

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

FIRST CORINTHIANS

This is a genuine ABC production  authored by *Bob Coffey* and may not be reproduced or transmitted in any manner for financial profit

CHAPTER 1

BASIC CALLING 1-3

This great epistle reveals lots and lots about PAUL. It tells us he was well-assured of his calling as an apostle of the Gentiles by the determination of God. Sosthenes companions him in Ephesus-he had once succeeded Crispus as synagogue leader in Corinth – and was now Paul’s No.1. They greet the Church “living” *ουση* i.e. being kept faithful in a city of 1000 prostitutes and strong opposition i.e. Corinth.

The saints there sanctified themselves – set themselves apart in the circle of Christ – they did so esteem their calling. Otherwise there were many who nicknamed (or) imputed to themselves (or) called themselves by the name of Christ our Lord in every place, He is theirs and He is ours. Paul’s hallmark is his opening gambit “Grace and peace from our Father and our Lord Christ.”

CALLING MADE SURE 4-9

Paul gives thanks always for them and Gods grace given them, and the wealth of speech and depth of knowledge they have. All this confirmed that they were His property – “sold out” to Christ as *βεβαιος* was property sold at Athens. They had come into the lord’s hands as the Price was paid! They came behind in no gift – expecting the APOCALYPSE or revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was a doctrine taught everywhere by the apostle. In fact here this doctrine is being used to demonstrate “depth” of grasp of Christian teaching. They not only know about the rapture or home call of the church but as there were many Jews in Corinth they were taught specifically, as wherever Paul went, about Christ’s glorious kingdom to follow – and the revelation that destroys the antichrist. He will “confirm” or establish His title to his own until the ENDS – i.e. PAROUSIA & APOCALUPSIS. This confirmation avoids “being called out to judgment” *ανεκλητος* in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful through whom you were called *εκληθητε* into the fellowship of His son our Lord Jesus Christ. This calling is an heir ship which goes on into the eternal kingdom.

CALLED TO COUNT THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS 10-17

Paul pleads that as they are brothers through Christ’s name, that they all count themselves such – and not be torn in schism – but get themselves repaired – restored by mediator – in his mind as to way of living the faith and the central event on His clock *γνωμη*. Here the mind of Christ is their unity and His purpose is to gather them home as the Shepherd of one flock. Paul learned from Chloe’s house church that there are wrangles (or) quarrels (or) contentions among them. I say this because each of you is saying **I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ.** “Has Christ been shared out so you can take one part of His way or teaching? Was Paul was crucified vicariously for you or have you been baptised into Paul’s name? I thank God I did not baptise one of you – except Crispus and Gaius – that none may say “I baptised into my own name save a synagogue ruler and Gaius who hosted him and was a strong Corinthian leader (*Romans 16.23*). I did baptise the family of Stephanas. Paul says rather vaguely “Other than that I don’t know if I baptised any other”. Maybe this family had other retainers – giving rise to the uncertainty – or maybe memory failed

as to detail. He says “Christ did not send me to baptise – but to hasten with the good news *εὐαγγελίζομαι* – the teaching toward baptism he would give – but often others completed that task – hence his ministry team. He follows his remit to say that his speech was not sophistry – that the cross of Christ might be without fruit (or) deserted.

Paul draws attention not to preachers, nor to sacrament, but to the central value of vicarious atoning blood – to Messiah who came and comes again.

CALLED AND GLORYING IN THE CROSS 18-25

The word or oracle of the cross to those who perish is foolishness, to those of us who are experiencing salvation it is God’s POWER. Now Paul quotes *Isa. 29.14 & 33.18* – showing that Messiah ends debate by bringing in righteousness – by “the marvellous work of His cross and the wonder of His resurrection”. Has not God made the method of scribe, the method of philosopher and the method of debater – all worldly wise – “foolish”? Philosophy did not bring acquaintance *γνωσις* with God – though it searched-but God was pleased through the heralded message of the King to save believers. Jews ask a sign, Greeks search for philosophy. But we Christians preach Christ who took up the cross – to a Jew this is a stumbling block –to the Greek foolish. To people the Lord has called it is the power, the value, the capability, the medicine of God and it is divine philosophy; for the folly of God is wiser than the combined wisdom of man – His weakness than their combined strength.

LOOK AT THE PEOPLE GOD CALLS 26-31

Here is what we in England might call *the countess of Huntingdon’s text* after her own adoption of it. God’s word does not say “Not any wise, not any powerful, not any well-born” – but it does say “**not many**”. God counted out and chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, the weak to shame the strong, the things with no special genes to confound (*or*)render unemployed and of no use the things that are so that no flesh should boast before Him. You are from God – you are His own – and you are in Christ, who has become our wisdom righteousness and also holiness and redemption so that as scripture reads, “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord” *Jeremiah 9.24*. This powerful text from Jeremiah lies beside Isaiah’s writing as a template of God’s great wisdom-the one forecasting the cross and Cyrus and the kingdom where Lion and lamb lie down together – the other forecasting the New Covenant and the latter day return of Israel. Here is divine philosophy *per se*.

CHAPTER 2

PAUL’S CORINTHIAN MINISTRY

THE LINK OF THE CRUCIFIED LORD AND THE APOSTLE 1

Paul would not come without a witness. It was “news of victory” (*v1*). It was the martyrdom, “the enduring to blood” of God, the “witness of the Lord” on the Damascus Road. “Who art thou Lord?” “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting!” We read in *Acts 18* that God gave Paul a special vision because he was “afraid”. Here he says, “I did not come with superior authority force or distinction of speech or wisdom when I announced to you the victorious witness of God.” He counts himself a “herald” –the wonder is the all out victory that is the dying witness of Christ – God’s Son-and how that scene of crucifixion became the setting of resurrection.

THE LINK BETWEEN THE CRUCIFIED LORD AND THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM 2

He determined not to make a “show” or “to know well” and “be assured” of anything except Jesus Christ – and “this same” **τουτος** (*however strange it seems*) “crucified” – the Messiah is to Paul absolutely “one who died” and gloriously “one who rose” so the unlikely fate of the cross – to the learned a matter incredible – constitutes the very wonder of it all.

For Paul there were 3 circles to his early Corinthian experience:

The circle of weakness – his sight” if not other health factors were always a factor; the circle of Phobia – his dread of others that showed up clearly, and his trembling [*Greek τρομος*], his nigh delirious fear.

3. THE LINK BETWEEN THE ASCENSION AND PENTECOST 4-5

His speech and heralding was not in persuasive words of mans fallible

ανθρωπινης wisdom but in the syllogism or history (*Homer uses επιδειξις* of history) of the Spirit and power that their faith might be in the dynamic of God ...So the story of the cross is related to the giving of the Holy Spirit.

WISDOM AMONG THE PERFECT 6-8

The perfect ones are those who have “died to self” – who have “been united to Christ.” Paul is speaking of the commitment of the “all out” Christian and the one who is in daily communion with the Lord. Wisdom has its language. It is not a philosophical language nor is it a political one – such as world rulers would speak. Before the ages of human government God had a mystery on the horizon.

When Jesus did come – not one reigning prince recognised his absolute claims.

Paul quotes *Isa.64.4* “O that you would rend the heavens and come down-no eye has seen any God besides you. *dj /w/ zulahedh*. In other words only the Lord has given visions of Himself.

But as again his great pair of quotes in v.9 states “**He will sprinkle many nations**” *hzy (LXX)* “Thus shall the nations wonder at him” – kings wonder for no tidings were to be carried back of what happened to Christ. Isaiah predicts what was not read to the Great they will see in prophecy or in vision or judgment and what they did not hear they will understand by mediator *njb*

THE FIVE PILLARS OF WISDOM 9

God has prepared great things for “those who wait for His mercy” (LXX) – “those who wait *hkh* (Hebrew) – “those who bind themselves to Him” – translated by Paul “those who love” (*The apostle has in mind the bondservant of Exodus 21*)

1. REVELATION BY THE SPIRIT 10-11

God has brought from behind the curtain the things Isaiah said – about the “suffering servant”.

We can understand it all of the crucified one. The chapter the Jews do not have in their TORAH any more. So they are still “blinded” who do not accept Christ.

Paul here quotes *Proverbs 20.27* “The lamp of the Lord” as David was called in *2Sam.21.17*. The Holy Spirit of God can “track down” what those who are bound to the Lord need to know in the future.

2. RECEIVING THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT 12

To know those things God has given to us we need to receive the Holy Spirit – thus we shall know with Assurance of the grace God has deposited *χαρισθεντα* v12 truth in scripture for our nurture and learning.

3. THE SCRIPTURAL TRADITION 13

We do not depend on oratory. The early Christians passed on the truth as oral tradition and so it was *λαλια* “common story” which is now in scripture – but is handed on by discussion and conversation and teachings which have come to be ours as the Holy Spirit gave us the New Testament.

4. THE SEPARATION AND GLEANING OF BIBLE TRUTH 14-15

We “express” or separate and gather together *συγκρινω* spiritual truths as the Spirit leads us in Scripture. Unsaved we would never operate like that. It would be foolishness v14 *Βανακρινω* to examine the writers or so study truths in scripture is a method we have to learn.

5. BY UNION WITH HIM AS HIS BRIDE WE HAVE HIS MIND 16

Who has known by observation not philosophical reflection – who has reconciled the divine mind [*συμβιβαξω* “to come to terms with” or “deduce”] but as the bride we are privy to it.

CHAPTER 3

CORINTHIAN BABES AND NAMED LEADERS 1-9

The matter of Christian comprehension has gone before. It is through the Spirit of God we have His power demonstrated, it is through the self-same Spirit we have it revealed to us and it is desired and acceptable in our lives – demonstration, revelation, and acceptance. How then is the church – already commended for its gift of *γνωσις* just *νεπιοι* – babes? *Theophrastus* first used the word of vegetables not animals or humans. It first means that which we are “fond” of. It came to be used of those who could not “bear arms” (*under 15 years*) – which is probably the relevant use here. It also can be applied to infants weak or speechless.

Paul regrets that when with them he could not once babble – assured that they were “with him” – but had to “babble” on their level – as to babes. All their interest lay in their relationship to the world around them-as does that of children *σαρκικοι*. Hence they were fed spiritual “milk” not “meat”. How then were they highly charismatic and how did they receive the truth of the “revelation” of Messiah in His kingdom? As to the second they were like the Thessalonians expecting it *at any moment*. And as to the first a long corrective had to be issued in *Chapters 11-13*. “Meat” needs to be chewed and digested. They had not even at the time of writing a capacity to tease out detailed truth and rather fell into camps-reflecting the divisive spirit of the world around – like *Stoics and Epicureans* to take a Greek brand name for divided thinking. This gives us the rhetorical query of v3 on “zeal”, “quarrelling” and “being disagreeable (or) standing apart”-so they are following the “teaching style” of Greece by producing “named leaders” like *Epicurus* – hence Paul and Apollos reflect these shades of thought. His next question is, “Who are Paul and Apollos? Just deacons who gave the spiritual food that was sent from the living Christ-He gave it. He wrought faith in them by the Spirit (*cf. Chapter 2*) Again he described them as

farmers – planting and watering – but God is the one who by the Spirit brings growth. Also God rewards his workmen, ourselves and yourselves but we are about one task and it is one field where we work. Now Paul moves to another analogy, the one BUILDING that is the church.

GOD’S BUILDING 10-17

According to the grace given Paul he laid a foundation. **κατα** always retains the downward direction – so grace came from the heavenly Lord – it was grace that created this wise *master builder* **αρχιτεκτος**. The term denotes one prescribing method and one who guides building teams. Paul “laid a foundation”. Another is building on it. But let each watch how he builds. Other foundation cannot be laid alongside that which is laid, “who is Jesus the Messiah” cf. *Isaiah 28.16* “Behold me as I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious **τις** (it is “as pearl” – cf. the suffering Saviour – it is Chaldean stone **nba** (with a Hebrew camez or long “A”) i.e. Abrahamic in origin – it is “a stone of the field” **nba** (with a Hebrew seghol or “E”) i.e. “taken up from burial” – it is rare stone i.e. “one of its kind” **τρῆς** – it is “foundation of the founder”(Christ). He who believes shall not “flee for (other) refuge” – i.e. he is safe.

