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**A Layman's
Commentary on
Corinthians**

T.O.D. Johnston

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Johnston, T.O.D.

A Layman's Commentary on The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians

Religious Non-fiction

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Contact the publisher:

Owen Johnston

E-Mail – email@biblestudylessons.pdf.info

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A Layman's Commentary
On The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians:
Composed In 31 Lessons

1st Edition - 2012

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Dedicated for knowledge, understanding, and inspiration as we seek to follow Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ.

Preface

After reading many scholarly commentaries on different books of Scripture, it became my mental habit to sift through the minute discussions of individual words and/or phrases, and the quoting of various scholars of the past of many differing opinions, and center on the most logical and inspirational truths that remained. Thus I relied on the studied scholarship of those who had learned the original languages and had read all the previous scholars that had written to get the best possible understanding of Scripture that I, as a non-scholar, could. It seemed that most church members would not attempt to read scholarly works - but would benefit from their knowledge if presented in a plain and straightforward manner, the truths they had perceived. The following commentary is my attempt to do this. May God bless my efforts to the extent that they increase the understanding and faith of the reader.

T.O.D. Johnston
2005

I Corinthians - Lesson I

Introduction.

The city of Corinth was one of the most famous and prosperous cities of Greece. It was the capital of the Peloponnesus, connected to the mainland by a neck of land, or isthmus. It had a port on the western side called Lecheum, and on the east, Cenchrea. These opened upon the Aegean sea on the west, the Ionian Sea on the east. From these two ports, great commerce was carried on throughout the Mediterranean Sea, from the straits of Gibraltar to the west, the coasts of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor on the east. This as well as throughout the Greek Islands and ports, and with Italy. This extensive commerce brought great prosperity. It was destroyed by the Roman army in 146 B.C., but rebuilt by Julius Caesar.

It had magnificent public buildings: temples, palaces, theaters, porticoes, baths, and so forth. The columns, capitals, and bases were unique in design, and it was named as the Corinthian order of architecture. It was also famous for its many statues of the Greek gods and goddesses. The most popular was the temple of Venus. It was very wealthy, all producing luxury, over-indulgence in many diversions.

There was great activity in the arts, sciences, literature, as well as the Isthmian games every five years, which included contests of leaping, running, throwing the spear, boxing, and wrestling. There were also competitions for poetry and music. The winners received a crown of woven leaves. Paul refers to these contests at different times in his letters.

In its heathen condition, the city was extremely corrupt, profligate, and lascivious. Public prostitution was a large part of their religious practices. That practice increased the wealth of the pagan temples. This is mentioned because Paul mentions several things in his letters to this city that wouldn't be understood without knowing these pagan customs and practices. He also notes that no other Gentile country was as corrupt.

Even in spite of these conditions, the Gospel of Jesus Christ took root, and a Church was founded and grew there. Paul founded it in about 51 A.D., soon after his visit to Athens (Acts 18:1). He ministered there for 18 months. During that time, he wrote two letters to Thessalonica. This first letter was written to the Corinthians in about 55 or 56 A.D., while he was in Ephesus during his third missionary journey (Acts 16:8,19).

Outline of the Epistle.

- I. The introduction – 1:1-9.
- II. Dealing with dissensions – 1:10 through chapter 3.
- III. The case of incest – chapters 5-7.
- IV. The question of eating things offered to idols – chapters 8-10.
- V. Regulation within the church – chapters 11-14.
- VI. The resurrection of the dead – chapter 14.
- VII. Miscellaneous exhortations, salutations, commendations, etc.

I Corinthians 1:1-17. Greeting and Dealing with Dissension.

Salutation

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sos'thenes our brother,

2 ¶ Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

3 ¶ Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving for Spiritual Gifts

4 ¶ I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;
5 that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;
6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:
7 so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:
8 who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Divisions in the Church

10 ¶ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chlo'e, that there are contentions among you.
12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apol'los; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.
13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?
14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gai'us;
15 lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.
16 And I baptized also the household of Steph'anas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.
17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Verse 1.

Paul identifies himself as having been called to his place of authority as the apostle to the Gentiles of Jesus Christ, by appointment from God (through the will of God). His was a Divine commission, there was no part from any man. This authority was his basis to straighten out this church's divisions and contentions.

A companion, Sosthenes, is mentioned (as noted previously in Acts 18:17).

Verse 2.

Addressed to the Church of God at Corinth. As before mentioned, it was planted by Paul several years previously (Acts 18:1).

