrodite was represented by the later Greek poets as having been born of the foam of the sea, and first touched land on the island of Cyprus, which was henceforth held sacred to her. She has been claimed by some to have been aboriginal,¹ while some writers insist that she was an indigenous goddess.² She figured among the Greeks as goddess of beauty and sexual love. She was extremely popular among the numerous islands and ports of the Grecian seas, but it was at Corinth that she received her greatest share of honor.

Charm and Beauty. The poets painted Aphrodite as the most beautiful of all the goddesses, whose magic power not even the wisest could withstand. Even wild animals were conscious of her influence, and pressed around her like lambs. In partial explanation of this otherwise incomprehensible fact, she was endowed with the celebrated love-begetting magic girdle, which she could lay aside at will, and also lend to others.³ The

1. L. R. Farnell, Cults of Greek States, II, p. 618.

2. O'Neill, op. cit., pp. 89f.

3. O. Seeman, The Mythology of Greece and Rome, p. 66.

germ in the story of her love for the beautiful Adonis can be easily distinguished. It clearly represents the decay of nature in autumn, and its resuscitation in spring. Adonis, whom Aphrodite tenderly loved, was killed, when hunting, by a wild-boar. Inconsolable in her loss, Aphrodite piteously entreated Father Zeus¹ to restore his life. Zeus at length consented that Adonis should spend one part of the year in the world of shadows, and the other in the upper world. It is clear that the monster that deprived Adonis of life is only a symbol of the frosty winter, before whose freezing blast all life in nature decays.²

Function. She was worshipped as the bestower of all animal and vegetable fruitfulness. This worship was degraded by repulsive practices of religious prostitution and self-mutilation. She became the goddess of sexual impulse, of birth, marriage and family life. As the goddess of the grosser form of love she inspired both men and women with passion. Upon her male favorite she bestowed the fatal gift of seductive beauty, which generally led to disastrous results in the case of the women. She also acted as an intermediary for bringing lovers together. Naturally, a personality invested with such charms was regarded as the ideal of womanly beauty. The function of

1. Apollodorus, III, 14. 3-5.
2. Seeman, op. cit., p. 67.

Aphrodite as the patroness of courtesans represented the most degraded form of her worship as the goddess of love. Wealthy men dedicated their most beautiful slaves to the service of the goddess at Corinth.¹ Her attributes were the ram, the he-goat, the dove, certain fish, the cypress, myrtle, and pomegranate. The animals being the symbols of fertility, the plants were remedies against sterility.²

A Natural Outgrowth of the Greek Mind. The Greeks, more than any other peoples, perhaps, divinized the act of procreation; they could only conceive the intoxications of amorous pleasure as being under the protection of some mysterious and divine being, as perfect in her physical beauty as in her charm of mind.³ They erected temples to Aphrodite, whom they worshipped under the different names which a lascivious and poetic fancy recognized and venerated--in the glorification of love through the plastic perfection of woman as the emblem of venereal appetite. It was at Corinth alone in Greece, and there in connection with the Heavenly Aphrodite, that impure practices were established as part of the recognized ritual of worship. Because of this the city was notoriously dangerous to visitors; "not for every man is the voyage to Corinth";⁴ "non

1. J. L. Garvin, "Aphrodite," Encyclopaedia Britannica, II, pp. 97-99.

2. Loc. cit.

3. L. A. Stone, Story of Phallicism, II, p. 414.

4. Strabo, op. cit., 8. 6. 20.

cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum."¹

The Aphrodisia. Aphrodisia was the general name of the festival in honor of Aphrodite. The festivals of Corinth were the most celebrated of those held in honor of the goddess. Great crowds assembled at the temple from all parts of the Graeco-Roman world. Sacrifices of blood were not offered, though victims seem to have been slain for purposes of divination. A ritual bath and mimic dance formed part of certain mysteries which were celebrated. The nude image of the goddess was exposed in the religious ceremony, and then after due performance of certain rites she was supposed to be restored to life. The ceremony seems to have been dancing unveiled exposed priestesses to excite the passion of those who came to the festival. Those who desired to be initiated *ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ μοιχικῇ* received on entering the temple a phallis and a lump of salt, and gave a piece of money to the temple treasure.² Naturally, therefore, the priestesses took a conspicuous part in the festival of Aphrodite, one day being given up to them, and another to the 'respectable' women. Much of Eastern license and debauchery were seen on these festival days. No protest was made by society against the immoral practices in Corinth. The seeming paradox is explained when it is understood that the idea

1. J. C. Stobart, The Glory That Was Greece, p. 108.

2. W. J. Woodhouse, "Aphrodisia," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, I, pp. 640-645.

of purity changes its context in the different generations; and also the Hellene regarded the physical procreation power as belonging to the divine character and as part of the cosmic creative force. Therefore, a practice that was secularly impure might be made holy by cult and consecration.¹

Guest-loving girls! Servants of Suasion in wealthy Corinth! Ye that burn the golden tears of fresh frankincense, full often soaring upward in your souls, unto Aphrodite, the heavenly mother of lovers! She hath granted you, ye girls, blamelessly to cull on lovely couches the blossom of delicate bloom; for, under force, all things are fair.²

2. Mystery Cults.

Origin and Purpose. In Hellenic and Hellenistic usage the term *τὸ μυστήριον* and (far more frequently) *τὰ μυστήρια* describe a secret cult, initiation into which presupposed a course of special preparation. It was sacrilege for an initiate to divulge anything that he had seen, heard or experienced in the solemn esoteric ritual.³ In Corinth most of the mysteries were practiced in some form or modification in the middle of the first century. In this investigation only the general character of the mysteries, their tendencies, and their influence on thought and life can be considered. All these religions, by the very necessity of circumstances were

1. L. R. Farnell, "Greek Religion," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, VI, pp. 392-424.

2. Pindar, The Odes, "Fragments," 122, (87) p. 578.

3. P. Gardner, "Mysteries," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, IX, pp. 77-82.

not local or civic, but appealed to men as individuals and in groups. All of them were proselytizing, and offered to mankind, in competition with one another, a better way of life. Their most important characteristic was that they were mysteries. The better way of life only belonged to those who were initiated, and had secret practices and doctrines which it was not lawful to reveal. The strict secrecy of the cults carried with it the necessary consequence that their principles were handed down, from generation to generation, by a set of priests or hierophants. These hierophants usually claimed extensive powers, and offered themselves as the only legitimate way by which the deities could be approached. They held the keys to the gate, and only by their aid could the would-be votaries attain to divine communion.

Development. The attraction of these societies for men and women was the satisfying of the longing for salvation, *σωτηρία*. Men and women were eager for such a communion with the divine, such a realization of the interest in their affairs, as might serve to support them in the trials of life, and guarantee to them a friendly reception in the world beyond the grave. "To attain peace of mind, a position of confident hope amid the blows of circumstance, would make trial of any secret cult which came their way, perhaps one after another,

until they found one to satisfy their need."¹

The communion, then, with some saving deity, was the end of all of the mysteries. The mysteries of the Graeco-Roman world had in common certain features, to which most of the modern writers have come to a general agreement. These features, briefly are as follows:

The entry into any of the societies, or *θιαῖσσι*, was through specified rites of purification. Sometimes the purification was accomplished by baptism in water; often there was a more repulsive baptism of blood. The blood-purification which was very frequent was the taurobolium. A more ordinary purification in Greece was that by the blood of a sacrificed pig. These ceremonies did not arise out of a sense of guilt or unfitness for communion with the gods. At first the uncleanness from which they libetated men was only formal, and the rite partook of the nature of magic. But by degrees more lofty conceptions made their way into men's minds; and it is to be supposed that many a votary looked back in the blood-bath as making his entry into a better state of existence.²

Importance. It was of the essence of the mysteries to establish a way of communion between the votary and the saving deity who was the protector of each society. Sometime this was

1. Loc. cit.
2. Loc. cit.

accomplished by a sacred meal, such as many societies in Greece celebrated on fixed days at the tomb of founders of families and clans. Sometime it was brought about by the votary drinking a special prepared draught.

When a way was once opened, between the votary and that aspect of the divine nature with which he could hold intercourse, there followed an ἔπιπτεία, or enlightenment, which led in some cases to visions and dreams.

All the mysteries professed to guarantee not only happiness in the present life, but a favorable reception in the world of the dead. They extended men's views to take in the future life as well as the present one. Thus the essential features of the mysteries were rites of initiation, rites of communion, and a great concern as to the future life.¹ In First Corinthians 2:6ff. there are some conceptions which have close associations with the Mystery Religions, and in First Corinthians 2:1-10, where Paul speaks of a more advanced stage of knowledge, there is certainly a suggestion of the "Mysteries." The use of such terms as πνευματικός, τέλειος, σοφία seems to demand a similar background.

3. Religious Brotherhoods.

Origin and Purpose. The craving for outlets for religious emotion was satisfied by the private θιάσοι, the guilds

1. Loc. cit.

of brethren devoted to the special cult of one divinity. The unions belonged to the type of secret religious activities which were found in all parts of the Mediterranean world at varying levels of culture. After the Macedonian period the inscriptions were numerous and are enlightening concerning their organization and their wide prevalence throughout the Hellenic world.¹

Development. These brotherhoods showed the development of the idea of a humanitarian religion in that they transcended in most cases the limits of the old tribal and civic religion and invited strangers. The members, both men and women, associated voluntarily, no longer on the ground of birth or status, but were drawn together by their personal devotion to a particular deity. These members stood in a far more intimate and individual relation than the ordinary citizen could stand to the gods of this tribe and city. This sense of fellowship sometimes was enhanced by a sacrament which the members partook together. "A common meal at least, a love feast or 'Agape', formed the chief bond of the thiasatai, and this was sometimes a funeral-feast commemorative of the departed brother or sister."² There was nothing to prevent the ^(A. 105) thiasas choosing 7 as its patron-deity one of the leading divinities of traditional

1. L. R. Farnell, "Greek Religion," op. cit., pp. 392-424.

2. Loc. cit.

polytheism.

Importance. The religious importance of these societies consists in their quickening influence on personal religion, and in the gratification that they afforded to the individual craving for personal union with the godhead. The religious importance is also seen in their organization which aroused a keener sense of religious fellowship among the members, and which served as a model to the Christian community.

III. PHILOSOPHY

After the capture of Corinth by Mummius, Greek philosophy turned from the ideal of man as an organic member of a social order that no longer had any true existence, and occupied itself instead with the individual man. A new social ideal with any vitality in it could only come into being as history prepared the way, by giving rise to a form of society more adequate than that of the Greeks and possessing those elements through lack of which Greek civilization had failed. Meanwhile, it was necessary for men to have something as the guiding principle in their lives, to take the place of that which formerly had been supplied by the traditional duties of citizenship, and the authoritative sanctions of the state religion. To get this, they turned in one of two directions: On the one hand, there began to some extent that frantic running after

Oriental Cults, which formed so striking a feature in the life of the Empire later on. Belief in the old gods and the old religions was undermined by scepticism, only to be replaced by a superstition which grasped at every novelty. The more sober minds, on the other hand, turned to philosophy for guidance and comfort. For the next few centuries, then, philosophy assumed an intensely practical aspect. It was nothing but a complete art of living.¹

Furthermore, in all its various tendencies, the philosophy of the next few centuries, practically agreed in this: that if there was any good attainable at all, it must be found by each man within himself. Circumstances had passed beyond man's power to control; but if he could not remedy the ills of the outer world, or find in the life which surrounded him a worthy field for his endeavor, he could at least make himself independent of this world. He could cultivate that philosophic calm and pose which found all the elements of happiness within the mind itself, and thus be put beyond the power of chance to harm. Corinth had a veneer of philosophy. The great and thriving city unequaled in importance by any other city in Greece would naturally embrace the Greek culture. She was proud of her mental activity and acuteness, although, in this particular, she was

1. A. K. Rogers, Student's History of Philosophy, p. 120.

surpassed by Athens.¹ She had imported all the schools of learning and philosophies, on which, as Aristides, a rhetorician of the second century said, "a person stumbled at every step."² The two leading Philosophies of the first century which influenced the Corinthian Church will be briefly examined.

1. Epicureanism.

History. Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) was an Athenian, although he was born in Samos. About 306 B.C. he founded his school, which was held in his own garden at Athens. Here he gathered about him a group of enthusiastic disciples, including among their number even women and slaves. Bound together by the closest ties of intimacy and friendship, they formed a group which furnished an ideal of friendly intercourse. In this group Epicurus reigned supreme. His followers regarded him with the utmost veneration--a veneration which is expressed in the words of Lucretius³ in later days:

For we must speak as the acknowledged grandeur of the thing itself demands, a God he was, a God, most noble Mummis, who first found out that plan of life which is now termed Wisdom, and who by trained skill rescued life from such great billows and such thick darkness, and moored it in so perfect a calm and in so brilliant a light.

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, The International Critical Commentary, First Corinthians, p. xii.

2. Quoted in S. Davidson's Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. II. pp. 208-209.

3. Lucretius, V, l. 7., cited in Rogers, op. cit., p. 123.

His teachings were memorized by pupils, and accepted without change, down to unimportant details. So rightly did he impress his views upon them, that, in spite of the long life which the school enjoyed, its speculative opinions scarcely altered to the end. Mainly for this reason, the names which represent the later history of the school are only of secondary importance.¹

Tenets. Epicureanism is a combination of the Hedonism of the Cyrenaics, with the Atomism of Democritus. First of all, however, it is Hedonism. Epicurus found in pleasure the one obvious and undeniable good. Virtue was good only because of the pleasure which accompanied the exercise of virtue and not of its own account. Epicurus made the declaration that no conception of the good is possible apart from bodily enjoyments. While Metrodorus, one of his followers, even asserted boldly that "everything good has reference to the belly."² Epicurus stressed the necessity of selecting out pleasures, of avoiding those unregulated impulses which bring evils in their train, of preferring simple and unnatural joys to the questionable delights of luxury and extravagance. When he went on, however, to disparage all positive pleasure, in favor of a philosophic poise of mind, a quiet and undisturbed possession of one's faculties free from pain of body and trouble of spirit,

1. Loc. cit.
2. Loc. cit.

it is not easy always to distinguish his position from that of his followers who carried the theory to its natural end.

He even advocated the theory that positive pleasures only represent the relief that results from the removal of a pain. Therefore they were only the preliminaries of a true satisfaction, which, in itself, was nothing but the freedom from pain that left the mind without craving and without agitation, and which, once attained, was incapable of quantitative increase.¹

The end of our living is to be free from pain and fear. And when once we have reached this, all the tempest of the soul is laid. When we need pleasure is when we are grieved because of the absence of pleasure; but when we feel no pain, then we no longer stand in need of pleasure.²

Epicureans were virtually Atheists.³ Their philosophy was a system of materialism, in the strictest sense of the word. In their view, the world was formed by an accidental concourse of atoms, and not in any sense created, or even modified, by the Deity. They professed certain belief in what were called gods; but these equivocal divinities were merely phantoms, impressions on the popular mind, dreams, which had no objective reality, or at least exercised no active influence on the physical world or the business of life.

1. Ibid., p. 124.

2. Diag. Laertius, Life of Epicurus, cited by Rogers, op. cit., p. 124.

3. L. R. Farnell, "Greek Religion," op. cit., pp. 392-424.

The Epicurean deity, if self-existent at all, dwelt apart, in serene indifference to all the affairs of the universe. The universe was a great accident, and sufficiently explained itself without any reference to a higher power. The popular mythology was derived, but the Epicureans had no positive faith in anything better. As there was no creator, so there was no moral governor: All notions of retributions and of judgment to come were of course forbidden by such a creed. The principles of the atomic theory, when applied to the constitution of man, must have caused the resurrection to appear an absurdity. The soul was nothing without the body; or rather, the soul was itself a body, composed of finer atoms, or at best an unmeaning compromise between the material and the immaterial.¹

Importance.

The moral results of such a creed were necessarily that which Paul described:² "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." The essential principle of this philosophy was that there was nothing to alarm, nothing to disturb.³ Its farthest reach was to do deliberately what the animals do instinctively; its aim was to gratify self.⁴ With the coarser and more energetic minds, this principle inevitably led to the grossest sensuality and crime; in the case of others, whose temperament was more common-place, or whose taste was more pure, the system took the form of a selfishness more refined. Pleasure was still the end at which it aimed. Therefore, if the end be removed to its remotest distance, and

1. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., 1917, p. 369.
 2. First Corinthians, 15:32.
 3. H. Ritter, The History of Ancient Philosophy, III, p. 340.
 4. Ibid., p. 408.

understood to mean an enjoyment which involved manifold self denials, if Epicurus is given credit for taking the largest view of consequences,¹ and the life of his first disciples was purer than there is reason to suppose, the end remained the same.

