

# PAUL'S APPEAL TO THE CORINTHIANS TO MANIFEST THE MYSTERY OF GOD BY BEARING THE CORPORATE IMAGE OF CHRIST AS THE SECOND MAN

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In the penultimate chapter of 1 Corinthians, the chapter on resurrection, Paul presents a detailed word on the significance of resurrection as it relates to the manifestation of the mystery that God has prepared for those who love Him. He begins by speaking of the resurrection of Christ, which was preached and witnessed by the apostles (vv. 1-11). Then he discusses the impact of resurrection on the reality and vitality of faith (vv. 12-19), on the unfolding eschatological history of God's prepared plan (vv. 20-28), and on the moral influence of resurrection on the present living of the church (vv. 29-34). After speaking of the impact of resurrection, Paul connects the glorious body of the resurrected Christ with the bodily resurrection of the believers (vv. 35-49), who no longer bear the image of the earthy, the first man, but the image of the heavenly, the second man (v. 47), through the vitalizing function of the life-giving Spirit (v. 45). He concludes by speaking of the mystery of the believers openly and corporately manifesting the image of Christ when He returns (vv. 50-57).<sup>1</sup> The open manifestation of this mystery, however, depends upon the church's much more hidden, spiritual manifestation of the mystery of God in this age as it corporately bears the image of Christ as the second man in the light of the Lord's coming (16:22). And so throughout this Epistle Paul appeals to the church in Corinth to bear the image of the heavenly by manifesting their corporate identification with Christ, rather than their corporate identification with Adam.

The first Epistle to the Corinthians is an appeal for the church in Corinth to manifest the corporate living of Christ as the second man in contrast to their evident manifestation of the corporate living of Adam as the first man. Their living, which should have manifested the heavenly image of the corporate Christ as the mystery of God, instead manifested only the haughty and vulgar elements of Adam's earthy image. Knowing of their infantile living in Adam and their need for growth in Christ (1:11; 2:6), Paul's Epistle is a lengthy, personal appeal to the Corinthians to manifest the mystery of the corporate Christ, who is experienced as righteousness in a regenerated human spirit, as sanctification in a transformed mind, and as redemption in a glorified body (1:30). The experience of Christ as God's wisdom, not only in the mind, the thinking faculty of our soul, but also in our spirit and body, reflects the fact that both the first and the second man are constituted with humanity. Consequently, the image of the earthy and the image of the heavenly are expressed both individually and corporately through the three parts of God's created humanity—spirit and soul and body (1 Thes. 5:23).

In 1 Corinthians Paul focuses on the corporate function and expression of these three distinctive parts of humanity. He speaks of the corporate manifestation of the first man in relation to the three parts of fallen humanity, and he speaks also of the corporate manifestation of the second man in relation to the same three parts of redeemed humanity. Although Paul addresses various expressions of the fallen humanity of the first man, pointing out the church's corporate defilement in spirit (8:7; cf. 2 Cor. 7:1),

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corporate reliance on human wisdom (1 Cor. 2:5), and corporate abuse of the body (3:16; 6:18-19), his primary focus is on the expression of the redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified humanity of the second man (15:47), pointing out the church's corporate joining in one spirit (6:17), corporate attuning in the mind of Christ (1:10; 2:16), and corporate identification as members of the Body of Christ (6:15). Even though the believers in Corinth were expressing Adam's humanity, Paul appealed to them to manifest Christ's humanity. As such, Paul did not view the problems in the church in Corinth as the individual problems of a few errant saints but rather as vestiges of their corporate living in the first man.