The members are set apart, separated from the common corruption of the pagans of that time and place. They are called to be saints. To save men from their sins was the mission of Jesus Christ. Once forgiven, they are a new creation unto good works, to do all unto the glory of God. They are not unique in this, but with all believers at every place, the high calling by the same Lord and Savior of all.

Verse 3.

This verse is the same as seen in Romans 1:7. It is a Christian greeting that expresses the greatness of God's gift to all believers of His grace and peace. Our heavenly Father planned, promised, and brought to pass our redemption through Christ, Who paid the price on the cross and also provides for continual blessing in our daily lives.

Verse 4.

Paul expresses how thankful he continually is to God for what God has given them through His bountiful grace by Jesus Christ.

Verse 5.

He is also thankful for various spiritual gifts they had received. They had clearly understood and so expressed the great truths of God concerning their salvation through Jesus Christ. They could speak with knowledge of all doctrine which they comprehended.

Verse 6.

The testimony of Christ is the Gospel which the apostle had preached. That truth had been confirmed by gifts of the Holy Spirit and miracles done through the apostle before them.

Verse 7.

The gifts of the Spirit were possessed by members of that church. This coming of Christ, it has been suggested, is the judgment against the unbelieving Jews and the destruction of that nation, Jerusalem and the Temple, and the dispersion of the population. This would take place under 20 years after the date this letter was written.

Verse 8.

As they had shown their complete understanding and acceptance of the Gospel, they were considered confirmed by the apostle, and so also by God. Once confirmed, then so continued unto the end – to be accounted blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus. Some consider this still the destruction of the Jewish nation. Others consider the reference to the end of the age, the time of the Second Coming. In our day we would recognize it as the Rapture of the Church.

Verse 9.

The faithfulness of God is far above and beyond what is common among men. What faithfulness can be found on earth is a reflection of that of God. His fidelity is certain to keep you in the participation in the blessings of His Spirit and the glories to come hereafter.

Verse 10.

Paul now introduces his second point. They also have serious responsibilities. He calls them to stay away from all dissension, arguing and disagreements. They must hold to the same central truths, having the same heart and mind, working together in the faith and hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They must submit to Christ's authority. To disagree on minor points among various groups is always going to happen. But they must not be allowed to hinder the unity of the Church or the spread of the Gospel. All Christians agree on the essential doctrines, therefore have patience and bear with others, and don't claim that only your group has all the truths of God.

Verse 11.

Paul had received information about the 'contentions' there. Some members of the household of Chloe, had come to him for that purpose. Chloe must have been a devout matron of that city, whose family had converted to the Lord. Her concern led her to send for Paul's help. Three names are mentioned later in chapter 16:17, most likely her son's – Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. These disagreements led to division, each group then arguing in favor of their group, against all others.

Verse 12.

It would seem from this listing that the entire congregation had divided into groups, claiming a different leader. One group followed Paul. Another, Apollos. A third, Cephas. Then, followers of Christ. This congregation was made up of Jews and Greeks. They variously claimed preference for one teacher, or preacher, over another. Possibly the Jewish converts would prefer someone other than Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles. It seems natural that some would also choose not to be followers of any human leader, but claim only Christ. They would stay in the center.

Verse 13.

'Is Christ divided?' Did He do separate things for different groups of people? Did someone else die for you on the cross? Did Paul die for you? Were you baptized in Paul's name? All such things are absurd on their face. To be called by any name but Christ, or to follow another, is wrong. Christ alone is your Savior. He alone calls upon you to be His disciples.

Paul makes it clear that he never did or said anything as if setting up his own religion based on his own authority. No one was baptized in his name. He preached only Christ to all people.

Verses 14,15.

Paul recollects that he did baptize two, Crispus and Gaius, that now reside in Corinth. He is thankful of that, not wishing to be any source of these divisions, as some might suggest. No one can say he baptized in his own name.

Verse 16.

Also, the household of Stephanas. They are identified in chapter 16:15 as the first converts in the whole region of Achaia and baptized by Paul. There were no others in that whole region of Corinth that Paul baptized.

Verse 17.

To put baptism in its proper perspective – the mission of Paul was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls. The simple truth of sin and redemption, not philosophical arguments and convincing profound worldly wisdom. He preached the cross of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. Baptism was a rite that comes after conversion, as a public witness of that conversion and entrance into the Church as a born again believer in newness of life unto God. Case closed.

Next, the truth about God's purpose in the preaching of the cross.

