

eloquent tirades, profound deductions, and the like, but the effectual virtue of the power of the divine Spirit working! The latter would glorify Christ, reach souls, bring new life. In essence, he said, there is abundance of talk, but little of the creative breath of the Spirit of the living God!

The "kingdom of God" which is mentioned here obviously does not have its main thrust in the kingdom promised to Israel during the millennium, but that spiritual blessing of Messiah's kingdom which parallels the blessing of the church (John 3:3). One might well paraphrase the verse in this fashion: "salvation is not a lot of words, but a lot of genuine Christian living!" To this all born again people will echo a hearty amen.

- c. Peace. In a real sense Paul challenged the Corinthians with this slogan: "Peace or war--choose!" They had but two options. He would either come with a rod for punishment and discipline or he would come with some special manifestation of love and meekness. Discipline of an apostolic fashion held some genuine concern for the church! The anarthrous construction of of "love and meekness" suggest some special effort of the apostle.

Conclusion: Paul had set a standard of living under the Spirit of God. Those whom he led to Christ he expected would pursue this high standard and manner of living. If they didn't, they could expect him to deal harshly with them about the matter. This sort of arrangement was not inconsistent with the terms of the Gospel nor the holiness of the God with whom we have to do. God is concerned with people being for real! Are YOU? Amen.

BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"The Kingdom of God in Power"

1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Introduction

1. Paul vigorously defended his position as an apostle of God (1:1-4:13). He was disturbed that many in Corinth had settled down to a life of ease. This was a contrast with the apostolic example!

2. Paul felt he had an inside track in speaking to the Corinthians. He had founded the work there (Acts 18:1-11). On this ground, he was qualified to minister the Word of God to them with energy and force! This he did not hesitate to do. Witness the present text. Consider the following three items:-

1. PAUL'S POSITION vv. 14-16.

As a father, Paul:-

- a. Warned. In writing the matter of apostolic suffering as compared with Corinthian felicity, Paul did not do so to shame them. The harsh tone had changed, if indeed it were harsh. The verb "shame" means to "turn one back on himself." But Paul did aim at warning. This verb means to "bring back the mind to its place." The apostle desired to lead the believers back to a calm and settled frame. How they needed it.
- b. Begot. The Corinthians are called Paul's sons. The noun actually means "little born ones." They were his own as the pronoun "my" notes. He is more than a tutor (instructor in KJV). This term marked a slave to whom child education was committed till he reached his maturity. It was one who guided the child to school. But Paul was more than this. He was a father!

Through his preaching and intense labour, the Corinthians had a spiritual birth. It is true, this was "in Christ Jesus," and by means of the "Gospel," but it was Paul through whom God worked!

- c. Admonished. This is a better rendering of the Greek term than "beseech." The present imperative of the verb "become" adds force to constancy of effort and involvement. One might render it: "show yourselves imitators (Greek) of me!" The thought is the forming of a character on the basis of a given model. It was a one who had brought them into new life in Christ that this was urged.

2. PAUL'S DECISION.

To send Timothy. One of the basic reasons for sending Timothy was to fulfill the position of the apostle (vv.14-16). Apparently, Paul had already sent Timothy, but this letter would arrive before him and his coming needed an explanation (cf. Acts 19:22 with 1 Cor. 16:17).

- a. His condition. Timothy is characterized in two marvelous ways: his spiritual birth and his spiritual service. As to the former, he was a child of Paul's in the faith (cf. Acts 16:10; Phil. 2:20). My, how glorious to be able to point to those who are your children in the faith!

But Timothy was also a faithful man of God (cf. 4:2). He was one who could be trusted and believed on in the Lord. This was all "in the Lord." What a high station for him to have!

- b. His mission. There are two ideas carried by the verb: "bring you into remembrance." They are: to remind of persons and to recall places. Both were the mission of Timothy. Not that they were ignorant, but they had for-

gotten some very essential things (cf. Acts 20:31-35; 2 Cor. 1:12ff.). The tutors had sort of crowded out the father!

The "my ways" phrase speaks of an OT idea (cf. Psa. 37:23; Isa. 57:18; Jer. 17:10; Ezek. 33:9). These are qualified by the blessed expression: "which are in Christ." Anything aside from our Lord is useless and vain. Timothy would once again apprise the believers at Corinth of Paul's humility, self-abnegation, self-forgetfulness, and dedication to the Lord. In seeing this and hearing thereof it was hoped that the church would have a revival!

Prudently, Paul notes that this is the sort of teaching which he promotes in all the churches. What was good for one was also helpful for another!

3. PAUL'S INTENTION.

To comment on:-

- a. Pride. This is how some acted. They lived in the air of triumph and victory. They touted the fact that Paul was not coming to Corinth, only Timothy was coming. They really enjoyed announcing this in the assembly. The aorist tense of the verb "puffed up" (v. 18) points to the fact that they probably said in public: "Timothy is coming instead of Paul. Paul is not coming." The construction in Greek shows that this some actually assumed this matter to be true. But these self-inflated creatures would learn something different!
- b. Power. With the use of a third class condition, Paul notes that he will come to Corinth. When he arrives, he will learn (know) something. The verb here suggests that Paul would operate as a judge proceeding to make an examination. It is a word from the apostle with threatening solemnity. What Paul wanted to know was not fine discourses,