

1 CORINTHIANS

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

INTRODUCTION

Rm 1:1+ Address and greetings. Thanksgiving

1 I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, 1
10:32
Ac 5:11+ I send greetings •to the church of God^a in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus 2
Ac 9:13+ Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who
20:28 pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. •May God 3
Ac 2:21+ our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through 4
2 Co 8:7,9 Jesus Christ. •I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especial- 5
12:8+ ly in your teachers and preachers; •the witness to Christ^b has indeed been strong 6
2 Th 1:7+ among you •so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while 7
3:13; 5:5 you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed;^c •and he will keep you 8
2 Co 1:14 steady and without blame^d until the last day, the day^e of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Ph 1:6; 2:16 because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God 9
Col 1:22 10:13
2 Co 1:18 is faithful.^f
Ph 3:10f
1 Jn 1:3

I. DIVISIONS AND SCANDALS

A. FACTIONS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

Dissensions among the faithful

All the same, I do appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus 10
Rm 15:5 Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing 11
Ph 2:2f among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. •From what 12
3:4
2 Co 10:7 serious differences among you. •What I mean are all these slogans that you have, 13
3:22-23 like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollos', 'I am for Cephas',^g 'I am for Christ'.^h
Jn 1:42 Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you 14
Ac 18:24+ baptised in the name of Paul? •I am thankful that I never baptised any of you 15
Ep 4:5 after Crispus and Gaius •so none of you can say he was baptised in my name. 16
Ac 18:8
Rm 16:23 Then there was the family of Stephanas, of course, that I baptised too, but no one 17
16:15-17 else as far as I can remember.

The true wisdom and the false

3:18 For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and 17
2 Co 1:12 not to preach that in the terms of philosophyⁱ in which the crucifixion of Christ 18
2 Co 2:16 cannot be expressed. •The language of the cross may be illogical to those who 19
Rm 1:16 are not on the way to salvation, but those of us who are on the way see it as God's 20
Is 29:14 power to save. •As scripture says: *I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring* 19
Ps 33:10 *to nothing all the learning of the learned. •Where are the philosophers now? Where* 20
Is 33:18 LXX

- are the scribes? Where are any of our thinkers today? Do you see now how God has shown up the foolishness of human wisdom? •If it was God's wisdom that human wisdom should not know God, it was because God wanted to save those who have faith through the foolishness of the message that we preach. And so, while the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, •here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, •but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. •For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.
- Take yourselves for instance, brothers, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families? •No, it was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning; •those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen—those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything. •The human race has nothing to boast about to God, •but you, God has made members of Christ Jesus and by God's doing he has become our wisdom, and our virtue, and our holiness, and our freedom. •As scripture says: *if anyone wants to boast, let him boast about the Lord.*
- As for me, brothers, when I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed.^a •During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. •Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling'^b •and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. •And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.
- But still we have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity:^c not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age,^d which

Is 19:12

Rm 1:19-20

Mt 12:38p
Jn 2:18+
Ac 17:19-23
Jn 12:34

Jn 6:35+

2 Co 12:10;
13:14Dt 7:7
Si 10:19f
Rm 7:5
Jg 7:2
1 S 16:7
2 Co 4:7
Jm 2:5Dt 8:17-18+
Rm 3:27
Ep 2:9Jr 9:22-23
Si 10:28
2 Co 10:17Rm 1:16
2 Co 1:12;
11:6Ga 3:1; 6:14
Ph 2:12Ac 1:8+
2 Co 12:12
1 Th 1:5Col 1:28
Heb 5:14

1 a. One of Paul's favourite expressions: 10:32; 11:16,22; 15:9; 2 Co 1:1; Ga 1:13; 1 Th 2:14; 2 Th 1:4; 1 Th 3:5,15; cf. also Ac 20:28. Cf. 'the churches of Christ', Rm 16:16. Cf. Mt 16:18+; Ac 5:11+.

b. I.e. what is said by a witness testifying to Christ, 'among you' or 'in you'.

c. When the hidden plans of God are to be made known, Rm 16:25+, Christ will reveal himself at the end of time, the time of his *parousia*, 1 Co 15:23+, and his Appearing, 1 Th 6:14+; cf. Lk 17:30; 2 Th 1:7; Heb 9:28; 1 P 1:5,7,13; 4:13. Before this, the Man of Sin will have 'revealed' himself, only to be destroyed by Christ, 2 Th 2:3-8.

d. Cf. Ph 1:10; 2:15f; Ep 1:4; Col 1:22; 1 Th 3:13; 5:23; Jude 24.

e. This 'day of the Lord', 5:5; 2 Co 1:14; 1 Th 5:2; 2 Th 2:2; cf. 2 P 3:10, called also the 'day of Christ', Ph 1:6,10; 2:16, or simply the 'day', 1 Co 3:13; 1 Th 5:4; cf. Heb 10:25, or 'that day', 2 Th 1:10; 2 Th 1:12,18; 4:8; cf. Mt 7:22; 24:36; Lk 10:12; 21:34, or 'the day of the Son of Man', Lk 17:24, cf. v. 26, or 'the day of God', 2 P 3:12, or 'the day of visitation', 1 P 2:12, or 'the great day', Jude 6; Rv 6:17; 16:14, or 'the last day', Jn 6:39,40,44,54; 11:24; 12:48, is the fulfilment in the eschatological era, ushered in by Christ, of the 'day of Yahweh' foretold by the prophets, Am 5:18+. The fulfilment begins with the first coming of Christ, Lk 17:20-24, and the punishment of Jerusalem, Mt 24:1+; and this final stage in the history of salvation, cf. Ac 1:7+, will be completed by the glorious second coming, 1 Co 1:7+, 15:23+; 1 Th 6:14+, of the Sovereign Judge, Rm 2:6+; Jm 5:8-9. A cosmic upheaval and renewal will accompany it (cf. Am 8:9+), Mt 24:29p+; Heb 12:26f; 2 P 3:10-13; Rv 20:11; 21:1; cf. Mt 19:28; Rm 8:20-22. This day of light is coming, Rm 13:12; Heb 10:25; Jm 5:8; 1 P 4:7; cf. 1 Th 5:5,8,

but exactly when is uncertain, 1 Th 5:1+, meanwhile we must prepare for it, 2 Co 6:2+.

f. Cf. 10:13; 2 Co 1:18; 1 Th 5:24; 2 Th 3:3; 2 Th 2:13; Heb 10:23; 11:11.

g. Either because Cephas (Peter) had visited the church of Corinth, or because some members of that church paid special allegiance to Peter's authority, acknowledged in other churches.

h. Perhaps these attached themselves to the immediate witnesses of the risen Christ, cf. Ac 1:21f; 10:41, in preference to others, cf. 1 Co 9:1; 2 Co 5:16+; 11:5,23; 12:11; or else they acknowledged no human intermediary between themselves and Christ.

i. Lit. 'wisdom'. This human wisdom (here philosophical speculation and tricks of rhetoric) will be contrasted with the wisdom of God, v. 24 and 2:6f.

j. Lit. 'according to the flesh'. Paul is explaining God's purpose, but at the same time he sardonically reminds the Corinthians that they have no reason to be proud.

2 a. Lit. 'the testimony of God', i.e. to the message of Jesus. Var. 'the mystery of God'.

b. 'fear and trembling': a biblical cliché, cf. Jg 7:3; Ps 2:11; 55:5; Ezk 12:18; Mk 5:33; 1 Co 2:3; 2 Co 7:15; Ep 6:5; Ph 2:12.

c. The 'mature' or 'perfect' (*teleiotei*) are not an exclusive group of initiates but those who have reached maturity in Christian life and thought. Cf. 14:20; Ph 3:15; Col 4:12; Heb 5:14.

d. Perhaps human rulers or governments; more probably, the evil powers or demons that control the world, cf. 1 Co 15:24-25; Ep 6:12. See also Lk 4:6 and Jn 12:31+; but the reference is perhaps to both, the latter using the former as their tools.

Rm 16:25+ are coming to their end. •The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our 7
mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages
Eph 3:10 began. •It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or 8
1 P 1:12 they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory;• we teach what scripture calls:• 9
Ps 24:8 *the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man,*
Is 64:3 *all that God has prepared for those who love him.*
Jr 31:6

Dn 2:28 These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for 10
Jn 14:26+ the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God. •After all, 11
2 Co 13:13+ the depths of a man can only be known by his own spirit, not by any other man,
Jdt 8:14 and in the same way the depths of God can only be known by the Spirit of God.
Pr 20:27 Now instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes 12
Rm 11:33f from God, to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us. •Therefore 13
15:44+ we teach, not in the way in which philosophy is taught, but in the way that the
Pr 28:5 Spirit teaches us: we teach spiritual things spiritually.° •An unspiritual person^a 14
Mt 16:23 is one who does not accept anything of the Spirit of God: he sees it all as nonsense;
Jn 10:26+ it is beyond his understanding because it can only be understood by means of the
15:44+ Spirit. •A spiritual man, on the other hand, is able to judge the value of everything, 15
Is 40:13 and his own value is not to be judged by other men.† •As scripture says: *Who* 16
Rm 11:34 *can know the mind of the Lord, so who can teach him?* But we are those who have
W's 9:13 the mind of Christ.†
7:40

1 Th 2:7 **3** Brothers, I myself was unable to speak to you as people of the Spirit: I treated 1
Heb 5:12-14 you as sensual men, still infants in Christ. •What I fed you with was milk, 2
1 P 2:2 not solid food, for you were not ready for it; and indeed, you are still^a not ready
SI 37:28 for it •since you are still unspiritual. Isn't that obvious from all the jealousy 3
Ga 5:19-20 and wrangling^b that there is among you, from the way that you go on behaving
Jm 3:16 like ordinary people? •What could be more unspiritual than your slogans, 'I am 4
1:12 for Paul' and 'I am for Apollos'?

