

## Christ Not Divided

The question of division is an uncomfortable one for Christians. Faced with the myriads of denominations and sects, many of which have histories stretching back hundreds of years, the apostle Paul's charge in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "that there be no divisions among you," seems nigh impossible. In his time, division was only at an early stage of development, for in Corinth it "had not yet led to the dissolution of the community; they celebrate the Lord's Supper together (11:17ff), and Paul can address his letter to the whole community" (Conzelmann 32). But today what can a believer who takes this word to heart possibly do? Should he follow the path trod by John Henry Newman in the nineteenth century to Roman Catholicism? Should he compromise his convictions and search for some ecumenical middle ground? Should he appease his conscience by token moves toward unity, pursuing avenues that have the appearance of unity but leave the root causes of denominations untouched? Or should he just set the problem aside and wait for a divine eschatological intervention?

Before consciously making a choice, however, this believer should ask himself: Is the problem in Corinth and Paul's solution applicable today? Judging by much of the exegesis on 1 Corinthians, the answer would seem to be no.<sup>1</sup> Recent commentaries on the book share the same striking characteristic: a total absence of any attempt to connect Paul's word with the problem of denominations.<sup>2</sup> Rather, some offer all but a thinly veiled justification of denominations. One writer says of 1:10: "The guilt of schism is when each party, instead of expressing fully his own truth, attacks others, and denies that others are in the Truth at all" (F. W. Robertson, quoted in Robertson and Plummer 14); and another, "The expression need not mean anything more precise than peaceful co-existence" (Barrett 41-42). Provided there is peaceful co-existence, it seems, denominations need attract no blame. Other examples of the exegesis of this verse are similarly accommodating to denominations: "St Paul is urging, not unison, but harmony" (Robertson and Plummer 10), and "The words...do not thereby imply that in the Christian faith unity demands uniformity" (Fee 53). Contrast this with Paul's understanding of Christian unity: "That you all speak the same thing...that you be attuned in the same mind and the same opinion" (1:10). Rare indeed is a comment that calls the division in Corinth what it truly was:

an "evil tendency" (Ellicott 17), which, if not rebuked, would destroy the testimony of the one Body of Christ in that city.

Certainly 1 Corinthians is unique among the books of the New Testament in dealing with the problem of division.<sup>3</sup> Division in Corinth may have been only in its nascent stage, but it was division nonetheless, the same in nature if not in scale as the church faces today. What Paul has to say about division holds true for all its manifestations. His word provides both a clear diagnosis of its cause and the cure for the sickness as well. But to see this requires that we first admit the problem and commit ourselves, in faith, to the apostle's ministry for its solution. Second, we must approach Paul's word with a full understanding of God's economy, because the apostle was commissioned with the stewardship of this economy. Indeed, his solution to this problem, as we will endeavor to show, is yet a further unveiling of this economy.<sup>4</sup>

### The Cause of the Corinthian Division

The believers in Corinth had divided into parties by uplifting or depreciating spiritual leaders. All four groups were censured by Paul (1:12-13).<sup>5</sup> There has been much debate over the number of these groups and speculation over their possible agendas, but this has not afforded much explanation as to why the Corinthians succumbed to this problem in the first place. Certainly Paul was not interested in any of the differences between them. Rather, he went to the heart of the problem: the Corinthian pursuit of wisdom. In the following section he depreciates the wisdom of the Greeks to the uttermost, giving it no place at all in God's economy. It serves no purpose in the preaching of the gospel (v. 17), God is destroying it (v. 19) and has utterly rejected it (3:18-20), it is futile as a means of knowing God (1:21), the crucified Christ is its antithesis (vv. 23-25), and it is not allowed any part in the establishing of the believers' faith (2:1-5). For Paul, the problem of division derives from the believers' misplaced appreciation of wisdom. The exaltation of wisdom was inherent to Greek life and culture, the characteristic of their race—the "Greeks seek wisdom" (1:22). It was not a problem for one of the parties alone, a so-called Hellenic group that supposedly followed Apollos. On the contrary, all those who had

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uplifted one minister of Christ above the others had done so on the basis of wisdom. By wisdom they reasoned concerning the apostles and judged what was better and what was inferior in their ministries. Inevitably they differed from each other in their judgments and thus made different choices.

