

2) As to conduct. Paul went out to preach with limitations (cf. 2:105). The church went with grand lordly airs.

3) As to welcome. The church was honored and feted. It was like an ornament in cultivated circles. The apostles, however, were scarcely judged worthy of any attention. Indeed, they are condemned by the same world!

c. Their treatment. vv. 11-13. Ten verbs and four participles are used to point up the true apostolic succession in this bracket. The dispensation of the kingdom has not yet arrived!

1) Privations. vv. 11-12a. Think of these: hunger, thirst, nakedness, buffeted (blows with the fist and/or hand), homelessness, and manual labor.

2) Actions. vv. 12b-13a. They get insults with sneering, but reply with well wishes. They get persecutions in judicial forms, but reply with exercising self-control. They get calumnies, but reply with kind intreating.

3) Considerations. v. 13b. "Filth" is that which is collected by sweeping around. "Off scouring" is dirt detached from an object by sweeping.

Conclusion: The final words of this section sum up what actually persists unto this hour among those who truly know the Lord: "unto this day" Surely, there is no popular demand for the Gospel and the Word. Those who have compromised have found the adulation of the world, but to their own judgment. Who will now take His stand with the Crucified Lord and Risen Lord? Amen. Come now!

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"Fools for Christ"

1 Cor. 4:6-13

Introduction

1. Self-glorification is abnegated in those who work and relate themselves to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ must be all in all.

2. Paul has argued a good cause. He has shown the priority of the Gospel and the Lord. There is no room for the wisdom of the world. All we have comes through the Spirit of God. The fruits of the Gospel are God's and not men's. Judgment of the real issues of hearts must await the second coming.

3. But there is a practical side to things. No human pride can be tolerated among those concerned with the Gospel. There are substantive reasons for this. Harken to some of them:

1. SCRIPTURE REGULATION v. 6.

The great question must always be: "what saith the Word of God?" Mark this thought:

a. By transference. The verb here properly signifies to present a thing or person in a form different from its natural figure. To disguise. Only in Paul in NT. Paul had transferred the problems to himself and his friend so as to avoid naming the true culprits. It was done for "your sakes."

b. By preference. They were urged not to go beyond that which is written. The Greek idiom here is hard to reproduce, but it suggests not going beyond the written Word of God concerning the nothingness of man.

c. By inference. The verb puffed up comes from a word which means a pair of bellows. It is a vivid picture of self-conceit. The sub-final clause is designed to show that one must not be captivated by one teacher to the disparagement of the other.

2. GIFT QUESTION. v. 7.

This verse moves forward to show all that is to be condemned in a puffed up situation. Three questions are raised:

- a. Concerning priorities. The verb differ means to sift or separate between (Acts 15:9). All self-conceit rests upon the notion of superiority of gifts. Who had made such differences? The answer: "Not thyself!"
- b. Concerning qualities. All that might prove to be matters of pride are in fact receipts from God. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is the answer expected in this question.
- c. Concerning rights. There is ultimately no place for glory in one since he has nothing, but what he received. This is the conclusion to be drawn from the other two questions raised. Paul is revolted at the failure to humility which faith must inspire.

3. EXPERIENCE SITUATION. v. 8.

Paul continues his libel against the church at Corinth and points to the dreadful chasm between himself and them.

- a. The Corinthians. Full of irony and even strong sarcasm, Paul levels a strong verdict against the church at Corinth.
 - 1) Their fullness. The verb means to be satiated. Only other example is in Acts 27:38. Perfect tense adds to the imperishable self-satisfaction of the church.
 - 2) Their richness. The change to the aorist tense of the verb shows the undue and indecent haste of the church's advance. They had become rich over night. Spiritual gifts are undoubtedly in view.
 - 3) Their ultimateness. The thought of the verb and the phrase is finality. They have actually landed in the millennium! It is a private one. No more obscurity.

No more infirmity. The church is swimming in the waters of full celestial oceans. It lacks nothing. What a description. This, at least, is the manner in which the church claims to be.

- b. The apostle. From the experience of the church, Paul turns to his own and makes two important observations:-

- 1) His prayer. Here is an unfulfilled wish. But it tells the true story of his heart for it would be grand news!
- 2) His hope. Were the Corinthians actually reigning, it would altar the situation for him too. The "with" of this phrase is in direct correspondence with "without us" in the previous phrase.

3. APOSTOLIC ILLUSTRATION vv. 9-13.

Here is one of the most outstanding portions of the Word concerning true apostolic succession. Cherish it carefully:-

- a. Their appointment. v. 9. The condition of the apostles is what it is because God made it so! Two verbs show the involvement of God: "set forth" and "made a spectacle." The former means to expose to view or exhibit (2 Thess. 2:4; 1 Cor. 15:32). In this grand pageant, the apostles came as the finale. The second verb means a place of a show (Acts 19:29, 31), then a spectacle shown there, and finally, as here, the men exhibited as the show (Heb. 10:33). Three are mentioned as spectators: world and two of its subdivisions: men and angels. Think of it: the church at Corinth on the throne and the apostles as a spectacle in the amphitheatre with their blood and last agonies forming the joy of a whole population of spectators.
- b. Their commitment. v. 10. Three antitheses express the contrast just mentioned. They are severe blows at the proud Corinthians.
 - 1) As to teaching. Apostles are fools while the church is intellectual. But the apostles did it "for Christ's sake" and this is commendable.