The structure and development of 1 Corinthians reflect this larger theme—the manifestation of the mystery of the corporate Christ. This Epistle is more than a compendium of moral failures and apostolic corrections, as suggested by Frederic Louis Godet in *Studies in Paul's Epistles*, where he says, "At Corinth...we see the new religion at issue with the licence of the Greek spirit, and find the Apostle enforcing the principles of Christian discipline necessary to regulate these wills so impatient of all control" (68). John Nelson Darby repeats this limited premise in his *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, saying, "We find in it moral details, and the interior order of an assembly, with regard to which the Spirit of God here displays His wisdom in a direct way" (204). While there were certainly moral failures in the church in Corinth, the regulation of individuals lacking in self-control for the sake of interior order was not Paul's purpose in addressing the specific problems related to division (1:10), fornication (5:1), lawsuits among the brothers (6:1), the abuse of freedom in foods and the body (vv. 12-13), marriage life (7:1-2), the eating of things sacrificed to idols (8:1), the order in God's administration (11:3), the Lord's supper (v. 17), spiritual gifts (12:1), the denial of the resurrection (15:12), and material possessions (16:1). In addition to these problems, other problems were also present in Corinth, but Paul did not address them extensively (6:9-11). This indicates that Paul had a broader purpose beyond the mere correction of human faults and failures in his decision to address these particular eleven problems.

Each of these problems provided an opportunity for Paul to appeal to the church in Corinth to bear the heavenly image of Christ in the one spirit, one soul, and one body of the corporate second man, not merely to discipline them for bearing the earthy image of Adam in the soulish body of the corporate first man. These eleven problems are spread out over sixteen chapters, but within these chapters there is a fine ordering of these problems as they relate to the church's manifestation of the image of the second man and of the first man. In chapters 1 through 4 Paul begins with the problem of division to remind the church of its corporate standing and position in Christ, focusing on the reality of the second man's corporate participation in the fellowship of the divine economy. In chapters 5 through 11 he speaks of various problems that expose the church's corporate living in Adam, a living that can be effaced only through the operation of the divine economy. In chapters 12 through 16 he speaks of how the church practically manifests the image of the corporate Christ through its participation in the divine economy. In chapters 1 through 4 and in chapters 12 through 16 Paul emphasizes the corporate manifestation of the image of Christ as the second man. In chapters 5 through 11 the intervening chapters, he addresses specific problems that selectively illustrate that corporate manifestation of the image of Adam as the first man. Although he deals with the church's problems item by item, he begins and ends by speaking of the paramount importance of manifesting the image of the second man; this underscores the deeper focus of his overall appeal.

#### The Reality of the Image of the Second Man in Chapters 1 through 4

From his introduction in 1:1-9 through the end of chapter 4, Paul's concern is that the church in Corinth would experientially know the reality of the image of Christ as the second man. While he speaks of this matter in the context of the church's divisive

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history and their foolish pursuit of the wisdom of the age (1:13; 2:1), his overarching focus is on the corporate Body of Christ, which is the issue of his begetting stewardship (4:1, 15). He views the problems related to division and to the pursuit of human wisdom as lingering vestiges of the image of the first man. In contrast, he speaks of the progressive manifestation of the image of the second man through the experience of Christ as God's wisdom in all three parts of the second man's humanity, as the things that God has prepared for those who love Him (12:4-6; 2:9).<sup>2</sup> If we fail to see Paul's deep burden that the church in Corinth would manifest the mystery of God by bearing the corporate image of Christ as the second man, it is easy to regard his Epistle as little more than an effort to restore the interior order of the church through the enforcement of principles of Christian discipline.

Such a view, however, does not comport with the content of Paul's introductory words in the first nine verses of chapter 1, which indicate a deeper intention in his letter to the Corinthians. He begins by speaking of his function in the Body of Christ as a called apostle through the will of God (v. 1; 12:28), not to laud himself but in order to remind them that he had been sent by God to announce the mystery of God (2:1), a sending that occurred long before their earthly manifestations of the first man compelled him to write a letter. Thus, he links his initial sending as an apostle and his current communication with them to his function as an apostle carrying out the eternal purpose and will of God, the manifestation of Christ as the mystery of God (Eph. 3:3-4, 10-11).

Paul maintains his focus on his apostolic commission by reminding the Corinthians that, as the church of God in Corinth, they have been sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:2). Thus, he begins by speaking of God as their true source and of their true status in Christ. Although the church was in the earthly city of Corinth, in reality its source was God; and while the church in Corinth was composed of human beings on earth, in reality it was separated from earthly things because it was sanctified in Christ. The believers in Corinth were not called to be saints, rather they were called saints, and as such they had a sanctified position in Christ, a position that is secure in every place by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 2).