But whether or not Epicurus was consistent in his position, at any rate, he created an ideal which appealed powerfully to a certain type of mind as a working theory of life, which exerted a wide influence. It was not a strenuous ideal, it called for no heroism or sacrifice; but this very fact constituted its charm for certain moods, which to few men were wholly unknown. The attitude of opposition which it assumed toward the more flagrant vices and follies gave it a sufficient moral flavor to hide its more ignoble aspects.²

2. Stoicism.

The philosophy of the Hellenistic world was the Stoa; all else was secondary. What is seen, broadly speaking, down through the three centuries, is that Aristotle's school lost all importance. For a century and a half Plato's school became a parasite upon the Stoa in the sense that its life as a school of skepticism consisted wholly in combating Stoic doctrine. Epicurus' school continued unchanged, but only attracted small

1. Ibid., pp. 402f.

2. Rogers, op. cit., p. 125.

minorities. The Stoa, which meanwhile had taken under its shield both popular and astral religions and many other forms of superstition, finally mastered skepticism, in fact though not in argument. The Stoa took enough of a revived Platonism to form that modified Stoicism or Eclecticism which was the distinguishing philosophy of the earlier Roman Empire.¹

History. Zeno, (340-265 B.C.) the founder of the Stoic school was born at Citium in Cyprus. His father was a merchant, and he himself was, in his youth, engaged in trade and commerce. Zeno's father, after a voyage to Athens, brought home with him the works of Socrates. Zeno was attracted by them to the study of philosophy. He was of mature years when he first visited Athens on business, where, having lost all his possessions in a shipwreck, he took refuge in philosophy; not, however, without feeling a secret bias to such pursuits. The life of a cynic appearing likely to afford him consolation in his poverty, Zeno became a disciple of Crates. It is manifest enough that in his view of moral life he adopted many of the opinions of the Cynics.² Nevertheless, his moral sensibility revolted against the grossness of their habits, and his scientific mind did not find sufficient food in the scanty wisdom of Crates. He, accordingly, sought fuller intellectual supply from Stilpo

1. W. W. Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization, p. 290.
2. Ritter, op. cit., p. 450.

of Megara, who combined austerity of practice with great extent of knowledge. From the latter he may have learned to estimate rightly the importance of the precise investigation of logic. He studied in the other leading schools of thought in Athens at that time.¹ Stoicism offered, to the nobler minds of the day, a welcome refuge from the trivialities and anarchy of the life which surrounded them. It succeeded in evolving a type of character and belief, superior in many respects to anything else that the ancient world produced. Thus, in the painted porch, *Ποικιλῆ*, which had once been the meeting place of the poets, those who instead of yielding to the prevailing evil of the times, thought they were able to resist it, formed themselves into a school of philosophers.² From this circumstance, his followers, who were at first called Zenonians, subsequently received the name of Stoics. The number of his disciples appears to have been considerable, notwithstanding that they were the object of contempt to the more refined, who looked upon them as a continuation of the Cynics. His school was generally regarded as the resort of the poor. It was a common joke that poverty was the charm to which Zeno was indebted for his scholars. Zeno is praised for the temperance and austerity of his habits, while his abstinence from sensual

1. Ibid., p. 451.
 2. Ibid., p. 449.

enjoyment is proverbial. The Athenians are said to have had such confidence in his integrity, that they entrusted to his keeping the keys of their gates. The striking decree which accompanied the honors voted to him after his death ended with the words, "He made his life a pattern to all, for he followed his own teaching."¹

Tenets. In the high tone of this school, and in some part of its ethical language, Stoicism was an apparent approximation to Christianity. On the whole, however, it was a hostile system, in its physics, its morals, and its theology. It condemned the worship of images and the use of temples, regarding them as nothing better than the ornament of art.² But it justified the popular polytheism and, in fact, considered the gods of mythology as minor developments of the Great World-God. The Stoics were pantheists.³ In their view, God was merely the Spirit or Reason of the Universe. The world was itself a rational soul, producing all things out of itself, and resuming all to itself again.⁴ "Matter was inseparable from the Deity. He did not create: He only organized, He merely impressed law and order on the substance, which was, in fact, himself."⁵

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1. Tarn, op. cit., p. 295.
 2. Ritter, op. cit., pp. 537, 535.
 3. Ibid., ppp. 509, 515, 516.
 4. Ibid., p. 592.
 5. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., 1917, p. 367.

The manifestation of the Universe was only a period in the development of God. In conformity with these notions of the world, which substituted a sublime destiny for the belief in a personal creator and preserver, were the notions which were held concerning the soul and its relation to the body. The soul was, in fact, corporeal.¹ The Stoics said that at death the soul would be burned, or returned to be absorbed in God. Thus, a resurrection from the dead, in the sense in which St. Paul showed it,² must have appeared irrational to the Stoics.

Methaphysics. Reality to the Stoics was an organic whole, an intimate combination of form and matter, soul and body, through which one universal life pulsated. This connected whole is indifferently God, or nature. Man, like everything else, constituted a part of the universal nature. Conformity to Nature, then, became a formula which had in it the possibility of giving the real content to the life of virtue. The negative interpretation of the life of nature still persisted very largely and dictated the character of the Stoic teaching on its more paradoxical side. But still the positive conception lay back of this, and became eventually more prominent. The mere protest against convention, and the emphasis on ascetic endurance, was transmuted into a positive law of duty.

1. Ritter, op. cit., ppp. 593, 512, 549.
2. First Corinthians, Chapter 15.

The Stoics denied that the two things, matter and form, are at all separate. Meaning existed in the world, not in the realm beyond it. They got rid of all transcendentalism by reducing form itself to matter. The result was a materialistic pantheism. The world of material nature was the sole reality; but it was not dead matter. It was living, informed by a rational soul; and so was God. This soul of the world, the Logos, or rational principle, was everywhere present as a more active and subtle kind of matter; just as the human soul was present in the body, ruling and directing it to rational ends. Indeed the soul, breath, or spirit, was but a part of the world soul. It participated in its rational qualities, and was received back finally into the universal reason, where its individuality was lost.¹

In opposition, therefore, to the explanation of the world processes by chance or mechanism, the Stoics conception was thoroughly teleological. Everything flowed of necessity from the nature of the whole; and since that whole was reason, everything had its place in an intelligible scheme.²

Ethical Ideal. Virtue is knowledge. But this did not mean, as it did with Aristotle, that the highest end of life was pure contemplation. Knowledge, for the Stoics, was practical

1. Rogers, op. cit., p. 139.

2. Loc. cit.

knowledge, knowledge growing out of the needs of conduct. But what is the relation of reason to the lower, appetitive nature, which also forms a part of man? In answering this question the Stoics represented the desires and emotions as a disease, an imperfection, a disturbance of the reason itself. The emotions were not something to be simply regulated and held in check by the reason. They had to be utterly destroyed. As a disease, emotion was not to be tolerated for a moment. The true ethical ideal, therefore, was entire freedom from the emotions. It was not a question of tempering one's passions: to rest satisfied with being only a little mad, a little sick. The wise man aimed at perfect health of soul, to have no passion at all. True virtue and happiness, then, consisted in living free and undisturbed. That would be possible only when the will refused to be coerced by those external things and events, which lay outside the power of the mind itself.¹ In man was the power to overcome the external things and he needed no help outside himself.

The Problems of Evil.

Many afflictions may befall a good man, but no evil, for contraries will never incorporate; all the rivers of the world are never able to change the taste and quality of the ocean.²

As regards physical evils, they met the difficulty

1. Ibid., p. 141.
2. Loc. cit.

consistently, even if paradoxically, by their denial that such things are evil at all. Their conception of the world as a unity enabled them to explain a seeming imperfection by its relation to the larger scheme of things into which it entered. A partial evil became a universal good. As Seneca¹ reasoned:

Must my leg then be lamed? Wretch, do you then on account of one poor leg find fault with the world? Will you not willingly surrender it for the whole? Know you not how small a part you are compared with the whole?

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If a good man had foreknowledge of what would happen, he would cooperate toward his own sickness and death and mutilation, since he knows that these things are assigned to him according to the universal arrangement, and that the whole is superior to the part.

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But how is it said that some external things are according to nature, and others contrary to nature? It is said as it might be said if he were separated from society; for to the foot I shall say that it is according to nature for it to be clean; but if you take it as a foot, and as a thing not independent, it will befit it both to step into the mud, and tread on thorns, and sometimes to be cast off for the good of the whole body; otherwise it is no longer a foot. We should think in some such way about ourselves also. What are you? A man. If you consider yourself as detached from other men, it is according to nature to live to old age, to be rich, to be healthy. But if you consider yourself as a man, and a part of a certain whole, it is for the sake of that whole that at one time you should be sick, at another time take a voyage and run into danger, at another time be in want, and in some cases die prematurely. Why then

1. Seneca Dialogues, cited by Rogers, op. cit., pp. 153-154.

are you troubled? Do you not know that as a foot is not longer a foot if it is detached from the body, so you are no longer a man if you are separated from other men.

Since men were unable to put themselves at the point of view of the whole this theory did not carry them very far practically. They were forced to fall back on the blind faith that nature could do no wrong. The trials, sins, warfares of men were prescribed to make men live and die master of themselves. Adversity was the better for all, for it was Fate's mercy to manifest to the world their errors. He showed that the things they feared and covered were neither good nor evil, being the common and promiscuous lot of good men and bad.

The Problem of Freedom. The whole standpoint of the Stoics involved an insistence upon the supreme reality of duty, and the responsibility it involved. On the other side stood their doctrine of necessity, according to which man was but a part of the universe that was acting through him. There was evolved the conception of a freedom opposed to the mere liberty of indifference which the Epicureans upheld. Such a freedom acted in accordance with law; but this law was an expression of man's own inner nature, and not something forced upon him from without. Nevertheless, it was not an ignoble submission, for they were yielding, not to brute force, but to the law of reason, the law of their own being. The wise

man did nothing unwillingly, for whatever he found necessary, he made his choice.¹

Importance. In the course of its development Stoicism became all things to all men. The pantheistic world-god, the artisan fire working in the veins of all creation, could be virtually identified with the Platonic soul of the world, or could be described in the language of the purest monotheism. The allegorical method by which the gods of mythology could be interpreted as parts, aspects, or functions of "Zeus" or "Nature" veiled prudent accommodations, contented orthodoxy, and gratified the permanent instinct of ingenious exegesis. Personal immortality, while not strictly compatible with the theory, was not explicitly denied. "A temporary survival was sometimes conceded to great souls until the expiration of the cycle and the reabsorption of all things in the fiery world-god."² It created at a time when ideals were sorely needed, an ideal of personal life and character more profound than the Greek world had yet seen and, in so doing, it provided the only available refuge for minds of the nobler sort.

It fostered ideals which proved a saving leaven in the corruption of social life but it was too cold, intellectual and self-centered to regenerate society. The need was felt for

1. Rogers, op. cit., pp. 155-157.

2. Paul Shorey, "Philosophy (Greek)" Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, IV, pp. 859-865.

something that should appeal, not simply to the intellect or the bare will, but to the feelings and emotions as well. Ethical philosophy was being replaced by religious philosophy.¹

Scepticism. The Sceptics can hardly be called a school. They included those men in the various schools who doubted the possibility of attaining to absolute knowledge. Among the Roman inhabitants they had a close affinity with the tenets of the later Academicians on the one hand and with Stoic doctrines on the other. But their keen consciousness of the great limitation of human knowledge made them also a factor in producing a certain agnosticism among the educated. It is clear that this doctrine when applied to politics, morals, or religion was upsetting. As a matter of fact, the majority of the Corinthians were plain men, not given to speculation, with a fondness for the concrete rather than the abstract. They naturally selected from the various philosophies the elements which appealed to their practical sense, and which fortified them to meet the burdens and responsibilities of their daily life.²

When the Christianity of St. Paul came into contact with the Greek mind in Corinth, it had to make its way slowly through modes of thought alien to its genius, which was seconded, only

1. Rogers, op. cit., p. 159.

2. C. H. Moore, The Religious Thought of the Greeks, pp. 244-245.

too strongly, by a loose morality. In Corinth idealism and sensuousness presented an uncongenial front to the doctrine that true life comes only through faith in a crucified Messiah.¹

1. Samuel Davidson, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 34, 35.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

A community of believers gathered from among the inhabitants of Corinth presented phenomena demanding special attention. Surrounded by prevailing immorality,¹ it was difficult for them to realize the purity which Christianity required. The devotion of the believers was less steady and consistent than it should have been, had their state before conversion been different. Established amid excessive corruption, the Christian society soon fell into disorder. The seeds of former habits, customs, and vice had not been wholly eradicated from the hearts of the converts. The depravity in which they lived and moved at one time exerted a considerable power upon their conduct, even after regeneration. In consequence of the prevailing degeneracy of Corinth, they were in greater danger of relapsing into the practices from which they had been saved. Rescued from abounding vice, they found it exceedingly difficult to maintain a high standard of moral excellence, because of the corrupt atmosphere in which their spiritual breath was drawn.² Conversion did not at once and entirely deliver the life from the sinful excesses in which the life had

1. See Chapter Five, p. 132f.

2. See Chapter Five, p. 143f.

indulged. It laid the ax to the root of the tree; but, repeated strokes were necessary to prostrate the deep rooted plant, which had grown up large and strong. The Corinthian church, therefore, exhibited various disorders soon after St. Paul's departure.

In such an environment as Corinth presented it was inevitable that a reaction should cause the emergence of opposite and antagonistic tendencies. Asceticism was the natural resort of resolute souls touched by the ethical appeal of the Gospel. The group which had the ascetic tendency accounted the flesh as essentially evil, and insisted on its mortification. They practiced abstinence in eating and drinking. They not only censured illicit intercourse between the sexes but condemned the institution of marriage and enjoined celibacy. The other tendency was more congenial to the natural mind but it was the more dangerous because it was disguised by an affectation of superior spirituality. It was agreed that the flesh was evil but they accounted it as evanescent. The immortal spirit was the arena of religion, and the mortal flesh had no religious value whatsoever.¹

Perhaps the most obvious quality in the Greek race was its disposition to argue and to criticize. Paul makes it clear that the Corinthians had been found of criticising their teachers, of comparing them with each other, of discussing all

1. David Smith, The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 235.

their qualities and characteristics and of arguing about them.¹
 Out of this quality arose factiousness.²

The Judaizers at first insisted upon the observance of the law of Moses, and especially of circumcision, as an absolute requisite for admission into the church. They said, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved."³

After the decision of the Council of Jerusalem it was impossible for them to require circumcision. They therefore altered their tactics, and as the decree of the council seemed to assume the Jewish Christians would continue to observe all the Mosiac law, the Judaizers took advantage of this to insist on the necessity of a separation between those who kept the whole law and all others. They taught that the uncircumcised were in a lower condition as to spiritual privileges. They also said the uncircumcised were at a greater distance from God, and that only the circumcised converts were in a state of full acceptance with God. They kept the Gentile converts who would not submit to circumcision in the same relative position as the proselytes of the gate, and treated the circumcised alone as proselytes of righteousness. The nucleus of the church was

1. I Corinthians, 2:1-3:23

2. W. M. Ramsay, The Expositor, 1900 Article on "Historical Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians," I, p. 29.

3. Acts, 15:1.

a body of converted Jews and proselytes.¹ It was inevitable that divisions should come.

I. PARTIES

In regard to the parties by which the Corinthian Church was distracted, it is impossible to arrive at certain and unquestioned conclusions. Where there is so much uncertainty, there are numerous hypotheses. Nor is it a matter of surprise that the topic should have given rise to speculation, when the data furnished by the two Epistles for determining their nature and number are so slight and fragile. It is sufficiently clear that there were parties, but there are considerable differences of opinion as to the position in which they stood one to another, as to the number, and as to the characteristics that marked them out in their associated relations. According to some hypotheses there were four parties, according to others three, and some take the view that there were only two parties.² Before the parties themselves are discussed, it will be necessary to understand the nature of the parties; to understand the spirit which has, in subsequent ages, been proverbially the ban of Christendom. Though in principle the same, in form the

1. Conybeare and Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, 1906, pp. 442-443.

2. S. Davidson, An Introduction to the New Testament, II, pp. 223-231.

division in the Corinthian Church was so different from the divisions of later times that a clear statement of the difference is necessary to prevent confusion. In the first place, this is the earliest instance of the application of the word 'schism' to a moral division. Instead of the meaning usually assigned to it in later times, of a separation from some society, it is used here for a division within a society. These factions or 'schism,' therefore, in the Corinthian Church, must not be considered as dissentient bodies outside the pale of the rest of the society, but as recognized parties of which the society itself was composed.¹

In the second place, the grounds of dissension were wholly different from divisions today. They were aggravated in Corinth by the conflux of various elements, the result of its commerce, situation, and environment,² as well as the tendency to faction which had long characterized the Greek race. The principle occasion for this 'schism' was the same as that which was to be found in every church of the Apostolic age, and which has never since been found in any. At no subsequent period have Christian communities been agitated, as all then were, by the animosity and rivalry of Jewish and Gentile converts. In Corinth, the most exclusively Gentile of all the primitive

1. A. P. Stanley, Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, p. 26.

2. See Chapter Four.

churches,¹ the Jews formed the basis of the community. The chief tasks which the founder of the church had to fulfill were the reconciling of their scruples and the meeting of their prejudices. Two classes of men were brought into close association, and taught to look upon each other as brothers and friends. One part which had but recently relinquished the worship of Grecian divinities, still considered acts of gross immorality as either innocent or indifferent, and the future life, if not incredible, at least difficult to be believed. The other part, consisted of Jews either by birth or religion, who still retained all the Jewish rites or circumcision, of the Sabbath, of abstinence from particular kinds of foods, and of attendance at the Jewish festivals. "No equal degree of contrariety has ever since been found within the bosom of the same religious society."²

In the third place, the professed watchwords of these parties were the names, not of any subordinate teachers, but of two of the Apostles and one of their immediate followers, and of Christ himself.