The place of the Christian preacher

After all, what is Apollos and what is Paul? They are servants who brought 5
the faith to you. Even the different ways in which they brought it were assigned
2 Tm 2:6 to them by the Lord. •I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but God 6
made things grow. •Neither the planter nor the waterer matters: only God, who 7
makes things grow. •It is all one who does the planting and who does the watering, 8
and each will duly be paid according to his share in the work. •We are fellow 9
Eph 2:20-22 workers with God;• you are God's farm, God's building.
1 P 2:5

By the grace God gave me, I succeeded as an architect and laid the foundations, 10
on which someone else is doing the building. Everyone doing the building must
Ps 118:22 work carefully. •For the foundation, nobody can lay any other than the one 11
Is 28:16 which has already been laid, that is Jesus Christ. •On this foundation you can 12
Ac 4:11-12 build in gold, silver and jewels, or in wood, grass and straw, •but whatever the 13
1:8+ material, the work of each builder is going to be clearly revealed when the day
Mt 3:11-12p comes. That day will begin with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's
1 P 1:7 work. •If his structure stands up to it, he will get his wages; •if it is burnt down, 14
Is 43:2 he will be the loser, and though he is saved himself, it will be as one who has gone
through fire.†

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple^c and that the Spirit of God was 16
living among you? •If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God 17
2 Co 6:16 will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred;† and you are that temple.
Eph 2:20-22

Conclusions

1:17-25 Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the 18
Pr 28:26 ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be
wise. •Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture 19
Jb 5:13 says: *The Lord knows wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are;*
Ps 94:11 or again: *God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise.* •So there is 20
21

- 22 nothing to boast about in anything human: •Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, 1:12
 23 life and death, the present and the future, are all your servants; •but you belong 6:19; 11:3
 to Christ^e and Christ belongs to God. Rm 8:10
- 1 **4** People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the Lk 12:42-44
 2 mysteries of God. •What is expected of stewards is that each one should be
 3 found worthy of his trust. •Not that it makes the slightest difference to me
 4 even pass judgement on myself. •True, my conscience does not reproach me at
 all, but that does not prove that I am acquitted: the Lord alone is my judge. 2 Co 5:10-11
 5 There must be no passing of premature judgement. Leave that until the Lord Mk 7:1
 comes: he will light up all that is hidden in the dark and reveal the secret intentions Lk 12:2-3
 of men's hearts. Then will be the time for each one to have whatever praise he Rm 2:16
 deserves, from God. Jn 5:44
- 6 Now in everything I have said here, brothers, I have taken Apollos and
 myself as an example (remember the maxim: 'Keep to what is written');^a it is not
 7 for you, so full of your own importance, to go taking sides for one man against
 8 another. •In any case, brother, has anybody given you some special right? What
 do you have that was not given to you? And if it was given, how can you boast Jn 3:27
 8 as though it were not? •Is it that you have everything you want—that you are Ga 6:3
 rich already, in possession of your kingdom, with us left outside? Indeed I wish Rv 3:17
 9 you were really kings, and we could be kings with you! •But instead, it seems to
 me, God has put us apostles at the end of his parade, with the men sentenced 2 Co 4:8-12;
 to death; it is true—we have been put on show in front of the whole universe, 6:4-10; 11:
 10 angels as well as men. •Here we are, fools for the sake of Christ, while you are 23-33
 the learned men in Christ; we have no power, but you are influential; you are Tm 3:10-11
 11 celebrities, we are nobodies. •To this day, we go without food and drink and 2 Co 11:27
 12 clothes; we are beaten and have no homes; •we work for our living with our own Ac 18:3+
 hands. When we are cursed, we answer with a blessing; when we are hounded, Ps 116:10
 13 we put up with it; •we are insulted and we answer politely. We are treated as
 the offal of the world, still to this day, the scum of the earth.

An appeal

- 14 I am saying all this not just to make you ashamed but to bring you, as my
 15 dearest children, to your senses. •You might have thousands of guardians in
 Christ, but not more than one father and it was I who begot you in Christ Jesus Ga 4:19
 16 by preaching the Good News. •That is why I beg you to copy me •and why I have 1 Th 2:11
 17 sent you Timothy, my dear and faithful son in the Lord: he will remind you of the Phm 10
 way that I live in Christ, as I teach it everywhere in all the churches. 2 Th 3:7+
 18 When it seemed that I was not coming to visit you, some of you became self- Ac 16:1+;
 19 important, •but I will be visiting you soon, the Lord willing, and then I shall 19:22
 want to know not what these self-important people have to say, but what they
 20 can do, •since the kingdom of God is not just words, it is power. •It is for you 2:4+
 21 to decide: do I come with a stick in my hand or in a spirit of love and goodwill? 2 Co 10:2

e. The 'Glory' is the manifestation of Yahweh's power, Ex 24:16+, the incommunicable attribute of God. The title 'Lord of Glory' implies the same dignity for Jesus as that of Yahweh himself.

f. A free combination of Is 64:3 and Jr 3:16, or possibly a quotation from the *Apocalypse of Elijah*.

g. Lit. 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual'. Exact meaning obscure. Other possible renderings 'demonstrating for spiritual men how spiritual truths hold together'; 'spiritual truths being thus suited to spiritual men'; 'submitting spiritual truths to the judgement of men of the Spirit'.

h. *Psychikos*: man left to his own natural resources. Cf. the note on *soma psychikon* of 15:44.

i. A defensive remark: Paul, a 'spiritual' man, is not to be judged by the Corinthians who are 'sensual', 3:1-3.

j. Var. 'of the Lord'.

a. Om. 'still'.

b. Add. 'and dissension'.

c. Or 'fellow-workers in God's employment'.

d. This is not a direct reference to purgatory but several Doctors of the Church have taken it as a basis for that doctrine.

e. *Naos*: more precisely the innermost part of the Temple, the 'sanctuary' where God dwells.

f. I.e. consecrated and reserved to God: to lay hands on it is sacrilege.

g. Cf. 1:12; 6:19; 11:3; 2 Co 10:7; Rm 6:11+; 15+: 8:9; Mk 9:41.

4 a. Obscure. Perhaps a citation of a proverb familiar to the Corinthian Jews; perhaps a gloss deprecating some insertion by a copyist.

B. INCEST IN CORINTH

5 I have been told as an undoubted fact that one of you is living with his father's 1 wife.^a This is a case of sexual immorality among you that must be unparalleled even among pagans. •How can you be so proud of yourselves? You should 2 be in mourning. A man who does a thing like that ought to have been expelled from the community. •Though I am far away in body, I am with you in spirit, 3 and have already condemned the man who did this thing as if I were actually present. •When you are assembled together in the name of the Lord Jesus,^b 4 and I am spiritually present with you, then with the power of our Lord Jesus he is to be handed over to Satan so that his sensual body may be destroyed and 5 his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.^c

The pride that you take in yourselves is hardly to your credit. You must know 6 how even a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough; •so get rid 7 of all the old yeast, and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread, unleavened as you are meant to be. Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed; 8 let us celebrate the feast, then, by getting rid of all the old yeast of evil and wickedness, having only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.^d

When I wrote in my letter to you^e not to associate with people living immoral 9 lives, •I was not meaning to include all the people in the world who are sexually 10 immoral, any more than I meant to include all usurers and swindlers or idol-worshippers. To do that, you would have to withdraw from the world altogether. 11 What I wrote was that you should not associate with a brother Christian^f who is leading an immoral life, or is a usurer, or idolatrous, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or is dishonest; you should not even eat a meal with people like that. •It is 12 not my business to pass judgement on those outside.^g Of those who are inside, you can surely be the judges. •But of those who are outside, God is the judge. 13

You must drive out this evil-doer from among you.

C. RECOURSE TO THE PAGAN COURTS

6 How dare one of your members take up a complaint against another in the 1 lawcourts of the unjust^a instead of before the saints? •As you know, it is the 2 saints who are to 'judge the world';^b and if the world is to be judged by you, how can you be unfit to judge trifling cases? •Since we are also to judge angels, it follows 3 that we can judge matters of everyday life; •but when you have had cases of that 4 kind, the people you appointed to try them were not even respected in the Church.^c •You should be ashamed: is there really not one reliable man among 5 you to settle differences between brothers •and so one brother brings a court 6 case against another in front of unbelievers? •It is bad enough for you to have 7 lawsuits at all against one another: oughtn't you to let yourselves be wronged, and let yourselves be cheated? •But you are doing the wronging and the cheating, 8 and to your own brothers.

You know perfectly well that people who do wrong will not inherit the 9 kingdom of God: people of immoral lives, idolaters, adulterers, catamites, sodomites, •thieves, usurers, drunkards, slanderers and swindlers will never 10 inherit the kingdom of God.^d •These are the sort of people some of you were 11 once, but now you have been washed clean, and sanctified, and justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of our God.^e

D. FORNICATION

•'For me there are no forbidden things';^a maybe, but not everything does good. 12 I agree there are no forbidden things for me, but I am not going to let anything dominate me. •Food is only meant for the stomach, and the stomach for food; 13 yes, and God is going to do away with both of them. But the body—this is not

- 14 meant for fornication;^c it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. •God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise^a us up too.
- 15 You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ; do you think I can take parts of Christ's body and join them to the body
- 16 of a prostitute? Never! •As you know, a man who goes with a prostitute is one
- 17 body with her, since *the two*, as it is said, *become one flesh*. •But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.
- 18 Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the
- 19 body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. •Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God.
- 20 You are not your own property; •you have been bought and paid for.^d That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.^f

10:31
15:12f
Rm 1:4+;
8:11+
2:12+
Rm 6:12-13
Gn 2:24
Rm 8:9-10
3:16-17
Rm 5:5+
1 Th 4:4-8
3:23; 7:23
Rm 3:24+;
6:15+
Ph 1:20

II. ANSWERS TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS

A. MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY^a

Ep 5:22-33+

- 1 **7** Now for the questions about which you wrote. Yes, it is a good thing for
- 2 a man not to touch a woman; •but since sex is always a danger, let each
- 3 man have his own wife and each woman her own husband. •The husband must give his wife what she has the right to expect, and so too the wife to the husband.
- 4 The wife has no rights over her own body; it is the husband who has them. In the
- 5 same way, the husband has no rights over his body; the wife has them. •Do not refuse each other except by mutual consent, and then only for an agreed time, to leave yourselves free for prayer; then come together again in case Satan should
- 6 take advantage of your weakness to tempt you. •This is a suggestion, not a rule:
- 7 I should like everyone to be like me, but everybody has his own particular gifts from God, one with a gift for one thing and another with a gift for the opposite.
- 8 There is something I want to add for the sake of widows and those who are
- 9 not married: it is a good thing for them to stay as they are, like me, •but if they cannot control the sexual urges, they should get married, since it is better to be married than to be tortured.
- 10 For the married I have something to say, and this is not from me but from
- 11 the Lord: a wife must not leave her husband —•or if she does leave him, she must either remain unmarried or else make it up with her husband—nor must a husband send his wife away.

