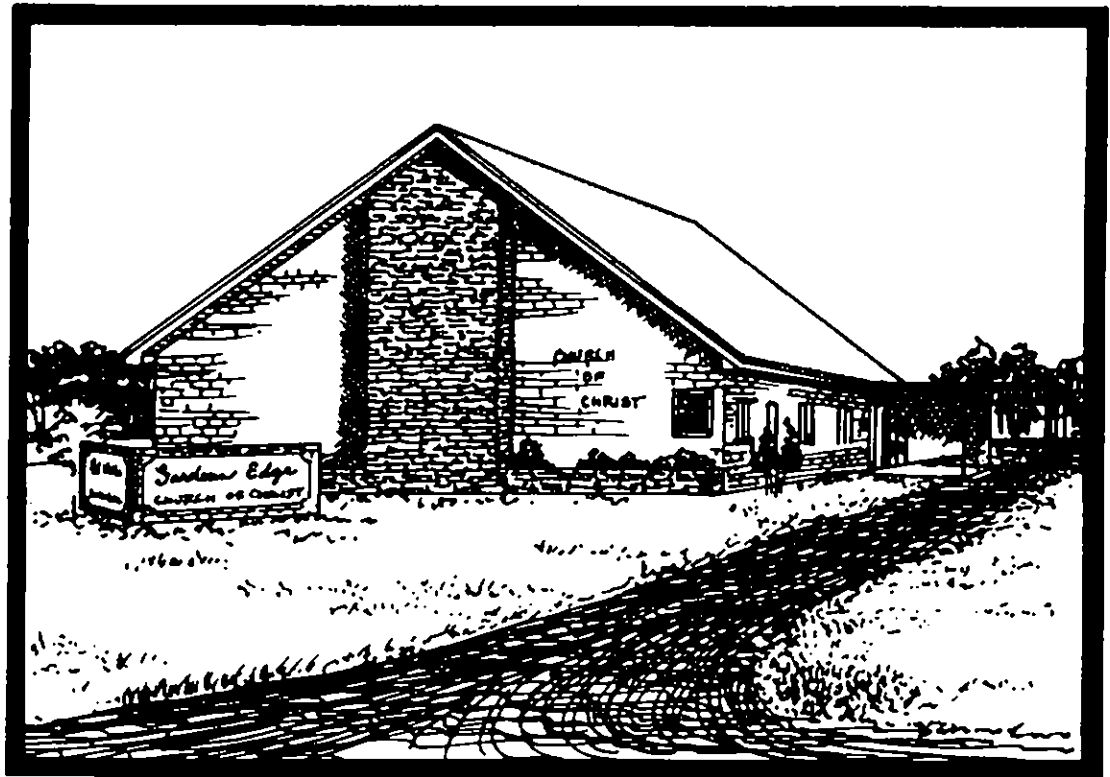


# 1987 PREACHERS' STUDY



Garden's Edge  
Church of Christ

George Battey  
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George F. Battey, Jr.

## The 1987 Preacher's Study

*The Garden's Edge Church of Christ*

The theme for this year's preacher's study was "Presenting Every Man Perfect in Christ." The topics addressed becoming perfect in our personal lives, our personal works, the works the church, and in our relationships with one another. We are thankful to the men who labored to research their topics so thoroughly and to share their work so that we may all benefit. We particularly appreciate those who have taken the extra time and effort to provide their research in written form to be included in this book.

Special thanks are accorded to Alice Doster and Print Works of Texas for their efforts in helping collate and print these notes.

The Editor

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This book is sent forth with the purpose of preserving the material which was presented during the 1987 Preacher's Study in Wichita Falls, Texas. You are encouraged to read, reread, study, underline, discuss, and pass along to others the truths you discover from these lectures. Regretfully, the spirit of personal association and the effectiveness of oral delivery cannot be fully captured by the printed page.

May the book serve as a continuattion of the good accomplished by the original presenters.

Ted M. Warwick  
Garden's Edge Church of Christ

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**Abstract** Our relationships between one another play a major role in our development as Christians and in the welfare of the church. There are many diverse relationships in which Christians are involved, but to examine these with any depth is impractical. However, several basic principles are common to all relationships. This study looks closely at the underlying principles that make relationships successful.

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Christianity consists of a variety of relationships that add to it a special dimension and ingredient. Without these, Christianity will never attain its glorious purpose. The importance of our subject is emphasized by the variety of relationships discussed in the New Testament and specific instruction given by New Testament writers as to how each relationship is to be nurtured. No attempt will be made in this study to consider specific relationships, as each is a study in itself. We will, however, attempt to focus on principles which are interwoven in all relationships and fundamental if we are to reach a state of "relational" maturity.

First, the importance of these relationships is pictured in a variety of ways and places in the New Testament. Ephesians 3:15 teaches that we are in the family of God and wear the name of Jesus. Romans 12:5 says, "So we being many are one body in Christ and everyone members one of another." Pictured is an interdependence with other Christians as well as with Jesus Christ. One member of the body cannot function by itself. One member is not more important than another (Romans 12:3).

Paul, in 1 Cor. 12:12-26, teaches several important things about our relationship with others and with Jesus. In verse 12 he says, "The body is one." Verse 13 says that we are "baptized into one body." In verse 25, he states, "that there should be no schism in the body." Each of these statements emphasize the importance of our cultivating the proper relationship with Christ and with other Christians. Since there are to be no divisions in the one body into which we are baptized, we are to endeavor "to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Notice as members of the body of Christ we are in Christ (Rom. 12:5). This introduces us to the most important relationship in our Christian life. When we are baptized into Christ we receive the greatest blessings ever given to mankind: forgiveness of sins, escape of eternal punishment, reconciliation to God, and the hope and promise of eternal life. By accepting these blessings in Jesus Christ we make a commitment to obey His teaching. This commitment is made because of our love and appreciation for the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). Christian lives must be built on a loving devotion to Jesus. One of our greatest problems is the lack of devotion. Often we allow our wants, wishes, desires, and pride to place barriers between us and our Savior. Each time we yield to temptation, we show a lack of love toward God and Christ.

Each of us should examine our lives to make sure we have cultivated the proper relationship with God through Jesus His son. We are sure the proper relationship exists when John's words are true about us, "Hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandments" (1 John 1:3). Are we doing what God wants us to do? Are we showing our love for him by surrendering to his will? If our answer is "yes," we are perfecting our relationship with God. When we have developed our proper relationship with God in Christ, our relationship with others will grow to maturity. A Christian life must revolve around Christ and his word.

Paul continues in 1 Cor. 12:25-26:

*But that the members should have the same care one for another and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all members rejoice with it.*

Clearly our relationship one with another is more than a mere formal, ritualistic placement into some mystic body. Ours is a sharing of loving concern for the spiritual and physical well-being of those in Christ's body.

Just as love is the driving force in our relationship with Christ, so it is in our relationship with other Christians. Jesus says in John 13:34-35:

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*

Not only is love for one another commanded by Jesus, but it is pictured as a distinguishing characteristic of His disciples. When our love fails, we fail in our relationship with those in Christ and those out of Christ.

John tells us in 1 Jn. 3:14, "He that loveth his brother abideth in death." We have no hope of eternal life if we do not love our brethren. In verse 16, he continues, "Hereby perceive we that love of God because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." These are strong statements illustrating the importance of our loving one another. A deep love is required for one to lay down his life. This is, however, the depth of love we are to have for others. John says in 1 Jn. 4:12, "If we love one another God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us." Verse 20 says, "If a man say I love God and hateth his brother he is a liar." God's love is perfected in us when we truly love one another. Love molds our attitude toward others and prompts certain types of actions. John again admonishes, "...let us not talk in word but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). We are not to talk about our love, but we are to show it by the way we live.

Our love for others, or the lack thereof, is manifested by our attitude. Our attitude in turn is manifested by our interaction with others. The New Testament gives explicit instruction about our feelings and our attitudes toward others that must be interwoven into our relationships as well as the specific behavior which follows.

Paul instructs the Romans in Rom. 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Paul in writing the Phillipians says, "But in lowliness let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). True love places the physical and spiritual well-being of others before our own. Our attitude should always be one of humbles service to our fellow man. Romans 12:16 instructs, "Mind not high things but condescend to men of low estate." These words again picture our becoming servants of others. True love is kind, it envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeking not her own and esteemeth others more highly than itself (1 Cor 13).

In Galatians 5:13, Paul teaches, "But by love serve one another." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words* defines the words "serve" (*douleuo*) as "be servants to—suggests acting as a slave." The word describes someone who gives himself up completely to another's will. This Greek word is used 160 times in the New Testament. Sometimes the word is used without the idea of bondage. The word is used in a variety of ways: to express our being a servant of God, Christ, the Law of God, idols, sin, to divers lusts and pleasures, and to one another. We are to do good unto our fellow man, especially to those of the household of faith as we have opportunity (Gal. 6:10). Our service to others manifests itself in many ways. In Gal 6:2, we are instructed to "bear ye one another's burdens." Vine says that these are sufferings borne on the behalf of others. This same thought is conveyed by Paul in Romans 15:1-3:

*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

We are to receive one another, to forbear one another (Col. 3:13), forgive one another (Col. 3:13), and submit to one another (Eph. 5:21). Generally, a very close relationship is pictured between Christians, emphasizing our sincere love and concern for our brethren.

In Hebrews 10:24, another important relationship is pictured, where it is written, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." The writer emphasizes the need for us to be concerned about and help each other with our spiritual growth. The use of the word "provoke" is interesting since we normally use the word negatively. Provoke, as it is used here, denotes "to stimulate, to encourage." A variety of words are used in the New Testament to teach similar ideas. "Admonish" is used by Paul in Rom. 15:14 when he says, "...able to admonish one another." The word is used in the sense of putting to mind or to warn. Paul says in Col 3:16, "...teaching and admonishing one another." Paul includes the word "teach" with "admonish." Teach means to impart a positive truth as contrasted with admonish, which is used in the view of things that are wrong. In Heb. 10:25, "exhorting one another" is used to urge someone to pursue some course of conduct. Other words found in the New Testament that convey similar thoughts are encourage, beseech, entreat, and charge. We are tempted to think this is the preacher's or teacher's responsibility. However, this responsibility must be shared by every Christian. Many times a private encouragement, exhortation, or admonishment will be more fruitful than public teaching. We urge, exhort, and encourage not only by teaching but by setting the proper example and giving proper support.

A greater challenge is found in another area of our relationship with others. Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." Notice Paul does not say we can if we want to. If we are spiritual, we have no choice but to help others overcome their faults. The word spiritual is used in the sense of men in Christ who walk as to please God. If we want to walk pleasing to God, we must concern ourselves with this difficult responsibility. No discussion of spiritual procedures will be made, but we will concentrate on our attitude when involved with a restoration attempt. Restoration must be undertaken with a loving concern for the guilty as well as for ourselves. We must approach the guilty party gently, prayerfully, cautiously, and meekly with love permeating our attitude and actions.

Several reasons may cause us to neglect or hesitate attempting to restore someone who has been overtaken in a fault. Sometimes we feel inadequate because of our own shortcomings. Usually this is

an unfounded concern, since none of us is perfect. If we waited until we found someone who had no shortcomings, the guilty could never be restored. Risk is another reason we sometimes hesitate to get involved when someone has committed sin. Each time we approach someone about sin in their life, we place our relationship with the guilty party in jeopardy. If our restoration attempt fails, not only is the guilty party's soul in jeopardy, but any relationship we have enjoyed may be damaged or even severed. In Heb. 12:11 we are taught, "Now no chastising for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Human nature almost always causes us to become defensive when we are approached about our sins.

Sometimes we are too busy to restore those overtaken in a fault. We may be so engrossed with our jobs, pleasures, and so on, that we are unaware of difficulties someone is having with their Christian life. If we do notice, many times we don't have time to get involved. Other times we seem to be indifferent; aware of the problem but we choose not to get involved. Christians must feel the responsibility of assisting one another in overcoming our weaknesses. The task is not pleasant or easy, but necessary for the well-being of the church and its members. We must not portray a "holier than thou" attitude, but a genuine love and concern which motivates our actions.

We must examine our lives to make certain we are cultivating and maturing in our relationships with other Christians. The most important question is "How deep is our love for our brethren?" Mature or perfect relationships are impossible without a deep love for one another. Love is always measured by the type of action it prompts. Our love for Christ is measured by the action it prompts. Jesus said, "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Our love for others is not measured by our obeying their commandments, but in our willingness to sacrifice for their spiritual well-being. Our reaction to and dealings with others is the truest measure of our love for our brethren and for Jesus. Both our love or the lack thereof is shown by our dealings with others.

Gossip is a subject one might not expect to find in this study but it is one of the many that gives a measure of the depth of our love for others. If someone tells you that I have committed a sin, your action indicates the love you have for me. If you love me, you must first find out if the story is true. That requires you coming to me. It may be necessary for you to discuss my sin with someone in the church, but if so, your motive must be to restore me. If you speak to another about my sin without my best interest in mind, you have committed sin and have shown a lack of love for me and for the church. Gossip is a vicious attack on others and destroys relationships which the New Testament teaches us to cultivate and nurture.

Christian relationships have been under emphasized by most of us over the years. We have failed to recognize the importance of our one-to-one relationships as well as our group relationships. When we have cultivated the proper husband-wife, parent-child, and the many member-to-member relationships outlined in the New Testament, our Christian lives will be more fruitful. Not only will we become stronger Christians, but we will be a source of strength and encouragement to others in the body of Christ. As love permeates our Christian life, our relationship with Christ becomes deeper and fuller. Jesus makes an interesting statement when praying on the night of his betrayal in John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." To know Christ is to have eternal life. Ultimately, eternal life is the reward for which each Christian strives. Let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure.

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**Abstract**      The evangelist plays a vital role in God's plan for spreading the Word to a lost and dying world. Unfortunately, the office and duties of the evangelist have often been misunderstood; hence, men occupying this office have been vested with powers and duties that God never intended for them to possess. Two of the most common and dangerous practices concerning the subject are the one-man pastor system and evangelistic authority. After presenting the scriptural definition of the office of the evangelist, these two false doctrines are refuted.

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### Introduction

There are some vital truths about this great work that I believe are misunderstood and that have led to a misuse of the office, not only in the denominational community, but also in the New Testament church. In a book entitled *The Urgency of Preaching* and the chapter entitled "Recovering the Preacher's Identity," the author says many studies have been conducted in recent years which reveal the greatest ill affecting ministers of all kinds is the loss of professional identity. He writes, "The average minister is a victim of vocational amnesia; he does not know who he is." <sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, this can be said of some of our fellow laborers.

To get a better understanding of the topic, three issues are addressed.

- The work of an evangelist as described in the New Testament
- The modern day pastor system
- Evangelistic Authority

### What Is the Work of an Evangelist?

Every man who aspires to be an evangelist, or who is one, must have a thorough understanding of what the Bible teaches about this office or work. All too often young men (boys) are asked to go to a place and do the work of an evangelist with the assumption that they already know enough, or that they will learn all they need to know through on the job training, to be an effective evangelist. No doubt many of us have been educated to some degree through the "trial and error" method. And we do recognize the value of experience, yet we fail to consider the plight of the young man who begins his career as a preacher of the gospel but lacks a thorough, well-guided study and training program. The very least we may expect is that one who holds the position will have conscientiously studied all that the New Testament teaches about his work,

that he will come to understand its qualifications and duties, that he will be impressed by the gravity of its responsibility, and will understand his relationship to the local church.

So that we might have a scriptural foundation upon which to build, I want to state clearly and briefly the work of an evangelist as described in the New Testament. This work can be summarized by the following six duties.

1. The first and foremost responsibility is **preaching the gospel**. This is essentially the meaning of the word evangelist—one who brings or declares the good news. This he does whenever and wherever the opportunity is afforded, as exemplified by the evangelist Phillip (Acts 8:35,40).
2. After having preached the gospel, he is to **assist the believers in their obedience by baptizing them** in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for the remission of their sins. This is in keeping with the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20), Peter's action on Pentecost (Acts 2:38ff), and the work of Phillip (Acts 8).
3. He is to **reprove, rebuke, and resort** (2 Tim. 4:1-2) and his guide in fulfilling these duties is to be the scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
4. He is to **complete the organization of the local congregations**, including the appointment of elders and deacons where qualified men can be found. This also includes committing the gospel to others who would faithfully teach (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9; 2 Tim. 2:2).
5. He is to **indoctrinate the church** so it may be rooted and grounded in the truth and protect itself against false teachers (Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1,15; 1 Tim. 1:3).
6. He is to **devote himself full time to the Lord's work**, being instant in season and out of season (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 2:4-5; 2 Tim. 4:2).

This is a brief, but accurate, description of the work of an evangelist as described and exemplified in the New Testament. These comments were taken from an article entitled "The Qualifications and Work of an Evangelist," by Carl Johnson, which appears in *Old Paths Pulpit* # 2<sup>2</sup>.

Against this backdrop, we want to examine a number of the modern misconceptions regarding the work of an evangelist or preacher, some of the abuses of the office, and the potential danger of apostasy in our brotherhood

## **The Modern Day Pastor System**

Based on research, this is a difficult thing to describe with any degree of accuracy simply because the "office" of a pastor and its qualifications and duties varies somewhat between denominations and often within a single denomination. Another difficulty is posed by the fact that denominational writers and practitioners generally use unscriptural language in discussing the system. Many use the terms *minister*, *preacher*, *pastor*, *shepherd*, *evangelist*, and *leader* interchangeably and without much qualification or regard to the Biblical definition of these terms. So when they speak of an elder or pastor or evangelist, it is not always clear to whom they are referring.

I will appeal to several sources as authorities for my description of the system, including a book written by Jay Adams. This book, entitled *Shepherding God's Flock*, was written (according to the author's preface) as a text book for pastors. The following five characteristics of the modern day pastor system are based on this book and a personal interview with a self-styled non-denominational preacher in Tyler, Texas.

1. It is a **one man system**. One man is essentially responsible for an entire congregation. A pastor is the manager or superintendent of the local church. According to Adams, the pastor "plans, organizes, and rules." In his book, Adams repeatedly uses the term shepherd and pastor interchangeably. Under the heading "Pastoral Theology," Adams writes, "The shepherd is **the one** who provides full and complete care for all his sheep"<sup>3</sup> (emp. mine).

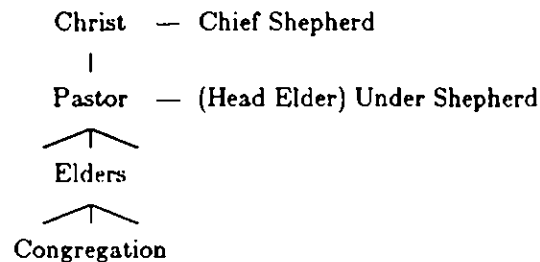
Chapter 19 of Adam's book is the conclusion and, by way of summary, he gives the student pastor a final quiz. He has devoted 465 pages to explaining the theory or theology of the work of the "shepherd, pastor, and minister." Yet this quiz ironically betrays the way the system actually works, for the first question out of 25 is this: "Do I run a one-man show?" Of course, this is typically what happens.

According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, a pastor is "a clergyman in charge of a congregation."<sup>4</sup> In practice, this is precisely the role of the modern-day denominational pastor.

2. Contrary to the teaching of the New Testament, a **distinction is made between the pastor (one man) and the elders**. Drawing often from the Old Testament, Adams writes that the pastor is the chief elder over a congregation and that the other elders (plural) are in subjection to him and are to assist the pastor with his duties. From Exodus 18:18-26 and Num. 11:17, he concludes that as the elders of the people helped to bear the load of Moses, so today's elders are to help the pastor bear his load.

He appeals to 1 Tim. 5:17 to prove that some are what he calls "managing elders," while others, worthy of special honor for their preaching and teaching, are suitable to be pastors.

Portrayed graphically, the order in the church, according to this doctrine, looks like this.



3. Generally, they **claim a divine calling**. The pastor regards himself as Christ's personally-appointed undershepherd, and that his "calling, gifts, and authority" are all God-given. Not only do they believe that God has ordained the office or work of an elder or evangelist, but that God has ordained the particular individual to fill the position. Adams suggests that the pastor is placed, not by men, but by the Holy Spirit; and he appeals to the Ephesian elders spoken of in Acts 20:28 of whom Paul said "the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers."

This sense of a personal, divine calling clearly overshadows their regard for the force of Scripture. In effect, it gives the one whom has been "called" a superior, pre-eminent position above all other church members who, in turn, are subject to the pastor. The pastor I interviewed confirmed this. I simply asked him, "Can you be fired?" He said, "No!" If the people were dissatisfied or displeased with him, their only recourse would be to leave the church; they could not fire him. Of course, it is not this way in every personal denomination, but it is true in some cases. And it is this very thing, appealing to a divine mandate of some kind, that has produced the lack of accountability among modern day preachers, including men like Jim Bakker and the PTL ministry.

4. The pastor system emphasizes **pulpit preaching, counseling of the fold, and daily administration of church affairs**. According to Adams, "The calling and function of the pastor (is) to tend sheep, not primarily to evangelize." <sup>5</sup>
5. The pastor system has a tendency to develop **staff ministries**. Where you find the modern day pastor, you will often find an associate or assistant pastor, youth minister, bus ministry, puppet ministry, divorcees ministry, young married ministry, and so on.

### **What Is Wrong With This System; Why Is the Pastor System Unscriptural?**

Having described what the pastor system is, the next question that needs to be addressed is why the practice is unscriptural. The errors of this system can be reduced to the following four points.

1. There is no such office separate and distinct from the office of elder and bishop. These are but three designations of the same office.

In Acts 20:7, Paul called the Ephesian **elders** and said that the Holy Ghost made them **overseers** (bishops) to feed (that is, shepherd or **pastor**) the church of God. All three concepts are also used by Peter (1 Pet. 5:1-2). He writes, "the elders which are among you I exhort," "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof." "Feed" is translated from the Greek word, *poimaino*, which according to Thayer, means "to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep." <sup>6</sup> Elders are exhorted to **shepherd** the flock **and** to take the **oversight** thereof. The elder is a shepherd (pastor) and an overseer

J.W. McGarvey writes in his book *A Treatise on the Eldership*:

The term pastor, the Latin for shepherd, has come into common use from the influence of the Latin version of the Scriptures. There is one all-sufficient reason for preferring our own Anglo-Saxon term shepherd. It is found in the fact that *pastor* has become perverted by sectarian usage, and designates in popular phraseology, an entirely different office from the one to whom it is applied in the Scriptures. It has become a synonym for a settled preacher,

and is often used for the purpose of distinguishing the preacher from those who are scripturally called the pastors of the church. It will perhaps be impossible to recover the term from this abuse, and therefore, it is better to throw it away <sup>7</sup>

So, this man-made system usurps the function of the scriptural office of the eldership.

2. No New Testament church was ever under a *single* ruler, but a plurality of elders.

McGarvey writes:

There is no proposition in reference to the organization of the primitive churches upon which scholars and critics are more perfectly agreed than that every fully organized church had a plurality of elders. A man betrays an ill-balanced judgement or a want of common information, if he denies it <sup>8</sup>

The following scriptures show that there is no one-man eldership.

<b>Acts 14:23</b>	"elders in every church"
<b>Acts 15:2,6,22</b>	Jerusalem had elders
<b>Acts 20:17-28</b>	Ephesus was under the oversight of elders
<b>Phil. 1:1</b>	Phillipian church had elders (bishops)
<b>Titus 1:5</b>	"elders in every city"

3. Paul lists in Eph. 4:11, five offices or functions which Christ designated in the church. Two were temporary offices, namely apostles and inspired prophets; the remaining three offices were, I believe, permanent in the Lord's church. These include the offices of evangelist, pastor, and teacher. If a pastor (shepherd who tends sheep) is not an elder, how can the omission of the eldership from this list be explained? The two terms must refer to the same office.
4. Additionally, the modern pastor system has spawned something of a clergy-laity system, which produces a special class of ministers that is foreign to the New Testament.

These represent several reasons why the modern-day pastor system is wrong.

What is the danger of this man-made system to us; how do we stand to be influenced one way or another by it? In my opinion, the system poses a real, present threat to our brotherhood. Leo Boles, in his book on the eldership, wrote, "The practice of churches employing preachers to give their full time to the church is rapidly increasing. We are developing a serious condition in the churches." <sup>9</sup> Although he said this about a different element or segment of the Church of Christ, it is frightfully applicable to our brotherhood.

I believe the danger of this system to the Lord's church is basically threefold.

First, the obvious problem of a system of one-man rule is that it places the responsibility for all decisions and policies of the church in the hand of one man, whereas God placed the responsibility for guiding and overseeing the church into the hands of elders. This one-man rule situation is particularly devastating when the one man is an overbearing, opinionated, hypocritical sort who

always has to have things his way and who is insensitive to the needs of others (see Diotrophes—3 John 9-10).

Second, the emphasis is placed on a full-time pulpit preacher (pulpiteering) and tending the flock (members) at the expense of evangelism. As mentioned in the description of the work of an evangelist, however, preaching the Gospel is to be the primary task.

*Simth's Bible Dictionary* suggests that the initial purpose of the evangelist was to preach to those who had never heard the gospel, rather than devoting the entirety of his time to instructing the church. According to *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, "the term evangelist is applied to those missionaries who like Phillip the evangelist and Timothy traveled from place to place to bear glad tidings of Christ to unbelieving nations and individuals."<sup>10</sup> The *International Critical commentary*, the historian Eusebius, and even Alexander Campbell all state that the primary work of an evangelist is evangelizing. And our own brethren have lately emphasized that the work of the evangelist is primarily spreading the gospel into new territories, establishing new congregations, and helping them mature.

While none of us would deny the fact that there is a work the evangelist can and must do with an established congregation, I believe it betrays a wrong emphasis when the majority of our evangelists are engaged in that kind of work, rather than taking the gospel into new fields.

Take heed to what brother Tommy Shaw wrote:

The primary duty of the evangelist is to go where the church does not exist, preach the word, and baptize believers. Ideally, he will stay with any new congregation he may plant, teaching God's way, and nurturing new congregations to maturity. Always he is looking forward to the time when the church will be prepared to carry on without him, so that he can move on to other fields white to harvest.<sup>11</sup>

Third, the monopoly on the pulpit and other areas of church work encourages indifference and complacency and stymies the development of others in the congregation.

Whenever an evangelist is "working with a congregation," as we say, he better be doing just that—working with them and encouraging their development to the point where they can function without him. Paul told Titus to "set in order the things that are wanting." Concerning this passage, Lipscomb said Paul left Titus, "to supply the needed teaching, and as the members proved their capacity, put them in the lead that were fitted to teach and lead in the work of the Lord."<sup>12</sup>

What often happens in our ranks is that a man goes to a place to do the work of an evangelist. He lives there several years, preaches many sermons, conducts home studies, and leaves to go elsewhere. And what happens? The church immediately calls in another who does the same thing and then departs, leaving the church no better prepared to carry on its work with no new teachers trained and no one able to do personal work. Basically, they have left the church unimproved in spite of their public preaching!!

Boles wrote:

A large part of the work of evangelists consist in teaching the young converts and developing men who would take the oversight of the congregation. Preachers have sermonized and can make "talks" or speeches on Bible subjects, but cannot train young converts in the work of the Lord. Truly, there is an incompetency in many preachers or evangelists.<sup>13</sup>

Is it incompetency? Or is it what Brother Clovis Cook wrote in the December issue of the Old Paths Advocate in his article "The One-Man Preacher System" (this is only slightly different than the pastor system), "Many of our preachers like the system and so do many churches."<sup>14</sup> The preachers like it for security reasons, but notice "the churches like it because it relieves them of many obligations and responsibilities."<sup>15</sup> More correctly they **think** it relieves them, but it really doesn't.

Maybe this problem of underdeveloped church members and the lack of consistent, regular training of church members to qualify them for greater service is the fault of both preacher and the congregation. The churches don't want to be bothered, and the preacher is secure in his position so long as the members are indifferent about their duty!

Leroy Garrett said during his debate with George DeHoff concerning located preachers, "Churches are being admonished by a one-man system, allowing a group of lukewarm, indifferent brethren to be content with giving a dollar a week [June 1954: DeHoff's salary was \$6000 per year; he received \$400 for week meetings JGB]...singing a few songs, breaking bread, doing nothing all week only to repeat the same thing the next Lord's day."<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, Garrett's appraisal is painfully close to the truth of our own situation in far too many places. So let us be mindful of these dangers.

- One man having a preeminent place in the body to the detriment or exclusion of others
- Overlooking the evangelistic aspect of the evangelist's work and calling
- Professionalizing the pulpit and failing to train, qualify, and equip the so called "rank and file" members of the church for greater service, and preparing them to continue **without** the evangelist.

## Evangelistic Authority

This is another concept that needs to be properly and adequately defined.

Of course some would say that the New Testament itself, and the epistles to Timothy and Titus in particular, which help us to understand the role of the evangelist in the government of the church and the relationship he sustains to the local congregation, gives the best definition of this doctrine. However, I am not convinced that this concept, styled "evangelistic authority" is taught in these epistles.

No doubt there are differing views among those who advocate this doctrine, but probably the clearest and most representative description of this doctrine, as far as the view held by its advocates in our brotherhood, is to be found in a tract entitled "Church Government" by Tom Allington.

Simply stated, here are the highlights of this doctrine.

Every congregation, young or old, must be cared for, supervised, and governed (p. 10). In the absence of qualified and duly ordained elders, the evangelist is Christ's agent and governor to administer the laws of the kingdom (p. 10).

Assuming the evangelist is qualified and the congregation approves of the arrangement, the members are obligated to submit to the authority of the evangelist (p. 19). The evangelist may exercise this authority over more than one local congregation at the same time; in fact, he may "supervise, rule, have charge over" several churches (as Titus did over the churches in Crete) at the same time (p. 10). This arrangement may last indefinitely until such time as the evangelist appoints elders over the congregation.

The tract makes it clear—any congregation which exists without (a) duly ordained elders or (b) a supervising evangelist is unscriptural and must believe they can exist acceptably with the Lord in a state of anarchy (p. 19). [Note: anarchy can mean the absence of government or a state of disorder and confusion]

What is wrong with this view? Is it scriptural or not? Notice a few consequences of this doctrine.

1. It places the duties that God specifically gave to a plurality of elders in the hands of one man who may not even be a member of the congregation he rules. Allington writes "The elders were to feed the flock, rule over them and watch for their souls." <sup>17</sup> But then he writes "These elders, if properly qualified, will replace the evangelist in teaching, ruling, and feeding the flock" <sup>18</sup> [emphasis mine, JGB].

But always in the New Testament, especially in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, whenever directing, ruling, or shepherding are spoken of, it is ascribed to the elders and never to the evangelist. Notice the following.

- **1 Tim. 3:1** - the elder is referred to as bishop (*episcopos* = overseer)
- **1 Tim. 5:17** - elders are to rule the affairs of the church ("rule" is translated from *proestotes* = "to be head of, rule, direct")
- **1 Tim. 3:5** - elders care for the church

It is interesting to observe that while an evangelist may be young and, therefore, inexperienced, those who are given charge to direct the church must be elders (Titus 1:5 - elders = presbyters, which emphasizes the age associated with the office). Too, the elder must be an experienced man. 1 Tim. 3:6 forbids a young man.

2. Look at one of the proof texts used by advocates to put the evangelist in a position of authority in a congregation.

*Heb. 13:7, 17 - "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."*

This passages is appealed to at least four times in the tract and is applied to the evangelist. What does this verse really say?

Verse 7 does not apply to our subject. A. T. Robertson, M. R. Vincent, and a host of other commentators and translations show that the reference in verse 7 is **not** to an overseeing evangelist but to departed, deceased leaders and teachers whom these people had in the past. The Greek phrase translated "which have the rule" is in the past tense; thus "that had the rule over you," as translated in the American Standard Version. Weymouth translates it as "your former leaders." The admonition is to remember, or be mindful of, those who have taught you and been your guides, and to imitate their faithfulness.

Verse 17, conversely, incorporates the ideas of "obeying" and "submitting" to those that have the rule. Yet notice the office of evangelist is neither specifically mentioned nor alluded to.

Coffman writes, "the obedience required in this verse is submission to the elders of the church." <sup>19</sup>

Robert Milligan writes, "These were the elders or overseers of the church, to whom were committed (1) the duty of instructing the members; and (2) the duty of watching over and governing them." <sup>20</sup> So we learn from many passages in the New Testament (Acts 20:20, 1 Tim. 5:17, 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

A. T. Robertson writes, "These leaders as good shepherds recognize keenly their responsibility for the welfare of the flock." <sup>21</sup>

This is clearly a reference to the pastoral responsibility of the eldership. So it is a mistake to claim Heb. 13:7 or Heb. 13:17 as a proof text for evangelistic authority.

3. The next proof text is Titus 1:5, which is cited at least a half a dozen times. Brother Allington writes, "Paul, in Titus 1:4, sets forth precisely what the duty of the evangelist is to be in all the churches of Crete," <sup>22</sup> and "This duty of an evangelist [setting things in order, JGB] in church government is clearly defined in Titus 1:5." <sup>23</sup>

What is it that is clearly set forth and defined in Titus 1:5? Titus was to do two things in Crete, namely

1. Set in order the things that are wanting, and
2. Ordain elders in every city.

But notice that absolutely nothing is said about "evangelistic supervision," about Titus being "in charge of," "ruling," or "being over" the churches of Crete. Also conspicuous by its absence is the term "authority."

Allington states that this work given to Titus "required proper use of authority, and Paul gave him the authority to accomplish the work." <sup>24</sup> But that is the only mention of authority, and it is **not** in Titus 1:5.

Over and over we are told in various ways that the evangelist was given a special degree of authority to enable him to accomplish this work, and this authority was conferred on him by the apostle Paul himself.

What are the instructions Paul gives to Titus?

- (1:13) rebuke them sharply
- (2:1) speak the things which become sound doctrine
- (2:7) show self as a pattern of good works
- (2:9) exhort servants to be obedient
- (2:15) these things speak and exhort with all authority
- (3:1) put them in mind to be subject to principalities
- (3:8) these things affirm constantly
- (3:10) reject the heretic

No mention of authority is made.

Regarding Titus 1:5, "authority" is translated from the Greek *epitage*. This is the only place in the New Testament where the word is translated authority. Thayer defines it as "an injunction, mandate, command." <sup>25</sup> Vine writes regarding the word, "[it] stresses the authoritativeness of the command." <sup>26</sup>

Earl D. Edwards, professor of Bible at Freed Hardeman College, has done a thorough study of the Greek grammar of this passage, which he presents in his booklet "The Evangelist in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus." His conclusion is this:

Paul is telling Titus to present his message, not with timidity, but in a impressive and authoritative manner, worthy of a message which has its origin in God. When this concept is properly understood, it seems it becomes a parallel to the passage in Timothy, where Paul tells Timothy that "God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power ..." (2 Tim. 1:6-7). If instead one takes this passage to mean "authority" in the sense of "having the oversight" of the congregation or congregations, he automatically makes it contradict many of the principles about the evangelist's relationship to elders and to the congregation <sup>27</sup>

Barnes writes:

The sense here is, he was to do it decidedly, without ambiguity, without compromise, and without keeping anything back. He was to state these things not as being advice or counsel, but as the requirement of God. <sup>28</sup>

The authority that was exercised, rather than being found in the man as God's agent, or in the office, resides in the **message**. An evangelist (or anyone for that matter) may speak with authority, or in an authoritative manner, simply and only because he proclaims the word of God, which Paul says is "profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (1 Tim. 3:16).

Tommy Shaw wrote in an OPA article entitled, "Church Government,"

The question sometimes arises concerning the evangelist's authority in relationship to long-established congregations that do not have elders. The scriptures indicate that in matters of doctrine he can and must preach, exhort, rebuke, reprove, charge, teach, and warn with all authority. In the same situation, in personal matters or other areas of expediency, his role would be predicated upon the desire of the members, for he could exercise his skills to no greater extent than allowed by the congregation. <sup>29</sup>

Thus, an evangelist "sets things in order," not by "ruling" or being "in charge of," a congregation, but simply by teaching and calling on the people to comply.

4. There is another problem with this concept. Since Paul had to confer authority on Timothy and Titus, it obviously did not reside in the office of evangelist. If it had to be conferred then, it must also be conferred now. But who does this? Who grants this authority to the evangelist?

Allington writes:

Titus 1:5 makes it plain that the evangelist assuming this responsibility would be formally identified as was Titus. Also the congregation or congregations to which his authority is limited would be identified. <sup>30</sup>

Clearly, the apostle Paul did that then. Who does this now? Who says which evangelist is over which church or churches?

We are told again that a church may call in an evangelist in whom they had confidence to assume this responsibility (p. 11). But is there a Bible pattern, or is there even any hint that churches of the first Century (or since) had the right to call in an evangelist to be responsible for them and to rule them until elders were qualified and ordained?

On this matter of what the churches of Christ did **before** Paul sent Titus, Allington writes, "...the Bible is silent on this matter." <sup>31</sup> And that is right. We have no pattern, aside from Paul's use of apostolic authority, of how to determine who is over whom, and who is to confer this authority over churches.

Evangelistic authority advocates teach that Titus' authority was restricted to Crete. Allington writes:

It would never be assumed that the assignment in Titus 1:5 would give Titus authority in Colossae or Laodocia. Neither could it be assumed that some free-lance, roving evangelist could have moved into Crete and start to wield authority over any of these congregations. This assignment was given strictly to Titus, and the only way anyone else could have qualified for any of the work assigned to Titus would have been at the request of Titus and with the approval of the congregation involved.<sup>32</sup>

Paul, by apostolic authority, could make these judgements and assignments. In Titus 3:12, Paul says he will send Artemis or Tynchicus, yet nothing is said about Titus requesting this or the churches giving their approval. This is the danger of an unbiblical arrangement. In the absence of biblical guidelines, men have to formulate their own; this does not work. So far as I can tell, nowhere in the Bible is this concept of evangelists today having designated territory or congregations and restrictions regarding who could or could not labor there. By what logic would a church have to submit to one qualified, duly-ordained evangelist and not to another? Whose prerogative is it **now** to decide this?

Well evangelistic authority advocates understand that evangelists must be appointed, ordained, sent out, and as Allington writes, "they have to give an accounting to those over them."<sup>33</sup> Later he writes, "It appears that all evangelists were sent out by a local congregation or an apostle. There is no evidence of a free-lance evangelist out preaching when, where, and how he chose with no responsibility to anyone."<sup>34</sup>

This sounds like the ordaining and sending church or apostle had **something** to say about when, **where**, and how the man preached. We know that Paul left Titus in Crete. Allington continues:

In the beginning they were sent out and recommended by an apostle. Later [watch this closely, JGB] when the churches were developed to where they could establish and maintain government in each congregation [is this not the eldership, JGB], these churches [with elders, JGB] sent out and recommended the evangelist and held him responsible for his teaching and conduct.<sup>35</sup>

Now we have a church with elders, ordaining an evangelist—they are "over him" (as our brother said)—he is accountable to them. He does not "free-lance" it, going when and where he wants. Someone must confer on him his authority.

But is there anyone who is ready to say that the elders who ordained this man, and are about to send him out, have the authority to decide or designate which congregations come under the supervision and oversight of **their** evangelist? Of course not, there is simply no Bible precedent for determining this.

I believe that apostolic authority was to be replaced by qualified elderships. Since the passing of apostolic authority, the job of the evangelist is **not** to exercise authority over churches without elders as an interim government, but to teach and train the churches, to set in order the things that remain unfinished by teaching, then to ordain elders in every church. This is God's plan!