**T**he parties in Corinth, therefore, were a consequence of the believers' remaining in their natural background, a background of Greek culture with its philosophical thinking. Although they had been called through the preaching of the gospel to become saints, sanctified in Christ, they still appreciated the good and admirable components of their past. By vehemently attacking wisdom, Paul, in effect, nullifies this background and shows them that it has no place in the church of God. He reminds them that in relation to this background, God chose them as the "things which are not" (v. 28).

This rejection of any place for what was Greek strengthens the revelation of God's economy. The goal of God's economy is to gain His corporate expression in humanity, the new creation as the new man, the constituent of which is uniquely one: Christ Himself. In the new man "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man"; rather, "Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:11), which means that He is every person and in every person. The believers in Corinth failed to realize that in Christ their national and cultural backgrounds, and all that they were by birth, counted as nothing and must not be allowed any place. They should not have remained in their natural life to exercise their preferences for certain ministers of Christ above others. In their day the problem was somewhat hidden behind the names of God's called apostles. Today the names of denominations unashamedly display the national, cultural, and doctrinal preferences of their members.

### **Christ Not Divided (the Solution according to Theology)**

Commentators rightly identify that Paul's response to the divisions at Corinth was based on "Christology," revealing Christ and His cross as the wisdom and power of God (Hafemann 175). Paul's "cure" for them, then, entails "an exposition of the nature of the gospel as centered in the cross of Christ" (Thiselton 107), for their party slogans all bear witness to "a failure to understand, or rightly value, the Gospel, which Paul was sent (i.17) to preach" (Barrett 51).

Unfortunately though, most view Christ and His salvific work primarily in objective terms. Thus, the wisdom of God in Christ is seen as the redemptive work for sinners' justification that He accomplished through the cross. The three components of this wisdom in 1:30—righteousness,

sanctification, and redemption—are narrowly interpreted in terms of the believers' objective salvation. Fee, for example, writes that they are "three different metaphors for the same event (our salvation that was effected in Christ)" (86). Barrett (60), Bruce (36), and Fee (86) all equate this verse with 6:11 ("But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God"), where Paul describes the believers' subjective experience of justification. In chapter two, God's wisdom in a mystery (v. 7), the depths of God (v. 10), the things of God (v. 11), and the things of the Spirit of God (v. 14) are given the same interpretation. The wisdom predestined for our glory in 2:7 is described variously as "Christ crucified'...for the salvation of men" (Robertson and Plummer 38), "God's purpose to redeem mankind through Christ" (Barrett 71), and "God's gracious activity in Christ, whereby through the crucifixion he determined eternal salvation for his people" (Fee 105). Yet such a conception impoverishes the exegesis of one of the deepest passages in Paul's writings. Some commentators have nearly nothing to say about these terms; one even warns against any suggestion that they refer to an "esoteric knowledge of deeper truths about God" and limits them to "simply his own plan for saving his people" (Fee 112).

This interpretation of the gospel announced by Paul falls short on a number of counts. First, it projects a narrow understanding of Christ and His cross, which fails to take into account Paul's Christology in the Epistle as a whole. First Corinthians is outstanding in presenting Christ, not historically in the stage of incarnation for redemption but in the stage of resurrection for His life-giving work as the Spirit (15:45). His saving of the believers has not only resulted in justification for their eternal salvation (6:11), but even more, in their organic union with Him through regeneration, whereby they have become one spirit with Him (1:30; 6:17). The focus of the believers' being called by God is not primarily their eternal destiny but rather their entering into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, God's Son (1:9). This fellowship is a participation in and partaking of Christ, just as the fellowship of the Lord's blood and body at the Lord's table is a partaking of His blood and body (10:16-17).<sup>6</sup> Through the believers' partaking of Christ, He becomes their portion, indicated by the phrase "theirs and ours" in 1:2. Indeed, Paul presents many aspects of Christ as their portion in the course of his Epistle: power and wisdom (v. 24), righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (v. 30), the Lord of glory for their glorification (2:8, 7; cf. Rom. 8:30), the depths of God (1 Cor. 2:10), the unique foundation of God's building (3:11), their Passover (5:7), the unleavened bread (v. 8), the spiritual food (10:3), the spiritual drink (v. 4), the spiritual rock (v. 4), the Head (11:3), the Body (12:12), the firstfruits (15:20, 23), the second man (v. 47), the last Adam and the life-giving Spirit (v. 45).