I Corinthians – Lesson II

I Corinthians 1:18-31. God's Purpose in the Preaching of the Cross.

Christ the Power and Wisdom of God

18 ¶ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

19 For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 ¶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 that no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Verse 18.

The Gospel of Christ has one message of divine truth – the salvation of sinners through the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. This message divides all people into two distinct groups. One group is of those that do not believe, who consider the message as foolishness. They are perishing. The other group is of those that believe, through the power of God, who receive salvation, and the strength and guidance as children of God on their journey unto eternity with God and Christ Jesus.

Verse 19.

Turning to the Old Testament, Paul refers to Isaiah 29:14. 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.' This refers to those that through their highest efforts of observation, reasoning, and philosophy, try to explain the grand truths of creation, the true wisdom about the invisible world, the purpose of man and so on. What has been beneficial from all this so-called 'wisdom', this 'understanding of the prudent'? What has all this actually produced?

Verse 20.

The people here – the wise, the scribe, the disputer, refer to those that claim wisdom (as a prophet). The scribe claims great education and knowledge, the disputer seeks higher interpretation of scriptures, allegorical, mystical, even cabalistic secrets about the future.

Their methods added multitudes of traditions that obscured and made the plain truth of God's words of none effect for them.

The great contrast is now seen. The Gospel of Christ has made all of these claims of worldly wisdom as foolish and of none effect for them.

Verse 21.

No one had by their greatest efforts of thinking, education, philosophy, ever arrived at a true understanding of God. This was part of God's plan. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

The Greeks considered the products of their great philosophers as wisdom. They called the message of the Gospel as foolishness compared to their own wisdom. But in fact, the wisdom of God is the Gospel of Christ, and the power of God that through the preaching of the Word brought salvation to those that believed.

Verses 22,23.

Now turning to the Jews, Paul describes them as that wicked and perverse generation. They required signs, miracles, to prove anything that was claimed to be from God. They had great fear of being deceived. They were never satisfied. The greatest sign they looked for was the Messiah who would restore the throne of David as king of a powerful nation. Because Jesus did not fulfill this 'sign', they rejected Him, a stumbling block to them.

The Greeks sought wisdom or philosophy as in the writings of Plato, Cicero, Seneca, and so on. These were the greatest, most beautifully expressed and high sounding reasonings of their greatest thinkers. This was wisdom to them. The Gospel they considered to be foolishness.

The apostles are completely different from both of those groups. They preach the simple truth of Christ. He was crucified to purchase their salvation. He shed His blood in their place, to redeem them.

Verse 24.

The obvious fact was that both Jews and Greeks were called by God through the preaching of the Gospel, had responded, and believed. This was the proof that the Gospel came from God, and enlightened their souls unto conversion. This was God's infinite wisdom, glorifying His justice and mercy, providing the way of salvation, that no man could ever earn.

Verse 25.

What seems foolish to men, is actually wiser than anything man could come up with on his own. What seems weak to men, God has shown to be more powerful than anything men have done or could do.

Verse 26.

You recognize the state of grace and blessing that you have been invited to. Think about who you are. Are you accounted by the worldly as wise, wealthy, or powerful? The Jews accounted the wise, powerful, and wealthy as those especially blessed by God.

The Gospel has an equal call to all people. It seems though, that those of wisdom, power, and wealth consider their state as the holders of the best that this world has to offer and their entire focus is on maintaining and even increasing their standing in this world. Spiritual things are of no interest or value to them. Not many hear God's call or respond to it.

Verse 27.

God's message reaches the less educated in worldly wisdom and philosophy to confound the wisest of the worldly with the truth of God in Christ. God reached those without

power or authority to confound the scribes and Pharisees, the civil authority of the Sanhedrin, and spread the Gospel, converting thousands to faith in Christ.

Verse 28.

The base and despised, things which are not; Paul is referring to the Gentiles that had become Christians. This is from the Jewish point of view. They considered everyone but themselves as heathen, despicable, no better than dogs. They had no value, they are repeatedly called 'the things that are not.' Yet their conversion was to increase the church, what the Jews rejected as the only people chosen of God. Their nation was soon to be destroyed, trodden under the feet of the Gentiles.

Verse 29.

No human being, though even when used by God, can claim to have had the plan and the power to carry it out on his own. Therefore no flesh should glory in His presence. No person has the right to take any credit for what God has done.

Verse 30.