If any builds on this gold silver precious stone (as marble) cf. the temple...(or) a (structure of) wood, hay and stubble(as thatch) the work of each will become plain for the day will show it, for it will be revealed by fire. The fire will test what kind of work it is. If the work of any remains that he built then he will receive reward, if it is burnt up he will be ready for punishment damage or loss; but he will be saved, but as a “brand from the burning” – cf. *Zechariah 3.2*.

Paul brings his metaphor fully into play – his hint of gold and silver and marble suddenly comes alive in the phrase “Do you not know that you are the temple of God. His Spirit indwells. If anyone destroys the temple of God – God will destroy him – for the temple of God is holy – you yourselves are this temple. The time was circa AD54-55 – some 15 years before the actual destruction of the Jerusalem temple. But a greater sin was in mind – the persecution of believers.

SOPHIST AND SAINT 18-21

Paul urges that if any think himself wise in matters of this aeon or age, let him become a fool (*for Christ*) to be truly wise. For the world’s wisdom is folly alongside God. He quotes *Job 5.13 and Psa. 94.11* – “He catches the wise in their craft – or *naked*” **μαρ**

And “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise are futile” – the mathematics of the wise are exhalation. So no one should boast in men. This is a strong rebuke to schisms. For all are yours – be it Paul Apollas, Cephas the world Life death – present or future things – all are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is of God. The Greek genitive of “yours” **υμων** speaks of a belonging and a location or place within the life of Christ as Christ shares the life of God.

CHAPTER 4

A NEW METAPHOR

Man should “calculate” or “reckon” or “put us down on account” evaluating us as “under-rowers” of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. That means that they all take their time from the Lord and they all have household duties as to the open secrets of faith.

But the remainder (*of the calculation*) is that it is sought of stewards that each has been found faithful. Here the parable of Christ comes in (*Luke 16*). But for me it is into minutiae that I should be previously examined by you or by fallible short-lived man, but I do not even put myself through prior examination. Paul can say he knows nothing in himself that disqualifies – but that is not justification. The one that “examines me” on a daily basis is the Lord. Here Paul changes his word from *ανακρινω* to *κρινω* which speaks of the real court or proper judgment. So do not judge anything before the moment – until the Lord Himself comes who will bring to light secrets of darkness and make clear the plans and desire of the hearts. David in *Psalms 143.2* pleads that God I do not enter into “balancing his life” at the point of singing. This is grace. Then one day when we have had opportunity to serve we will have praise from God. The Hebrew of *Psalms 143* *db[* answers to how we work; how we worship; how we act as ambassadors. It depends on our being close to God and regulating our lives honestly that this is avoidable.

1 INFLATED IDEAS 6-7

Paul specifically says he changed the metaphor from architecture to speak of the subjection of ambassadors like himself to Christ that you may learn not to presume or think away beyond what is written. He means that we are not judges and God is the one who is best judge of where I am at now. The result hopefully is that they would not be **puffed up** about one or other servant for there is much happening in each life. “For who judges you most thoroughly? What do you have you did not receive? If it is a gift why boast of it? Paul is aware of the danger of inflated ideas of some leaders.

2 SOFT LIVING – LIVING AS KINGS WHILST POVERTY ABOUND 8-13

Already you are gluttoned, already you have become rich, and you are reigning without us. And it would help us were you kings indeed, that we might be co-regents. For it seems to me that God displayed us the apostles last as condemned to death (*in the arena*) for we have become a theatrical spectacle for the world & angels and mankind. We are fools for Christ; you are practically wise in Christ. We are weak you are strong. You are in glory, we are dishonoured. **Till this present hour** we go hungry and thirsty and are lightly clad, and are buffeted, unsettled (or) wandering, and we work ourselves hard cutting with our own hands (*tent-making*). Being cursed we bless – *Psalms 109.28*; persecuted we endure; blasphemed we bring comfort. We have become as the wretched of the world, the off scouring of all – Lamentations 3.45 **until the present.** [*The Hebrew in Lamentations 3.45 is yj s dng swam moral blemish*] So the Christian is being treated much as the Jew after the fall of Jerusalem in Jeremiad’s day – by Babylon then – by Rome and the Gentile nations within NT times.

3 THE CHRISTIAN PATHWAY OF MEEKNESS 14-21

I am not writing these things to make you feel shame (or) dread but as my children whom I have loved I am placing them in your mind *νουθετω* for if you had a 1000 Christian pedagogues, you have not many fathers. I have begotten you in Christ through the gospel. Therefore I beseech you, copy me! For this reason I sent Timothy who is my beloved and faithful in the Lord, who will remind you of my pathways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in the whole church. Certain of you are become puffed up as if I were not coming to you – but I will come quickly if the Lord will and I will get to know not only the oracle but also the power of those **who are inflated** – for the Kingdom of God is not only in word but also in power.

What do you wish – that I come with a rod or in love and a spirit of meekness?
The gospel is known not at all by oratory – but by the increase of power of those
under its discipline and inspiration i.e. *δυναμις*.

CHAPTER 5

Gross sexual misconduct

IT IS GENERALLY REPORTED 1-5

A 98 word sentence in which Paul proposes a solution to the main issue at Corinth

The report Paul heard comes from within the church. Fornication is the problem. It is of such a sort as is not named among the nations or ethnically. A man has sexual relations with his Father's wife. "And you continue to be proud of yourselves (*present*) should you not rather be sorrowful *once for all* (*aorist*) so that you take out from the centre the one who has done this act.

Though absent in body, I am present in spirit. I have already made a judgment as if I were present concerning the one who has forced (or) *as we would say* "pressured" this contemptuous thing. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together and my spirit, with the increasing power of our Lord Jesus Christ, hand over this very person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

EXCURSUS ON "THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH"

There can be no doubt that this is as in the case of David's numbering – a "falling into the hands of God". The word *ολεθρον* is used commonly of "death" and "pestilence". There is a finality about this which underlines the gravity of the issue. Paul offers no gentle solution and no alternate answer and no prayer call.

BOASTING 6

Your boasting has no beauty. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole mixture? Therefore cleanse yourselves of the old leaven that you may be a new mixture as you are without yeast. Here Paul recognises that they do not have the old Jewish yeast of traditional pride but this yeast of fornication only.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER 7-8

For Christ our Passover has been slain for us – so let us keep the feast. This appears to be a high communion such as Easter that is in mind. So the letter is a spring epistle. Let us be festive not with the leaven of evil and sin but with the unleavened bread of "being examined in the sunlight" *ειλνκρινειας* and "openness" *αληθειας*.

GENERAL COMMENT ON COMPANY 9-12

I have written against mingling with fornicators. I do not mean to include all the fornicators of this world. There were it is said 1000 priestesses at Corinth who were involved in worldly fornication – without marriage vows. Similarly I do not mean the greedy and thieves and idolatrous – then surely you should have to leave the world. At this moment i.e. in this second piece of advice just now – I write that you must not choose the company of one who calls himself a brother (*in Christ*) who is a fornicator or greedy, or an idolater, or slanderer, or drunkard or thief. Do not eat with such people. I have no right to judge those without. Why do you not judge those within? Those without God will judge.

CHAPTER 6

LAW SUITS AND PAUL'S CONCEPT OF THE SECULAR!

ESCHEW LAW-SUITS WITH BELIEVERS 1-6

Any of you who ventures (or) dares(or)faces difficulty, holding a lawsuit(or) matter of law against another *ετερος* (i.e. another person than a Christian) dares in that to submit himself to be judged by those *not set right with God* *αδικων* and not by saints. “Don’t you know”, says Paul “that the saints will judge the world?” “So if in your circle (or) among you the world is itself being judged (i.e. Christians have the principles for truly sorting issues) then are you not a test (or) criterion (or) are you not more than capable (or) worthy to judge small issues?” “Don’t you know that we shall judge angels – not only the?”

EXCURSUS 1 – ON “JUDGEMENT”

[Daniel 7.22 Judgment will be delivered into the hands of the saints The Hebrew hyd speaks about “supreme tribunal” and the highest rank of beings to be tried, technically, are angels – hence Paul’s inference]

EXCURSUS 2 – ON “SECULAR”

[Here Paul uses a word for “secular” which 120 years later was condemned by Phrynichus the grammarian –the word βιωτικός– which word, we, like Paul, use very frequently as in “anti-biotic” and “bio-chemistry” etc. The NT use is equivalent to our “secular” – everything fitted to life around us in the work-a-day world.]

WINNERS AT LAW ARE LOSERS IN FELLOWSHIP

Paul draws the conclusion that if we have secular things to judge – set up those who count themselves of least or little value in the church. Then Paul adds “I say this to dodge or twist around you” *[meaning – around your pride]* (or) “to shame you”. So is there not among you one wise person who will be able to judge *with balance* *[ανα μεσον proportionately(or) as to the middle term of a syllogism – i.e. what head a dispute comes under (or) neutrally (or)all of these]* as to his brother. “Is not the outcome that brother is at law with brother, and this supervised by men without faith in Jesus?” Therefore the case is already *completely lost ηττημα/ησσα* among you in the spiritual sense “because you have law-suits in the courts with yourselves”.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES? 7-8

“Why not rather leave your cause unjustified? Why not rather withdraw from law (or) “be defrauded” *αποστερω* but you do wrong and defraud your brothers in these ways.” Paul states again the fundamental that “unrighteous persons” shall not inherit the kingdom of God – *Plato* uses it of “ill-matched” persons – i.e. not matched to Christ i.e. in new birth; otherwise it means those who “do wrong” i.e. as to their actions *αδικοι*.

CONGREGATIONS THAT WILL NOT ENTER HEAVEN! 9-11

Long years ago my wife heard a sermon by a “straight from the shoulder” preacher *John Joe Rainey* on “ten congregations who will not be in heaven” Here they are then: –

the fornicators; the idolaters; the adulterers; those males who are transvestite (i.e. effeminate); men who practice **koitos** with men; thieves; those who defraud or laud it over law; the drunken; slanderers; robbers.

The law of inheritance bars them for living against the gospel. We have to add that repentance of a genuine nature brings them within the ambit of the kingdom again. Paul states the contradistinction as to the Corinthians “You have been made holy – you have been made righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the circle of the Spirit of God. The triune work of sanctification in God’s will through justification by Jesus’ blood and regeneration by the Spirit’s work renders the Corinthians a people who are true heirs of the kingdom.

SEXUAL REALITY AND THE SANCTITY OF THE BODY 12

All [*human practice*] (or) [*the above*] is within my power or is allowable – but all is not expedient (or) agreeable (or) contributory to a good end, but I will not have been brought under the authority of anyone. This is the meaning of INTEGRITY. We must be free moral agents – not demurring to others.

OBJECTIONS FROM CREATION & RESURRECTION 13-20

FIVE BUTS

(1) **But God. Meats for the stomach and the stomach for meats** but God will render them unemployed and the stomach unemployed too. Paul teaches that life in Christ’s final likeness abolishes the present biological system. *Luke 24. 41-2* speaks about *βρωσιμος* that which is eatable (*including steamed fish*) this gives no proof of the same *κοιλια* stomach bowels and gastric system – following us into eternity – indeed the positive statement of Paul suggests the early Christians knew in this as in other things we would be changed – *1Cor15.51 and 2Cor3.18*. To the race of people who were advanced in learning so as to take account of things of the after-life this spread of texts prepares the scrutinising minds of the Corinthians for radical change.

(2) **But the body is not for fornication** but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

(3) **But** God also raised up *εγειρω* the Lord and will awaken us through His increasing power. [*εξεγειρω* *The effect of adding εξ indicates a larger use of power. εξεγειρω speaks of “change of condition” and “subsequent copy” and “use of materials” by re-forming.*] So ours is not the resurrection of the body in the shape of what has been identically reproduced – but its successor in the likeness of Christ – cf. *1Cor15.38*.