Mt 19:12

1 Tm 5:11-14+

Mt 5:32p; 19:9

- 5 a. His mother-in-law; cf. Lv 18:8.
b. Var. 'of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

c. Not just excommunicated, or expelled from the community, v. 13, but consigned to Satan to be punished. The punishment, however, is intended to convert the man; his 'spirit', that is his soul, is to be saved. Cf. 11:30-32.

d. The Jews removed all yeast from their houses at Passover time, Ex 12:1+, and ate only unleavened bread ('azymes'). Christ crucified (our 'passover', i.e. our paschal lamb) is the one sacrifice for all, cf. 1n 19:36+. The Christian is united with the sacrificed and risen Christ in an unending Passover: he must therefore remove 'the old yeast', i.e. 'evil and wickedness', and use unleavened bread, i.e. 'sincerity and truth', instead.

e. The 'pre-canonical' letter, see Introduction to The Letters of St Paul.

f. Lit. 'a brother'.

g. Those who do not belong to the community, cf. Mk 4:11; Col 4:5; 1 Th 4:12; 1 Tm 3:7. The expression is of Jewish origin, cf. Si, prologue v. 5.

6 a. The pagan magistrates. Not that the Corinthian judges were more corrupt than others but they had not been 'justified' by God through faith in Christ. Hence Paul's play on words: how could they administer 'justice' for those who were 'justified', i.e. the 'saints', or members of the Christian community?

b. Side by side with Christ, the sovereign judge.

c. I.e. the pagan judges, cf. Mt 15:26+; 18:17. An alternative translation 'If therefore you have such everyday cases, set those to try them who are of no account whatever in the Church', that is to say, the least respected of the Christians. The invitation would be then sarcastic: the disputes are so trifling that the most ignorant could deal with them.

d. Cf. 15:50; Ga 5:21; Ep 5:5; Rv 21:8; 22:15.

e. Note the trinitarian formula, cf. 2 Co 13:13+.

f. Probably one of Paul's own sayings the meaning of which has been distorted by the libertines.

g. Against the libertines who maintained that fornication was as necessary for the body as food and drink.

h. Var. 'has raised'.

i. Lit. 'You have been bought for a price'.

j. Lit. 'Glorify (Vulg. adds 'and carry') God in your body'.

7 a. Not a formal treatise on marriage and virginity but a series of replies, probably in the same order as questions were put to Paul. Hence the repetitions and apparent contradictions. The main points are: 1. As a general rule, each should keep the state of life in which his call to the faith found him. 2. Virginity is a higher calling than marriage, and spiritually more profitable. 3. Marriage is a safeguard for those incapable of absolute continence.

1 P 3:1 The rest is from me and not from the Lord. If a brother has a wife who is an 12
 unbeliever, and she is content to live with him, he must not send her away;
 and if a woman has an unbeliever for her husband, and he is content to live with 13
 her, she must not leave him. •This is because the unbelieving husband is made 14
 one with the saints through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made one with
 the saints through her husband. If this were not so, your children would be
 unclean, whereas in fact they are holy.^b •However, if the unbelieving partner 15
 does not consent, they may separate; in these circumstances, the brother or
 sister^c is not tied:^d God has called you^e to a life of peace. •If you are a wife, it 16
 may be your part to save your husband, for all you know; if a husband, for all
 you know, it may be your part to save your wife.

7:20,24; 11:16 For the rest, what each one has is what the Lord has given him and he should 17
 continue as he was when God's call reached him. This is the ruling that I give
 in all the churches. •If anyone had already been circumcised at the time of 18
 his call, he need not disguise it, and anyone who was uncircumcised at
 the time of his call need not be circumcised; •because to be circumcised or 19
 uncircumcised means nothing: what does matter is to keep the commandments
 of God. •Let everyone stay as he was at the time of his call. •If, when you were 20
 called, you were a slave, do not let this bother you; but if you should have the 21
 chance of being free, accept it. •A slave, when he is called in the Lord, becomes
 the Lord's freedman, and a freeman called in the Lord becomes Christ's slave. 22
 You have all been bought and paid for; do not be slaves of other men.^f •Each 23
 one of you, my brothers, should stay as he was before God at the time of his call. 24

Rm 6:15 + Ep 6:5-9 Col 3:22-24 Rm 6:18,22 6:20 Rm 3:24 + 1 P 1:18 7:17
 About remaining celibate, I have no directions from the Lord but give my 25
 own opinion as one who, by the Lord's mercy, has stayed faithful. •Well then, 26
 I believe that in these present times of stress^g this is right: that it is good for a man 27
 to stay as he is. •If you are tied to a wife, do not look for freedom; if you are 28
 free of a wife, then do not look for one. •But if you marry, it is no sin, and it is
 in their married life,^h and I should like to spare you that.

2 Co 6:2 + Heb 13:14 2 Co 6:8-10
 Brothers, this is what I mean: our time is growing short. Those who have 29
 wives should live as though they had none, •and those who mourn should live as 30
 though they had nothing to mourn for; those who are enjoying life should live
 as though there were nothing to laugh about; those whose life is buying things
 should live as though they had nothing of their own; •and those who have to 31
 deal with the world should not become engrossed in it.ⁱ I say this because the
 world as we know it is passing away.

Mt 19:12 I would like to see you free from all worry. An unmarried man can devote 32
 himself to the Lord's affairs, all he need worry about is pleasing the Lord; •but 33
 a married man has to bother about the world's affairs and devote himself to
 pleasing his wife: •he is torn two ways. In the same way an unmarried woman, 34
 like a young girl, can devote herself to the Lord's affairs; all she need worry
 about is being holy in body and spirit. The married woman, on the other hand,
 has to worry about the world's affairs and devote herself to pleasing her husband.
 I say this only to help you, not to put a halter round your necks, but simply to 35
 make sure that everything is as it should be, and that you give your undivided
 attention to the Lord.

St 7:25 Still, if there is anyone who feels that it would not be fair to his daughter to 36
 let her grow too old for marriage, and that he should do something about it, he
 is free to do as he likes: he is not sinning if there is a marriage. •On the other 37
 hand, if someone has firmly made his mind up, without any compulsion and
 in complete freedom of choice, to keep his daughter as she is, he will be doing
 a good thing. •In other words, the man who sees that his daughter is married 38
 has done a good thing but the man who keeps his daughter unmarried has done
 something even better.^j

Rm 7:2 A wife is tied as long as her husband is alive. But if the husband dies, she is 39

- 40 free to marry anybody she likes, only it must be in the Lord.* •She would be happier, in my opinion, if she stayed as she is—and I too have the Spirit of God,[†] I think.

2:16
Ep 3:4

B. FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS*

General principles

Rm 14

- 1 **8** Now about food sacrificed to idols. 'We all have knowledge'; yes, that is so, but knowledge gives self-importance—it is love that makes the building grow.
2 A man may imagine he understands something, but still not understand anything
3 in the way that he ought to. •But any man who loves God is known^b by him.
4 Well then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: we know that idols do not really
5 exist in the world and that there is no god but the One. •And even if there were things called gods, either in the sky or on earth—where there certainly seem to
6 be 'gods' and 'lords' in plenty^c—still for us there is one God, the Father, from whom all things come and for whom we exist; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things come and through whom we exist.

Ac 9:31
Rm 15:2

Ga 4:8

Dt 6:4+

Ex 20:2-3+

Rm 11:36

Ep 4:5-6

Jn 1:3

Col 1:16-17

Heb 1:2

Rm 14: 15:

1-2,7

1 Th 5:14

The claims of love

- 7 Some people, however, do not have this knowledge. There are some who have been so long used to idols that they eat this food as though it really had been sacrificed to the idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled
8 by it. •Food, of course, cannot bring us in touch with God: we lose nothing
9 if we refuse to eat, we gain nothing if we eat. •Only be careful that you do not make use of this freedom in a way that proves a pitfall for the weak.
10 Suppose someone sees you, a man who understands, eating in some temple of an idol; his own conscience, even if it is weak, may encourage him^d
11 to eat food which has been offered to idols. •In this way your knowledge could become the ruin of someone weak, of a brother for whom Christ
12 died. •By sinning in this way against your brothers, and injuring their weak
13 consciences, it would be Christ against whom you sinned. •That is why, since food can be the occasion of my brother's downfall, I shall never eat meat again in case I am the cause of a brother's downfall.

Rm 14:17

Col 2:21f

Heb 13:9

Rm 6:13+

Rm 14:15

Rv 2:18

Mt 10:40+

Ac 9:5

Rm 14:13,

20-21

Paul invokes his own example^e

- 1 **9** I, personally, am free: I am an apostle and I have seen Jesus our Lord. You
2 are all my work in the Lord. •Even if I were not an apostle to others, I should

Ac 9:17+

Rm 1:1+

Ac 15:8

b. 'Sanctification' and 'holiness' here, as frequently in the Bible, mean not so much the perfection of a man's life as its precondition—dedication to God and adoption by him, cf. Ac 9:13+. By marrying one of God's people a pagan is brought into a special relationship with the true God and with his Church.

c. That is, the Christian partner.

d. This is known as 'the Pauline privilege'.

e. Var. 'us'.

f. Spiritually slaves to their outlook and conventions.

g. Lit. 'because of the present (or imminent) distress'.

h. Lit. 'in the flesh', not however referring, as in 7:2-9, to concupiscence.

i. Lit. 'should not use it to the full'.

j. In the classical world a father made what arrangements he thought fit for his daughter. Some interpreters see in this passage a reference to the practice of a man and woman living together under vows of strict chastity, for which there may be some evidence though only from a later date. In this case, read 'virgin' for 'daughter' in vv. 36-38.