The greatest present evidence is what God has done for those in Christ Jesus. God's gifts are blessings – His wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and salvation. God's word reveals the truth of all creation, its purpose and plan for man's redemption, even unto eternity. Nothing that man has produced at any time has ever come close, nor ever will.

Verse 31.

Paul quotes from Jeremiah 9:23,24 - 'Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.'

All good things are of and from God. So that anyone who has any of these material blessings, or spiritual blessings, all are received. Therefore all boasting or celebration must be in what God has done. All are by God's mercy and blessing, and the greatest of which is what God has provided through the Gospel of His Son. Men must focus on the giver, not the gift. Whoever trusts in power, wisdom, wealth, or prosperity is fooling themselves. All these things are only temporary. The blessings that come from God are permanent and eternal. The forgiveness, salvation, love, peace, and joy that come from our heavenly Father begins here and grows and matures forever. Amen.

I Corinthians – Lesson III

I Corinthians 2:1-16. Paul explains the purpose for his manner of preaching.

Proclaiming Christ Crucified

- 1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.
- 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
- 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.
- 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:
- 5 that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

The Revelation by God's Spirit

- 6 ¶ Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:
- 7 but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory;
- 8 which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
- 9 But as it is written,
Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of man,
the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
- 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.
- 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.
- 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
- 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
- 14 ¶ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.
- 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Verse 1.

Paul begins by describing what he did not do in his first speaking to them. He didn't come with the fancy and eloquent arts of rhetoric used by those famous Greek philosophers. In their manner of speaking, their subject is made more forceful and important by the way it is delivered, with such flamboyant and high sounding 'excellency of speech.'

In contrast, Paul declared unto them the testimony of God, a message so excellent, eternally true, that needed no fancy words or eloquent speaking to convey its eternal truth.

Verse 2.

He was convinced that his message of salvation through Christ and His sacrifice on the cross was all that was needed for them to understand what God was offering to them. This is the foundation of all true wisdom, morality, peace, and happiness.

Verse 3.

Paul here describes himself among them. He seems to suggest some physical weakness, as well as not being able to stand before them with an attractive appearance, to speak as a bold and eloquent orator with a dramatic voice and gestures. Paul had none of these physical advantages or mannerisms, yet his message was used by God to reach the souls of those that listened to him.

'In fear and trembling' describes the state of mind he often had. His deepest desire was to be faithful and true in his every effort to share the words of faith and show that faith by his actions, toward others.

Verse 4.

Again Paul asserts that he used none of the things that a great orator would – enticing words of high-sounding complexity. His preaching was plain and true, revealed by the Holy Spirit. What he spoke was pure, holy, and made clear the doctrine of salvation to the conversion of souls, by the power and energy of the Spirit of God. This explanation leaves out any human credit for Paul's message and its results.

Verse 5.

Their faith, no man can claim as its source. What they believe could not have originated in any human wisdom, and no powerful human orator could have produced the change in them. God's message and power is what their faith stands upon.

Verse 6.

What Paul is describing, those who were fully instructed in the knowledge and accomplishments of God through Christ Jesus, he calls them 'perfect'. They had true wisdom. This wisdom was so far above all worldly human wisdom, whether other religious systems, philosophies, or observations of nature. It is also above all the powerful, whether rulers, kings, princes, who claim great things for themselves. They had power and position for only a short time, and whatever they said was forgotten, or came to nought after they were gone.

Verse 7.

Paul speaks the wisdom of God in a mystery, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It had been planned before the foundation of the world, but was comparatively hidden from that time. The prophets made some references about it, and it was contained among the Law and the sacrificial system, rites, and ceremonies. However, no one had been able to recognize or comprehend it. Once the fulness of time came, Jesus fulfilled those prophecies, promises, the law, ceremonies and sacrifices, and His final sacrifice once for all. What had been hidden was made plain and gloriously fulfilled by Christ, and this was the message proclaimed by the Apostles.

Verse 8.

Here Paul writes directly concerning the Jewish nation. Whatever degree of education or claimed wisdom and understanding of its 'princes' or rulers, whether priests, pharisees, rabbis or members of the Sanhedrin, they show no perception or recognition of God's plan and purpose in the words and actions of Christ. This led them to crucify the Lord of Glory – Christ's glory was and is eternal. His Gospel is the most glorious news for any human to hear and believe. This message is proclaimed to bring in all who will believe to share this path with God unto that same state of glory that begins now and continues unto eternity with God and His Christ, our Lord.

Verse 9.