Its dynamism and range of power reflects His increased power in us in the spiritual real.

“*Don’t you know your bodies are members of Christ?*” “Taking the members of Christ shall I make them the members of a prostitute?” “God forbid” “*Don’t you know that he who unites (or) alloys with(or) sets within as in marquetry κολλω – the prostitute is united in one with her?*” cf. *Genesis 2.24* A man shall be glued (or) lovingly devoted *qbd* to his wife – “one flesh *dha*”

(4) **“But** he who unites in this way to Christ is one spirit” There is a higher union. It is one of relationship with God. “Flee the prostitute” says Paul. “Every sin a man does is outside the body”

(5) “**But** the fornicator is sinning inside his own body” – which means that consequences in body and mind and even in health may follow in the subject. Moreover – the inside problem is bigger for it involves the relationship with God.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH – THE LORD’S BODY

“Don’t you know that your church body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is among you?” He is one you have from God – the Father. And you are not your own – you are redeemed with a price. So glorify God in your church body, and in the spirit of the church-all of which are of God.

CHAPTER 7

Sexual and moral issues reflected in the prism of 1st century Corinth

There are 116 OT references in this first epistle but none in this chapter. There are 57 such OT references in the second letter. On general queries as to relationships of men and women Paul gives useful guidelines.

1. PRIOR INVOLVEMENT IS WITH THE LORD – THEN FAMILY 1-2

It is good for a man not to fasten himself to a wife – not to undertake marriage, to touch apprehend or have intercourse with a wife. The verb *απτομαι* suggest “bringing himself to be involved with” not “to touch physically” as it is in the middle voice so that the action is upon himself – and the approach is to him. But on account of **fornication** let each man have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. That is the answer – now we need to ask “what was the question?” The question may have been “should a Christian man be a eunuch?” or “Should every Christian seek marriage?” or “How can the Christian avoid adultery?” It is to be noted that fornication was the No.1 Corinthian moral problem.

2. HEEDING THE DIVINE COMMAND TO PROPAGATE LIFE 3-4

“The husband must yield fruit to (or) honour the debt of love owed to his wife, likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have *εξουσιαζω* authority over her own body.” [The Greek in loco might read “to abuse” or “to present it to another”] This is exactly so of the husband as well” The question, then, might be – “Can Christian married women be allowed to work in Corinthian temples?”(or) “Can Christians live celibate?” or “Can a husband live as a eunuch within marriage?”

3. ADVICE AGAINST LEGAL SEPARATION OR LIVING APART 5-7

Husband and wife should not withdraw from one another, except by mutual consent for a brief time – and this that they may be scholars of fasting and prayer *σχολαζω* – and come together again for the same reason (*sexual union*) so that Satan should not test you on account of incontinence. Paul speaks in this way by “lenient judgment” or “fellow feeling” *συγγηωμην* not by command passed from the Lord. He adds, “*I wish that all men were like me*, but each has his own gift from God, one being as in the foregoing case unmarried, another being prayerful and committed to marriage and its duties.

EXCURSUS 3 – “WAS PAUL MARRIED?”

When Paul speaks with *fellow-feeling* for the married one could readily make that assumption. Besides his was rabbinic status and position as teacher and/or elder at Antioch. He had authority to lead a wife (9.5) on his journeys. Of the state of his marriage nothing is said more plainly than in Chapter 9 – and it remains to ask Is this

sufficient to establish the fact of marriage?” He specifically says “It is good to remain as I am” under the head of ‘unmarried [men] (*αγαμοις*) and widows(*χηραις*)” so the case appears watertight that Paul was at least “unmarried” at the time of writing – as to whether or not his wife had died or as to whether he ever was married we have no absolute proof.

4. UNMARRIED MEN AND WIDOWED LADIES

Paul seems to include himself with the former and he holds forth the benefits of being a eunuch for the service of Christ and also advises widows to remain unmarried. He does not speak of their children but presumably the church assisted with family needs and support where there were sons and daughters surviving their deceased father along with the widow herself. Paul’s advice as he later shows is contexted in the current framework of problems – whether persecution or famine for there had been a world-wide famine as Agabus prophesied. At any rate single persons could fully devote themselves to the Lord and thus achieve much in the service of Christ.

5. ADVICE AGAINST DIVORCE 10-11

Paul is categorical that separation must be resolved in terms to resolution of difficulties and renewal of marriage. Women(*according to the Lord’s own command-cf. Matthew 19.8*) are not to leave their husbands – and if on some serious basis of aggravation they do they are to remain unmarried. Husbands, for their part, are not to leave their wives.

6. ADVICE TO CHRISTIAN WIVES OF UNBELIEVING SPOUSES 12-24

Paul advises not on the basis of precedent or command but on a commonsense principle that a good testimony and pleasing life is winsome and can only help a man who is not a Christian see the light and life of Jesus in his wife. For this reason in the case of unequalled yoked persons where the wife comes to faith after her marriage she should remain faithful to her husband. Paul encourages such wives that their children who in those days lived mainly under female upbringing are “holy” or distinctly blessed by being separated to such a wife and in a measure to God’s word and will as indeed is the husband. The unbeliever may object to the new-found faith of his spouse and in this instance the wife is not bound but is to allow a peaceful separation. Paul envisages cases where husbands also convert and encourages them that by living with grace affection and understanding they may also win their spouses to Christ. Paul’s rule is that those who become Christians remain in the marital or social commitment or status as circumcised Jews that they have undertaken by vow or condition (as slaves) prior to conversion.

He advises that slaves should where masters are willing to grant manumission obtain their freedom. He reminds slaves that they were first and more dearly bought by their Redeemer – Christ and are to live in the light of His redemption.

7. ADVICE TO THE UNMARRIED 25-26

I have no command of the Lord to pass down on these. “As myself receiving mercy to be faithful as an agent (*or*) **under the yoke of the Lord** I give you a maxim or opinion” *γνωμην* (*based on the index of the sundial – which if well set reads true*) “I think therefore it is lovely to begin (*or*) to remain thus through the impending (*or*) “threatening dangers” *ενεστωσαν*. This term was used of “threatened war” and of “current tyrant” by *Aeschines and Herodotus* respectively. The crisis referred to may be

that the Church's moral reputation lies in tatters or it might be danger to the Christian family by persecution.

8. ADVICE TO THE MARRIED 27

Are you given once for all to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed.

9. TO THOSE LOOSED FROM MARRIAGE VOWS 28a

By death or otherwise, he should not seek a wife. But if you desire to marry you are not sinning (*i.e. there is no command against it*) and if the unmarried pure woman desires to marry she has not sinned. I.e. the desire is noble.

10. THE NECESSITY AND NATURE OF THE AGE 28b-31

“Such as marry will have *tribulation* **θλιψις** in the flesh. **θλιψις** is used of “problems without escape”; I would spare you these. Brothers, I would say (*as bringing truth to light φαινομεν*) that **this moment in time is one to shorten sail**(*or*) shrouded in deadly danger(*or*) one to *gird up the loins συστειλλω*. As to the future let those who have wives be as this is not permanent; and those who mourn the dead as though it is not to stay (*i.e. soon they will be re-united*); and those who rejoice in laughter as in friendships or family bonds recognize this is not continuous; and those who buy in the agora, as if they have nothing; and those who make use of money and possessions as though they were spent up. For the conformity or fashion or character of this world is passing away.” The **σχημα** expression is much like *Shakespeare's* “The world is a stage and all men are players.”

11. RESOLUTION OF ANXIETY – TWO STREAMS OF THOUGHT ON MARRIAGE 32-35

The Lord Jesus said “Be not anxious for tomorrow”. Paul says “I desire (*or*) am inclined to prevent you having anxieties”

Then he says “The unmarried is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he will please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife. The wife and the virgin have traditionally shared among themselves (*or*) it is a sharing estate. The unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, that he may be holy both in body and spirit, but the married woman is concerned about the things of the world – or cosmetic appearance – how she can please her husband. I say this so there may be a reconciliation or acquiescence of you and the others.” Paul here is stating that either should understand the other. “Not that I would throw a hunting(*or*) bird noose over you, but that without anything like that drawn around there might be good order & good side by side relationships”

ευπροσεδρον.

12. ENGAGED PERSONS 36

“If any one thinks he is being disgraceful as to custom towards the one to whom he is engaged, if she is beyond the prime of life, and so he ought to be, let him marry” Here Paul suggests the long engagement does a man no credit.

13. OF THE MAN WHO IS ABLE TO LIVE CELIBATE 37-38

“He who stands settled in heart, having no necessity to fulfil appetite **αναγκην** but has authority right around his own inclination, and has made this judgment in his heart(*i.e. in all conscience with appreciation of the power of his will emotion and*

mind) to guarding his own virginity, does well. Be the consequential option that he gives in marriage he does well. But he who does not give his hand in marriage does better.”

So the celibacy question runs rather like this – if a man judges it right for him by real criteria he does well not to marry, but if he decides he cannot stay celibate and marries he does well too. The better option is not to marry as far as celibacy goes.

14. RE-MARRIAGE OF A WIDOW 39-40

“A woman is bound by the law of her husband for the length of his life. But if he should be dead, she is free to have been married, only in the Lord. But she will be happier if she should remain as she is according to *my opinion*” **GNOMON**. Opinion here stressed means something like “**my light**” which makes the illumination of history and truth through Jesus like the bright hour of the day the intensely clear factor behind the advice being given. In the light of subsequent history and the fact that grave persecution did not affect Greece Paul need not have been so guarded – there again as he appeared to be speaking with the Holy Spirit’s consent we recognise his advice was accepted and has stood till today in God’s word. The “period piece of advice” may well have been given over against the need for the church to re-establish a favourable testimony without following its ghastly moral crisis.

CHAPTER 8

On knowing God and oneself – His unity and our union

EXCURSUS (4) ON THE NATURE OF “KNOWING GOD”

“We know that all have gnosis [*knowledge*] (a) Knowledge **γνωσις** (this word is used by *Demosthenes* for a “court of inquiry” and for city “governor” or a games “umpire” – hence for precise knowledge.) *Plato* uses the word **γνωστικος** and applies it to the faculty of knowledge. It parallels the Hebrew **hdy** – to know – both in comprehension and personal acquaintance and the sexual connection and has a further application in prognostication to “knowing the future” (b) Knowledge puffs up” **φυσιοω** (*This word and its connections have many applications. Demosthenes uses it of “political pride” and Plato of the “pride of horses” It is used by Hippocrates of the bladder “blown up” in swelling. It is like our word “inflated” which we apply to pride. Its work-a-day use was “bellows, wind, thistledown, the flute, spouting whale”*). So the “pride” instanced in 4.18 in relation to “personalities” and noted in 5.6 with reference to what might be called “a relaxed attitude to lifestyle” (*actually a failure to deal with wrong*) is seen here again with reference to Christians happily eating idol meat – blissfully unaware that others uninstructed in the faith view them still as idol worshippers. Paul speaks of the positive building power of “love” that works by faith.