## Conclusion

In summation, Isaac Erret, an early figure of the restoration movement, stated the matter clearly when he said:

The authority of every Christian minister corresponds in magnitude and extent with the duties of his office. where duty ends, there authority ends <sup>36</sup>

Again, the basic duty of the evangelist is to preach the word (not to direct) and, therefore, preaching is as far as his authority extends.

To my fellow evangelists and preachers of the gospel I want to express the following sentiments.

If we are ever going to be perfect in the work of an evangelist, it will be necessary for us to (1) properly understand the office and function we are to perform in the kingdom, and (2) being mindful of the pitfalls and unscriptural practices such as mentioned, avoid them.

But all the knowledge in the world will avail us absolutely nothing unless we are **committed** with all of our hearts to preaching the gospel of Christ to the lost of this world, whether across the ocean or across the street. I am afraid today that much of the fervor, zeal, conviction, and militancy that characterized gospel preaching in the early days of the Restoration has waned and continues to decline.

I quoted earlier from a book entitled *The Urgency of Preaching*. Its author (Kyle Haseldon) traces the general decline in preaching over the past several decades, and in 1962 he wrote:

In the average parish the will to preach—the joy, enthusiasm, and urgency of preaching—diminished in our generation until preaching became a monotonous and dreaded routine for some ministers and a weekly ordeal for others <sup>37</sup>

I fear that some of our number, too, have lost the sense of urgency of our work and of our message.

We preach because preaching is expected of us, we preach well enough to get by, but we do not preach under the kind of compulsion which made Paul say, "for necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." We do not share the passion of Richard Baxter's, "Preach as never sure to preach again and as a dying man to dying man." We do not mount our pulpits Sunday after Sunday with the awful feeling that under God's appointment we are dealing with men in terms of life and death and by God's grace are communicating to them eternal truths which reach beyond life and death. Our mood, in a word, is one largely untouched by the urgency of preaching." <sup>38</sup>

My prayer to God on behalf of the soul of every man and woman, boy and girl is that every one of us, as ministers of Jesus Christ, will renew our commitment to preach the gospel with a zeal and conviction we have never known before. I pray that God will bless us in our every effort on behalf of the gospel and the Lord's church to His glory.

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**Abstract** Matthew 5:17-20 is not only a very interesting section of Scripture, it is also a vital passage in understanding the "Sermon on the Mount" and the entire Bible. Jesus shows in this section of Scripture the duration of the Old Testament Law and the relationship which a disciple in the kingdom of heaven sustains toward the Old Law. These verses set the stage for the contrastive teaching which begins in verse 21, and they also state a theme which runs throughout Matthew 5, 6, and 7, namely the "exceeding righteousness" which men must possess to enter and abide in the kingdom of heaven.

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### Introduction

Jesus said:

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:17-20).*

Many religious bodies have misconceptions regarding the Old Testament and its place in religion today. Even many in the church are confused and so the need for this study is great.

In Matthew 5 Jesus is getting ready to teach some things that are new and different—things that would "astonish" these people on the mountain (Mt. 5:28). Some might interpret these new teachings as an attempt by Jesus to "overthrow" the Old Testament Law. Jesus, then, takes this opportunity to reassure the people that He has come not to "destroy," but to "fulfill" the Law of Moses.

### Text #1

In Matthew 5:17 Jesus says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Whatever Jesus was going to do to the Law, He also was going to do to the prophets. To what do the words "Law" and "prophets" refer?

Basically the word "Law" refers to the first five books of the Old Testament and the word "prophets" has reference to the remainder of the Old Testament. The book of Psalms is sometimes listed separately (Lk. 24:44, for example), but since prophets wrote the Psalms, it is

often included in the term "prophets." When these two terms are coupled together, the "Law and the prophets" refer to the entire Old Testament Scriptures. In Matthew 7:12 Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." In other words, this is what the entire Old Testament was trying to accomplish. Again, after Jesus quoted the two greatest commandments of the Old Testament (as in, to love God and to love thy neighbor), He said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Mt. 22:40). Matthew 5:17-20, then, is stating Jesus' relationship with reference to the entire Old Testament Scriptures.

### **Fulfill, Not Perpetuate**

Notice carefully what Jesus did not say. He did not say He came to perpetuate the Old Testament Law. He did not say it would stand as long as heaven and earth stood. The contrast is destroy vs. fulfill, not destroy vs. perpetuate. Many misunderstand Jesus here. They think since He is not destroying the Law, then He must be perpetuating it. If Jesus perpetuated the Law and prophets, He would have actually destroyed them! Notice carefully why this conclusion is true.

The Old Testament was full of promises, prophecies and types as well as principles. If one perpetuates a promise, prophecy, or type he destroys them. For example, when a man makes a promise he must eventually fulfill the promise. If he keeps prolonging the promise, but never fulfills what he said he would do, he has broken his promise—"destroyed" it. On the other hand, when one fulfills promises, prophecies, and types, he passes from the stage of the unfulfilled to the fulfilled. The Biblical illustrations of this truth are numerous. In Jeremiah 31:31-34 God gave the promise of a new covenant being made with His people. If Jesus had not established a new covenant, He would have destroyed Jeremiah's prophecy by perpetuating it. In Genesis 22:17-28, God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed. If Jesus had not brought a blessing to all nations, if He had simply perpetuated it, this promise would have been destroyed. Daniel 2:44 records a prophecy that the kingdom would be established. If Jesus had not established His kingdom, this prophecy would have been destroyed by perpetuation.

The word "destroy" means to "destroy, demolish, overthrow, throw down" (Greenfield). The word "fulfill" means "to fill, make full, fill up, complete" (ibid.). Two different methods are in view—overthrowing vs. fulfilling. Either of these methods will render the Old Testament inactive. Jesus is emphasizing which method He will use to bring the Law of Moses to an end. To destroy the Law would be to violate its commandments and destroy the symbolism contained in those laws. To destroy the prophets would be to prevent what they predicted from coming to pass. Instead of destroying the symbolism of the Law and the predictions of the prophets, Jesus came to fulfill them. The Law was "taken out of the way" (Col. 2:14), but not by destruction: rather it was taken away by the process of fulfillment.

In Galatians 3:24-25, Paul describes matters like this, "Wherefore the law was our school master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." The work of a "schoolmaster" was equivalent to that of a bus driver—he took the children to school and left them in care of the teacher. When this work was completed, he was no longer needed; his work was fulfilled, but not destroyed. So it is with the Old Testament. It was taken out of force not by destruction, but by fulfillment.

**Text # 2**

The next verse in this study reads, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Mt. 5:18). The word "jot" (Greek: *iota*) means the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet. The word "tittle" (Greek: *kerasia*) means literally "little horn." The tittle is the small stroke of the pen which distinguishes one letter of the alphabet from another. In English the tittle would make the difference between "E" and "F." Jesus is saying not the smallest letter, nor the smallest part of the letter will pass away by the process of destruction.

The Old Testament was not going to fade out bit by bit. It is either completely in force, or completely abolished. Jesus is saying as long as any of it remains in force, all of it does—every jot and tittle including: animal sacrifices, stoning blasphemers, circumcision, assembling in Jerusalem three times a year for worship, forbidden food regulations, etc. One cannot decide to just keep the ten commandments, but none of the rest. Paul points out, "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. 5:3). In other words, if one keeps any of the Law (circumcision, for example), he must keep it all (animal sacrifices, for example).

Next, Jesus said, "Till heaven and earth pass." What does He mean by this expression? Does He mean every jot and tittle remains in full force as long as heaven and earth stand? The answer to that is, No. Luke helps in understanding what Jesus meant. Luke records Jesus as saying, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Lk. 16:17). Jesus is using a proverb. He is speaking of the certainty of the fulfillment, not the duration of the Law. It is so certain that the Old Testament will be fulfilled that it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the Law to be destroyed.

**Duration of the Old Testament**

Jesus does give the duration of the Law of Moses in the second half of verse 18, "till all be fulfilled." The question here is, What did Jesus mean by "all?" At first it would appear that "all" would include every single prophecy in the entire Old Testament. If this is what He means, then the entire Law of Moses remains in full force till the end of time. Why this conclusion? Because there are still unfilled prophecies that will not be fulfilled until the end of time. For example, Daniel 12:2 prophecies about the bodily resurrection and Judgment Day. Must this prophecy be fulfilled before Moses' Law comes to an end? The answer is, No. Luke's gospel gives a clue about what Jesus means by "all" things being fulfilled: "And [Jesus] said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me" (Lk. 24:44; cf. Acts 13:29). The Law, then, would last until "all" things concerning the Messiah had been fulfilled. This very point is evidenced in Matthew's text: "Think not that I am COME to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not COME to destroy but to fulfill" (Mt. 5:17). Jesus is speaking of His coming to the earth and the purpose for which He came. He was speaking of things concerning His earthly ministry.

To summarize, Jesus taught every jot and tittle of Moses' Law would remain in full force until all things concerning His earthly ministry were accomplished. Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (Jn. 4:34). Again, He prayed, "I have glorified thee

on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (Jn. 17:4). The question at hand is, Did Jesus really finish, or fulfill, "all" things concerning His earthly ministry? The answer is obviously, Yes. John records, "After this, Jesus knowing that ALL THINGS were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. . . . When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is FINISHED: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost" (Jn. 19:28, 30).

After Jesus died, He ascended into heaven to reign as our King and High Priest, thus fulfilling all things concerning His earthly ministry. Things passed from the stage of the unfulfilled to the fulfilled. The Old Testament was completed now. It had served its purpose. It was now fulfilled and so it came to an end, not because it was destroyed, but rather fulfilled. Paul records, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). Again, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances . . ." (Eph. 2:15).

If the Law of Moses was fulfilled, has served its purpose and is abolished, how can anyone be under it today? They simply cannot be. Christians now live under a new and better covenant: "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:16-17). While Jesus was on the earth He made His new will. He taught the gospel of the kingdom while alive, but it did not come into power until after His death.

### Text #3

Moving on now to the next point, Jesus made this statement in His sermon:

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:19)

The word "break" (Greek: *luo*) is akin to "destroy" (Greek: *kataluo*) in verse 17. Usually this Greek word is translated "to loose" and carries with it the idea of freeing from restraints. Whoever "loosens" the requirements of even the least commandment, while the Law is in force, is the real destroyer of the Law.

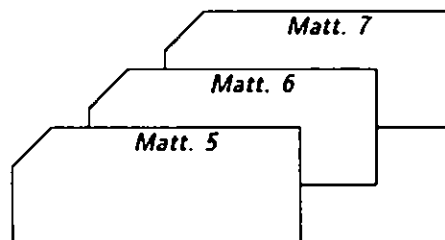
It is important to notice what Jesus did not say. He did not say, "Whoever teaches new things, or different things will be called least in the kingdom." Jesus taught many new and different things that went into effect after He died, but He never broke, nor taught anyone to break Moses' Law while it was in force.

### Contrastive Teaching Illustrated

It will be beneficial to illustrate the contrastive teaching that takes place in Matthew 5. Let two boxes be labeled "Old Testament" and "New Testament."



Next, allow several cards to represent the teachings of Matthew 5, 6 and 7.



Now, if these teachings of Matthew 5, 6 and 7 are placed into the box called the "New Testament" there will be some people who will object. They will say something like this: "If you have Jesus teaching New Testament principles like Matthew 5, 6 and 7 while He is alive, He will actually be teaching people to violate the Law of Moses. After all, Jesus said, 'Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.'" So what these people do is, they reach their hand into the "New Testament" box and pull out these teachings--the very ones they said would violate the Law of Moses if Jesus taught them while He was alive—and they place these teachings into the "Old Testament" box. Now all of a sudden, according to them, these teachings do not violate Moses' Law!

The inconsistency in this reasoning is this: if these principles violate Moses' Law when they are in the "New Testament" box, they will also violate Moses' Law when placed in the "Old Testament" box. Conversely, if these teachings of Matthew 5, 6 and 7 can be placed in the "Old Testament" box without violating Moses' Law, then they can also be placed in the "New Testament" box and Moses' Law will not be violated. Jesus could, and actually did teach New Testament principles while He was alive and, although these principles did not come into force until after His death, these principles did not cause anyone to "break" one of the least commandments of Moses' Law. It is inconsistent to say the teachings of Matthew 5, 6 and 7 violate Moses' Law if placed in the "New Testament" box, but would harmonize with Moses' Law if placed in the "Old Testament" box.

In Matthew 5:19 Jesus is teaching that if a man breaks what he considers a "least" commandment under the Old Testament, he will do the same thing under the New Testament, because habits of disobedience are not easily discarded.

Is there not a lesson here for the church today? Jesus is teaching that to have devout, dedicated converts we are going to have to look for someone who is devout and dedicated to begin with. A devout heathen, or Moslem will make a better convert than a lukewarm, liberal "church of Christ" member! In like fashion, Jesus taught that obedience under the Old Testament Law was an indicator of what a man would do under the New Testament Law. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Lk. 16:10). How many people take the Bible and mark off commandments as "great," and "small" and then discard with the "small" ones? Men must learn respect for even those commandments which they consider "little." "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto ALL thy commandments" (Ps. 119:6).

Next, notice Jesus said one must "do and teach them" (Mt. 5:19). He places "doing" before "teaching" because it is hypocritical to teach something which is not being practiced first. This order is no accident and the same thing is still true today.

#### Text #4

The final verse under consideration reads, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:20). Because of this verse many people have drawn the wrong conclusion regarding the rest of this chapter.

In the remainder of Matthew 5 Jesus begins to do some contrastive teaching. There are two major views:

1. that Jesus is contrasting the teachings of the Pharisees with what Moses actually meant (which incidentally is the most popular view), or
2. that Jesus is contrasting Moses' Law with His own New Testament principles.

One's outlook on life is going to be greatly affected by how these teachings of Jesus are viewed. If Jesus was merely explaining what Moses' Law actually taught, then these principles no longer apply (cf. Col. 2:14), but if Jesus was contrasting Moses' Law with His own New Testament principles, then these teachings do apply today and they dare not be ignored. So, the present study is very critical.

#### "You Have Heard"

To determine whether the contrastive teachings of Matthew 5 apply today, the phrase "you have heard" must be dealt with. In Matthew 5:21 Jesus begins the contrastive teachings by saying, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill." Jesus does not begin His contrastive teachings as one might expect. It might be expected to hear Him say, "It is written," or "You have read." For example, "Jesus answered them, Is it not WRITTEN in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (Jn. 10:34). Again, "Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never

READ, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise?" (Mt. 21:16). Obviously in both of the above passages Jesus is quoting the written Law of Moses. Should it be supposed, then, that when Jesus said, "You have HEARD that it was SAID. . ." that He was referring to the oral traditions of the Pharisees? Was He simply referring to some perversion of Moses' Law? The answer is, No! If there are references to the Pharisees' perversions, they are only secondary; they are merely by-products, or side effects. The primary focus of these contrastive teachings is a contrast between the Old Testament Law as it was actually written, and the New Testament Law. There are several reasons for this conclusion.

First, the people assembled before Jesus were common uneducated people. Most of them were probably illiterate. In Matthew 7:28-29, Matthew records, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." These people listening to Jesus on the mountain were the common people not the scribes, doctors and lawyers. Mark records a similar instance, "And the common people heard him gladly" (Mk. 12:37). When Jesus spoke to the educated scribes, doctors and lawyers He would say, "It is written," or "Have ye not read," but when speaking to common, uneducated people He would say, "You have heard that it was said." John 12:34 underscores this point, "The people answered him, We have HEARD out the the LAW that Christ abideth for ever." The multitudes heard from the Law, but they had not read it themselves. Most were probably illiterate. Few of them would have owned copies of the Scriptures, unless they were wealthy, and then they probably would not have been illiterate. These people depended on the scribes and Pharisees to hear the Scriptures read and explained to them (cf. Mt. 23:1-3). Therefore, Jesus was indeed quoting from the written Law, but He accurately says, "You have heard."

Second, when Jesus says, "You have heard," one can turn to the written Law and read exactly what they had been hearing! However, when Jesus says, "I say unto you," one cannot read in the written Law the new teaching He gives. For example, Jesus said, "You have heard thou shalt not murder" (Mt. 5:21). This may be found verbatim in Exodus 20:13. In contrast, Jesus says "But I say anger is equivalent to murder" (Mt. 5:22). This statement may not be found in the written Law of Moses.

At this point someone may argue, "The Old Testament teaches in Psalms 37:8 that anger is sinful." In reply, it must be admitted that anger was condemned in the written Law of Moses, but the Old Testament never taught anger was **equivalent** to murder. This is new truth! Moses' Law against murder forbade only the actual act of murder. When Jews were angry, they were sinning to be sure, but they were not guilty of murder! Had anger been equivalent to murder one would expect to see people stoned to death for being angry, because that was the penalty for murder. Let no one say, "Anger was equivalent to murder in the Old Testament, but they did not have an objective method of determining when a man was actually guilty of this crime." No, if anger had been equivalent to murder God would have provided a method of detecting this secret sin (cf. Num. 5:11-31) and death would have been the penalty for this infraction.

The above reasoning may be used and demonstrated true on the remaining contrasts of Matthew 5. In verse 27 Jesus says, "You have heard, Thou shalt not commit adultery." This may be read in Exodus 20:14. Jesus now gives new truth when He says, "But I say lust is equivalent to adultery" (verse 28). Although the Old Testament did condemn lust, it never taught lust was equivalent to adultery. If the Old Testament had taught lust was equivalent to adultery, one

would expect to see people stoned to death for lusting because that was the penalty for adultery. Clearly, then, Jesus was teaching new truth—New Testament doctrine.

In verse 31 Jesus teaches, "You have heard whoever puts away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement." This is taught in Deuteronomy 24:1. In contrast Jesus says, "But I say only for fornication" (verse 32). The Old Testament did not teach divorce for fornication; it taught stoning for fornication (Deut. 22). Jesus' teaching concerning divorce for fornication was new and belongs to the New Testament Law.

In verse 33 Jesus teaches, "You have heard, Thou shalt not swear." In contrast He says, "But I say unto you swear not at all . . . let your yes be yes, and your no, no" (verses 34-37). The Old Testament never taught that a simple yes, or no was just as binding as an oath. This is New Testament teaching.

In verse 38 Jesus teaches, "You have heard an eye for an eye." This is taught in Exodus 21:24. In contrast He says, "But I say to you, Resist not evil" (verse 39). Jesus is here refusing to let His disciples use the principle of resistance which Moses' Law allowed. "Resist not evil" is clearly a New Testament teaching.

In verse 43 Jesus teaches, "You have heard love your neighbor and hate thine enemy." Once again one may turn over to the written Law and read exactly what these people had been hearing. The Old Testament clearly taught the Israelites to love their neighbors in Leviticus 19:18, and, although it was not taught explicitly, the Old Testament did teach implicitly to hate the enemy in passages such as Exodus 21:24 and Deuteronomy 23:6. In contrast Jesus says, "But I say to you, Love your enemies" (verse 44). the Old Testament did not teach Israelites to love their enemies like this.

These teachings of Jesus were new and they astonished the people (Mt. 7:28-29).

Third, to say the focal point of Jesus' preaching was to correct perversions of the Law would be to completely ignore the mission of John the baptizer. John's mission was to reform the people in accord with Moses' Law in preparation for the Messiah. John was a prophet and the mission of all prophets was to bring men back to Moses' Law. If Jesus was merely bringing men back to Moses' Law, and that was the sum total of His work, then it must be concluded:

1. that John failed in his mission to bring men back to the Mosaic Law, and
2. Jesus' mission on earth was no different than that of a prophet.

However, Jesus praised Peter who confessed that Jesus was the Son of God rather than a mere prophet (Mt. 16:13-17; Lk. 9:18-20).

### **"But I Say"**

It will be helpful here to focus a little further on the contrastive teachings. In Matthew 5:22 Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." The Old Testament prophets would preface their remarks with the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord." But Jesus does not do this—because He is the Lord! Moses and the prophets were merely human messengers delivering God's word. Jesus **was** God and He spoke on His own authority! He shows no shame or embarrassment when saying, "I say to you."

Notice two important facts. First, Jesus does not say, "Folks, I know what you have been hearing, but this is what Moses really meant . . ." Had Jesus simply been explaining the Law one would have expected something like the above statement.

Second, Jesus does not say, "Folks, I know what you have been hearing, but here are some more Scriptures those Pharisees have not told you about . . ." He says nothing of the sort. When Jesus says, "But I say to you," He does not quote from the Old Testament. He asserts His own authority—which would have been needless had He simply been explaining the true meaning of Moses' Law. People must do what Jesus said, not because the Old Testament taught it, but because Jesus Himself taught it—because "He said so!"

This authoritative teaching astonished the people. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mt. 7:28-29). It would not have been astonishing if Jesus had said, "Moses really meant . . ." or "Here is what other Scriptures say . . ." Jesus was delivering new truth which had never been revealed in the Old Testament! He was setting a new standard of living. The people were astonished at His doctrine (not Moses' doctrine), and His authority. In fact, Jesus said the things He taught that day on the mountain were His own teachings (Mt. 7:24). Why did Jesus not say, "Whoso heareth these sayings of MOSES, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock?" Why did He not say that? Because He was not teaching Moses' Law; He was teaching His own New Testament Law! Clearly, Jesus was teaching "Kingdom Law" and not explaining Old Testament Law.

### A Complete Contrast?

In saying Jesus was contrasting Old Testament Law with His own New Testament Law, one hesitates to use the word "contrast." It sometimes leaves the impression that Jesus repudiated all things which Moses taught; that He wanted absolutely nothing to do with anything Moses ever taught. However such is not the case. Basically four things take place in regards to Moses' Law in Matthew 5:

1. Sometimes Jesus will accept the Old Testament teaching just as it is and "bring it over" into the New Testament. For example, Moses said, "Love your neighbor." Jesus, in essence, says, "Yes, I accept that just the way it is. In My kingdom men must still love their neighbors."
2. Sometimes Jesus will first "add to" the Law before making it part of His own New Testament Law. Three examples of this are found in Matthew 5. Moses said, "Do not murder." Jesus basically says, "Yes, I accept that; men cannot murder under My New Testament Law. But I am going to add something: Do not even be angry." Moses said, "Do not commit adultery." Jesus is saying, "Yes, I accept that. Men cannot commit adultery under My New Testament Law, but I am going to add something: Do not even lust in your heart." Moses taught, "Do not forswear." Jesus is saying, "Yes, I accept that; men cannot commit perjury under My New Testament Law, but I am going to add something: From now on, a simple yes, or no in your daily conversation is just as binding as an oath." After He makes all these additions to Moses' Law, He then "brings them over" into the kingdom.

3. Sometimes Jesus will first "subtract from" the Old Testament Law before He accepts it as one of His own. For example, Moses taught if a man wanted to divorce his wife he should simply "give her a writing of divorcement." Jesus is saying, "I am restricting that. From now on, a man may divorce only on the grounds of fornication." After making this subtraction He then places it in His kingdom.
4. Sometimes Jesus completely rejects an Old Testament principle, because it completely contradicts His own New Testament Law. For example, Moses said, "An eye for an eye." Jesus is saying, "Not any more! From now on it is resist not evil." Moses said implicitly, "Hate your enemy." Jesus is saying, "Not any more. From now on it is love your enemies."

#### **Text #4 — Continued**

In returning to the original text, what did Jesus mean when He said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:20)? Close examination of the context will reveal that this verse is the theme of the remainder of the "sermon on the mount."

The scribes and Pharisees were considered by the common people as models of righteousness. When Jesus here told the multitude that their righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees, it must have shocked them. Some probably thought, "These Pharisees are fanatics about religion. They fast twice a week, give tithes of all they earn, pray long and often, cleanse themselves and compass land and sea to make a single convert. How can we possibly exceed what they are doing? We cannot possibly do better than them!" But Jesus says, "Oh yes you can" and He proceeds to explain how they can do better than the Pharisees.

To understand what Jesus meant we must first understand what kind of righteousness the Pharisees had. Remember that in Matthew 5:19 Jesus said that to be great one must (1) do and (2) teach the commandments of God. The Pharisees taught the commandments, but they did not do them. Jesus said on another occasion, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Mt. 23:2-3). Jesus is teaching in Matthew 5:20 that His disciples are going to have to do better than that. They must not only teach, but do the will of God.

Further, the Pharisees justified themselves. "[Jesus] said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15). "[Jesus] spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Lk. 18:9). These people were arrogant and proud of themselves. They were self-satisfied and felt no need for a Saviour, for grace, or mercy. This in turn made them unmerciful and unforgiving toward others, for if a man feels no need for mercy himself, he will feel no need to show it to others.

Now, Jesus says in Matthew 5:20 that we must have an exceeding righteousness. He then begins to describe that righteousness which is necessary for one (1) to enter and (2) to remain in the kingdom. He is not describing the righteousness necessary to be a faithful Jew under Moses' Law! He begins to describe the righteousness necessary to be a faithful disciple in the kingdom!

## The Righteousness That Exceeds

Exactly what does this "exceeding righteousness" consist of? Jesus begins to give the foundational qualities of this righteousness in verse 3 of Matthew 5. The righteousness that exceeds:

1. is poor in spirit—it is the opposite of the proud and arrogant. It sees itself as helpless and hopeless without Jesus.
2. mourns—it grieves over the sins in one's own life and the lives of others. This godly sorrow will motivate one to become active in seeking forgiveness.
3. is meek—it voluntarily submits to the will of God without grumbling and complaining.
4. hungers and thirsts for justification—it desires justification so badly that a man becomes willing to do anything necessary to receive forgiveness.
5. is merciful—when a man desires mercy and compassion from God it will naturally cause him to be merciful and sympathetic toward others.
6. is pure in heart—this describes one whose sins are washed away and whose motives are pure, clean and sincere.
7. is a peacemaker—it strives to reconcile men with God and men with men.
8. is persecuted—righteousness is persecuted because it is a living rebuke to sin and ungodliness.

After describing the foundational principles of the righteousness that exceeds, Jesus explains it can be seen in one's life. It will (1) act like salt in preserving and preventing corruption. It stops the process of spiritual and moral decay. It will (2) shine like light to lead men out of the darkness of sin and evil.

As Jesus continues to preach this "sermon on the mount," He gives specific illustrations of the righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees—the righteousness necessary to enter and remain in the kingdom.

1. It is not angry.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Mt. 5:21-22).

Jesus' disciples must learn to suppress anger which is the seed of murder. No murder was ever committed without anger being involved.

2. It guards the sacredness of marriage.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Mt. 5:27-28).

The righteousness that exceeds will guard the heart against adulterous thoughts. It avoids all things that create lustful thinking. Much of today's television programming is thereby eliminated. How much worse will television have to become before brethren decide it is unfit to have in their homes? Jesus went on to say, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Mt. 5:32). The growing rate of divorce in the church shows a lack of the righteousness that exceeds.

3. It takes sin seriously.

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Mt. 5:29-30).

Sin is no laughing matter. If one went to the doctor and was told that his hand had to be amputated, he would not leave laughing. The loss of a hand is serious business, but far less serious than sin. When men laugh, or make light of sin they are lacking in the righteousness that exceeds.

4. It is dependable.

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all ... but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Mt. 5:33-37).

A Christian's word is his bond. He does not give his word thoughtlessly or lightly. He will see that his promises are kept. His "yea" does not mean "maybe," or "perhaps."

5. It does not retaliate.

Ye have heard that it hath been said An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also (Mt. 5:38-39).

This righteousness that exceeds leaves retribution in the hands of God. It even goes so far as to help an enemy when he is distressed. It loves even the unworthy.

## Conclusion

The entire "sermon on the mount" becomes an exposition of the righteousness that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees—the righteousness necessary to enter and remain in the kingdom of heaven. The Old Testament never taught things like Jesus taught on the mountain that day! These were new truths which men of God through the ages had longed to see. The remainder of the book of Matthew sets Jesus the Christ forth as an example of this "righteousness that exceeds" and by studying these divine pages men are moved to imitate the King of the Kingdom!

**Abstract** Evolutionary philosophy, which is so pervasive in our society, poses a real threat to the welfare of God's people. It is an anti-theistic, anti-biblical philosophy that, if left unchecked, will erode the foundations of faith. An examination of evolutionary philosophy, with particular attention paid to the men who developed and embraced it, demonstrates the clear anti-theistic bias of the philosophy. Along with the pernicious attack on biblical faith, the evil of evolution is clearly demonstrated in the impact of Social Darwinism on our culture and society.

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## Introduction

On the twelfth of February 1809, Abraham Lincoln, the future distinguished president of the United States, was born in rural Kentucky. On the very same day, across the Atlantic in Shrewsbury, England, Charles Darwin, the future evolutionist was born. This coincidence has inspired certain evolutionary apologists to say that, whereas Lincoln freed men from physical slavery, Darwin freed men from the slavery of religious superstition. Spoken in this way, the superstition from which Darwin is said to have freed men is nothing more than belief in the Bible, and in particular, the fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

This view of Darwin's place in our culture points up the need to address the issues of creation and evolution by Christian apologists. Some might question the worth or the need of doing this. The proverbial posture of an ostrich may provide a temporary respite from the discomforts of conflict, but it is surely a temporary solution. In speaking of the danger of not recognizing clear and present threats to Christianity, G. K. Chesterson said:

If a man proves to clearly and convincingly to himself that a tiger is an optical illusion, he will find out that he is wrong. The tiger himself will intervene in the discussion, in a manner which will be in every sense conclusive.<sup>1</sup>

I believe that the evolutionary philosophy is a tiger in the streets of modern society. The idea that evolution is not to be feared, and not to be taught against, is as illogical and unsafe as maintaining that false teachers and liberalism are not to be feared or contended against. We may have utter confidence in our faith, but we cannot ignore the evolutionary philosophy and its influence over others, including our children. Who can tell the number of hearts that have been turned into stony soil, or wayside soil, because they have believed the claims of modern materialists supported by the evolutionary theory? Who can tell the number of young people who have slipped their moorings because of the pernicious influence of evolutionary doctrine in all aspects of society.

We must not forget that Satan, our adversary, has the uncanny ability to dress up error with plausible sounding arguments and make it appear acceptable. The evolutionary theory is the product of a number of highly-educated men, and as it now exists, is the result of over a century of intense scientific endeavor. To the uniformed student reading a textbook heavily laden with evolutionary dogma, evolution seems an impregnable structure. He does not have at hand the knowledge or experience to criticize it or discover its fallacies.

There are a number of reasons why we must give careful attention to the question of origin. Everyone must answer three questions for himself:

1. Where did I come from?
2. Why am I here?
3. Where am I going?

The answers to the last two, right or wrong, depend on the answer to the first one. Each person needs to have a sense of identity and purpose. This is impossible without a sense of our origins.

We must also face the fact that truth, divine truth, is at stake in the contest between creationism and evolution. As explanations of the origin of things, they are mutually exclusive. Was man supernaturally created by a higher power or is he the product of chance and accident over a long period of time, as taught by mechanistic evolution. These are the only two options available to us. One may try to merge the two, but creation and evolution cannot successfully be merged. Sometimes men fall into the trap of viewing evolution as scientifically proven fact and creation as a religious myth. Sometimes a Christian will try to hold both views simultaneously. George Orwell, in his novel *1984*, calls this "double-think." He defines this as the ability to hold two contrary statements as "fact" at the same time, without feeling a contradiction. The writer James says, "*A double minded man is unstable in all his ways*" (James 1:8).

Evolution, when understood as it is preached by its advocates, is a materialistic philosophy that writes God out of the picture. If evolution is true, there is no need for a personal God. This is the conclusion that most evolutionists have drawn, and have urged on their disciples. Professor W. R. Thompson, writing in the introduction of a recent edition of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, says:

The doctrine of evolution by natural selection as Darwin formulated it, and as his followers still explain it, has a strong anti-religious flavor. For the majority of its readers, *Origin* effectively dissipated the evidence of providential control.<sup>2</sup>

As the Darwin centennial in 1959, held in Chicago, the evolutionist Julian Huxley spoke of the implications of Darwinism for religion:

Darwinism removed the whole idea of "God" as the creator of organisms from the sphere of rational discussion. Darwin pointed out that no supernatural designer was needed, since natural selection could account for every known form of life.<sup>3</sup>

Evolution rules out the activity of God as Creator. In doing so, it strikes at the very heart of the Bible. If evolution be true, the entire Scripture record is undermined as a trustworthy revelation

of an omnipotent, supernatural Creator. Some fifty-four passages from the first eleven chapters of Genesis are quoted and re-quoted a total of eighty-seven times in eighteen different New Testament books. In every instance, they are quoted as the authoritative word of God.

Jesus acknowledged the genuineness of the Genesis account in his dialogue with the Pharisees on divorce in Matthew 19. Jesus said, "*He which made them in the beginning made them male and female*" (Matthew 19:4). What you believe about the whole Bible, as the authoritative communication of God, is conditioned by your belief or disbelief of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, and the first three chapters in particular. It must also be noted that there are sixty-eight explicit references to the creation of the world and life, by God, scattered throughout the books of the Old and New Testaments. The inspired writer penned the words, "*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*" (Hebrews 11:3).

Add to these the numerous incidental allusions to God's creative agency, and you soon discover that evolution amounts to a comprehensive denial of the Scriptures. Jesus asked the question, "*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*" (John 3:12). If the Bible's history of life's origins is false, as some claim, how can the remainder of biblical revelation be embraced as spiritual truth?

We must equip ourselves with the basic knowledge to answer those who are confused or deluded by the conflict between creation and evolution. The answers are there. People need to realize that there are rational and scriptural answers to the assertions of evolutionary dogma. Parents, teachers, preachers, and elders need to be concerned about preparing to defend the truth against the errors of evolution.

## A History of Evolutionary Thought

In 1959, Charles Darwin published *Origin of the Species by Natural Selection*. The widespread acceptance of the theory of evolution dates from that time. Contrary to popular opinion, Darwin did not originate the theory of evolution. In fact, the theory was old when he was born. Also, he did not truly originate any of the major concepts associated with the theory. The road leading to Charles Darwin and the modern day acceptance of the theory of evolution is a long and winding one. It dates back to Ionian Greece, several centuries before the time of Christ.

In the beginning there was Empedocles (490-430 B.C.). According to Bolton Davidheiser:

Empedocles taught that parts of bodies were formed independently—heads without necks, arms without shoulders, eyes without their sockets—and were brought together in random arrangements by a force which he called love. Many of the arrangements of anatomical parts were so abnormal that they perished quickly. Others were less abnormal and were able to live for some time. There were individuals who had their heads on backwards. There were cattle with faces of men, and men with the heads of cattle. As the combinations which were less well suited perished, those that were best suited for survival persisted and are represented among the living animals and human beings.<sup>4</sup>

Does that sound crazy to you? Did you know that Empedocles is acclaimed by some eminent evolutionists as the "father of evolution?" The reason is simple. Empedocles held that pure chance was the directing factor in all natural phenomena, thus writing God out of the picture.

Also, his philosophy included a crude form of natural selection. It is my fervent hope that one day the Darwinian version will be considered as ridiculous as Empedocles!

Another Greek scientist and philosopher who advanced evolutionary concepts was Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). Unlike Empedocles, Aristotle believed there was a purposive force behind the world and nature—a Creator or Designer. Aristotle believed that there was a gradual transition from imperfect to perfect, an ascension from the simple to the complex, with man being the ultimate product. Since Aristotle believed that there was someone behind it all, he might be considered the “father of theistic evolution.”

Many other Greek philosophers had something to say about the concept of evolution in the centuries before Christ. Eventually, however, the pragmatic Romans conquered the philosophical Greeks, only to be conquered later by the might of Christianity. The Romans had little use for the speculations about the remote past of mankind, and Christians accepted the Mosaic account of the world's origin. The apostasy of Christianity brought on the world a period known as the Dark Ages. During this period, the pendulum swung from the extreme of pagan philosophy to the extreme of ecclesiastical superstition and ignorance. The study of the natural world was virtually non-existent. Of this period, Richard Ritland says:

In the middle ages it became common to attribute many phenomena of nature to the direct intervention of God. Processes or phenomena which were not understood were often attributed to the supernatural power and direct intervention of God. Demons and demon possessed people were thought to wield great influence. For not a few persons, nature was a playground for a changeable, capricious God on the one hand, and a malevolent Devil on the other.<sup>6</sup>

By the fifteenth century, a number of factors had combined to bring about a change in the Western world. The men of Europe were beginning to travel and trade with other peoples and were exposed to challenges that the Western world had not faced in a millenium. About the same time, a religious transformation now known as the Protestant Reformation began to challenge the iron-fisted authority of the apostate church. This had an enlightening effect on the whole West. These events helped to usher in the Renaissance. The scientific study of the natural world experienced a renaissance of its own. Many new things were discovered about our world. Some of these discoveries ran counter to the long-entrenched superstitions of the time, many of which were actually defended by the apostate church from a false application of certain passages of Scripture. A famous example of such a clash would be Galileo and the Inquisition. Galileo taught, based on his own astronomical observations, that the earth revolved around the sun. The official position of the apostate church was that the earth was the center of the universe; therefore everything revolved around the earth. In a famous trial, Galileo was accused of heresy and was forced to recant.

Having mistakenly identified many natural phenomena as supernatural, many people began to question, when natural explanations were offered, if anything was supernatural at all. The eighteenth century saw the rise of Naturalism and Rationalism. Naturalism is a philosophy that seeks to explain all phenomena and values through strictly natural (as opposed to supernatural) means. Rationalism, following hard on the heels of Naturalism, took the whole matter one step further. Rationalism is defined as “any philosophical theory that assigns first place to reason in the attainment of knowledge...the term is most often applied to eighteenth century philosophers who attacked religion by rejecting all claims based on faith or revelation.”<sup>6</sup>

Though not a majority, a large segment of the intellectual and academic communities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries subscribed to these concepts. Atheism or agnosticism were the eventual result wherever rationalism found a home. By the time of Charles Darwin, a sizeable part of the "intellectual elite," a group that had (and still has) a profound influence in government, society, and education, rejected the idea of a personal God who was Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of the world. The time was ripe for a widespread acceptance of the views of Darwin and other materialistic evolutionists.

Before Darwin came on the scene, there were others of anti-theistic and anti-biblical bent who proposed evolution as an explanation for the world and its life. In fact, when Darwin presented this theory to the world, he really did not say anything that had not already been suggested.

In France, where Rationalism found many converts, scientists like George de Buffon, Pierre de Maupertuis, and Jean Baptiste Lamarck espoused evolutionary views of the world.

Maupertuis was a mathematician, astronomer, biologist, and atheist. In enunciating the principal of "the survival of the fittest," he anticipated Darwin's "natural selection" by more than a century. Of this man, Davidheiser says

It is interesting to note that according to Glass [Bently Glass, editor, *Forerunners of Darwin*, 1745-1859 (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), p. 57], the reason Maupertuis proposed evolution through natural selection was that he had considered and desired to refute the argument for the existence of God from apparent order and design seen in nature.<sup>7</sup>

George de Buffon, a biologist, expressed his evolutionary ideas in his *Natural History of Animals*. He mentions several observations that Darwin made in *Origin*. He spoke of "survival of the fittest" as a mechanism for evolutionary development. He took the view, as Darwin did, that the world has been around for a much longer time than the Bible reveals.