Paul quotes from Isaiah 64:4. This describes how all man's efforts of physical observation and thinking could have never conceived of or imagined what God 'had prepared for them that love Him.' Paul is referring to the same message of salvation. Only God could have conceived of such a glorious, merciful plan, and also had the power to bring it to pass, in exactly the way, time, and detailed manner as had been foretold. This was in all the signs, prophecies, promises, law, sacrifices, etc. of the Old Testament.

Verse 10.

God has revealed the glories of the Gospel through His Spirit. The same Spirit that spoke by the prophets, now reveals to the apostles the fulness of the Divine plan. The deep things of God, His infinite wisdom and goodness toward man in creation, providential care, redemption, and eternal glory with Him. These things were made convincingly clear and undeniable to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit of God could reveal these things of God. All the best learning and wisdom of the world could never have known God.

Verse 11.

The spirit of a man knows the innermost things of that man – ideas, plans, values, purposes, aspirations. Only that individual knows his own mind. So also, in a similar way, the Spirit of God, the third person of the Divine Trinity, knows all the counsels and plans of God the Father. It is God's Spirit that revealed to the apostles the Gospel of salvation. Therefore, what they preached and taught was the eternal truth, and as dependable as God Himself. What He promised, He has and will continue to bring to pass. The miracles done by them in Christ's Name were undeniable proof of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and that they spoke the truth of God.

Verse 12.

We, being the genuine apostles of Christ, have received the Spirit of God, through whom we have been taught the deep things of God, first and foremost the Gospel of Salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus.

This is totally different from worldly wisdom, and the spirit of the world. Paul may be thinking of the majority of Jewish teachers, who looked for and taught the coming of a worldly Messiah who would set up a worldly kingdom. They interpreted the Old Testament verses that mentioned Him in this sense.

The apostles, on the other hand, have been freely given the bountiful and excellent things God has prepared for man through Christ as openly revealed and proven by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 13.

These things must be expressed in the common language of the Jews or the Greeks. The Jewish rabbis loved to delve into insidious details and secret interpretations of their own imagining. They, in effect, obscured God's truth. The Greek orators expressed things in high-sounding flowery words, with metaphors and similes that dazzled the imagination more than pointing out any truth.

Apostles had to be plain and understandable. Words must be accurate, clear, as the Holy Spirit teaches. The purpose is to explain spiritual things to spiritual people.

Verse 14.

This is here further explained. The natural man lives focused on his natural physical needs and desires. The present world is all he knows or expects. Death is the end of all life. Without the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, no man can recognize or comprehend

spiritual things. They are foolishness to him. His whole focus is on building his kingdom here and now, to attain the most and best of everything the world has to offer – wealth, position, education, power, authority, reputation, honor, recognition, and so on.

Verse 15.

The spiritual person judges all things from a spiritual perspective. He can discern the truth concerning the natural man's false and pointless activities. The natural man cannot understand or appreciate the words or actions of the spiritual person.

Verse 16.

No natural man has or could ever perceive or understand the mind of the Lord. This also refers to Isaiah 44:13. Believers, on the other hand, received the mind of Christ, being born again of His Spirit. Only then can a person teach the things of God to others.

In Closing.

This chapter gives a good example of how a minister of the Gospel should regulate his actions in his public ministry. It clearly describes the simplicity of Paul's preaching – no high-sounding eloquence or dramatic delivery, no enticing words of man's wisdom.

The foolishness of preaching has its own wisdom, divinity, and beauty. It is the profound mercy and divine plan for man's salvation through Christ Jesus.

Next – Dealing with the immature Christians.

I Corinthians – Lesson IV

I Corinthians 3:1-23. Paul addresses the Corinthians' immaturity as followers of Christ.

Laborers Together with God

- 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.
- 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.
- 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?
- 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apol'los; are ye not carnal?
- 5 ¶ Who then is Paul, and who is Apol'los, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?
- 6 I have planted, Apol'los watered; but God gave the increase.
- 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.
- 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.
- 9 For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.
- 10 ¶ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.
- 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
- 13 every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.
- 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
- 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.
- 16 ¶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
- 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.
- 18 ¶ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.
- 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.
- 20 And again,
The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise,
that they are vain.
- 21 Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours;
- 22 whether Paul, or Apol'los, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;
- 23 and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Verse 1.

Paul describes them as still infants in their understanding of spiritual things. They are still 'carnal', under the common influence of the fleshly appetites. He uses the term 'babes in Christ'. They are just beginning, which they have shown by their lack of judgment in the church.

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