There is such a state as “seeming to know” without making a judgment where such vital decision must be made. “If anyone loves God, ‘he has come to know and is still known by God’ ” (*Lenski shows that for a verb passive in meaning and middle in its active form cf. 1Cor.13.12 – the passive supplies in itself the middle-so the man “both knows and is known”*) **The teaching point here is to say that “knowledge as acquaintance humbles before a holy God – where it truly exists.**

IDOL OFFERINGS 1-3

“Concerning, therefore, the meat of idol offerings” Paul presumably is speaking of meat obtainable in the *agora* or “shambles” or more particularly what was “eaten” during guild sessions and high days of the pantheon of gods or visits to friends and

acquaintances. “We know”[*he speaks of being aware by observation that idols don’t speak or answer prayer or engage with humanity*] “that there is no idol in the world”(or) better, “that an idol is nothing in the world”[*so-called idols as in Isaiah’s parody are artificial –sort of “stuck on” to the life of man – as unnatural as a circus notice on a tree trunk*] “and that there is not one (god) of a different genus – there is but one God.” Paul would have fully founded their theology on *Deuteronomy 4.35,39* and *6.4* where the Hebrew reads, “You (singular) were caused to see Him for Jehovah (or)Yahweh – He is The Elohim (the strong) and there is no repeat (or) no proof apart from that belonging to him alone” םדבל ם דװ [way myhl ah awl hwhy yk j [dl jarh hja ...and “know and Sabbath upon your heart (or spend time resting and thinking and meditating) for Yahweh is Elohim in the heavens above and on the earth beneath – there is no repetition (or) other God םדא נױא ןת״ם זרח ן [װ ן [mm mymVb myhl ah awl hwhy yk Ddbl ןא ןבChw myh j [dym ... and “Hear, O Israel, Yahweh Elohenu Yahweh is one” (ECHAD) םדא hwhy myhl a hwhy ןארVy [mv.

MOSES ON DEVOTION AND THE NATURE OF GOD 4

In the first instance within *Deuteronomy 4* Moses acts as a **prophetic preacher** teaching the individual Israelite to understand what the Sinai appearance entailed and its uniqueness and further exhorting the Israelite to spend time with God to come to know Him personally. In the second case we have **the prophet** setting out Israel’s confessional statement. His use of EHAD (*Used of composite union –hence Patrick’s famous trefoil symbol of the Trinity*) as opposed to YAHEED (absolute singularity) admits of the “eternal procession of the Son of God – the Lord or Word – who speaks to him. Thus Israel’s *Shema* is itself the very ground of the Trinitarian approach far from being an embarrassment to the apostle and Christianity.

THE POLYTHEISTIC HYPOTHESIS (Now largely despised) 5-6

“And the hypothesis being that there are ‘self-styled gods’ (or) that ‘call themselves gods’ (*Paul is tongue-in-cheek here*) either in heaven or on the earth, like the accompanying hypothesis that there are “gods many and lords many”. Translation needs to give proper weight to the *εἰπερ ...εἶτε...ὠσπερ* which Paul uses to make the “ifness” emphatic (*i.e. it is very much a shadow world, an if-theology, a matter widely accepted by mankind*) He continues “**But for us there is one God – the Father, from whom are all things, and we (as His children) for Him – and one Lord Jesus Christ, all things being through Him, and we (as Christians) are through Him.**”

THIS KNOWLEDGE 7-13

Here Paul further expounds that “this knowledge is not in the whole circle” (*of Christians*) so some of them see the idol as an unexpurgated part of their religious worship and eat till this very moment the idol sacrifice. These were what we would call worldly Christians or believers not weaned from pagan practice. Their synthesis of thought is weak – “half-digested” is probably the best translation – where the play between ‘eating’ and ‘understanding’ – although we could adopt the other use of *μολυνω* which is “wallowing” “stained” “debauched” in relation to ignorance or more apparent sin. The use of *συνειδησις* in Paul is not quite as precisely *moral* as in today’s coinage where the word means “conscience” – Paul’s use bears equally on *mental* synthesis – it is a co-ordinated “knowing” as much as a faculty of “moral excusing or indictment”.

“But meat does not bring us into the presence of God – we are neither better (*spiritually*) if we eat, nor do we come behind if we do not. But watch in case your authority (*i.e. the power to eat all God has created that is clean*) does not stumble the weak.

For if anyone sees you who has keen knowledge (*or*) decisive comprehension reclining at a meal in an idol’s temple, will not the inner conviction of the one who is weak have been built up to eat the things offered to idols? And the weaker brother for whom Christ died (*as a sacrifice*) is destroyed over your knowledge, and by continuing to smite (*or*) sting (*or*) deliver blows to the weaker synthetic power of these (*Christians*) you sin against Christ. Wherefore – *however much or little διοπερ* meat puts a scandal before my brother I will not eat a piece of *dressed cooked meat κρεα* ever again – that my brother may not be stumbled.”

The apostle puts others who less well understand the ultimate truth and who tend to follow the example of sturdier and knowledgeable persons in a place of importance so that Christianity then and now is bound to be a co-ordinated faith understanding how to apply principles to life so as to maintain the growth of Christ’s kingdom among men and maintain the peace of the body of believers. Sometimes this may result in a too-stagnant orthodoxy – something more in the nature of a tradition quite distinct from doctrine – so taking on an aura as “best practice”. The care of souls implies some definite uniformity and cost.

CHAPTER 9

Authority – Adaptability – Aim

THE AUTHORITY OF PAUL 1

“Am I not an apostle *Commissioned by Christ Jesus?* Am I not free *unencumbered, a freedman, but hardly independent – though yes ‘open to all’ as the agora is open to all who would purchase?* Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? (*As in Acts 9 & 26.13-19 Paul reports the self-revelation of the risen Christ as his authorisation – another occasion when this is registered is in Acts 18.9*) Are you not my work in the Lord? [*The one and a half years of Acts 18 12-17 in 51-52 AD spent in Corinth during the duration of Gallio’s magistracy by a Delphic inscription were years of ‘tent making with Aquila & Priscilla’*]. There were Sabbaths of dialectic in the synagogue; times of fractious abuse; gatherings in the ample home of Titius Justus; there was a voluminous public uproar and a court case ruled inadmissible and quashed as based on non-actionable theology. Just under one sixth of Paul’s working life as an apostle was spent in Corinth and since it was a new church scene where he encountered many inquisitive men *and women* it required great energy for a man approaching 50.

GREEK BELIEVERS GATHERED INTO A CHURCH – A SEAL OF CHRISTIANITY 2-3

If I am not an apostle for others (*the Jews who rejected his ministry*) still at least I am for you. For you are **in the Lord** – the seal *σφραγίς* (“*passport stamp*” – *Aristotle, the local authentication of identity often engrafted into the body*) of my apostleship Paul now gives his answer to those who question closely his qualification-as *archons* were queried and *plaintiffs* before trial.

1. THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT 4-6

Paul affirms in accordance with his understanding of the provisions made for other apostles, for the brothers of the Lord (*James, Joses, Simon and Jude*) and Peter and his wife *generally called Perpetua or named by others Concordia*. In patristic usage, that he could expect his board (*food & drink*) and care of his companion and wife. He pointedly asks if he alone with Barnabas must work.

2. THE RECIPROCAL ARGUMENT OR WORKERS' RIGHTS 7

A soldier is worth his "salt" or salary. Soldiers paid for some of their armour but not for their maintenance – thus they get *οψωνια* wages. A vinedresser derives wine from the vineyard; a shepherd gets milk from the goats of the flock.

3. THE DIVINE RIGHT ARGUMENT 8-11

Four sections of Torah can be referenced. *Deut. 25.4; Lev. 6.16, 26; Numb. 18.8, 31; Deut. 18.1-3*. Paul begins with *Deuteronomy 25*.

- (1) "Don't muzzle the ox. Does God care for oxen or does he speak always for us?" Answer – "Much more for the labouring man" – on the
- (2) *Deut. 25.4* basis – it as the ox may eat so the labourer should be paid as the sun set on his workday
- (3) *Deut. 25 14-15* On our account it has been written, that the ploughman ploughs in hope and the reaper shares his hope." So Paul asks if after sowing spiritually it is a great consideration to reap in things that support the body.

4. PARALLELS BETWEEN THE SERVICE OF THE TEMPLE AND THE CHURCH 12-13

"If others partake of support by right, why should we not?" Paul shows he did not use the right. He covered everything – that he might not even burden the gospel a notch. He refers to such instances as *Leviticus 6 16 & 26* where both unleavened bread and sin offering provide priestly food and the corn heave offerings as in *Numbers 18.8 and 31* likewise are gifted as sustenance to them. Also in *Deuteronomy 18 1-3* as he is aware the shoulder of ox or sheep with the corn wine and oil were to be received by the Levites. "Those who work in the temple eat from its sacrifices and those who attend constantly at the altar share portions together."

5. THE ORDINATION OF THE PIERCED HANDS 14-15

"The Lord ordained that those who carry the good news live from the gospel." This command as in *1 Timothy 5.18 Godet* urges has a common root in *Deuteronomy 25* and is related to *preachers*. *Godet* is very reliable here as he says that the Lord has established a class of *preachers* so that neither is his work left to spontaneous zeal of the faithful nor to a new priesthood – which he calls "two opposite rocks" but a ministry whose members live for the gospel. He has not used any one of these options nor written that this might become his practice for he would rather die than that the "joyous feeling of the moral worth of his own actions" *should (Godet)* be made void by such future change.

PAULINE NECESSITY 16

"If I should continue to preach is not a boast for me. For necessity is laid on me." He speaks of "bonds" of Acts 9.16. *Godet* goes prefers Acts 9.5 in his exegesis. Paul, I suggest, had a sober perspective – and utter awareness of inevitable and inescapable

pains of birthing the gentile church. He was a man inspired by the Holy Spirit yet no more prone to boast than a dying man. His “woe” is the unthinkable option of giving up for a quiet life.

A WILLING MESSENGER? 17-18

If Paul is willing ...the question is not his will “to preach” but his will “to take a salary.” That would certainly give him a steady income. But if unwilling to act as he has right to do, he has remained faithful to his stewardship or household – (*even to his wife – if the reading of his scanty references warrants deducing that he had a wife at all*) and in the larger sense his Lord as doing his utmost physically to provide. He asks what his reward really is. He answers – the reward of carrying the good news without charge and getting a place for the gospel of Christ, so that his right might not be misused in the office of the gospel.

PAUL IS ADAPTABLE IN MINISTRY 19-27

He has remained free from all ties – to make himself servant of all. A Jew to the Jews to wind the Jew; to those under law likewise; to those without law – not being lawless but in the law of Christ to win those without law. Serving those whose will is guided by nature, law and Christ – all three. It is equally so with the weak to whom he retained a ministry! **He was all things to all men to save some.** He did this for the gospel to become able to share it widely. Now as one who may have seen *the Isthmian* games held within just a few miles of Corinth he advises that **“all run, one wins”** and we ought to aim for the prize of Christ. **All who agonise as entrants in the arena are trained in their discipline** – theirs is a wreath **that fades, ours is imperishable.** Paul runs accordingly – not as if he *is unseen or in a secret race* *αδηλος* – he boxes not as one merely thrashing the air, but he beats his body under the eye *υποπιαζω* in a punch that will bring the contest to a conclusion – defeating his body completely – lest being a “herald” to others he might become unusable. His similes encompass some of the 5 disciplines – jumping, discus, and boxing, wrestling and running. Kindred references in *Philippians 3*, *2 Timothy 4* and *Hebrews 12* could be linked with his experience during the Corinthian ministry. The **HERALD κηρυξ** blew his trumpet to call athletes to begin the race. This is a most apt illustration of what Paul was about as a preacher of the gospel in these parts.

CHAPTER 10

Christ in the OT. – The sacraments – Those who walked under the glory cloud and drank the cup from the rock. Baptism – binds to humility – the danger of proud over-confident living – repeating the error of the wilderness fathers.