The most famous of this trio of Frenchmen is Lamarck. His *Philosophy of Zoology*, published in 1809 (the year Darwin was born), presented the first complete theory of evolution. His views did not enjoy widespread acceptance however. He had already ruined his reputation among his peers, because he was prone to making wild speculations. He was not taken seriously. The main point of Lamarck's theory was that environmental influences could affect the physiology of living things. The changes thus wrought in the organism could be passed on to successive generations.

The most commonly remembered of his illustrations is that of how giraffes got longer and longer necks because they had to reach for higher and higher foliage to eat, as it became depleted near the ground. It should be remembered that Lamarck's and Darwin's theories as to how giraffes got their long necks differ only in whether the length came about through stretching or through a preferential selection of those which happened to be born with longer necks than the average. Neither explains how the animals which were not giraffes survived with their short necks, nor how the females survived with their foot shorter necks, nor how the young giraffes with their much shorter necks managed to survive to adulthood.<sup>8</sup>

Lamarck's view of Scripture and Christianity is captured in the comments of a French writer named Sainte-Bouve:

In the book *Forerunners of Darwin*, Charles C. Gillespie quotes a French writer named Sainte-Bouve, who, he says, has best caught the spirit of Lamarck's philosophy. Sainte-Bouve says that Lamarck's "philosophical hostility [amounted] to hatred for the tradition of the Deluge and the Biblical creation story, indeed for anything which recalled the Christian theory of nature " <sup>9</sup>

England too had its evolutionary proponents. Two deserve notice here. The first of these was Erasmus Darwin, the paternal grandfather of Charles Darwin. The evolutionary views of Erasmus Darwin were called "Darwinism" before Charles ever saw the light of day. Erasmus published the ideas for which his grandson later received credit.

As to the means of transformation, however [that is, the mechanism of evolution], Erasmus Darwin originated almost every important idea that has since appeared in the evolutionary theory. <sup>10</sup>

Erasmus Darwin was a physician and surgeon of some fame. At one time he was invited to become the personal physician of the king of England. He turned down the offer to pursue his scientific investigations and to write about evolution. He was agnostic and certainly did not believe the Bible. After a brief time of wide popularity, public opinion turned against him. It is believed that the growing movement of Methodism, headed by John Wesley, is what turned the tide against Erasmus.

Another important English figure in the history of evolution is Herbert Spencer. He was a theologian and philosopher with a wide popularity in England in the nineteenth century. He had a hand in popularizing the theory of evolution presented by Darwin. As a contemporary of Charles Darwin, he contributed a great deal to the thinking of Darwin as well. Spencer is given nineteen column inches of space in the 1892 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in the article "Evolution." Charles Darwin got eight inches. This reflected the general perception of that time that Spencer did more to advance the theory than did Darwin. Spencer's autobiography of 1268 pages contains only part of one page devoted to the subject of religion. He states there that the "creed of Christendom" was alien to his nature, and he tells of his rejection of the need and the way of salvation presented in the Bible. He states, "To many...religious worship yields a species of pleasure. To me it never did so." Yet this man was a theologian!

Before we move on to Charles Darwin, allow an observation that I believe will hold true for most people who accept the theory of evolution. The observation is this: people who embrace this philosophy often do so out of a desire to rationalize their previous rejection of God and His will. In other words, these men did not undertake a thorough investigation of the natural world and then come to the unavoidable conclusion that it was the result of chance and accident. They did not then conclude that since the world and all its teeming life came about through this "evolution," there really must not be a God in heaven. No, that is not what happened at all. What happened is that for some reason, the decided they didn't want to believe in God or accept His word any more. Then they set about concocting a rationale to justify their decision.

Josh McDowell, in *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, pretty well sums up the problem. He says, "I have found that most students reject Christ for one or more reasons: 1. Ignorance—Romans 1:18-23 (often self-imposed), 2. Pride—John 5:40-44, 3. Moral problem—John 3:19-20." <sup>11</sup> I concur with that. I know some young people who used to be in the church and now are not. I

have heard their rationale from their own lips. They say that they just can't believe in God and the Bible any more. Evolution, as taught in school, has convinced them, they say. Oft times though, in blaming their change of mind on evolution, they are just offering an intellectual excuse. Do they know anything about evolution, beyond the gloss they get in school? Likely they don't. Have they ever investigated the myriad of difficulties with which scientists even now struggle? No. Have they ever diligently and sincerely considered the claims of the Bible? Why, they hardly cracked their Bibles when they were in church, and certainly not now! What is the real problem here? I believe the real problem is identified in three passages of scripture from the epistles.

*Romans 1:28 - "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient"*

In the context, Paul is talking about how the Gentile world plumbed the depths of depravity (1:18-32). They were "without excuse" (1:20) for God was manifest to them in his creation. They got in the state they were in because they **rejected the knowledge of God**, not because he was unknowable or because the evidence pointed in a contrary direction!

*2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 - "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*

In this passage, Paul is prophesying of the apostasy of the church (2:1-12). How was this sad state of affairs to come about? They were deceived by unrighteousness (v. 10a). From verses 11 and 12, it is apparent that all those who "have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" will be sent a **strong** delusion so that they will believe the lie.

*2 Timothy 4:3-4 - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*

The third passage parallels 2 Thessalonians 2 in that it speaks of a time (then in the future) when people would reject the truth. Notice the downward course of events.

1. A distaste for "sound doctrine" (v. 3a)
2. A selectivity toward preachers, choosing only those that will tell them what they want to hear (v. 3b)
3. A turning of their backs to the truth (v. 4a)
4. Fiction and falsehood reign in truth's place (v. 4b)

In the Romans passage, a past rejection of God is discussed along with its consequences. In the latter passages, a future rejection (now past) of God's truth is presented. All three teach that when men reject God and His will, they will believe in something, even if it is nonsense. Furthermore, they will believe it so strongly that they will believe it as the truth!

I believe the same principle applies in the acceptance of the theory of evolution as an explanation of man's origin. Evolution is not accepted by most people because it is so manifestly true. It is accepted because it allows people to sigh a big sigh of relief—a big sigh of relief because they think they don't have to face an omnipotent Judge at the end of their lives. Therefore, they do not have to amend their lives and obey the gospel here and now. I believe this is exactly the case

with the many I know who claim to believe the theory of evolution. I am convinced it was the case with Mr. Charles Darwin as well.

Charles Darwin was born into a wealthy family, the son of Robert Darwin, who was the son of Erasmus Darwin. Robert Darwin had no interest in religion, but he did consider it a necessity to keep the poorer class of society in line. Robert subscribed to his father's views on the origin of life. Charles' mother died when he was eight years old, and he had only a scant recollection of her.

Sent to study medicine at Edinburgh with his brother Erasmus, Charles failed. As a young man, Charles seems to have realized that he would be independently wealthy for life, as he was heir to fortunes on both sides of his family. (His maternal grandfather was Josiah Wedgewood, of the Wedgewood China fame). This instilled in Charles a love of leisure and sporting that angered his father. Robert Darwin considered his son Charles a shiftless spendthrift. Relations were never good between father and son. Apparently, Charles was keenly aware of his father's low opinion of him. I believe this was a psychological motivation to Charles Darwin in the time to come. He was trying to prove something to his father, in a sense.

In those days when a wealthy father had a worthless son, a solution was sought to the problem by sending the son to seminary. It was often hoped that some exposure to religion and training for the clergy would save the family from future embarrassment. So it was the Robert sent Charles to Christ's College, Cambridge to train for the ministry. A poorer choice for a young man who reveled in the pleasures of youth could not have been made. In those days, the school had a reputation for gambling, drunkenness, moral laxity, and lack of discipline. The highest aspirations of the students were to be recognized as authorities on food, drink, and women. One member of the faculty spent most of his time at the horse races, and another high official of the school was said to have never opened his mouth without uttering an oath. Such was the environment in which Charles found himself for several years.

While at Cambridge, Charles took an interest in botany and geology. After graduating in 1831, Charles signed on board the H.M.S. Beagle as ship's naturalist. The Beagle was a survey and mapping ship. During the five year voyage, Darwin sailed both coasts of South America, visited Australia and New Zealand, and sailed back to England. While visiting the Galapagos Islands off the western coast of South America, Darwin found what he believed was evidence for the transmutation (evolution) of species in the variety of finches that were indigenous to the islands. Returning home at the age of twenty-seven, Darwin had trunks filled with notebooks and journals from his travels. These products of his travels and research were the foundation for what was to come.

When Darwin set out on the Beagle, a college professor recommended that he take along a newly published book by the geologist Charles Lyell. That book was *Principles of Geology*, which was destined to have a profound effect on Darwin, and provided a basis for his theories.

Charles Lyell, the so-called "father of modern geology," popularized the theory of **uniformitarianism**. This is the theory that all the agencies that produced change in the earth's past are the same as those observable today; such as local floods, earthquakes, landslides, erosion, and so forth. The antithesis of this theory is **catastrophism**. Catastrophism promotes the view that at various times in the past, monumental catastrophic changes occurred in the earth's geology and ecology. These changes were relatively rapid. Regarding the scriptures, the flood of Noah's time is an example of catastrophism. There is abundant evidence that other great

cataclysmic events have produced enormous changes in the earth over a relatively short duration of time. Uniformitarianism denies that such rapid changes are possible. The uniformitarian geologist scoffs at the idea of a world-wide flood as recorded in Genesis 6-9. The motto of the uniformitarianism is found in the words of the apostle Peter, "All things continue as they were from the beginning" (2 Peter 3:4). In the context of chapter three, Peter says the day would come when men, like Lyell, would scoff at the record of God's judgement as portrayed in the Flood.

Although Lyell began as a theist, his views were ultimately changed to embrace materialistic evolution. Lyell had a powerful influence on Darwin. One biographer of Darwin's life asserts that no man had a greater influence on Darwin's views while they were being formed. Darwin's acknowledged his indebtedness to Lyell in several works. The influence Lyell had on Darwin was reciprocated. Darwin eventually convinced Lyell to embrace evolution and atheism. Through nine editions of *Principles of Geology*, Lyell had defended a type of theistic evolution. (His beliefs were not biblically founded. Lyell is on record as ridiculing those who accept Moses' record as factual history). In the tenth edition, Lyell proclaimed his conversion to Darwin's doctrine.

For several years after his return to England, Darwin lived the life of the country gentleman and worked on his theory. He was finally pressed into publishing it when it came to his attention that another man by the name of Alfred Wallace was about to publish a theory of evolution, and that it was essentially the same as Darwin's. *The Origin of the Species by Natural Selection* appeared in 1859. It created no little stir on its arrival. Darwin was not a powerful exponent and defender of his views, but there were others only too willing to champion the cause of materialistic evolution. Thomas Huxley, who became known as "Darwin's bull dog," enthusiastically supported natural selection and attacked Darwin's critics in an equally enthusiastic fashion. Earnest Haeckle, a German, did a great deal to introduce Darwinism into the minds and schools of his country. In America, Asa Gray, John Dewey, and many others championed Darwin's doctrines. By and large, the French scientists ignored Darwin and, with typical Gallic pride, proclaimed their allegiance to the theory of the Frenchman Lamarck.

After the publication of his theory, Darwin continued to push it and did not hesitate to mention his admiration for those who attacked the Bible and the Church. In 1873, at the age of sixty-four, he wrote:

Lyell is convinced that he has shaken faith in the deluge far more effectively by never having said a word against the Bible than if he had acted otherwise. I have lately read Morley's *Life of Voltaire* and he insists strongly that direct attacks on Christianity (even when written with the wonderful force and vigor of Voltaire) produce little permanent effect: real good seems only to follow the slow and silent attacks.<sup>12</sup>

The only degree Darwin ever earned was in theology. While at Christ's College he had tinkered with the idea of becoming a country clergyman. As he later wrote in his autobiography, this desire "died a natural death when on leaving Cambridge I joined the *Beagle* as a naturalist." He referred to the day he sailed on the *Beagle* as his "second birthday." Since it was on this voyage that he thought of his evolutionary ideas, it may be observed that this was a tragic substitute for the second birth of a Christian. Concerning his loss of faith while still young, Darwin wrote in his autobiography:

I had gradually come by this time to see the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world...was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindus, or the beliefs of the barbarian...I gradually came to disbelieve Christianity as a divine revelation.<sup>13</sup>

Darwin was fifty years old when he published *Origin*. At the age of sixty-two, he published *The Descent of Man*, in which he discussed the evolution of man and expressed the belief that man was descended from the old world monkeys. He did not say anything about human evolution in *Origin* because he felt it would be too controversial at the time and would hamper the book's reception by the public.

At his death, Darwin was buried with honors at Westminster Abbey. Herbert Spencer, who had done much to popularize Darwin's views, was denied internment there when he died, because he was considered anti-Christian. Darwin was also anti-Christian, although he was not so vocal and radical about it as was Spencer.

Since Darwin's time, a large segment of the scientific and academic world has embraced evolutionary concepts, in whole or in part. At the time Darwin wrote *Origin*, he theorized that natural selection (survival of the fittest) was the means whereby new species of animal and plant life were produced. However, he did not know how variation in nature would occur so as to produce more fit and less fit individuals to survive or be eliminated. In 1901, Hugo DeVries, a Dutch biologist, rediscovered the work of Gregor Mendel. Mendel was an Austrian monk who is now considered the "father of genetics" because of his observations of variations in plant life that led to the discovery of genes and chromosomes. DeVries hypothesized that variation occurred in nature due to mutations in the genes and chromosomes. Many of these mutations would be bad, but some, he guessed, would be good. These beneficial mutations would equip that particular organism to compete and survive better in the natural world. A combination of Darwin's natural selection theory and DeVries' beneficial mutation theory is the basis of contemporary evolutionary theory, also called Neo-Darwinism.

In this century, other evolutionists have proposed numerous modifications to the Darwinian theory, due to its several problems that have not yet been resolved, even after a century of research. Two of these theories deserve mention here, namely the

- Saltation theory
- Punctuated Equilibria theory

The Saltation theory was propounded by Richard Goldschmidt and Otto Schindewolf. This theory was constructed to try to account for the complete absence of transitional forms in the fossil record. You have now doubt heard claims that evolution has been proven beyond all doubt and that the fossil record contains abundant proof to that effect. Don't believe it. The exact opposite is true. To explain away the absence of "missing links" in the fossil record, Goldschmidt and Schindewolf suggested that evolution took place through massive jumps (saltations) that were the result of "megamutations." In other words, their theory envisions a reptile laying an egg that hatches a bird. This variation on the theory of evolution is discredited by most other evolutionists. Most felt that it was Goldschmidt and Schindewolf who laid the egg.

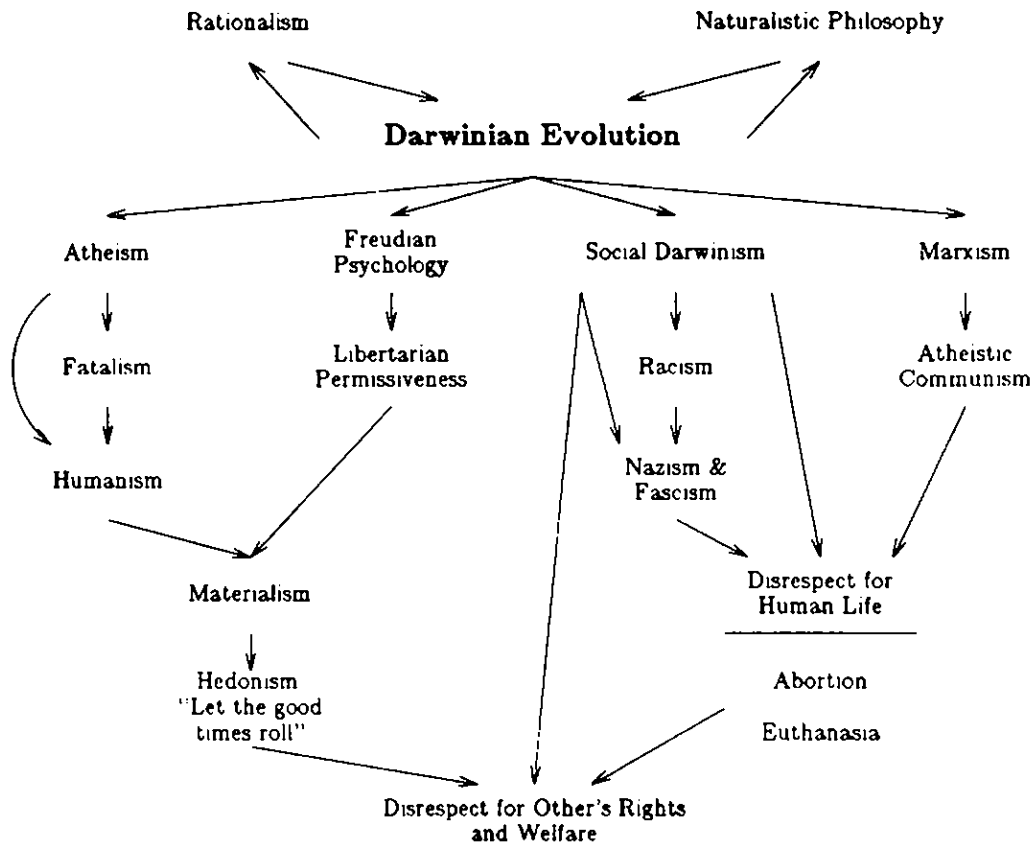
The Punctuated Equilibria theory is another attempt to explain away the absence of transitional forms between species. This theory proposes that evolution occurred only in small populations that were cut off from some main population of a like species. In time, natural selection and beneficial mutations had their way with this sequestered population. The proponents of this

theory believe that these mechanisms of evolution work more rapidly on small populations than large ones. Therefore, the small sequestered population would change its physiological and genetic characteristics more rapidly, too rapidly, in fact, to leave any clear record in the fossil record.

These alternative evolutionary theories are mentioned to put the lie to the claim that evolution is a settled fact. It is not. The entire spectrum of science that concerns itself with evolution—cosmic, organic, or anthropological—is in a constant state of flux. Today's hot theories are tomorrow's bad guesses and scientific dead ends. If evolution is a fact, then which of the alternative theories composing evolutionary philosophy and science are the facts?

## The Fruits of Evolutionary Doctrine

Jesus said, "...a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:17). The following chart is a diagrammatic depiction of some of the rotten fruit that has dropped off of the tree of evolution.



Let us notice a few of the rotten fruits from this tree. We begin with that bane of the twentieth century, Social Darwinism. This is nothing less than the application of the "survival of the fittest" concept to human affairs and social relationships. Unscrupulous characters have borrowed this already bad idea and made it worse by appealing to it to condone their unethical practices. Many of the excesses of capitalism have been condoned by appealing to this idea. Andrew Carnegie, the wealthy industrialist of the past century, wrote in his biography concerning his conversion to evolution by reading Darwin and Spencer:

I remember the light that came in as a flood and all was clear. Not only had I got rid of theology and the supernatural, but I had found the truth of evolution. "All is well, for all grows better" became my motto and my true source of comfort. <sup>14</sup>

Social Darwinism has justified racism and even genocide. It has been used by militarists to glorify war. "In war the chaff is winnowed from the wheat." This was the statement of a Prussian (German) militarist of the nineteenth century. It seems that the German leaders adopted the concept of Social Darwinism to a greater degree than anyone else in Europe. Many of the German leaders of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were imbued with the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche held Christianity in contempt.

Likewise he ridiculed democracy and socialism for protecting the weak and worthless and hindering the strong. Social Darwinism and the anti-democratic cult of naked power, as preached by advocates like Nietzsche, were laying the foundations of fascism, which would one day plunge the world into one of the most terrible convulsions in history. <sup>15</sup>

Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler based their fascism on evolutionary thought. Mussolini was strengthened in his belief that violence was basic to the transformation of society by the philosophy of Nietzsche. "In public utterances he repeatedly used Darwinian catchwords while he mocked at perpetual peace, lest it should hinder the evolutionary process." <sup>16</sup> Hitler's concept of the superior race, so evident in *Mein Kampf* and in his speeches, was solidly founded in the Darwinian concept of "survival of the fittest."

Marxism, which is the root of modern communist totalitarianism, owes much of its success in the last century and a half to the influence of evolutionary ideas. Frederick Engels and Karl Marx, the founders of Marxism and Communism, corresponded with each other about Darwin's *Origin* when it was published. Marx wrote to Engels on December 9, 1860, "Although it is developed in the crude English style, this is the book which contains the basis in natural history for our views." He wrote again on January 18, 1861, "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural selection for the class struggle of history." <sup>17</sup>

Marx wrote to Darwin and asked permission to dedicate his book, *Das Kapital*, to Darwin. Darwin declined, because he said it would offend some of his family. (Darwin's wife was a very religious woman). A writer by the name of E. Yaroslavsky, a personal friend of Joseph Stalin's, wrote a biography of Stalin that was published while Stalin was still in power. He wrote, "At a very early age...he began to read Darwin and become an atheist." Yaroslavsky relates Stalin's boyhood comments about Darwin to another friend, "I'll lend you a book to read: it will show you that the world and all living things are quite different from what you imagine, and all this talk about God is sheer nonsense." The book referred to here was Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. <sup>18</sup> In 1959, the Darwin Centennial was celebrated throughout the world. The U.S.S.R. issued a stamp and a coin to commemorate the event. Darwin is considered an intellectual "hero of the revolution" in Russia.

Much of the fault for the evils of our society can be laid at the feet of Darwin and the proponents of his doctrine. Irreligion has made great inroads into government, education, the home, and even religion. Over fifteen million innocent unborn children have paid the price for this false

doctrine through abortion, in America alone. Euthanasia is coming over the horizon to be another great plague on our society. Since many people now believe that they are nothing more than animals that walk on their hind legs, they act like animals. The concepts of responsibility to God and one's fellow man, of duty, of morality, and of ethical behavior are all thrown out with yesterday's garbage by many people. Since this life is all there is, according to evolutionary philosophy, "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die" has become the slogan for many.

No, Darwinism is not the fountainhead of all evil in our world. Satan is (John 8:44). Darwinism is just another of the deceptions he has woven throughout the history of man. His aim is to destroy confidence in God. It has been his goal from the beginning. Note the words of the apostle Paul.

*2 Timothy 3:1-4 - "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves [humanism], covetous [materialism], boasters, proud, blasphemers [atheism, etc.], disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection [abortion], trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent [sexual immorality], fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God [hedonism]"*  
[Brackets indicate my comments in relation to the text and the significance of selected sins mentioned, SB]

## Conclusion

Space does not permit me to offer a full treatment of the tenets of evolutionary philosophy. There are many avenues of inquiry to be pursued. There are many excellent works, produced by scholars more capable than myself, that expose the fallacies of evolution in more detail, and present the case for creation. In the list of "Works Consulted" at the end of this article, is a list of some books preceded by an asterisk (\*). These are recommended for the student, parent, teacher, preacher, elder, or concerned Christian of any age who wants to have the truth on this important issue. The truth can be found. It takes study and hard work, especially in God's word. One must have the attitude portrayed by the writer of Proverbs.

*Yea, if thou criest after knowledge,  
And liftest up thy voice for understanding;  
If thou seekest her as silver,  
And searchest for her as hid treasures;  
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,  
And find the knowledge of God*  
*Proverbs 2:3-5*

*Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that  
causeth to err from the words of knowledge.*  
*Proverbs 19:27*

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**Abstract** The first century church was one characterized by rapid growth. During that short period, the apostle Paul could declare that the gospel had been preached to the whole world. Again during the middle of the twentieth century, the Church of Christ experienced rapid growth as was the fastest growing religious group in the United States. Today, however, the growth of the church pales by comparison. Why? This presentation looks at what made the church grow during its peak years. Then it looks at the church today and examines the reasons for slower growth. Finally, suggestions are made to help make the church once again a vibrant and growing body. Much of the material is taken from the book *Why Churches Grow* by Flavil Yeakley.

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### Introduction

In 1977, Flavil Yeakley, a member of the church of Christ and a social scientist, published a book entitled *Why Churches Grow*. His book was the result of extensive investigation into the growth patterns of the churches of Christ using the tools of social science. The focus of Yeakley's research, and consequently his book, was aimed at answering two important questions:

- Why do some congregations grow while others die?
- Why are some people receptive to evangelism while others are not?

In the early 1970's, Bro. Yeakley sensed that the church was no longer expanding as it once had, so he tried to determine through scientific research whether or not his suspicions were accurate. If so, he wanted to discover what could be done to reverse the downward spiral. Much of what he discovered is helpful in measuring the status of our own congregations. We shall look at the results of Dr. Yeakley's research in a general way and make some relevant applications to our own situation. We will pay special attention to the following questions.

- What has gone awry among our congregations?
- What can be done to correct the situation?

Dr. Yeakley begins his book with this alarming assessment:

Between 1946 and 1965 the church of Christ was the fastest growing religious group in the United States; however it can no longer make that claim. In the past decade [1965-1975 AWB] the church's conversion rate has decreased, the drop-out rate has increased, and thus the net growth rate has declined. In just ten years, the church has slipped from first place to twelfth place on the growth rate list. Eleven denominations are now growing faster than the church of Christ.

In a typical congregation there are around 160 members and only eight baptisms per year. Six children of church members and two other people are baptized each year in that typical congregation. Half of these eventually drop out of the church. That typical congregation, therefore, is baptizing only four permanent converts per year. When the average annual death rate is subtracted, that leaves a net growth of less than one percent.

If the trend of the past decade continues into the future, the present net annual growth rate...will continue to decrease until around 1980 when growth will totally stop. The church will then begin to shrink. By around 1990, it will be back to the present size or below. Around the turn of the century, it will be down to only half of its present size. During the next generation's lifetime, the church of Christ in the United States will disappear entirely if the trend continues. Something must be done to reverse this trend.

Since the days of its pristine glory, the church's patterns of growth have waxed and waned many times. But always and forever the key to the growth of the church has been the local congregation. Every work God gave to the church was assigned by Him to the local congregation. The universal church has no function and no earthly organization or structure beyond that of the local congregation.

The apostle Paul clearly evidenced this fact in the places he chose to labor. He favored the establishment of congregations in critical population centers so that these churches, when they grew to maturity, would spawn many second generation congregations in an expanding missionary program. The sound spiritual development of the local congregation without controversy is the key to the real and lasting growth of the universal church.

## **Growth in the Early Church**

Although numbers do not tell the whole story, rapid growth was one of the characteristics of the early church. Jesus sent the apostles "into all the world" to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). On the day of Pentecost at the establishment of the church and the opening of the kingdom of God, 3,000 people were immersed into Christ (Acts 2:41). Verse 47 says that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." By the time of Acts 4:4, the number of men which had believed had reached 5,000. Acts 5:14 states, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." In Acts 6:1, the number of disciples continued to multiply. Verse 7 says, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." In Acts 9:31, it is not the number of disciples that had multiplied, but the number of churches. By 50 A.D. it was said that the disciples had "turned the world upside down." Around the same time, Paul could write, "Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18). In about 61 A.D. Paul informed those of Colossae that the gospel had been preached "to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23). Congregational growth in the early church was phenomenal.

## **Growth in the Restoration Movement**

In the late 1700's, several independent movements found issuance and gradually gained momentum, beginning inexorably to flow together. By 1832, these movements had merged into one great effort.

Between 1830 and 1850, the growth of the Restoration movement was tremendous.... By 1850 the movement had become the fourth largest religious fellowship in the United States. In the decade preceding the Civil War, the restored church of the New Testament was the fastest growing religious body in the nation.... It is the largest, indigenous religious movement in American history.

However, division during and after the Civil War almost destroyed the restored church.

By the early 1900's the church of Christ was much smaller than the other heirs of the Restoration movement.... For several decades, the church was almost unknown outside the South. The brethren suffered in those years from a negative attitude, a lack of vision, and a lack of growth.

Yet after World War II, the church once again came into acceptance and "by 1965 the church of Christ had become the largest of the heirs of the Restoration movement and the tenth largest religious group in the nation."

## A Perspective on the Present Situation

By 1976, the church of Christ was no longer the fastest growing religious group in the United States.... Research indicates that congregations are now having an average of only one baptism per year for every twenty members. Christians' children make up 75% of those being baptized and about half of them drop out of the church after they grow up and leave home. The church is baptizing only one [outside AWB] convert per year for every eighty members of the church and about half of these converts drop out of the church within five years of their baptisms.

The growth rate of slightly less than one percent, which Yeakley reported in 1977, actually slipped steadily until the church, in 1983, shrank slightly more than one percent. However, cautious optimism is encouraged because in 1984, the decline slowed and in 1985, the church grew very slightly. Although the 1986 growth rate is only a preliminary estimate at this stage, it appears that the church began to grow again last year. Yeakley reported these statistics at the 1987 Harding University Lectures in October. Still, while this is good news, we must recognize that in the same period of time, the world population has steadily grown large and on a comparative scale with world population growth, our number is continuing to decline proportionately. Therefore, we need to investigate the process of church growth most judiciously.

## A Profile of the Convert

"Evangelism is the process of influencing others in such a way that the Christ who lives in Christians and in their message is formed in the lives of people." Bro. Yeakley goes on to say that

Christ becomes a part of people through the same process by which people become themselves. Selfhood in general is created and sustained through interaction with others. Communication with others is the most important factor influencing the development of mind, personality, or selfhood. People become themselves as they identify with others and with various reference groups. Family members and close personal friends constitute the primary reference group. A local congregation with which a person identifies is a secondary reference group that is very important to this study.

### **Patterns of Religious Influence**

This process of achieving selfhood by interaction with others, or by establishing a primary reference group of family and friends, is very significant in terms of likelihood of a person's being converted. Yeakley discovered, and others confirm, that if a person's relatives and close personal friends all belong to the same religious body, they have what is styled a homogeneous pattern of religious influence. It is very easy for this person to belong to and remain in that same religious body. It is difficult to convert him; and the more homogeneous his primary reference group is, the less likely you are to convert him.

However, if a person's close relatives and close personal friends belong to different denominations, he has what is called a heterogeneous or mixed pattern of religious influence. His primary reference group does not help him define himself religiously, and he is much more likely to be found among those are converted.

One other point revealed in Yeakley's study of patterns of religious influence was that when there is a homogeneous pattern in a circle of friends, it is better to study with the whole group and to focus the study on the acknowledged leader of the group. He is more likely to be converted than a low status member of the group. If you can convert him, it is likely you will get the entire group.

### **Changes in Life Patterns**

Secondly, in profiling the convert, Yeakley learned that a person who has recently experienced a high degree of change in his life situation is much more likely to be receptive to evangelistic persuasion. Changes such as the death of a spouse, divorce, death of a close family member, marriage, retirement, change in financial status or work responsibilities, or change in residence are examples of what Yeakley has in mind. Typically, the greatest degree of change occurs between the ages of 18 and 30. The years 30-45 tend to be rather stable. The period between ages 45 and 50 is one of upheaval when children grow up and leave home. Finally, from 60 to 65 when a person retires is also a period of stressful change.

### **Patterns of Dissatisfaction**

Another very significant determinant as to who will be a likely subject for evangelism is dissatisfaction. Testing revealed that those persons with high dissatisfaction levels for appropriate reasons were much more likely to convert. Yeakley suggests that we use more selective methods of canvassing in order to target those already dissatisfied for the right reasons (pp. 18-21).

### **Religious Backgrounds**

Concerning the subject's religious background, Yeakley theorized that if you can find people who are already at least partially identified with the church in theological stance, you should have an

easier time converting them. He said, "In general a subject is most likely to be attracted to a new reference group that is similar to his original reference group on all points except those points in the original group which he found offensive."

Yeakley established this by consideration of the interpretation and authority of the Bible. He placed the church in a centrist position in opposition to right-wing literalistic fundamentalists and left-wing liberals who believe everything should be interpreted figuratively if a literal interpretation seems unreasonable on the basis of human reasoning. In his interviews, Yeakley discovered that 60% of the faithful converts had either the same original position as that of the church of Christ on this continuum or a position only slightly more conservative or slightly more liberal (pp. 21-28).

### **The Age Factor**

One of the individual characteristic variables that did not turn out to be significant in distinguishing among converts, drop-outs, and non-converts was the age factor. All classes were equally distributed through all age levels. One very interesting sidelight to this was that a person's age at the time he is baptized does seem to be an important factor—especially in reference to the children of members of the church.

## **A Profile of the Growing Congregation**

In an effort to understand the mechanisms of congregational growth, Yeakley studied 48 congregations of the churches of Christ. Sixteen were selected from those with a high net growth rate, sixteen from those with a medium net growth rate, and sixteen from those with a low net growth rate. His discoveries are most interesting.

### **A Membership Similar to the Community**

"Subjects were much more likely to be found in the convert category if they were similar in age, socio-economic status, and educational level to the congregation with which they were associated" (p. 35). In each of these categories, the greater the similarity between the congregation and the community, the higher was the conversion rate, the lower the drop-out rate, and thus, the higher the net growth rate. However, in an important clarification Yeakley states, "These findings do not indicate that people of any particular age group, socio-economic status level or educational level are the best subjects for evangelism. What they do indicate is that the congregation which will be most efficient in evangelizing the community in which it is located—all other things being equal—is the congregation which is similar to or just slightly above the community on these variables" (p. 37).

### **A Heterogeneous Membership**

Dr. Yeakley's research suggests that the more heterogeneous a congregation is in age, socio-economic and educational levels, the higher will be their conversion rate, the lower their drop-out rate, and the higher the net growth rate. He reasons that a heterogeneous group can both appeal to larger segments of the population and provide a wider range of brethren for new converts to identify with.

While there is much to commend this view, I believe we should also be aware of the controversy among church growth experts over this concept, as well as understand Yeakley's personal bias. Yeakley argues that smaller, homogeneous, unit congregations aiming at a homogeneous community would require an organizational structure beyond that of the local congregation and therefore would be unscriptural. He makes a couple of very weak biblical arguments to support his view. I believe Yeakley completely abandons the realm of scientific proof in this argument. He is arguing for huge local congregations of several thousand members. Interestingly, another writer in church growth literature, Win Arn, suggest that a group of 50-75 people is the largest group one person can effectively have fellowship with. Dr. Donald McGraven argues for the planting of numerous congregations in an area based on the homogeneous unit principle, which basically states that people do not like to cross cultural, racial, socio-economic, or educational levels to go to church. Unscriptural organization is not required by such a concept. Each congregation may govern itself and may preach to whomever it can persuade to listen. In fact, people will naturally gravitate to congregations more homogeneous to themselves.

### **An Involved Membership**

The involvement of individual members of the church of Christ was measured and compared with a measurement of how central their church membership was in their self-image. That research revealed a very high correlation between these two measurements. Church membership is a central part of the self-image of those who are highly involved in the work of the church. Such church membership is only a minor part of the self-image of those not actively involved in the work of the church. Therefore, Yeakley concludes that a congregation which offers people many opportunities for involvement would be more successful in attracting and keeping converts than would a congregation which offers few opportunities for involvement (p. 40).

Yeakley also concluded that often the real problem was not always actual roles-to-member ratios, but was sometimes the perceived roles-to-member ratio. In other words, a larger congregation might have more than enough specific task assignments to go around, but the members might not be aware of the many ways in which they could be involved.

### **The Role of the Preacher**

The role of the preacher in growing congregations was of critical importance, particularly with reference to his view of evangelism and the style of his preaching.

A person's identification with the local congregation is crucial to his conversation and often the preacher more than anyone else projects the image of a congregation. "Furthermore, pulpit

preaching provides the subject with exposure to a Christian personality in a more powerful way than almost any other means of evangelism. Dynamic, Christ-centered pulpit preaching allows the subject to see the Christ who lives in the heart of the preacher" (p. 49). Fourteen of the sixteen churches in the high net growth rate group reported having preachers whose style of preaching was positive.

Concerning the preacher's view of evangelism, three models were presented to all 48 pulpit ministers in the survey. They represented the information transmission view, the manipulative monologue, and the non-manipulative dialogue. Every congregation in the high net growth group had ministers who accepted the non-manipulative dialogue model of evangelism (p. 47).

## Evangelistic Methods and Results

### Change in Friendship Patterns

Dr. Yeakley's research discovered the absolute essentiality that new members must break their old friendship patterns and establish new ones in the church. When they did this, they were likely to remain faithful. When they did not, they were likely to drop out of the church (p. 54).

### Similarity of Age, Socio-Economic Status, and Educational Level (Between Personal Worker and Subject)

The best results are achieved when the personal worker and the subject are about the same age and have about the same socio-economic status and educational level. When there is a difference, it is slightly better for the personal worker to be older and above, rather than below, the subject on the other variables.

"Evangelism is most likely to be effective when the personal worker and the subject are as alike as possible on every dimension except that the personal worker knows more about the Bible. The optimal situation is not one in which the subject sees the personal worker as being vastly superior in Bible knowledge. In that situation, the subject is likely to feel intimidated. What is best is for the personal worker to be seen as knowing just a little more about the Bible than the subject does" (p. 56,57).

### The Personal Worker's View of Evangelism

"Subjects associated with personal workers who accepted a non-manipulative dialogue view of evangelism were most likely to convert. 70% of converts were in this category. When the personal worker accepted the information transmission view of evangelism, the subjects were least likely to convert. 87% of the non-converts were in this category. When the personal worker accepted the manipulative monologue view of evangelism, the subjects were most likely to convert and then drop out of the church some time after their conversion. 75% of dropouts were in this category" (p. 58).

71% of the converts in this study perceived the personal worker as a friend. 85% of dropouts saw him in the role of a salesman. 87% of non-converts saw the personal worker as a teacher. These

facts correspond remarkably well with the evangelist's view of his work. 99% of the subjects who saw the personal worker as a teacher reported he did not ask them to express their view and they were reluctant to convert. 99% of those who saw the personal worker as a salesman said that he appeared to ask questions only in order to manipulate them and these folks were likely consequently to convert and then drop out. 100% of those who viewed the personal worker as a friend reported that he readily asked them to share their views and seemed to do so because of general interest. Consequently these people were likely to convert and abide faithful.

Those personal workers who were viewed as teachers overwhelmingly used the informational transmission mode of evangelism. Those who were viewed as salesmen almost universally selected the manipulative monologue model as the most like their own. Those who accepted the non-manipulative dialogue as their model for evangelism were almost always perceived as a friend by the subject.

### **Influences in Evangelism**

Yeakley also concluded:

that the more types of evangelistic influence (such as sermons in the regular worship assemblies, gospel meetings, cottage meetings, informal Bible studies primarily involving conversion, religious radio and television programs, direct mail advertising, Bible correspondence courses, books, tracts, and other printed matter, and social activities with members of the congregation) used by a congregation and the more a congregation used group related and personal contact media the greater the probability that the congregation would be in the high net rate group. Furthermore, the greater the total number of types of influence to which a subject is exposed and the more he was exposed to group-related and personal contact media the greater the probability he would convert (p. 64)

In general according to Dr. Yeakley it seems that the fewer gadgets, props, visual aids and the like that come between the Christian and the person he is trying to influence, the better the results. He went on to say that the results seemed to be better when the only tool was an open Bible (p. 66).

What is important is the quality of the relationship and not the structure of the teaching method or the kind of tools that are used. The element of paramount importance in establishing the right kind of climate seems to be the attitude of the personal worker. A conversational approach is required in every case. The personal worker must be genuinely interested in the subject. He must arrive ready and willing to listen as well as to speak. He must come searching for a better understanding of the truth as well as to teach the truth (pp. 67-68).