Paul continues by reminding the church of the grace that was given to them in Christ Jesus (v. 4). This grace enriched them in all utterance and all knowledge (v. 5). "The Corinthian believers were enriched by the grace of God in all utterance of the divine thought concerning Christ and in all apprehension and realization in knowing Christ" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 5, note 1). This grace also confirmed the testimony of Christ in them (v. 6), which involved the progressive manifestation of the mystery of Christ through the maturing of the initial gifts that they received when they believed Paul's announcement of the mystery of God as the gospel (v. 17; 2:1).<sup>3</sup> This maturing process will culminate in the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it will be unreprouvable, without blemish or reproach (1:7-8). This unreprouvable standard, ultimately, is sourced in a faithful God, through whom the church has been called into the fellowship of the Son (v. 9). The fellowship of the Son is the fellowship that the Son enjoys with the Father by the Spirit; it is the fellowship that the Son enjoys within the immanent being of the Triune God, but it is also a fellowship that has been enlarged in the church through its fellowship in the blood and body of Christ (10:16). Paul begins to address the problems in Corinth in 1:10 only after reminding the Corinthians of the reality of their calling to fulfill the will of God, their access to grace, their enrichment by grace, their confirmation as the testimony of Christ, their receiving of the initial gifts, and their joint participation in the fellowship of the Triune God through being joined to the Lord.

Given his emphasis on the church's standing in Christ and the church's participation in the fellowship of the Son, it is understandable that Paul begins in verse 10 with the problem that is in starkest contrast to the matters spoken of in verses 1 through 9—the

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problem of division. He approaches this problem with a question, "Is Christ divided?" (v. 13), because a divided Christ is antithetical to the church's experience of the fellowship of the Son and its corporate participation in grace for the fulfillment of God's will. This question is a rhetorical reminder that the Corinthians' corporate expression should reflect the reality of Christ as the second man with whom they have been joined as one; it is not merely a recognition of the outward presence of divisions among them.

The expression of the second man is characterized by the oneness of the Triune God in the fellowship of the Son, not merely by outward human agreement, whereas the expression of the first man is characterized by division, which, in the church, often becomes manifest in petty disagreements based on misaligned affections for those who render spiritual service, resulting in a lack of the same care for one another and ultimately in separation from the other members of the Body of Christ (12:25, 21). At the core of the divisions in Corinth, there was a subtle clamoring for status within the seemingly spiritual association of the Corinthians with the names of the Lord's servants. The Corinthian believers used the circumstances of their baptism to promote themselves by claiming a higher status for those who personally served in the physical act of their baptism (1:12-16). Although, ostensibly, these divisions were formed around named apostles and even Christ, these named members did not initiate this elevation. Instead, the divisions were initiated by those who were seeking opportunities in the flesh to uplift themselves (3:3; 1:11). This selfish seeking was endemic in the church, involving each saint and producing a variety of exclusionary tendencies (v. 12). The believers who elevated the names of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas did so to the exclusion of the other apostles, while those who elevated the name of Christ did so to the exclusion of all the apostles. In many respects this latter form of exclusion was the most divisive because it denied any identification with the members of the Body of Christ who were truly functioning as God-appointed apostles and who were conveying the teaching that builds up the church.

In response to these reported divisions (v. 11), Paul points the Corinthians to the organic identification of the church with Christ, by asking two additional questions, "Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" (v. 13). These two rhetorical questions, along with the question "Is Christ divided?" are related. In the divine economy the church as the corporate Christ is not divided, because Christ's work on the cross produced the church in Himself as the one new man, reconciling divided humanity in one Body to God (Eph. 2:15-16). Furthermore, the baptism of every believer in one Spirit into one Body produced the many members of the Christ, the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13). In *Commentary on First Corinthians*, Frederic Louis Godet notes, "The cross has made Christ the head of the body. By baptism every believer becomes a member of that body" (81). Through these questions Paul focuses the Corinthians on the reality of being baptized, of being put into the one, undivided person of Christ, which was made possible by the one work of Christ on the cross to accomplish redemption. In the corporate person of Christ, there is no place or even existence of any other names. Paul illustrates this reality by using his own name in these rhetorical questions, unequivocally identifying himself with the undivided person of the second man and distancing himself from any identification with the divisive names of the first man that were present in Corinth, however named.