BROTHERS 1-13

“Brothers” – this is the 8th of 15 references in this epistle to “brothers”. Paul is emphatic that Christians forge powerful fraternal links reflecting their union with Christ. This brotherly reference brings the Corinthians nearer to Paul than the “Fathers” who fell in the wilderness were to Moses. Those fathers the main bulk of whom were mindless of God (a) went under the Shekinah and (b) though they passed through the Red sea waters and *“allowed themselves to be baptised”* (Middle) *εβαπτισαντο* into association with the faith of Moses (*i.e. they trusted him*) in cloud and sea and (c) ate the same spiritual bread and drank the same spiritual drink of the rock – yet **with most God was not well pleased.”**

So what went wrong? The apostle says what he means and means what he says – he tells us that they “Went as far as trusting Moses to get them over the sea. The manna was greedily grabbed but **who said grace?** The water was unfailing. Jewish rabbis *Onkelos and Rashi* speak of “the well that followed” Israel. Moses trailed them along like disciples but they were not by and large disciples along with Him under God. These are types of the lust we must avoid – for other thoughts held them captive. They fell into **idolatry**. Cf. scripture. *Exodus 32.6* **q̄tzl w̄mpȳ w̄j V̄w l̄kal m̄[h b̄vȳw** (**And sexual promiscuity**) “Let us not commit fornication as they did” pleads Paul – and the apostle quotes the number of victims – no less than **24 thousand** died just before they were to enter CANAAN. [*Numbers 25.9*] He goes back to *Numbers 21* **l̄arvym br-m̄l̄ j̄mȳw m̄[h ta w̄kcn̄ȳw mȳprvh mȳct̄n̄h ja m̄[b h̄why t̄l v̄ȳw l̄ql̄qh m̄hl̄ b̄ h̄zq w̄v̄p̄m̄ mȳm nȳaw m̄tl̄ nȳa**. “The Lord sent hissing serpents biting and enflaming so many died because they said there is no water and our soul is at an extreme end because of this despicable bread.” Paul plainly says “they tried Christ – the rock or “well”(v.9). They were destroyed by the destroying angel – Including 14,700 deaths in *Numbers 16* – these things are called “types” – i.e. they happened to others but carry a lesson for us.

Paul next states that “*the ends of the ages have come to an issue* **κατανταω**. In this context *Godet* rightly cautions Paul speaks of a “series of phases” within this historical period.

The lesson is, “Let him who thinks he stands watch lest he fall. No trial has suddenly taken you unless that which is ‘common’ (or “venial”).” Even temptations to idolatry and fornication are well annotated. The apostle looks to a “faithful God” who always protect and directs us **through** temptation – as **through** a “defile in the mountains”. We take courage that He means us to be victorious as Christ was.

PAUL SUMMARISES WILDERNESS SINS

1. *They were lustful Numbers 11. 4,34*
2. *They were idolaters v7 Exodus 32.6*
3. *They were fornicators v8 Numbers 25 1-9 23,000 destroyed*
4. *They were Tempters v9 Died by serpents*
5. *They were nurturers v10 Exodus 16.2 & Numbers 14.37*

THE CUP OF COMMUNION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE 14-22

Paul appeals to them as **φρονιμοι** practical or competent in politics and affairs-to judge when “we” bless the cup by prayer is it not **fellowship** of common interest in the blood of Christ – and by breaking bread – in His body. The “supper” brings worshippers under Christ’s influence; the Passover – under the Jewish altar; the heathen meal brings those who eat under that of demons.

The cup referred to “**cos habberakia**” was the third of the meal – the “cup of redemption” (cf. Sanctification, deliverance, redemption and praise). So taking the cup places us as *Godet* says “In the pure and luminous atmosphere of divine adoption.” Paul asks “Is this not the fellowship of the body of Christ?” The second phase of communion speaks of “Membership of one body and the bond to one head”.

Paul follows standard Jewish practice in identifying heathen deities with demons – cf. LXX on *Deut.32.17* **δαιμονιαις** – heathen gods mask demonic powers *Psalms 96 5, 20*. The Corinthian guild practice involved “**sprinkling of holy waters, sitting in silence, hymns and dance in honour of gods many on various days named for them**” and the worship of **Jupiter** afforded three cups. Paul urges “I would not that

you come into this fellowship”. The Apostle proclaims that they cannot compromise – they cannot do both. Heathen cultus is not for us (v21).

CHRISTIAN LIVING IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY 23-33

Here we have **Paul’s rule** for making good decisions.

- (a) Is it beneficial & constructive? v23
- (b) is it motivated by love for others? v24
- (c) Does it yield a clear conscience? Vv. 25-30
- (d) Is it bringing glory to God? V31
- (e) Is it not a hindrance to a weak Christian?
- (f) Is it good for my witness? v33

JEWISH GRACE 24

Paul in v24 refers to what was a **Jewish grace** – with which any meat might normally be eaten, even meat that was sold in the shambles (v25).

“To the Lord belong the earth *xra* and its fullness *alm* “full gifts” literally “filling up of hands for Jehovah”; the fertile world *ibt* and they that dwell in it. All its food is to be offered to Jehovah – all its fertility allotted to the inhabitants to enjoy.

The Christian is to accept invitations to meals in good faith – often such could lead to the advance of the kingdom. But where there is uncertainty think of the Gentiles – the heathen, then the Jews, and then the Christians – even the weakest member of the latter body – and give no offence to any. (v32) Thus those in my company should end up with a high view of God’s holiness. The liberty one has should be governed by the glory of God and trammelled by the scruples and conscience of others.

CHAPTER 11

Follow me as I follow Christ – literally μιμνται “Be mimes” Paul encourages identical behaviour to Christ. Paul gives due praise that the Corinthians – described as “brothers” for the 9th time. His praise is because “They remember all about him and hold the traditions as he passed them on”. Then he adds an additional insight. “I want you to know “Christ is the head of every man” “The husband is head of the wife” “God is head of Christ”.

1 THE ARGUMENT FROM GLORY 1-10

Gods needs exposure, man’s needs veiling

A man praying or preaching with covered head disgraces his head; every woman praying or preaching with uncovered head is a disgrace to her head. Neither the capability nor option of the ministry of ladies is the issue precisely treated – but how to prevent prejudice to God’s divine purpose and plan that in different and distinct ways man and woman would portray Him. Man’s duty and role is to declare and show God’s glory and woman on the other hand, being the unique evidence of man’s glory, has natural and beautiful hair covering or may adopt a covering (*palla*) as a sign that in tender and special relationship with her husband she submits to the Lord and to, *and* to promote her husband’s humility before God. Without deference to custom that preserved public recognition in Corinth and in cities where the Law of Moses was practiced a woman of the day was considered to be in the category of those with shaven heads – the women of ill-fame. (*This would give sign of being a ‘woman of ill fame’*). For if a woman does not veil herself, let her have her hair clipped off. But if it is a disgrace to be *shaved* – the comic theme of a play by *Menander* set in Corinth or to have her hair cut let her be veiled. On the other hand the man ought not to veil his face – in what *J. Murphy O’Connor* argues is an “unmasculine hair-do” and one possibly

associated with homosexuality, having come into being and being subordinate as the image and glory of God. But the woman is man's glory. *Within modern church life the categories of perverted or profligate life-style are no longer read from neatly trimmed feminine hair-style or an abundance of masculine hair tossing over the shoulders. Nevertheless the possibility of bringing shame to the name of Christ by bad dress sense or sensuous and scanty clothing should not be forgotten.*

2 THE ARGUMENT FROM CREATION AND DESIGN – ONTOLOGICAL 8-9

Man is not from woman but woman from man. Man has not been created entirely through and on account of woman – but woman throughout because of man. God has designed family and the development of the human race as a priority and has never revoked His creation ordinance in favour of the fruitfulness and growth of mankind through natural generation – that the earth should continuously and everywhere be replenished.

3 THE ARGUMENT FROM INTERFACE WITH ANGELS 10

Because of the “angels” women should be circumspect. The fact of angelic presence among worshippers is doubtless considered pettifogging and trite but we cannot contest with the apostle with any success that we are a theatre (*1Cor.4.9*) and an advanced academy for angels. *Hebrews 1.14* and holy angels may at the behest of God or routines He has established be present to study in depth the profound nature and effect of their gospel when Christians assemble to in the name of Christ. It is beyond dispute that their understanding of the grandeur and sincerity of our worship and prayer relates in large measure to how we contrast with the lasciviousness and lust of the world around us and its pride of life. Angels, manifestly, are offended by any violation of propriety. That we are part of their further learning is seen from *Ephesians 3 10-11; 1Corinthians 4.9 & 1Peter1.12*

4 THE ARGUMENT OF THE LORD'S CARE OF BOTH MALE AND FEMALE 11

Neither is man nor woman without the other in the Christian tradition and application of these principles. The effect is that neither man nor woman is to boast independence of God or for that matter lack of commitment or covenant responsibilities to one another. It is not a case of “my career” but “my service of God “being the first joy of my life in either case. The mutual inter-relation of man and woman **shall have proper regard** for the ends for which in the beginning God created us to which also our Lord Jesus brought us back in His teaching viz. “fountain -head” or “head stream” of time – *Matthew19.4*

THE GENDER TESTIMONY TO IT'S GOD AND MAKER 12

The woman is from the man and the man always through the woman, but everything is **from God**. The object in worship and in organising how we relate in Christian worship and what roles each man and woman is given relates to godliness and gift and is always bound to God's glory.

5 YOU JUDGE – THE ARGUMENT FROM NATURAL LAW 13-16

“Judge these things for yourselves – is it appropriate that a woman pray to God unveiled? Or doesn't **nature teach** you that a man with long hair does himself no honour, while for a woman long hair is her glory. That hair has been given her instead of throwing a veil around her – but if anyone seems to love an argument about words,

–we (*Jews or apostles?*) do not have this sort of custom neither the churches of God – i.e. of **unveiled women**. Paul is saying that in the days of his testimony a universal discipline reigned concerning public orations whether in the assemblies of the fathers of nations, royal courts or religious gatherings. We today are no less accustomed to well understood codes of dress in such gatherings – though the safeguards of society and social change have led to a family style presentation of the person both at home and in worship. Educational change has led in the last century to full participation in all public affairs of our womenfolk. The Spirit of prophecy said that in the last days “sons and daughters would prophecy” and within the bounds of good order in accordance with the Lord’s guidelines for Church leadership and the complimentary roles of the sexes this reality is increasingly and wisely being recognised. The application of wisdom also as ever subscribes to the principle “Wisdom is justified in her children”. The Church in such matters shall rejoice in the benefits of gift and increased usefulness and be ever watchful over the development of good and pure Christian living and practice.

Calvin makes “discussion” **the custom** the apostle does not have – but it is the “unveiled woman” that is uncustomary.

The principal reason for modern deference is not alone a “custom” based argument – and whilst factoring in the essentially theological stance of the apostle Paul based on **the creation purpose** which must ever regard woman as a child-bearer according to her created role yet this does not preclude her being gifted in the latter days and like the slaves of earlier time freed to serve His church as never before.

Godet – ever apt in his comments – refers to the catacombs where “**the men wear their hair cut short and the women wear the Palla over face and shoulders**” Our western dress code is being heavily challenged by the Burkha. We need to maintain the **decency of scripture** and do service to biblical doctrine and be mindful of God’s glory in worship taking care that the church neither crowns secularism monarch nor reinvents man’s purpose nor despises gift nor for that matter fail to note that God Himself is providing articulate women of fervour who can prophecy. Today with us dress code has been highly individualised and uni-sex custom widely accepted in dress – there is no attendant immoral context as with “hair” in Corinth. On that account we have relaxed the time-honoured custom of 19 centuries. The keynote is the Glory of God and humble submission under his mighty hand.

EXCURSUS (5) – REMARKS OF SOME BIBLE TEACHERS

Dr Alan Redpath “A man who can only rule by stamping his foot had better remain single. But a man who knows how to govern his house by the love of the Lord, through sacrificial submission to the Lord, is the man who is going to make a perfect husband. The woman who cannot submit to an authority like that had better remain single”.

Fee “The use of the word “veil”... is an unfortunate one since it tends to call to mind the full veil of contemporary Moslem cultures, which covers everything but the eyes. This is unknown in antiquity, at least from the evidence of paintings and sculpture.”

THE LORD’S SUPPER 17-34

Paul responds to information which made him highly discontent – that the Corinthians were becoming over-indulgent and even intoxicated by wine at the supper that should have reminded them of one who in extreme pain barely tasted an anodyne. The abuse was severely rebuked. He advised them that the wider use of wine should be confined to their homes.