8 a. The frequent feasts and public ceremonies in antiquity were always accompanied by sacrifice. Portions of the sacrificial food (*eldolytha*) went to the gods, the priests and the donors. What remained was either eaten at a sacred meal or sold in the markets. This situation provided several difficulties for Christians: could they take part in a sacred meal; buy meat that had been sacrificed to idols; accept invitations to eat in a pagan house? Paul answers these specific difficulties, 10:14-22 and 23-30. In principle, enlightened Christians are completely free to decide for themselves, 8:1-6; 10:15, 25, 29-30, but they must avoid leading astray other Christians who are not yet emancipated from their pre-conversion ideas, 8:7-13; 10:23-24, 28-29. Paul makes no reference to the Decree of Jerusalem, Ac 15:20-29, and does not even seem to have heard about it, Ac 15:1+.

b. In the biblical sense, i.e. 'loved'. Cf. Ho 2:22+.

c. Paul is simply stating a fact. The 'gods' are the mythical gods of Olympus, the 'lords' are divinised human beings.

d. Lit. 'be built up'; ironical, cf. 8:1.

9 a. Though free to do whatever he thinks best about food sacrificed to idols a Christian must be guided by charity. Paul himself, as he goes on to say, had given up out of charity some of his rights as an apostle.

k. She must marry a Christian.

l. Var. 'of Christ'.

2 Co 3:2 still be an apostle to you who are the seal of my apostolate in the Lord. •My 3
 answer to those who want to interrogate me is this: •Have we not every right 4
 Lk 8:2-3 to eat and drink?^b •And the right to take a Christian woman^c round with us, 5
 Mt 12:46+ like all the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6
 Jn 1:42 Are Barnabas and I the only ones who are not allowed to stop working? •Nobody 7
 Ac 4:36+ ever paid money to stay in the army, and nobody ever planted a vineyard and 8
 18:3+ refused to eat the fruit of it. Who has there ever been that kept a flock and did not 9
 2 Tm 2:6 feed on the milk from his flock?

These may be only human comparisons, but does not the Law itself say the 8
 Dt 25:4 same thing? •It is written in the Law of Moses: *You must not put a muzzle on the* 9
 Lk 12:6,24 *ox when it is treading out the corn.* Is it about oxen that God is concerned, •or is 10
 1 Tm 5:18 there not an obvious reference to ourselves? Clearly this was written for our sake
 10:6+ to show that the ploughman ought to plough in expectation, and the thresher to
 Rm 15:27 thresh in the expectation of getting his share. •If we have sown spiritual things 11
 for you, why should you be surprised if we harvest your material things? •Others 12
 are allowed these rights over you and our right is surely greater? In fact we have
 4:12 never exercised this right. On the contrary we have put up with anything rather
 than obstruct the Good News of Christ in any way. •Remember that the ministers 13
 serving in the Temple get their food from the Temple and those serving at the
 Mt 10:10p altar can claim their share from the altar itself. •In the same sort of way the Lord 14
 directed that those who preach the gospel should get their living from the gospel.
 2 Co 11:9 However, I have not exercised any of these rights, and I am not writing all 15
 this to secure this treatment for myself. I would rather die than let anyone take
 away something that I can boast of.^d •Not that I do boast of preaching the gospel, 16
 Ac 4:20; since it is a duty which has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not
 9:15-16; preach it! •If I had chosen this work myself, I might have been paid for it, but 17
 22:14-15; as I have not, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands. •Do you 18
 26:16-18 know what my reward is? It is this: in my preaching, to be able to offer the Good
 2 Co 11:7 News free, and not insist on the rights which the gospel gives me.

So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of 19
 everyone so as to win as many as I could. •I made myself a Jew to the Jews, to 20
 win the Jews; that is, I who am not a subject of the Law made myself a subject
 of the Law to those who are the subjects of the Law, to win those who are subject
 Ga 4:12 to the Law. •To those who have no Law, I was free of the Law myself (though 21
 not free from God's law, being under the law of Christ) to win those who have
 Rm 15:1 no Law. •For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in 22
 2 Co 11:29 order to save some^e at any cost; •and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, 23
 to have a share in its blessings.

All the runners at the stadium are trying to win, but only one of them gets 24
 Ga 5:7+ the prize. You must run in the same way, meaning to win. •All the fighters at 25
 Ws 5:16 the games go into strict training; they do this just to win a wreath that will wither 26
 Ph 3:14 away, but we do it for a wreath that will never wither. •That is how I run, intent 27
 2 Tm 4:7-8 on winning; that is how I fight, not beating the air. •I treat my body hard and
 Jm 1:12 make it obey me, for, having been an announcer myself, I should not want to be
 1 P 5:4 disqualified.^f
 Rv 2:10; 3:11

Heb 4:2-3 A warning, and the lessons of Israel's history^g

Ex 13:21; 14:22 **10** I want to remind you, brothers, how our fathers were all guided by a cloud 1
 above them and how they all passed through the sea. •They were all 2
 Ex 16:4-35+ baptised into Moses^b in this cloud and in this sea; •all ate the same spiritual 3
 Ex 17:5-6 food •and all drank the same spiritual drink,^c since they all drank from the 4
 Nb 20:7-11 spiritual rock that followed them as they went,^d and that rock was Christ. •In 5
 Ps 114:8 spite of this, most of them failed to please God and their corpses littered the
 Nb 14:16 desert.
 Jude 5

These things all happened as warnings^e for us, not to have the wicked lusts 6
 Nb 11:4,34 for forbidden things that they had. •Do not become idolaters as some of them 7
 Rm 4:23
 Heb 9:9,24

did, for scripture says: *After sitting down to eat and drink, the people got up to amuse themselves.* •We must never fall into sexual immorality: some of them did, and twenty-three thousand met their downfall in one day. •We are not to put the Lord^f to the test: some of them did, and they were killed by snakes. •You must never complain: some of them did, and they were killed by the Destroyer.

11 All this happened to them as a warning, and it was written down to be a lesson for us who are living at the end of the age.^g •The man who thinks he is safe must be careful that he does not fall. •The trials that you have had to bear are no more than people normally have. You can trust God not to let you be tried beyond your strength, and with any trial he will give you a way out of it and the strength to bear it.

Ex 32:6

Nb 25:1-9
Ws 10:8Nb 21:5-6
Ac 5:9
Nb 17:6-15
Ex 12:23+
10:6
Rm 15:4
Ga 6:1Sl 15:11-20
J:9+
Jm 1:13-14
Mt 6:13;
26:41

Sacrificial feasts. No compromise with idolatry

14 This is the reason, my dear brothers, why you must keep clear of idolatry. I say to you as sensible people: judge for yourselves what I am saying. •The blessing-cup^a that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ. •The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf. •Look at the other Israel, the race,^b where those who eat the sacrifices are in communion with the altar. •Does this mean that the food sacrificed to idols has a real value, or that the idol itself is real? •Not at all. It simply means that the sacrifices that they offer *they sacrifice to demons who are not God*. I have no desire to see you in communion with demons. •You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot take your share at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons. •Do we want to make the Lord angry; are we stronger than he is?

Rm 14:1

11:23-26+
Lv 3:1+
Mt 26:26-2712:12+
Ep 4:4Dt 32:17
Ps 136:37
2 Co 6:14-16

Dt 4:24

Food sacrificed to idols. Practical solutions

23 'For me there are no forbidden things', but not everything does good. True, there are no forbidden things, but it is not everything that helps the building to grow. •Nobody should be looking for his own advantage, but everybody for the other man's. •Do not hesitate to eat anything that is sold in butchers' shops: there is no need to raise questions of conscience; •for *the earth and everything that is in it belong to the Lord*. •If an unbeliever invites you to his house, go if

6:12+
Sl 37:2810:33
Rm 14:19;
15:2
Ph 2:4
Ps 24:1

b. At the expense of the Christian congregations.

c. Lit. 'a sister, a woman (wife?)'. To look after the apostle's needs.

d. Lit. 'I would rather die than... No one shall take away something that I can boast of.' Apostolopesis.

e. Var. (Vulg.) 'all'.

f. In this passage Paul is using contemporary sporting terms.

10 a. Before reverting to the problem of food sacrificed to idols, Paul quotes the O.T. to remind Corinthians about the dangers of idolatry so as to prevent them joining in the actual sacrificial meals, 10:14-22.

b. As Christians are now baptised 'into' Christ (Rm 6:3; Ga 3:27), i.e. to be united with him.

c. Passing through the Red Sea in v. 2 suggests Christian baptism; here manna and water from the rock suggest the Eucharist. Christians took the description in Ex of the liberation from Egypt as a symbol of liberation from sin by Christ, who is symbolised by Moses, cf. Jn 1:21+; 13:1+. This comparison was implied by Jesus when he linked his Eucharist to the Passover-supper, cf. Mt 26:17-29p; 1 Co 5:7. This accounts for the many Exodus references in the Easter liturgy.

d. Allusion to the legend that the rock from which Moses made water flow accompanied the Israelites on their travels through the wilderness. Jewish writers had already tended to identify this rock with Yahweh himself, and had supported this identification with references to Ex 17:6, and to the O.T. use of 'Rock of Israel' as a title for Yahweh, cf. Ps 18:2+. Paul credits

the pre-existent Christ with the attributes of Yahweh.

e. Lit. 'types' (*typoi*). The purpose in the events, intended by God, was to prefigure in the history of Israel the spiritual realities of the messianic age (which are known as 'antitypes', 1 P 3:21, but cf. Heb 9:24). These 'typological' (or less accurately, 'allegorical', Ga 4:24) meanings in the O.T. narrative, though not consciously intended by the authors are nevertheless valid and necessary for the understanding of scripture, since the pattern of God's working on the physical plane does in fact reflect his eternal purposes fulfilled in the incarnation to become the spiritual realities of the messianic age. Typological meanings of O.T. events are often pointed out by the authors of the N.T. as though the sole purpose of Israel's written history had been to provide types for the instruction of Christians. Paul does this, v. 11 and 9:9; Rm 4:23f; 5:14; 15:4; cf. 2 Tim 3:16, and some books like Jn and Heb are largely based on a typological interpretation of the O.T.

f. Var. 'Christ'.

g. Lit. 'unto whom the ends of the ages have reached'.

h. I.e. the cup of wine for which we thank God, like Christ at the Last Supper.

i. Lit. 'the Israel according to the flesh', i.e. the Israel of history, cf. Rm 7:5, as compared with the Israel 'of God', Ga 6:16, the true Israel, the Christian community.

you want to, and eat whatever is put in front of you, without asking questions just to satisfy conscience. •But if someone says to you, 'This food was offered in sacrifice', then, out of consideration for the man that told you, you should not eat it, for the sake of his scruples; •his scruples, you see, not your own. Why should my freedom depend on somebody else's conscience? •If I take my share with thankfulness, why should I be blamed for food for which I have thanked God?