The One who was crucified for us should be the One to whom all the believers belong. This surely is Christ, not anyone else. All believers were baptized into the name, that is, into the person, of the crucified and resurrected Christ, issuing in an organic union with Him. His unique name and unique person cannot be replaced by the name and person of any of His servants. (Lee, Recovery Version, 1:13, note 2)

While the church's divisive practices exposed a fleshly striving for position in Corinth, the source of this contention was rooted in their fleshly attachments to their varying

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cultural backgrounds. The attachment of the Jewish believers in Corinth to the ordinances of the law produced divisive religious opinions, and the attachment of the Greek believers in Corinth to human wisdom produced divisive philosophical opinions. “In dealing with the divisions among the Corinthian believers, which came mainly from the background of Jewish religion and Greek philosophy, the apostle stressed Christ and His cross” (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 17, note 3). Christ created peace on the cross by abolishing the religious ordinances that divided the first man, and as the power and wisdom of God (v. 24), He became wisdom to us from God, displaying this wisdom by becoming the corporate righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of the second man (v. 30).

Christ became wisdom to us from God as three vital things in God’s salvation: (1) righteousness (for our past), by which we have been justified by God, that we might be reborn in our spirit to receive the divine life (Rom. 5:18); (2) sanctification (for our present), by which we are being sanctified in our soul, i.e., transformed in our mind, emotion, and will, with His divine life (Rom. 6:19, 22); and (3) redemption (for our future), i.e., the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23), by which we will be transfigured in our body with His divine life to have His glorious likeness (Phil. 3:21). It is of God that we participate in such a complete and perfect salvation, which makes our entire being—spirit, soul, and body—organically one with Christ and makes Christ everything to us. (Lee, Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 1:30, note 2)

**A**ccording to Paul, the answer to division is the reality of the corporate Christ, the Christ who became the second man through His death on the cross and through His resurrection as the Head of the new creation. In chapter 1 Paul speaks of the reality of the oneness of the second man in Christ, and he speaks the experiential operation that will manifest this reality—the operation of Christ as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption within the corporate parts of the second man. In chapters 2 through 4 Paul demonstrates this experiential operation particularly as it relates to his stewardship of the mysteries of God.

In chapter 2 Paul acknowledges his organic identification with Christ and with the church, which was expressed through his desire to physically come to them to announce the mystery of God (v. 1), through his willful determination to not know anything except Jesus Christ (v. 2), and through his speech and proclamation devoid of the emotionally persuasive words of human wisdom (v. 4). In all his contact with the church, he was determined to speak only spiritual words that conveyed the Spirit (v. 13). Thus, his announcement of the mystery of God was a demonstration of the Spirit and of power (v. 4), and its goal was the accomplishment of God’s predestinated glorification of the believers in Christ (vv. 6-7). Paul also reminds the church in Corinth of their capacity to be spiritual, rather than soulish, by their receiving of the things of the Spirit through spiritual words taught and interpreted by the Spirit in their regenerated human spirit (vv. 14, 11), and he demonstrates that just like himself, the church had the corporate mind of Christ in order to experientially know the mind of the Lord (v. 16).

**I**n chapter 3 Paul reinforces his emphasis on the operation of Christ in the ministry of the apostles, a ministry that produces the church as God’s cultivated land and as a corporate temple (vv. 9, 16), growing from infancy and immaturity into a corporate building that is composed of the precious material of the Triune God Himself (vv. 1, 12), which material alone can endure the test of His refining fire (v. 13). When Paul speaks of the status of the church’s current living, it is always with a view to their condition in relation to the corporate Christ. For example, even though he addresses them as fleshy and fleshly (vv. 1, 3), he nevertheless regards them as being in Christ, even in their infancy (v. 1), and therefore, capable of growth (v. 6). And even though he acknowledges that their divisions, involving jealousy and strife, are entangled with

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their appraisals of those who have ministered to them (vv. 3-5),<sup>4</sup> he refutes their natural concept that the functions borne by God's ministers are the product of natural abilities rather than distinctions that derive solely from differences in the gift of grace that has been given to each (vv. 5, 10). Paul emphasizes that God's fellow workers—those who plant and those who water—are one and are working together with the One who causes the growth (v. 6). For Paul, both the grace that is given to the ministers and the grace that is received by the church is from God and of God, and with a proper cultivation of this grace, the building that occurs upon the foundation of Christ will ultimately manifest the church as the temple of God (v. 16), which belongs only to Christ and consists only of Christ (vv. 11-15, 23).