Paul refers to receiving words used by Christ in the upper room that had been passed along to him – possibly by Peter. Jesus took bread and broke it in one act and said “**Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you**”. The **middle voice form** of “broken” *κλωμενον* really means “**is given**” as two ancient texts originating at *Memphis and Thebes* respectively read from like words in Luke’s gospel (*Luke 22.19*) found in those Egyptian copies. Jesus is saying (to paraphrase) “**My body I willingly give to be broken**”. The conjugation of the same verb in Luke yields a present participle passive *διδομενον*. It is as if Jesus is saying “**I have yielded myself up long, long ago**”. To this our Lord added “This cup is the New Covenant in my blood – this do as often as you drink it to awaken memory *αναμνησιν* of me”. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the victory of the death of Adonai until when He shall come. The Corinthian text adds the warning opposite the proclamation that anyone who drinks unworthily not having entered the covenant eats and drinks judgment as he does not discern the flock *διακρινων* and the basis of its sanctification. To judge oneself to be a sinner in need of the blood is on the other hand a means of coming under the means of grace. Paul demands of the Corinthians that they test themselves as severely *δοκιμαζετο* as the ancients who would enter the Greek army and thus sit down with believers.

Lest I forget Gethsemane,
Lest I forget Thine agony,
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary

CHAPTER 12 Spiritual Gifts

IDOLATRY TO HERESY 1-3

A Corinthian author calls the people “everlastingly children” (cf. 1Cor.3.1). The terrible misconstruing of truth on the part of the *Ophites* who asked that those entering their churches curse Christ (cf. v.3) and the equally ruinous views of *Cerinthus* who alleged that Christ parted from Jesus before the passion was devastating for doctrine. *Cerinthus* held that God cursed Jesus and his followers were permitted to do that too. It is easy to see why John would not be found in the public baths with this heretic.

GIFTS, ADMINISTRATION & THEIR OPERATION 4-6

There are thoroughly different choices of gift but the same Holy Spirit.
There are completely different choices of ministry under the same Lord.
There are totally different works to be energised – but the same God.
The *gift* the *calling* the *energy* in these respective cases comes from the triune God

GIFTS DO THREE THINGS 7-11

Anything we are given can **educate** us, it can **equip** us with new powers, it can **thrill** us completely!

- (a) “Words of knowledge” *γνωσις* make the teacher prophetic teacher or messenger of admonition and warning; truth *σοφια* makes the preacher. These gifts enlighten
- (b) Faith –healing– miracles (*which challenge Satan’s kingdom*) with “prophecy & discernment” equip the saints.

(c) Tongues and interpretation of ancient time assisted in the hearing of the gospel by alien peoples and still today help in devotion & speaking to God (14.2) heightening the relationship with the Lord – often gifting ethereally beautiful rhythmic song.

THE BODY AND THE GIFTS 12-13

“**Membership**” as *Kick Warren* points out is an original Christian concept – derived from Paul and the notion of *the body*. It comes from oneness and uniqueness by the ministry of the **Holy Spirit**; it comes from the uniqueness of **Christian Baptism** and from the **word and Spirit**. All these allied to the uniqueness and oneness of **the body** of Christ in its variety uniting us.

DIVERSITY IN UNITY 14-23

The body has multiple members – foot and hand, ear and eye, each of the four brings vital help and adds capability. Paul shows that a “one-member body” is a ridiculous concept [v19]. God has devised the diversity of His church. The eye will lose capability without the assistance of the hand and equally the head without the foot. This series of observations is very telling for Christ is the “head” and He both hears prayer and sees the way ahead –but in doing so relates to us as His “feet and hands.” He has determined to use us as His hands and feet in our time. “Weaker” they may be – but empowered and essential still, “Less honoured” than the head – yet given great honour to share in His very nature. “Less presentable” – not seen – but God has “tempered” *συγκεραννυμι* (to temper pleasure with pain, to become closely acquainted/unite/to mix) or made to be deeply involved in friendship and creative of pleasure and a vital factor in all of life the member that lacked – i.e. the productive organs of human life. Here *we might read* “the evangelist” to whom belongs the joy of promoting the growth of the church and the need to “know nothing among others save Christ and Him crucified” – “to decrease that He may increase”

THE MIX 24-27

God’s divine plan of “growth” and development counters “schism” and is massively promoted by bringing deep pleasure through “new birth” and often by taking His people through “painful” experiences to stronger faith. He has “tempered” also in the sense of developing acquaintance and friendship with Himself and others. God prevents “schism” by developing mutual care – “anxious care” for one another is not disobedience neither is it banned. The very word we have banned by Jesus when He said we should have “no anxious care” of what we eat or wear. He has allowed us to show for other persons. So *μεριμναι* is not entirely a banned concept. We are to care to the point of deep concern for other people. The suffering of members is shared – cf. persecution as well as health concern – whereas the “glorification” or home call brings joy to all. We are the body – we share as members in His whole estate – with the church worldwide!

THE GIFTED MINISTRIES 28-30

God has gifted His church with: –

First: apostles *αποστολοι*

Second: prophets *προφεται*

Third;teachers *διδασκαλοι*

Then authorities *δυναμεις*

Then gifts of healing, helps, steersmen, linguistic variety in speech
ιαματοι, αντιληψεις, κυβερνησεις, γενη γλωσσαι

Not all the gifts of believers by any means are in the first three groups; not all participate with authority; not all have the gift of healing; not all can communicate and interpret languages...but many can help and steer i.e.

αντιληψεις /κυβερνησεις ...i.e. people who are able **to do tasks in turn**. Paul seems to be urging that many can do a variety of things and **take a period of responsibility in the church** – they can take hold of truth or needs with the mind – they can be like branches of the vine clinging to the truth as tendrils and helping the church forward – or be “steersmen” piloting the church through difficulties using the skills they have learned of the dangers facing us and the way through under divine direction. So this taking responsibility for the guidance of the whole church can devolve about others than the first four groupings given – though the first four would be generally associated closely with such a task and generally be endowed with this capability.

A BETTER WAY 31B

Paul finishes, “See the best gifts and I show you a way that “overshoots” or outflanks all other – thus bringing in His timeless chapter on “love” which re-introduces the first principle and life-style of Christ to the church not alone at Corinth but through the apostles’ letter it has gone out into all the world.

CHAPTER 13

There are 5 characters drawn in this fabulous chapter on love. The first three are deliberately overdrawn- to deflate current Corinthian self-esteem; the fourth is exactly delineated – Jesus; the fifth is honestly described – Paul.

1. THE MAGNIFICENT LINGUIST 1

John Paul II had great linguistic endowments. Early in 2012 I met a gentleman who is resident in Turkey and fluent in over 20 languages. He pointed out a minor error in a printed Hebrew script I had issued and told me he was currently studying Babylonian. Paul creates a fictitious character with unbelievable comprehension far beyond what I have described above – one who commands all earth’s languages and heaven’s tongues. Were such knowledge attainable – in the absence of love even so astounding a gift could be discounted as valueless. Loveless language has no joyful song and is an “echo” – it comes back as harsh, unfeeling, insensitive or as hollow grating sound without harmony and melody – it is so much noise.

2. THE MIGHTY PROPHET v.2

Daniel was enabled to interpret dreams and to Jeremiah it was given to know the time of Israel’s return – to Daniel the days until Christ’s triumphal entry, to John the divine the signs of the Lord’s second coming – these were specially favoured men indeed. Paul takes us beyond such outstanding prophets in a second hyperbole and introduces us to a prophet to whom nothing is mysterious, who knows everything and is such a confidant in the will of God as to be able to change the position of mountains (*cf. Matthew 17.20*) in His world. Without love such a person could not exist for these powers belong to God alone and God is love. Omniscience and love belong together and could never be the prerogative of the loveless. Prophecy originates in a loving God who will do nothing except He reveals it to His servants the prophets but the prophetic ministry is one of absolute servant hood to the hour of death.

3. THE MAGNANIMOUS BENEFACTOR v3

To give everything to the poor and to make one's life a burnt offering as a martyr for a great cause – this is to count neither possessions nor very life dear. This performed without love has absolutely no advantage or gain. It remains unrewarded. The concept of *the suicidal individual – acting out of hatred* – is plainly rebuked here. In his comment *Godet* refers to an Indian who had himself immolated at Athens in *Augustus'* time – of whom *Strabo* says “He immortalised himself”. *Lucian* calls such “Men of empty glory” *Godet* again quotes the case of two Presbyters who went to execution – **the one craving the other's forgiveness without receiving it. He who would not forgive denied Christ and was spared – he who craved it died gloriously for His Lord. Heroic acts there may be but where they lack love they have no merit and are literally worthless.**

4. THE PERFECT MAN 4-10

We are compelled to John's Galilee verdict, “It is the Lord!” on assessment of this fourth delineation. “*The*” love expressed in this outstanding portrayal depicts “One who never loses patience; one ever kindness itself. “*The love* (in Him) is without a jealous bone in His body; “*The*” love(in Him) is free from a boasting spirit and conceit ; He is one who never has to be ashamed or apologetic; one who does not assert His rights; one who is never exasperated – and most amazing of all – who never has an evil thought”

Put positively, here is one who always rejoices in truth and is no despairing critic of men's' incommoding and terrible failures; one who covers over others' faults (making his atoning blood their shelter of safety – literally a roof and home); in Him we meet one who always is confident and trustful; who never ceases to hope; who endures under the greatest burden. “*The love*” (expressed in the person of Christ) never fails (*literally “never falls from the charioteer's board”*). In this most perfect of portraits of love incarnate love divine the supreme lover of our souls is patient, kind without envy boast or pride. This lover of His people is never; rude, self-seeking or readily angered. He did not come to judge and keeps no record of wrongs for He forgives all our iniquities, transgressions and sins and remembers them no more for ever. He delights in truth. He is our Shepherd and protection and trusts us more than we trust Him, He maintains His hopes for us and His perseverance with our faults and foibles renders Him most precious. His name is Jesus and there is no-one who remotely compares with Him for loving kindness.

Where Paul has put a **generic article** to Love (*η αγαπη*) in verses 4, 8 and 13 he is describing pristine love in Christ. This is the Christ whom Paul preaches.

4. THE APOSTLE v11

When he was *νηπιος* (*a child beginning life in Tarsus without speech*) he simply made sounds. His practical wisdom was limited, his power to calculate or think logically or count *λογιζω* was very limited too. With manhood childish things were, however, soon past and gone. Paul tells us that prophecies will become a thing of the past and tongues will cease in face of a common speech and pure language when the Lord returns. Knowledge gained by acquaintance and inquiry will no longer be employed in the world of tomorrow. Science will be defunct. “God will make all things new” *Revelation 21.5*. God is going to “form” things new and for common sharing.

5. THE PRESENT ENIGMA WILL YIELD TO FUTURE SIGHT

(1) **The dark glass** – in the ancient world the metal mirrors of Corinth were famous.

(2) **The enigma** is a sentence which does not say something clearly or exactly but enables an educated guess. The OT verse from *Deuteronomy 34.10* mentions God speaking to Moses mouth to mouth and not in dark or enigmatic sentences. The advent of Christ (*cf. 1 Corinthians 1.7*) will give rise to new circumstances in respect of prophecy, speech, and knowledge.

(3) **The Enduring love** – in the perfect state gifts will be done away. There will be sight of Christ – so faith is unnecessary; there will be possession of the kingdom – so hope will pass away. Hope and faith abide *now* (**νῦν**) [*literally “at this moment in time”*]. They will of course fade away. *Godet* puts it beautifully “**The palm belongs to charity**”. *Calvin* “Love is greater in virtue of its eternal duration”.

Faith is superseded by sight as when Thomas calls out “My Lord and my God”, so hope of the new day is eclipsed by the morning of His appearing.

(4) **The love** v13 is greater than these. The love that Christ demonstrated is beyond hope and beyond faith that we can exercise and even – dare I boldly tread alone to say it – beyond all other love ever seen among men – even among the dearest believers – **the love of Jesus at the cross holds the palm**. Its preachers and exemplars have not won the world but neither have they lost the battle for men’s hearts. What is wanting in us the return of the dear dying Lamb in righteousness glory and justice with never dying love will quickly progress – and without the shadow of a doubt – He will not just conquer the hearts of men for a term – this “desire of nations” will hold the whole wide earth in thrall for a thousand years.