1. 'Paul Party'.

The Apostle put to the forefront the party which took its name from himself. He therefore gave proof of great tact,

1. A. P. Stanley, op. cit., p. 27.
2. Loc. cit.

for by first of all disapproving of his own partisans, he put his impartiality beyond attack. It has been supposed that in the enumeration of the parties he followed the historical order in which they were formed. But from the fact that Paul was the founder of the church, and that Apollos came after him, it does not follow that Paul's party was formed first and that of Apollos second. The contrary is more likely to be true. St. Paul's partisans had only had occasion to pronounce themselves as such, by way of reaction, against the exclusive partiality inspired by the other leaders who came after him. St. Paul according to his liberal views of Christianity, as apposed to the bondage of Judaism, had preached a system free from the compulsion of the law. This attitude was quickly assumed in the main by the Gentile converts. They were disposed to press to extremes the liberty of the gospel, and to regard as indifferent the scruples of the weak. The Jews, therefore, to counteract this, cast indirect reproach on Paul, as a false apostle.¹ They distinguished themselves from others as if they alone were the true Christians. The state of the community to which they belonged caused the Judaizers to keep their legal notions in the background, and to insist on that aspect of them which detracted from St. Paul's authority.

1. II Corinthians, Chapter Eleven.

Furthermore, it is natural to suppose that the Corinthians who had been converted by St. Paul were most attached to his person. He came to them with the determination to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.¹ His gospel and its presentation was so simple that to some it seemed to indicate a deficiency of culture where as he had refrained on purpose from the attractive language of human wisdom. When Apollos came with such a contrast of presentation of the gospel many of the Corinthians made comparison, exalted Apollos' ingenious and brilliant teaching at the expense of St. Paul, which was more sober and simple in form. It was inevitable that in the presence of this strongly accentuated preference, another part of the church should zealously vindicate the merits of St. Paul. They recalled his labor as founder, and declared that they remained attached to him, despite all, as the true representative of the gospel.² The Apostle condemned their procedure, not only because it involved presumption in the formation of their judgments, but also because it was inconsistent with the dignity of Christians. It involved submission to men who are no rivals of God and of Christ in the work of redemption and in the bestowment of pardon upon the individual.³

1. First Corinthians, 2:1,2.

2. F. Godet, Introduction to New Testament, p. 248.

3. First Corinthians, 1:13f; 3:4-7; 21-23.

Although St. Paul deprecates the parties, he was inclined on the whole to favor the Party of Paul. He is absolutely sincere in his desire that his converts shall not place loyalty to him above loyalty to Jesus Christ, but he is obviously not ready to tolerate easily their feeling a superior loyalty to any other human leader.¹ This intense desire for the loyalty and love of his own churches lies back of his boast of not building on another's foundation.² St. Paul's jealousy for his converts was often in no small part a jealousy for the truth and for Jesus Christ, since loyalty by them to another leader would sometimes have meant loyalty to a different "gospel,"³ which, as St. Paul saw it, was not a gospel at all. He could refer to his message as "my gospel," and "he thought of the people also as being in a very peculiar sense his own. If he took a selfish pride in them, he was also willing to accept any sacrifice which their welfare demanded of him."⁴

2. 'Apollos Party'.

That the followers of Apollos must have been closely connected with those of Paul may be inferred both from the association of Apollos with the disciples of Paul in Acts,⁵ and from the constant union of their names in First Corinthians.⁶

1. I Corinthians, 4:15.
 2. I Corinthians, 3:10.
 3. Galatians, 1:6.
 4. John Knox, Chapters in a Life of Paul, pp. 96, 97.
 cf. II Corinthians, 11:29.
 5. Acts, 18:26, 27.
 6. I Corinthians, 3:4-7; 4:6; 16:12.

The frequent allusions to human wisdom and learning in the first chapters¹ would agree with no party so well as with that which professed to follow Apollos.

The 'schism' probably commenced with the partisans of Apollos. This teacher is described as a Jew of Alexandria, an elequent orator and deeply instructed in the Scriptures.² After having been indoctrinated in the Christian faith by Priscilla and Aquila, he was sent by them from Ephesus to Corinth. He was to carry on the work begun by St. Paul, who had recently left it. Apollos exercised a happy influence on the believers, and acted powerfully on the Jewish population.³ It is easy to suppose what happened. Some became infatuated with the newcomer, made comparisons, exalted his ingenious and brilliant teaching at the expense of that of the Apostle Paul. Thus there was formed around Apollos, and without any fault of his, a group of admirers, who boasted of him as their spiritual father. His brilliance charmed those of his hearers who had been accustomed to the dazzling oratory and ingenious dialect of the Greek philosophers. They contrasted his manner with St. Paul, much to the latter's disparagement. The contrast was indeed extreme; for the Apostle Paul, though superior in intellect and erudition, had none of the outward graces of

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1. I Corinthians, 1:17-28; 2:1-6.
 2. Acts, 18:24
 3. Acts, 18:28.

Apollos. His person was uncouth and his delivery unimpressive.¹ This would naturally affect the manner in which he expounded Christianity, and would not suit the taste of the Corinthians accustomed to Greek culture.² Apollos had also the advantage of succeeding the Apostle Paul, for people usually prefer the last speaker. Apollos probably set the doctrines of Christianity in Alexandrian mold, in a philosophic form which challenged the attention of the cultivated. In his hands the new religion approached the wisdom propounded in schools of philosophy under the cloak of artificial rhetoric. This Alexandrian approach was easily impregnated with a spiritualistic mysticism and asceticism, when carried to excess.³ Many of the Corinthians seem to have been so carried away by the brilliant discourses of the eloquent Alexandrian, that thereafter the unadorned preaching of the 'plain'⁴ Paul seemed in comparison very deficient.⁵ It was not until it had been presented to them by Apollos' logic, so they thought, that they had come to have a true understanding of Christianity.⁶

His system of doctrine, however, seems to have been sadly misapprehended. It was carried to the extreme, and it produced in many members of the Corinthian Church pride and

1. II Corinthians, 10:10.

2. See Chapter Five.

3. S. Davidson, op. cit., 1894, p. 32.

4. II Corinthians, 11:6.

5. John Knox, op. cit., p. 92.

6. T. Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, I, p. 287.

vain philosophy, instead of the genuine fruits of Christianity. At the same time, the preaching of Apollos, properly viewed, contained no deviation from the doctrinal view of St. Paul. The Apostle acknowledged Apollos as the person who built upon the foundation that he had laid.¹

The difference between the two parties must have been this: The partisans of St. Paul were the most serious men, whom a troubled conscience, the need of pardon, the longing for holiness had induced to embrace the cross that the Apostle had presented to them. When they had done that they were satisfied. The partisans of Apollos were rather men whose intellect was charmed by the eloquence of that teacher. Their imagination was captivated by his ingenious explanation and the brilliant allegories he could draw from the Old Testament.² Apollos must have had much success in Corinth, for in First Corinthians 3:6 the Apostle speaks of him as having watered where he had planted. The information given in Acts makes it fairly certain that his preaching was primarily eschatological. It is not impossible, therefore, that the tendency to seek for philosophy which St. Paul seems to reprove in the Corinthians in First Corinthians Chapters 1-4, ought to be connected with the party of Apollos to which he also refers.

1. I Corinthians, 3:5ff.

2. F. Godet, op.cit., pp. 248-249.

3. 'Cephas Party'.

The great Christian Judaizing party was subdivided into various sections, united in their main object, but distinguished by minor shades of difference. Thus at Corinth, it comprehended two factions, the one apparently distinguished from the other by a greater degree of violence. The more moderate faction called themselves the followers of St. Peter, or rather of Cephas, for they preferred to use his Hebrew name.¹ The party of Cephas differed more widely from the first two than these did from each other. It was doubtless composed of Judeo-christians and of proselytes who adhered to the decision of the Council of Jerusalem,² and recognized the apostleship and teaching of St. Paul. For their own practice they persevered in the legal observances, so far as they were compatible at all with the common mutual life of Christians.³

These Jewish Christians, still entangled with natural prejudices and prepossessions, stood in some measure distinct from the Pauline. Their modes of thought were opposed, in a certain sense, to those which characterized the Pauline and the Apollos parties. They were not able to sympathize in the free views of such as had been converted from heathenism. They could not without considerable difficulty, bring themselves

1. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 444.
2. Acts, Chapter 15.
3. Godet, loc. cit.

to think and act as Christians released from the obligations of the Mosaic law. They felt a lingering attachment to former practices which they were unable at once to eradicate. These dwelt much upon our Lord's special promises to Peter, and the necessary inferiority of Paul to him who was dominically called to be an apostle. For Christ, himself, had promised "upon this rock I will build my church."¹

They claimed that St. Paul felt doubts about his own Apostolic authority, and did not dare to claim the right of maintenance,² which Christ had given to his true apostles.³ They also depreciated him as a maintainer of celibacy, and contrasted him in this respect with the great pillars of the Church, "the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas," who were married.⁴

The chief difference between them and the Pauline Christians manifested itself mainly in regard to the use of flesh which had been offered in sacrifice to idols, as may be seen in the eight, ninth, and tenth chapters of First Corinthians. There they were styled weak brethren. Those who possessed greater knowledge are exhorted not to offend less enlightened consciences by doing things which would cause them to stumble. These Jewish Christians would naturally choose Peter for their head. They

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1. Matthew, 16:18.
 2. I Corinthians, 9:4-6; II Corinthians, 11:10.
 3. Matthew, 10:10; Luke 10:7.
 4. I Corinthians, 9:5.

ranged themselves under the banner of the apostle to the circumcision, though he had probably never been personally at Corinth.¹

It should be kept in mind that they were Jewish Christians not simply Judaizers. They were not teachers or special representatives from Judea to Corinth, but private members of the church. They showed no intention of returning to Judaism, or of mixing up the observances of the Mosaic law with the doctrine of Christianity. "They were not persons of the same influence or proselytizing activity as the Judaizers whom St. Paul had so frequently to combat."² They had passed from the religion of one dispensation to that of another, but they were still partially unenlightened as to the genuine freedom of the gospel. Their consciences were greatly offended at the conduct of those Gentile converts who were not sufficiently circumspect in their actions before their weaker brethren. They thought that they would be guilty of idolatry if they ate of the food which had been offered to idols, even though they did not know that it had been so used.³ They did not refuse to associate with Gentile believers, therefore they were of a milder type than many of their brethren. They overstepped the exact boundary between Jewish and Gentile Christians, but still denied the

1. F. Godet, op. cit., p. 249.

2. S. Davidson, op. cit., 1849, p. 236.

3. Loc. cit.

Apostleship of St. Paul. Their great stumbling block was the death of the Messiah on the cross, to which the apostle attached paramount importance. They connected Messiahship with the life and work of Jesus, rather than with His death.¹

4. 'Christ Party'.

The most difficult question remains: Who were they who said: "As for me, I am of Christ?"² On this point there exist a great mass of opinions.

Johannes Weiss³ untied this Gordian knot by cutting it from the text as a later addition. Others have sought to give these words a very innocent sense. According to some this would be the formula of St. Paul, which he would claim as his own, in opposition to the three preceding parties. According to the Greek Fathers it would be, in general, the true formula that every Christian should adopt. But in these two cases, it should have been opposed to the foregoing by a strong adversative particle. Placed as it is, parallel to the three preceding ones, it falls with them under the stroke of the same reproach: "Each of you saith."⁴ In reality this party is the one that is most directly condemned by the severe question that follows: "Is Christ divided?"

1. S. Davidson, op. cit., 1894, p. 32.

2. F. Godet, op. cit., pp. 250f.

3. Johannes Weiss, Commentary, op. cit., I Corinthians, 1:12.

4. I Corinthians, 1:12.

There existed even at Jerusalem a party opposed to the Twelve, that of the "false brethren"¹ whom St. Paul clearly distinguishes from the apostles. They claimed to impose the Mosaic law on Gentile converts, while the Twelve maintained it only for Christians of Jewish origin. The further question, whether these might not be released from this obligation in churches of Gentile origin remained open. This ultra-party was probably guided by former members of the priesthood and of Jewish Pharisaism, who, by virtue of their learning and high social position, regarded themselves as infinitely superior to the apostles.²

It is not therefore surprising that when they became Christians they should claim to take out of the hands of the Twelve, of whom they made small account, the direction of the [Christian] Messianic work. They were motivated by the desire of making this work subservient to the extension of the legal dispensation in the Gentile world. Of such were the secret heads of the counter mission organized against St. Paul which he met with everywhere at this period.

It had now pushed its work as far as Corinth, and it is easy to understand why the portion of the church which was given up to its agents, distinguished itself not only from the parties of Paul and Apollos, but also from those of Peter. They designated themselves as those of Christ, not because their leaders had personally known

1. Galatians, 2:4-6.
2. Acts, 6:7; 15:5.

Jesus, and could better than others instruct the churches in His life and teaching,--who in these two respects would have dared to compare himself to Peter or put himself above him?--but as being the only ones who had well understood His mind and who preserved more firmly than the apostles the true tradition from Him in regard to the questions raised by Paul. They were too prudent to speak at once of circumcision and Mosaic rites....When they arrived on Greek soil, they certainly added theosophic elements to the gospel preached by the apostles, whereby they sought to recommend their teaching to the speculative mind of the cultivated Christians of Greece.¹

St. Paul had cause then in Second Corinthians to speak of "Imaginations, [reasoning] and in every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God," and to insist upon, "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."² The Apostle also expressed the fear that the Corinthians were allowing themselves to be turned away from the simplicity which is in Christ, as Eve let herself be seduced by the cunning of the serpent.³

In the next verse St. Paul rebuked them for the facility with which they received strange teachers who even brought to them another Jesus than the one he had proclaimed to them, a spirit and a gospel different from those they had already received.⁴ Such expressions show that the doctrine of those emissaries was greatly different from St. Paul's and that of

1. F. Godet, Commentary on First Corinthians, I, p. 75.

2. II Corinthians, 10:5.

3. II Corinthians, 11:3.

4. M. R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, III, p. 346.

the Twelve, especially from the Christological standpoint. There was certainly something here that the Apostle was combating more than the simple legal teaching previously imported into Galatia. It had sought to allure the Corinthians by unsound speculations, and Paul's teaching was disparaged as poor and elementary. This was the reason that he justified himself, even in the First Epistle, for having given them only "milk, not with meat."¹ Therefore St. Paul gave his lively polemic against the mixing of human wisdom with the gospel.² All this applied to the preaching of the 'Christ Party', and not the least to that of Apollos or Cephas.³

The doctrine of those of Christ did violence to the person and work of Jesus. This is the group which St. Paul had in mind when he said, "no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is Anathema."⁴ He is speaking here of spiritual manifestations which made themselves heard even in the church. There were many kinds of them, and their origin required to be carefully distinguished. The truly divine inspired addresses could be summed up in the invocation, "Jesus, Lord."⁵ The inspirations that were not divine terminated in declaring Jesus accursed.⁶

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- p. 196.
1. I Corinthians, 3:1,2.
 2. I Corinthians, 2:6-16.
 3. C. Holstein, Das Evangelium des Paulus, Teil I,
 4. I Corinthians, 12:3.
 5. Loc. cit.
 6. Ibid.

Such a fact may be explained, however, by examining a doctrine like that professed by the Judaizing Christian Cerinthus. According to Cerinthus, the true Christ was a celestial virtue which had united itself to a pious Jew called Jesus, on the occasion of His baptism. The Christ had communicated to Jesus the power of working miracles, the light from which His doctrines emanated. The Christ, however, had abandoned Jesus to return to heaven, before the time of the Passion; so that Jesus suffered alone, abandoned by the Divine Being. With this idea in mind what was to prevent one pretending to be inspired from exclaiming: "What matters to us this Crucified One? This Jesus accursed on the cross, is not our Christ: He is in Heaven!"