In chapter 4 Paul reinforces his emphasis on the ministry as an operation of Christ to manifest the mystery of Christ by speaking more personally about his ministry. Paul begins by presenting himself as a servant of Christ and as a faithful steward of the mysteries of God (v. 1). Through his faithful stewardship in both teaching and living, Paul manifested the ways which are in Christ to the Corinthians, the ways that will serve as the standard of the Lord's examination in the day of His coming (vv. 17, 3-5). In particular, he notes that the Lord's examination, which will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, depends primarily upon the church's faithfulness in regard to the things written in the preceding chapters related to the manifestation of the oneness of the second man in contrast to a continuing manifestation of the divisive ways of the first man (4:6). For such a manifestation, Paul endured hardship and suffering (vv. 11-13) but without any concern for the cost of being foolish and dishonored before angels and men in this age (vv. 9-10). He bore every slight as a cherishing and admonishing father, whose distinguishing characteristic was a spirit of meekness rather than a rod (v. 21). In his appeal to the Corinthians he demonstrates the divine love in his capacity as a begetting father (v. 15), speaking to his children, who were living in division, who needed to be reminded of his ways which were in Christ (v. 17), and who were puffed up in the natural wisdom of the first man (vv. 6, 18). While there was ground for the use of a rod, he chose instead to respond to the problem of division with the most effective means of diffusing the influence of the haughty mind of the first man—the meek spirit of the second man.<sup>5</sup> In his reference to a spirit of meekness, Paul implicitly underscores his desire for the church to express the image of the second man through the operation of Christ as wisdom in every part of the second man.

### The Expression of the Image of the First Man in Chapters 5 through 11

Paul begins to address the series of problems in chapters 5 through 11 only after reminding the church in Corinth of the reality of the mystery of God and of their capacity to manifest this mystery through the three parts of the second man. While Paul's words in chapters 5 through 11 were a necessary response to the presence of actual problems in the church, he focuses on these problems because they indicate that the believers in Corinth were living in the soul and flesh of the first man, rather than as members of Christ in the one spirit and same mind of the second man.

In chapter 5 Paul responds to the church's failure to deal with an evil brother involved in fornication, saying, "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication that does not even occur among the Gentiles, that someone has his stepmother" (v. 1). In Paul's striking response to this situation, he reserves the harshest judgment for the church rather than the brother because he views this matter as a corporate failure rather than an individual moral failure. After obliquely alluding to the gross and defiling nature of this sin with the word *such*, he more pointedly addresses the leavening mindset of the church, asking, "And you are puffed up? And you have not rather mourned...?" (v. 2). Although he sees a need for individual accountability for "the one who has done this deed," he sees a broader need for corporate accountability

involving the church's failure to remove such a one from their midst (v. 2). Rather than a corporate response of mourning from the church as the second man, there was a corporate response of boasting (v. 6), of taking fellow delight in those who practice such things, which is a hallmark of the first man (Rom. 1:32). "In spite of the confusion and the presence of the gross sin of incest among them, the Corinthian believers were boasting and glorying" (Lee, Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 5:6, note 1). In his contribution related to 1 Corinthians in *The Biblical Expositor*, Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, states, "The Corinthian church had failed to take disciplinary action against the offender or even to share distress because of his offense" (267). J. N. Darby affirms the complicity of the church, saying, "The evil did not attach to that man alone who was personally guilty of it. The assembly was not clear till the evil was put out" (218).