CHAPTER 14

Edification and order in worship

The chapter is contextualised by four important OT references set out below:-

(1) v.5 “I would that you all spoke with tongues” is interpreted through **Numbers 11.29** where Moses’ parallel desire is for all God’s people to be moved by the Spirit and capable of prophecy. Give us inspired holy prophets and ours will be the victory of the gospel

(2) v.21 “In (the circle of) the law it is written, I will speak (**λαλεῖν**) to Israel with strange tongues” – **Isaiah 28.11** – Paul shows that Isaiah foretold days when Gentiles would teach **Jews who would become fixed on “rule-book” religion**. He is saying

that they would be in the circle of law when Gentiles were in the circle understanding of the cornerstone or NT foundation – Paul is not mistaken in referencing the law where it might seem he should be quoting the prophets but he is explaining the context.

(3) v.25 As in **Isaiah 45.4 & 14** a “surnamed” people who are born from above can be witness to the Lord. In the Gentile darkness of Babylon and in future apocalyptic Babylon of Revelation clear testimony to salvation was and will be through the Jew.

(4) v.34 The desire of woman towards her husband divinely stated in **Genesis 3.16**. The woman is told her destiny in three ways. *She will have life long family responsibility*; she will have a *locust like desire* for provision of food and finally *she will be made like or assimilate to her head* who is her Lord-in-God. He is destined to share with her in Christ as **ICM** or teacher.

EXCURSUS (6) – THE USE OF “SPEAK” IN CHAPTER 14

Λαλεῖν (Greek) covers a variety of manners of speaking. One may speak... “inarticulately” “poetically” “melodically” and it was used widely of baby-talk, of a mother singing lullabies, of monkeys chattering, of the green frog croaking and the grasshopper making its “wind-up”.

The OT prophetic *אֵבֶנֶת יְהוָה* (*Samuel's period* cf. *1Samuel 9.9 & 10.10*) was formerly a “seer” (cf. the *Mosaic period*) but was re-named as a “prophet”. In *Exodus 4.16 & 7.1* we find the concept of “fluent speech” in Aaron and revelation or “seer-message” to Moses. Thus the term “prophet” attached to the “**communication**” aspect – though it entailed the “**message**” aspect besides. In his 23 uses of *λαλεω* mingled with 9 references to “prophet/prophecy *προφητεω* Paul is laying stress variously on “voice” and “message”. It would seem that the “in house” prophecy of King Saul signified a great “conversion” in spiritual terms *κῆρ* a “changed” man – singing to psaltery, tabret, pipe and harp. For this reason David’s gift should have encouraged his had he continued with God. Cf. *1Cor 14 7-8 & 1Samuel 10.5*. Saul in his day joined “singing” prophets.

(1) LOVE THE MARKED CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE)

Tongues and prophecy V.1

Paul recommends Charity as vital in the life of the Christian; he commends prophecy to the heart of us all and a balanced interest in other gifts as suited to personal inspiration and edification of the fellowship by the Holy Spirit. Readers were to “follow” *διωκω* or go where they could secure N.T. scriptural “preaching” – since in those days it was not everywhere known. Paul stirs us to zeal for “prophecy” (“*the message*” and the “*apocalyptic of God*” and “*a word in season*” too). The advice is related to the advantage of preaching in edification and in conversion.

(2) EDIFICATION IS OF THE ESSENCE 2-5

Tongues and prophecy

Glossalalia implies such joyous ecstasy as involves ineffable conversation with God and edifies the individual – it has its own language but remains to others mysterious – where interpretation is wanting. Prophecy on the other hand (v3) edifies, exhorts and comforts the church – bringing new views of truth to the mind, new strength to the will and reviving the spirit in hope.

Paul accepts the merit of glossalalia in *the exceptional circumstance* of one being **able to interpret** and share the views encouragement or comfort that he enjoys with God. *Godet the French evangelical of a few generations back* illumined this well by showing it is as rare a gift as **being able to tell a dream afterward**.

BY WAY OF ILLUSTRATION 6-12

(a) Paul’s *νῦν* “now” in v6 serves to say “I am better to explain understandably in writing” than to “Come and publicly celebrate my devotions mystically”. If at this moment in time I did the latter it would be no help to you, is the thought.

Paul says he would naturally come by revelation (*a lively perception of the mystery of God or His word or work which makes prophecy*) or knowledge (*the Holy Spirit exercising our thought in respect of the word or salvation – giving rise to doctrine*).

(b) Various musical instruments are of value only by distinction of sound – cf. above-where the prophets sang.

- (c) There are numerous languages – each people has speech – “no tongue is not a language” –it is just that it is not always understood.
- (d) Meaning is vital. Failure to grasp the import of speech alienates. Those who seek to exercise any spiritual gift should be exercised as to how that gift can build up the church.

THE BELIEVER WHO SPEAKS IN TONGUES SHOULD RELATE 13-20

Speaking in tongues rejoices the spirit through enjoying the divine presence; it innerves prayer and promotes a song in the inner sanctum of the soul. One may be pouring out tanks to God but others cannot say “Amen” if they do not know what is afoot. The apostle advises that any Christian so gifted should pray for interpretation and use this gift in public to edify.

Let him pray with deep commitment or vow to interpret. Paul shows this determination in vv15-16 – a determination to both pray in aspiration for fullest blessing and sing in celebration of received favours so others can say “Amen” and share the joy. Paul uses the mode of tongues more than all – but would far rather speak five intelligible words than 10,000 otherwise in church. The value of a total glossalalia service as in v.16 (as in 23-24) is negligible to the *ιδιωτης* uninitiated – *the curious* – the *immature* or **instructed** who is not yet baptised.

(3) EVANGELISM (BRING OTHERS TO CHRIST) IS VITAL 21-40

Tongues and prophecy

The value of tongues (*with interpretation*) as testimony to the “unbeliever” is as for the Jews at Pentecost a warning against unbelief as the gospel heard on that solemn day by aliens in their own tongue proved to be – they immediately craved change of heart.

V25. If the whole service be given to glossalalia unbelievers will think Christians have succumbed to a form of madness v23. On the other hand if it is a gathering for preaching-cum-prophecy such a person will be convicted and his heart will be laid bare and he will worship and repent saying “God is among you”. This tongues uninterpreted cannot do.

Paul queries why each should present a hymn, a talk, some apocalyptic, a tongue. That worship leaders should ask such a question as Paul did even today might streamline worship and render time spent together of greater profit.

1. *There is a psalm or hymn-singing that opens worship – not improvised – cf. εχειν*
2. *We have doctrine next – clear exact instruction.*
3. *Revelation i.e. prophecy. (Two or three – who graciously cede to others)...there being no written revelation.*
4. *Tongues and interpretation (prayer and praise with participation).*
5. *Closing in adoring hymn or psalm.*

In this way “we reach the ‘third heaven’ and return to practical life.” (*Godet*)

“The others” of v30 are the congregation (*Melanchthon*)-they would discerningly declare “Bless the Lord” or “Hallelujah” or “Jesus is Lord”.

Paul contrasts demon-possession with the Spirit coming upon a man in v32. The latter **restores man** – the devil **takes man from himself**.

EXCURSUS (7) – THE POSITION OF WOMEN

(Guarded but open and subject to custom)

Paul brings church custom alongside the position expressed in the law – notably submission – cf. Genesis 3.16. The question is of modesty – it is not of crime. The

exception of “asking questions” tends to prove the norm was “silence”. Note the content of chapter 11 “**As to women if under a sudden inspiration or revelation they wish to take the word in the assembly to give utterance to prayer or prophecy, I do not object** – only let them be veiled – but in general let them be silent”. *1 Corinthians 11.4 has to be read in line with the Meshel character of the husband-wife relationship. Whether the church is right to replace the Meshel(teaching) prerogative of Christ as to the nature of **church ordination and ministry** is not proven by any claim of right – it resides within scriptural regulation – notwithstanding the current work practice in Britain operates within a context where family life is in some good measure directed by government, albeit by voluntary concurrence, towards the workplace – and parliament is not subject to scriptural parameters or the Meshel(Hebrew) teaching authority of Christ.*

Paul ironically asks if Corinth is the “mother church” or “did the word come out to be opposed to you alone?” Paul also felt it necessary to explain his own authority within a culture far different from that of the Hebrews. He speaks of “What I have written is...” in v38. This may be read variously as “The things I write are the Lords” or “the Lord’s commands.”

TO SUMMARISE

Tongues and Prophecy

To Corinth Paul will say “Covet to prophecy...and forbid not to speak with tongues” as a balancing conclusion i.e. let your preference be prophecy... To Thessalonica he says, “Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings” i.e. “Don’t rule out **tongues** or set **prophecy** at naught – the first should be there – the second should be prominent and respected.

CHAPTER 15

“Christ is risen and we shall rise”

Introduction The dogmatic keystone of the faith of Christ is the Resurrection. In 15.3 Paul makes a very significant reference to the unique redemptive and substitutionary death of Christ.

1 THE FORCE OF OT PROPHETIC SCRIPTURE (throughout the chapter)

Some scholars deny that the Old Testament teaches the Resurrection. A favourite Theological question for NT diploma and Bachelor exams is “Does the OT or the Psalms have anything to say about the Resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION REFERENCES cf. *John 18.36 κατά τας γραφάς*

(1) **Moses** 1400BC A prophet shall God raise up מִיָּק (Heb) like me *Dt. 18.15* cp. *Genesis 3 17-19 [v21 & vv45-49]*

(2) **David** 1000BC The Lord ... sit thou at my right hand יִנְיָמִי *Psa. 110.1* No physical corruption *Psa. 16.10 [v4, v25]*

(3) **Hosea** 800BC After 2 days He will revive us – on the third raise us up מִיָּק *Hosea 6.2 [v55]*

(4) **Isaiah** 740BC He will wipe away all tears. He will show him the light of life נִרְא *Isaiah 25.8, 53.11 [v3, v54]*

(5) **Daniel** 600BC The God of heaven will set up מִיָּקִי an indestructible kingdom *Dan 2.44 [v24]*

2. THE FORCE OF RECORDED NT HISTORICAL FACT 1-11

Corroborative evidence – apostolic assurance – based on Paul’s history received from Peter and his experience of Christ on the Damascus Road.

Awakenings Many bodies of saints arose, leaving tombs after Him, appeared to many – Mt 27 52ff cf. v18 **Day 1**

Appearances Jesus rose and appeared to Cephas; the twelve; 500 in a mount in Galilee; James; the apostles...

Ascensions Jesus leading captivity – Acts 1.9 with Matthew 27.53 & Psalm 68.18 on **Day 40.**

Abnormal conversion *εκτρομα (τραυμα)* v8 Paul – born from hurts – Acts 9.5 Jesus wounds – Stephen’s wounds.

3. THE FORCE OF PAUL’S PHILOSOPHICAL HYPOTHESES 12-19

Paul takes the sceptic’s platform to show the emptiness of the converse position

Thesis If Christ is heralded as King how do some calculate that there is no resurrection?

Antithesis If **there is not a state of resurrection** then not even Christ is raised

Consequence 1 If Christ is not raised our message is empty, faith is pseudo, our witness is a crime against God

Consequence 2 If Christ is not raised your faith is rash – you are still in sin (not forgiven), our dead have perished

Consequence 3 if we hope only in this spring after winter life in Christ we are more miserable than all men

4. THE FORCE OF THEOLOGICAL REALITY OF RESURRECTION 20-28

We must notice that even in Section 3 there are 8 references to Christ – speaking of a new state developed by the resurrection of the King or Messiah. Now we have 4 further references to Christ which speak about God’s perfect plan.