The Christ of Paul's gospel is not just the Redeemer, but the all-inclusive Christ. He is inexhaustible and He alone can be the common portion of all the believers, regardless of their place (1:2), for the replacing of all other centers among them.

Second, interpreting 1:30 by 6:11 suggests that Paul is confused and inconsistent in the sequence he uses for the components of Christ as wisdom: righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. In 1:30 righteousness is first, but in 6:11 its synonym, justification, is last, and so sanctification follows righteousness in 1:30 but precedes justification in 6:11. Moreover, if redemption is Christ's propitiatory work at the cross, it is the cause of righteousness and sanctification. Why then is it placed last in sequence and on the same logical level as the third in the list?

**H**owever, when proper account is taken of sanctification and redemption in the rest of the New Testament as a whole, there is no confusion or inconsistency. Justification does indeed proceed from Christ's work of redemption in the initial stage of salvation and results in the believers being regenerated in their spirit (Rom. 5:18; John 1:12-13; 3:6). Sanctification here refers to the further stage of salvation in the believers, their present salvation.<sup>7</sup> This concerns not their position in Christ but their disposition, in which they become holy and bear the fruit of sanctification in their lives (Rom. 6:19, 22). This is a salvation by the transformation of their soul, including the renewing of their minds (12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). Redemption in 1 Corinthians 1:30 does not refer directly to Christ's work on the cross. It is the final stage of the believers' salvation, the coming redemption of their bodies (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14, cf. Phil. 3:21), when they will enter into the glory Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 2:7, the final goal of their salvation (Heb. 2:10).

Only by interpreting 1 Corinthians 1:30 as the believers' complete salvation can we respect the construction of this verse. This opens up a vista on Christ as God's wisdom which harmonizes with the inclusive revelation of Christ in this book. Christ as God's wisdom to us is all-inclusive: He is wisdom not only for our past but also for our present and for our future. His salvation is broad; it encompasses every part of the believers' being.

Third, limiting God's wisdom in chapter two to Christ's redemptive work is not consistent with Paul's treatment of the Corinthians. Belittling their misplaced trust in the wisdom of the age, he says, "We do speak wisdom among those who are full-grown" (v. 6). Since he considered the Corinthian believers to be infants in Christ (3:1), this

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wisdom must refer to further aspects of his message which the Corinthians could not yet receive. They needed to grow so that they could receive this "solid food," not just the "milk" Paul had given them before (v. 2). It requires all the apostle's fourteen Epistles to appreciate the wisdom in a mystery, which God predestined for

their glory (2:7). This was the full content of Paul's ministry, namely Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ (Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:3-6). Here, in the context of 1 Corinthians, more specifically, it means Christ as the unique center in God's economy and the portion of the believers (1:2, 9). The Spirit is needed to search these depths of God and reveal them to us in many aspects for our participation (2:10). No doubt, Paul's writing concerning all the items of Christ as our portion in this Epistle is such an example of the Spirit's searching and revealing. Thus, far from being a retrospective unfolding of Christ's judicial redemption, the Spirit's searching and declaring to us of God's wisdom in a mystery, Christ as the depths (deep things) of God, it is actually the way that God accomplishes His purpose of dispensing the riches of Christ into the believers to constitute them to be the church as His expression.

**H**ence, Paul's way to solve the problem of division is not to point the believers to the redeeming Christ in His work on the cross. This would only bring them back to their initial salvation. It could never solve the problem of division among the people of God because, as this Epistle shows, division is the result of the believers remaining in their natural life and in the appreciation of their natural backgrounds. Rather, he presents to them an all-inclusive Christ who, as God's wisdom in a mystery and the depths of God, is the centrality and universality of God's economy. The Corinthian believers needed to progress further in their experience of Christ to gain a further salvation, a "much more" salvation in Christ's life (Rom. 5:10), which would save them from themselves to living Christ (Phil. 1:21) by partaking of Him as their portion. In this portion there is both the terminating aspect of the cross of Christ for the crucifying of their flesh (Gal. 5:24; 2:20) and the bountiful supply of Christ as the life-giving Spirit for their daily salvation (Phil. 1:19; 2:12).