Conclusion

Col 3:17
1 P 4:11
9:19-23
1:2+
10:24+
Rm 15:2
2 Th 3:7+
1
Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God. •Never do anything offensive to anyone—to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God; •just as I try to be helpful to everyone at all times, not anxious for my own advantage but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved.
11 Take me for your model, as I take Christ.

C. DECORUM IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Women's behaviour at services

15:1-3
1 Th 2:13+
4:1-2
2 Th 2:15
Ep 5:23
Ac 11:27+
2 Co 3:18
11:15
Gn 1:26-27
Gn 2:21-23
1 Tm 2:12-13
14:34
14:17; 7:17;
14:33
1:2+
You have done well in remembering me so constantly and in maintaining the traditions^a just as I passed them on to you. •However, what I want you to understand is that Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ. •For a man to pray or prophesy with his head covered is a sign of disrespect to his head.^b •For a woman, however, it is a sign of disrespect to her head^c if she prays or prophesies unveiled; she might as well have her hair shaved off. •In fact, a woman who will not wear a veil ought to have her hair cut off.^d If a woman is ashamed to have her hair cut off or shaved, she ought to wear a veil.
A man should certainly not cover his head, since he is the image of God and reflects God's glory; but woman is the reflection of man's glory. •For man did not come from woman; no, woman came from man; •and man was not created for the sake of woman, but woman was created for the sake of man. •That is the argument for women's covering their heads with a symbol of the authority^e over them, out of respect for the angels.^f •However, though woman cannot do without man, neither can man do without woman, in the Lord; •woman may come from man, but man is born of woman—both come from God.
Ask yourselves if it is fitting for a woman to pray to God without a veil; and whether nature itself does not tell you that long hair on a man is nothing to be admired, •while a woman, who was given her hair as a covering, thinks long hair her glory?
To anyone who might still want to argue: it is not the custom with us, nor in the churches of God.^g

The Lord's Supper

Now that I am on the subject of instructions, I cannot say that you have done well in holding meetings that do you more harm than good. •In the first place, I hear that when you all come together as a community, there are separate factions among you, and I half believe it—since there must no doubt be separate groups among you, to distinguish those who are to be trusted. •The point is, when you hold these meetings, it is not the Lord's Supper^h that you are eating, since when the time comes to eat, everyone is in such a hurry to start his own supper that one person goes hungry while another is getting drunk. •Surely you have homes for eating and drinking in? Surely you have enough respect for the community of God not to make poor people embarrassed? What am I to say to you? Congratulate you? I cannot congratulate you on this.

- 23 For this is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: that
 24 on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, •and
 25 thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for you;'
 26 do this as a memorial of me'. •In the same way he took the cup after supper,
 27 and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do
 28 this as a memorial of me.' •Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat
 29 this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death, •and so anyone
 30 who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be behaving
 31 unworthily towards the body and blood of the Lord.
 32 Everyone is to recollect himself before eating this bread and drinking this
 33 cup; •because a person who eats and drinksⁱ without recognising the Body^k
 34 is eating and drinking his own condemnation. •In fact that is why many of you
 35 are weak and ill and some of you have died.^l •If only we recollected ourselves,
 36 we should not be punished like that. •But when the Lord does punish us like that,
 37 it is to correct us and stop us from being condemned with the world.
 38 So to sum up, my dear brothers, when you meet for the Meal, wait for one
 39 another. •Anyone who is hungry should eat at home, and then your meeting
 40 will not bring your condemnation. The other matters I shall adjust when I come.

10:16-17
 [Mt 26:26-29
 [Mk 14:22-
 25
 [Lk 22:14-20
 Ex 12:14
 Dt 16:3
 Ex 24:8
 Jr 31:31+
 Heb 8:6-13

16:22
 Rv 22:17,20

Ac 5:9

Dt 8:5+
 Rv 3:19

Spiritual gifts^a

- 1 **12** Now my dear brothers, I want to clear up a wrong impression about
 2 spiritual gifts. •You remember that, when you were pagans, whenever
 3 you felt irresistibly drawn,^b it was towards dumb idols? •It is for that reason that
 4 I want you to understand that on the one hand no one can be speaking under the
 5 influence of the Holy Spirit and say, 'Curse Jesus', and on the other hand, no one
 6 can say, 'Jesus is Lord' unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

1 Th 5:20
 Ga 4:8

Jn 14:26+
 1 Jn 4:1-3

Ac 2:21+
 36+
 Rm 10:9
 Ph 2:11

The variety and the unity of gifts

- 7 There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; •there are all sorts of
 8 service to be done, but always to the same Lord; •working in all sorts of different
 9 ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them.^c •The
 10 particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.
 11 One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom^d given him by the Spirit; another
 12 may have the gift of preaching instruction^e given him by the same Spirit; •and
 13 another the gift of faith^f given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing,
 14 through this one Spirit; •one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy;^g

Ep 4:5
 1 P 4:10

12:28-30
 Ac 1:8+
 Rm 12:6-8
 1:5

Rm 12:3
 Ac 11:27+

11 a. i.e. the teaching of Christ and the apostles.

b. Greek pun on word *kephalē*, 'head', 'leader'. A Christian who prayed with head covered insulted Christ his leader; he should not hide Christ's glory but reflect it 'with uncovered face', cf. 2 Co 3:18.

c. i.e. her husband, since she seemed to be claiming equality with her husband. A woman's veil was a sign of subjection, v. 10.

d. Ironic! having begun by removing the veil, she may as well go all the way and shave her head as well. Cf. v. 15.

e. Lit. 'a power', or 'authority'.

f. Apparently a reference to angels as being guardians of public order in public worship.

g. This puts a stop to any discussion.

h. The supper commemorating Christ's last supper with his disciples during which he instituted the Eucharist. Before the liturgical meal the Corinthians held this ordinary meal, the earliest form of the *agape*. Paul disapproves of this custom, v. 34, and condemns its abuses, vv. 21-22.

i. Var. 'This is my body, broken for you'.

j. Add. 'unworthily'.

k. The Body of the Lord.

l. Lit. 'fallen asleep'. Evidently Paul considers the sickness and death of some Corinthians to have been

a punishment for irreverence to 'the body and blood of the Lord'.

12 a. The spiritual gifts (*charismata*) granted by the Holy Spirit to some members of the community witnessed to the Spirit's presence and helped the Church to function while its hierarchy was still in a rudimentary state. There were so many gifts, and some were so eccentric and noisy, that they tended to produce disorder. Hence Paul's admonitions: 1. All these gifts come from the Spirit. 2. All are given for the benefit of the community. 3. Their respective values are to be judged by their usefulness to the community. 4. The gift of prophecy (*prophetela*) is vastly superior to the gift of tongues (*glossolalia*) of which the Corinthians are so proud. 5. Finally, it is better to have charity than any of the *charismata*.

b. Allusion to the frenzies and orgies of some pagan cults.

c. Note again the trinitarian formulation, cf. 6:11; 2 Co 13:13+.

d. Probably the gift of preaching the central Christian truths about God and God's life in us: this is the 'perfect teaching' of Heb 6:1. Cf. also 1 Co 2:6-16.

e. The gift of preaching the elementary Christian truths: 'the elementary teaching concerning Christ' of Heb 6:1.

f. An unusually intense faith, cf. 13:2.

g. On 'prophecy' cf. Ac 11:27+.

Ac 2:4+
1 Jn 4:1-3 another the gift of recognising spirits;^a another the gift of tongues^d and another the ability to interpret them. •All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, 11 who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

The analogy of the body^f

6:15; 10:17 Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit 12
Rm 12:4-5 because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ.^k •In 13
Ep 4:25 the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as
Col 3:15 citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. •If the foot 14
were to say, 'I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body', would that 15
mean that it stopped being part of the body? •If the ear were to say, 'I am not 16
an eye, and so I do not belong to the body', would that mean that it was not a part
of the body? •If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? 17
If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. •If 18
all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? •As it is, the parts are many 19
but the body is one. •The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you', nor can 20
the head say to the feet, 'I do not need you'.

What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest 22
which are the indispensable ones; •and it is the least honourable parts of the 23
body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get
decorated •in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God has arranged 24
the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, •and so 25
that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be
equally concerned for all the others. •If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with 26
it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

12:7-11
Rm 12:6-8 Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it. 27
Ep 4:11 In the Church, God has given the first place to apostles, the second to prophets, 28
Ac 11:27+ the third to teachers;ⁱ after them, miracles, and after them the gift of healing;
Rm 1:1+ helpers,^m good leaders,ⁿ those with many languages. •Are all of them apostles, 29
Jm 3:1+ or all of them prophets, or all of them teachers? Do they all have the gift of
miracles, •or all have the gift of healing? Do all speak strange languages, and 30
all interpret them?

The order of importance in spiritual gifts. Love

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is 31
better than any of them.