Paul asks, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" only after speaking of their misplaced boasting (1 Cor. 5:6), indicating that both the sin and the church's acceptance of this sin had a leavening impact on the church, the whole lump. The old leaven that needed to be purged out was both the sin itself and the puffed-up mind of the first man that tolerated it (v. 7). Paul had a concern for the salvation of the brother's spirit in the day of the Lord (v. 5), but he had a more pressing concern that the church would manifest its unleavened status as a new lump in Christ, resulting from the sacrifice of Christ as the reality of the Passover (v. 7). Rather than feasting and glorying in the things of the first man, which were filled with the old leaven of evil and malice, Paul desired that the church in Corinth would feast on the reality of Christ as the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (v. 8).

In an expression of Christ, Paul carried out his judgment in the person of Christ and in the fellowship of the Body, responding to the church's manifestation of the first man with an entirely different manifestation of the spirit, mind, and will—that of the second man. Paul delivered the brother to Satan for the destruction of his flesh resulting in the salvation of his spirit, based on an appraisal that originated in Paul's spirit, which he points out is a corporate spirit (vv. 3-4). His appraisal was not based on soulish knowledge, that is, moral knowledge based on considerations of good and evil, but on considerations of the Body of Christ, with whom he was assembled in spirit even though he was absent in the body. In the name, the person, of Christ, he willfully exercised spiritual power in order to carry out a spiritual judgment on the flesh of the sinning brother in this age in order for his spirit to be saved in the day of the Lord. In this exercise, however, he maintained his standing in the Body by asking and relying upon the church to corporately bear the responsibility for executing his judgment (v. 13).

In chapter 6 Paul responds to the Corinthians' manifestation of the soulish ways of the first man in their resolution of personal disputes, and in their manifestation of the fleshly ways of the first man through their abuse of personal freedom related to the body. Beginning with their reliance upon the judgment of unrighteous unbelievers to settle personal disputes (v. 1), the saints in Corinth demonstrated an ignorance of how to respond to the unrighteous actions of their fellow believers in Christ. In particular, their willingness to resolve disputes according to the judgment of the world, the judgment of the first man, indicates that they were blind to the elevated responsibility given to the second man to righteously judge the world, angels, and the things of this life (vv. 2-4). Consequently, they were unable to resolve their disputes under the ruling of the cross, which, in contrast to lawsuits, includes a willingness to be wronged and even defrauded (v. 7). Furthermore, by pursuing the judgment of the world (v. 4), the saints not only brought shame on themselves but also deprived themselves of the benefit of the spiritual discernment of their fellow members in the corporate Christ (vv. 5, 7).

In response to their manifestation of the corporate first man, Paul reminds the church of the negative implications of manifesting the first man and the positive implications of manifesting the second man. Negatively, Paul reminds them that by returning to their

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former manner of life (v. 11), which included thievery, covetousness, reviling, and rapaciousness, they were disqualifying themselves from participating in the corporate manifestation of the kingdom (vv. 9-10). Positively, Paul reminds them that by living in their status as those who were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name, the person, of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God, they were positioned to inherit the kingdom (v. 11).

After addressing the problem of lawsuits among believers, Paul goes on to speak of the abuse of freedom in regard to the abuse of lawful matters related to food and sex. He begins by saying, "All things are lawful to me, but not all things are profitable" (v. 12). In speaking of how to respond to legitimate human needs, his use of the word *lawful* perhaps refers back to the Corinthians' reliance upon the law to settle material disputes, allowing him to remind them that disputes should not be settled and human needs should not be satiated according to a standard of right and wrong, which is the standard of the first man, but according to that which profitably builds up the Body of Christ (v. 12; 10:23; 12:7; 14:6).<sup>6</sup> In 10:23 Paul repeats nearly the same phrase as in 6:12, saying, "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable," but then he adds, "All things are lawful, but not all things build up." Paul's use of the word *profitable* in 6:12 and his later association of it with the words *build up* in 10:23 indicate his early effort to elevate the consideration of the Corinthians out of the realm of the first man into the realm of the second man by focusing on what is profitable for the building up of the Body of Christ rather than what is merely allowable but damaging to the members of the Body of Christ.