### **Pursuing Full Growth in Christ (the Solution according to Spirituality)**

Paul was a wise master builder (1 Cor. 3:10). First, he presents a full view of Christ as the wisdom of God for the believers' participation and full salvation. This may be considered his theological response to the problem of

division. But he does not stop there. He then turns to the exercise the believers need to have to be rescued from this evil age, what we may call his solution according to spirituality. The Corinthians were divided because they were still infants in Christ (v. 1), when they ought to have been full-grown (v. 2, cf. 2:6). The divisions among them manifested their infancy and spiritual retardation. The converse of their condition is Ephesians 4:13-14, which speaks of arriving at “the oneness of the faith,” which is a “full-grown man,” in contrast to “little children...carried about by every wind of teaching.” Thus, in 1 Corinthians 3 Paul’s intention is to motivate and even incite them to pursue the growth in Christ: he points out their real condition (vv. 1-4) and gives them the incentive of the reward and punishment of God’s judgment (vv. 13-14, 17).

**H**owever, the key to this growth is not in chapter three but in the last part of chapter two—the contrast between the soulish man and the spiritual man. This is proved by the fact that Paul already refers to the matter of growth in 2:6, where he says that he speaks wisdom only (2:4, cf. 3:2) among the “full-grown.” Although Paul is not setting forth the ground for any spiritual elitism as some have inferred from this word, he nevertheless indicates that some believers are in the category of “those who are full-grown” and others, including the Corinthian recipients of his letter, are not. Those who are full-grown are “spiritual men,” according to 3:1, with the capacity to receive the things of the Spirit (2:14), that is, the things of God (v. 11), the depths of God (v. 10), which the Spirit is searching and revealing to them. In order to pursue the growth in Christ and escape from division, what is needed is a clear understanding of the meaning of being spiritual in contrast to soulish as set forth in verses 11 through 16.

This requires us to recognize that when Paul uses the term *spirit* in relation to the believers, as in Romans 8 and Galatians 5—6 for example, he has two spirits in view: the Spirit of God and the human spirit. He refers to both spirits in 1 Corinthians 2:11, as he does throughout this Epistle (vv. 4, 10, 12; 3:16; 6:11, 19; 7:40; 12:3-4, 7-9, 11, 13; 15:45 for the divine Spirit; 4:21; 5:3-5; 7:34; 14:2, 14-16, 32; 16:18 for the human spirit; and 6:17 for the union of the two). Yet many respected commentators deny that there is a human spirit either because of fear of its “Gnostic” associations or its Platonic parallels, or because they are influenced by the world view of modern psychology. This forces them into an unnatural and distorted exegesis of 2:11-16. Those who maintain a view of man’s being only a body and soul do so by denying that the phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ (the spirit of man that is in him, v. 11) refers to a distinct part of man’s composition and then argue that the term ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος (the soulish man) is a generic term for man in his unregenerate state. Gordon Fee is one representative

of this school of interpretation. For Fee, in 2:11 Paul is talking about “the interior expression of the human person” (111). “The analogy,” he writes, “does not have to do with the constituents of personality; rather, it has to do with our common experience of personal reality” (112). Then regarding the contrast between the soulish and the spiritual, the former, writes Fee, “are not now, nor have they ever been, believers....Because of their being ‘merely human’ (i.e., without the help of the Spirit), they ‘reject’ the things of the Spirit” (116). The corollary is that being spiritual “simply means to have the Spirit” (117).

**D**enying that the spirit of man is a distinctive part of man’s being in verse 11 destroys the comparison that Paul makes between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. This comparison is central to Paul’s reasoning in this passage. Verse 10 tells us that the Spirit reveals all the things which God has prepared for us because He is searching the depths of God, which are Christ as the mystery of God (Col. 2:2), in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells (v. 9), to be our portion (1:12). Only the Spirit can receive these things and declare them to us (cf. John 16:13-15). First Corinthians 2:11 begins with the modifier *for*, which indicates that it offers either an explanation or an illustration of this function of the Spirit in the Godhead. Just as in the Godhead there is the Spirit who knows the things of God, there is a counterpart in man, the spirit of man, that Paul implies searches the depths of man to know the things of man. In so saying, he is once more, this time subtly, depreciating the wisdom-seeking Greeks, who depend not upon the spirit but on the mind for knowing the things of man. Therefore, they among men do not know the things of man, such as the purpose of being created by God (Gen. 1:26), the fall into sin and its slavery, the need of salvation (Acts 17:27), the aspiration to express God (Eccl. 3:11), and man’s desire for Christ (Hag. 2:7). By depreciating the distinctive agency of the spirit of man within him, commentators severely undermine Paul’s case for the Spirit of God’s function in revelation.