However, it is by no means necessary to suppose that it was exactly this system that St. Paul had in mind. At this time many other similar Christological theories might have been in circulation, fitted to justify those striking expressions of his: "another Jesus, ...another Spirit, ...another gospel."¹ It is easy to suppose that the name of Christ, in the title which these persons took, those of Christ, would be formulated, not only in opposition to the name of the apostles, but even to that of Jesus.² After the personal salutation, St. Paul wrote with his own hand to those of Christ, and answer to the

1. II Corinthians, 11:4.

2. Origen, Cont. Cels. VI, 2. Cited by Godet, Commentary, op. cit., I, p. 77.

"Jesus Anathema," "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be Anathema."¹ The Christ party asserted that they were apostles and ministers of Christ, and St. Paul called them ministers of Satan. Whether they were a party within the church at Corinth like the rest, or rather a party by the side of the others, is not clear. They were, in a sense, foreign to Corinth. They were the fanatical Ultra-Judaizing Party.² It seems, therefore, that Kniewel has reached the right conclusion by designating those of Christ as "the Gnostics before Gnosticism."³

One other passage will be examined in regard to those of Christ. In Second Corinthians St. Paul speaks of persons whom he designates as οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι,⁴ and whom he puts in close connection with the 'Christ Party.' This could not refer to the Twelve because they have recognized in principle St. Paul's preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles, and they had declared his apostleship to have the same divine origin as St. Peter's.

If the expression "Archapostles," which St. Paul evidently borrowed from the emphatic language of the 'Christ Party', referred to the Twelve, who could have been considered as being

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1. I Corinthians, 16:22.
 2. C. Holsten, op. cit., p. 196.
 3. Kniewel, quoted by Godet, loc. cit.
 4. II Corinthians, 11:5; 12:11.

an apostle in the simple sense of the word? Obviously, it could only be St. Paul himself. His adversaries would thus unskilfully have declared him to be an apostle, the very man whose apostleship they were denying. Neither can it be held that the Twelve were ever regarded at Corinth as superior to Paul in the gift of speech: First, because they probably had never been heard there; Second, because they were expressly characterized as "unlearned and ignorant."¹ How could Paul in the same letter in which he recommends a collection for the Jerusalem Church,² designate men sent by that church and by the apostles as servants of Satan whose end would be worthy of their works?³

It is clearly understood that it was not Apollos. There remains therefore only one explanation. These archapostles were none other than the emissaries of the ultra-Judaizing party. Their partisans at Corinth honored them with this title, to exalt them not only above St. Paul and Apollos, but also above the Twelve. Their object was to break the agreement which was established between the Twelve and St. Paul, and to possess the direction of the church for themselves.⁴

In conclusion, it may be observed, by way of a general summary: (1) There were real parties within the Christian

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1. Acts, 4:13.
 2. II Corinthians, Chapters 8, 9.
 3. II Corinthians, 11:14, 15.
 4. Godet, Commentary, op. cit., pp. 79f.

society at Corinth, not yet necessarily very sharply defined, but still plainly distinguishable, and self-distinguishing.

(2) There were four loosely defined parties, and these four declarations included all such declarations as were then put forth among them. The names were not merely assumed. (3) The order is probably designed to show that St. Paul has no sympathy with any partisan group. First, by the nature of the case, chronologically, came the 'Apollos Party'; then the 'Paul Party'; then the 'Cephas Party'; and then the very name of the Lord as a party name, 'Christ Party'. (4) This last-named group was really a party, and, as such, merited the same censure as the rest. In fact, it seems that this was the most sectarian and most unchristian party within the Corinthian society.

The available information will not allow further conclusions. T. W. Manson¹ postulated an attractive hypothesis that the parties within the Corinthian Church were probably responsible for all the different opinions in the church. He states that if these parties could be understood the cause for all the trouble could be found. This investigation attempted to carry out Manson's theory but the available information will not permit this procedure. It was a speculative venture. It appears, however, that if it were possible to ascertain all the

1. T. W. Manson, "St. Paul in Ephesus; The Corinthian Correspondence." op. cit.

facts regarding these parties, the causes of the troubles in the Corinthian Church would be apparent.

II. LITIGATION

The subject of Chapter six had evidently been suggested not by a formal question addressed to St. Paul by the church, but by some information which had reached him.¹ It may be assumed with all probability that the information came to him through Stephanas and his two companions. From them Paul learned that it was the usual procedure among the Corinthian Christians to take legal action against one another in the ordinary secular courts.² They chose pagans to decide the points at issue, and the public feeling in the church did not regard such procedure as unsuitable or unbecoming.

The fault of the individual here springs from the tone of the Corinthian Church in general. Paul's remarks are directed more to produce a healthier tone in the Christian community as a whole than to rebuke the action of individuals. In fact, his expression is put in such vague and general terms as to leave it uncertain "whether any particular case was in the Apostle's mind at the time."³ "Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints."⁴

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1. Cf. I Corinthians, 1:11; 5:1, etc.
 2. William Manson, personal interview
 3. C. J. Ellicott, Commentary on First Corinthians, p.110
 4. I Corinthians, 6:1.

St. Paul's words have not been correctly understood by most commentators. Some seem to think that he orders the Corinthian Christians to appeal to church courts instead of the ordinary courts of law. But that is quite out of keeping both with the language here and with the whole tone of St. Paul's teaching. He never expressed disrespect for the established institutions of the country and the empire, or advised that the church should set up a rival organization. He taught his converts in all the churches he established to accept and make the best of existing institutions.

Other commentators think that the alternatives are different in character. They suggest that the process before the Christians would be in the form of arbitration, and the same case, if tried before the heathen, would be according to the legal forms which were then prevailing. But the expressions describing the two alternatives are exactly parallel

κρίνεσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων καὶ οὐχὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγίων, where both Pagans and the Christians

are designated by terms expressive of moral and religious character, that it is very difficult to think they describe different processes.¹

1. Legal Procedure.

St. Paul here seems to be thinking not of serious questions of crime and fraud so much as of the small matters,

1. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I. p. 274.

which persons of a litigious character, such as the Greeks, were always ready to make into causes of disagreement and legal action. In studying the background of Corinth evidence was found which showed that small cases were ordinarily decided in Greece by umpires or arbiters chosen by the parties themselves.¹ The expression used throughout the passage suggests rather informal proceedings than formal trials according to legal principles before judges. The terms used are *κρίνω*, *κρίνομαι*, *κρίτησιον*, all of which are appropriate to small cases tried according to the least strict procedure by umpires whom the parties select, and who decide the case, not according to formal written law, but according to their own conception of right and wrong.

It is clear, therefore, that St. Paul is not thinking of serious and grave matters. (1) The subjects brought up for decision are called *βιωτικὰ*, "Matters of everyday life," the trumpery details of common life. (2) The litigants set any persons they choose, that were satisfactory to all parties, as arbitrators to judge the individual case. The Apostle is not trying to induce the Corinthians to accept a Jewish custom, he is referring to the ordinary Greek usage, and is only advising them to choose a Christian as an arbitrator in each case.²

1. Loc. cit.

2. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, p. 275.

He is not willing to leave the argument after he has shown that they should choose Christian arbitrators. He proceeds to show that they are at fault to find provocation to suits among themselves. He said they ought rather to acquiesce patiently in (what they considered to be) unfair treatment or inadequate recognition of their rights. The fault to which the Greek nature was most prone is that which St. Paul called *πλεονεξία*, the tendency to insist on getting at least one's full rights, and therefore often even more than one's fair share. This carried to an extreme and combined with a low moral standard of action, often became that grasping, greedy, cunning kind of dealing, which was unfairly associated with all Greeks, since it was a marked characteristic of some of the race. But even with a higher spirit of principles, the fault was not entirely eliminated, and the Corinthian Christians had not shaken themselves entirely free of it. They were still, in their mutual dealings, apt both to think that others were denying them a fair share, and, in their eagerness to get their full portion, to claim more from their neighbors than they had a right to.¹

It is clear in this passage that St. Paul is thinking of Greek rather than Roman procedure. A similar custom of choosing and using umpires to decide the small cases existed

1. Ibid., p. 276.

originally in Rome. In the more developed Roman procedure the umpires were appointed by a magistrate, and even very simple cases involved a stage of formal legal procedure. However, the Romans never tried to force their own system of law and society on the Eastern Provinces, which had a well established civilization of their own. It is probable that even in Roman Coloniae, in the East, procedure in unimportant civil cases was more Greek than Roman in the time of St. Paul. In Corinth the law in private cases was of the Greek, not the Roman character, freer and less formal. The ordinary life of the city at that time was evidently Greek rather than Roman.¹

2. Judging the World.

In First Corinthians 5:12f, St. Paul declared that the church has nothing to do with judging the outer world. The church was to judge its own members, and expel the unworthy from its midst, and leave the outer world to the judgment of God. However, in 6:2f, he asks, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" It is apparent that a certain discrepancy seems to arise when these two passages are read together. But the passage, 6:2,3 is not entirely serious. In 6:4,5 taking *καθίσετε* as an

1. Ibid., p. 277.

imperative, St. Paul says that they ought to choose those who are of no account in the church to act as arbiters in such insignificant matters, which were unworthy to occupy the time and attention of more important members of the church. Then he explained that he said that in order to move them to shame; his words are not to be taken as serious advice.¹

As Sir William Ramsay has well said:²

The undertone of Sarcasm, almost of banter, is to be understood as ruling throughout 6:2-4.

This becomes all the clearer when we remember...that we should be ready to suspect Paul is making a quotation from the letter addressed to him by the Corinthians whenever he alludes to their knowledge, or when any statement stands in marked contrast either with the immediate context or with Paul's known views. These criteria mark 6:2,3 as an allusion to some very selfsatisfied expressions in the Corinthian letter: "Of course you know that the saints shall judge the world, and even angels (is it not written in your letter?)."

The commentators who take 6:2,3 as a serious description of the future powers and duties of Christians are hard pressed to find any really satisfactory explanation of the words as expressing a principle to which Paul attached much importance. Anyone who works out for himself a connected conception of Paul's views about the place of man in God's universe must say, as we do, that they are not to be taken as a serious philosophic enunciation. It is usual among those who take 6:2,3 seriously to quote Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30 in illustration; but these passages only show how impossible it is to attach any serious importance to this one, though they may have probably been in the mind of the Corinthians when they wrote the sentence which Paul is quoting or alluding to.

1. Compare II Corinthians 11:1f; 12:11f.

2. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., pp. 279-280.

III. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

In both of the Epistles to the Corinthians that have been preserved Paul is dealing with a young church in which some of the faults of their former state of life are appearing. This was especially the case with the Corinthian's love of faction. There were divisions, cliques, and splits; rivalries between rich and poor, and rivalries as to the possession of spiritual gifts, and especially as to those which were most demonstrative, and therefore seemed to confer the most distinction.¹

Chrysostom complained even in his day of the obscurity of these passages; he explained them by the fact that the circumstances to which this whole treatment applied no longer existed in the churches of his time.²

The difficulty of the subject of spiritual gifts lies in the lack of knowledge of the condition of things to which it refers. The phenomena which were described, or sometime only alluded to, were to a large extent abnormal and transitory. "They were not part of the regular development of the Christian church."³ Some members of the Corinthian Church, in the first glow of early enthusiasm found themselves in

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, The International Critical Commentary, I Corinthians, p. 257.

2. Godet, Commentary, op. cit., II, p. 176.

3. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, loc. cit.

possession of some exceptional spiritual endowments. These appear to have been either wholly supernatural endowments or natural gifts raised to an extraordinarily high power. It seems to be clear that these endowments, although spiritual, did not of themselves make the possessors of them morally better. In some instances, in fact, the reverse was the case; for the gifted person was puffed up and looked down on the ungifted. Moreover, the gifts which were most desired and valued were not those which were more useful, but those which enabled the possessor to make the most show. The form of St. Paul's answer¹ gives evidence that the question arose partly from the strangeness of the phenomena that had presented themselves in the church. The question also arose from a natural suspicion that they were but another manifestation of the demoniacal influences which the Corinthians must have often witnessed in connection with the religious rites of heathenism.² The Apostle seeks to show that unusual manifestations of a supernatural presence in the Christian assemblies were to be expected. Some, however, appear to have lost their moral balance in consequence of ecstatic possession.³

The word $\piνευματικά$ must not be understood to denote "spiritual things" in general, nor quite specifically

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1. I Corinthians, 12:1ff.
 2. See Chapter Five.
 3. I Corinthians, 14:23; 5:1f.

glossolalia. It means the Charismata, the nature of which generally is first declared, and the necessity of which in the church is first proved. This is not so, simply because the spiritual gifts were not the prerogative of a few, but they were gifts bestowed in various forms and degrees on all Christians. The universality of the gifts is one of the arguments which St. Paul used to prove that no member of Christ's body, the Church, should envy another member, inasmuch as every member has its own function assigned it in the body.¹ The gifts are called πνευματικά, not because of any connection with the human πνεῦμα, but because they are bestowed by the Spirit of God.²

Under circumstances so extraordinary as the ones described in this section³ it was unavoidable that many disorders arose. Some who were deluded or impostors claimed to be the organ of the Spirit. Some were dissatisfied with the gifts which they had received and they envied those whom they regarded as more highly favored. Others were inflated and made an ostentatious display of their extraordinary powers. In the public assemblies the greatest confusion arose from so many persons desirous to exercise their gifts at the same time⁴

The source of all these miraculous powers was the

1. I Corinthians, 12:1ff.

2. T. C. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 304-305.

3. I Corinthians, Chapters 12-14.

4. Charles Hodge, Commentary on First Corinthians, p. 237.

Charism of faith. It was that peculiar kind of wonder working faith¹ which consisted of an intense belief that all obstacles would vanish before the power given. This faith, of course, must be distinguished from that disposition of faith which is essential to the Christian life.²

1. Miracles.

The most striking manifestation of interposition was the working of what was commonly called miracles, (powers). This manifestation included the gifts of healing.³ These miraculous powers were not even mentioned as a class apart from natural endowments, they were joined in the same classification with other gifts.⁴ This was the case, not in a narrative of events long past, where unintentional or intentional exaggeration might have crept in, but in the narrative of a contemporary. This phenomenon occurs in these letters which speak of these miracles as being wrought in the daily sight of the readers addressed. The question that is forced upon every intelligent mind is, whether such a phenomenon can be explained except by the assumption that the miracles did really happen. Is this assumption more difficult than that of Hume, who cuts the knot by assuming that whenever an account of a

1. I Corinthians, 12:9; 13:2.

2. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., 1906, p. 429.

3. I Corinthians, 12:11,28,30.

4. I Corinthians, 12:10,28,29.

miracle is found, it is ipso facto to be rejected as incredible, no matter by what weight of evidence it may be supported?¹

2. Glossalalia.

With regard to speaking with tongues there is much difficulty, from the notices of it in First Corinthians, in comprehending its nature. From the passages where it is mentioned² the following conclusions can be reached: First, that it was not a knowledge of foreign languages, as is often supposed. Second, this gift was the result of a sudden influx of supernatural inspiration, which came upon the new believer soon after baptism and recurred afterwards at certain intervals. Third, while under its influence the exercise of the understanding seemed to have been suspended, while the spirit was rapt into a state of ecstasy by the immediate communication of the Spirit. In this ecstatic trance the believer was constrained by an irresistible³ power to pour forth his feelings of thanksgiving and rapture in words. Yet the words which issued from his mouth were not his own, and usually he was even ignorant of their meaning. The principal error of the Corinthians appears to have been to imagine that the more a

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1. Conybeare and Howson, Ibid.
 2. I Corinthians, Chapters 12 and 14.
 3. I Corinthians, 14:32.

man was carried beyond himself by the action of the spirit, the more sublime this action was, and the nearer he was brought to God. The desire of self-display, of exciting surprise and admiration, and the desire for ruling, easily vitiated the exercise of this gift.¹

The words spoken seem to have been of some strange sounds which were not intelligible to the bystanders, unless they possessed another gift, subsidiary to this, called the "interpretation of tongues."² By this subsidiary gift the ecstatic utterances of the former might be rendered available for general edification. Another gift, also, was needful for the checking of false pretensions to this and some other charism, the gift of "discerning of spirits."³ The recipients of this gift could distinguish between the real and the imaginary possessors of spiritual gifts.⁴

St. Paul disparaged glossalalia. The evidence is not sufficient to prove that there were at Corinth teachers who were insisting that the members speak with tongues but there are strong indications that such was the case. The Apostle stressed the fact that it was not necessary or even desirable for every one to speak with tongues.

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1. Godet, Introduction to New Testament, op. cit., p. 277.
 2. I Corinthians, 12:10.
 3. I Corinthians, 12:10
 4. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., 1906, p. 430.