Success in evangelism is often defined in terms of statistics which report the number of baptisms. That is a good way of defining success from the perspective of the people we are trying to influence. Success for the evangelist, however, should not be defined that way. Success for the evangelist should be defined in terms of sharing. The purpose of evangelism is to share the faith with others so that they can make an authentic and informed choice. If others understand what is being shared with them and make an authentic choice to reject it, Christians have achieved their true purpose. Christians can and should contact as many people as possible and authentically share their faith with them in a non-manipulative dialogue (p. 81).

However, on the other hand, it is not wise for Christians to spend all of their time and effort in evangelism working with people who are not receptive. The wise thing to do would be to start first with those people most likely to be receptive. Many evangelistic efforts in the past have been deliberately designed to be as non-selective as possible. No one should be excluded from our evangelistic efforts, but it is both scriptural and practical to go first to those who are most likely to be receptive (p. 182).

## What Is Wrong?

In analyzing the results of his study Dr. Yeakley suggests three very broad problems which are restricting church growth and I would like to add a fourth to that list from my own observations among our churches.

### Changing Conditions in the World

The world's need for the gospel has not changed. It is still "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). And people are still receptive to the gospel message if they are influenced in the right way. However, methods that were once effective in reaching people are not as effective today.

"Alienation" is a word which well describes conditions in today's world. People are not as close to one another as they used to be. Our basic unit of society, the family, is gradually being destroyed. Divorce rates are double what they were in 1965 and divorce in the church is rapidly becoming commonplace. Yeakley states that the declining growth rate in the church since 1965 is almost a perfect mirror image of the increasing divorce rate among members of the body.

People's friendship patterns also have been altered drastically. People do not have as many friends; the ones they have are not as close; nor are they lasting. We move more often and change careers more frequently. Generally, we do not have the roots we once did.

Moral standards have plummeted alarmingly. The crime rate is up significantly, especially among young people. Alcohol and substance abuse have risen steadily and rapidly. The incidence of venereal disease is up. Abortions are at record levels, yet illegitimate births are increasing as well. Some say that 15% of the brides are pregnant at the wedding.

Popular entertainment, which we have become wealthy enough to afford, reflects the moral standard and contributes significantly to that decline. Movies and television are dirtier than ever and are being watched more. Magazines and books perfectly acceptable today might have been judged pornographic in 1965. Lyrics of popular songs suggest a way of life that is clearly immoral by Christian standards.

Due to all of these negative pressures, church growth has been slowed to a crawl and in some places stopped altogether. It is more difficult to find those willing to hear, and what is more alarming than that is that Christian moral codes seem to be declining. Many have developed a markedly increased tolerance to sin.

### **Emphasis on Opinion**

Yeakley suggest the second problem is that many among us are intent on being conservative in matters of opinion and liberal in matters of faith. When, in fact, the opposite condition should prevail. We must be conservative in all matters of faith. We should insist that the Word of God be obeyed completely. Yet there are matters about which the Word of God takes no stance. In these areas, God wants the church to have liberty.

Right-wing radicals ignore the need for liberty in matters of opinion. They reject any new methods. They make their customs into law, which they then bind on all others. They insist on conformity in matters of tradition where the widest degree of tolerance should be allowed. Thus, they treat the word of man as though it has as much authority as the Word of God.

### **Lack of Respect for God's Word**

The third problem is that left-wing extremists ignore the need for strict obedience to the Word of God, and thus, unity on all matters of faith. They do things for which there is no Bible authority and sometimes even that which is contrary to the Word of God. Thus, they treat the Word of God as though it had no more authority than the word of man. The fundamental problem with these extremes is a lack of respect for the unique authority of God's word.

### **Weak and Ineffective Pastor System**

The fourth problem, which is significant among our own churches, is that a very weak and ineffective pastor system seems to be evident. It is weak and ineffective in that we generally do not allow the preacher to do all the preaching. If we did, it would still be an unscriptural system, but it would be more effective than the one we use. We do not have congregations filled with Christian ministers. Whatever evangelistic work is done must be started and continued by the preacher alone.

We need members of the body who recognize the commitment they have made to Christ and become more involved in the work of the church. We need men who labor diligently to become effective teachers of God's word. We need men and women to study the Word of God privately with their friends. We need people who are actively seeking scriptural ways in which they can become effective ministers for Christ.

The greatest reason men and women are not coming to Christ in a steady stream is because so few are out there telling them that they must. The Lord Jesus Christ is simply not first in the lives of many Christian—even those who are thoroughly orthodox in their attendance and worship. Many people of God are not truly concerned with the body of Christ and ways to nurture, encourage, uplift, help, love, and defend it. Many Christians are not actively concerned about their neighbor and how to interest him in the gospel.

If we would spend half as much time in positive efforts to recognize the Lordship of Jesus in our lives (the growth and well-being of the body, the influencing of friends and neighbors for Christ, and so on) as we do criticizing, carping, and bewailing all the flaws in our fellow Christians, there

is not telling what might occur in the growth of the church. It is not someone else's responsibility. It is my responsibility. What can I do? That is the question of paramount importance, and what has gone wrong is that it is not being asked often enough.

## **What Can Be Done to Correct the Problems?**

### **Preach the Word**

The strength of the church is in its Christ-centered message, not its men or its methods. In trying to understand and achieve church growth, this fact must not be forgotten. Periods of growth and progress in the church have always been periods of dynamic, Bible-based, Christ-centered gospel preaching (Isa. 55:11; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21).

The early church had power because of what it preached and because the Christ they preached could be seen in their lives. The early Christians did not preach psychology or sociology (Acts 5:42). They did not preach politics or economics (Acts 8:35). They did not preach philosophy (1 Cor. 1:22-24; 2:1,2). It was the plain, clear preaching of the simple gospel message that produced unparalleled growth in the early church, and that is exactly what we need today.

Total evangelism is the only way to produce lasting church growth. Evangelism, as has been said, is the process of influencing others in such a way that the Christ who dwells in us and in our message will be formed in the hearts and lives of those we seek to influence. Three things are needed to accomplish this goal.

1. We must find methods that effectively identify those who are likely to be receptive to the gospel; then set about to influence them in such a way as to produce lasting conversions.
2. We must have the kind of scriptural organization that involves the members of the body in the work of the local congregation.
3. We must have the kind of counseling and teaching that helps Christians grow spiritually so they will be able to solve the problems they face and learn to live the more abundant life.

In all of this we must preach the word of Christ.

### **Reach the Lost**

To persuade people, we must begin with people where they are—not where in our estimation they ought to be. We must begin by answering the questions they are already asking. We must begin with needs they recognize as being relevant to their lives. Preaching, teaching, personal evangelism, and mass media evangelism must all be relevant. This does not mean that we consider only the questions people are already asking—only that we begin there and preach to them Jesus, just as Philip taught the Ethiopian nobleman.

### **Use the Mass Media Effectively**

According to Dr. Yeakley, when we use the mass media to present doctrinal sermons, we have the channel of communication but have to create our own audience out of a small segment of the population. He believes this use of the mass media can have some positive results but only if we do a lot of advertising and promoting to create that audience. Yeakley actually takes the view that the most effective use of mass media forms is advertising. A considerable body of research indicates the mass media are most influential in the awareness and interest stages of the persuasion process. During the evaluation and trial stages, little influence is felt from the mass media, and almost no influence is felt during the adoption stage. While this may all sound very complex, what is being said is that mass media can be used most effectively to create awareness and arouse interest. After this is accomplished, the next step is to follow up through personal contact and group-related methods. Yeakley is saying that mass media evangelism needs to be used primarily as a screening process to identify those who have been interested and are more likely to be receptive to the gospel message.

### **Avoid Manipulation**

Manipulation is not ethical persuasion. Persuasive appeals aimed at young children or at people who are mentally incompetent are inherently manipulative since the people in the target audience are not capable of giving informed consent. Foot-in-the-door techniques that trick people into hearing persuasive messages to which they would not otherwise listen are manipulative. Withholding vital information needed for an informed decision is manipulative. Using strong emotional appeals to overwhelm reason is manipulative, as are strong emotional appeals lacking factual evidence and logical reasoning.

At each stage of the persuasion process, the person being persuaded must be able to give informed consent or the persuasive effort is manipulative. We should not use strong emotional appeals in our efforts to persuade men until we are sure they fully understand what is involved. They must be able to count the cost of their obedience. We must not try to steal cheap grace. Instead we should stress the challenges and demands of discipleship. They must know that obeying the gospel means that they are turning over their lives to the Lord.

### **Change Friendship Patterns**

Evangelism must involve a change in friendship patterns. It is not enough to change what people believe and practice concerning doctrine. We must bring them into the fellowship of the family of God. Do not underestimate either the importance of this or the difficulty with which it is accomplished. Teaching people on a one-to-one basis is important, but it just is not enough. While people are being influenced in this manner, they should also be exposed to the church as an assembled and functioning body.

Above all, we cannot end our contact with subjects once they are baptized, nor can we allow ourselves to be their only personal contacts. We must do everything we can to help them make friends with other members of the congregation. Most importantly, we must be sure they are not merely identifying with us and others as new friends, but rather try to see that they are really

identifying with the Christ who dwells in each of us. In this way Christ will be formed in the new believer.

Concerning friendship, it is also well to point out that effective evangelism requires that we maintain some contact with non-Christians. However, every Christian's primary reference group should consist largely of other Christians. We must find ways to maintain contact with unbelievers while still achieving the goal of separation from a world becoming more and more corrupt.

### **Involve the Members**

It is critically important that congregations become involved in the work of the church if it is to grow significantly. If a congregation does not use its members it will lose them. Yeakley suggests several strategies to increase congregational involvement.

First, congregations need a balanced program. Many congregations do not have enough roles for their members to fill. Often the shortage of roles is made far more serious by unequal distribution of those roles. A few willing workers are given many roles to fill and the many have little to do. Some churches are built around one particular kind of ministry. A body must have diversity to survive. Successful congregation development requires a balanced program involving many areas of activity and as many of the believers as will participate.

Second, congregations need a balanced membership. The highest involvement level and the best net growth rate is achieved by congregations that are heterogeneous enough to match the community in which they are located.

Third, and most important, congregations need an open style of leadership. Congregations where elders lord it over the church tend to have low involvement levels. (Of course, for this strategy to be of much help, we must first develop men to be elders. This is a critical need among our congregations.) Nevertheless, the Bible clearly establishes that elders serve in a divinely-ordained, decision-making capacity. It is this function that is in view when referring to them as elders or presbyters. However, when elders maintain tight control and spend all of their time in the function of decision making, two things generally occur. First, the elders tend to become autocratic lords over God's heritage; and second, the church does not grow, due to low involvement levels. Yeakley advises that elders do need to make decisions, but that much of the day-to-day work can and should be delegated to other faithful men and women. The elders should oversee the work to be sure policy decisions are implemented and done so correctly. But the primary service of elders, and probably the most neglected, is the function that only the elders can serve—pastoring or shepherding the flock. The pastors must counsel, teach, and listen to the members. Elders need to create channels of communication so that all the members can have some meaningful input in the decision-making process. The members must be heard and their views considered. At the input stage of the decision-making process, congregations need all the diversity that is possible. Once a decision has been made, more communication is needed to persuade the members to accept and support it. An eldership should not just order the members to obey. They must persuade by their teaching and example. They can only do this if they are actively involved in shepherding the flock, helping brethren with their problems, listening to their complaints and suggestions, and teaching them the truth of God's word. If such an open style of

leadership is practiced, the congregation's involvement level will increase, and the congregation will in turn grow. To know the people and to know the Bible is the key to an effective eldership.

## Preach the Word

Finally, let us end where we began. When Christians are not growing spiritually as they should, one of the primary reasons is that preachers are not providing the spiritual diet that is needed for growth. In some congregations today, the preaching is biblical, but dull. In others, it is entertaining, but not very biblical. Consider the following scriptures.

*1 Tim. 4:13-16 - "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."*

*2 Tim. 4:1-5 - "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."*

To do the kind of preaching that congregations need, preachers must spend much time in study, meditation, and prayer. They must grow intellectually, personally, and spiritually to keep pace with the ever-increasing needs of the congregation. Dynamic, Christ-centered, Bible-based gospel preaching is the most important thing we need to reach the lost, involve the members and help Christians to grow spiritually. If we can persuade our brethren by our preaching and our own examples to place the Lordship of Christ first in their lives, the well-being of the body second, and reaching the lost with the gospel of salvation third, the church will grow.

## Spiritual Gifts: Reasoning, Rebuking, and Regulating; 1 Corinthians 14

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**Abstract**     The purpose and use of spiritual gifts have often been misunderstood by those in the religious world. Like the Christians worshiping in the city of Corinth in the first century, religious organizations today have misunderstood their function and have, in their zeal, gone out of control. The apostle Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth about their misuse of the spiritual gifts God had given them. This study examines the fourteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. It presents an overview of the purpose God had for the gifts and why Paul thought it necessary to correct their behavior through reasoning, rebuking, and regulation. Finally, an exposition of the chapter is provided.

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Paul's guided pen had written some forty-four verses on spiritual gifts prior to *1 Cor. 14:1*. The origin, purpose, and duration of spiritual gifts had received attention to dispel the ignorance of the brethren about these gifts. Paul's divine pen had an important task remaining. It was the practical, but divine, matter of reasoning further and instructing the brethren how to use divine gifts according to divine purpose, while they remained.

The regulations given were united to certain facts Paul revealed in this segment of writing. They were facts regarding ignorance, the common good, love of the body, edification of the gathered, and order in the assembly. The Bible reads:

- 1 Cor. 12:1*        "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."
- 1 Cor. 12:7*        "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."
- 1 Cor. 14:1*        "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye prophesy."
- 1 Cor. 14:12*       "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."
- 1 Cor. 14:26*       "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."
- 1 Cor. 14:33*       "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."
- 1 Cor. 14:40*       "Let all things be done decently and in order "

These goals are fulfilled practically when the regulations governing tongue speaking, prophets speaking, and women not speaking are followed as given in verses 27-35. Furthermore, a proper understanding of verse 15 is Paul's way contextually of saying how tongue speaking had to be done so as not to misuse the gift.

Paul's primary concern in 1 Cor. 14 is edification of the congregated body. We should not permit this thought to stray too far from our minds, no matter how interesting a specific part of the reasoning, rebuking, or regulating becomes to us. Paul's selection to compare tongue speaking and prophets speaking was to emphasize that the guiding principle is edification of the gathered body, not self. The brethren from ignorance or desiring self-glory had forgotten the gifts were for the "profit withal." They had become self-centered, self-loving, self-trusting, and very self-assertive.

Paul deals with love, knowledge, and regulation to assure divine purpose is fulfilled. We must recognize love involves regulation, and order is inherent to its nature and purpose (Eph. 4:15-16). Modern teaching regarding the love of God and one another seems to have forgotten love involves regulation and is terribly exploited when God's voice is not permitted to guide and reveal boundaries.

A number of verses affirm that Paul's theme is edification of the church.

- 1 Cor. 14:3*            "...but he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification"
- 1 Cor. 14:5*            "...except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."
- 1 Cor. 14:12*          "...seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."
- 1 Cor. 14:17*          "...but the other is not edified."
- 1 Cor. 14:19*          "...yet in the church...that by my voice I might teach others also"
- 1 Cor. 14:26*          "...let all things be done unto edifying."

A host of phrases in the chapter, when examined contextually, are found to be speaking implicitly about edification. For example:

- 1 Cor. 14:2*            "...speaketh not unto men, but unto God..."
- 1 Cor. 14:6*            "...what shall I profit you..."
- 1 Cor. 14:9*            "...how shall it be known what is spoken?"
- 1 Cor. 14:13*          "...pray that he may interpret"
- 1 Cor. 14:14*          "...but my understanding is unfruitful..."
- 1 Cor. 14:15*          "...with the understanding also"
- 1 Cor. 14:16*          "...how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at the giving of thanks?"
- 1 Cor. 14:23*          "...will they not say that ye are mad?"
- 1 Cor. 14:24*          "...he is convinced of all, he is judged of all"
- 1 Cor. 14:27*          "...and let one interpret"
- 1 Cor. 14:28*          "...and let him speak to himself, and to God"
- 1 Cor. 14:31*          "...that all may learn, and all may be comforted"
- 1 Cor. 14:33*          "...for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace..."
- 1 Cor. 14:40*          "...let all things be done decently and in order"

Paul's comparison of tongues and prophecy through verse 25 is to underline the purpose of gifts and edification. He has no interest in writing which gift is inherently better, since that was the Corinthian's problem. He has no interest in encouraging speaking in tongues for private devotion, for such is completely contrary to its purpose of the gifts, namely for the profit of the whole body. The present-day practice of lifting verses from 1 Cor. 12-14 to teach spiritual gifts for private devotion is absolutely contrary to everything Paul intended in this writing.

Paul compares tongues and prophecy to reveal the Corinthian's misunderstanding and misuse resulted in an assembly that was not edified. This comparison is followed with the regulation of gifts in the church to assure edification while the gifts remained. Verses 26-33 regulate the gifts in the church for edification. Verses 34-35 regulate the conduct of women in the assembly. Verses 36-38 remind the readers such regulation is by apostolic authority. Verses 39-40 conclude the reasoning, so God's purposes are fulfilled.

Paul's concern in this writing is not mere speaking to God, because that is self-edifying. Self-edification is a by-product of a spiritual gifts, but was never the primary purpose of spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 12:7 declares the gifts were given for the common good. Eph. 4:8-16 reveals the gifts given unto men were to perfect the church for its ministering and edifying one another. When you speak to the church, you must speak not only to God, but also to man. This is equivalent to edifying the gathered body, and if you do not edify the body, do not speak in the assembly.

A rather rough, but suitable outline to follow the content and continuity of Paul's reasoning in 1 Cor. 14 is suggested by the following verses.

- 1-14      The reasoning for tongue speaking to be done with interpretation
- 15-17     The conclusion and results of having or not having an interpretation
- 18-20     Paul's personal attitude and use of tongues to admonish others
- 21-25     An Old Testament incident to illustrate that the Corinthian's view was improper  
The results proper and improper in the assembly when gifts were abused and not abused.
- 26-33     The regulation of gifts to assure edification of the assembled.
- 34-35     The correction of improper conduct by the women in the assembly
- 36-38     An affirmation of Paul's apostolic authority.
- 39-40     A general, but fitting, conclusion to assure gifts were for the common good and used  
with love to edify the body while the gifts remained.

Paul's primary conclusion regarding prophecy, tongues, and interpretation comes in 1 Cor. 14:15, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." Unfortunately, few verses have been more battered. Therefore, to answer what Paul meant by "pray with the spirit" and "pray with the understanding also," we must carefully examine the reasoning of verses 1-14.

## Verse 1

*Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy.*

Paul states to pursue love, while as a church being warm and zealous of spiritual gifts. You should in your desire for gifts covet prophecy. He repeats this idea in verse 39. Why did he single out this gift? Because the issue is edification of the gathered and understanding the total role of spiritual gifts in the church.

How shall we relate the facts of desiring spiritual gifts to love, transmission of gifts by apostolic hands, and the gifts shall pass? Paul's appeal is to the church as a whole. They should desire the best gifts to be manifested in their midst. It would be a mistake to think Paul's urging is for a Christian with a gift to spend his time desiring other gifts. Why? They did not come by mere desire nor would they continue in the future by mere desire. This passage must be understood in light of the whole church and not an urging for them to desire more and more individual gifts. A study of comparative passages is the only way to prevent hasty conclusions.

## Verse 2

*For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*

Paul singles out prophecy to be contrasted with tongue speaking. The tongue speaker speaks to God and not men, while the possessor of the gift of prophecy speaketh also unto men. What does this mean? It means the audience did not understand what the tongue speaker said and were not edified. It means an arrangement had to be followed, so the tongue speaker would be understood by the audience.

The speaking was not mysterious, but of mysteries. Mystery refers to the content spoken (1 Cor. 2:7-8). The tongue speaker and the prophet both spoke mysteries (as in divinely-revealed truth previously hidden), but the tongue speaker spoke in a language foreign to the assembled.

A tongue speaker speaking in a language not common to the assembly or without an interpreter spoke only to God. When he spoke in a language common to the assembly (Acts 2) or by an interpreter (1 Cor. 14), he spoke both to God and man. The prophet by speaking mysteries in a language or tongue understandable to the gathered was always able to build up, urge, and console the gathered. Hence, they were edified which was what gifts used in the assembly had to do.

The word "unknown" placed in the translation has been considered more of a stumblingblock to learning than a help. Let us try to take the fangs from the semantic difficulty by asking the reader to recall two things. The inserted term "unknown" is to be used only in one of the following two ways.

1. It is unknown to the speaker in the fact that he did not previously learn the language through formal teaching or by cultural association.

2. It is unknown to the hearer when they cannot understand the language spoken without an interpreter.

The term "unknown" does nothing for the mystical view of speaking being ecstatic utterances.

The word "tongue" in these passages is easily and properly understood by Acts 2:4,6,8. It is speaking in a tongue or language as the Spirit have utterance. They had not previously learned or spoken in that tongue or language. The fifty times the word "tongue" is used in the New Testament and refers twenty-five times to tongue speaking.

The efforts to make the tongues of 1 Corinthians different in kind or quality than the passages in Mark and Acts is contrary to the Bible and a definite source of error. A few brief reasons for this conclusion follow.

- The same term is used and Luke wrote Acts after 1 Corinthians was written.
- The word "tongue" and "language" are used interchangeably.
- Tongues and ecstatic utterances cannot be used interchangeably in 1 Corinthians.
- How can ecstatic tongues serve as a sign?
- How do you interpret ecstatic utterances?
- You can speak of kinds of tongues, but how do you speak of kinds of ecstatic utterances?
- Interestingly, Paul's Old Testament illustration is dealing with a foreign language.
- How do you speak words easy to be understood while speaking ecstatic utterances?
- If ecstatic utterances were in words, would they be classified as ecstatic utterances?
- Ecstatic utterances are not a language as there is no real signification of sound.

## Verses 4-5

*He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.  
I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.*

The reason for desiring to prophecy is clarified in that both speaker and the audience are edified. This is because everyone understands. The tongue speaker only edifies himself. Why? Because the others do not understand.

Let us prematurely put this in Paul's language, before we come in his writings to his conclusion. Why covet to prophecy? The prophet's understanding is fruitful. How? The audience understands him and is edified. The tongue speaker's understanding is unfruitful. Why? The audience does not understand him. What must be done so the tongue speaker's understanding is fruitful? There must be an interpretation. We must have release or unfold the meaning of the words spoken by the tongue speaker before the gathered. Do not forget gifts are for the common good and not for mere private gain or exercise (1 Cor. 12:7).

It is evident the mere experiencing of an event without the church understanding the words spoken did not edify the church. Therefore, how shall we infer as so many do that the speaker was edified by mere experience without understanding? We shall not infer such, for it is contrary to the scriptures. When one claims by mere feeling that God is doing something to him or through him, how does he know or prove it is God doing what he claims without understanding?

Where in the Bible is a man edified by an emotional experience without understanding? Where does the claim that God is doing something to me without understanding fit in the scriptures that cry to prove all things? Now, if the speaker was edified by mere experience without understanding the language, it proves too much. If the tongue speaker is edified without understanding, then why couldn't the church be edified by simply witnessing something that is happening?

### Verse 6

*Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?*

Paul's point seems to be: what good would come from visiting you and speaking doctrine by revelation in a tongue you would not understand? Brethren, if I visit you with revelation or doctrine you will be edified by my visiting you. But if I speak such in a tongue you do not understand, what will the benefit of my visit be?

### Verse 7

*And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?*

Paul begins a series of illustrations that pursue the worth of tongue speaking without interpretation and the lack of benefit of sound with signification or meaning. What is the merit of sound from inanimate objects if no difference is to be discerned in the sounds? Does the soldier girt up his loins for battle when the trumpet gives an unmarked or vague sound? Luke 11:44 notes the idea of uncertainty by translating the words "appear not."

Paul moves from the inanimate and the need of distinction to the animate and to understand for distinction. Verse 9 contrasts uncertain and without distinction to easily understood and signification. Words easy to be understood are words well indicated, clear, or distinct. Paul is showing the necessity of interpretation, so the tongue speaker speaking with the spirit could edify the body. Therefore, his understanding would be fruitful because not only he but also the gathered understood.

These passages certainly reveal the nature of tongue speaking. It is not possible to handle the language of Paul and affirm that ecstatic utterances are under consideration. Consider this thought. How would the gift of interpretation function without a knowledge of what was spoken by the tongue speaker? Ecstatic utterances by definition say nothing, so how could an interpreter give their meaning? How could the tongue speaker be edified by saying nothing that has meaning?

**Verse 10**

*There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.*

Paul states the whole concept of voices or sounds is that each has its meaning. Why would the Corinthians insist on tongue speaking when the assembled do not know the language spoken? It is evident by Paul insists on an interpretation. There are many kinds. We know there are many different foreign languages, but the very nature of ecstatic utterances does not permit us to speak of kinds of ecstatic utterances with signification.

**Verse 11**

*Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.*

The term "barbarian" refers to one who speaks a foreign language not understood by another. Paul is telling the brethren that if we do not know the meaning of the voice, we are not constructive in our conversation. This meaning according to verse 2 is "for no man understandeth him." The speaker understands, God understands, but the assembly does not understand.

**Verse 12**

*Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

Brethren, remember why you possess gifts. They are for all to profit (1 Cor. 12:7). Therefore, when you speak in a tongue, your whole desire is to edify the church. Recall these reasons to see the gifts are properly used.

- 1 Cor. 12:7. All are to profit from the use of the gift.
- 1 Cor. 14:1. All are to follow love in the use of the gift.
- 1 Cor. 14:1,5. All are to edify the church when the gift is used.
- 1 Cor. 14:14. All are to use their gifts so their understanding is fruitful.

**Verse 13**

*Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

What shall we do about speaking in a tongue foreign to the assembly, so the gift can be used and not abused, and the gathered edified? We will have an interpretation, or we will not address the assembly.

What may appear as the apparent sense of verse 13 needs reflection. Why?

1. It is unacceptable to interpret verse 13 as meaning for one to speak in a tongue and then pray for interpretation yourself. It would destroy the very meaning of the regulations given in verses 27-28.
2. It is not telling the man to pray for what he can or cannot do. One has the gift of interpretation or one doesn't have the gift of interpretation. It is a separate gift from tongue speaking (1 Cor. 12:30).
3. The sense is very much like Paul speaking of desiring gifts. Let us find if the gift of interpretation is present in the church when we desire to speak in a tongue in the assembly.
4. The sign was in speaking a language not learned. Therefore, it would not necessarily be the language of the assembled and could call for interpretation. The idea of the tongue speaker interpreting for himself is redundant, removes reliability of the message, and permits the very exalting of self that Paul was regulating. Paul did not permit such an arrangement when he regulated in verses 27-28. The verses of regulation are the best commentary on verse 13.
5. The interpretation would need to be as divinely inspired as the original message, or its reliability is destroyed. We need the mouth of a second witness, so to speak, to establish the truth and to fulfill Paul's regulation.
6. A question arises here regarding multi-gifts. We are very skeptical of such among those who received gifts by apostolic hands. The very illustration of 1 Cor. 12, picturing many members but one body, is illustrating spiritual gifts functioning in the church. The illustration loses its very message if multiple gifts are common. Acts 8 is cited to support multiple gifts, but did Phillip preach by revelation? All preaching was not necessarily miraculously received in the first century. We see an overlap in Paul's instruction to Timothy, and we must consider men like Apollos. Do not let this point take from the other things stated, as it is mentioned only because the question of multiple gifts occasionally arises when verse 13 is discussed.

Paul seems to say you will not only pray in the exercising of your spiritual gift, but you will do so that others may understand. You always function with the view of an interpretation for the gathered. When one prays in a tongue, it shall be with the intention, settled beforehand, to speak so the audience can understand.

## Verses 14-17

*For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

*What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*

*Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?*

*For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.*

The reason for speaking with a view for interpretation is given by Paul beginning in verse 14. When there is no interpretation, we speak only to God and not to man. It is true that we pray using our spiritual gifts and we are edified. But it is also true that our understanding is unfruitful. Why? Our

understanding is not communicated to others, because they do not understand the language we are speaking. Therefore, my understanding is unfruitful without interpretation.

An individual may very well understand a given truth or receive a mystery, but that understanding is unfruitful unless communicated to another. My understanding does not benefit others unless communicated to them. Remember, the whole purpose of gifts in the church is that others may profit or be edified. "With the spirit" refers to the spiritual gift possessed or one's spirit as the instrument of God's spirit. "With the understanding" refers to the assembly being able to understand the language of the speaker so they could profit from the things he spoke. Otherwise, his understanding was not fruitful, because it would not edify others.

In verse 16, "with the understanding also" refers to the assembly's understanding. Paul speaks of one praying with the spirit, but the occupier of the room does not understand what is being said. How will he overcome this problem? We will pray with a view for interpretation.

Verse 17 reveals that the key is speaking so others can understand. You give thanks well, but the other is not edified. They did not understand the language you spoke to the gathered, you did not have an interpretation, you did not pray with the understanding also; you spoke to God but not to man. Do you think he would tell the tongue speaker that he gave thanks well, if he did not understand it himself? The element of reason is always found in true worship and never merely undefined emotional states. True worship involves feeling, by not when it is freed from reason.

Let us say in another way what we have just stated about these verses. This does not seem repetitious considering the number of explanations these verses receive. The result of praying with the spirit, but not the understanding also, is that you prayed well, but the hearers were not edified. This is because they did not understand what was said. You only spoke to God. Evidently, the tongue speaker understood, for he is said to have prayed well. How could the tongue speaker say "Amen" if he know not what he prayed? Others were not permitted to say "Amen" because they were ignorant of the words spoken. Paul did not have a double standard.

The problem arises when you pray with the spirit but not with the understanding, the gift is used without the common good. You are following love of self, not love of the body. The truth is not communicated, so the body is not edified. Now, how do we overcome these problems? We pray for an interpretation to be done when we speak. When we cannot arrange for an interpretation, we will be silent in that gathering.

Paul's continuity of thinking is fairly evident.

- Verse 13 speaks of an interpretation.
- Verse 14 reveals that praying with the spirit without an interpretation makes my understanding unfruitful. It does not benefit the body.
- Verse 15 concludes that one should pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. This removes the problem of the understanding being unfruitful.

- Verse 16 concludes that when we pray not with the understanding, the occupier of the room is unlearned and will not understand what is taught. The continuity of thought permits an interchange between "understanding also" and the understanding of others by interpretation.
- Verse 17 concludes that you can pray with the spirit and give thanks well, but the others are not edified. They are not edified unless you pray with the understanding also. They must understand what you are saying. Paul is saying to the tongue speaker "seek an interpretation."
- Paul, in verse 19, writes that he would rather speak five words with the understanding and associates this with his voice being able to teach others. We do not see the phrase being strained to refer to others' understanding, since it is constantly used in this manner from verse 13 forward.

### **Verses 18-19**

*I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:  
Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might  
teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*

Paul presents his appeal to the tongue speaker on the common ground that he also speaks in tongues. He makes it clear that his judgement in speaking in tongues always considered the audience's ability to understand the language. Paul writes that we must speak words that get into the ear, not just to the ear.

### **Verse 20**

*Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*

Paul admonishes the brethren to reason like mature people and to be of a loving disposition. Examine your motivation for using the gift to determine whether it is used for self or the exaltation of the body of Christ.

### **Verse 21**

*In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet  
for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.*

Paul introduces more argumentation for proper use of the gifts. History teaches that tongue speaking is not an evident sign of divine favor. Israel heard the truth in her own tongue but refused it. It was understandable. God brought a nation over Israel that spoke in a tongue they did not understand because of their refusal to obey. The hearing of a tongue you do not understand does not mean the gathered are blessed of God. Why Israel heard such was due to her unbelief and God's judgement. Paul is saying, "Brethren, is there much tongue speaking among you because you are not satisfied with the Truth spoken clearly and simply?"

Brethren, do you realize you are misusing the gifts of tongues? Why speak in tongues in an assembly of believers, when you already believe the the Holy Spirit has been shed forth? When you examine tongue speaking from every aspect, it was unbelief, not belief, that necessitated it. We must be careful not to say more than what Paul adds in verse 22.

### Verse 22

Tongue speaking was designed for unbelievers and prophecy for believers. We should not say that prophecy cannot benefit unbelievers, and we should not conclude that tongue speaking cannot benefit believers. We see tongue speaking with an interpretation could benefit an assembly of believers. The key is whether tongues speaking is functioning as a sign or not as a sign, not whether it is benefiting only one or the other.

Paul seems to say that we should recall that tongue speaking was followed by teaching in a language known to the audience or when someone who understood the language was present. Tongues are going to cease, but they will be permitted in the assembly with interpretation. Brethren, you do not understand that their original purpose is in the revelatory scheme.

Again, let us mention that in this verse drawn from the Old Testament, Paul refers to the speaking of a foreign language. It is very difficult to see Paul making this argument if we are dealing with ecstatic utterances. Again, we do not see any need to seek a different definition of tongues to understand the Corinthian letter.

### Verses 23-25

*If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?*

*But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:*

*And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*

You must speak with an interpretation. The assembly must be edified. That is why we have been contrasting tongues and prophecy to convince you that is the edification of the assembly that is important, not that you personally exercise your gift.

### Verse 26

*How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.*

Paul concludes again what he has been focusing on throughout this section. We shall use spiritual gifts in an assembly only if it benefits the church.

## **Verses 27-28**

*If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.*

*But if there be an interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*

Paul is ready to regulate tongue speaking in the assembly. He has reasoned, rebuked, and now must regulate to assure the teaching is carried out. These passages seem to care for the vagueness of verse 13. Let there be no tongue speaking without an interpreter being present. There is a question whether Paul is saying two or three tongue speakers shall take turns and let one interpret or let one tongue speaker speak two or three thoughts and let the interpreter speak.

The view taken rests on the use of anyone being singular here. It seems the phrasing is harsh if we say let anyone speak by two or three persons. One could say it is collective and, therefore, is used in that manner. We prefer the idea expressed is to let one speak in a tongue, expressing two or three thoughts by the Spirit, and in turn let one by the Spirit interpret. We are not convinced which is right, but express what we find the most meaningful, informative, and comfortable to our understanding of the total situation. It does not seem definite that one is to interpret, even if we entertain the idea of more than one tongue speaker.

What does the tongue speaker do when there is no interpretation possible? He does not address the assembly. He will be silent and hold his peace.

## **Verses 29-32**

*Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.*

*If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.*

*For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.*

*And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*

The prophets were to speak one at a time to the assembly while others discerned. When something was revealed to another, the one speaking would finish or become silent. The other would then teach the gathered. We do not find in the Bible where the gathered were segregated. The prophets, speaking one at a time, resulted in edification of the gathered, for it states that in this manner, all may learn and be comforted.

We learn that the person under divine guidance still maintained control over his behavior. What was given to him was God-breathed, but the maintenance of his conduct was his responsibility. This removes the often ridiculous claim of actually charging the Holy Spirit with behavior that is disorderly in gatherings today. It is the individual himself who does not have himself under control. Another passage that certainly implies that those divinely guided were in control of speaking or not speaking is 1 Thes. 5:19.

**Verse 33**

*For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*

Brethren, you know the gatherings of heathens are outrageous. We know the God of heaven and earth does not labor to create chaos from his workings. Uncontrollable behavior is not of God, for it does not follow love, edify the gathered, or use the gifts for the common good. When you abuse the gifts, are you not simply bringing some of your heathen habits with you and losing your ability to convince all?

**Verses 34-35**

*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

*And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*

Women are not permitted to speak in the assemblies, but to be in silence. The question of women are specifically being corrected does not change the charge. Why? Paul points out the charge is supported by the fact that to be under obedience is said in the Law, and it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

The woman is not permitted to speak, but to be under obedience. This is not a new order but is even supported by the Law. The woman is not to ask questions in the church but at home. Why? It is a shame for women to speak in the church. There is no thought here that she can teach if a man gives her permission. A woman teaching in the church is a violation of God's order. Now, it is true such speaking indicates she is not under obedience, but man never has the right to give her permission to speak in the church. Therefore, the fact that man says she can teach there does not change that the Bible says she is not under obedience when she does. It is a violation of God's order. Paul taught women were not to teach nor to usurp authority in Paul's first letter to Timothy.

Let us notice the following relationships in regulating speaking in the assembly.

- The tongue speaker will be silent if there is no interpretation.
- The prophet will be silent if revelation is given by another.
- The women will be silent in the church.

It is evident that Paul is dealing with the teaching of the assembly by discourse. The tongue speaker shall not deliver a discourse to the assembled if there is no interpretation. The prophet shall cease his discourse when others have a revelation to give. The women shall not give a discourse or ask a question in the assembly. The tongue speaker is conditioned by an interpretation. The prophet is conditioned by a revelation. The woman is conditioned by being in the church (the assembly).

We need to insert an important consideration about these regulations. The regulations are dealing with inspired utterances. This does not mean the principles of these regulations do not apply today.

The functions being under the control of the Spirit directly or indirectly does not change the necessity of regulation or the principle of the regulations given during the day of spiritual gifts.

How does the reality that the activity was done by an inspired person or by a person that studied the inspired word change the need for regulation? We know both are responsible to control their behavior. The function or purpose is still there, even though the source is no longer direct, but indirect. The probability or susceptibility for violations are still present in the assembly, even though inspired persons are not. Therefore, why should many conclude today that such regulations have no applicability to questions regarding order in the assembly of the saints at this hour? It appears those pens, which see such as not applicable today, are in sympathy with activities such regulations would oppose today.

### **Verses 36-38**

*What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?  
If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write  
unto you are the commandments of the Lord.  
But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

Paul declares the church is not a legislative body.. Apostolic authority is heaven's authority. We speak the will of heaven (1 Thes. 2:13). The sense of these verses is much like 1 Cor. 11:16. There comes a time when no more can be said or needs to be said. The authority of the apostles stands in directing the conduct of those translated into the kingdom of his dear Son. When it is declared fully and lovingly, but still resisted, there comes a time when we must let the ignorant be ignorant. We cannot argue over apostolic authority as long as some people would desire to argue (1 Jn. 4:6).

### **Verses 39-40**

*Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.  
Let all things be done decently and in order.*

Brethren, seek to edify and use the gifts according to their Spirit-given purpose. When gifts are used for the common good, you follow love and the body is edified. You will then be perfect in understanding and innocent in disposition. You will show God is orderly and the giver of every good gift. Others will realize your God is not like the gods of the heathen. The reasoning, rebuking, and regulation, when heeded, will assure a becoming and orderly assembly for believer and non-believer alike. Furthermore, you will be fully prepared for the functioning of the body when spiritual gifts lapse and the voice of the new revelation closes its lips in deference to a completed revelation.

**Abstract** This presentation considers the subjects of law and Christian liberty as they related to maintaining unity in a congregation containing a mixture of strong and weak, Jew and Gentile Christians. It identifies the various groups in the congregation and the problems facing the weaker members. Next, the responsibilities and duties of each member are explained. Then Paul's personal illustrations of these principles are presented. Finally, the presentation answers the question of how long a weak member can remain weak and not be considered rebellious.

The following scriptures were used as a basis for the presentation.