Moreover, denying that Paul means the spirit of man as an entity distinct from man’s soul and interpreting his meaning here simply as the “innermost self” of man (Thiselton 224) exposes the parallel construction “Spirit of God” to such an interpretation too. Certain commentators have indeed proposed that the Spirit in this passage is not a distinct hypostasis in the Trinity of God but God’s self-consciousness. The three parts of man are certainly not analogous to the hypostases of the Triune God; nevertheless, as C. J. Ellicott points out, “The πνεῦμα in ver. 11 is not the human self-consciousness, but the third and highest part of our composite nature, and so a kind of feeble similitude of the Third Person of the blessed immanent Trinity” (41). If we carelessly ignore the distinctiveness of the spirit of man within him in verse 11, we will open the

door to a liberal interpretation which damages the Person of the Spirit in verse 10, a verse of “cardinal importance in reference to the Scripture doctrine of the Holy Ghost” (41). If we wish to uphold the reference to the Spirit of God here, we must respect the parallel construction that refers to the spirit of man within man’s inner being.

Since the spirit is “of man,” it is a faculty common to mankind in general, not of the believers particularly. In mankind deadened by the fall (Eph. 2:1, cf. Gen. 2:17), its function is dormant and awaits the enlivening of regeneration, when its function is both restored and uplifted by the presence of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:16, cf. 9:1). Fallen mankind must walk according to their soul, in the vanity of their mind (Eph. 4:17), and are rightly termed *soulish*, unable to receive or know the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

Fee argues, however, that the term *soulish man* does not refer to the function of the soul as distinct from the spirit, but is a general term for unbelieving mankind. In support of this he cites the Old Testament use of the term *soul* as referring to “humanity in its natural, physical existence” (116), an argument that is developed more fully by Thiselton (267-268). This is a dubious argument for the following reasons:

First, a striking occurrence of the Old Testament’s general use of the term is Exodus 1:5, where Jacob and his family are numbered as seventy *souls*. They hardly fit the description of unbelievers, devoid of the Spirit of God, since they were God’s called people, who received the revelation and oracles of God in that age (Gen. 28:10-22; 37:5-11; 48:19-20; 49:3-27). For sure, they were not *soulish* men unable to know the things of the Spirit of God.

Second, *soul* in the Scripture has both a general and a particular meaning. It is the same with the term *flesh*, which is used in Genesis 6:3 and Romans 3:20 to refer to fallen humanity in general, but in Romans 7:18 to refer to the body in which sin dwells (cf. Rom. 7:23; 8:13). With terms such as these, a judgment must be made as to whether the term is being used in its general or particular sense. Here, the context of the term *soul* weighs heavily for its particular use, since it is describing a characteristic of man, *soulish* as opposed to *spiritual*. The preceding reference to the spirit of man further strengthens the ground for its particular meaning here.

Third, by insisting that *soulish* only means humanity

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without the Spirit of God and conversely that *spiritual* means the possession of the Spirit, Fee has the difficulty of explaining its use in relation to the Corinthian believers, who possessed the Spirit. It requires the rather awkward nuance that the Corinthians were only “acting just like these people” (116). However, Paul was

pointing out that he could not speak wisdom to the Corinthians because they were *soulish*, not *spiritual*, and thus unable to receive this wisdom, intending to incite them to pursue being *spiritual* by growing as he develops further in chapter three.

In summary, by distinguishing between *soulish* and *spiritual* in terms of the absence or presence of the Holy Spirit respectively, both Fee and Thiselton require us to make a considerable semantic leap. If this is what Paul means, we may wonder why he does not just say, “He who does not have the Spirit of God cannot know the things of God” But what Paul is describing by the terms *soulish* and *spiritual* is not the possession or otherwise of the Spirit of God but what determines the character of the person, his soul or his spirit. The *soulish* man is “the man whose soul, with its merely human longings and affections,...unhallowed and unilluminated, and, so to speak, despiritualized (comp. Jude 19, ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες), is to him the all in all”; the *spiritual* man, by contrast, is “the man whose human πνεῦμα is illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and in whom it is the predominant influence” (Ellicott 45-46), “one who denies his soul and does not live by his soul but allows his spirit, that is, his regenerated spirit which is occupied and energized by the Spirit of God to dominate his entire being” (Lee 689). Whereas unbelievers have no choice but to be *soulish*, the believers, by virtue of the Holy Spirit’s regeneration of their spirit (Titus 3:5; John 3:6), may be either *soulish* or *spiritual*.