3. Prophecy.

In the scriptural sense of the word, a prophet was not a foreteller of future events, but a revealer of God's will to man; though the latter sense may include the former. The gift of prophecy was the charism which enabled its possessor to utter, with the authority of inspiration, divine strains of warning, exhortation, encouragement, or rebuke. He was also enabled to preach, teach, and enforce the truths of Christianity with supernatural energy and effectiveness.¹ Peter mentioned as distinctive of the Gospel dispensation the wide diffusion of this prophetic inspiration among the members of the church.² In the family of Philip the Evangelist, there were four daughters who exercised this gift. The general possession of it is in like manner implied by the direction of St. Paul to the Corinthians.³ He described the marvelous effect of the inspired addresses and looked upon the gift of prophecy as one of the great instruments for the conversion of unbelievers. The Prophet regarded the gift of prophecy far more serviceable in this respect than the gift of tongues, although by some of the new converts it was not so highly esteemed, because it seemed less strange and wonderful.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 430.

2. Acts, 2:17-18.

3. I Corinthians, 11:4; 14:24-31.

4. Conybeare and Howson, Loc. cit.

4. Teaching.

The gift of prophecy cannot easily be separated by any accurate demarcation from another charism often mentioned in Scripture as the gift of teaching.¹ The distinction between them appears to have been that teaching was more habitually and constantly exercised by its possessors than was prophesying. Both gifts were often given to the same person. An access of divine inspiration might at any moment cause the teacher to speak as a prophet. This was constantly exemplified in the case of the Apostles, who exercised the gift of prophecy for the conversion of the unbelievers, and the gift of teaching for the building up of the converts in the faith.²

5. Government and Ministration.

Other gifts specially mentioned as charisms are the gift of government and the gift of ministration.³ By the gift of government certain persons were specially able to preside over the church and regulate its internal order. By the gift of ministration, or helper, its possessors were enabled to minister to the needs of their brethren, to manage the distribution of relief among the poorer members of the church,⁴ to care for the sick, and to carry out other practical Christian works.⁵

1. Acts, 13:1; I Corinthians, 12:28-29.

2. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., 1906, p. 431.

3. I Corinthians, 12:28.

4. See Chapter Four, p. 127.

5. Conybeare and Howson, loc. cit.

6. Apostles.

Among the several classifications of Church officers, the most important appears to be Apostles. This office was listed along with the other spiritual gifts in First Corinthians 12:28.

The title was probably at first confined to "the Twelve" who were nominated to their office, with the exception of Matthias, by Jesus himself. The title was limited to this body by the Judaizing section of the church; but St. Paul vindicated his own claim to the office as resting upon the same commission given him by the same Lord.¹ The writer of Acts applied the name also to Barnabas.² In another sense, the term was applied to all the more eminent Christian teachers.³ It also was some times used in its simply etymological sense of emissary.⁴ Still those only were called emphatically the Apostles, in its technical meaning, who had received their commission from Christ himself, including Matthias and St. Paul.

They were not limited by geographical boundaries as to their sphere of action; they went as the Holy Spirit directed and proclaimed the gospel. Moreover, those charisms which

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1. I Corinthians, 9:1ff; II Corinthians 11:23ff.
 2. Acts, 13:1.
 3. Romans, 6:7.
 4. II Corinthians, 8:23; 11:13.

were possessed by other Christians singly and severally, seem to have been collectively given to the Apostles, because all were needed for their work.¹

7. Love.

The climax to St. Paul's argument on spiritual gifts was reached in this ἀγάπη stage. The gifts mentioned were needed in the organic development of Christianity; they made their contribution and then passed away. They were needed in the beginning to help development, but the highest of all miraculous gifts without love amounted to nothing. St. Paul took up the lowest stage of development first.² The miraculous lay not in sounds and manifestations but in what had happened within their hearts. If the manifestations were given without the reality from within then it amounted to nothing.³ The Apostle was trying to get the Corinthians to rise above the low stage of Christian development to the high stage of development in Christian attitude and activity, the "love stage."

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1. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., 1906, p. 433.
 2. I Corinthians, 13:1.
 3. I Corinthians, 13:2,3.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MORAL DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE CHURCH

The difference of spirit between one race and another is nowhere so strongly marked as in their treatment of women and their customs regarding the position of women. It has been shown that Corinth was more Greek than Roman in its treatment of women; but Corinth had an Oriental element that greatly contributed to its custom regarding women. The man was the lord of the household; the wife, his means of bearing legitimate children. She was little more than a household slave, and actually little more than one of the husband's concubines. The husband did not pretend to be faithful to one woman, and very often the woman was not faithful to her husband. The woman, they thought, was made in order for man to satisfy his natural appetites. With such a conception of sex, and with the environment of Corinth, it is easy to understand why the Corinthian Church was so degraded in morals and presented such a problem to the Apostle.¹ It must be kept in mind, therefore, that St. Paul was dealing with the Corinthians when he wrote these two Epistles.

I. THE CRIME IN THE CHURCH

1. I Corinthians, 3:1-3; 5:1-13; 6:9,15-20; 7:1-40, 10:8; etc.

One of the Corinthian Church members was living with his stepmother.¹ The circumstances are not described, because they were already known to the readers; therefore it is not easy to attain any certainty about them. It would appear, however, that the father, assuming him, as seems inevitable, to be the "wronged man", was still living and known personally to St. Paul, and therefore presumable a Christian.² On the other hand, the entire silence about the woman's conduct and about any punishment for her is hardly reconcilable with the idea that she was a Christian at all. Since she was not a member of the church, her conduct did not fall under the cognizance either of the church or of St. Paul. On the whole, it seems probable that the pagan wife had separated from her husband, and that her stepson had thereupon married her. Any other supposition seems to be excluded by some of the conditions of the case.

1. The Relation of the Church to the Crime.

The Corinthians had not reported the crime in their letter to St. Paul.³ They had not asked his advice about it, yet they were aware of the circumstances, which were not concealed from the public. Therefore, it must have seemed to

1. I Corinthians, 5:1.
 2. II Corinthians, 7:12.
 3. Cf. I Corinthians, 5:1 and 7:1.
 4. William Ramsay, The Expositor, 1900, Article on "Historical Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians", p. 109.

them to be a thing which concerned the individual, and with which the church had no call or right to interfere.¹

The expression by which St. Paul indicates the blackness of the crime, "such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles"² has been misunderstood that the Apostle meant that such an act either was unknown or at least was universally disapproved among the Gentiles. However, it was not the case that such marriages were universally disapproved among the Gentiles. On the contrary, it was within St. Paul's knowledge that marriages between even closer relations, and blood relations, were regular and customary in Asia Minor, near Tarsus and in many other sections of the Mediterranean world.

The ordinary society in Corinth would not have been shocked or outraged at a marriage between a man and the divorced second wife of his father. There was not in Corinth a strictness of moral judgment. The worship of Aphrodite produced a moral laxness that influenced the feelings of all the Corinthians.³ Greek customs and law had always been lax as to restrictions on marriage. Marriage of uncle and niece, or aunt and nephew, had always been freely permitted even in the strictest period of Greek morality, if there ever was a

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1. I Corinthians, 5:1.
 2. See Chapter Five.
 3. I Corinthians, 5:1.

strict period.¹

It is not to be supposed that the Corinthians had become more lax in their moral judgment when they adopted Christianity, and were now ready to condone an act which in their pagan days they would have regarded with horror. The Corinthian Church, when it condoned this crime, was simply judging as the Corinthians had always judged. It was not sinking below its pagan level, but it was simply standing contentedly on that level.

St. Paul is, beyond all doubt, referring to the Roman Imperial Law, which, though not the immediate ruling law in the Greek cities, was certainly known in a general way in the Corinthian Colonia.

He means, not that such a marriage was condemned by all Gentiles, but that it was condemned by the law which was most authoritative and supreme among the Gentiles--the law of the great empire.²

Thus in practice, the Corinthians were standing on the Greek level of moral feeling in regard to marriage; but St. Paul could count on the knowledge of Roman custom, which was known in a Colonia, even an eastern Colonia. Roman marriage customs were very much more strict than Greek.³ The old Roman laws had been extraordinary strict in its prohibition

1. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, p. 110.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Ibid.

of marriage between relations; but the rule was relaxed by degrees. Marriage with a stepparent or stepchild or parent-in-law, etc., was never allowed in Roman custom or law; affinity, in the direct line, always was a bar to marriage. Therefore, this Corinthian marriage was, and always remained, illegal in Roman law.

2. The Judgment of St. Paul.

After censuring strongly the laxness of the Corinthian judgment on the crime, St. Paul contrasts their indifference with his own severe judgment. This remarkable passage is a very striking example of the great difficulty that the twentieth century must sometime experience in attempting to understand the thoughts of the first century. It plunges the reader into circumstances and ways of thinking which are hardly possible for him to comprehend; and he is apt to interpret the passage by reading into it the ideas of a later time.

For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.¹

This passage must be connected, not with the following but with the preceding verse. The particle *μέν*, with which

1. I Corinthians, 5:3-5.

it opens is not here to be understood as pointing forward to a following *δέ ; μὲν γὰρ* must be taken together and connected with the last verse. It expresses the contrast between the attitude of the Corinthians and the attitude of the Apostle towards the crime.¹

This passage has been interpreted as describing a formal judicial decision and sentence passed on the offender in the most solemn and awful fashion.² It is understood by some to carry with it excommunication and worse, or even, as some say, a miraculous punishment.³ The fact that here St. Paul speaks without consulting the Corinthian officials has been regarded as a proof that they had no power in the matter, but that the Apostle alone, without their presence or assent, was empowered to judge and decide and condemn the guilty person to the extremest penalty both spiritual and physical, merely intimating to the church the sentence which he had passed.

Any such view can hardly stand the test of reasonable consideration. This would suppose that St. Paul would judge and condemn on mere hearsay evidence,⁴ evidence of whose nature he gives the church no account, without hearing any defense,

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, The International Critical Commentary, First Corinthians, p. 97.

2. See Chapter One, p. 26.

3. Charles Hodge, Commentary on First Corinthians, p. 83.

4. See Chapter One, p. 26.

without giving the accused party any intimation that he is being tried. Moreover, the supposed sentence of excommunication, and worse than excommunication, remained a mere brutum fulmen, which was never put into effect. The church in Corinth seems to have judged the case, and decided on a much milder sentence, which St. Paul entirely approved.¹ Further, the Apostle did not represent himself as pronouncing a formal sentence. He continued his remarks in a tone so different as to constitute an extraordinary anticlimax, if the decision and sentence were already pronounced.

The clue which must guide is the grammatical construction. This passage, 5:3-5, must be connected with verse 2. St. Paul contrasted the indifference of the Corinthians with his own vehement condemnation, not of this man, but any such person, i. e., any person guilty of such conduct as had been attributed by rumor to this man. This was not a case for inaction. It was a case for instant action, but action according to the rules of justice and moral principles. The lazy, contented self-satisfaction of the Corinthians must be sharply checked. The word ΚΕΚΡΙΚΑ then did not imply a legal judgment, but an expression of St. Paul's opinion on a mere report of the case. It was the first step, as it were, in a legal case. The matter had been reported to the praeter, and he decided

1. II Corinthians, 2:6-10.

that there was a case, and sent it for investigation before the proper tribunal, stating the severe view which the law takes of such cases, if proved. The expression "to deliver such a one unto Satan" has a striking parallel about Hymeneus and Alexander, who had made shipwreck concerning the faith, "whom I delivered unto Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme."¹ But the circumstances there are too obscure to afford much help in the present case. To understand these words it is necessary to inquire what meaning the Corinthian readers would attribute to them. As Sir William Ramsay understood the situation:²

They had been accustomed in their pagan life to very similar formulae, in which a person who had been wronged by another and had no other way of retaliating, consigned the criminal to the god, and left the punishment to be inflicted by divine power. These forms played a great part in ancient life, and many examples of them have been preserved to our time. We find divine wrath and punishment thus invoked against thieves, slanderers, poisoners, assassins, an adopted child who had raised his hand against his foster mother, users of false weights, persons who refused to restore money deposited in their care, and so on; even a mere advertisement of lost property was accompanied commonly by a curse consigning to divine punishment any one that found and did not restore the lost article.

In such cases the sufferer, who entrusted his vindication to the divine power, was said to make way for the god as his champion. The god was conceived as

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1. I Timothy, 1:20.
 2. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, pp. 212-213.

a judge, whose power was set in motion by this formal supplication.

In these invocations, the gods were asked or tacitly expected to punish the wrong-doer by bodily disease; fever--in which the strength wastes through the effect of "subterranean fire" without special affection of any part--was regarded as the favorite weapon of the god; but any bodily affliction which came on the accursed person was regarded, alike by the invoker and by the sufferer, as the messenger or weapon of the god.

The Corinthians who read Paul's judgment, v. 3-5, could hardly avoid interpreting it by the analogy of that pagan custom, which had been familiar to them and doubtless often practiced by them until about two or three years ago. Even yet they were not very far removed above the old pagan level. One must ask the question, would they not take Paul's judgment as a Christianized form of the pagan usage? The criminal is handed over to Satan (who, however, is here treated as the instrument in divine hands); and, if there subsequently befell him any bodily suffering, it would be regarded as the divine act to the end that he might repent and learn.

3. Principles in Judging the Crime and the Results.

There were two important considerations which St. Paul wanted the Corinthians to take into account in judging this case. First, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," one sin and one sinner, if regarded with indifference, may ruin the whole Corinthian Church. The old leaven of their pagan ways must be completely cleared out, and they must devote themselves to Christ, to live His life. The allusion to leaven, at first just a figure of speech, leads St. Paul to work out the figure into an allegory. If sin was the leaven, then Christ

was the unleavened, and the life of Christ is the Unleavened Feast.¹ Second, the Corinthian Christians must not associate with immoral persons. These instructions were given by the Apostle to the Corinthians in a previous letter. He now explained, evidently in reply to some criticism on their part, that the rule must not be taken in the sense that they should exercise a censorship over their pagan neighbors, and refuse to meet them in society. In Corinth, if the Christians carried out that extreme principle, they would have to go out of the world altogether,² and St. Paul did not teach the converts to retire from the world. He advised the Corinthian Church to confine its judgment and censorship to its own members. But within its own bounds it must exercise strict supervision, maintain a high standard of morality and conduct, and expel any unworthy member. They must refuse all intercourse with a Christian who has sunk from, or failed to rise to, the necessary standard of Christianity.

The Corinthians were deeply touched and stirred by the Apostle's letter. Their insensibility to the serious nature of the crime disappeared. They realized its true nature, and they were filled with sorrow and repentance. They apologized for their conduct, explaining how they had only failed to see

1. I Corinthians, 5:7,8.
2. See Chapter Five.

clearly, but had not willfully erred. They were eager to judge the case and punish the offender.¹

A new element was introduced. The offender had been as unconscious of the crime, as free from deliberate intention to sin, as the rest of the church. He proved this by the profound sorrow and humiliation which he felt. In such circumstances, when he was tried, the sentence inflicted was not so severe as St. Paul had indicated it should be. But this decision was not unanimous; a minority were of the opinion that they should implicitly obey the Apostle, and inflict his full sentence. When St. Paul heard of this he wrote them that the punishment inflicted was sufficient.² He had regarded this as a testing case to determine if the Corinthians were obedient. Now he knew that the Christian ideal was raising them gradually to its level. He accepts their decision, and forgives him whom they had forgiven.³

II. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SEXES

Throughout the canonical Epistles St. Paul had before his mind a clear picture of the general position and difficulties and surroundings in which the Corinthian Church was

1. II Corinthians, 7:7-11.

2. II Corinthians, 2:6-10.

3. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, pp. 214ff.

located.¹ He never became so occupied with any of the details as to lose sight of the bearing of each on the general state of the congregation. He saw the necessity of raising the whole church's general standard of moral judgment. Some members had been criminals of the worst kind in their pagan days, not so long past. They had been cleansed, and had been sanctified, yet the past habits and the pressure of surrounding society made a serious and continual danger.²

1. Purity and Immorality.

The danger of past habits and the pressure of surrounding society was seen especially in the lack of purity of life; and St. Paul returns to this subject time after time. They had to be constantly urged to live a pure life. The frankly confessed and universally held theory on the subject in pagan society was that every requirement of the body was natural and right, and ought to be satisfied fully in whatever way, time, and manner the individual found convenient. The only standard applicable for judging the individual's conduct lying in considerations of physical health and beauty. The same principle was applied to purity of life as to food and nourishment. In neither case was there any standard according to which the conduct of men should be judged except consideration of

1. See Chapter Four.
2. I Corinthians, 6:8-11.

the physical health of the individual. So long as the action was pleasant and enjoyable to the individual and did not injure in any way his physical well-being, it was right.¹

Against this accepted pagan theory the Apostle argues and his argument is that of a mystic. He accepts the standard of judgment as regarding food for the body but food and the body are both alike, transitory and perishable. But on the other hand, the body as a vehicle of life and spirit is eternal and imperishable. Its proper function in this respect lies in its relation to God, and not in individual satisfaction.