“At this very moment of writing **νυνι Christ** has risen. First fruits like earliest harvesting have happened *εγενετο*

It is awesome to think of the devastation and death *θανατος* of the un-regenerate through one single man Adam – and by parallel awesome to know that all the regenerate will live again through the *αναστασις* of one – **Christ.**

EXCURSUS (8)-TAGMA (RANKS OF CHRISTIANS ENTER HEAVEN) MILITARY DIVISIONS (TAGMA) HAVE MARCHED TO HEAVEN SINCE THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Three divisions:–

(a) The first-fruits ascension when many of the saints went with our Lord.

(b) The *parousia* ascension at the coming of the bridegroom.

(c) Then *τελος*– the kingdom ascension at the end of the earth’s history.

“Magistracy” and “delegated authority/executive” and “military & financial power” will ultimately cede to Messiah’s rule v.24 and become “unemployed”.

In the Messianic era Christ will sever the link with Sheol in a foretaste of eternity v27.

In Hosea 13.14 the stages are set out:

(1) God unyokes from the hand of Sheol – cf. Lazarus; “redeems from death” – cf. firstfruits;

(2) “I will be your plague” (*Ex9.30*) – at a stroke raises the saints;

(3) “I will be your amputator, O Sheol” *bfq(hb)* at the millennial cut-off point.

Thus it would appear that these promises stress that the curse of death is first

disturbed, then **diminished** as by plague, then the link between man and Sheol is

broken...so the idea of “divisions” *ταγμα* – marching under Christ’s signal is Paul’s chosen way of expressing the progress of God’s people to heaven – to the awakened or resurrection life over the church age. Paul makes no provision for the intermediate state and neither do I, hence also the need more fully to appreciate the advised relevance of Paul’s phrase “The last enemy”. This purpose gloriously to be shown over 1000 years the millennial kingdom is transferred to the New Heaven by the final ascension. These three Christian divisions of the army of the righteous join in Glory and are united by the Father with patriarchal and pre-diluvian humanity and the holy angels. God is “all in all” – all His objectives achieved – “finito”

5. THE FORCE OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ARGUMENT 29-34

Why, why? why?

Why? (Greek επει τι) “What is the cause that is inspiring those who baptise themselves for the dead to do it”? i.e. if not resurrection. And why are they continuing to be baptised on behalf of the dead? (*Solution: martyrs honoured by neophytes and with faith enough to take their place – believed in resurrection like the martyrs.*)

Why are we in danger hourly? I am ready to die daily, if this cause for boasting that lies in you in you pleases God, which I hold in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why have I fought with men in Ephesus as if I was in the arena with beasts? What advantage – if the dead do not rise? (I.e. if there is no after-life). Don’t join the “eat and drink for tomorrow we die” people – planetary thinkers that they are – shooting off into darkness. Bad sojourns – *from conversations to sexual connection* corrupt good ethics. *ομιλια* were of three sorts: – Baring the body in bacchanalia, baring the soul to sinister persuaders, and baring the spirit to idolatries.

6. THE EFFECT OF RE-CREATION IN RESURRECTION 35-43

cf. “Thou fool” v36 & Psalm 14 God looks down! Do I look up?

“The grain of wheat” shows how a dying body (in soil) yields its life as the **new plant** emerges

(a) Body and personal life as pleases God will continue sealed by His Spirit v38

(b) Fish, animals, birds and men thrive in different settings. In resurrection we are fitted to our **new home**.

(c) “Glory” marks the **new body**. God is as the sun heaven’s Shekinah, we it’s moon, angels its stars – all radiant.

THE BODY OF GLORY!

Fourfold change From seduction and debauchery – from living life like mixed paints on a paten – we are never to be duped again – or corrupted *φθορα-αφθαρσια*; from disgrace and slighting of rights to distinguished expectant glorious *ατιμια-δοξα*; from being prone to disease and too weak to work to living on and on – improving gift *ασθενια-δυναμις*; from rueful appetite and passion to beings energised moment by moment single hearted as runners and warriors living for Christ *ψυχικος-πνευματιχος*.

7. THE ARGUMENT FROM ANTHROPOLOGY 44-49

Pauline and biblical teaching sees man as body, soul, and spirit. Now we enter the area of “greater likeness” to God.

(a) Distinction 1 Our body is “sown” and “awakens” different and eternal – no longer earth bound and differently relational and spiritually attune to God.

(b) Distinction 2 Adam “was history” with “springtime of the soul “in view. Christ “continual inspirer of spring-time of spirit”.

(c) Distinction 3 Adam is *χοικος* – “heaped up earth” – then “like Christ” – *1Jn.3.2* –The transfiguration was not final state & the appearance of “young man” at the tomb to the women (*Mk16.5*)was not used as a paradigm. There is a fabulous plan!

8. THE ARGUMENT FROM MUTATION THAT GOD HAS PLANNED 50-58
Paul shares “light” with the Corinthian **brothers** and bids them as **brothers** be settled unshakeable and outflanking or overflowing in the Lord’s work – convinced that this work (*characterised as κοπος or harvesting*) is not in vain in the Lord

FIRST OF ALL MEN NEED TO BE SAVED

First, Flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom – nor that which is corrupt in nature or character – cf. *Mark 10.17*.

Second, the “open secret” is that we shall not all “sleep the sleep of death” but must all be changed. Paul in using “we” alludes to the Parousia of the church.

Third, it will be sudden – “split second stuff” (*εν ατομα*) Change (*αλασσω*) means natural change – cf. *2Peter1.4* – divine nature or image fully realised in man

Fourth, at the “last trumpet” – this is an allusion to the Roman trumpet for awaking, for arming and for marching away. It is a home-going trumpet of *1Thessalonians 4.16*

Fifth, *Isaiah25.8* The Lord will “**extirpate**” **Death** as a principle of life – completely and into perpetuity. The dead **will have been raised** incorruptible – saints alive will be changed.

Sixth, this corrupt mortality and this dying mortality must become incorruptible undying. This is *Isaiah 25:6-27.13* realised...

Seventh, indignation is over – Israel is hidden and then increased and blossoms to fill the world with fruit. A great banquet is to begin a new age –the shroud over nations is to be destroyed – earth’s tears are to be wiped away and joy will abound. Israel will sing of the Rock of Ages, she will serve the Lord and the world will learn righteousness – other lords that ruled are gone – Israel is enlarged – a nation whispering in prayer is at length born from above. The Lord comes **for and to a people hidden in rooms** (*The church and Israel*) while wrath passes (*26.20-21*) – the word of God punishes the serpent [*Satan*] – Israel buds and fills the world with fruit (*27.6*) **in the day of the trumpet** when from a forsaken broken city to a place spreading His rule from Egypt to Euphrates **Jerusalem becomes the joy of the whole earth.**

Eighth, the end of the sting *Hosea 13.14*

“Yea...O death I would have swallowed you as you swallow men. O grave I should have been to you what you are to men – your grave” cf. No.4 above.

With the great “endowment” of “non-corruption” and of non-dying in the *Parousia* and new age of Christ’s rule believing humanity can speak as in *vv55-56* of death and Hades. The reign of Christ has, however, begun in our souls (*Romans5.13*) in this day of grace – we can overcome as we look to Him who was victor over sin and the grave. So we live lives that outflank sin and retain hope of life beyond the grave. Hallelujah!

CHAPTER 16

The Gentile church supports the church in Jerusalem

THE COLLECTION 1-4

The collection to which Paul refers was for aid of the Jerusalem church and is in accordance with the apostle's word to the Galatian churches "Carry each other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ". Today the land around Lystra is called "Land of 1000 churches". At Psidian Antioch in Galatia the believers from **that fast growing first century group of churches** gathered gifts each Lord's Day *Κυριακή* and as each gave a little treasury of gratitude was sent to the mother church which had suffered more by famine than her pooled resources could cope with. Cf. *Acts 11.28-9*. The regular gifting was advised in preference to annual or seasonal giving. Those approved by introductory letters Paul would send to bear their gift to Jerusalem. "If it seems right that I go they will go with me" he said.

THE APOSTLE'S SCHEDULE 5-9

"I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia" has as yet no time to quote – but declares that he plans to journey along the Philippi-Apollonia-Thessalonica route "throughout" Macedonia. "By the favour of God–*ρυξοω* wintering with you (Corinthian) so that they might send him onward where he should journey. He does not want this to be an immediate and *passing visit* where he literally "*sees them in passing*" *εν παροδω ειδειν*. Time to spend at Corinth is the aim *επιτρεπω* v7. All of this is subject to God's will – Paul uses the term *επιτρεπω* – which means "to make a trustee" or "trust as gatekeeper" – hence to permit or allow. This is the more apt since he refers to a "great and effective" ministry opened in Ephesus –but not without opposition which he foresees as a challenge to the church's endurance. He adds that when he comes he will remain till Pentecost. The autumn of 57 is envisaged as the starting point of the apostle's Corinthian visit.

IMMEDIATE ACTION 10-12

Timothy is to go to Corinth. The church is advised of his temerity and invoked to be considerate because he has worked assiduously as Paul himself. Paul desires that when he returns **it will be with news of peace among them** and he will be back in time to meet Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus – currently with Paul. He adds that Apollonius is not minded to visit presently but will come at a more opportune time. Apollonius took no pleasure in the rivalry claims some Corinthians held out in his favour (cf. *Acts 19.22*).

FIVE EXHORTATIONS 13-14

- 1 Be watchful.
- 2 Take your stand as soldiers in the faith.
- 3 Think and act as mature men would (*allusion to 14.20*).
- 4 Grow strong by exercise of *faith* (cf. *Chap1 on atonement and Chap 15 on resurrection*).
- 5 Let all your actions be in selfless love.

CONCLUDING (15TH) CHALLENGE-TO BROTHERLY LOVE 15-18

"Stephanas house is – as you know are the first fruits of Achaia [*southern Greece*]." The 1611 *AV translators* came upon the colourful idiom "**addiction to service**" for which Stephanas' house church was famed is based on the word *εταξαν* for they had "fixed, agreed, settled instalments" or arranged giving for the Jerusalem church. Paul in the first instance appeals to all that they submit to this earliest lead and work with each who co-operates and labours hard. Again in the second instance Paul expresses

pleasure at the visit of Stephanas, Fortunatas and Achaicus – "for they filled up what was failing or coming behind or missing of you – for they refreshed my spirit and yours (*i.e. analogy of a night's sleep for the body*) so recognise these men for what they are."

FIVE GREETINGS TO THE CHURCH 19-24

1. The churches of Asia greet you. Ephesus was become a centre by now – Colossae Laodicea, Hierapolis, Smyrna, Sardis, Philadelphia and Pergamos – and further a-field Lystra, Derbe, Iconium and Antioch – embrace you.

2. Aquila and Priscilla embrace all that has to do with you in the circle of the Lord – and the church in their house.

3. All the brothers embrace you.

4. Embrace one another with a holy kiss. This greeting encouraged cordial renewal of warm fellowship.

5. My greeting – PAULOS.

If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus – let him be ANATHEMA. A little-known commentator named *Bickel* showed that *Marana-tha* (Aramaic) signifies "Our Lord come" is an emphatic imperative. Another named *Hoffman* has it that *Maranatha* comes from Psalm 16.2 and translates *Mar* (Adonai) holding that *anetha* meaning "You are Lord (cf. R.V. margin) – [*I refer for further interest to the text of Dr. Godet First Corinthians trans. Rev. A Cousin T&T Clark 1893*] Strictly the Aramaic simply reads *Mar* (Lord) *an* (our) *atha* (to come) as in *Philippians 4.5* "The Lord is at hand" insofar as he is to come or having come is vigilantly watchful and still present among us; it is this great purifying effect – which is the real significance of the quote. We who revere Him live purely – we who await him continue to live holy!

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. My love is with you all in the circle of Christ Jesus – AMEN.

There are 49 uses of KURIOS (Lord) and 63 of CHRISTOS (Christ) in the epistle.

FINIS

Bob Coffey Aramaic & Greek Bible Companion
L'shuvkha Marya (To the glory of the Lord)