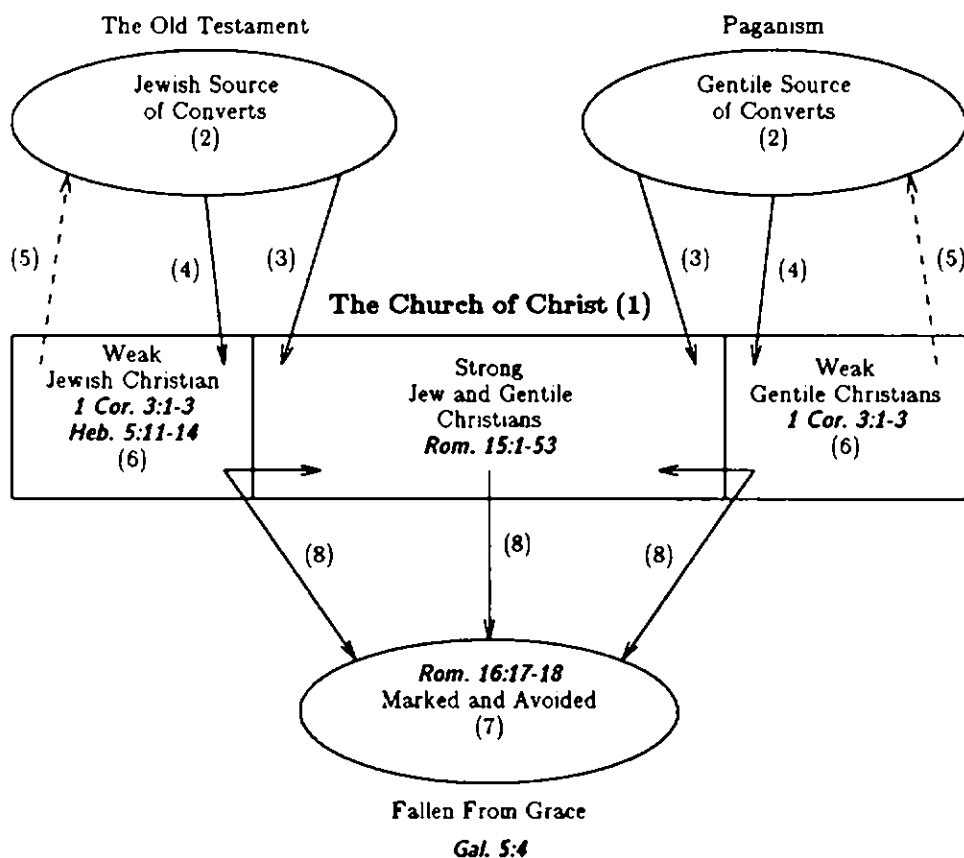
- *Romans 14:1-15:3*
  - *1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1*
- 

## Introduction

The Church of Christ meeting in Corinth during the first century contained a mixture of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Each of these were subject to a new law, namely the law of Christ, however, each came from a different religious background. This presented problems as they tried to understand and apply the laws that now applied to them. Those Christians who were previously Jews tried to bind on the church many of the old laws, while the Christians who were previously Gentiles tried to carry some of their old customs into the church.

This situation is represented graphically in the next figure, "The Problem Charted."

## The Problem Charted



### Legend

- (1) The Church of Christ.
- (2) The source of converts to the early Church.
- (3) A convert that completely detached himself from his former religion with its lifestyle and implications.
- (4) A convert to the Church who is not, at the present time, willing to give up scruples about his former religion.
- (5) A convert that returns to his former life and religion. This is a choice and is a danger to the weak if he remains in a "weak" condition.
- (6) The task each strong Christian has in bringing the weak Christian to the normal position of strength. This is the positive choice of action for the "weak" brother.
- (7) The position a "weak" brother is placed if he continues to insist on his rights being imposed on others for salvation. The "strong" are in danger of being placed in this position also if they, too, refuse to heed the instructions to them in Rom. 15:1-3.
- (8) The course of action by the church in marking and avoiding the offenders.

## I. Identifying the Weak and the Strong

A. *Romans 14:1-15:3* — Relationship with the Law of Moses and pagan Gentile rites (with emphasis in this context on the Law of Moses)

1. The weak; Jewish Christians who had not totally given up the law
2. The strong; Gentile Christians or Jewish Christians who had totally given up the law

B. *1 Cor. 8:1-11:1* — Relationship with idols and the things sacrificed to it

1. The weak; those that lacked proper knowledge about idols and the sacrifices to them. Probably Gentiles, but could also refer to certain Jews. In *1 Cor. 3:1-3*, Paul used the term “weak” and compares it to “carnal” and “babes in Christ,” showing that something is lacking and must be supplied.
2. The strong; those who knew an idol was nothing and had no scruples about eating meat that was sold in the markets.

## II. Identifying the Persons the Principles Would Be Applied To At That Time

*1 Cor. 9:19-23* - “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.”

A. The persons under consideration

1. Jews — speaking of them in a national sense
2. Under the Law — Jews zealous of the law
3. Without Law — the Gentiles
4. The Weak — weak ones in each of the above categories that were members of the church

*1 Cor. 10:32* - “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God”

B. Groups under consideration

1. Jews
2. Gentiles
3. The Church of God

## III. Identifying the Infirmities of the Weak

*Rom. 15:1* - “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

A. Days — the Jewish Holy Days

*Rom. 14:5-6* - “One man esteemeth one day above another. another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to

*the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."*

*Gal. 4:10-11 - "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."*

1. Days = daily sacrifices and Sabbaths
2. Months = new moon observances
3. Times = festivals
4. Years = sabbatical years and Jubilees
5. The Gentiles also had their Holy Days and Feasts

#### B. Meats

1. Meats considered unclean under the Law of Moses

*1 Tim. 4:3-5 - "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."*

2. Meats offered to idols

*Acts 15:28-29 - "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."*

- a. Part of the sacrifice was offered to idols, burned on the altar, or given to the officiating priest
- b. Part was given to the person offering the sacrifice and frequently sold in the market. Sometimes the person offering the sacrifice would have a feast and use this meat in it. This feast could be given in the pagan temple or in the person's home.

3. Jewish position on these meats

*"Meal of this description (meats offered to idols, Acts 15:29), was an abomination to the Jews; who held that not only those who partook of such entertainments, but also those who purchased such meat in the market, subjected themselves to the pollutions of idolatry. The apostle James, therefore recommends, that the Gentile Christians should abstain from all meats of this kind, out of respect to this prejudice of Jewish Christians."<sup>1</sup>*

4. Drinking wine offered in the heathen drink offerings

*Deut. 32:37-38 - "And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up and help you, and be your protection."*

*Rom. 14:21 - "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."*

#### IV. Identifying the Duties of the Weak and the Strong In Such Matters

##### A. The Weak

###### 1. Forbidden to judge the strong

*Rom. 14:3 - "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him."*

###### 2. Must be fully persuaded in his own mind

*Rom. 14:6 - "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."*

###### 3. Must follow after things that make peace

*Rom. 14:19 - "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."*

###### 4. If not fully persuaded, must refuse to act or else sin

*Rom. 14:23 - "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."*

##### B. The Strong

###### 1. Receive the weak but not to disputations about his doubts

*Rom. 14:1 - "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."*

###### 2. Must not despise the weak

*Rom. 14:3 - "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him."*

###### 3. Must be fully persuaded in his own mind

*Rom. 14:5 - "One man esteemeth one day above another. another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."*

###### 4. Must not judge the weak

*Rom. 14:13 - "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."*

###### 5. Must act so good cannot be evil spoken of

*Rom. 14:16 - "Let not then your good be evil spoken of"*

###### 6. Cannot eat with offence

*Rom. 14:20 - "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."*

7. Must keep "Faith" to self and God

*Rom. 14:22 - "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."*

8. Cannot let anything be a stumblingblock to the weak

*1 Cor. 8:9 - "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak."*

9. Must please his neighbor for his good to edification. In this way the "weak" would not remain weak for a long period of time.

*Rom. 15:2 - "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."*

V. Identifying Paul's Personal Application of These Principles

A. It is obvious that Paul intended the list of indifferent things to be larger than the ones recorded in our text

1. Please all men in all things

*1 Cor. 10:33 - "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."*

2. Nor anything

*Rom. 14:21 - "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."*

B. The sequence found in 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 (circa 54-55 A.D.)

1. Paul lays down the principle that was to govern their actions toward the weak

*1 Cor. 8:13 - "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."*

2. Paul uses his example of not taking support from those at Corinth, even though apostles had the right to expect it (1 Cor. 9), but did not bind it on others.

a. The Lord ordained this support, but Paul did not take it

*1 Cor. 9:14-15 - "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void."*

b. The reasons for not taking it

*1 Cor. 9:19, 23 - "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more....And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."*

- c. Paul became what he needed to become for the Gospel's sake

*1 Cor. 9:20,22* - "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;... To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

- d. He shows the discipline practicing these principles requires

*1 Cor. 9:24-27* - "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

3. Paul deals with the additional danger in having any kind of relationship with idolatry — immorality. Then he returns to the eating of things sacrificed to idols

- a. A study of this was required to complement the "knowledge" of 1 Cor. 8:2

*1 Cor. 8:2* - "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

- b. Paul's examples set the pattern to follow

*1 Cor. 11:1* - "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

4. Timothy was circumcised (circa 53 A.D.)

*Acts 16:3* - "Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."

5. Paul's vow and his paying for the vows of others to conciliate the Jews (circa 58-60 A.D.)

*Acts 21:20-26* - "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them."

## VI. Identifying the Conditions Set Forth to Regulate the Length of Time a Person Could Remain "Weak" And Not Be Considered Rebellious

- A. Romans and First Corinthians were written to give answers as to what the Lord required regarding the old law and the pagan practices. The weak could not just ignore these instructions and continue in their condition.
- B. While they were in this process of being "fully persuaded," the strong brethren who already had this knowledge were not to give offence to the weak. "Stumblingblock" indicated there was a movement in the right direction.
- C. If they stubbornly refused to make progress giving in to their scruples was to stop.
  1. Titus was not circumcised (circa 51-53 A.D.)

*Gal. 2:3-4* - "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage"

2. The conduct of Peter, James, and Barnabas was not tolerated

*Gal. 2:11-14* - "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

3. "Ye observe days ... I am afraid of you." (*Gal. 4:10-11*)
4. The admonition in Rom. 16:17 was to be invoked if a division was made out of it. This is applied to both the weak and the strong. In other words, those who insisted on their "rights" and would not let the weak develop were also in danger.

*Rom. 16:17* - "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

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**Abstract** Authority is a concept that is fundamental to life. Every man, woman, and child is under authority. Authority is needed to guide, direct, and protect people living in any society. Authority is particularly important to the Christian, for God has ordained different authorities which Christians must obey. This presentation looks at the various kinds of authority that God has ordained and views the Christian's responsibility to each.

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## Introduction

God has ordained three separate, yet concurrent, areas of divine authority: civil government, the Kingdom, and the home. Each of these has a direct relationship to the Christian.

Absolute authority belongs only to God. Alexander Campbell once remarked, "God himself is of necessity absolute monarch of the universe." In this study, we will notice how this authority, once constituted and arranged, affects us as Christians and our individual responsibilities toward it.

Two terms often used in this type of discussion are *authority* and *government*. The terms are defined as follows.

**authority** "the power to give commands, enforce obedience, take action, or make decisions; jurisdiction."

**government** "the exercise of authority over an organization, institution, state, district, etc.; direction; control, rule, management."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps you have wondered why authority exists and why it is necessary. Authority exists for a very good reason; it provides structure and order for the interactions between people. Organization is necessary in almost every group function; without it, confusion and disorder often result. This is true of Little League baseball, PTA groups, Girl Scouts, etc. Some form or type of government must be employed to provide orderly function.

In the total absence of authority, anarchy occurs. Anarchy is defined as

"1. the complete absence of government and law, 2. political disorder and violence: hence, 3. disorder in any sphere of activity."<sup>2</sup>

An example of this is found in Judges 17:4-13. The story concerns a man named Micah, who arranged for idolatrous worship his home. At that time, there wasn't any existing authority strong enough to prevent such an ungodly arrangement. Another example is told in Judges 19-20. A Levite and his concubine were returning home to Ephraim and decided to spend the night in a village called Gibeah. During the night, some men of Gibeah took the Levites concubine and raped her. Eventually, she died. In retribution, the Levite dissected her body and sends the parts to the twelve tribes of Israel. The story ends with a detailed account of how all Israel retaliated against the men of Gibeah. This period was a sad one for Israel to recall. The writer of Judges seems almost apologetic to mention it. He repeats continually, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25)

### Three Types of Government

The Greek philosopher Aristotle, called the father of political science, named three groups or kinds of government as the basis of all recognized authority, including:

1. **monarchy** — rule by one person
2. **aristocracy** — rule by a few persons
3. **democracy** — rule by many persons.

He described a monarchy and aristocracy as governments by men of superior character and intelligence. These three types of governments ruled for the benefit of the people or the government. Conversely, a corrupted government ruled only for the benefit of those in authority. (If a government ruled only for the benefit of those in authority, not for the good of all, it was called corrupt). As there are three types of recognized authority, there are also three kinds or types of corrupt governments. They are

1. **tyranny** — a corrupted monarchy
2. **oligarchy** — a corrupted aristocracy
3. **tyranny of the majority** — a corrupted democracy

### Elements of a State or Kingdom

The following elements are required to constitute a kingdom or state.

- **a constitution** — "in forming a state, the essential elements are people and a country. The people make a constitution, and this makes a President or King, citizens or subjects, and everything else belongs to the state." <sup>3</sup>
- **a king or ruler**

- subjects
- law
- territory

## The Right of Governments to Exist

All authority exists as God appoints and arranges. This becomes apparent in the study of civil government.

The apostle Paul taught in the following verses concerning civil government.

*Romans 13:1-2* - "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." (Amplified Bible)

*1 Pet. 2:13-14* - "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

These verses illustrate that civil government was instituted by God to provide protection for the child of God, regardless of the type of government that it might be.

Furthermore, the Christian is required to be in subjection to and obey those in authority and to pay whatever taxes that may be levied by that government. The only exception to this rule is when civil authorities require a Christian to disobey God's law. In this event, the child of God is to "obey God" (Acts. 5:29).

## The Kingdom of Heaven

The second institution under consideration is the kingdom of heaven. The authority or right for the kingdom of heaven to exist is found in its constitution. God is the author of the constitution of the kingdom of heaven. He propounded it to the Word that was made flesh; the Word accepted it, because the will of God was always his delight. As a result, all authority is given to me in heaven and earth was given to Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1,14; Mt. 28:18-19).

"The earth is now the Lord's; the present, temporal territory of His kingdom; that the heathen people are given to him for his inheritance, all the ends of the earth are his, and all dominions, kindreds, tribes, tongues, and people shall yet served him on earth and glorify him in heaven; that all that he redeems are his seed — his subjects."<sup>3</sup>

**King** the Lord Jesus. He is the constitutional monarch of the kingdom of heaven.

*Eph. 1:20-21* - "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

"Monarchy is the only form of government which nature recognizes. It was first, and it will be the last. History testifies that republics are better adapted to peace than war, and that they are forced and unnatural organizations of society. Aristocracies and republics owe all their attraction to the excessive corruption of governments under which they have originated. So that the corruption of these have originated monarchies again. A monarchy would be always the best government, because it is the cheapest, the most efficient, and the most dignified; provided only that the crown was placed on the wisest head and the scepter wielded by the purest hands. Could we always secure this, we would all be monarchists: because we cannot, we are all republicans."<sup>4</sup>

In civil government, this is an ongoing evolution. However, let it be remembered, the constitutional king of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus Christ, wears the crown as the wisest and purest of all creatures in heaven and earth.

**Subjects**      born again people. Their privileges and honors are varied and many. The constitutional king is the Son of God. Therefore, the privileges and honors of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven include the forgiveness of sin, adoption into the family of God, being known in the Lord, and the resurrection from the dead.

**Laws:**            law of love. The supreme law in this kingdom is love: love to the King and love to each other. There is one universal law of naturalization, or making citizens out of all nations: the gospel plan of salvation. The laws of this kingdom, like the laws of every kingdom, are obligatory only on the citizens. This should be remembered when applying the marriage law of the kingdom of heaven to alien sinners, who are not citizens of the kingdom. They are under civil law, but not the kingdom law.

The only positive law or statute of the kingdom of heaven is worship.

**Territory**        the whole earth. In all other kingdoms, except the kingdom of heaven, the territory is the national domain and inheritance. This is not so with this kingdom; the whole earth is the present territory. However, the new heaven and new earth are to be its inheritance.

### **The Present Administration of the Kingdom of Heaven**

The apostles of Jesus Christ were ambassadors for him and had all authority delegated to them by the king. Hence, everything was first taught and enjoyed by them. They organized their converts into groups called churches or congregations, and then set them in order. This was done for their edification, and for their usefulness and influence in this world. They uniformly appointed elders or overseers to labor in the word and teaching, and to preside over the whole affairs of the congregation. To these also, were added deacons, who, under the direction of the overseers, were to manage all the affairs of these individual families of God. This is the very name BISHOP and DEACON, and all qualifications enjoined, fairly and fully appointed.<sup>5</sup> The Christian's responsibility towards constituted authority is to be in subjection to them and to

render obedience.

*Heb. 13:17 - "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."*

*1 Thes. 5:12 - "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;"*

Actually, there are five different areas of responsibility that members of the kingdom are to render towards its leaders.

1. *remember*, or literally, "to look to them with feeling" — thus being sensitive, as person to person, to their needs, feelings, etc.;
2. *consider* (observe their manner of life attentively) — no to complain, criticize, or judge, but to imitate their faith. A positive reason for knowing them, for one's own good of building himself up rather than tearing another down;
3. *imitate* — follow their examples;
4. *obey*, literally, "to persuade oneself to believe in the elder, to cause oneself to be friends with, win the elder's favor, to gain the good will, strive to please, to cause oneself to have confidence in, to believe in and trust them";
5. *submit* — to resist no longer, give way, yield...here to quit resisting the guidance of the elders.

**NOTE:** All definitions are taken from *...Appoint Elders In Every City*, written by Benny Cryer.

"If a congregation will not elect to these offices the persons possessing the qualifications; or if, by a waywardness and selfishness of their own, they should elect those unqualified, and thus disparage those marked out by the possession of the gifts; in either case, they despises the authority of the ambassadors of Christ and must suffer for it."<sup>6</sup>

## The Authority In The Home

The home is the oldest institution in existence. As such, it has a monarchical form of government. The husband is the head of the home. The apostle Paul taught, "the head of the woman is the man" (1 Cor. 11:3). Therefore, the wife is to be in subjection to her husband.

*Eph. 5:22 - "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."*

The constitution of the kingdom of heaven clearly establishes this order.

*1 Cor. 11:10 - "Therefore she should be subject to his authority and should have a covering on her head (as a token, a symbol, of her submission) to authority, (that she may show reverence as do) the angels and not displease them." (Amplified Bible)*

The children, similarly, are to be in subjection to both parents.

*Eph. 6:1-4 - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the*

*Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;"*

The word, honor, in these verses means "to value, money paid, or values; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself."<sup>7</sup> This indicates the esteem and value that a child should have regarding his or her parents. The constitution of the kingdom sets forth the husband as being the king in the home. However, this is far from asserting that he is to be a tyrant. The supreme law of the kingdom forbids this. The crown should be on the "wisest head" and the "scepter wielded by the purest heart." Kingdom law requires this of all authority figures.

## Conclusion

Three separate institutions have been studied. All have their existence as God has provided and arranged. Civil government is for the protection of the Christian. The kingdom of heaven is for His glorification and the salvation and edification of the subjects and citizens. And finally, the home functions for companionship and love and to propagate the human race. Therefore, these three have a direct effect on the lives of every Christian. They have some things in common, such as subjection and obedience. Nevertheless, they are all separate, and each functions uniquely. When the supreme law of the kingdom prevails, then honor, submission, and obedience should be not a burden but a privilege.

There are, of course, other areas of authority, such as evangelistic authority. However, this and other areas of responsibility are not within themselves institutions, as are the areas studied. Moreover, these will likely have their sphere of operation within one of the existing institutions already studied.

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### Definition of Words

<i>authority</i>	the power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action, or make decisions, jurisdiction (Websters)
<i>anarchy</i>	1. the complete absence of government and law, 2. political disorder and violence hence 3. disorder in any sphere of activity (Ibid)
<i>tyranny</i>	1. the office, authority, government, or jurisdiction of a tyrant or absolute ruler, 2. oppressive and unjust government, despotism, 3. very cruel and unjust use of power or authority, hence harshness, rigor, severity (Ibid)
<i>tyrant</i>	1. an absolute ruler, especially, one who seized sovereignty illegally: usurper, 2. a cruel, oppressive ruler, despot, 3. any person who exercises his authority in an oppressive manner, cruel master (Ibid)
<i>monarchy</i>	1. rule by only one person, 2. a government or state headed by a king or emperor: called absolute (or despotic) when there is no limitation on the monarch's power, constitutional (or limited) when there is such limitation (Webster)
<i>republic</i>	a state or nation in which the supreme power rests in all the citizens entitled to vote (the electorate) and is exercised by representatives elected, directly or indirectly, by them and responsible to them. (Webster)
<i>aristocracy</i>	1. originally, government by the best citizens, 2. government by a privileged minority or upper class, usually of inherited and social position (Webster)
<i>oligarchy</i>	a form of government in which the ruling power belongs to a few persons (corrupt).
<i>constitution</i>	1. a setting up, establishment, 2. an appointing, 3. a making up, composition, 4. the way in which a thing is made up; structure; organization, make-up. (Webster)
<i>law</i>	all the rules of conduct established and enforced by the authority, legislation, or custom of a given community or other group
<i>subject</i>	( <i>hupotasso</i> ), primarily a military term, to rank under ( <i>hupo</i> , under, <i>tasso</i> , to arrange), denotes (a) to put under subjection, to subject. Rom. 13:1,5, 1 Pet. 2:13; Heb. 2:5,8, 12:9, Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18  ( <i>hupetko</i> ) to surrender—submit self Heb. 13:17; means to resist no longer, give way, yield, here, to quit resisting the guidance of elders. (Vine)
<i>rule</i>	( <i>egeomai</i> ), to lead, i.e., command (with official authority); fig. to deem, i.e. consider.—account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose think Heb. 13:7,17 (Strong)  ( <i>proistemi</i> ), lit., "to stand before," hence to lead, attend to (indicating care and diligence), is translated <i>to rule</i> (middle voice), with a reference to a local church. 1 Tim. 3:5, 5:17 (Vine)
<i>obey</i>	( <i>hupakouo</i> ), to listen, attend, and so, to submit, to obey, is used of obedience (a) to God, (b) to Christ, etc., (g) to parents by children, Eph. 6:1, Col. 3:22  ( <i>peitharchaoo</i> ), to obey one in authority is translated "obey" in Acts 5:29, 32), "to be obedient," Tit. 3:1 R.V. (A.V. "to obey magistrates") (Vine)

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**Abstract** Divorced from its context, Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 13:10 have been misinterpreted by many in the religious world. A proper understanding of this verse goes a long way in exposing many false doctrines based on a faulty interpretation of this passage. This presentation looks at the passage in its several contexts and looks to the intent and meaning of Paul when he penned these words.

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## Introduction

Few chapters have suffered more misapplication and misinterpretation than 1 Corinthians 13. Divorced from its context of chapters 12 and 14 and from the larger context of the entire letter, many misunderstandings have arisen. Many people fail to see that Paul was still dealing with the Corinthian problems when he wrote chapter 13, namely the abuse of spiritual gifts, division in the congregation, the envy of other's gifts, selfishness (in the form of lawsuits, and so on), impatience with one another at the assemblies, and behavior that disgraced the Lord. So, 1 Corinthians 13 must not be separated from the background of the entire letter.

Not only has chapter 13 in general suffered from misapplication and misinterpretation, but so has verse 10 and its immediate context (vv. 8-13). This can, to an extent, be seen in the way the Greek phrase *to teleion* has been translated. Notice how the following translations render it.

- *Revised Standard Version* — "when the perfect comes"
- *New English Bible* -- "when wholeness comes"
- *Jerusalem Bible* — "once perfection comes"
- *Phillips Bible* — "when the complete comes"
- *New International Version* — "when perfection comes"
- *Living Bible* — "when we have been made perfect and complete"
- *Today's English Version* — "when what is perfect comes"
- *King James Version* — "when that which is perfect comes"

- *Simple English Bible* — “when that which is complete comes”
- *New American Standard Version* — “when the perfect comes”

The variations in the translation of *to teleion* alone suggests a need for investigation of this passage. The meaning of this phrase has been even more problematical. Meaning will never be appreciated without a study of the Corinthian letter as a whole.

## Background of 1 Corinthians 13 (the letter and chapters 12-14)

Division among the brethren (1:10-16, 6:1-8, 11:18-22) due to worldly mindedness (3:1, 2:14-16) was a major problem at Corinth. Each group followed its own leader, exercised its gifts selfishly, and cared little for the health of the body as a whole. The Corinthian Christians had received an abundance of spiritual gifts.

*1 Cor. 1:4-7 - “I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.”*

But keep in mind that spiritual gifts were not necessarily a mark of Christian maturity. In fact, in this case they were a mark of immaturity. These believers were carnal, yet they exercised wonderful gifts. As long as the church sought spiritual gifts and miraculous experiences, there would be division, confusion, and carnality (infancy) rather than the maturity that comes by love.

Chapter 13 is not to be thought of as an interruption in Paul’s discussion concerning spiritual gifts; rather, it is a continuation of what he said in Chapter 12. Verses 12:31 and 14:1 make the connection between chapters 12 and 14 and chapter 13 obvious. 1 Corinthians 13 is closely linked in form and content with chapters 12 and 14.

**Spiritual Gifts vs. Love**—the most excellent way (12:31). Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians because of some information reported to him by Chloe’s family (1:10-12) and because he had received a letter from the Corinthian church (7:1). Paul answers their questions one by one in verses 7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1, and 16:12.

## Graphic Arrangement of 13:1-13

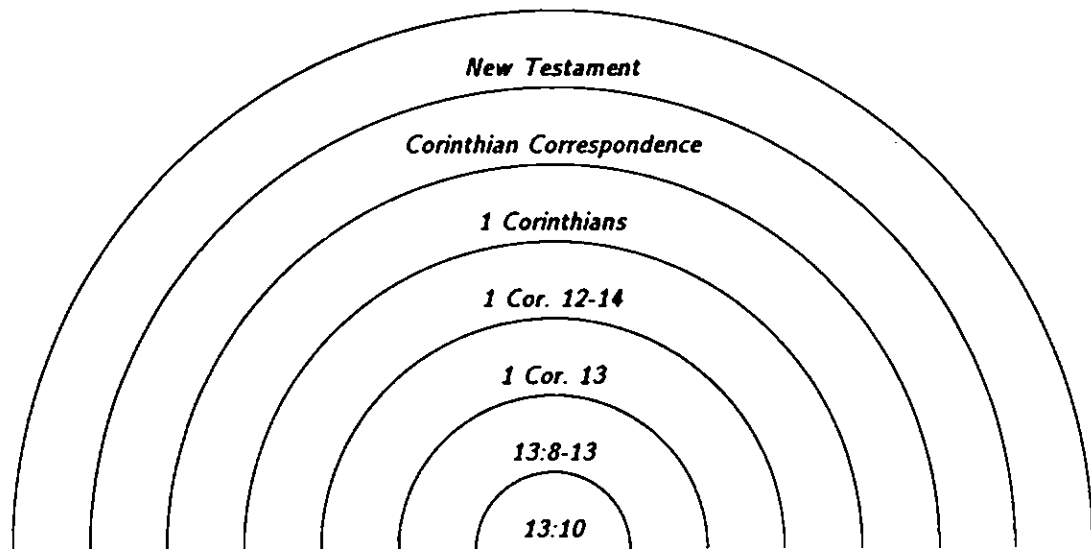
The division of chapter 13 into three sections is accepted by biblical scholars. The chapter consists of three paragraphs containing the following verses.

- vv. 1-3
- vv. 4-7
- vv. 8-13

In studying verse 10, the most immediate context must be considered first, which is verses 8-13. It must be studied within its context, namely chapter 13. The next context consists of chapters 12-14. A larger context than this is the first epistle to the Corinthians. The entire Corinthian

correspondence (both epistles) constitutes the next context. Finally, the New Testament makes up the largest context. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Context of 1 Corinthians 13:10**



The diagram and graphic arrangement of chapter 13 is largely the idea of Nils Lund, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1931, pp. 268-276. Minor adjustments were made, particularly regarding verses 8-13.

Notice how each section corresponds with each other. Both the X's constitute sections that relate (showing that chapter 13 must not be divorced from chapters 12 and 14). Then the two Y's (verses 1-3 and 8-13) relate to each other and are similar in form and content.

A diagrammatic representation of the chapter is shown on the next page.

Notice the steady progression from X (12:31) to Y (1-3) to Z (4-7) to Y (8-13) to X (14:1).

X	(A) But eagerly desire the greater gifts
	(B) and now I will show you the most excellent way (12:31)
Y	A If I speak with the tongues of men or of angels
	A' but have not love, I am only a noisy gong or a clanging symbol (v. 1)
Z	B And if I have prophecy and know: - all mysteries - all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains
	B' but have not love I am nothing (v. 2)
Y	C And if I give all my possessions (to feed the poor), and if I deliver my body to be burned
	C' but have not love it profits me nothing (v. 3)
X	A Love is:
	- patient - kind
Y	Love is:
	- not jealous - not boastful - not arrogant (v. 4) - not rude - not selfish - not provoked - not calculate wrongs (v. 5) - not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices in truth (v. 6)
Z	B
	bears all things believes all things hopes all things endures all things (v. 7)
X	A Love never fails;
	A' but if prophecies, they will pass away if languages, they will cease if knowledge, it will pass away (v. 8)
Y	B For we know in part, and we prophesy in part (v. 9)
	B' but when <del>so</del> <i>revelation</i> comes, the partial will be done away (v. 10)
Z	B <sub>i</sub> When I was a child, I spoke/thought/reasoned as a child.
	B <sub>i</sub> ' but when I became a man, I put away childish things (v. 11)
X	B <sub>ii</sub> For now we see by means of a mirror darkly.
	B <sub>ii</sub> ' but then face to face (v. 12a)
Y	B <sub>iii</sub> Now I know in part.
	B <sub>iii</sub> ' but then shall I know fully just as also I have been fully known (v. 12b)
Z	C But now remain:
	- faith - hope - love - these three
X	C' but the greatest of these is love (v. 13)
	(B) Pursue love,
Y	(A) Yet eagerly desire spiritual gifts (14:1).

## Verses 1-3—Spiritual Gifts Contrasted With Love

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*

*If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

This is what Paul said he was going to do in 12:31. Verses 1-3 compose the first section of chapter 13 and a counterpart to verses 8-13. Notice the obvious parallelism in verses 1-3.

“Parallelism consists of two or more lines that use different words to express the same idea in a similar grammatical form.” According to Leland Ryken in *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, page 103:

There are different kinds of parallelism. Synonymous, antithetic, climactic, and synthetic. Verses 1-3 make up antithetic parallelism, where the second line states the truth of the first in a negative way or in some way introduces a contrast.

What is the major thrust of verses 1-3?

1. Paul contrasts spiritual gifts and human achievement with love to demonstrate the excellence and superiority of love (12:31). This chapter cannot be isolated from chapter 12. Paul clearly makes the obvious connection.
2. *Agape* love is more important in a Christian's life than spiritual gifts. Paul mentions four: tongues (languages), knowledge, prophecy, and faith. These four are representative of all the others Paul talked about in chapter 12.
3. It is *agape* that gives everything meaning. It is the more excellent way of 12:31. Everything becomes vain and disintegrates without it. Everything is meaningless without the right motive. *Agape* gives value to all human activity, including the ultimate, altruistic sacrifice of one's self to whatever purpose.

So, Paul in verses 1-3 is simply pointing out the more excellent way of 12:31. It is love (*agape*). Paul contrasts spiritual gifts with this more excellent way.

## Verses 4-7. Love Defined Against the Background of the Corinthian Problems

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

*It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

*It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves.*

This section uses terms frequently used in the New Testament to describe either God, Christ, or the attitudes and traits in lists of virtues which Christians are taught to incorporate into their lives.

Having shown the superiority of love, now Paul makes clear what he means by love. This is far from being a methodical dissertation on love as an abstract subject. The qualities of love are cited to contrast with the spiritual gifts at Corinth, and they are presented here as exactly opposed to the characteristics of the Corinthian Christians.

The positive expressions of love in verses 4 and 7 are separated by eight negative elements in verses 5-6. The goodness of love is thus seen against the backdrop of what it is not.

- The Corinthian Christians were impatient and unkind (14:29-32: public assemblies, and so on), but love would make them longsuffering and kind.
- They were jealous of each other (3:3; and each other's gifts), but love would remove that envy and jealousy.
- They were arrogant and proud (4:6, 18-19; 5:2), but love would replace it with a desire to promote others (Phil. 3:4, Rom. 12:10). Love does not feel superior to others.
- They were behaving rudely (11:17-22), but had they *agape*, they would have acted in a way pleasing to God (11:19).
- They were even suing one another, which shows that they were selfish, provoked, and calculating wrongs.
- The Christians were boasting about sin in their congregation (chapter 5), but love does not brag or rejoice in unrighteousness.

Love: bears, believes, hopes, endures -- all things.

<b>bears</b>	endures wrongs, troubles, and so on; the Corinthians were not.
<b>believes</b>	trusts and is confident of others, not suspicious; contrasted to the Corinthian Christians attitude.
<b>hopes</b>	sees the bright side of things; contrasted to the Corinthian Christians.
<b>endures</b>	perseveres through all kinds of adversity and ill treatment

It is apparent that these verses cannot be fully understood and appreciated without knowing the background, namely the Corinthian problems.

These Christians were immature. They had not matured in love. Love would take care of all of their problems.

Paul acted somewhat like a doctor. He treated the individual symptoms of immaturity (divisions, suing one another, rudeness, and so on), telling them how to treat each of these problems. But then, like a good doctor, he treated the cause of the symptoms as well. The real problem was a lack of love. Love (verses 4-7) would mature them.

This is the essence of the letter. They were immature and childish because they did not have love. If they had love, Paul would not have been able to speak to them as mature Christians and not as infants.

So, again it is seen that these verses (4-7 and all of chapter 13) cannot be divorced from the rest of the book. Each quality of love identified by Paul was a specific correction for the Corinthian problems.

## Verses 8-13. The Superiority of Love Because of Its Permanence

Verses 8-13 should be treated and seen as the counterpart of verses 1-3. Both sections compare and contrast spiritual gifts with the superiority and excellence of love.

Paul makes three statements (verses 8, 9-10, 13) and the parallelism is evident. Paul gives three illustrations in verses 11-12 to explain further what he means in verse 10. All of these statements again use antithetical parallelism, where the second part states the truth of the first in a negative way or introduces a contrast.

Holladay states in his book *1 Corinthians*

Love has already been singled out as that which Corinthian Christians so desperately needed (8:11). Now it talks about enduring quality. His remarks are allusive, the language of poetry usually is. His language here is suggestive and emotive; it is impressionistic rather than realistic. His fondness for employing metaphors and figures of speech...is especially evident here.

Yet, as in all effective use of language, Paul does not obscure the fundamental point—the absolute worth of pursuit of love (14:1). Thus the general image of this impressionistic painting is clear; it is the individual hues and tones which are bothersome, and which, the more closely examined, appear to be less vividly clear. Once it is established that Paul's language here is ambiguous, perhaps intentionally so, attempts to lend precision and clarity to it are automatically rendered dubious if not presumptuous. Any explanation will necessarily be provisional.

## Verse 8. Abiding Nature of Love Contrasted to Temporary Nature of Spiritual Gifts

*Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*

Three spiritual gifts are listed (prophecy, languages, and knowledge). These three are representative of all the gifts mentioned in chapter 12. Love is superior to spiritual gifts because it never fails. So Holladay says that Paul's language is allusive because it is poetry. Poetry is allusive, suggestive, emotive, and impressionistic. Yet, good use of language (poetry, or otherwise) does not obscure the fundamental point. Paul has a fundamental point and it is not obscured by metaphors and figures of speech.

Paul is ambiguous here, poetry usually is. When we attempt to clarify and add precision to the individual hues and tones of Paul's poetical, impressionistic painting, we are bothered by it, and are perhaps presumptuous.

### Verses 9-10. "In Part" vs. "to teleion"

*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part,  
but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.*

Paul is obviously referring to spiritual gifts when he says "that which is part shall be done away," because he said:

**verse 8** spiritual gifts will be abolished (*katargeo*)

**verse 9** spiritual gifts are "in part" (*ex merous*)

**verse 10** "in part" will be abolished (*katargeo*)

So what Paul refers to in verse 10b is spiritual gifts.

The prepositional phrase does not imply a partial knowledge or partial prophecy. It denotes that the knowing and prophesying itself is imperfect or is not the more excellent way.

What does "to teleion" mean? First notice that the meaning of the word is outside the phrase. The meaning of the word is not problematical. The translation and meaning of the phrase in its context have been problematical for may, but not the meaning of the word itself. The use of the word in the LXX, Apostolic fathers, and papyri support the basic meaning of the word in the New Testament as "mature, full grown, total, complete, and final."

Such is also the normal meaning in Hebrew of "tomim" and "sholem" for which *teleios* stands in the LXX.

So, this word almost always occurs with the meaning of maturity. The majority of the occurrences are in the contexts contrasting "teleios" with something that is lacking (Colossians 1:28).

### Verse 11. First Illustration of Verses 9-10

*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*

The first illustration of what Paul meant when he said spiritual gifts would be abolished whereas *to teleion* is permanent is that of a child compared to a mature adult.

A child leaves behind his infancy and childishness when he becomes an adult, or when he matures. A child leaves behind his infancy, with its limited ways of thinking and acting, to become mature in full grown manhood. Likewise, a Christian will leave behind the "childish" things of spiritual gifts to attain maturity.

A child thinks, feels, and speaks like a child because he has not yet reached the adult level. As his infancy is transformed into maturity, he puts away the childish things.

Paul said that the Corinthians were not spiritual, but carnal (3:1), even "babes in Christ," and that their excessive use of tongues was evidence of their "childish" maturity (14:18-20). The use

of spiritual gifts was a sign of babyhood. When maturity came, spiritual gifts (babyhood) would end.

This illustration is suggested by the previous uses of *teleios* and *nepios* (2:6 and 3:1). Tension existed in Corinth between maturity (2:6 *teleios*) and childishness (3:1 *nepios*).

This is a recurring theme (motif) throughout the letter. If they had been mature,

- they would not have had the problems they had
- Paul could have spoken to them differently

Paul said they were immature (*nepios*) infants (3:1, 13:11) because they were worldly (*sarkikos*) minded (3:1). In 2<sup>nd</sup> 14-16, Paul said that the *psuchikos* (natural person) could not receive the things of God, because those things are spiritually grasped. Spiritual things are foolishness to the worldly-minded person.

The letter to the Corinthian congregation is a compelling treatment of specific problems which had wreaked havoc in the congregation. When the problems were brought to Paul's attention, he dealt with them from the perspective of developing them from *nepios* to *teleios* Christians.

## Verse 12a. Second Illustration of Versus 9-10

*Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face.*

This is Paul's second contrast between "in part" and "to *teleion*". It is another way of stating verse 11 and they are both another way of stating verses 9-10.

This verse has consistently been understood from the earliest periods of the church history in terms of the second coming of Christ or heaven. Yet it is precisely this unproven assumption that hinders the understanding this passage.

Paul does not specify the precise meaning of "then" nor does he specify with whom Christians are to be face to face. Paul does not say we are going to see God face to face ("we see" has no expressed subject), much less that it will take place in heaven. This is not Paul's subject matter here.

