

Here they are:-

- a. His relations. He is qualified to "sift" (same verb as v. 14) the things of God. He can examine and decide rightly because he has the eyes of his heart enlightened. Christians know by virtue of their personal relationship with Christ. Men of intellectual gifts who are ignorant of the things of God often talk learnedly and patronizingly about things of which they are grossly uninformed. **Not** so the spiritual man--he is qualified.
- b. His resistance. Using the same verb as above, Paul shows that the spiritual man does not submit to sifting himself! He is not subject to scrutiny and sentences of others. Those who are ignorant of the "thing of God" are in no position make decisions of judgment about the spiritual man.
- c. His possessions. The quote in the final verse of this section is from Isaiah 40:13. Although the formal words of "it is written" are omitted, the quotation is ample to show that the natural man cannot judge the ways of God in creation and government, so he is in no position to appreciate the procedure of the spiritual man. Meanwhile, the spiritual man has the mind of God as to the destination of man and the only means of realizing Glory (cf. 1:18, 21, 23).

Conclusion The wisdom of God is bound up in the Personal Work of Christ. The apostle Paul received this wisdom and spoke it in words which came directly from the Spirit of God. The natural man in his condition does not get to know these matters. But the spiritual man does. What do the "things of God" mean to you? This is one way of finding out whether you are natural or spiritual? Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"Men and Wisdom"

1 Corinthians 2:13-16

Introduction

1. To know the "things of God" requires the Spirit of God (v. 12). There is absolutely no understanding of the things of God without divine help.
2. Another dramatic announcement which Paul enunciates is that men respond differently to the truth of God. On the basis of the "things of God" it is possible to mark but clear distinctions amongst men.
3. Give careful and prayerful attention to the distinct reactions of men to the things of God:-

1. THE APOSTOLIC v. 13.

The "we" of this verse is a reference to the apostle Paul and those who took their stand with him. The wisdom of the world is contrasted with this group. The "things of God" are related to these in three ways:

- a. It is spoken The Greek verb Paul chose to utilize here is one which gives attention to the form of utterance and not to the substance as such. There are no esoteric doctrines suggested here. If only some actually apprehended the truth of God, it is not due to reserve on the part of the messengers of God for they speak!
- b. It is taught. The verbal adjective "taught" is used here with the sense of a perfect participle, hence words which have actually been learned. The words of Paul and others in connection with the "things of God" are not derived from human wisdom, but are learned by the movement of the Spirit. Some deny the connection here with verbal plenary inspiration, but to others it is a very strong argument indeed. The very words rise from the Spirit.
- c. It is compared. The verb used here definitely means "compare" in the only other New Testament occurrence (2 Cor. 10:12). Other meanings,

however, are admissible such as "adapting, interpreting, combining, and joining." It is not certain whether the word "spiritual" is masculine or neuter since the form of both is the same. It is probably best to take it as masculine and translate the entire phrase "interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men." Taken in this manner, real force is given to the following verse. So Paul argues that his expression of the "things of God" is the Spirit's wisdom and not of the world. He shows that spiritual men are the recipients of these items (cf. v. 6).

2. THE PSYCHIC v. 14.

There is a small particle in the original Greek which is the second word in the verse. It is a strong adversative. It points out that there are some who do not react favourably to the "things of God." They are called the psychical persons.

This term is not related to our modern terms in psychology, but is a reference to unregenerate people. In the original it is anarthrous. It is a qualitative adjective. That which belongs to nature, which is unchanged and unconverted is portrayed by this term. It implies that there is an absence of the breath of higher life which puts moral beings in communication with God. Some have concluded that the natural man does not have a spirit, but this seems to be controverted elsewhere (1 Thess. 5:23). The items mentioned by Paul in that verse are those which are essentials for the whole human person (namely, body, soul, spirit). The spirit in the natural man is latent and inactive so long as the Spirit has not awakened it to enter into union with Himself. How is this group marked? Look:-

a. It has no penetration. The "things of God" do

not get welcomed into the inner being of these men. What the child of God receives with joy and admiration, the natural man conceives as foolishness. The premise for understanding the plan of God is foreign to this person.

b. It has no apprehension. This is actually a stronger word than the previous one. It has reference to the condition of the natural man. In order to acknowledge something, one must know it and this is lacking. The natural man is closed to the workings of the Spirit. The ingressive aorist verb suggests that this person did not get to know the "things of God." His helpless condition calls for pity and not impatience. It is true, however, that such persons usually possess a paragon or wisdom and commiserate the deluded followers of the Lord.

c. It has no analyzation. The verb "discerned" is one which means to "sift" so as to get the truth by investigation as a judge. The Word teaches that this is what the Berean Christians did (Acts 17:11). Paul and Luke are the only ones who use this term in the NT and Paul only in this Book of Corinthians. Since the natural man does not recognize the facts, he cannot render a decision. It must be noted that the word "spiritually" has nothing whatsoever to do with the Alexandrian system of interpretation. According to that scheme those who are spiritual are capable of distinguishing the profound (allegorical) sense as distinct from the grammatical. True it is that the Spirit alone will sift these items of God. The benefits of the child of God are great indeed while the misery of the unconverted is patent.

3. THE PNEUMATIC vv. 15, 16.

This is the term by which the "spiritual man" is designated. He is carefully marked by several matters.