Rm 8:31; 13
14:15 If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love,^a 1
Col 1:8 I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. •If I have the gift of 2
Mt 7:22 prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything,
Mt 17:20 and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then
Jm 2:14-17 I am nothing at all. •If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even 3
Mt 6:2 let them take my body to burn it,^b but am without love, it will do me no good
whatever.

Rm 13:8-10 Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful 4
1 Th 5:14-15 or conceited; •it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not 5
Rm 12:9-10 resentful. •Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; 6
Pr 10:12 it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. 7
13:13+ Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time 8
Ac 11:27+ will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue
Ac 2:4+ for ever; and knowledge—for this, too, the time will come when it must fail.
For our knowledge is imperfect^c and our prophesying is imperfect; •but once 9
10 perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. •When I was a child, I used 11
to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am
2 Co 5:7 a man, all childish ways are put behind me. •Now we are seeing a dim reflection 12

in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known.^d

- 13 In short,^e there are three things that last:^f faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

Spiritual gifts: their respective importance in the community

- 1 **14** You must want love more than anything else; but still hope for the spiritual
2 gifts as well, especially prophecy. •Anybody with the gift of tongues speaks
3 to God, but not to other people; because nobody understands him when he
4 talks in the spirit about mysterious things. •On the other hand, the man who
5 prophesies does talk to other people, to their improvement, their encouragement
6 and their consolation. •The one with the gift of tongues talks for his own
7 benefit, but the man who prophesies does so for the benefit of the community.
8 While I should like you all to have the gift of tongues, I would much rather you
9 could prophesy, since the man who prophesies is of greater importance than the

1 Jn 3:2

Nb 12:8

Ws 3:9

Rm 5:4

Ga 5:6

Ep 1:15; 4:2

Col 1:4

Phm 5

Ac 2:4+;

11:27+

1 Th 5:20

Nb 11:29

h. The gift of knowing if *charismata* were spiritual, natural, or evil.

i. On the charisma of 'tongues' (*glossolalia*) cf. Ac 2:4+.

j. Paul uses the classical analogy of society as a single body with many parts but his concept of the Body of Christ goes back to the memory of his own conversion, cf. Ac 9:4f; Ga 1:15f, to faith in Jesus whose body, raised from the dead and given life by the Spirit, Rm 1:4+, became the 'first-fruits' of a new creation, 1 Co 15:23. The words spoken by the Lord at Paul's conversion, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting', imply that Christians are identified with the risen Christ. In Paul's writings, Christians are bodily united with the risen body, Rm 8:11, by baptism, 1 Co 12:13; cf. Rm 6:4+, and the Eucharist, 1 Co 10:16f, which make them parts of Christ's body, 1 Co 6:15, united in such a way that he and they together form the Body of Christ (what is now called 'the mystical body'), 1 Co 12:27; Rm 12:4f. This rather realistic teaching of 1 Co is taken up later on and developed in the Letters of the Captivity, where the basic idea remains the same, i.e. humans are reconciled to God by becoming parts of, Ep 5:30, Christ's body which was physically dead but is now spiritually alive, Ep 2:14-18, Col 1:22. The stress however is on the unity of the Body that brings all Christians together in one Spirit, Ep 4:4; Col 3:15, and on the identification of the Body with the Church, Ep 1:22f; 5:23; Col 1:18,24. Having thus personified the body, Ep 4:12f; Col 2:19, Paul asserts that Christ is its Head, Ep 1:22; 4:15f; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19 (cf. 1 Co 12:21). This assertion probably developed from the concept of Christ as Head of all Powers, Col 2:10. Eventually, in its widest sense, Paul includes in his concept of the Body the entire cosmos as unified under the Lord Christ, Ep 1:23+. Cf. Jn 2:21+.

k. The way a human body gives unity to all its component parts is the way Christ, as unifying principle of his Church, gives unity to all Christians in his Body.

l. The regular teachers appointed for each separate church, cf. Ac 13:1+.

m. Lit. 'helpings': voluntary gifts to works of charity.

n. Administrators and guides of the churches.

13 a. Love (*agape*) has no possessiveness and is not a desire for satisfaction: it wants to satisfy the other. The supreme charity is God's love for us, 1 Jn 4:19, that made him give his Son so that sinners might be reconciled, Rm 5:8; 8:32-39; 2 Co 5:18-21; Ep 2:4-7; cf. Jn 3:16f; 1 Jn 4:9-10, and become not only God's chosen ones, Ep 1:4, but God's sons, 1 Jn 3:1. This love is attributed to God (the Father), Rm 5:5; 8:39; 2 Co 13:11,13; Ph 2:1; 2 Th 2:16; cf. 1 Jn 2:15, but as it is identical with God's nature, 1 Jn 4:7f,16, it is found in the Son, Rm 8:35,37,39; 2 Co 5:14; Ep 3:19; 1 Tm 1:14; 2 Tm 1:13, so the Son loves the Father as the Son is loved by the Father, Ep 1:6; Col 1:13; cf. Jn 3:35; 10:17; 14:31, and as the Father loves us, so the Son loves the human race, Jn 13:1,34; 14:21;

15:9, which he was sent to save, 2 Co 5:14f; Ga 2:20; Ep 5:2,25; 1 Tm 1:14f; cf. Jn 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16; Rv 1:5. This is the same love that the Holy Spirit, Rm 15:30; Col 1:8, gives Christians, Rm 5:5; cf. Ga 5:22, to help them to carry out, Rm 8:4, the essential commandment of the Law, which is love of God and neighbour, Mt 22:37-40p; Rm 13:8-10; Ga 5:14. To love friends, and enemies, Mt 5:43-48p, is not only the necessary consequence of God's love for us, but actually proves that God loves us, 1 Jn 3:17; 4:20f, and it is the new commandment laid down by Christ, Jn 13:34f; 15:12,17; 1 Jn 3:23; etc., and constantly emphasised by his disciples, Rm 13:8; Ga 5:13f; Ep 1:15; Ph 2:2f; Col 1:4; 1 Th 3:12; 2 Th 1:3; Phm 5:7; cf. Jm 2:8; 1 P 1:22; 2:17; 4:8; 1 Jn 2:10; 3:10f,14; etc. This is how Paul loves the Christians of his own churches, 2 Co 2:4; 12:15; etc., and how they love him, Col 1:8; 1 Th 3:6; etc. Love presupposes sincerity, humility, selflessness and self-sacrifice, Rm 12:9f; 1 Co 13:4-7; 2 Co 6:6; Ph 2:2f, service, Ga 5:13; cf. Heb 6:10, mutual help, Ep 4:2; cf. Rm 14:15; 2 Co 2:7f. Love shows itself in the way we behave, 2 Co 8:8-11,24; cf. 1 Jn 3:18, and the way we obey the Lord's commands, Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 5:2f, etc., and give effect to our faith, Ga 5:6; cf. Heb 10:24. Love holds the community together, Col 3:14; cf. 2 P 1:7, and it 'covers up many sins', 1 P 4:8; cf. Lk 7:47. Since love of neighbour springs from love of God, its motive cannot be fear, Rm 8:28-39; cf. 1 Jn 4:17f. Nor can we be charitable without truth, Ep 4:15, cf. 2 Th 2:10, and it is this that enables us to make moral judgements, Ph 1:9, and gives us spiritual understanding of the divine mystery, Col 2:2; cf. 1 Jn 4:7, and spiritual knowledge of the otherwise unknowable love of Christ, Ep 3:17-19; cf. 1 Co 8:1-3; 13:8-12. Since Christ, Ep 3:17, and the whole Trinity, 2 Co 13:13+; cf. Jn 14:15-23; 1 Jn 4:12, live in the soul that has this love, it fosters the theological virtues, cf. Rm 1:16+; 5:2+., in any person where it is the dominant characteristic, 1 Co 13:13. Love is the only eternal virtue, 1 Co 13:8, and will only be perfect in the vision, 1 Co 13:12; cf. 1 Jn 3:2, when God gives his lovers the gifts he has promised, 1 Co 2:9; Rm 8:28; Ep 6:24; 2 Tm 4:8; cf. Jm 1:12; 2:5.

b. Var. 'I may give all my goods to the poor so that I can boast of it'.

c. Lit. 'in part'.

d. I.e. by God.

e. Or 'Meanwhile'.

f. Or 'In short, then, we are left with these three things'. This association of the three theological virtues, which is found earlier in 1 Th 1:3 and which was probably in use before Paul's time, recurs frequently in his letters, though the order varies: 1 Th 5:8; 1 Co 13:13; Ga 5:5f; Rm 5:1-5; 12:6-12; Col 1:4-5; Ep 1:15-18; 4:2-5; 1 Tm 6:11; 2 Ti 2:2. Cf. Heb 6:10-12; 10:22-24; 1 P 1:3-9,21f. Faith and charity are associated in 1 Th 3:6; 2 Th 1:3; Phm 5, faith and fortitude in 2 Th 1:4, love and fortitude in 2 Th 3:5. Cf. 2 Co 13:13.

man with the gift of tongues, unless of course the latter offers an interpretation so that the church may get some benefit.

Now suppose, my dear brothers, I am someone with the gift of tongues, and I come to visit you, what use shall I be if all my talking reveals nothing new, tells you nothing, and neither inspires you nor instructs you? •Think of a musical instrument, a flute or a harp: if one note on it cannot be distinguished from another, how can you tell what tune is being played? •Or if no one can be sure which call the trumpet has sounded, who will be ready for the attack? It is the same with you: if your tongue does not produce intelligible speech, how can anyone know what you are saying? You will be talking to the air. •There are any number of different languages in the world, and not one of them is meaningless,^a •but if I am ignorant of what the sounds mean, I am a savage to the man who is speaking, and he is a savage to me. •It is the same in your own case: since you aspire to spiritual gifts, concentrate on those which will grow to benefit the community.