A *spiritual* man is a person not without a soul, but one who denies the life of the soul in order to live by the life of the spirit, Christ as the Spirit who indwells him (Col. 1:27, cf. Gal. 2:20). Such a living in the mingled spirit causes the faculties of the soul to be renewed and uplifted (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). Hence, the mind, the leading part of the soul, is renewed by the mingled spirit’s operation and spreading within it to become the “spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:23), causing us to have the mind of Christ spoken of at the end of this section of 1 Corinthians (2:16, cf. Phil. 2:5). Only this mind can be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion (1 Cor. 1:10) with the other members of Christ for preserving the Body of Christ from division.

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## Conclusion

By failing to address the issue of division among God's people as it exists today in the form of denominations, commentators of 1 Corinthians are unable to offer any insight into the cause of division in the church in Corinth and are distracted into historical speculation about the various parties condemned by Paul. By falling short in the vision of God's economy, conceiving of it only in terms of Christ's redemptive work for sinners, they fail to identify the remedy for division that Paul's ministry bequeaths to the church today. By turning away from the scriptural revelation of the spirit of man, they deny God's people the means to pursue growth in Christ for solving the problem of division for the sake of the church's oneness in its testimony as Christ's Body.

Paul's solution to the division in Corinth is one which is fully according to the revelation of God's economy. Christ, the wisdom of God, is all-inclusive and the believers' unique center and portion. He saves them judicially through His redemption and, even more, organically by working Himself into them as their life. On their side, they must pursue growth in the life of Christ in order to be built up as His temple, His dwelling place on earth (3:16-17), by becoming spiritual through denying their soul and living by exercising their spirit—the human spirit regenerated, indwelt, and mingled with the Holy Spirit.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Those who argue that this is not a question for exegesis cannot deny that a host of other present concerns are addressed directly or in passing even in text-critical commentaries. Moreover, there is growing recognition that we should read the New Testament with present concerns, that is, read “theologically” as well as “historically.” Several essays which address this method can be found in Joel B. Green, ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. Grand Rapids and Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans and Paternoster, 1995.

<sup>2</sup>For example, in Thiselton's voluminous study of 1 Corinthians, which provides extensive bibliographies for almost every pericope of the book, we search in vain for a title relating this portion to the matter of denominations.

<sup>3</sup>The Greek word for *division*, *σχίσμα*, occurs only in three places outside the Gospels, all in 1 Corinthians (1:10; 11:18; 12:25). It also occurs in Matthew 9:16; Mark 2:21; John 7:43; 9:16, and 10:19.

<sup>4</sup>For an understanding of these chapters according to the full view of God's economy, see Witness Lee, *Life-study of First Corinthians*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1984, 1-295.

<sup>5</sup>“It is to be remembered that all these party watchwords

are on one level, and all in the same category of blame....St. Paul has no partiality for those who claim himself, nor any respect for those who claim Christ, as their special leader. Indeed, he seems to condemn these two classes with special severity” (Robertson and Plummer 11).

<sup>6</sup>Fee determines to dissociate the two portions, 1:9 and 10:16-17, for fear of sacramentalism and concludes that “the fellowship of His Son” means “fellowship with Christ” (43). But acknowledging the dependence of 1:9 on 10:16-17 need not lead to a sacramental interpretation of the former verse, as Thiselton rightly points out (104-105). It is not participation in Christ through the sacraments but through the organic, mystical union of our spirit with Christ as the life-giving Spirit that affords us the means to jointly participate in Him, a participation which we especially enjoy as we partake of the symbols at the Lord's table.

<sup>7</sup>God's eternal intention is that we would be holy (Eph. 1:4). Our being sanctified has both a positional aspect, whereby we are made holy by being set apart to God (Heb. 10:10; 13:12), and a dispositional aspect, whereby we are transformed in our disposition to be holy (Rom. 6:19, 22; 15:16). The former is by the blood (Heb. 10:29); the latter is by the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 15:16; 2 Thes. 2:13; 2 Cor. 3:18). The former we receive when we believe into Christ, as in 1 Corinthians 1:2. The latter is the result of the Spirit's work on us before (1 Pet. 1:2; John 16:8), during (1 Cor. 6:11), and after our initial salvation (Heb. 2:11), and continues throughout our entire Christian life.

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