Paul means "by means of a mirror" a polished metal mirror, not a glass window. He is saying that "now" the image is imperfect (because we are seeing by means of a metal mirror), but "then" they will see the real image, and it will be clear.

That is all Paul is saying. Remember, it is poetry. Poetry is allusive, suggestive, and so on, but it does not obscure its fundamental point: now our vision is imperfect; then our vision will be clear. It is the same fine point of verses 9-10, and verse 11 is just another way of illustrating it.

## Verse 12b. Third Way of Illustrating Verses 9-10

*Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

"I know" is the counterpart to the proceeding "I see" (v. 12a). Also, note the use of "now" and "then" in verse 12a as well.

"Know fully" (*epiginoskein*) is another way of saying "face to face." The "now" and "then" are correlative terms and must not be defined on *a priori* assumptions, but from this context. In verses 9-12, there are four pairs of correlative (parallel relation) phrases. The last three illustrate the first.

"ex merous" (in part)	vs.	"to teleion" (mature)
"to be a child"	vs.	"to be a man"
"to see dimly" (now)	vs.	"to see clearly" (then)
"to know partially" (now)	vs.	"to know fully" (then)

I believe that whatever Paul means by "to be a child" is also now, and "to be a man" is also then, and that "in part" is now and "to teleion" is then.

## What does "to teleion" mean?

It is obvious that Paul is again contrasting the temporal nature of spiritual gifts with the permanence of love. *To teleion* means full-grown or maturity.

In verse 11, Paul is saying that a Christian must mature and leave behind childish things and obtain the more excellent way (12:31). The most basic theme of this letter is the transition between *nepios* (3:1, 13:11) and *to teleion* (2:6, 13:10).

In verse 12a, Paul, it appears, is not talking about seeing God directly, but about the seeing of the most excellent way (*agape*). Vision is no longer obscured by *sarkikos* and *psuchikos* (2:14), but with love, the transition is made to *pneumatikos* (2:15).

When a person "grows up in Christ" (or puts on *agape*), his childishness and immaturity have been put away; he now acts, thinks, and talks like a mature Christian.

The spiritual gifts had become a sore point among the Corinthian Christians. It had become the cause of divisions (1:10, 12:25, and so on) and Paul notes in chapters 12-14 that though spiritual gifts are good, they are destined to terminate at Corinth, and that furthermore, they did not express the mature Christianity. They represent the "now" (infancy of the congregation), which Paul prays will mature in love. When that maturity arrives (*agape*, v. 1f), "then" spiritual gifts will be abolished.

It is obvious that both the childish and mature persons "in Christ" occurred in the Corinthians on earth. This agrees with the following scriptures.

*Phil. 3:15* - "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you."

*Eph. 4:15* - "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

*Col. 1:28 - "We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ."*

When both parts of verse 12 are viewed together with verse 11 as illustrative of the point in verses 9-10, the meaning is obvious. Instead of an unnecessary reference to Christ's second coming or heaven, or a hypothetical reference, the contrast is between a child and a mature person and describes an actual historical situation among the Corinthian Christians.

Spiritual gifts do not produce maturity. The illustration of a child becoming a man shows that maturity (*teleion*) comes in this life and before the coming of Christ and heaven.

### **The gender of *to teleion***

It has been argued that love could not be the meaning of *to teleion* because of the neuter article and gender of the phrase. But this argument "has no basis in fact" (Carroll Osburn). Dr. Osburn is the foremost Greek scholar among the cups and Sunday school brethren. He is not only known among them, but he is perhaps better known among the Greek and Bible scholars around the world. Dr. Osburn, who incidentally received his Ph.D. in Greek and Vanderbilt and is chairman of the board of the Bible department at Pepperdine, says

*In Greek literature, the neuter is used at times when referring to persons if it is not the individual's, but a general quality that is to be emphasized, and especially the neuter singular adjective is used to denote a plurality of elements which are in union" (Refers to Blass and DeBrunner A Greek Grammarian, page 76, and Winer and Buttman's Grammars.)*

He further says

*In this usage, the article does not function merely as a definite article to distinguish "a" from "the," but functions idiomatically before the adjective to express what would otherwise have to be expressed by a relative clause or by a noun."*

He continues,

*As A. T. Robertson has correctly noted, the use of the neuter singular in a construction such as this, rather than being a breach of gender, is perfectly normal Greek usage."*

So what is Dr. Osburn saying? He is saying that *to teleion* does refer to *agape*. Even though the gender differs between the two words, it is perfectly normal Greek usage for the neuter to refer to the feminine *agape*.

In Greek, the neuter is used often to refer to persons, if not the individual but a general quality like *agape* is being emphasized.

In verse 10, the positive (*to teleion*) explains the negative (*ek merous*). When the Christians at Corinth mature in love, spiritual gifts will end at Corinth. The maturation (*teleion*) is expressed all the way through this chapter in terms of love *agape*.

## Verse 13

*And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

Paul is simply showing the superiority of love. In verses 1-3, where A, A', B, and B' refer to spiritual gifts (see Figure 2), Paul contrasts them to C and C' which refer to the great virtues that man may acquire. Here he states that love is greater than the other two finalists.

### The meaning of "*to teleion*" again

It is apparent that Paul means "love" in his use of *to teleion* here. This fits the meaning of the smallest context (verses 8-13), the larger context of chapter 13 and chapters 12-14, and the general theme of the entire letter.

### History of interpretation

This passage has been interpreted three different ways by mainstream scholars since the first century, including

- maturity in love
- heaven or the coming of Christ
- the completed canon

Clement of Rome, a member of the church, wrote to the same church (Corinth) 40 years after Paul wrote to the same people. In a context where he is defining love (like Paul in verses 4-7), he used Paul's own terminology in 1 Corinthians 13 and said "In love were all the elect made perfect."

Isn't that interesting? Here is a man who was a leader of the early church and he said, "In love were all the elect made perfect." That is obviously the way he understood 1 Cor. 13:10. As has been shown, it was reasonable for him to reach that conclusion.

But this view has not been the most dominant interpretation throughout history. The most consistent ways the verse has been interpreted are heaven and the second coming of Christ and the completed canon.

Regarding the interpretation as heaven or the second coming of Christ, there is nothing in the context to justify equating this to *to teleion*. That simply must be imposed on the text.

For the last 80 years in America, *to teleion* has been interpreted as referring to the completed canon. David Lipscomb was most like influenced toward this view of *to teleion* by A. R. Fausset (*Jameson, Fausset, and Brown*, Volume 3, p. 322). (It is interesting to note that Brown did not share this view).

Attempts to trace this view back to Chrysoston are unconvincing. They have apparently arisen from a misreading of Lange's commentary. Chrysoston did not hesitate to take *to teleion* as meaning the hereafter. This cannot be traced back to him or be called the "traditional view."

Although it is true that through the inspired scriptures "the man of God is complete, equipped for every good work," (2 Tim. 3:16-17), there are serious problems with taking *to teleion* here as the completed canon.

For one thing, the canon of scripture is not under consideration in Romans 12:2 and James 1:25, which are cited to support this meaning in 1 Cor. 13:10. Serious doubts arise about the first century readers thinking of "the complete canon" when reading these verses. The contexts do not warrant this interpretation.

The *teleios* law in James and Romans is that the law has already been given and needs only to be followed and accepted. The perfect will and law of God were already at work when those passages were written and must not be construed to mean the completed canon.

There is nothing in the context of 1 Cor. 13:10 that warrants equating "completed canon" with *to teleion*. This interpretation cannot be reasoned from the chapter or the book. It must draw conclusions from elsewhere in the New Testament.

I maintain that you can know what Paul meant from a study of this passage alone, and then show how it parallels other New Testament passages.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Paul means by *to teleion*, maturity, the maturity that comes from love. This conclusion is supported by the following reasons.

1. The most immediate context (verses 8-13) shows that contrast between spiritual gifts (temporary) and love (permanent).
2. It fits in the context of the whole of chapter 13.
  - a. Maturation (*teleios*) is expressed all the way through chapter 13 in terms of love.
  - b. Verses 1-3 form a counterpart to verses 8-13.
  - c. All the way through chapter 13, the contrast is made between spiritual gifts and love.
3. Verses 4-7 must be seen against the background of the letter. They were *nepios* (3:1). If they had *agape*, they would not have had all these problems he wrote about in the letter. They would have been mature.
4. The context of the letter demands it. Paul's main concern was helping them make the transition between *nepios* and *teleios*.
5. The historical record demands it. Clement of Rome, an early Christian elder in the church, who knew some of the same people Paul addressed, understood its meaning to be love.

## **Notes**

# Calvinism: A Focus On Its Foundation

## Man's Free Will in View of God's Sovereignty

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*Greg DeGough*

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**Abstract**      This presentation addresses the foundations of Calvinism, namely the subject of man's free will. It begins by showing the positions that Calvinism takes concerning man's free will, God's sovereignty, and man's ability to respond to God. Quoting from several Calvinists, the author shows the logical arguments used to support their doctrine, and then shows that the arguments have no basis in standard definitions of logical argumentation. The author then points out the fallacies of the arguments from a scriptural perspective. The second major focus of the presentation concerns what the Bible says about man's free will, God's sovereignty, and man's ability to respond to God. The author clearly shows that God's sovereignty does not invalidate man's free will and ability to choose. The Calvinist view of these scriptures is also examined and shown to be faulty. Finally, the author summarizes the arguments and shows the implications of Calvinism, if it is true.

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### Introduction

- I. In discussing the matter of God's plan for man's salvation, it is inevitable that we are faced with the doctrines held by the proponents of popular theological systems.
- II. Many of these doctrines are based on fundamental misconceptions that do not have their foundation in God's word.
- III. Two of these misconceptions are held by the proponents of the theological system popularized by John Calvin in the 16th century. They have to do with the extremely important issues of the nature of God's sovereign power and the ability (or inability) found in man.
  - A. The reason they are misconceptions is not because they are illogical per se (although they are) but because they do not conform to the express teaching of major portions of God's word (In the end, this is what makes them illogical.)
  - B. It is especially important that our concepts of God's power and his relationship to our ability be thoroughly Biblical because:
    1. The Bible reveals truth about God. We have no other source of specific information about God and His will than His revelation, the Bible. Doctrinally, if what we believe about God is not biblical, it is not based on truth.
    2. The Bible reveals truth about ourselves. The Bible tells us things about our own nature that we would not know, or would otherwise deny, had God not convicted us by revealing them to us

*Jn. 15:22 - "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."*

*Heb. 4:12 - "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

3. We need truth in these areas. The concepts themselves are so important. The ideas we form concerning these concepts will color all of our thinking about God and his will for mankind.

#### IV. In this study, we will briefly cover the following subjects.

- A. The Calvinist view of God's sovereignty and will
- B. The Calvinist view of man's ability
- C. The Bible's teaching about God's sovereignty and will
- D. The Bible's teaching about man's ability

### Main Points

#### I. The Calvinist view of God's sovereignty and will

- A. God determines all that has occurred or will ever occur in His creation by His sovereign rule. In fact, He must do so to maintain His sovereignty.
  1. *"Nothing in this world happens by chance. God is in back of everything. He decides and causes all things to happen that do happen. He is not sitting on the sidelines wondering and perhaps fearing what is going to happen next. No, He has foreordained everything 'after the counsel of his will' (Eph. 1:11): the moving of a finger, the beating of a heart, the laughter of a girl, the mistake of a typist — even sin."*<sup>1</sup>
  2. *"The Scriptures not only teach that God predestined certain individuals unto eternal life, but that all events, both small and great, come about as the result of God's eternal decree. The Lord God rules over heaven and earth with absolute control; nothing comes to pass apart from his eternal purpose."*<sup>2</sup>
- B. Therefore, His will has but a single aspect; it consists only of positive decree. God decrees everything that has occurred or will occur.
  1. *"...If what I teach is true, that those who perished are destined to death by the eternal good pleasure of God, though the reason does not appear, then they are not found but made worthy of destruction...the eternal predestination of God, by which before the fall of Adam He decreed what should take place concerning the whole human race and every individual, was fixed and determined...God chose out of the condemned race of Adam those whom He pleased and reprobated whom He willed..."*<sup>3</sup>

2. Calvin considered the decree of the unconditional election and reprobation of particular men to be an inevitable corollary of the sovereignty of God.

- a. *"God has always been at liberty to bestow his grace on whom he would, [variously distributing/ favours as seems to him meet, [retaining/ the free right of electing and reprobating." <sup>4</sup>*

3. This makes God the origin of sin by "efficacious permission."

- a. *"It is even Biblical to say that God has foreordained sin. If sin was outside the plan of God, then not a single important affair of life would be ruled by God...Although sin and unbelief are contrary to what God commands (His preceptive will), God has included them in His sovereign decree (ordained them to certainly come to pass)...Sin comes about by the efficacious permission of God, to use Augustine's term (permissio efficax). Augustine did not want to imply that God was an unholy God. So he said that sin was permitted by God...Yet he realized that simply to say God permits sin is contrary to God's sovereignty and would make him a bystander in the bleachers, watching to see how the events on history's playing field turn out. So Augustine said that the permission is efficacious...God permits sin; thus man is to blame and not God. But God efficaciously permits sin: Sin is not only foreknown by God, it is also foreordained by God...the Bible is clear: God ordains sin." <sup>5</sup>*

- b. There is some difference of opinion among Calvinists about this point:

*"Originally, Adam's will was free from the dominion of sin; he was under no natural compulsion to choose evil, but through his fall he brought spiritual death upon himself and all his posterity. He thereby plunged himself and the entire race into spiritual ruin and lost for himself and his descendants the ability to make right choices in the spiritual realm." <sup>6</sup>*

However, if one accepts the idea that God's will has but a single aspect, there is no other conclusion that he can logically reach except that God is the origin of sin.

4. Calvin tried to avoid this conclusion, even though to do so He had to contradict himself repeatedly.

- a. **Indeterminism** — *"...that cannot be done without his will which is yet done contrary to his will. For it would not be done if he did not permit it, and permission is given, not without, but by his will." (E.P. 4)*

**Determinism** - *"...how foolish and frail is the support of divine justice afforded by the suggestion that evils come to be, not by his will, but merely by his permission...It is quite frivolous refuge to say that God otiosely permits them, when Scripture shows Him not only willing, but the author of them." (E.P. 10:11)*

**Indeterminism** — *"Therefore the great works of the Lord are contrived according to His desire, so that in a wonderful and ineffable way what is done against His will is yet not done beyond His will; for it would not be done did He not allow, and allow it not unwillingly, but willingly" (E.P. 10:14)*

**Determinism** — *"But of all the things which happen, the first cause is to be understood to be His will, because He so governs the natures created by Him as to determine all the counsels and the actions of men to the end decreed by Him."* (E.P. 10:12)

**Indeterminism** — *"I always affirm that the nature of man is at first created upright, lest the depravity which he contracted should be ascribed to God; and similarly that the death to which, though formerly the heir of life, he rendered himself subject, proceeded from his own fault so that God cannot be considered its author."* (E.P. 8:5)

**Determinism** — *"Who does not tremble at these judgements with which God works in the hearts of even the wicked whatever He will, rewarding them nonetheless according to desert? Again it is quite clear from the evidence of Scripture that God works in the hearts of men to incline their will just as He will, whether to do good for His mercy's sake or to evil according to their merits."* (E.P. 10:11)<sup>7</sup>

- b. Some Calvinist apologists don't even bother to struggle with the problem; they simply state that it is foolish to argue that God is not the author of sin, when the obvious conclusion of the scripture (read "Calvin's theology" - g.d.) is to the contrary.

- i. *"This is the awesome Biblical asymmetry: God ordains sin, and man is to blame. We cannot comprehend this."*<sup>8</sup>

5. If this doctrine were true, God would be convicted of conspiracy by His own word (Deut. 13; Eph. 5:11).

*Eph. 5:11 - "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."*

## II. The Calvinist view of man's ability

### A. In imparting salvation to man, God takes account of nothing within man.

1. *"Certainly they are far from honoring the grace of God as it merits who declare that, while it is common to all, it effectually resides in them because they have embraced it by faith. For all the time they would keep the cause of faith out of sight, namely that, elected to be sons by grace, they have afterwards bestowed upon them the spirit of adoption."* (E.P. II) *"...the faith by which the children of God enter in to possession of their salvation is...derived from election as its origin."* (E.P. 9:2)<sup>9</sup>
2. *"[God's] eternal choice of particular sinners unto salvation was not based upon any foreseen act or response on the part of those selected, but was based solely on His own good pleasure and sovereign will. Thus election was not determined by, or conditioned upon, anything that men would do, but resulted entirely from God's self-determined purpose...Before the foundation of the world, God chose particular individuals unto salvation. His selection was not based upon any foreseen response or act performed by those chosen. Faith and good works are the result, not the cause of God's choice."*<sup>10</sup>

3. "...divine election is always an unconditional election. God never bases His choice on what man thinks, says, does, or is. We do not know what God bases his choice on, but it is not on anything that is in man." <sup>11</sup>

B. Man is dead in sin (by decree) and this deadness causes him to be unable to respond to God without God's irresistible assistance.

1. Man has a dead heart of stone

- a. "...in the Old Testament the unregenerate is described as having a heart that is made of stone (Ezek. 11:19). A stone heart has no life. It is dead; it can do nothing. That is total inability...The Armenian compares the unregenerate to one who jumps out of a second story window, cracks three ribs, breaks his leg, and still lives...The Calvinist, however, would compare man to one who jumps off the top of the Empire State Building and is spattered over the sidewalk. Even if there were anything left of him when he landed, he could not know that he needed help, let alone cry out for it...And that is the picture of the sinner. He is dead in his sins and trespasses (Eph. 2:1,5)." <sup>12</sup>

*Ezek. 11:19* - "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh"

*Eph. 2:1.5* - "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;...Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved:)"

- b. "As the result of the fall, men are blind and deaf to spiritual truth. Their minds are darkened by sin; their hearts are corrupt and evil...Men left in their dead state are unable of themselves to repent, to believe the gospel, or to come to Christ. They have no power within themselves to change their natures or to prepare themselves for salvation." <sup>13</sup>

2. Man cannot desire to do good for he hates God and everything for which God stands.

- a. "...the pit of total depravity is that natural man does not even desire a good goal. He could not care less. That last statement is wrong. He does care: he hates the good and its source, namely, God." <sup>14</sup>

3. God hardens men so that they will not respond

- a. "...some think that God hardened the hearts of Pharaoh and Sihon after--not before--they became stubborn. However Deuteronomy 2:30 says that Sihon's refusal was caused by God's hardening of their hearts. There is nothing in the text or context to suggest that God hardened them as a punishment for their own sins...God caused their sin to come to pass." <sup>15</sup>

### III. The Bible's teaching about God's sovereignty and will

#### A. God is sovereign

1. Scriptures which speak of God's sovereignty (See Isa. 44:24-45:25 Isa. 46:5-13, Jer. 18:1-10, Acts 17:24-31, Rom. 9:6-29, and the following scriptures.)

*Psa. 115:3* - "But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases."

*Isa. 41:2-4* - "Who raised up one from the east? Who in righteousness called him to His feet? Who gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? Who gave them as the dust to his sword, and driven stubble to his bow? Who pursued them, and passed safely by the way that he had not gone with his feet? Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, am the first; and with the last I am He."

*Dan. 4:34b,35* - "...For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, What have you done?"

*Rom. 4:17b* - "...God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."

*Eph. 1:11,12* - "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

*2 Tim. 1:8-10* - "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"

*Tit. 1:1-3* - "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;"

*Heb. 1:10-12* - "And, thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shall thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

*1 Pet. 1:20* - "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you"

2. The sovereignty of God is an unending source of comfort for His children. The can live with the assurance that what their God has said will surely come to pass.
3. His sovereignty is governed by His moral character, such as his justice.

*Romans 3:25,26* - "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

4. He is not free to do anything He has the power to do. Part of His character that has been revealed to man is His love for man and His desire that men repent and be saved. His sovereign will is also governed by this desire. (See Rom. 9-11, Ezek. 18:20-32, and the following scriptures).

*Acts 10:34* - "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

*1Cor. 1:21* - "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

*Heb. 11:6* - "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

*Isa. 45:22* - "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

*Ezek. 33:11* - "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

*John 3:14-17* - "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

*Rom. 11:32* - "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

*1 Tim. 2:4-6* - "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

*2 Pet. 3:9* - "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

B. To be sovereign, God does not have to control everything that happens in His creation in a deterministic fashion. His sovereign will has two aspects: permissive and perfect.

1. We have already noticed several passages that declare His absolute power to decree.
2. The permissive aspect of His will is seen in His great longsuffering and patience.

*Rev. 2:21* - "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."

*Rom. 2:4* - "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

*2 Pet. 3:9,14,15* - "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance....Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;"

- a. The permissive aspect of His will in no way indicates that He permits sin because He caused it or is pleased with it. (Isa. 65:1-7). Rather, He waits patiently for the sinful, who have willfully turned away from him, to turn to Him in repentance and be saved. His patience leads them to repentance.

- b. The future punishment of the wicked satisfies the absolute hatred of sin that is a necessity of God's moral character (Rom. 2:3,5-11). But God does not want any to perish; he wants to save.
- 3. Because there have been creatures with free will in God's creation and God's sovereignty remains intact, then logically the concept of free will cannot impinge on God's sovereignty.<sup>16</sup> Calvinists who take this position (that there have been free-will creatures) do so because the word of God teaches it. However, they are not being consistent with their system's fundamental principles.

#### C. Objections to the Calvinistic view of God's sovereignty and will

- 1. If God's will was deterministic, notice what would necessarily happen to the redeeming act of Christ.

- a. It becomes a symbolic rather than real sacrifice.

- i. If the elect were chosen unconditionally and individually before time began, then Christ's death becomes not the act that truly redeems mankind, but a symbol of their election already accomplished in eternity by God's decree.
- ii. Calvin wrote concerning this subject, "[Christ] is the manner in which [God] discharges His work of grace in [the elect]. But why He takes them by the hand has another superior cause, that eternal purpose, namely, by which he destined them to life."<sup>17</sup>
- iii. This idea, if true, would destroy the fact that Jesus made a free choice to die for man's redemption as the scriptures say He did.

*Matt. 26:39* - "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

*Matt. 26: 53,54* - "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me."

*John 10:17,18* - "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

- iv. For a Calvinist, if he is true to the implications of his doctrine, Jesus' death is not truly substitutionary, it is merely symbolic.

- b. It becomes irrelevant, merely an accommodation for man.

- i. Calvinist doctrine invariably views the redeeming death of Christ as an accommodation to man, from the perspective of its benefits for man.
- ii. However, the Scriptures emphasize that the redemption satisfied God's desire to save man, even enabled Him to save man.

*Heb. 9:14* - "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

*Rom. 3:25,26* - "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

- iii. Jesus' sacrificial death enabled God to save whom He pleases. He pleases to save all those who appropriate that salvation provided by Christ through faith.
- iv. Whether we accept or reject the salvation provided through the death and resurrection of Jesus is irrelevant to the efficacy of that sacrifice. God and his moral necessities are satisfied through the sacrifice for sin.

## 2. How can a man who God has caused to sin ever be truly deserving of punishment?

- a. "...if [God's] will has but a single aspect, God is necessarily insincere; for he is ostensibly angry toward impenitent sinners with whom he secretly must be pleased, since they are but fulfilling His immutable will for them." (cf. Gen. 6:3)<sup>18</sup>
- b. Paul should know better than to feel remorse and sorrow for those whom God has reprobated by His design and will (Rom. 9:1-5; 11:13-14).

## 3. Calvin was forced to view God as an arbitrary "game-player" by his false assumptions.

- a. Concerning 2 Pet. 3:9, Calvin wrote:

*"So wonderful is his love towards mankind that he would have them all to be saved, and is of his own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost."*

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*"But it may be asked, If God wishes none to perish, why is it that so many do perish? To this my answer is that no mention is here made of the hidden purpose of God, according to which the reprobate are doomed to their own ruin, but only of his will as made known to us in the gospel. For God there stretches forth his hand without a difference to all, but lays hold only of those, to lead them to himself, whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world"*<sup>19</sup>

- b. Robert Shank puts together some of Calvin's more fanciful thoughts explaining the Bible's references to the possibility of apostasy to show the great lengths to which Calvin went in supporting his system of theology, even at the expense of God's character.

*"In all these passages and others which could be cited, the warnings [against possibility of apostasy] are directed to men who obviously are conceived of as being members of the elect body, the true ekklesia...unless we accept Calvin's assumption (3:2:11,12) of 'an inferior operation of the Spirit' by which he enlightens some with a present sense of grace which afterwards proves 'evanescent' and 'sheds some rays of grace on the reprobate, afterwards allowing these to be extinguished' so that by the express design of God they perish--all because 'the will of God is immutable' and His eternal counsel for them was reprobation rather than salvation, so that 'when God shows himself propitious to them, it is not as if he had truly rescued them from death and taken them under his protection.' despite the fact that they 'believe God to be propitious to them, inasmuch as they accept the gift of reconciliation' ...ad infinitum, ad nauseam (God plays games with the souls of men? The death of Christ for the sins of the world was all in fun?)"*<sup>20</sup>

#### D. Calvinist objections to this teaching

1. Palmer writes the following concerning objections raised against making God the origin of sin:

*"There are two ways to solve the problem: one is rationalistic and the other is Biblical...in solving the problem [the Armenian] substitutes man's reason for the Bible...The question that is being asked is not: What does the Bible say? (I beg to differ with Mr. Palmer! g.d.). But rather: What can my finite reason understand? What is contradictory and what is not?"*<sup>21</sup>

- a. This argument needs to be seen for what it really is, an escape tactic. When pressed with the illogic and unsound Biblical reasoning of their theology, Calvinists appeal to such arguments as this.<sup>22</sup>
- b. Rationalism, in this context, is reason without revelation. We must show that reason is demanded by God, and we must defeat any attempts to discount the use of reason enlightened by God's revelation. Using reason to understand God's revelation, produces knowledge of the truth.
  - i. However, we must also recognize that it is possible for us to become mere rationalists if we divorce our reason from the revelation of God's word.
- c. When Calvinists object to demands that their system be Biblically consistent and logically sound, as if these demands were a result of humanistic rationalism, they must be shown that the very reason they have a system is the result, of rational, deductive processes. Does this fact make their system the result of humanistic rationalism? The fallacy of this objection is that they wish to be rational when it suits them, but wish to object to rational thinking when it shows that their system is inconsistent.

- i. *"The purpose of the Bible is not to give a systematic presentation of doctrines...However, by comparing Scripture with Scripture it is possible, at times, to arrive at a fairly full description of those facts...And sometimes logic—to the dismay of some Biblicists—has to be used. But there is nothing wrong with using reason and logic if we do it properly."* <sup>23</sup>
2. *"If...God foreknows what will come to pass in every event, then only that which he foreknows can come to pass."* <sup>24</sup>
- a. The position that holds God's inability to foreknow that of which He is not the cause is based on the concept of determinism, part and parcel of Calvin's doctrinal stance, and is to be rejected. God's foreknowledge and his decretive will do connect but only where he chooses to connect them.
  - b. By this reasoning, God becomes the cause of sin, and Jesus's death is no longer voluntary and authentic, but symbolic.
  - c. Consider these texts concerning foreknowledge and predestination of individual (Eph. 1:3-14 and the following scriptures).

*1 Pet. 1:2 - "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*

*Rom. 8:28-30 - "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."*

*Rom. 11:2a - "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew..."*

- i. The context of these passages shows contingency based on individual submission (Rom. 11:7-24, Eph. 5:1-7, [cf. Col. 1:21-23], and those listed below.)

*Rom. 8:12,14,17 - "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh...For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God...And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*

*2 Pet. 1:10 - "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"*

#### IV. The Bible's teaching about man's ability

- A. God attributes to man an ability, and responsibility, to make decisions concerning his destiny and how he will respond to God.

**Mark 16:15,16** - "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

**John 3:16,18** - "...whoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life... He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

**John 6:33,35,51** - "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world... And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst... I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

**John 7:17** - "If any one chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own"

**John 8:44** - "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

**Acts 17:30** - "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

**Rom. 5:1,2,17** - "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God... For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)"

**2 Cor. 5:20** - "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

**1 Tim. 4:9,10** - "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe."

**Heb. 11:6** - "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

1. Man's choices are necessarily limited by the essential nature of his being. God has chosen when and where man may live.

**Acts 17:26** - "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;"

Just as God is limited in his choices by his character, so man is limited in his choices by the fact that he is human and sinful. For instance, there is a sense in which man, though free, cannot decide to save himself. He is not capable of providing the satisfactory payment for sin.

**Rom. 3:23** - "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

**Rom. 6:23** - "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

**Acts 4:10-12** - "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Nevertheless, like God, he still has real options and can authentically choose.

*Rev. 22:17* - "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

2. Jesus made a free choice to die for our sins

*Matt. 25:53* - "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

*Heb. 5:8* - "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;"

3. The scriptures teach that it is possible for man to respond to God, or reject him, if he so chooses.

*Luke 7:30* - "Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Legion,' he replied, because many demons had gone into him."

*John 1:11* - "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

*John 4:23,24* - "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

*John 5:40* - "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

*Acts 7:51* - "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

*Rom. 2:4* - "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

*Heb. 10:29* - "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

*2 Pet. 3:9* - "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

*Rev. 2:20,21* - "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."

4. Notice that the betrayal of Christ to his enemies and his subsequent death was part of God's sovereign plan.

*Acts 2:22,23* - "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:"

*Acts 4:24-28* - "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the lord, and against his Christ.

*For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast annointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."*

However, Paul concludes that the plan could have been thwarted by man

*1 Cor. 2:6-10 - "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."*

Man was free to refuse to crucify the Lord of glory and thus ruin the possibility of salvation. God prevented this from happening, not by forcing those wicked men to crucify the Lord of glory, but by keeping the message of his plan secret from man until the Spirit revealed it through the prophets and apostles after the fact.

5. Even those who are "hardened" can respond to the Lord through faith (Rom. 11:7-24)

## B. Objections to the Calvinistic view of man's ability

1. If man cannot respond to God, what kind of a horrible God must he be?

*Deut 30:19 - "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live"*

*Jer. 25:4,5 - "And though the Lord has sent you all his servants the prophets again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention. They said, Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and your evil practices, and you can stay in the land the Lord gave to you and your fathers for ever and ever."*

*2 Chron. 7:14 - "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

*Jer. 3:12,14 - "The plunderers have come on all the desolate heights in the wilderness, for the sword of the Lord shall devour from one end of the land to the other end of the land; no flesh shall have peace...This saith the Lord: Against all My evil neighbors who touch the inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit—behold, I will pluck out the house of Judah from among them."*

*Ezek. 18:30-32 - "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies, says the Lord God, therefore turn and live!"*

*Isa. 55:6,7 - "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."*

*Matt. 11:28 - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

*Rev. 22:17 - "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*

2. It is Calvin's god, not the God of the Bible, who destines men to irredemable destruction and then taunts them with the promise that all may come for salvation, yea, even demands that they come, and punishes them because they do not!

### C. Calvinist objections to this teaching

1. Man's deadness because of sin precludes his ability to listen, understand, and respond to God. He has a heart of stone (see section II.B.1).
  - a. Compare Ezek. 11:19 with Ezek. 18:30-32.
  - b. How was Israel to obtain a new heart to replace their heart of stone? Through their repentance.
  - c. Calvinists make the mistake of taking the analogy between physical and spiritual life too far.

*John 3:6 - "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

Physical conception and birth, for instance, involve the beginning of the total experience of life for a human being, and physical death involves passing out of physical existence. Spiritual birth, however, is not the beginning of spiritual existence, but a change of state from being spiritually dead (as in "separated from the life of God"), to being "alive with Christ." Death (Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 2:13) refers to man's spiritual status, and not to man in the totality of his being. Because it refers to his spiritual status, it does not have a radical effect of totally disabling man's reason and ability to respond to God.

- d. The mistake made by Calvinists can be clearly seen in their own practical application of their doctrine. They cannot be true to their claim that all depends on God's unconditional, deterministic, eternal choice for they eventually must appeal to man's responsibility.
  - i. *"When anyone learns from the Bible about the enormity of his sin, he should want to run to God and plead, 'Help me, Jesus...Save me, Jesus'"*

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*"It is sufficient...to say to an uncovered person: 'Christ died for sin...If you want to be saved believe on Him. It is your responsibility, and God freely offers you salvation through Jesus. Believe.'"*

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*"...the Bible does not want us to reason in an unbiblical fashion and say that we will wait until the Spirit moves us before we believe...So believe. God commands you to. But if you do, thank God for causing you to do so." 25*

2. *"...God becomes a waiting God who in his powerlessness has actually been humanized...Does our redemption depend on God's decision, or does it depend on ours?" 26 "Does salvation depend partly on God (the giving of Christ on the cross) or wholly on God (the giving of Christ to die for us plus the giving of our faith)?" 27*

- a. The question that Berkouwer asks is not the question that we face when we consider the difference between monergism (one efficient agent in salvation) and synergism (cooperation in salvation). The real question is: Does our redemption depend on God's decision alone, or does it depend on God's decision and ours? We need to recognize such smokescreens for what they really are.
- b. Let us be certain to notice that God truly is "a waiting God."

*Matt. 23:37 - "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"*

*Rom. 10:21 - "But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."*

*2 Pet. 3:7-9.15 - "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance....And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;"*

- c. In synergism Calvinists contend that "God's decision is made dependent on man's decision."<sup>28</sup> However, this is only true if the election of men to salvation is particular. Since the election is corporate ("in Christ," Eph. 1:3-14) this objection does not hold. Berkouwer's theology raises this objection, not the Scripture.
- d. The position that holds man's ability and responsibility to respond to God does not imply that man contributes something to his salvation. However, there is a Biblical sense in which man does save himself.

*1 Tim. 4:16 - "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."*

*Acts 2:40 - "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."*

The Savior who came "that the world through him might be saved" is of no benefit except to "as many as receive him" and "believe in his name" (John 3:17; 1:12).

- e. Taking the position of "free-will" does not in any fashion take away God's glory and replace it with man's self-conceit as some have charged.<sup>29</sup> Without Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, which is a gift of God's grace and has nothing to do with anything man has done (or could do) to merit it, there is not even the possibility of salvation. Thus, salvation depends totally on God's gift through Christ's sacrifice. By showing the Bible's teaching about the conditional gift of salvation it is not as if one is providing a different method of salvation than total trust in Jesus to save. Faith is not the ground of salvation it is the condition whereby it is appropriated.

*Rom. 5:1,2 - "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*

3. "Is God the author of redemption alone or also of faith?"<sup>30</sup>

a. Does the Lord give faith?

i. Consider the following scriptures

*Rom. 12:3 - "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."*

*1 Cor. 12:9 - "To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;"*

*Gal. 5:22 - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"*

(these concern faith for Christian living)

*Eph. 2:8 - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"*

(the entire clause "by grace you have been saved, through faith" is the "gift of God" here. "This" is neuter [*touto*] while "faith" is feminine [*pisteos*]). These passages do not pertain to God giving saving faith, therefore they are not pertinent to our discussion.

ii. However, we must consider the following scriptures.

*2 Pet. 1:1 - "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"*

*Acts 18:27 - "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:"*

*Phil 1:29 - "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"*

iii. These are considered to be strengthened by Matt. 13:10-16 and the following passages which supposedly teach that it is not given to some to know and believe the truth.

*John 6:37,44,65 - "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out...No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day...And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."*

*John 12:37-40 - "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the lord been revealed?"*

*Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."*

*Acts 13:48 - "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."*

*Acts 16:14 - "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."*

*2 Tim. 2:25 - "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;"*

*1 Pet. 2:8 - "...even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."*

- iv. We must conclude that there is a sense in which faith is a gift from God. However there is no substantiation in these passages for the idea that God gives faith arbitrarily. Rather the testimony of the Scriptures is the opposite.
- b. The Scriptures also teach that faith is something which is from man and that God indiscriminately takes this faith from man into account regarding salvation (Heb 11:6; Rom.3:21-5:2; 11:7-24 [this passage proves that salvation is predicated on man's faith and is not conditional]; Gal 2:16-3:29).
- 4. "Faith and repentance are divine gifts and are wrought in the soul through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit"<sup>31</sup> "(John 6:44)...man cannot choose Jesus. He cannot even take the first step to go to Jesus, unless the Father draws him."<sup>32</sup>
  - a. How does God draw man to him?

*John 6:45,61-65 - "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me....When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."*

- b. Compare the following verses.

*Rev. 2:20,21 - "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."*

*Rom. 2:4 - "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"*

*Pet. 3:9 - "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

If God gives opportunity to repent and yet man has not the ability, where is the opportunity? Why does God wait for man to repent if he determines when they repent?

## V. Untenable implications of Calvinist presuppositions

A. The Calvinistic view of God's will as deterministic necessarily places man in a no-man's land where authenticity regarding decision-making and obedience is not possible.

1. By denying the freedom of the will with regard to salvation, righteousness and sin, there is a necessary spill-over of this concept of bondage into the other realms of life. If man cannot think and will for himself in the most important area of life, how can he in lesser areas.
2. This is partially why so many in the religious world today think that it is impossible to be morally righteous and consequently they justify the practice of sin as natural and impossible to completely overcome.
3. Calvinism will ultimately (through its logic) lead to complete subjectivity in matters of religion and human existence
  - a. If the Lord controls my will, then what I do must be the will of the Lord. "The Lord told me to do so-and-so."
  - b. The denial of free will logically opens man to outside control from varied sources, as in demons, subliminal influences, and so on. These are things the Scripture says the child of God need not fear.

*1 John. 4:4,5 - "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them."*

*Isa. 8:12-15 - "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread, and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured."*

- c. Many Christians believe that they are not saved because they don't "feel" as close to God as they think they should.