That is why anybody who has the gift of tongues must pray for the power of interpreting them. •For if I use this gift in my prayers, my spirit may be praying but my mind is left barren.^b •What is the answer to that? Surely I should pray not only with the spirit but with the mind as well? And sing praises not only with the spirit but with the mind as well? •Any uninitiated person will never be able to say Amen to your thanksgiving, if you only bless God with the spirit, for he will have no idea what you are saying. •However well you make your thanksgiving, the other gets no benefit from it. •I thank God that I have a greater gift of tongues than all of you, •but when I am in the presence of the community I would rather say five words that mean something than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Brothers, you are not to be childish in your outlook. You can be babies as far as wickedness is concerned, but mentally you must be adult. •In the written

Law it says:^c *Through men speaking strange languages and through the lips of foreigners, I shall talk to the nation, and still they will not listen to me, says the Lord.* •You see then, that the strange languages are meant to be a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while on the other hand, prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. •So that any uninitiated people or unbelievers, coming into a meeting of the whole church where everybody was speaking in tongues, would say you were all mad; •but if you were all prophesying and an unbeliever or uninitiated person came in, he would find himself analysed and judged by everyone speaking; •he would find his secret thoughts laid bare, and then fall on his face and worship God, declaring that *God is among you indeed.*

Regulating spiritual gifts

So, my dear brothers, what conclusion is to be drawn? At all your meetings, let everyone be ready with a psalm or a sermon or a revelation, or ready to use his gift of tongues or to give an interpretation; but it must always be for the common good. •If there are people present with the gift of tongues, let only two or three, at the most, be allowed to use it, and only one at a time, and there must be someone to interpret. •If there is no interpreter present, they must keep quiet in church and speak only to themselves and to God. •As for prophets, let two or three of them speak, and the others attend to them. •If one of the listeners receives a revelation, then the man who is already speaking should stop. •For you can all prophesy in turn, so that everybody will learn something and everybody will be encouraged. •Prophets can always control their prophetic spirits, •since God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints, •women are to remain quiet at meetings since they have no permission to speak; they must keep in the background as the Law itself lays it down. •If they have any questions to ask, they should ask

11:16+
Ac 9:13+
11:3,9
Gn 3:16
1 Tm 2:11-12

their husbands at home: it does not seem right for a woman to raise her voice at meetings. 11:5

36 Do you think the word of God came out of yourselves? Or that it has come
37 only to you? •Anyone who claims to be a prophet or inspired ought to recognise 2:16
38 that what I am writing to you is a command from the Lord. •Unless he recognises 7:40
this, you should not recognise him.^d 15:34

39 And so, my dear brothers, by all means be ambitious to prophesy, do not
40 suppress the gift of tongues, •but let everything be done with propriety and in order.

III. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD^e

The fact of the resurrection

1 **15** Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, the gospel 1Th2:13+;
2 that you received and in which you are firmly established; •because the 4:14
gospel will save you only if you keep believing exactly what I preached to you—
believing anything else will not lead to anything.
3 Well then, in the first place, I taught you what I had been taught myself, 11:2+; 23
4 namely that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures; •that he Lk 1:2
was buried; and that he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with Ac 2:23+
5 the scriptures; •that he appeared first to Cephas and secondly to the Twelve. Mt 28:10+
6 Next he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, Lk 24:34f
7 most of whom are still alive, though some have died; •then he appeared to
8 James, and then to all the apostles; •and last of all he appeared to me too; it was
as though I was born when no one expected it.^b
9 I am the least of the apostles; in fact, since I persecuted the Church of God, Ep 3:8
10 I hardly deserve the name apostle; •but by God's grace that is what I am, and 1 Tm 1:15-16
the grace that he gave me has not been fruitless. On the contrary, I, or rather Ac 8:3+
11 the grace of God that is with me, have worked harder than any of the others; •but Ga 1:13-14
what matters is that I preach what they preach, and this is what you all believed. 2 Co 11:23f
12 Now if Christ raised from the dead is what has been preached,^c how can 1 Tm 1:14
13 some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? •If there is no 6:14
14 resurrection of the dead, Christ himself cannot have been raised, •and if Christ Ac 2:24+
has not been raised then our preaching is useless and your believing it is useless; Ac 25:19
15 indeed, we are shown up as witnesses who have committed perjury before God, Ac 1:8+;
16 because we swore in evidence before God^d that he had raised Christ to life. •For 26:16
17 if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised, •and if Christ has not been Rm 4:24-25;
18 raised, you are still in your sins. •And what is more serious, all who have died in 10:9
19 Christ have perished. •If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are
the most unfortunate^e of all people.
20 But Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who Rm 8:11+
21 have fallen asleep. •Death came through one man and in the same way the Col 1:18
Rm 5:12-21+

14 a. Lit. '...sounds in the world but not one soundless'.

b. This prayer of ecstatic utterance is so freed by 'the spirit' that it contains nothing limited enough to be grasped by the 'mind'.

c. The quotation is very free.

d. Or, he is unnoticed by God who does not acknowledge him as his own. Var. 'if he refuses to recognise this, we'll let him' (Paul losing patience). For a similar way of putting an end to discussion, cf. 11:16; Ph 3:15.

15 a. Christ's resurrection, of which the apostles are witnesses, vv. 2-8, cf. Ac 1:8+, is the decisive proof, vv. 12-28, of the future resurrection of all, which is something the O.T. first of all suspects and hopes for, Ps 16:10+; Jb 19:25+; Ezk 37:10+, but eventually asserts quite plainly, 2 M 7:9+. This is why the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of faith, vv. 12-19.

The risen Christ can be called the first-fruit, v. 20, not only heralding but causing the resurrection of all Christians, vv. 20-28, cf. Rm 8:11+.

b. An allusion to the abnormal, sudden and surgical nature of Paul's birth into the apostolic family. He makes no distinction between the sort of apparition that took place on the Damascus road and the sort of apparitions of Jesus that took place between the resurrection and the ascension.

c. Paul is talking to those who believe Christ rose from the dead. To believe this and to lead a Christian life necessarily imply belief in the resurrection of the dead.

d. Or 'through God'.

e. 'This life' has become for Christians a state from which life in Christ, through the resurrection, will deliver them. If there is no resurrection, they have lost their deliverance. Note that the possibility of the soul's immortality without the resurrection of the body is not considered.

15:45-49 resurrection of the dead has come through one man. •Just as all men die in Adam, 22
 1 Th 4:16 so all men will be brought to life in Christ; •but all of them in their proper order: 23
 Ep 1:22 Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming^f of Christ, those who belong 24
 to him. •After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God 24
 the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power.^o
 Ps 110:1 For he must be king *until he has put all his enemies under his feet* •and the last 25
 Rv 20:14; 21:4 of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be *put under his feet*. 26
 Ps 8:6 —Though when it is said^h that *everything is subjected*, this clearly cannot include 27
 Rm 6:9 the One who subjected everything to him. •And when everything is subjected to 28
 Ph 3:21 him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected 28
 Rm 9:5+ Ep 4:6 all things to him, so that God may be all in all.
 Col 3:11

If this were not true, what do people hope to gain by being baptised for 29
 the dead?ⁱ If the dead are not ever going to be raised, why be baptised on their 29
 behalf? •What about ourselves? Why are we living under a constant threat? 30
 2 Co 4:10-12 I face death every day, brothers, and I can swear it by the pride that I take in you 31
 Ph 1:26 in Christ Jesus our Lord. •If my motives were only human ones, what good would 32
 Ws 2:6 it do me to fight the wild animals at Ephesus?^j •You say: *let us eat and drink* 33
 2 Co 1:8 *today; tomorrow we shall be dead*. You must stop being led astray: 'Bad friends 33
 Lk 12:19 ruin the noblest people'.^k •Come to your senses, behave properly, and leave sin 34
 14:38 alone; there are some of you who seem not to know God at all; you should be 34
 ashamed.

The manner of the resurrection

Ga 6:8 Someone may ask, 'How are dead people raised, and what sort of body do they 35
 Jn 12:24 have when they come back?' •They are stupid questions. Whatever you sow in the 36
 ground has to die before it is given new life •and the thing that you sow is not 37
 what is going to come; you sow a bare grain, say of wheat or something like that, 37
 and then God gives it the sort of body that he has chosen: each sort of seed gets 38
 its own sort of body.

Everything that is flesh is not the same flesh: there is human flesh, animals' 39
 flesh, the flesh of birds and the flesh of fish. •Then there are heavenly bodies and 40
 there are earthly bodies; but the heavenly bodies have a beauty of their own and 40
 Dn 12:3 the earthly bodies a different one. •The sun has its brightness, the moon a different 41
 brightness, and the stars a different brightness, and the stars differ from each 41
 other in brightness. •It is the same with the resurrection of the dead: the thing 42
 that is sown is perishable but what is raised is imperishable; •the thing that is 43
 sown is contemptible but what is raised is glorious; the thing that is sown is weak 43
 but what is raised is powerful; •when it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is 44
 raised it embodies the spirit.^l
 2:14-15+ 2 Co 5:1
 Heb 4:12+ Jude 19+

If the soul has its own embodiment, so does the spirit have its own embodiment.
 Gn 2:7 The first *man*, Adam, as scripture says, *became a living soul*;^m but the last Adam 45
 15:20-28+ has become a life-giving spirit. •That is, first the one with the soul, not the spirit, 46
 and after that, the one with the spirit. •The first man, being from the earth, is 47
 Dn 7:13 earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven. •As this earthly man was, so 48
 Rm 8:29+ Ph 3:21 are we on earth; and as the heavenly man is, so are we in heaven. •And we, who 49
 have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man.
 Jn 3:5-6 Or else, brothers, put it this way: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom 50
 6:10+ of God: and the perishable cannot inherit what lasts for ever. •I will tell you 51
 something that has been secret: that we are not all going to die, but we shall all 51
 1 Th 4:15-17 be changed.ⁿ •This will be instantaneous, in the twinkling of an eye, when the 52
 Nb 10:3+ last trumpet sounds. It will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable, 52
 J1 2:1+ and we shall be changed as well,^o •because our present perishable nature must 53
 Mt 24:31+ 2 Co 5:1-5 put on imperishability and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

A hymn of triumph. Conclusion

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability,^p and when this 54

mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture^a will come true: *Death is swallowed up in victory*. • *Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?* • Now the sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.