The outspoken naturalism of the pagan theory, against which St. Paul argued, had not been entirely abandoned in the Corinthian Church.² They had boldly stated in their letter, and had turned to their own use, of course with a view of full Christian freedom, the philosophic doctrine that "man is the measure of all things," that the individual is master of his surroundings and of his fate. Turned to a Christian application, this doctrine naturally suited their exuberant satisfaction with themselves and with their steady development and improvement.³

It was not hard for the Apostles to see the dangerous

1. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, pp. 280-281.
 2. I Corinthians, 6:12.
 3. I Corinthians, 3:18f; 4:8f; 5:6; 8:2; 10:12;
II Corinthians, 10: 12f; 11:19; 13:9f.

extremes to which this doctrine was liable to be pushed. The fact that he quotes it suggests that he believed it to have been used, or likely to be used, by his correspondents in the way indicated. In fact, it is natural to suppose that the words, "meats for the belly, and the belly for meats,"¹ are quoted from the letter of the Corinthians to St. Paul. The argument was turned aside by the Apostle thus: "You say that each part of the body has its natural functions, and is rightly directed to the performance thereof, but you forget the distinction between what is perishable, and what is permanent in the body." If this be true, then the Corinthians in their letter must have mentioned the naturalistic theory, either urging it as true or professing their inability to refute its logical consequences. St. Paul was not arguing against the criminality of a Nero, but against the naturalistic theories of educated, thinking, and comparatively well-living men.²

2. Marriage.

The discussion of marriage in the Corinthian Epistles is difficult and, to the historical student, disappointing. It is disappointing because, though it is treated, the treatment is so general as to give little information about the

1. I Corinthians, 6:13.

2. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, pp. 280f.

Corinthians in particular. It is difficult, because the Apostle was answering a question which had been addressed to him by the church in Corinth. His reply and arguments are evidently influenced much by the terms in which the question was stated and the ideas on the subject revealed thereby among the Corinthians; yet the reply gives no very clear evidence as to the terms and tone of the question.

There are few subjects in St. Paul's writings that have given rise to so many divergent and incorrect views as this topic. Some of the views relate to the practical conclusion that celibacy and monasticism were recommended by him as the ideal system of life for those who are strong enough morally. Other views relate to his own situation in life. Was he a widower, or had he never been married? In the course of the treatments of this subject he mentions several times his own example and his own condition. Now if the Apostle had been discussing the question whether it is better to marry or remain single, it is hardly conceivable, in view of his direct, uncompromising, and emphatic way of stating his opinions, that he should, in quoting his own example, speak so vaguely as to leave such an issue uncertain.¹ He would either make no reference to his own example, or he would so speak of it as to leave it clear on which side his example told.

1. I Corinthians, 7:7.

It is clear, therefore, that the question which was in his mind was not whether marriage or celibacy was the better way of life, and that he does not quote his own case as an example and pattern whether one should marry. When he mentioned himself, he was not thinking of that, and therefore his words do not permit any sure inference on that point. To treat this subject as if the question under discussion was the comparative advantages of marriage and celibacy, is to approach it from the wrong point of view, and misinterpretation is unavoidable.

Moreover, on that commonly erroneous view the whole treatment suggests a conception of the nature and purpose of marriage that is far from lofty or noble, as if marriage were a mere concession to the weakness of human nature to save mankind from a worse evil. But such a conception is irreconcilable with St. Paul's language elsewhere; such was not his attitude toward marriage. Marriage was, in his estimation, the type of the union between Christ and the church,¹ and therefore on the highest plane of ideal excellence and purity.

In no part of the Roman Empire at that time was there current any idea of the advisability and the superior purity of monasticism and the permanent separation of the sexes, least of all at Corinth. The Corinthians were entirely under

1. Ephesians, 5:23, 29f.

the influence of prevailing views, and were as firmly persuaded as all the leading official moralists, that the admitted and palpable degeneracy of their society was directly connected with the unwillingness to marry. This degeneracy was spreading widely among the most fashionable and corrupt section of society in the empire. The part of society which was most vicious was the one in which celibacy was commonest. The classes which were purest in life, the Jews and old fashioned pagans, were those among which marriage was almost universal. Obviously they drew the conclusion: Make marriage universal, and vice will disappear.

That such was the drift of the Corinthians' argument is clear from the Apostle's reply. He admits the truth that lies in their reasoning, and is involved in human nature. Marriage, however, should be a real union. A married couple ought to live together regularly. They may, by mutual consent, live separate occasionally for a time, with a view to religious and devotional purposes. Such temporary separation was a recognized custom in society, and St. Paul saw no reason to interfere with it, but was rather inclined to commend it. Still he safeguarded himself by adding that he only allowed, but did not enjoin, such periodic temporary separation.¹

1. I Corinthians, 7:6-21.

The view of marriage as a safeguard from evil is not a high one; and it is not St. Paul's. He said, "I would that all men were even as I myself,"¹ and that they needed no such safeguard, but could live on a higher plane and look on marriage from a nobler point of view. But such was not the case, and men must guide their life according to their own nature. Each has his own special weakness and special strength. The Apostle did not legislate as if all were like each other or like himself.²

In the beginning of his treatment of the subject St. Paul called attention to the fact that he was taking up the subject at the point where the Corinthians had left it; and his words would be so understood by them. The subject must be taken at the same point; but it is hard to restore the words of their lost letter. The crucial point in the whole passage is the opening statement: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."³ Evidently this was said in relation to a Corinthian statement or question. In rightly catching the nature of that statement or question lies the key to the interpretation of the crucial point.

Comparison of two other passages will throw some light on this statement, alike through the resemblances and through

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1. I Corinthians, 7:7-22.
 2. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, pp. 380f.
 3. I Corinthians, 7:1.

the differences (1) "So then both he that giveth his own virgin in marriage doeth well; and he that giveth her not in marriage shall do better."¹

In this passage there is a distinct, positive statement, followed by a comparison between two courses of action: one is good, but another is better. A comparative degree is necessary to express the comparison. Now in First Corinthians 7:1 there is only the positive degree, *καλόν*. It must be inferred that the meaning is not, as many assume, "It is better for man not to marry, but by a concession to weakness marriage is permitted." Such a meaning would require the use of the comparative degree. The analogy of 7:38 would suggest that 7:1 implies, "it is good to avoid marriage, but better to marry." A wrong meaning is also often drawn from 7:38. The Apostle did not say, "it is good for a maid to marry, but better for her not to marry." What he said is very different: "It is good for a father to seek out a husband for his daughter, but better not to seek out a husband for her. There is no reason why the father should regard it as his duty to give her a husband. He is quite justified if he leaves her in her unmarried state; it is good, it is not wrong, for a woman to be unmarried." He would not interfere with the established rule of society, that the parents seek

1. I Corinthians, 7:38.

a husband for the daughter; but he adds the proviso that there is no inexorable duty placed on the parent to find a husband for her. It is far better if the father puts no compulsion on his daughter.¹

(2) "...if the husband be dead, she [the wife] is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment..."²

Again observe that when the two states, second marriage and avoidance thereof, are compared, the comparative degree is used. Also, the avoidance of second marriage is declared to be, not better, but happier. The Apostle's own judgment, which he believed to be influenced by Divine inspiration,³ told him that such was more likely to lead to true happiness; but he would not place on the widow a shadow of compulsion in the way of duty.

The inference from these cases is clear. In First Corinthians 7:1ff, St. Paul lays down the principle: "It is good, it is permissible, it is not wrong, for man to remain unmarried provided absolute purity is observed." That condition of purity, however, was so difficult in Corinthian society, that he was obliged to go on, verse after verse, urging the great advantage of married life from that point

1. I Corinthians, 7:36-38.
 2. I Corinthians, 7:39, 40a.
 3. I Corinthians, 7:40b.

of view, but never implying that the essential feature of marriage lies therein.

Therefore the point of view which the Apostle assumed in First Corinthians 7:1f was that marriage was not an absolute duty, but was relative to the individual nature and character. Each individual man or woman must judge for himself or herself whether it conduces to the perfecting of their lives to marry. There was no moral principle constraining them to marriage; on the contrary, it was a fine thing, an excellent thing to remain unmarried.

This point of view seems to imply that the Corinthians had put the question whether the view, widely entertained alike among Jews and pagans, that every one ought to marry in the ordinary course of life at the proper age was correct. It is not improbable that the Corinthians actually quoted the public law, as it existed under the Roman Empire of Augustus. St. Paul strongly discountenanced that view. Marriage, as he saw it, was not an obligation imposed by society and by nature on all persons. The individual in this matter ought to judge for himself, and be answerable only to God and his own conscience. This is a claim for the emancipation of the individual judgment from the bonds that society had imposed on it. Freedom was St. Paul's ideal; but he dared not use

the word so much to the Corinthians, always predisposed to lawlessness, to the over exaltation of the rights of the individual, and to the overassertion of the principle that, "all things are lawful for me."¹

3. "Authority" Headdress.

The Apostle said that a woman was to have authority (ἐξουσία) upon her head.² This seems so strange to the western mind that the words have been reckoned among the most obscure in the whole of the Pauline writings. A vast amount has been written in commentaries--almost all entirely erroneous and misleading. Most of the commentators say that the "authority" which the woman wears on her head is the authority to which she is subject; a preposterous idea! Authority or power that belongs to the wearer, such power as the magistrate possesses in virtue of his office, was meant by the Greek word, ἐξουσία. So it is understood by Diodorus, (1:47). He described the statue of the mother of the Egyptian king Osymandyas, wearing three royalties upon her head, i. e., she possessed the royal dignity in three different ways, as daughter, wife, and mother of a king.³ The woman who had a veil on her head wore authority on her

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1. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, pp. 283-287.
 2. I Corinthians, 11:10.
 3. Ramsay, The Cities of St. Paul, p. 203.

head. In Oriental lands the veil was the power, the honor, and the dignity of the woman. With the veil on her head, she could go anywhere in security and profound respect. She was not seen; it was the mark of thoroughly bad manners to observe a veiled woman in the street. She was alone. The other people around her were non-existent to her, as she was to them. She was supreme in the crowd. She passed at her own free choice, and a space was left for her. The man who did anything to annoy or molest her endangered himself and often lost his life. However, without the veil the woman was a thing of nought, whom anyone could insult. The woman's authority and dignity vanished along with the all-covering veil that she discarded.¹

In order to understand the stress laid by the Apostle upon what would seem a matter of comparative insignificance, the importance attached in the ancient world to dress as indicative of national customs or moral habits must be recalled. In the early days of Greece, the longer or shorter garments which a man wore at once declared whether he belonged to the Ionian or Dorian race; i. e., it was an index to the gods of his worship, the mode of his education, the moral and religious ideas which formed the basis of his character. The moral importance of deviation, however slight, from the national

1. Ibid., p. 205.

costume was held with horror even down to the first century. Among the fashions of dress which admitted of no variation, was that which Greece, with the exception of Lacedaemon, retained in common with the Oriental nations generally, of women always appearing in public with their head covered with the "pelpum" or shawl.¹

Certain enthusiasts among the Corinthian women-folk had applied this principle, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female,"² in a startling fashion. Spurning the old restrictions, not only had they claimed and exercised the right to pray and prophesy in the assemblies of the church, but they had discarded the custom which required that a woman should wear a veil when she appeared in public. St. Paul answered the question asked him by enunciating a large principle --the law of subordination. The prostitutes in Corinth appeared in public without the veil and with uncovered head. In the temple of Aphrodite they prophesied, danced, and sang without the veil. The unfaithful married woman was shaved.

By a keen use of sarcasm the Apostle argues that the woman should not be content with removing the veil. Why not uncover their head completely by cutting off the hair, and

1. A. P. Stanley, Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, pp. 179-180.

2. Galatians, 3:28.

thus complete their husbands dishonor and their own disgrace? If, argued St. Paul, you will cast off your veil, then go all the way; shave your heads, and proclaim yourselves adulteresses.¹

There is a difference between men and women, and in fact the man has a certain superiority over the woman. Yet, by a truthful paradox, which has its counterpart in the divine nature, this superiority of the man involves no inferiority on the part of the woman. The man is the woman's head as God is Christ's head; that is, there is subordination without inequality. Yet there is a difference, and this difference is justified in both sexes finding their appropriate honor.² However, it is far more important to ascertain the principles involved in the Apostolic rule. The first is that Christianity does not directly affect the social relation of the sexes. The second point worthy of note in this advice is the solemn sanction given to what might be thought merely a local or national fashion.³

II. CONDUCT IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE

When the Corinthian Church assembled for worship many disturbances manifested themselves. Attention has been called

1. David Smith, The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 283.

2. Ernest Evans, The Clarendon Bible, Corinthians, p. 116.

3. I Corinthians, Chapter 11 and 14.

to the abuses of spiritual gifts, such as speaking with tongues, prophesying, teaching, etc; and to the internal divisions within the society which were more evident in the assembly; and also to the breaking away from the established custom of the women in regard to dress and public conduct. All these things were magnified in the assembly of the society for worship, but these are only a few of the disturbances of the infant struggling church.

In First Corinthians 11:2 the Apostle praised the Corinthians for their general fidelity to the ecclesiastical institutions and traditions he had transmitted to them; there was, however, an exception to be made of their fidelity in the way they were keeping the "Lord's Supper."¹ In First Corinthians 11:17 the tone becomes that of positive blame. This blame is not in contradiction to the preceding eulogy; for it does not bear on their neglect, but on the corruption and profane spirit brought to the celebration of one of the most important acts of worship.²

In their observance of the Lord's Supper, the Corinthians had committed grave abuses. In order to bring the institution as near as possible to the form in which it was observed by Christ, and to follow the Greek custom as practiced by the

1. I Corinthians, 11:20.
 2. F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, II, p. 134.

religious brotherhoods, a love feast, or evening meal preceded the Lord's Supper among the Corinthians, just as the paschal feast preceded the Last Supper, properly, so called. To this love feast preceding the Lord's Supper, of which all partook on an equal footing, each brought meat and drink. The poor man shared the bounty of the rich, as if he had contributed his part of the meat; and the members, rich and poor, masters and slaves, exhibited a spectacle of unity to the world.

But the Christian love declined, these love feasts lost their true character and object. They ceased to be meals of which all the members partook alike and indiscriminately. Those who brought food with them ate and drank by themselves, apart from the members who had been prevented by poverty from contributing. In consequence of this distinction, the poor in their hunger were compelled to look on; while their rich brethren, having more than was necessary, sometimes indulged in excess. Thus the meal degenerated into a private feast, losing all its significance and beautiful propriety. Better had it been to eat and drink in their own houses than thus to despise the Church of God, and put to shame such as had no houses of their own.

The poor saw their wealthy brethren reveling in abundance without being invited or allowed to partake. By that conduct

the rich rendered themselves unfit to join in the essential and more solemn part of the ordinance with spiritual discernment or reverence. Furthermore, the poor were in a hostile attitude when the solemn transaction in commemoration of the Redeemer's death was observed. The Apostle strongly censured these irregularities and excesses. He did not forbid the love feast, but he wrote against its abuse, without condemning it altogether. He knew that there was something in the custom appropriate to the occasion. Thus the agapa feasts are condemned so far as they ceased to promote Christian love; or, in other words, to the extent that they lost their original character and aim.¹

The shocking desecration of the Lord's Supper by the disorders which the Apostle here censures was, no doubt, the primary reason why he was so severe in his condemnation of the conduct of those Corinthians who profaned it by their selfish misbehavior, but it was not the only reason for distress and indignation.

In the whole range of history there is no more striking contrast than that of the Apostolic Churches with the heathenism round them. They had shortcomings enough, it is true, and divisions and scandals not a few, for even apostolic times were no golden age of purity and primitive simplicity. Yet we can see that their fullness of life, and hope, and promise for the future was a new sort of power in the world. Within their own limits they had solved almost by the way the social

1. S. Davidson, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, 1895, I, p. 36.

problems which baffled Rome, and baffles Europe still. They had lifted woman to her rightful place, restored the dignity of labour, abolished beggary, and drowned the sting of slavery. The secret of the revolution is that the selfishness of race and class was forgotten in the Supper of the Lord, and a new basis for society found in love of the visible image of God in men for whom Christ died.¹

The selfishness of class was being revived by the Corinthian offenders. They were treating with contumely the image of God visible in their fellowmen, and thus bringing into serious peril the best results of this social and religious revolution. The Apostle declared that their evil work was bringing upon them the manifest judgment of God.² It was to put down this practice that St. Paul brought forward more strongly than had been customary, the religious, as distinguished from the social character of the Lord's Supper. He impressed upon them the danger they incurred by such desecration and by recalling to their minds the solemnity of the original institution. Not merely had the order of the assembly been disturbed, but the original institution³ of partaking in one and the same loaf, one and the same cup, was rendered impossible.⁴

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1. Henry M. Gwatkin, Early Church History, I, p. 73.
 2. I Corinthians, 11:30-32.
 3. I Corinthians, 10:16-22.
 4. Stanley, op. cit., p. 196.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS WITHIN SOCIETY

The questions the Corinthians asked St. Paul were suggested to them by the pressing calls and difficulties of their present situation--a scanty, needy group, almost submerged in the surrounding ocean of paganism, keeping their heads above it only with difficulty, and with a constant tendency to sink again beneath the surface. The Corinthians had just risen out of the dead level of paganism. The first effort had carried them high above the surface; but reaction was inevitable.