B. In Calvinism authentic action on man's part in regard to his salvation is not possible. This produces the inevitable and frightening question: "Am I one of the elect?" The doctrine of perseverance is of no value to quiet this concern for only the elect will persevere and there is a real possibility that the evidence of election in one's personal experience is unauthentic

(see section III.C.3.b of the outline). There is no such tension in the scriptural teaching concerning salvation, for there man acts authentically and objectively to appropriate salvation through living, working faith. In the end, Calvinists must concede ground for the only answer they have to this problem is the same answer Paul gives to the Philippians and Galatians: "...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling...for at the proper time we shall reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Phil. 2:12; Gal. 6:9)

1. *"The only evidence of election is effectual calling, that is, the production of holiness. And the only evidence of the genuineness of this call and the certainty of our perseverance is a patient continuance in well doing."*<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

- I. We must maintain a consistent hermeneutic, letting Scripture interpret Scripture, lest we fall into the same error of wild prooftexting and ingenious interpretation used by Calvinist apologists to validate their own presuppositions that they bring to the study of God's word. We must determine what the whole of Scripture teaches about such a broad subject as God's sovereignty and man's will. When we do so faithfully we will not find irreconcilable propositions but harmonious truth.
- II. Rejecting deterministic thinking regarding the will of man places real challenges before us to do right. The responsibility for our sin or our good actions rests on us as we submit to, or reject, God's will.
  - A. *"I remember hearing a story about a boy, a new convert, who was asked how he was doing in his new Christian life. The boy replied that there were two dogs fighting inside him, a good dog and a bad dog. When asked, 'which dog wins?' he replied, 'The one I say 'sic 'em' to.'"*<sup>34</sup>
- III. We must understand that the underlying concept behind evangelism is the ability of men to change their minds and respond to the preaching of the truth "He [calls them] to this through our gospel, that [they] might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Thess. 2:14).
  - A. We must also understand that no other means has been provided through which the souls of men may be encouraged to change. It is the gospel and the gospel alone that can produce the necessary change in the minds of men that can lead them to Christ for salvation. We cannot give up preaching the gospel, even if no one seems to care about it much any more, for it is the only provision God has given by which He pleads with men "be reconciled!" (2Cor. 5:18-20; Rom. 10:12-17)

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9. John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, cited by Shank, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
10. Steele & Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 33.
11. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.
13. Steele & Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 29.
14. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
16. See quotation from Steele & Thomas, section II.A.2.
17. John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, cited by Shank, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
18. Robert Shank, *Life in the Son*, Springfield, MO.: Wescott Publishers, 1961, p. 349.
19. John Calvin, *Commentary On The New Testament*, *ad loc.*, cited by Shank, *Elect In The Son*, p. 95. Shank comments on the quotation, "Such deception would be blameworthy in men, and no less so in God. Thank God, such duplicity is only a figment of Calvinism and not at all a *modus operandi* of God."
20. Shank, *Elect In The Son*, p. 53.
21. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
22. And others! "...the Calvinist freely admits that his position is illogical, ridiculous, nonsensical, and foolish...The Calvinist's motto is Deuteronomy 29:29." (Palmer, pp. 85-86). This is supposed to satisfy the radical contradictions and Biblical misinterpretations that the imaginations of John Calvin have presented to the religious world?
23. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 54, 66.
26. G. C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1960, pp. 28, 229.
27. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
28. Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

29. Ibid.
30. Palmer, op. cit., p. 19.
31. Steele & Thomas, op. cit., p. 53.
32. Palmer, op. cit., p. 16.
33. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 207, cited by Shank, *Elect In The Son*, pp 213, 214
34. J. W. Jepson, *Don't Blame It All On Adam*, Minneapolis, MN.: Bethany House Publishers, 1984, p. 53

**Abstract** The problem of suffering is one that has plagued mankind since Adam's fall. Evidences of suffering abound in the world: plagues, starvation, murder, tyranny, and the list continues. Yet it seems that it is hard for Christians to accept that they, too, must suffer though their sins be forgiven and they stand righteous in the sight of God. Many view Christianity as a panacea for their problems, only to be disillusioned by the reality of the Christian struggle. This presentation looks at suffering from a biblical standpoint and shows that suffering is a necessary part of God's plan. It also shows how Christians can prepare themselves for the sufferings they will face.

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The question of why bad things happen to good people is as old as mankind. It is the issue raised in the book of Job, thought by some to be the oldest portion of scripture, dating back to the Patriarchal Age. It was the problem confronted in 650 B.C. by Habbakuk when he asked, "O Mighty God...wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" (Hab. 1:12-13)

During the long period when the Hebrew prophets were silent, Epicurus, a Greek philosopher, sought to understand why evil existed in the world. He concluded that:

- Either God desires to prevent evil, but cannot (in which case He is not all powerful); or
- He has the power to prevent evil, and does not want to (in which case He is not good); or
- He has neither the power nor the desire to prevent evil (in which case He is neither good nor all-powerful); or
- He has the power to prevent evil, and wants to (in which case there is no reason for the presence of evil in the world).

Celsus, a Roman medical author and contemporary of the apostles, labeled the idea that an all-powerful and beneficent God took an interest in man as absurd. He knew that evil existed. He was unable to say why.

## A Full Answer Awaits the Lord's Coming

Why do the righteous suffer? Multitudes have been intrigued by the question. The great and good men who have pondered it have provided different, sometimes contradictory, answers. It may be that no definitive answer is possible. It may be that an entirely reliable and satisfactory answer must await the coming of the Lord.

*Not now, but in the coming years,  
It may be in that Better Land,  
We'll read the meaning of our tears,  
And there, sometime, we'll understand.  
We'll catch the broken threads again,  
And finish what we here began.  
Heaven will all mysteries explain,  
And there, up there, we'll understand.*

*— Maxwell N. Cornelius*

Since at our present level of understanding we only “know in part,” perhaps the most we can hope to do is to find a few beams of light with which to penetrate the deep darkness.

## **The Operation of Natural Law**

Why do the righteous suffer? Why does anyone suffer? Part of the answer must lie in the fact that all beings, both saints and sinners, are subject to natural laws. And the operation of those natural laws sometimes brings injury and pain.

Think of two men on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of a tall building. One is a Christian standing on a scaffold washing windows. He accidentally loses his footing. The natural law of gravity takes over and plunges him to his death on the sidewalk below. The other man is a dope addict. As he smokes pot, he imagines he can fly like a bird. He intentionally steps out of the window. Once again the law of gravity takes over and plunges him to his death.

Natural law can be a great blessing. Life as we know it would be impossible without the law of gravity and the other natural laws built into the universe by the great Creator. But those same laws which have so much potential for good also hold the prospect for evil.

Fire can heat one's house and cook one's food. But, out of control, it can also burn your house and you with it. Freezing temperatures serve the useful purpose of destroying some of the insects which, left unchecked, would destroy our crops. They may also cause ice to form on the roadway, causing a car to skid and injure or kill its occupants.

Natural law, like God, is no respecter of persons. It does not inquire of one's moral status. It exacts its toll impartially on all who break it, regardless of how good or bad a person is.

So, if we are going to accept the assets involved in living on this planet, we must be prepared to accept its liabilities as well—including the pain.

## **Self-Inflicted Pain**

A further reason why righteous people (and the unrighteous, too) suffer is that the injuries are self-inflicted.

Such was clearly the case with the prodigal son. He was reduced to penury and hunger "in the far country" simply because he made some bad decisions. He could not blame his father, or his elder brother, or the servants at home. Indeed, there was no one to blame but himself.

Spiritual laws operate with the same predictability as do natural laws. Thus Paul affirmed in his letter to the church at Galatia:

*Gal. 6:7-8 - "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."*

Hosea spoke of those who "sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7).

It is obvious that we sometimes bring suffering on ourselves. And we often want God to remove the consequences of our wrongs without touching the causation. The man suffering from a hangover may ask God to ease his headache, even though he is not prepared to ask God to take away the thirst for alcohol which brought on the pain.

Many have insisted on the right to sow their wild oats, and have then prayed for crop failure. It is, of course, ludicrous for one to pound on his finger with a hammer and then ask, "Why did this happen to me?"

## The Role of Others

The lives of all humans on earth are so intertwined that a single act by a single individual may sometimes trigger a domino effect which brings tragedy to numerous others far removed from the event. The Jews had so often seed the evils of fathers visited on their children that they reduced this familiar experience to a proverb, "*The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge*" (Ezek. 18:2).

The person who drives under the influence of alcohol is not just risking injury to himself. His car may slam into another, killing and maiming innocent strangers. But it also happens that those who love us most, hurt us worst. "*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*" ('Rom. 14:7).

But the action of natural law and the fact that some hurts are self-inflicted or come from others do not account for all the suffering in the world. Some suffering comes from Satan. And some suffering comes from God!

## In Satan's Hand

The experience of Job is a classic example of suffering that originates with Satan. Job was a prosperous, god-fearing land owner when he became the pawn of Satan.

There is an implication in the Old Testament narrative that Satan, having surveyed the whole human family, expressed disdain for all. God's response was, "Hast thou considered my servant Job...?" Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, "Doth Job fear God for naught?" Clearly

Satan believed that every man, including Job, had his price. He declared that Job's fidelity to God was based on self-interest rather than piety. The word "naught" carries the idea of doing something freely, without thought of recompense. Satan affirmed that Job served God because it paid dividends.

Within the permissive will of God, Satan began to test his theory. In quick succession, he took away Job's livestock, servants, and children. Lastly, he took Job's health as well.

Job and his "friends" spent many days pondering over what had happened to Job. The "friends" were certain that Job had brought his misfortune on himself by some evil which he had done. While disclaiming any wrongdoing on his part, Job was at a total loss to explain the evil which had befallen him.

The puzzling book never seems to yield the answer to the enigma of why the righteous suffer, but it does make clear that suffering sometimes has its origin in Satan.

## God's Role in Suffering

As surprising as it may seem, other passages of scripture affirm that God, too, has a role in suffering. But what is that role?

### Punishment For Wrongdoing

In the first seven chapters of the book of Genesis can be found three instances of suffering as punishment from God.

*Gen. 3:17-18 - "And unto Adam he said, Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee..."*

*Gen. 4:9, 11, 13 - "And the Lord said unto Cain...And now art thou cursed from the earth...And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear."*

*Gen. 6:3 - "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."*

The foregoing passages establish the premise that God punishes sin. It may be inferred that when a righteous man sins he runs the risk of punishment just as the unrighteous man does.

So closely has punishment become identified with sin that even the disciples thought there was a causal relationship between sin and suffering. Jesus twice dispelled that misconception.

*Luke 13:1-5 - "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all*

*men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*

*John 9:1-3 - "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."*

It is true that all sin will eventually lead to suffering, but it is not true that all suffering is directly traceable to sin.

## Spiritual Growth

*Rom. 5:1-4 - "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:"*

But for pain, an oyster would never produce a pearl, and but for tribulations, a Christian would never develop a firm and unshakeable hope. If the world were a "flowery bed of ease," it would produce no tempered saints "tried as with fire" (1 Pet. 1:7). We want a world without pain. We need a world with pain so as to promote spiritual growth. An anonymous poet expressed it thusly:

He prayed for strength that he might achieve;  
 he was made weak that he might obey.  
 He prayed for health that he might do greater thing;  
 he was given infirmity that he might do better things.  
 He prayed for riches that he might be happy;  
 he was given poverty that he might be wise.  
 He prayed for power that he might have the praise of men;  
 he was given weakness that he might feel the need of God.  
 He prayed for all things that he might enjoy life;  
 he was given life that he might enjoy all things.  
 He received nothing that he asked for—all that he hoped for;  
 his prayer was answered—he was most blessed

## Divine Chastisement

*Heb. 12:5-8, 11 - "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons....Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but*

*grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."*

Chastisement is part of the learning process. "It is good for me to have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes" (Psa. 119:71). Of Jesus it was said, "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8).

Some lessons can be learned in no other way than through suffering.

I walked a mile with Pleasure,  
She chattered all the way,  
But left me none the wiser,  
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,  
And ne'er a word said she,  
But, oh, the things I learned from her,  
When Sorrow walked with me.

—Robert Browning Hamilton

## Preparation to Comfort

The dark mystery of suffering is further illuminated in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians.

*2 Cor. 1:3-4 - "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."*

Is it possible that pain is a part of our on-the-job training? When we suffer, as we must, and then find consolation, as we surely will, we are better prepared to console others whose suffering is similar to our own.

Indeed, the effort to console others often has a healing effect on our own sorrow. Illustrative of this is a Chinese tale related by Harold Kushner in his book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. A woman had lost her only son to death. She went to a holy man for help in bringing her son back to life. Instead, the holy man asked her to bring him a mustard seed from a home that had never known sorrow, and he would use it to drive sorrow from her life.

Seeing a splendid mansion and thinking that surely there could be no sorrow there, the woman knocked and gained admittance only to find that great tragedy had recently befallen its inhabitants. Believing that her sorrow would enable her to help them, the woman stayed to comfort them before resuming her search for a house that had never known sorrow. Her search took her to hovels and palaces, in all of which she heard stories of sadness and misfortune. Ultimately, she became so involved in ministering to other people's grief that she forgot about her quest for the magical mustard seed, never realizing that it had in fact driven the sorrow out of her life.

Sorrow comes to each of us, and it may be that our greatest source of comfort lies in our becoming involved in comforting others.

## How to Prepare

But perhaps we are asking the wrong question. Suffering is a fact of life confirmed by both scripture and experience.

*Gen. 47:9 - "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of my life been."*

*Job 14:1 - "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble."*

*2 Tim. 3:12 - "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

From Rachel weeping for her children, to Israel groaning in Egypt, to the lamentation for the innocents slain at the birth of Christ, to the cry of Jesus from the cross, to a saint now writhing in agony in a modern hospital room, the question is ever the same—why?

Inasmuch as suffering is an integral part of the human experience, it may be futile to ask why it happens. Knowing that it does happen, it may be more appropriate to ask, "How shall I prepare to deal with suffering when it comes." And the Bible provides the answer.

We are encouraged to avail ourselves of prayer, which triggers the help of the Spirit of God. Notice Paul's words to the Christians in Rome.

*Rom. 8:26, 28 - "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered...And we know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord and are called according to his purpose."*

We are taught to rely on the consolation of God's word. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

We are admonished to keep our eyes on the invisible.

*2 Cor. 4:16-18 - "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

The sentiment of this verse is expressed in the legends inscribed on three arches spanning the doorway of a cathedral in Milan, Italy. Over one arch is the inscription, "All that pleases is but for a moment." Over a second are the words, "All that troubles is but for a moment." Over the third, "That only is important which is eternal."

When tragedy came to Job, he might well have reacted by cursing the Sabeans who stole his oxen, or denouncing the fire which consumed his sheep, or railing against the wind which killed his children, or criticising God who stood by and allowed it to happen. Instead, he responded in

faith by declaring, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed by the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

Let suffering come! Let pain do its worst! But know this: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30:5).

And as George Matheson put it:

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee.  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.

**Abstract** Partaking of the Lord's Supper is an item of worship that God has commanded us to observe on the first day of the week. Not only are we commanded to observe it, but we gain a blessing when we eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord. Unfortunately, many have perverted this sacred institution and violated the commandment of God. One common perversion is the use of fermented wine in the communion. This presentation examines what the Bible has to say about the fruit of the vine and refutes the use of fermented wine in the observance of the Lord's Supper.

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*Mt. 26:29 - "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine."*

*Mk. 14:25 - "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine."*

Conclusion:

1. This liquid is a drink element
2. This drink element is the fruit of the vine

We must then determine what kind of drink element the vine produces. Is there a liquid, a drink, that is produced by the vine? Surely we know what kind of liquid drink the vine produces. Go into a grape vineyard when the grapes are ripe, grasp a cluster of grapes in your hand, and squeeze the juice into a cup. Is there anyone living who will deny that this is the fruit of the vine? It is easy to see, either by reason or by demonstration, it is a drink; it is fruit of the vine and this fulfills the scriptural requirements for the drink element in the communion. Please, brethren, let's stand on safe and scriptural ground. In this, we cannot accept a fermented, alcoholic, and intoxicating liquor, which no vine under heaven and on the earth produces, as a drink element in the communion.

Notice what the vine produces. The word "fruit" (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25) is from the Greek *gennema*. It means "offspring, progeny, fruit, produce."<sup>1</sup> Its basic and fundamental meaning is "that which has been begotten or born."<sup>2</sup> That which is "born of" anything "comes forth." Notice "born of" woman (Matt. 11:11) and "comes forth" from woman 9Eccl. 5:15). What liquid fruit is "born of" and "comes forth" from the grape vine except grape juice? There is not a grape vine on earth that produces an alcoholic and intoxicating drink!

God ordained this fruit-producing law in the beginning.

*Gen. 1:11 - "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself."*

The vine is called a "tree" (Ezek. 15:2). It yields fruit after its kind and then its fruit has "seed in itself." The grapes contain the juice in which is the seed. No tree on earth yields an alcoholic and intoxicating beverage. A tree is known by its fruit, and a "good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" (Matt. 7:18). The vine does not produce intoxicating wine that "at the last biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. 23:32). The fruit of the vine is not as "the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps" (Deut. 32:33). But it is nutritive and healthful, and may be safely taken by young and old.

## **Fruit Producing Law**

Christ used this known and accepted fruit producing law to teach a spiritual lesson.

*John 15:5 - "I am the vine, ye are the branches"*

*John 15:4 - "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."*

The fruit of the vine is produced on a branch in contact with the vine. We must have contact with Christ if we are to bear his fruit. Similarly, the unfermented juice of the grape is produced on a branch that is part of the vine, but the fermented wine is not and cannot be produced on a branch which is part of the vine. If we sever grapes from the vine, press out the juice, and let fermentation produce alcoholic wine, this wine is not the fruit of the vine. It is a product of fermentation.

Jesus said, "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except in abide in the vine." If this fermented wine, produced out of contact with the vine, is the fruit of the vine, then we as "branches" can sever ourselves from Christ, the vine, and still bear fruit of Christ. This is an absurd conclusion. But Christ used the natural impossibility to teach the spiritual impossibility. "No more can ye, except ye abide in me." He chose the "blood of the grape" (Gen. 49:11) to represent his blood (Matt. 16:28-29).

## **Concerning Wine**

The "fruit of the vine" (Mt. 26:29, Mk. 14:15, Lk. 22:18) which Jesus used in establishing the Lord's Supper was unfermented, because Jesus established the Supper on the day of the Passover (Mt. 26:17).

- The day of the Passover and the seven days following it were called the "Days of Unleavened Bread." The Jews were to eat unleavened bread.
- Leaven (ferment) itself is forbidden, "Even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses"
- Leaven comes from the Hebrew word, *seor*, which means "fermentations, leaven." Thus, leaven is any agent that ferments something else.

What is said of leaven in the New Testament? Recall the scripture that talks about the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees; Jesus warned us to beware of false doctrines. Luke 12:1 defines the leaven of the Pharisees as hypocrisy. The fornication of the man in the church at Corinth which was worse than that of the Gentiles was described as leaven (1 Cor. 5:1, 7). This leaven could leaven the whole lump and corrupt the whole church. Paul warned the Galatians that those who had apostacized

could leaven the whole lump (Gal. 5:1-9). Paul also referred to the leaven of malice and wickedness in 1 Cor. 5:8.

Notice that the fruit of the vine cannot refer to wine. The "fruit of the vine" is identical in meaning to the product of the vine. The *Twentieth Century New Testament* renders this phrase in Matt. 26 and Mark 14 the juice of the grape.

The English word wine is a generic term which could refer to either a fermented or unfermented beverage. Most of the Hebrew and Greek words translated wine in the Old and New Testament are also generic. Some will argue that this justifies the use of fermented wine in the Lord's Supper. However, this argument is unfounded and cannot be upheld on this ground.

When Jesus spoke of the drink element in regards to His supper, he used the term "fruit," and never used the word translated as wine. The word Jesus used always and only refers to the fruit and offspring of the vine. This should place the subject beyond the realm of discussion to the serious, impartial Bible student.

As has been stated previously, fermented wine contains a leavening agent. It seems strange that someone would strongly contend for unleavened bread, yet contend for leavened wine. The verb "leaven" means to produce fermentation, according to Webster's Dictionary. Leavening and fermentation are the same process from a scientific standpoint.

Bread taken before the leaven was introduced was called unleavened bread (Exodus 12:39), for it was not leavened. Likewise, the fruit of the vine pressed from the grapes is unleavened before it goes through the process of fermentation. The germs of fermentation are in the atmosphere and when they enter the juice of the grape, the fermentation process begins. The juice cannot ferment until it is invaded by these foreign germs or until someone adds something to it to cause fermentation.

The next objection raised concerns the ability of people in the New Testament times to preserve the juice of the grape in such a way as to prohibit the fermentation process. They argue that since they did not have the modern processes of canning and preservation, the juice they drank must have been fermented. This then justifies the use of fermented wine today. This argument is also invalid. People in those times knew well how to preserve foods, both to prevent spoilage and to prevent fermentation from taking place.

Jesus taught in Matt. 9:17 that new wine is placed in new wineskins and that **both** are preserved. The wineskins were coated slightly with some olive oil and sealed with pitch and were stored in cool cellars and sometimes submerged in cool water. According to the ancient authorities, placing new wine in old wineskins would cause them to burst because the old skins were saturated with old glutton and germs from the previous use. The yeast, fungus, and another bacteria remained in the old wineskins. The resulting fermentation (because of these bacteria) would create excess gas and cause the old skins to burst.

The next argument then arises that the juice would also ferment in new skins but does not burst because the skins are able to stretch. This however is not true; juice placed in new wineskins does not ferment. Scientists state that fermenting grape juice produces a pressure of 500-1300 pounds per square inch. This is more pressure than modern day propane tanks can withstand. If the juice of the grape did ferment in the new wineskins, they too would burst. It was just as Jesus said: when new

wine is placed in new wineskins, both are preserved.

Other books from antiquity describe several different methods of preserving juice. One method used was to boil fresh grape juice down to one-fourth of its original volume, creating a grape syrup. When ready to drink the grape juice, they would simply dilute it with water. Another method used by the Arabians was to hang the grapes in cellars to preserve them; then they could eat them all year. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus mentioned this form of preservation.

Not only does the fermentation process add leaven to the fruit of the vine, it also changes its character and nature of the liquid. During the fermentation process, three constituents of the grape juice are destroyed and are replaced by seven completely new constituents. Approximately 55% of the remaining nine constituents of grape juice also disappear as a result of the fermentation process. The food value of grape juice is contained in these four constituents.

1. the grape itself
2. gluten
3. gum
4. 84% of its sugar

During fermentation, these four constituents are either altered or completely destroyed. It is scientifically inaccurate to state that the resultant wine is still the fruit of the vine.

What follows is a summary of several key points from a tract entitled "Emblems of the Body and Blood of the Lord," written by T. E. (Nong) Smith.

1. *gennema*—The Lord used this Greek word to designate this element at the institution of His Supper. Jesus could have used other Greek words, such as *gleukas* or *oinos*, translated "wine," but he did not!
  - a. I believe he had a motive in selecting the word *gennema*, namely to designate the drink element in His Supper.
  - b. *gennema* means "fruit," "product," "produce," "progeny," "generation," and "juice of the grape."
2. Jesus said, "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine." Anything produced from the juice of the grape was not produced while the branch was in vine is not the fruit (*gennema*) of the vine
  - a. After its kind—In the beginning, God said for every tree to yield fruit *after its kind* and the kind is from the seed (Gen. 1:11-12)
  - b. Now what kind of fruit, as a drink element, does the grape vine produce? Fermented or unfermented? Intoxicating or non-intoxicating? Leavened or unleavened?

What tree produces intoxicating wine? Jesus said that a tree is known by its fruit, for a good tree not forth corrupt fruit, neither does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

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**Abstract**     The goal of every Christian should be to be perfect in Christ Jesus. Reaching a state of perfection may seem like an unreachable goal, yet that is exactly what we are commanded to do. What does it mean to be perfect in Christ? How can we achieve this goal? These questions are addressed in this presentation.

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Almost twenty centuries have rolled into the eternal past since Paul wrote:

*"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" Colossians 1:27-28*

No doubt thinking people of all those years have pondered over and over the challenge and magnitude of those words. "Every man perfect in Christ?" How can that be? How can we affect it? Is it indeed even possible? Why were the early saints able to attain perfection in a comparatively short period of time?

Imperfection confronts and plagues us on every hand in every land. Lack of worship attendance, lack of sacrificial giving, lack of missionary zeal, and overall spiritual immaturity are more than evident. A carnal atmosphere hangs heavily in the land; our primary concern is with the natural man, or souls "loatheth this bread" of God, and we, like an ancient people, are uncircumcised in hearts and ears. How utterly appalling that Paul must say to brethren then and now, "suffer the word of exhortation" (Heb. 13:23) and "despise not prophesying" (1 Thess. 5:19-20). And yet, in spite of it all, we have the divine imperative—"Be ye therefore perfect."

Perfection (*teleios*), according to Moulton and Milligan, Thayer, and Vine, is defined as full-grown, mature, sound, complete, brought to its end, finished, mature. These definitions fill us with both comfort and concern. Comfort in that maturity or perfection is possible; concern because we see such great gulfs before us.

Imperfection or immaturity should, but not always does, refer to young converts. Experience has taught us that one can be a member of the church for many years and yet be immature. Some are old in years and babes in Christ. Maturity, then, is not just an aging process. One can actually age with infantilism! Paul, writing to the Ephesians, contrasts the perfect man and children. He equates spiritual maturity with completeness, and completeness with a well-rounded Christian character that brings the graces into proper balance.

*Eph. 4:13-14 - "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"*

Jesus made the startling statement

*"Be thou perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48)*

The mandate is undeniable and unalterable. It demands growth into maturity of godliness. We can and must become like Him in qualities of God that are communicable. Similar thoughts are expressed in the following passages.

- *Matt. 19:21*
- *Rom. 12:2*
- *1 Cor. 13:10*
- *1 Cor. 14:20*
- *Col. 4:12*
- *Heb. 9:11*
- *Heb 5:8-9*
- *Heb. 2:10*
- *James 1:4, 27, 25*
- *James 3:2*
- *1 John 4:18*

Perfection comes through growth that is found only in Christ. The food and fuel for this growth is the sincere (spiritual) milk and meat of the word (1 Cor. 3:1-3). He can then grow in grace and knowledge (1 Pet. 2:2). We are to perfect holiness (Heb. 6:1), and are to grow with all diligence (2 Cor. 7:1). Only in Christ are these things possible.

In Col. 2:16-23, Paul continues to deal with the principles and processes of perfection. Perfection in Christ, says he, comes not by the doctrines of the Ascetics who taught that such was possible through external, physical means only. Neither is perfection possible through the Jewish law hangovers, nor by interpreting liberty to mean license. Having removed all the false ideas regarding Christian maturity, Paul moves to the death concept in Col. 3.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above...for ye are dead..." Ye are dead! And yet in verse 5, demands "*put to death.*" How are we to reconcile these statements? Is this some apostolic oversight or error? Or, is this the key to our study? Paul is saying that sometimes there is a difference between our spiritual position and our practice. He is insisting that we become what we are! Walk worthy of the vocation. Get your position and practice together. He demands a positive activity based on knowledge. Then, and only then, can we even hope to achieve spiritual maturity.

No study on this subject would be complete without a look at Phillipians 3:12-16.

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

*Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

How are we to understand this? Is there a contradiction between this and the study to this point? Not at all! Paul is attacking perfectionism, not perfection in Christ. He wants legalists and libertines, both then and now, to know that none have reached the place where nothing more could be added; than none have reached a place beyond which there is no room for growth or from which they could not regress.

The growing, maturing Christian has a clearly defined goal: "This one thing I do." That goal determines how he sees everything. The goal becomes an overriding purpose: "To know Christ," "to apprehend that for which I was apprehended," "to be conformed to the image of His son," "reaching forth," and "bearing down upon."

The growing, maturing Christian realizes more and more his dependence on Christ. In the first two chapters of the Colossian letter, Paul teaches what we finally come to learn: our hope and sufficiency is in Christ. Notice some of the phrases Paul uses.

- "you are complete in Him"
- "redemption in Him"
- "all consists in Him"
- "all fullness is in Him"
- "all treasure of knowledge and wisdom are in Him"
- all the fullness of God is in Him"

Paul doesn't say to feel these things, but rather to reflect on these things and act on them.

In Eph. 3:14-21, Paul prays for all of us who are in Christ Jesus; the prayer contains several vital points regarding maturity.

- "That you...be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"
- "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"
- "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ..."

Is Paul praying for the impossible? Does he **really** expect us to go through life, through every situation, conscious of the presence of Christ in our lives? That is exactly what he says! Christ is to dwell, live, and abide in our hearts. He is to become a constant living reality to us. When this is true, when we are rooted and grounded, when we grow up, then shall we truly understand His much diversified wisdom and multi-dimensional love. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are in the prayer and in the process to bring us to the place where even we shall "be filled with all the fullness of God."

How utterly profound, how absolutely humbling, how challenging is the apostle's prayer. We are assured that even for us He can, He can do, He can do above, He can do above all we ask, He can do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. How ironic, how wrong, then, for us to choose death in the presence of Life; to choose darkness when Light is here; to choose ignorance and error while Truth is ignored; and to accept weakness and defeat when infinite Power is available. We must be brought to maturity. We must move from glory to glory. We must make ready for the Lord a people. We, too, must warn, and teach, and seek to present every man perfect in Christ.

## **Notes**

**Abstract** When the gospel was preached during the first century and people obeyed it, many Christians found themselves in a marriage relationship to a heathen who practiced idolatry. What was the new Christian to do? Paul addresses the issue of a "mixed" marriage in these verses. Many in the religious world turn to these verses to justify any number of unscriptural practices and relationships. This presentation considers the subject of marriage as it pertains to the union of a Christian and a non-Christian.

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### Verses 20-24: A Non-Christian Status?

*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.  
Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.  
For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.  
Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.  
Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*

#### Verse 20

*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*

Christianity does not require that Jews or Greeks change their nationality, for this has nothing to do with salvation. Only obedience to God affects salvation. Paul here is teaching that their relationship to Christ was compatible with any of the conditions of life enumerated. This declaration is to be taken in a general, not an unqualified, sense. Christians would have to give up anything that was sinful or that hindered them in serving the Lord.

#### Verse 21

*Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*

Notice what the following commentators have to say regarding the word "servant."

- Strong** "servant—a slave (lit. Or Fig., involuntary or voluntary; frequently therefore in a qualified sense of subjection)."
- Thayer** "a slave, bondman, man of servile condition. In vs. 23 metaphorically of one who gives himself wholly to another's will."
- Robinson** "vs. 21—Properly of involuntary service, a slave, servant. Vs. 23—Spoken of voluntary service, a servant, implying obligation, obedience, devotedness."

Paul is essentially saying that if a proper way to obtain freedom can be found, seek it; if not, let it not be a subject of painful reflection. It is all right to obtain freedom if it can be done in a way that is not sinful.

## Verse 22

*For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*

Paul makes the spiritual application. You were formerly slaves to sin, but now are liberated. That spiritual bondage was far more grievous than the bondage of the body.

Your condition, even though you are a slave, is far better than it was before. You are now free.

The *master*, though he was independent and free, is now Christ's servant. He also is bound, just as you are, and must obey law and submit himself to the authority of another, just as you must.

Slaves and masters are both to obey God's law.

## Verse 23

*Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.*

Even as servants under the laws of the land, count yourselves as the servants of Christ. All Christians, whether bond or free, are the servants of Christ because they have been bought with the blood of Christ.

## Verse 24

*Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*

The phrase literally means "to invite one; to something, i.e. to participate in it; enjoy it." They were called by the gospel, they were to abide in that calling.

Paul gives rules for masters and servants that will work this out. Notice the following passages.

*(Eph. 6:5-9 - "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.")*

*Col. 3:22-4:1 - "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."*

Every Christian becomes a better parent, a more affectionate child, a kinder friend, a more tender husband or wife, a more kind neighbor, and a better member of the community when he learns to abide in the gospel.

## Verses 25-26: What Is Meant By the Present Distress?

*Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

*I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.*

### Verse 25

*Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

Concerning virgins, note the following commentators.

<b>Strong</b>	"a maiden; by implication an unmarried daughter"
<b>Thayer</b>	"virgin"
<b>Robinson</b>	"generally of a marriageable age"

From his familiarity with the teaching of the Lord, Paul gives his judgement as one who has obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy. He is not one who would give advice for any selfish, mercenary, or worldly considerations, but rather as one known to act from a desire to honor God, to seek the best interests of the church. His advice is sound even though there is no explicit command from God.

## Verse 26

*I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.*

The word "present" literally means "close at hand."

The "distress" refers to the persecution that was raging against Christians. The commentators make the following statements concerning distress.

**Thayer**            "*distress*—necessity, imposed either by the external condition of things, or by the law of duty, with regard to one's advantage, custom, argument. "

**Robinson**        "difficulty, distressed straits"

Paul is giving this advice because it best suited the Christians during the troubled times in which they were living. During this period, God's people had no certain dwelling place, but were forced to move about to avoid severe persecution. They were at the mercy of their enemies and were not given even the most basic protection by the government. In this type of environment, a man could more easily provide for his personal safety if he didn't have to be concerned about a wife and children.

Notice the words of Jesus.

*Luke 21:23fR - "But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people."*

The distress to which Jesus referred was a special time in which God would enact vengeance on his disobedient children. It was temporary in nature.

Paul, therefore, did not intend for his advice to be taken as a permanent arrangement. When the times of distress would pass, Christians could resume living normal lives.

Other translations render these verses as follows.

**Revised Standard Version**            "*I think that in view of the impending distress, it is well for a person to remain as he is.*"

**Twentieth Century Version**            "*I think, then, that in view of the time of suffering that has now come upon us, what I have already said is best—that a man should remain as he is.*"

No wife and children needed to rend their hearts when Paul was on his journeys and often faced death itself.

## Verses 27-28: Is Divorce the Subject Under Consideration?

*Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.*

*But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*

### Verse 27

*But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*

The word "bound" literally means "to be bound to one, to put under obligation." The word is used in regards to a wife (*Rom. 7:2*) and a husband (*1 Cor. 7:27*).

Paul was guarding against all possible misunderstandings, since some could have taken this to the extreme and sought release from existing marriages. He is very specific with his questions.

"Art thou bound" and "art thou loosed" refer to the present condition as the result of a past act. The questions are direct and personal, and are thus stronger than if he used conditional clauses.

Paul uses the phrases *bound to a wife* and its opposite *loosed from a wife* to refer to an actual marriage, either by its presence or absence. Those who are "loosed" refer to unmarried persons: maidens, unmarried men, widowers, widows, and any who are scripturally loosed.

The word "loosed" is translated from the two Greek words *luisis* and *luo*. Notice how the following sources define these words.

Regarding *luisis*, they comment as follows.

<b>Thayer</b>	a loosing of any bond, as that of marriage; hence once in the N.T. of divorce
<b>Robinson</b>	a loosening, disjunction, properly <i>of</i> or <i>from</i> any tie or constraining; spoken in N.T. of the conjugal tie, separation, divorce
<b>Arndt &amp; Gingrich</b>	release, separation (in marriage) a divorce

Regarding *luo*, the comment as follows.

<b>Thayer</b>	to loose any person (or thing) tied or fastened: trop. of husband and wife joined together by the bond of matrimony, spoken of a single man, whether he has already had a wife or has not yet married. [Does not refer to a single person only (ERM)].
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Arndt & Gingrich	are you free from a wife (i.e. not bound to a wife)
Abbot & Smith	to loose, unbind, release; metaph. of the marriage tie. Acts 13:43 in an assembly, to dismiss
Robinson	of persons bound or confined, to let go loose, to set free: i.e. are thou free from a wife
Strong	a prim. verb; to loosen (lit. or fig.):— break (up), destroy, dissolve, (un)loose, melt, put off

The Eastern Text New Testament translated from the original Aramaic sources by George M. Lamsa translates the verse, "If you are married, do not seek divorce. If you are divorced from a wife, do not seek a wife."

## Verse 28

*But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.  
Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*

Viewing these marriages in this manner, Paul declares in regards to all of them, particularly including the maiden, that there was no sin in forming these marriages. The trouble to which Paul refers literally means a pressing or a pressure. It is used here to emphasize that childbearing, family duties, and obligations will increase the troubles that will come upon them.

Notice in verse 34 that there is a difference between a wife and a virgin.

## Verses 36-38: What Relationship Is Being Considered?

*But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the  
flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.  
Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over  
his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he keep his virgin, doeth well.  
So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth  
better.*

When considering the answer to this question, it is important to remember the control that a father had over the marriage of his daughter in ancient times. Remnants of this control exist today in American culture are reflected in that a man asks the father for permission to marry his daughter, and during the wedding it is the father that gives the bride away.

## Verse 36

*But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.*

Let us look at some of the key terms and phrases used in this verse.

Concerning "flower of her age" commentators write:

<b>Thayer</b>	past prime; in greater degree of defilement
<b>Robinson</b>	beyond the flower of life; past the proper age
<b>Arndt &amp; Gingrich</b>	highest point or prime of a person's development; past one's prime, past marriageable age, past the bloom of youth

Commentators write the following concerning the word "behaveth."

<b>Thayer</b>	to act unbecomely towards, i.e. contextually, to prepare disgrace for her
<b>Robinson</b>	but if a man think that he behaveth unseemly (act improperly in respect to his virgin-daughter, i.e. not giving her in marriage)
<b>Arndt &amp; Gingrich</b>	if anyone thinks he is behaving dishonorably toward his maiden

What Paul is basically saying in the verse is this. If a man thinks he treats his virgin daughter wrong in withholding her from marriage, he must act accordingly to her requirements. That is, if she cannot live satisfied in the unmarried state, let him give her in marriage. In doing this, he need not fear that he is disobeying the will of God.

Paul thinks it might be "unseemly" conduct on the part of a parent to refuse a marriage proposal for a daughter who desired to serve God in the married state.

## Verse 37

*Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he keep his virgin, doeth well.*

Regarding the word stedfast,

<b>Thayer</b>	in the N.T. metaph. of those who are fixed in purpose; 1 Cor. 15:28; Col. 1:23 (settled), 1 Cor. 7:37
<b>Robinson</b>	in the N.T. trop. firm, steadfast, settled, in mind and purpose

Regarding the word necessity,

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Thayer</b>               | imposed either by the external condition of things, or by the law of duty, regard to one's advantage, custom, argument. I have (am compelled) by necessity.   |
| <b>Robinson</b>             | necessity, need, as arising from the influence of others, constraint  |
| <b>Arndt &amp; Gingrich</b> | necessity, compulsion of any kind, outer or inner, brought about by the nature of things, a divine dispensation, some hoped-for advantage, custom, duty, etc. |

Regarding the word power, Thayer writes "with a gen. of the thing or the persons with regard to which one has the power to decide."

This verse teaches that the legitimate authority of the parent is great, but does not include the right to treat the children as mere personal property. The parent can only be said to have "power over his own will" when he can act without selfishly opposing the reasonable wishes of those whom God has committed to his care.

In this context, "having no necessity" refers to a situation in which her disposition or inclination would not make marriage necessary, or where there is no engagement or obligation that would be violated if she didn't marry.

### Verse 38

*So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.*

When all is said and done, Paul leaves the whole problem of getting married an open question to be settled on an individual case-by-case basis.

**Abstract** This presentation provides an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12. It describes the purposes for which God gave people spiritual gifts, namely to reveal the Word of God and to benefit the whole church. Next the author looks to the original language to precisely define the nine spiritual gifts Paul mentions in this chapter. The author then examines Paul's analogy between the human body and the local church regarding the spiritual (and natural) gifts God had given them. Finally, the author compares and contrasts Paul's statements concerning the miraculous Christian age and the nonmiraculous Christian age.

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## 1. Verse 1 — Paul introduces the subject of spiritual gifts

**KJV** "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."

**NIV** "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant."

A. Apparently, the Corinthians had written Paul about spiritual gifts.

1. 1 Cor. 7:1 - "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me..."
2. Paul begins chap. 7 with the expression *peri de*: this is the same expression used to introduce the topic of spiritual gifts.
3. It is likely that the discussion is not limited to specific answers to their questions but, instead, is a comprehensive discussion of this important matter.

B. The expression "spiritual gifts" is translated from the Greek adjective *pneumatikos* which is used substantively.

1. In verse one, the word is genitive plural. The genitive plural of this class of adjectives takes the same form for masculine, feminine, and neuter.
2. In 1 Cor 14:1, *pneumatikos* is neuter gender and definitely means "spiritual gifts."
3. In 1 Cor 14:37, *pneumatikos* is masculine and definitely means a "man possessing spiritual gifts."
4. From the context, 1 Cor 12:1 seems to mean "spiritual gifts" although interpreting it as a "spiritually gifted man" would not be incorrect.