Is 25:8
Ho 13:14
Rv 20:14
Ga 2:10
Rm 7:7+
Heb 6:1+
Jn 16:33

CONCLUSION

Commendations. Greetings

1 **16** Now about the collection made for the saints:^a you are to do as I told the churches in Galatia to do. • Every Sunday,^b each one of you must put aside what he can afford, so that collections need not be made after I have come. When I am with you, I will send your offering to Jerusalem by the hand of whatever men you give letters of reference to; • if it seems worth while for me to go too, they can travel with me. I shall be coming to you after I have passed through Macedonia—and I am doing no more than pass through Macedonia—• and I may be staying with you, perhaps even passing the winter, to make sure that it is you who send me on my way wherever my travels take me. • As you see, I do not want to make it only a passing visit^c to you and I hope to spend some time with you, the Lord permitting. • In any case I shall be staying at Ephesus until Pentecost • because a big and important door^d has opened for my work and there is a great deal of opposition. If Timothy comes, show him that he has nothing to be afraid of in you: like me, he is doing the Lord's work, • and nobody is to be scornful of him. Send

Ac 9:13+
Rm 15:25f
Ga 2:10
Mt 28:1

Ac 20:4

Ac 19:21;
20:1
2 Co 8:1

2 Co 2:12
Col 4:3

4:17

1 Tm 4:12
2 Tm 1:7

f. *Parousia* (presence), a Greek word adopted by early Christians to indicate the glorious coming of Christ on his 'day'. 1 Co 1:8+, at the end of time. Mt 24:3+; cf. also 1 Th 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:32; 2 Th 2:1; Jm 5:7,8; 2 P 1:16; 3:4,12; 1 Jn 2:28. In 2 Th 2:8,9 the same word is used to indicate the coming of the Lawless One. Cf. the similar terms 'revelation', 1 Co 1:7+, and 'appearing', 1 Tm 6:14+.

g. All forces hostile to the sovereignty of God, cf. 1 Co 2:6; Ep 1:21; Col 1:16; 2:15; 1 P 3:22.

b. When the whole cosmos has been subjected to him, Jesus will go to the Father and say his task is complete. The translation 'scripture says' is incorrect.

i. What this practice was is unknown: Paul does not say if he approved of it or not: he uses it merely for an *ad hominem* argument.

j. What episode Paul is referring to is unknown.

k. Quoted from Menander's *Thais*: it may have become a popular proverb.

l. Lit. It is sown a physical (*psychikon*) body, it is raised a spiritual (*pneumatikon*) body. In Paul, as in the O.T., *psyche* (Hebr. *nephesh*; cf. Gn 2:7) is what gives life to animals, to the human body, 1 Co 15:45; or it is the actual 'life' of the body, Rm 16:4; Ph 2:30; 1 Th 2:8; cf. Mt 2:20; Mk 3:4; Lk 12:20; Jn 10:11; Ac 20:10; etc., its 'living soul', 2 Co 1:23. The term can also mean any human being, Rm 2:9; 13:1; 2 Co 12:15; Ac 2:41,43, etc. As it only gives natural life, 1 Co 2:14; cf. Jude 19, it is less important than *pneuma* by which a human life is divinised by a process that begins through the gift of the Spirit, Rm 5:5+; cf. 1:9+, and is completed after death. Greek philosophers thought of the higher soul (the *nous*) escaping from 'the body', to survive immortally. Christians thought of immortality more in terms of the restoration of the whole person, involving a resurrection of the body effected by the Spirit or divine principle which God withdrew from human beings because of sins, Gn 6:3, but restored to all who are united to the risen Christ, Rm 1:4+; 8:11, who is the 'heavenly'

man and life-giving Spirit, 1 Co 15:45-49. The 'body' is no longer *psychikon* but *pneumatikon*, it is incorruptible, immortal, 1 Co 15:53, glorious, 1 Co 15:43; cf. Rm 8:18; 2 Co 4:17; Ph 3:21; Col 3:4, no longer subject to the laws of matter, Jn 20:19,26; it does not even answer the description of matter, Lk 24:16. *Psyche* can be used in a wider sense as the opposite of the body to indicate what it is in a human being that behaves and feels, Ph 1:27; Ep 6:6; Col 3:23; cf. Mt 22:37p; 26:38p; Lk 1:46; Jn 12:27; Ac 4:32; 14:2; 1 P 2:11; etc., or even to indicate the spiritual and immortal soul, Mt 10:28, 39p; Ac 2:27; Jm 1:21; 5:20; 1 P 1:9; Rv 6:9; etc.

m. Something that is alive because it has a *psyche* giving it a merely natural life, subject to decay and corruption.

n. The Vulg. reading 'we all die but we shall not all be changed' is incorrect.

o. I.e. those who will be alive at the time, among whom Paul could theoretically have been included, cf. 1 Th 5:1+.

p. Om. 'When this perishable nature has put on imperishability'.

q. A free quotation.

16 a. On this collection see Rm 15:26-28; Ga 2:10; 2 Co 8:9; Ac 24:17. The 'saints' (cf. 2 Co 8:4) are the Christians in Jerusalem who from the earliest days stood in need of help, Ac 11:29-30. Paul was very anxious to have this collection made, since he regarded it as a sign and a pledge of unity between the churches he had founded and those of the Judeo-Christians.

b. Lit. 'First day of the week', i.e. 'The Lord's Day'. cf. Ac 20:7; Rv 1:10; Mt 28:1.

c. An alternative translation 'This time, I do not want to pay you a passing visit'; this would presuppose a short visit recently made, which is hardly likely.

d. The same image is used in 2 Co 2:12; Col 4:3; it indicates Paul's missionary opportunities, cf. Rv 3:8.

him happily on his way to come back to me; the brothers and I are waiting for him.^e •As for our brother Apollos, I begged him to come to you with the brothers but he was quite firm that he did not want to go yet^f and he will come as soon as he can. 12

Be awake to all the dangers; stay firm in the faith; be brave and be strong. 13
Let everything you do be done in love. 14

1:16 There is something else to ask you, brothers. You know how the Stephanas 15
Rm 16:5-6 family, who were the first-fruits of Achaia, have really worked hard to help the 16
Ph 2:29-30 saints. •Well, I want you in your turn to put yourselves at the service of people 16
1 Th 5:12-13 like this, and anyone who helps and works with them. •I am delighted that 17
Heb 13:17 Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus^g have arrived; they make up for your 18
absence. •They have settled my mind, and yours too; I hope you appreciate men 18
like this.

Ac 18:2+ All the churches of Asia^h send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, with the 19
Rm 16:5+ church that meets at their house, send you their warmest wishes, in the Lord. 19
2 Co 13:12 All the brothers send you their greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 20
Ga 6:11+ This greeting is in my own hand—Paul. 21
Col 4:18 If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse on him. 'Maran atha.'ⁱ 22
1 Th 5:12-13 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 23
Ph 4:5 My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. 24

16 e. The phrase is ambiguous: either Paul and the 'brothers' of Ephesus are waiting for Timothy, or Paul expects Timothy and the 'brothers' who are his travelling companions (of whom Erastus was one, Ac 19:22).

f. In case his presence aggravated party feeling among his own supporters, 1:12; 3:4-6; 4:6.

g. Probably these had brought the letter from

the Corinthians to Paul, 7:1.

h. The Roman province is meant.

i. These Aramaic words ('the Lord is coming') had passed into liturgical use; they expressed the hope that the *parousia* would not be long delayed. An alternative reading is *Marana tha* (Lord, come!), Rv 22:20. Cf. Rm 13:12; Ph 4:5; Jm 5:8; 1 P 4:7.

2 CORINTHIANS

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

INTRODUCTION

Address and greetings. Thanksgiving

Rm 1:1 +

1 From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from Timothy, one of the brothers, to the church of God at Corinth and to all the saints in the whole of Achaia. •Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ac 16:1+
1 Co 1:2+

Ac 9:13+

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a gentle Father and the God of all consolation, •who comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can offer others, in their sorrows, the consolation that we have received from God ourselves. •Indeed, as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so, through Christ, does our consolation overflow. •When we are made to suffer, it is for your consolation and salvation. When, instead, we are comforted, this should be a consolation to you, supporting you in patiently bearing the same sufferings as we bear. •And our hope for you is confident, since we know that, sharing our sufferings, you will also share our consolations.

Ph 1:20+
Col 1:24+

8 For we should like you to realise, brothers, that the things we had to undergo^a in Asia were more of a burden than we could carry, so that we despaired of coming through alive. •Yes, we were carrying our own death warrant with us, and it has taught us not to rely on ourselves but only on God, who raises the dead to life. •And he saved us from dying, as he will save us again; yes, that is our firm hope in him, that in the future he will save us again. •You must all join in the prayers for us: the more people there are asking for help for us, the more will be giving thanks when it is granted to us.

Ac 20:19
1 Co 15:32

4:7
Rm 1:4+;
4:17; 8:
11+

Rm 15:30+

4:15; 9:12

I. SOME RECENT EVENTS REVIEWED

Why Paul changed his plans

12 There is one thing we are proud of, and our conscience tells us it is true: that we have always treated everybody, and especially you, with the reverence^b and sincerity which come from God, and by the grace of God, we have done this without ulterior motives. •There are no hidden meanings in our letters besides what you can read for yourselves and understand. •And I hope that, although you do not know us very well yet, you will have come to recognise, when the day of our Lord Jesus comes, that you can be as proud of us as we are of you.

1:17
Jm 3:15

1 Co 1:17;
2:1f

1 Co 1:8+

Ph 1:26; 2:
16; 4:1
1 Th 2:19-20

15 Because I was so sure of this, I had meant to come to you first, so that you would benefit doubly;^c •staying with you before going to Macedonia and coming back to you again on the way back from Macedonia, for you to see me on my way to Judaea.^d •Do you think I was not sure of my own intentions when I planned

1 a. It is not known what incident this refers to.
b. Var. 'single-mindedness'.
c. Var. 'to give you a double pleasure'.

d. Paul must therefore have changed the plan mentioned in 1 Co 16:5-6.