The converts from paganism were suddenly brought into contact with this Christian spirit as a novelty. Nothing in their past experience had prepared them for it. They were beginning to attempt to live a life which had to rest upon a totally new and strange basis of thought and conduct. The Apostle had written to them and cautioned them about associating with fornicators; and they misunderstood him and thought that he was referring to those on the outside of the church.¹ They faced the serious problem of adjusting themselves in a pagan society without becoming contaminated by it.

1. I Corinthians, 5:9f.

I. GENERAL SOCIAL STANDING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

In attempting to understand correctly the position and character of the Corinthian Christian community, the idea that all that was best in contemporary society tended toward Christianity must be guarded against. Those who were the most educated, those who were most refined and highminded, those who were purest in life and aspirations, were often entirely content with their theories of the world and of the divine nature. In spite of the general corruption of pagan society, there were many striking examples of noble purity of spirit and life in the Roman Empire at the time when St. Paul was preaching. In Roman official life, also, there were many admirable officers, devoted to their work, honest and incorruptible, with a splendid ideal of what a Roman official should be and should do. It was by no means the case that all these became Christians. The routine of official life made many of them quite incapable of assimilating such new ideas as that men should think for themselves, and should refuse to accept the state worship which was the very essence and criterion of loyalty to the Empire.

There were undoubtedly many of those early Christians in Corinth who, taken in the stark reality of human character, were not equal in tone and spirit to many of the best pagans.

In themselves they were incapable of rising to the same high cultural level of life, or the same sanity and clearness of judgment. Beyond doubt many of the genuinely devout Christians in Corinth were very commonplace individuals; some were naturally of low and vulgar nature in many respects.¹ They represented the average, imperfectly educated stratum of the ordinary society. They had by no means shaken off all the habits of thought instilled into them by pagan parents and surroundings when they became Christians. They required to be constantly watched, corrected, incited, guided, reprimanded, and encouraged. There was a frequent tendency among them to slip back into their old superstitions with new religious ideas. St. Paul often blamed them for faults utterly unworthy of the religion they professed; and in his letters to them there are many proofs that much patience and hopefulness were needed in treating the Corinthian Church.

The Apostle gave a brief picture of the general social standing of the members of the church in First Corinthians 1:26. This picture was not intended for a description of the Corinthian Church specifically, but it is true of this church just the same. In that passage St. Paul bids the Corinthians observe the principle that lies in the calling of Christians

1. I Corinthians, 5:9ff; 6:9ff.

out of the world into the church; not a large number of those whom the world counts its philosophers, not a large number from the official class clothed with the authority of the Empire or of the municipalities, not many out of the old aristocratic families have been selected.

No one within the church should plume himself in his advanced education or his official rank or his long descent, for though a few Christians possessed these worldly advantages, the reason of their calling lay not in those, but in very different qualifications.¹

The class of freedmen and slaves was probably strongly represented in the church. But the freedmen were free because their natural ability and character had made them more useful to their masters in this state, than as slaves. The freedmen were to a remarkable degree a moneyed class, and their money had been made amid great disadvantages of sheer force of character and conduct. At the same time they were also, as a rule, devoid of the higher education, and as rich and uneducated as unpolished parvenus. They were often exposed to the ridicule of satirists and the contempt of the aristocratic and free born. But they were also a class in which the average of ability and natural gifts must have been high; a class of self-made men, many of them possessing considerable aspirations, all of them endowed with much enterprise and energy. They

1. William Ramsay, The Expositor, Article on "Historical Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians," I, p. 98.

were distinctly a vigorous stock. They also had the advantage of not being separated from the free population around them by any obvious barrier of color and race.

The slaves who were won by Christianity were, doubtless, for the most part of similar type to the freedmen, and may be classed along with them. They probably were those on the way to earn emancipation.

Besides these there were also a few persons of the higher classes; philosophers, teachers, aristocrats, officials, imperial and municipal. To all of these there must be added a large number of the really poor, the suffering class in society. There was plenty of opportunity for the wealthy Christians in Corinth to exercise charity among their associates in the church as well as outside of it, and perhaps to plume themselves a little on their charity and virtue.¹ But the tone of ironical admiration of the rich, clever, influential Corinthian Christians² loses all its effect if it is taken as addressed only to a congregation of the poor, needy, and humble. It is addressed to persons who prided themselves not a little on their success in life and on the skill with which they had so successfully assimilated the manners of the most highly-educated and aristocratic classes. Such was the

1. Cf. I Corinthians, 13:3f.
2. I Corinthians, 4:6-13.

Corinthian Church; and the First Epistle conveys a stronger impression of wealth and ease, and of the faults incidental to them, than any other of St. Paul's Epistles.¹

II. MEAT OF SACRIFICED ANIMALS

One of the difficulties constantly besetting the new converts in Corinth was whether they ought to eat the flesh of animals that had been offered in sacrifice to a pagan deity. "The ordinary sacrifice among the Greeks was not burned: only the uneatable parts of the animal were given to the gods, while the useful meat was eaten."² Therefore much of the flesh that was set on the table in private homes, or that which was exposed for sale in the market, had been cut from the sacrificial victims. Did this make it polluted? Could the person who ate it be considered to be assisting, as a sort of accessory to the fact, in sacrificing to an idol?

The Jerusalem Conference had ordered the converts in the province of Syria-Cilicia to abstain from such meats;³ and St. Paul himself had impressed this duty on the Galatian Churches.⁴ Considering how emphatically he spoke in these Epistles to the Corinthians of the uniformity of his teaching

1. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., I, p. 96f.
 2. Ibid., II, p. 372.
 3. Acts, 15:29.
 4. Acts, 16:4.

in all the churches,¹ one can hardly avoid the conclusion that he delivered the decree also to them.

But when this order came to be carried out, it involved many difficulties. Was the Christian bound to inquire carefully and find out whether every piece of meat offered for sale in a shop was sacrificial? If he failed to ask, or if he asked and received false information, and bought and ate such meat, had he been guilty of sin? If he were eating in the house of a non-Christian friend or relative, was he bound to ask before he ate of it the previous history of every dish on the table, outraging all courtesy thereby, and often putting questions which the host would be really unable to answer? Such questions as these would meet the Corinthian Christians frequently, unless they went out of the world, and lived entirely separate from surrounding society; they would thereby lose all opportunity to influence their neighbors.

Evidently the Corinthians put these and similar difficulties before St. Paul and indicated their answer. They could hardly accept the Jerusalem ruling in regard to eating meats sacrificed to idols. It was contrary to the knowledge, the discernment of moral truth, which they felt in their own heart and conscience. They all perceived with inevitable and

1. I Corinthians, 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33.

overpowering certainty that an idol was naught.¹ How could flesh offered to an idol become unclean through the influence of that which was naught? The idol had neither power nor existence, and could not affect the meat. It would therefore be irrational and absurd to act in society as if the idol could harm the meat. It would even be wrong, they reasoned, so to act; for it would be a practical teaching of a false doctrine. It would teach that these false gods possessed real power and existence whereas they knew that no idol was anything in the world and that there is no God but one.²

In the Apostle's reply he did not quote the decree; they knew it, and their knowledge had only led them to controvert its orders. The decree, in fact, must have formed the text of the present discussion. Besides it would have been worse than useless to refer the Corinthians, bent on thinking for themselves and understanding all things, proud of their own capacity for discerning moral truth,³ to a formal decree. With their philosophic background it was necessary for them to feel the truth spring from their own mind, rather than have it given to them by external authority.

1. I Corinthians, 8:4.
 2. I Corinthians, 8:4.
 3. I Corinthians, 3:18; 4:8f; 5:6f; 8:2; 10:12;
II Corinthians, 10:12f; 11:19; 13:9f.

Therefore St. Paul proceeds to expound the philosophic basis on which that prohibition in the decree rested. The Christian society needed to be built upon mutual courtesy and sympathy. It was needful for the Christians not only to be courteous to his pagan host; he must also be courteous to his scrupulous, doubtful, hesitating, weak or strong brother. This true courtesy would come only through love and sympathy. The pure intellectual discernment of truth had made them self-confident and unsympthetic toward their brethren.¹

1. Eating in an Idol Temple.

The leaders in the church were evidently, in the letter to St. Paul, defending their own action of eating in an idol temple. This they did on the grounds that the essential fact in it was merely the eating of meat which had been sacrificed to idols. If they could prove the latter to be true, they established their right in the more serious matter. The Apostle found it necessary to distinguish mere eating of sacrificial meat from that more serious action, pronouncing the one to be allowable, except in so far as sympathy for the feelings of other Christians made it right to abstain, while showing that the eating in the idol temple was actual idolatry.

1. Walter Lock, The Expositor, 1897², Article on "First Corinthians 8:1-9", VI, p. 65.

Evidently some of the Christians were to be seen sitting at meat in an idol place, i.e., taking part in a feast or banquet in some place, a temple or other building, consecrated to a pagan deity. The feast must necessarily have been the form of a ceremony connected with the worship of the god to whom the locality was consecrated. A feast in such a locality could not be a purely secular and non-religious function. Yet it seems hardly possible that a Christian would take part in a pagan ceremony, ostensibly religious, publicly and before everyone, while still remaining a professed member of the church. Even if he desired to remain so, it seems inconceivable that he should have been permitted by the other members to remain among them unquestioned. The suggestion that the action of those who sat in the idol temple was due to courage and strength and to show their "knowledge" and "freedom from superstition about the idol" cannot be accepted. A different conception of the character of the Corinthians has been formed, which makes it clear that the nature of the ceremony must have been such that the religious aspect, especially to the Christians, could easily be regarded by them as secondary and comparatively unimportant. "The nature of ancient Greek religions and its relation to ordinary social institutions and associations explains the

difficulty."¹

This was probably the most serious matter in the present situation of the Corinthians, and St. Paul's method of dealing with it was instructive and beautiful. The right to be members of pagan clubs had not been directly submitted to him; and he does not treat it as if it had. He does not impose any absolute prohibition, or state any dogmatic rule, which might be a law constraining the free action of the individual Christians. Especially, in dealing with the Corinthians, it would have been worse than useless to impose a prohibition on them. They had to be led to place on themselves a prohibitory law. This was not a case like the crime in the church, in regard to which it was necessary to state an absolute law. It was a case where something--and even a great deal--had to be left to the individual conscience. Therefore the Apostle tried to lead his correspondents up to a higher plane of thought, on which they could see more clearly all that was involved in the question, and then they could judge for themselves. That higher plane of thought, on which alone they could see clearly and judge rightly, required among them a far better appreciation of the common bond that united the members.

St. Paul's view was that membership in those pagan

1. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., II, pp. 429-432.

societies was irreconcilable with the Christian spirit. The reason lay in the common meal and the power it exerted on the mind and nature of the participants, making them all into brothers. The sacrificial meal became a force in the mind of those who shared it,¹ and it is clear that the force arose through the surrounding circumstances and ceased when it was divorced from them. The power behind the idol was not a self-existent devil, but was a power relative to the human mind, and conditioned by the whole series of facts that play upon the mind. If the same meat had been carried to another place, a butcher's shop or a private house, and eaten in different surroundings, apart from the company which used that rite to cement its fellowship; then it no longer would have been affected by the daemonic power, it would have been clean.²

2. Idolatry.

If the importance attached to a topic can be estimated by the comparative frequency with which the words connected with it occur in an Epistle, then it is beyond question that idolatry was a topic that occupied much of St. Paul's thought as he wrote the Epistles to the Corinthians.

The word "idol," and its connectives, occurs fifteen

1. I Corinthians, 10:19ff.

2. Ibid., p. 435f.

times in First Corinthians, one time in Second Corinthians, and only sixteen times in the rest of the New Testament. It seems that the danger that loomed largest in the Apostle's mind as he wrote to the Corinthians was idolatry. As Ramsay says:¹

They were still a very young congregation; the prime need was to raise them quite out of their idolatrous upbringing and surrounding; and the most serious danger was lest they should unwittingly and unconsciously fall back into the practices connected with idolatry. But observe: the danger was not that they should directly return to the worship of the gods whom they had abandoned; in that case they would have been hopeless, and their "last state would be worse than the first." The danger was lest, while they thought they were still leading the Christian life, they should be attempting to combine with it practices and acts which were irreconcilable with it and must destroy their Christian spirit.

St. Paul connects the thought of idolatry and the thought of the Lord's Supper. They are related to one another as the evil and the antidote; between them there could be no other connection. The sequence of thought in First Corinthians 10:14-21 is unmistakable: "the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons," "of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons"² are side by side in his mind and words. Throughout the paragraph he balanced the one idea against the other, and passed back and forth between the two. It is impossible to read the paragraph without being impressed by his obvious

1. Ibid., p. 440.

2. I Corinthians, 10:21.

intention to set these two facts, the Lord's Supper and the common meal of pagan societies before the minds of the Corinthians as two hostile ideas, two irreconcilable and mutually destructive forces: "ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons."¹

The word "communion" or "fellowship," determines the sense of this passage. It does not simply indicate that the celebrants of the sacrificial feast each ate some of the food that had been consecrated by sacrifice. Its fundamental force is to express, "participation," "fellowship" and "close union with each other." The fellowship was cemented by virtue of the common meal, not through the dividing of the food among the participants, but through the common enjoyment of them of the same meal with all that was implied in the meal.

The force of the Apostle's assertion here is not fully realized until one takes it in conjunction with what he is denying. The Corinthians argued that the sacrifice, being offered to a thing of naught, could not suffer any pollution or come under any influence from that nothingness. They also argued that they, who possessed insight, might as freely partake of sacrificial meat as of similar meat which had not been

1. I Corinthians, 10:21.

sacrificed. St. Paul accepted part, and denied part of their assertion. Such meat of a sacrifice could be freely eaten, when it had been brought and exposed for sale in a butcher's shop. The evil lay in the fellowship and communion with others in virtue of the common meal forming the climax of the common performance of the idolatrous ritual; for in those surroundings the participator bound and pledged himself to his fellows in association with Daemonic Powers.¹

III. RESURRECTION

After St. Paul had treated various social, moral, ecclesiastical, and liturgical questions, he took up a doctrinal question which he had kept to the last because of its vital importance. There were certain people at Corinth who, because of their philosophy,² denied the doctrine of the resurrection. The Greeks, even those who accepted the immortality of the soul, looked upon a bodily resurrection as foolishness³ and in their daily intercourses with the Corinthian Christians had influenced the Christians by their strong arguments against it. It seems that at first the Corinthians had accepted the doctrine without hesitation,⁴ but

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1. Ramsay, The Expositor, op. cit., II, pp. 436ff.
 2. See Chapter Five, p. 154.
 3. Acts, 17:18, 32.
 4. I Corinthians, 15:1f.

were being persuaded by their heathen neighbors to doubt its reality. The church was mainly a Gentile church; and the error was of Greek rather than Jewish origin.¹

The doctrine of the resurrection was a stumbling block to the more thoughtful and religious men among the Greeks, in proportion as they were attracted by the spiritual side of Christ's teaching.² If what Plato had said was true, that the body is a prison and a tomb, then the true uprising will take place at death, and the resurrection of the body from the grave will be nothing better than a second descent of the soul into its grave.³ There is no need to try to reconcile this thought of Plato's with his belief in transmigration; for neither is that belief any approach to the Apostle's doctrine of a resurrection. That the soul should be born again to live on earth in another body is not St. Paul's conception of the change through which the body itself will pass from the corruptible to the incorruptible, from the natural to the spiritual. In fact no doctrine of Christianity appears to have evoked more stubborn opposition and more contemptuous scorn. Even in the time of Origin some who called themselves Christians denied the doctrine of the resurrection.⁴

1. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, The International Critical Commentary First Corinthians, p. 329.

2. Also cf. 'Christ Party'; see pp. 185f.

3. T. C. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 386.

4. Loc. cit.

Why, then, it may be asked, did St. Paul defend it so vehemently and even place it in the forefront of his ministry? Why should he not admit that a belief in the immortality of the soul would be sufficient to inspire a Christian with the sublimest hopes of the gospel? The answer must partly be sought in the fundamental contrast between the highest pagan idea of man and that in the teaching of Christ and His apostles. In Plato the body is the antithesis of the soul, as the source of all weakness is opposed to that which alone is capable of independence and goodness.