## II. Verse 2 — Paul uses spiritual gifts to further alienate the Corinthians from idolatry

KJV *"Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led."*

NIV *"You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols."*

- A. First, Paul contrasts the dumb (literally voiceless) idols with the Holy Spirit who spoke through inspired Christians.
- B. Second, it appears that Paul chose this particular contrast because the Corinthians so highly esteemed the gift of tongues.
  1. The Holy Spirit gave some Christians the coveted ability to speak foreign languages.
  2. Idols could not speak at all nor give their devotees the gift of tongues.
  3. It is obvious that idols could not give any other power such as miracles or healing. Apparently, Paul chose to use the "leverage" of the Corinthian affection for tongues to further distance them from their past lives of idolatry.

## III. Verse 3 — The Holy Spirit has revealed the Word to the world

KJV *"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."*

NIV *"Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."*

- A. The verse begins with *dio*.
  1. *dio* is used in Matt 27:8 — *"Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood."*
  2. *dio* appears to link verses 2 and 3. They had been led astray by dumb idols but the Holy Spirit would not lead them astray as He inspired them to speak.
- B. This verse consists of two parts, the latter of which is somewhat difficult and must be carefully interpreted.
  1. PART ONE: Anyone speaking by the direct inspiration of the Spirit or by the direction of the Spirit through the Word will not say "Jesus is anathema."
  2. PART TWO: The Calvinists, Pentecostals, and advocates of the NMPI (Nonmiraculous Personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit) argue that this demonstrates that Christians have a literal and direct "personal indwelling" which enables them to confess Christ.
    - a. Lenski says, "The fundamental gift is the Holy Spirit himself, through whom we confess Jesus as Lord. In truth, if we had no other gifts, this supreme gift would be blessedness and riches enough." <sup>1</sup>

- b. The following verses indicate that the profession of Christ as Lord, to which Paul refers, must necessarily incorporate a profession of the entirety of the Truth.
  - i. The demoniac of the Gerasenes said, "Jesus, thou Son of God most high" (Lk 8:28).
  - ii. Acts 8:35 says Philip "preached unto him Jesus", which from the context is known to have included the Gospel.
  - iii. Lk 6:46 - "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
- c. See Chart One

**IV. Verses 4-6 — The distribution of the spiritual gifts is in accordance with the will of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**

**KJV** "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

**NIV** "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men."

**A. The three key terms examined**

1. "Gift" is from *charisma* (English words charisma and charismatic) which means free favor, free gift. Synonymous with *dorea*.
2. "Service" is from *diakonia* (English word deacon) which means service rendered as by a servant. This word is used of Martha's serving (Lk 10:40). "Administrations" carries the modern connotation of management or supervision which is not appropriate.
3. "Operations" or "Workings" is from *energama* (English word energy) which means operation, a working, a thing wrought.
  - a. One form of the word, energas, is used in Heb 4:12 describing the Word as powerful (KJV) or active (NIV).
  - b. Gal 3:5 - "Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?" (*energeo*) (NIV)
  - c. Gal 5:6 - "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (*energeo*)

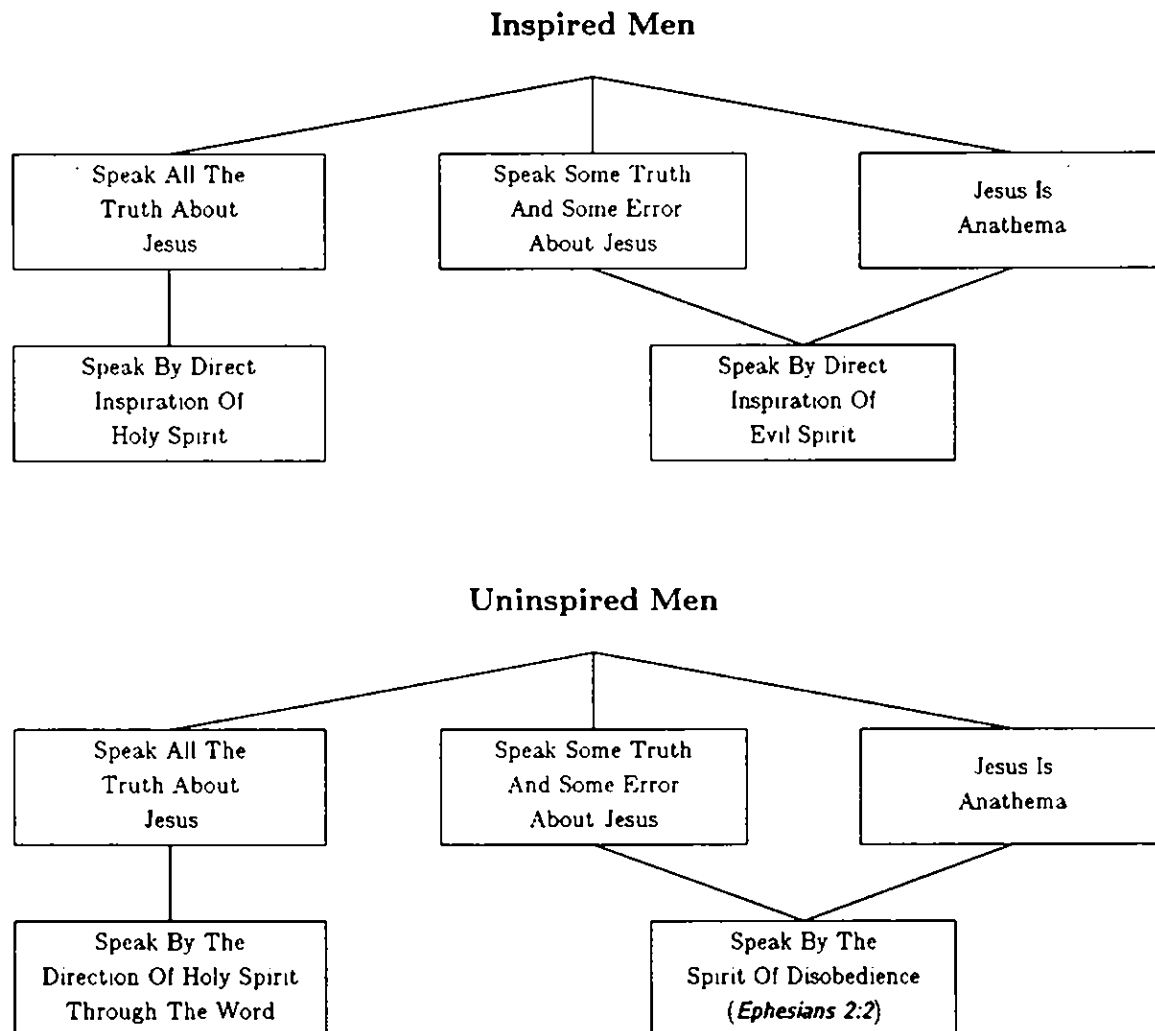
**B. These statements describe spiritual gifts in three different ways based upon prominent characteristics of each of the three Persons of the Godhead.**

1. The Holy Spirit gave inspired revelation to mankind along with the supernatural powers to confirm the Word.
2. Christ came to serve mankind through His example, sacrificial death, and mediation.
 

*Matt 20:28 - "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (NIV)*

## Chart No. 1

## All Men Speaking About Jesus



3. The Father is unequalled in power and might and with Him all operations and workings are possible.

C. In verses 4-6, the Apostle points out three important characteristics of spiritual gifts.

1. Means of reception—Given as a gift (vs 4).
2. Purpose—Benefit and serve others (vs 5).
3. Nature—Divinely powerful (vs 6).

#### V. Verse 7 — The purpose of the manifest gifts was to benefit the whole church

KJV *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

NIV *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

A. Manifestation is from *phanerosis* which is derived from *phanos* a torch, lantern, or light; hence that which is brought to light, made visible. The English words fantasy, fantastic, and phantom come from derivatives of this word.

1. Webster—manifestation 1a: the act, process, or an instance of manifesting: Display, show, expression...b: something that manifests or constitutes an expression of something else: A perceptible, outward or visible expression.
2. The spiritual gifts were all perceptible to an outside observer.
3. *Acts 5:32* - "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

- a. There is no such thing as an invisible, imperceptible witness.
- b. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit was a visible witness of the Resurrection.

*Acts 5:12* - "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus"  
*(Acts 4:33)* "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people."

B. Verse 7 is a restatement of the altruistic purpose for spiritual gifts and rebukes the egotistical grasping for self-glorification by the misuse of the gift of tongues.

#### VI. Verses 8-10 — The nine spiritual gifts are enumerated

KJV *"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues;"*

NIV *"To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues."*

## A. The expression "gift" examined.

1. Two synonymous words for "gift" are used: *dorea* and *charisma*.a. Occurrences of *charisma* in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

- i. *Rom 1:11* - "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift."
- ii. *1 Cor 12:4* - "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."
- iii. *1 Cor 12:9* - "To another the gifts of healing."
- iv. *1 Cor 12:28* - "Then gifts of healings."
- v. *1 Cor 12:30* - "Have all the gifts of healing?"
- vi. *1 Cor 12:31* - "But covet earnestly the best gifts."
- vii. *2 Tim 1:6* - "The gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." (Agency)
- viii. *1 Tim 4:14* - "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (Accompaniment)
- ix. **Clearly, all of these verses refer to miraculous gifts.**

b. Occurrences of *dorea* in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

- i. *Acts 8:20* - "Thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."
- ii. *Acts 10:45* - "On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- iii. *Acts 11:17* - "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us."
- iv. *Eph 3:7* - "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."

The expression "effectual working of his power" is, with the exception of minor variations in grammatical form, identical to "workings of miracles" in *1 Cor 12:10*.

- v. *Eph 4:7* - "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

In light of the context of the following verses, "gift of Christ" definitely refers to miraculous gifts.

- vi. **Clearly, all of these verses refer to miraculous gifts.**

2. What about *Acts 2:38*?

- a. In light of the fact that every instance of the word "gift" in conjunction with the Holy Spirit refers to miraculous manifestations, it can only follow that "gift of the Holy Spirit" in *Acts 2:38*

- b. The expression "gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38 is identical in the original to that in Acts 10:45.
  - c. Acts 2:38 must be interpreted in light of the context.
    - i. The Apostles were exercising the miraculous gift of tongues.
    - ii. Joel's prophecy predicted miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in perfect parallel with Peter's statement.
    - iii. See Chart Two.
  - d. Acts 2:38 perfectly parallels Mark 16:16-18 (See Chart Two)
- B. The primary function of spiritual gifts was the revelation and communication of the Truth. (See Chart Three)
- 1. Word of Wisdom
    - a. Literally *logos sophias*.
    - b. It is virtually impossible to fully understand the nature of this gift. This was not a problem for those who actually possessed spiritual gifts. It appears certain that the word is being used in a special sense.
    - c. Most scholars were in agreement that this refers to the Gospel of Christ.
    - d. *1 Cor 2:7 - "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."*
    - e. *Col 1:26-28 - "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest...God would make known...this mystery...Christ...whom we preach...teaching every man in all wisdom."*
    - f. This may have been the gift that was given to evangelists.
  - 2. Word of Knowledge
    - a. Literally *logos gnoseos*.
    - b. In the ordinary sense, wisdom and knowledge are virtually synonymous. It is apparent the terms are used in a special sense and that the gifts were different.
    - c. This gift is mentioned three times in Chapter 13.
      - i. verse 2--all knowledge.
      - ii. verse 8--knowledge, it shall vanish away.
      - iii. verse 9--we know in part.

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**Chart No. 2**
**Parallel Statements Which Define The  
Gift Of The Holy Spirit In *Acts 2:38***
**Joel Compared To Peter**

Call On The Lord	Be Saved	Pour Out Spirit Prophecy, Signs Wonders, Visions	Sons Daughters	All Flesh
Repent Be Baptized	Remission Of Sins	Gift Of The Holy Spirit	Your Children	As Many As The Lord Shall Call

**Mark 16:16-18 Compared To Acts 2:38-39**

Believes	Is Baptized	Shall Be Saved	Signs Cast Out Tongues New Tongues, etc.
Repent	Be Baptized	Remission Of Sins	Gift Of Holy Spirit

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Chart No. 3

Categorization of the Nine Gifts  
By Purpose or Function

I. *Communication* of the Truth

- A. Word of wisdom
- B. Word of knowledge
- C. Prophecy
- D. Tounges
- E. Interpretation of tounges

II. *Confirmation* of the Truth

- A. Gift of faith
- B. Gifts of healing
- C. Working of miracles

III. *Protection* of the Truth

- A. Discernment of spirits
-

- d. There is a wide variety of interpretations of this gift among the commentators.
  - i. MacKnight says the gift of knowledge was a knowledge of the revelations and writings of the O.T.<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. Lenski says this gift gave knowledge of the "gospel facts" and doctrines of the Church.<sup>3</sup>
  - iii. Lipscomb says, "The word of knowledge enabled the gifted to understand and teach the truths revealed by the apostles."<sup>4</sup>
- e. *1 John 2:27* - "As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you..." (NIV)
- f. It is possible that this was the gift given to guide teachers.
- g. Apparently, this gift provided only a part of Christ's doctrine. *1 Cor 13:9* - "For we know in part"

### 3. Prophecy

- a. *1 Cor 12:28* - "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..." Apparently, the gift of prophecy was the most important of the nine gifts.
- b. Examples of the gift of prophecy in the early church.
  - i. The gift of prophecy was given to both men and women.
    - Acts 2:17* - Joel said, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy"
    - Acts 21:8-9* - Philip the evangelist had four daughters "which did prophesy"
    - 1 Cor 11:5* mentions women praying and prophesying with uncovered heads
  - ii. *Acts 11:28* - Agabus foretold of the famine during the reign of Claudius.
  - iii. *Acts 21:11* - Agabus foretold of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem.
  - iv. *1 Tim 4:14* - Apparently someone had predicted Timothy's service to the Lord.
  - v. *1 Cor 14:3* says that prophecy edified, encouraged, and comforted the Church.
  - vi. *1 Cor 14:25* says prophecy would convert sinners.
  - vii. *2 Pet 1:19-21* says that it was by prophecy that men were inspired to write the Scriptures.
- c. It seems that *John 14:26* is a definition of prophecy. "...he (Holy Spirit) shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

- i. This verse points to two elements: (1) New revelation and (2) Recollection of prior revelation.
- ii. An example of this may be 1 Cor 7:10, 12. Verse 10 is the repetition of prior revelation by the Lord and verse 12 is new revelation by Paul.
- d. Prophecy was a partial gift - 1 Cor 13:9.
- e. Taken in its fullness, the gift of prophecy included the following elements: (1) Foretelling the future, (2) Revealing new revelation, (3) Recollecting past revelation, (4) Converting sinners, (5) Edifying of the Church, and (6) Inspiring the writing of Scripture.
- f. It is obvious, then, why Paul applauded the virtues of the gift of prophecy and encouraged the Corinthians to pursue this gift.

#### 4. Tongues

- a. Tongues served both to communicate and confirm the Truth.
  - i. *1 Cor 14:22* - "Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers." (NIV)
  - ii. *Acts 2*: On the day of Pentecost the Apostles used tongues both to communicate and confirm the Gospel.
  - iii. *Acts 10:46*: Tongues served as a sign to the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles were to be accepted into the Church.
  - iv. MacKnight says, "For by the gift of foreign tongues, the preachers of the gospel were able, immediately on their coming into any country, to preach the wonderful things of God, without waiting till in the ordinary course they learned the language of the country.--The persons who were endowed with this faculty had not the knowledge of all languages communicated to them, but of such only as they had occasion for." <sup>5</sup>
  - v. MacKnight's observation is confirmed by Paul, "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you" (I Cor 14:18) (NIV). This refers to number of languages not frequency of speaking.
- b. Apparently, one of the reasons tongues were used so frequently as a sign was the ease with which this could be done. Healings or miracles required other people or other elements upon which these powers could operate. Tongues could be exercised at a moments notice in any situation.
- c. *Acts 2* defines the gift of tongues. "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance...every man heard them speak in his own language...how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:4-8)

- i. This was not a miracle of hearing.
  - ii. The Bible states plainly they "spoke with other tongues."
- d. Mark 16 defines the gift of tongues. "they shall speak with new tongues" (vs 17). The word "new" is from *kainos* not *neos*. *Neos* means new in the absolute sense and is often used of youth while *kainos* means new as opposed to old, new to the possessor. The gift of tongues was the ability to speak tongues which were new to the speaker, not new to the earth.
  - e. Tongues were exalted in the minds of the Corinthians to the detriment of the congregation.
  - f. The regulation of tongues in the assembly has a direct application today to the use of foreign languages.
5. Interpretation of Tongues
- a. 1 Cor 14 clearly defines this gift as the ability to translate foreign languages into a language which was commonly understood.
  - b. It was to be used in conjunction with tongues in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:27-28).
  - c. MacKnight proposes that this gift also enabled one to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures for the Gentile Christians. (p. 202)
6. It appears that all of these have a base in natural abilities with the exception of those aspects of prophecy which involved direct revelation and future telling. With the noted exceptions, all these gifts are at work today in the Church in natural form.

C. The secondary function of spiritual gifts was the confirmation of the Truth.

1. Faith

- a. This gift is apparently defined in 1 Cor 13:2, "though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains."
- b. Lipscomb says, "A faith that enabled one to remove mountains, of which Jesus speaks. It enabled one to exert power."<sup>6</sup>
- c. Some have suggested that this gift also incorporated the quality of "boldness."
  - i. *Acts 4:13* - "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled..."
  - ii. It is certain that through some gift, the Holy Spirit gave the apostles great boldness. They were transformed from "mice" into "lions."
- d. How the miraculous gift of faith is related to ordinary faith is very difficult to understand.

## 2. Gifts of healing

- a. This gift is well understood as there are many clear examples in Acts.
  - i. *Acts 3* — Peter healed the lame man.
  - ii. *Acts 28* — Paul healed the father of Publius and others on Malta.
  - iii. *Acts 5:15* — Apparently, some were healed by Peter's shadow.
  - iv. *Acts 19:12* — Special miracles were done by Paul in that cloth items were carried from him to the sick, resulting in their being healed.
- b. These miracles were completely different from the so-called "healings" the Pentecostals claim today.
  - i. Scientifically verifiable.
  - ii. Instantaneous.
  - iii. Almost always done in view of the general public.
  - iv. Required no faith on the part of the recipient.
  - v. Required no special "hypnotic atmosphere" of hand clapping and rhythmic music and preaching.
  - vi. Widely known and recognized as genuine.
  - vii. Most important of all, the miracles of the New Testament were so undeniable that even the most bitter enemy Christianity will ever have, the Sanhedrin, had to admit they were genuine. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it" (*Acts 4:16*) (NIV).
- c. Spiritual gifts were not used to benefit Christians separate and apart from the confirmation of the Word.
  - i. 2 Tim 4:20 says Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus.
  - ii. Phil 2:27 says that when Epaphroditus came to visit Paul he became so ill he almost died.
  - iii. Paul could not use his gifts to alleviate his suffering as enumerated in 2 Cor 11.

## 3. Working of miracles

- a. Lipscomb and MacKnight take the position this was the ability to impart spiritual gifts. Their reasoning is frail.

- i. They appeal to Ananias but this is not a proof; only an assumption.
- ii. MacKnight makes a big play on the word *energama* as does Lipscomb. This is shown to be invalid by Gal 3:5 where virtually the identical expression is used.

1 Cor 12:10: "working of miracles" — *energama dunamis*.

Eph 3:5: "working of power" — *energeia dunamis*.

- iii. Lipscomb says, "All the gifts here enumerated enabled them to work miracles...Why, then, among these should one special gift be called the working of miracles?"<sup>7</sup>
- b. There were many miracles which did not come under the category of the other gifts.
  - i. Cast out demons.
  - ii. Pick up snakes.
  - iii. Drink poison.
  - iv. Raise the dead; i.e. Dorcas and Eutychus.
  - v. Miraculous transport through space — "When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again" (Acts 8:39) (NIV).

D. An additional function of spiritual gifts was the protection of the Truth.

#### 1. Discernment of spirits

- a. *Mark 13:22* - "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible." (NIV)
- b. *1 John 4:1* - "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (NIV)
- c. Apparently, this gift was required because (1) of the power of false prophets and (2) the fact the written Word was not yet complete.

### VII. Verse 11 — The holy spirit determined how spiritual gifts were distributed

KJV "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

NIV "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

- A. Paul reiterates the fact that all of the spiritual gifts are the work of the one Holy Spirit. The Corinthians should not have a spirit of division with regard to the gifts as they had done with regard to Paul, Peter, and Apollos.

- B. Paul repeats the fact that the decision as to how the gifts were distributed was made by the Holy Spirit. Those who were unhappy with the distribution were guilty of being unhappy with the Lord. Paul repeats the fact that the decision as to how the gifts were distributed was made by the Holy Spirit. Those who were unhappy with the distribution were guilty of being unhappy with the Lord.

#### VIII. Verse 12 — Paul introduces the analogy between the human anatomy and the church

KJV *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."*

NIV *"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ."*

- A. The comparison is one of analogy not allegory.
1. There is not a direct correlation between the organs mentioned and specific functionaries in the Church.
  2. Vs. 21 mentions the head. This cannot be correlated to a functionary, especially in view of the fact the eyes and ears are components of the head.
  3. Regarding the "uncomely members" of vs. 23, Lenski says, "Fortunately, no commentator, not even Hofmann, has allegorized these parts and the 'distinction they enjoy.' This collapse of the allegorizing view should be convincing."<sup>8</sup>
- B. Apparently, the comparison is made to the local congregation not the Church universal. The local church has functionaries but the Church universal has none now that the days of the Apostles are over.
- C. The construction of this verse is chiasitic, which Lenski suggests was used for emphasis. The one is many but the many are one. The emphasis is on the latter, not the former.
- D. The expression "so also is Christ" is a figure of speech. It appears to be metonymy of the owner for the possession such as a king named to suggest his kingdom.

#### IX. Verse 13 — Paul restates the common process of the miraculous Christian Age

KJV *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

NIV *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."*

- A. The verbs, baptize and drink, are both 1st aorist, passive, indicative in both the Nestle text and the Textus Receptus. Hence the KJV is in error in translating baptize in the present rather than past.
- B. This verse does not teach Calvinism.

1. Lenski, "To be baptized in connection with the Spirit means, not that the Spirit is only in some outward way connected with this application of water, but that he is inwardly and efficaciously connected with the application. His very nature and the regular method of his working lead to this conclusion. So also does the effect of baptism: through baptism the Spirit makes us 'one body,' which means one living, spiritual organism. Outward agencies are sufficient to produce various outward organizations (not living organisms) to which men belong. Only the one Holy Spirit is by the spiritual means of baptism able to bind together our souls in the body that we are." <sup>9</sup>
2. Note that Lenski says nothing about the Spirit working through the Word which is the living Seed by which we are born again. (1 Pet 1:22-23).
3. This is a restatement of Jn 3:5 - "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

C. Drinking of the Spirit refers to the reception of Spiritual gifts.

1. MacKnight takes the absurd position it refers to partaking of the Lord's Supper.<sup>10</sup>
2. The context is one of receiving spiritual gifts from the one Holy Spirit. The verb is passive, not active, which further supports the view that this refers to the reception of gifts as opposed to the Lord's Supper.
3. Some might object on the grounds of universality, saying that just as many as were baptized also "were made to drink" of the Spirit. This objection is met by the fact that all members were exhorted to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (12:31) and "desire spiritual gifts" (14:1).

X. Verses 14-27 — Paul develops the analogy between the human body and the local church.

- A. The immediate application of this analogy is with regard to spiritual gifts. Obviously, the principle applies to natural gifts.
- B. Those who possessed the "less impressive" gifts had apparently developed an inferiority complex.
  1. They disparaged themselves and undoubtedly failed to use their respective gifts to benefit the church.
  2. Undoubtedly, they were envious of others who possessed such prized gifts as tongues.
  3. It is interesting that in the analogy, inferiority was felt toward members of similar station.
    - a. The foot envied the hand.
    - b. The ear envied the eye.
    - c. This is an important lesson on envy.

C. Those who possessed the “impressive” gifts had apparently developed a superiority complex.

1. They were perhaps proud and arrogant.
2. As is the case with modern day Pentecostalism, this pride may have led them to ignore the Lord’s commandments, especially in regard to the use of the gifts. Paul said, “If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command” (1 Cor 14:37 NIV).
3. Apparently, tongue speakers and others with “impressive” gifts disdained other members not possessing these gifts.
4. It is interesting to note that in the analogy, the superior organs looked down on others of dissimilar station.
  - a. The eye disdained the hand.
  - b. The head disdained the feet.
  - c. This is a good lesson on pride.

D. In verses 22-24, Paul emphasizes the important contribution made by those who possessed “lowly” gifts.

1. Paul uses three categories to describe the “inferior” organs.
  - a. Feeble or weak--easily injured.
  - b. Less honorable--unattractive.
  - c. Uncomely or unpresentable (NIV)--those which require clothing.
2. As Lenski noted, these cannot be interpreted allegorically; rather, the lesson is a more general one.

E. In verses 25-26, Paul condemns division and commands an interlacing of both positive and negative concerns.

1. The members are to share in joy and sorrow.
2. The members are to share in benefits of spiritual gifts regardless of through whom it is they are exercised.
3. Luther said, “See what the whole body does when a foot is trodden on, or a finger is pinched: how the eye looks dour, the nose draws up, the mouth cries out...Again when good is done to one member, that suits all the others, and the entire body rejoices therein. This is how it ought to be also in Christendom since it, too, is composed of many members in one body and has one mind and heart, for such unity naturally has the effect that one is concerned in the good and the hurt of the other as in his own.”<sup>11</sup>

**XI. Verse 28 — Paul discusses the major functionaries in the church.**

**KJV**    *"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."*

**NIV**    *"And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues."*

**A.** The numerical order indicates importance rather than chronological sequence.

1. It is important to note that he only sequences the first three, the others are not necessarily in order of importance. Some feel it is significant that tongues are mentioned last.
2. The three listed as most important served to reveal and communicate the Word of God.

**B.** A similar list is found in Eph 4:11 - "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

**C.** "Helps" and "governments" are not as clearly understood as the rest.

1. "Helps" is from *antilapsis* which means one who aids or assists another.
  - a. The verb form is used in Acts 20:35 - "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak..." (NIV)
  - b. Undoubtedly, this refers to the office of the deacon who is an official functionary in the Church.
2. "Governments" is from *kubernasis* which means a government or office of a governor.
  - a. A related word is *kubernatas* which means a ship's captain (Acts 27:11, Rev 18:17).
  - b. There can be little doubt that this refers to the eldership.
  - c. In Eph 4:11, the elders are referred to as pastors or, more properly, shepherds.

**D.** In this verse, there is a mixing of the miraculous and nonmiraculous functionaries, demonstrating that both types of service were important to the early Church.

**XII. Verses 29-30 — Paul uses a series of interrogations stress the limited function of each member.**

**KJV**    *"Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"*

**A.** This is an emphatic repetition of one of the major messages of the chapter: Each member has different natural and supernatural gifts, but each member supplies a vital service to the Body.

B. It is noteworthy that tongues are again listed lastly.

**XIII. Verse 31 — Paul exhorts the miraculous Christian age and introduces the nonmiraculous age.**

KJV *"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way."*

NIV *"But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way."*

A. Some, such as MacKnight, regard this verse as being in the indicative mood rather than imperative.

1. The verb form is the same for both moods.
2. An indicative translation, "Now ye earnestly desire the best gifts; but yet I shew you a more excellent way."<sup>12</sup>

B. The following evidence shows that the Paul intended the imperative mood.

1. The Corinthians were NOT desiring the best gifts, rather they were eager to speak in tongues.
2. In 1 Cor 14:39, the identical verb *zaloute* (from which we get the word zeal) is used regarding the desire to obtain prophecy.
  - a. It is indisputable that this is in the imperative mood.
  - b. Clearly, 14:39 and 12:31 are repetitions of the same command.

C. Contrary to modern day Pentecostalism, the Nonmiraculous Age is superior to the Miraculous Age.

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**Abstract** This presentation examines the subject of marriage as taught in the sixth chapter of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth. The city of Corinth was steeped in idolatry and pagan worship. Many religious rituals involved prostitution. Fornication was nearly a way of life to people in this city, and when they became Christians the Corinthians had a hard time understanding purity in the marriage bond. In these passages, Paul discusses the impact of fornication on the marriage relationship.

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### Conditions At Corinth

To understand the meaning of these verses, some background information about the existing conditions in the city of Corinth must be considered. McKnight writes:

Before Corinth was destroyed by the Romans, it was famous for the magnificence of its buildings, the extent of its commerce, and the number, the learning, and the ingenuity of its inhabitants, who carried the arts and sciences to perfection, that it was called by Cicero, "the light of all Greece." The lustre, however, which Corinth derived from the number and genius of its inhabitants, was tarnished by their debauched manners. Strabo tells us, that in the temple of Venus at Corinth, "there were more than a thousand harlots, the slaves of the temple, who, in honour of the goddess, prostituted themselves to all comers for hire, and through these the city was crowded, and became wealthy." From an institution of this kind, which, under the pretext of religion, furnished an opportunity to the debauched to gratify their lusts, it is easy to see what corruption of manners must have flowed. Accordingly, it is known, that lasciviousness was carried to such a pitch in Corinth, that, in the language of these times, the appellation of a *Corinthian* given to a woman, imported that she was a prostitute and to have as a *Corinthian*, spoken of a man, was the same as to commit whoredom.

In the Achaean war, Corinth was utterly destroyed by the Roman Consul Mummius. But being rebuilt by Julius Caesar, and peopled with a Roman colony, it was made the residence of the Proconsul who governed the province of Achaia (see 1 Thess. 1:7 note) and soon regained its ancient splendour. From that time forth, the arts which minister to the conveniences and luxuries of life, were carried on at Corinth in as great perfection as formerly: schools were opened, in which philosophy and rhetoric were publicly taught by able masters; and strangers from all quarters crowded to Corinth, to be instructed in the sciences and in the arts. So that Corinth, during this latter period, was filled with philosophers and artists of all kinds, and abounded in wealth. These advantages, however, were counterbalanced, as before, by the effects which wealth and luxury never fail to produce. In a word, an universal corruption of manners soon prevailed, so that Corinth, in its second state, became as debauched as it had been at any former period whatever.

## The Text Under Consideration

*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

*Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*

*And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power."*

*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

*What? know ye not that that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

*Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

### Verse 12

*"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."*

1. Paul was aware of the loose lifestyles at Corinth.
2. He was also aware that some placed the gratification of the flesh (sexual pleasure) on the same plane as gratifying the appetite in eating meat.
3. It is not assumed that the majority of the Church held this view: probably only a few did, but many outside the church held this view.
4. Regarding "all things," commentators write
  - a. "such things as were indifferent." Lange
  - b. "such acts that were not in themselves wrong, as in, all things are lawful for me which may be lawful." Bengel, Hodge
  - c. "all things are in my power by reason of my free will" Words
  - d. "the words were in their letter to Paul offering the argumenet designed to justify fornication. Paul here quotes them, then places proper limits on their statement, i.e. supplies scriptural limitations." Neander
  - e. "the Apostle could not say in any sense that all things are lawful. The sentence is elliptical and must be supplied from the subsequent verse, i.e. all things are lawful for me..." McKnight

McKnights comments are probably the most logical.

Freedom must not commit suicide. The body was designed to be the organ of the Spirit for ruling over nature, not the organ of nature for ruling over the spirit.

## Verses 13,14

*"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*

*And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power."*

McKnight writes:

Vers. 13, 14 **Meats for the body and the belly for meats, etc.**—Here we have a contrast drawn between what is in itself indifferent, and the view which cannot be brought under this category. From the fact that a mutual relation has been established between meats and the belly by an ordinance of the Creator, the former being made to be received and digested by the latter, and the latter being formed to receive the former, and from the fact that both are alike transient, being designed only for this present life, it followed, as a matter of course, that eating was a thing morally indifferent, and was allowable, in so far as it neither proved inconvenient, or brought a person under bondage. Very different, however, was it with the act of fornication, since the body, standing as it did in direct relations with the Lord, and having been received by Him into the fellowship of an immortal life, does not in such practices fulfill any Divine destination [but is rather alienated from its proper functions, and degraded by them].

In the resurrection, there will be no need of physical nourishment, thus dispensing with the organs for its reception.

**But the body is not for fornication**—that is, fornication is not the natural function of a perishable organ, but it is the perversion to illegitimate uses of the entire body—that body which belongs to the Lord, and is with him, destined to an imperishable life. And in this also there are two elements involved; 1, a connection with the Lord,—**but for the Lord** (emAnd this relation is a mutual one, since the body is destined for the Lord to be one of His members, and His exclusive possession, and on the other hand—**the Lord is for the body**,—to rule it, and to use it, yea, to appropriate and assimilate it to Himself, and, as others add, to nourish it with his life. (Comp. Jno. vi. 33, 53, and also ver. 15,  $\mu\epsilon\lambda\eta$ ). 2. The destination of the body to an immortal life, grounded on its connection with the Lord—a destination that stands in striking contrast with the destruction above alluded to, which awaits the purely material world.

According to Lenski:

In v. 13, 14 Paul furnishes the factual *proof* that fornication is not an *adiaphoron* like the eating of food, but is wholly contrary to Christ, to whom our bodies belong, as God shall also raise them up. In v. 15, 16 Paul adds to the proof a statement regarding the *abominableness* of fornication. The latter rests on the former, but by combining it with the former Paul brings the enormity of this sin fully to the consciousness of the Corinthians. The presentation continues in its simple and lucid manner by just using the facts so that their force overwhelms.

## Verses 15,16

*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

*What? know ye not that that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

Lenski writes:

**'Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I remove the members of Christ and make them a harlot's members? God forbid.** Paul first appeals to the basic fact that our bodies are members of Christ. "Do you know?" implies that the Corinthians do know, and that the fact pointed out in the question is undisputed by them. Compare Rom. 12:1, 6, 12-14. What is really involved in the statement that "the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" is now combined in the unit thought that our bodies are "members of Christ." Just as we ourselves possess our own members and use them as our own for our own purposes, so my entire body and your entire body are members of Christ to be used by him alone for his own purposes. What is a fact regarding our entire person, body, mind, and spirit, is evidently also a fact when the body is considered by itself. For we all belong to Christ, not partly but in entirety."

Shall I take..."Take" means not simply to take, but to take *away*—to alienate from the proper owner.

"One must first sever these members from Christ to whom they belong, for only thus could they be made to belong to the harlot. Paul asks: "Do you Corinthians want me to do a thing like that?"

16) "Or do you not know," etc. = "Or if this repudiation (God forbid!) of the statement of the case I have made (robbing Christ of his members and making them harlot's members) still seems doubtful to you (which I can hardly believe), do you not know," etc? Paul is fully aware of the place where the doubt may lie for some or at what point some may try to raise a doubt. They would not question the statement that their bodies are "the members of Christ," for that would mean to repudiate their own Christianity, but they might deny that by an act of fornication their bodies would assuredly become the members of a harlot. That, they would say, is surely overstraining the result of contact with a whore. Therefore Paul writes another "do you not know." **Or do you not know that he who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? The two, says he, shall be one flesh.**

Whereas before the act there are two separate and distinct bodies, the fornicative act makes one single body of the two. No question can be raised regarding this point. It is also vital in Paul's array of facts. This is true whether men know it or not, either in Corinth or elsewhere. The unimpeachable proof is therefore at once added with γαρ, it is the Scriptures themselves.

The participle ο κολλωμενος is middle (not passive, our versions) and characterizes the person: "he who joins himself" to the harlot by means of the sexual act of committing fornication. *One such act bestows this character* (emphasis mine, RFW) just as one theft makes a thief, one killing a murderer.

The fact that by an act of fornication the two sinners become "one body" is established by quotation of Gen. 2:24: "The two shall be one flesh." "Flesh," σαρξ, *basar*, denotes merely the substance of which the "body" is composed and needs no further explanation.

Regarding verse 16, McKnight writes:

Ver. 16—1. *He who is (literally, glued) strongly attached to an harlot, is one body.*—The body being the seat of the appetites and passions, and the instrument by which our appetites and passions are gratified, 'to be one body with an harlot,' is to have the same vicious inclinations with her, and to give up our body to her to be employed in gratifying her sinful inclinations.

2. *The two shall be one flesh*—They shall be one in inclination and interest, and shall employ their bodies as if they were animated by one soul. This ought to be the effect of the conjunction of man and woman in the bond of marriage; and generally is the consequence of a man's attachment to his whore

This which was originally affirmed of the marriage union, is here applied to illicit intercourse, it being the same thing physically considered.

Note Proverbs 7:6-23 and Lenski's comments concerning the passage.

But he that joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with him. This parallels to the other statement exactly: "He that joins himself to a harlot is one body with her." The two opposites clash in every word. What is meant by "the body for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" in v. 13 is now defined by "he that joins himself to the Lord." The body as such could, of course, never belong to the Lord, it is always the person as such that belongs to him and thus the body: "he who joins *himself*" (middle, not passive as in our versions). This belonging of our body to the Lord and of the Lord to our body is on the part of him who so belongs, not a passive, but an active relation, one of the great activities of our faith and our love. This activity marks the character of that person, he is a *κολλημενος*. Yet we must say that, while in the opposite case a single act of fornication is enough to bestow the evil character, here the very nature of faith and of love is durative and the spiritual character is bestowed accordingly

The body for the Lord, and the Lord for the body, means that we join ourselves to the Lord in faith and in love and remain thus joined to him. But this means still more, for he who thus joins himself to the Lord "is one spirit with him." This is the opposite of the result that is obtained when one joins himself to a harlot. These two can become only one body and one flesh, can consummate only a physical union, and one that lies on the very lowest material plan, is wholly unspiritual, utterly carnal and base. What the harlot is in her vice and degradation he becomes who joins himself to her. Of his own volition he descends to her in her filthiness.

What a difference when one joins himself to the Lord! He becomes one spirit with the Lord. For while our union with Christ involves also our bodies as a part of our person it is really a union of the spirit and only as such includes our bodies

**Flee fornication!** The asyndeton makes the conclusion the stronger *Severias cum fastidio*. Bengel. Some sins we must necessarily face, fight, and thus conquer. From others we recoil with a shock, their baseness and their stench repel us, we flee. Fornication is and should be one of these. Paul writes *φευγετε* for another reason. He recognizes the danger that lies in our sinful flesh. So he admonishes: flee lest a spark ignite the tinder in the flames, Prov. 7:6-27.

MacKnight writes:

is without the body —But how can he say this, when drunkenness and such like vices also involve an injury to the body, and indeed cannot be practised at all outside of the bodily sphere?

Where drinking and other similar activities are concerned, the body is not the instrument, but the subject. But in fornication, the body is the instrument of the sin and is made over to another both inwardly and outwardly.

## According to McKnight

But fornication is *alienating that body which is the Lord's, and making it a harlot's body*—it is a sin against a man's own body from its very nature, against the verity and nature of his body; not an *effect on the body* from participation of things without, out a *contradiction of the truth of the body within itself* Alford. —but he that committeth fornication sins against his own body.—The scope of the argument is this: On the one hand the Apostle brings to view that fact that the fornicator by his sin surrenders his body to the harlot, and commingles his life with hers in such a manner that he loses the power to dispose of his body as he will, as it were yielding to another's nature the right he has to himself, and so coming in bondage to that (analogously to chap. vii. 4); and on the other hand, he considers how the body of the Christian (who is the only one here contemplated) is desecrated by fornication as it can be desecrated by no other sin.