The Apostle did not recognize this contrariety. With him the soul is not, as in Plato, prior to the body. He would have rejected Plato's doctrine that the body is related to the soul as the actual to the ideal, inasmuch as the body also has an ideal of perfection, which it will at length attain. Neither would he have said, with Aristotle, that the soul itself is that ideal of entelechy of the body. He taught in common with Plato that body and soul are distinct substances; but he would agree with Aristotle that they do not subsist independently of one another. With St. Paul the soul was not prior to the body; neither could it survive the body. Even when separated by death, they are not less than before, parts of the man and continue to exist in some kind of interdependence. The Apostle taught a noble doctrine, that an endless life awaits

man after death, a life in which the body as well as the soul will at last partake.¹

This conception was closely connected with the Apostle's Christology or rather, sprang out of it. The Son of God is become man. The spiritual has entered into human history and transformed the development of the race into a realization of divine ideas. Thus without the doctrine of the incarnation the Apostle's sublime idea of the resurrection would have been a mere play of the imagination. His central doctrine was the union of man through faith with the living Christ,² who is the quickening Spirit. Because of this union body and soul remain, though locally separated through death, in personal union with one another; and, as the life-giving omnipotence of Christ raises the life of the soul into the higher life of the Spirit, so it changes the body, through a resurrection, from psychical to spiritual. Thus the doctrine of the incarnation gives a new and startling significance to the bodily existence and the entire course of nature, while it lightens the dark path of death.

From this it is natural to expect St. Paul's discussion of the subject to turn to his conception of Christ's person; and such is the fact. Christ is now living in a human body,

1. Cf. I Corinthians, Chapter 15.

2. James S. Stewart, A Man in Christ, pp. 147ff.

and is a life-giving Spirit. These are opposite but mutually dependent ideas around which the forces of his arguments gather. He declared that his gospel rested on the facts of Christ's death and resurrection, which were proved by eye-witnesses to be facts.¹ To deny the resurrection of the dead involves also the denial of the resurrection of Christ.² For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then the gospel is void of content and, consequently, the apostles are deceivers; and the gospel is proved to be ineffective, and faith has no result. In these negative arguments the Apostle only clears the way for the direct proof. The resurrection is necessary in order that the subjection of all things to Christ and ultimately to God, may be brought to pass in the Christian order.³ As a corollary to this St. Paul appeals to the consistency of those who "baptized for the dead."⁴

This passage can be understood since baptism in the early church was by immersion.⁵ Up to this point in the discussion $\nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\hat{\omega}\nu$ does not have the article, but here in verse 29 it has the article. In the Greek's philosophy there was no place for the resurrection of a body. In this passage the symbol used is not a resurrection from death but of a body.

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1. I Corinthians, 12:1-11.
 2. I Corinthians, 15:12-19.
 3. I Corinthians, 15:20-28.
 4. I Corinthians, 15:29.
 5. Karl Barth, The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism, Translated by Ernest A. Payne, pp. 9ff.

The symbol must not be confused with its teaching. Baptism pictured a resurrection--a death, burial, and resurrection.¹ If there were no bodily resurrection, then in baptism of the symbolical dead bodies they were acting something that was not true; if Christ was not raised. In the first clause of First Corinthians 15:29 $\text{VEK\rho\hat{\omega}\nu}$ has the article, but in the next clause $\text{VEK\rho\hat{\omega}\nu}$ does not have the article. When the article is used, $\text{T\hat{\omega}\nu VEK\rho\hat{\omega}\nu}$ means dead bodies; but without the article, $\text{VEK\rho\hat{\omega}\nu}$ means simply dead, (death). Symbolically in baptism the body is dead. This symbol was possible because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism committed the believer to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and in the future life he would have a body just as Christ did (has). There was no meaning in baptism at all, if there was no resurrection; they were doing something and committing themselves to something that had no meaning. They were treating their bodies as symbolically dead, if dead bodies are not raised there is no need of being baptized in behalf of them; the symbol has no reality. St. Paul continued his argument with an appeal to the consistency of such as undergo suffering for the name of Christ.²

In all of St. Paul's reasonings there is really but one positive argument for the doctrine of the resurrection; that

1. Ibid., p. 11; cf. Romans, 6:1-4. The article is not used here.

2. I Corinthians, 15:30-33.

the man Christ Jesus is the source of life.

He is the first-fruits of them that fall asleep. He is the new covenant-head of the race; in Him man is exalted to the kingly authority for which God designed Him over all created things; to Him, as God-man, every power, not excepting death itself, is subjected. Not a word here of the immateriality and consequent indissolubleness of the soul. The apostle desires to encourage men who from fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage, and Christ Jesus is the only anchorage of man's faith and hopes.¹

The Apostle proceeded to meet the difficulties that surrounded the subject about the manner of the resurrection.² He prepared the way by showing the possibility of it from the analogy of the seed and the grain,³ and the physical difference of kind between one body and another.⁴ But here again he offered only one positive reply to the objector's question, "How are the dead raised? With what body will they come?" It is found in contrast between the first and the second Adam, and in a new revelation concerning Christ as the ideal man, the pattern of the future body, who also ought to be the pattern of morality and goodness. Such an argument can be addressed, and, indeed, has reference only to Christians. Silence reigns in this discussion over the destiny of the wicked. St. Paul did not dwell on an elaborate exhibition of the future life, as decked out with all the figures of Rabbinical rhetoric. There was now a nearer and dearer object

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1. T. C. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 388.
 2. I Corinthians, 15:35-55.
 3. I Corinthians, 15:35-38.
 4. I Corinthians, 15:39-44.

in the unseen world, which threw into the shade all meaner imaginations concerning it, all lower arguments in behalf of its existence. That object was Christ. The key to the whole argument is the refrain of triumph at the close. "The resurrection of the dead is more than an event, it is the final moral victory won for men by our Lord Jesus Christ."¹

IV. PALESTINE RELIEF FUND

The subject of this Palestine Relief Fund is mentioned in four places in the New Testament.² Paley³ has shown how these four passages fit into one another and explain one another, and his argument is conclusive. The fact that the Apostle mentioned the collection of this fund in three of his great Epistles, and that in one⁴ he devoted so large a portion of the letter to the subject, is evidence that he took a very keen interest in the matter and was anxious that the collection should be a success. There was no place in which it was more important that the collection should be a generous one than at Corinth.⁵

In the raising of this relief fund the Apostle bestowed immense labor, not merely because the need was great, but because he regarded it as proof of the corporate union existing

1. Edwards, op. cit., p. 389.
 2. I Corinthians, 16:1-3, II Corinthians, Chs. 8,9;
Romans, 15:26,27; Acts, 24:17.
 3. William Paley, Horae Pauline, IV, 2.1., p. 17f.
 4. II Corinthians, Chs. 8,9.
 5. A. Plummer, The International Critical Commentary
Second Corinthians, p. 230.

between all Christians, Jews and Gentiles, and as a tie likely to strengthen that union. The Corinthians were selfish individualists and St. Paul was seeking not only to help the Jerusalem Jewish Christians with the fund collected, but he was endeavoring to help the Corinthians get a different idea concerning the interdependence of all Christians. The Gentiles had shared the spiritual blessings of the Jews, and it was only fair that the Gentiles should share the temporal necessities of the Jews by giving them a share of their temporal blessings.¹ If this sharing was freely done, the union of Jews and Gentile in Christ would be shown to be a very real and practical thing, and would be made all the more binding in the future. "This collection formed the one visible expression of that brotherly unity which otherwise was rooted merely in their common faith."²

There is another important reason why it was specially desirable that the Corinthians should set a good example in this matter. Here Judaizing teachers had been at work, claiming to have the sanction of the Mother Church in Jerusalem, and denying that St. Paul had any such sanction. They claimed that St. Paul had no authority from the Twelve and was disowned by them. Therefore, if St. Paul succeeded in raising a large sum in Corinth for the poor in Jerusalem, it would show the

1. A. Plummer, Cambridge Greek Testament, II Corinthians, p. 119.

2. Adolf Harnack, Mission and Expansion, I, p. 163.

Christians in Palestine that his authority in Corinth was an influence for good, and also show his detractors that he was on good terms with the Jerusalem Church.¹

This relief fund, so anxiously worked for by St. Paul, was not the first occurrence of this in the Christian Church. Some years before, the Church in Antioch had sent relief to their poorer brethren in Judea, "by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."² This act may have been suggested by the fact that the Jews of the Dispersion were in the habit of sending money to their countrymen at home.³

1. The Example of Liberality set by the Churches of Macedonia.

The Apostle called attention to two facts about these Macedonian congregations: (1) Their deep poverty, and (2) their rich liberality. These churches were apparently not approached about the collection because of their poverty, but of their own accord asked to be included. When the collection was made they gave far more generously than the scantiness of their means would have led St. Paul to expect.⁴ Despite their poverty, they had given abundantly, beginning with the gift which alone gives value to every other, that of themselves.⁵

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1. A. Plummer, Commentary, op. cit., p. 230.
 2. Acts, 11:30.
 3. F. Josephus, Ant. XVI, 6.2.
 4. II Corinthians, 8:2-4.
 5. II Corinthians, 8:5.

Their example persuaded St. Paul to send Titus again to Corinth to continue this work among them; so that the church could raise its charity to the level of its other gifts; and also respond to the charity of Christ toward it.¹ The Apostle did not give an order to the Corinthians, but simply advice, which seemed justified by the fact that they had set themselves to the work, and that they had even expressed the intention to finish it before the Macedonians, and the previous year.² Assuredly St. Paul did not wish to impoverish them to enrich others at their expense; he only desired that there should be equality in the temporal domain, that a like exchange might also be established in the spiritual sphere between those who have more and those who have less, conformable to the law that governed the gift of the manna.³ The Apostle was a sensitive man dealing with sensitive people; and he makes it plain that he is not giving orders. Orders if carried out would mar the beauty of their liberality. He is giving his judgment as to what is fitting and just, and exhorting them to give according to their means.

2. Directions for the Management of the Collection.

St. Paul had already sent Titus with one or more Christians from Ephesus, probably charged with the duty of

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1. II Corinthians, 8:10-12.
 2. II Corinthians, 8:10-12, cf. Chapter Three, p. 36f.
 3. II Corinthians, 8:13-15; Exodus 16:18.

delivering First Corinthians, and of stimulating the Corinthians in the matter of the contribution for the poor.¹ He then sent Titus again with the last letter; and whereas, before, the contribution had in comparison with the greater interests, been a secondary consideration, it was on this mission, its chief object. When the scheme was first submitted to the Corinthians it was well received; but amid the subsequent dissension it had encountered grave opposition. This opposition grew from mutterings of a calumny into unblushingly alleged dishonesty.² St. Paul was charged, because of his zeal for the poor, with having a dishonest end in view, and under the pretext of charity was seeking his own enrichment. The Apostle did not directly mention the odious insinuation, but merely gave assurance to the Corinthians that they would have representatives in charge of the funds.³ He suggested that the Corinthians should adopt the method which he had instituted in the Churches of Galatia, and lay by each Lord's Day as much as they could afford of their week's earnings.

There was a double advantage in this method; not only would a gradual accumulation prove less burdensome but it would yield a better result. The collection would, moreover, be ready when he arrived, and it could be at once forwarded to its destination. And, he adds significantly, he would not himself undertake its conveyance

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1. II Corinthians, 12:18; I Corinthians, 16:12.
 2. II Corinthians, 12:15ff.
 3. I Corinthians, 16:3.

thither. They must appoint deputies, and these he would furnish with a letter of credit to the Church at Jerusalem; or else, he says, evidently to excite their liberality, if the contributions proved sufficiently generous, he would instead of furnishing the deputies with a letter of credit, accompany them in person and introduce them to the Church.¹

3. The Spiritual Advantages of This Ministration.

To succeed in encouraging the Corinthians, after having taken them on the point of Christian honor, St. Paul showed them the admirable fruits that would result from this work, if it was largely executed. God would not let them have cause to regret their generosity; rather He would fill them with new blessings.² This assistance, which would supply the needs of the saints, would cause thanksgiving to ascend to heaven from Jerusalem, and would bear witness in the eyes of the Church of that city to the sincerity of the faith of their new brethren, so that their fervent prayers for them would be in response to the token of love which would have been given them.³ In seeing this spiritual bond formed between the members of these two parts of mankind heretofore separated, the Jewish Christians and those of the Gentiles joining hands as brethren, the Apostle was struck by the greatness of this work that had been intrusted to him, and he expressed thanks to God for His unspeakable gift.⁴

1. David Smith, The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 322.
 2. II Corinthians, 9:6-11.
 3. II Corinthians, 9:12-14.
 4. F. Godet, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 326.

4. The Corinthian Response.

After St. Paul received the good news of the reconciliation he asked the Corinthians to bring to a generous and speedy conclusion, the collection which they had begun to make before their recent attitude of rebellion against him. There was a great risk in this request. It is easy to see throughout this section¹ that the Apostle feels the difficulty of the situation. He desired to be confident of success; confident that his beloved converts would do all that he wished them to do, and all they ought to have done in the matter. Yet he does not quite feel this confidence.

From the limited evidence on the subject it seems that the Corinthian contribution was a disappointment to St. Paul. It looks as if they were not very generous givers to this cause or to other things.² When the delegates who were conveying the gifts to Jerusalem were named no one from Corinth was mentioned.³ This may have been accidental; yet it may mean that what was contributed at Corinth was so insignificant that it did not require a special delegate, but was entrusted to one of the others; but St. Paul had decided to make the journey anyway.⁴ Be this as it may, the Apostle evidently felt the disappointment, for his reference to the collection from here on is very slight.⁵

1. II Corinthians, Chapters 8, 9.
 2. I Corinthians, 9:11,12; 16:3,4; II Corinthians, 11:8,9; 12:13.
 3. Acts, 20:4.
 4. See Chapter Three, p. 87.
 5. Romans, 15:26,27; Acts, 24:17.

CONCLUSION

This investigation has led to the conclusion that First Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul, in substantially the same form and order as the extant Epistle, in the spring of 54 A.D., while St. Paul was in Asia, probably Ephesus. This Epistle is a part of a larger correspondence between the Church in Corinth and St. Paul. It was written to a church located in Corinth, which was a large metropolis located on the isthmus between Greece proper and the Peloponnesus. This city was a miniture of the Empire with all its vices and virtues, and the environment made its contribution to the Christian community good and bad.

It has not been easy to acknowledge that among the Christians of Corinth so many forms of error and sin existed. It is a pleasing dream which represents the primitive churches as societies of angels; and it is not without a struggle that they can be viewed impartially as they really existed. However, it is a higher feeling which thankfully recognizes the truth that there is no partiality with God; that He has never supernaturally coerced any generation of mankind into virtue, nor rendered schism and heresy impossible in any of His churches. St. Paul told his converts in Corinth that it was necessary for heresies to be among them, that the good may be tried and distinguished from the bad;¹ implying that, without the

1. I Corinthians, 11:19.

possibility of choice there would be no test of faith or holiness. Evidence has been given to show that in Corinth ample opportunity for choice was provided for the Corinthian converts; often their choice was not for the good. Therefore sighing for the realization of an ideal which Scripture paints and imagination embodies; but which eyes look for and cannot find is needless. It will calm the impatience when looking vainly with earnest longing for that glorious church, "Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing";¹ to recollect that no such church has ever existed upon earth, while yet it has existed and does exist in heaven. It is still more encouraging to know that the Corinthians, with all their faults, were able to become part of that Church.²

When contemplating the true character of the divisions, errors, sins, and ignorance of spiritual realities in the Corinthian Church, it must be acknowledged that it needed all the miraculous gifts with which it was endowed, and all the inspired wisdom which presided over its organization, to ward off dangers which threatened to blight its growth and destroy its very existence. In its earliest infancy, two powerful and venomous foes twined themselves around the very cradle of the Corinthian Church; but its strength was according

1. Ephesians, 5:27.

2. Statement by William Manson, personal interview.

to its day. With a supernatural vigor it rent off the coils of Jewish bigotry and stifled the poisonous breath of heathen licentiousness. Had the Corinthian Church's fate been subjected to the ordinary laws which regulate the history of early institutions, it could scarcely have escaped one of these two opposite fates either of which would have completely defeated it.

In the city of Corinth, however, no less than other places, the earnest expectation of the creature waited for the manifestation of the sons of God.¹ Miracles and gifts did not convert. Inspiration did not sanctify. Then, as now, imperfection and evil clung to the members, and clogged the energies of the kingdom of God. But then, as now, Christians were fellow heirs, and of the same body with the spirits of just men made perfect.²

Then, as now, inconsistency was a common virtue. But then, as now, and as always God "will spare all the place for their [the righteous] sakes."³ Then, as now, the church seemed to have failed; but then, as now, the light was shining in the darkness, and the church was "the light of the world."⁴

1. Romans, 5:27.

2. W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, 1906, I, p. 454f.

3. Genesis, 18:26.

4. Matthew, 8:14.

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