In their bodily abuse of the allowable uses of food and sex, the church in Corinth was brought under of power of the soul of the first man (6:12); they were enslaved in their will and corrupted in their thinking, and thereby they manifested the fallen corporate elements of the first man. This abuse, however, provided Paul with an opportunity to reveal that the second man is one with the Lord in spirit, soul, and even body. In the short span of eight verses, from verse 13 to verse 20, Paul speaks experientially of the corporate manifestation of the first man and the second man in relation to all three parts of created and redeemed humanity. He begins in verse 13 by pointing out the church's corporate abuse of the body in regard to matters of food and fornication, contrasting it with the fact that their bodies were members of Christ, that is, members of His body (v. 15). He notes that the body is not for fornication but for the Lord and that the Lord is for the body because it will be raised up in the coming resurrection and be conformed to the body of His glory (vv. 13-14; Phil. 3:21).<sup>7</sup> Knowing that bodies manifest the humiliation of the first man, it is striking that Paul makes such a clear statement concerning our bodies being members of the second man. The abuse of the body in Corinth, however, called for this word, a word that was apparently neither jarring nor disconcerting to the apostle. His realization that the church's manifestation of its corporate identification with Christ involves the three parts of humanity, with the body of the believers being one with the body of Christ, is the logical, spiritual extension of the even more momentous truth that the church is joined to the Lord in one spirit (v. 17). In Paul's thought the church is joined to the Lord's body because it is joined to the Lord in one spirit. In *Knowing the Scriptures: Rules and Methods of Bible Study* Arthur T. Pierson comments on the reality of being joined to the Lord, saying,

"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" is a short sentence of ten English words. Yet it suggests to us the highest possible unity between the disciple and his Lord. Many other forms are used to express this identification, but none approach this in the conception of inseparable oneness. (146-147)

Based on this reality, Witness Lee comments, "Our oneness with the Lord is both spiritual and physical. Although we may not realize much of this now, one day it will be



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fully manifested that we are actually one with the Lord in body, soul, and spirit” (*Life-study* 343). The body that will be consummately joined to the Lord will be purified and conformed to His body, and even though our body is currently one of humiliation, this does not detract from the reality that in some way, even now, our bodies are members of Christ. “Even now the Spirit of the resurrected Christ who dwells in our spirit gives life to our body. This impartation of life makes our bodies the members of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit” (358). Thus, “Because we are organically united with Christ (v. 17), and because Christ dwells in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22) and makes His home in our heart (Eph. 3:17), our entire being, including our purified body, becomes a member of Him” (Lee, Recovery Version 1 Cor. 6:15, note 1). Watchman Nee affirms this truth, saying,

In the eyes of God, our union with Christ is complete, eternal, and absolute. In other words our spirit is joined to Christ’s Spirit. This is very crucial. Our soul is joined to the soul of Christ. This is a union in mind, emotion, and will. Our body is also joined to the body of Christ. If the union between *us* and Christ is without any breach, our body cannot be an exception. If we are members of Christ, our body must also be Christ’s member. (673)

In one spirit and through the operation of the life-giving Spirit, our bodies are members of Christ, making it truly possible for believers to glorify God in their bodies (v. 20).

Just as it was impossible for the Corinthians to glorify God in bodies that were living out the sinful ways of the first man (v. 18), it was equally impossible for them to know the proper function of the body through the unrenewed mind of the first man. This ignorance is signaled by Paul’s repeated question, “Do you not know?” (vv. 15-16, 19). The Corinthians had no experiential spiritual knowledge of the things that pertain to the second man, especially the three points that Paul affirms immediately following his exposure of their spiritual ignorance: “your bodies are members of Christ” in verse 15; “he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit” in verse 17; and “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit”<sup>8</sup> in verse 19. Instead, the Corinthians only manifested the unrenewed mind of the first man with its spiritual ignorance of the things of man (2:11), including the proper and profitable use of the body to manifest, to glorify, God (6:20).

In chapters 7 through 11 Paul responds to the church’s inquiries about matters related to marriage (ch. 7), the eating of things sacrificed to idols (8:1—11:1), head covering (vv. 2-16), and the Lord’s supper (vv. 17-34). He begins by answering questions related to the status of the believers in regard to marriage and virginity. These questions were predicated upon lustful impulses emanating from the body and upon selfish considerations emanating from the mind of the first man, without any consideration of the spirit. Paul, however, answers in the principle of incarnation with commandments and opinions that originate from the mind of the second man.

Although Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7 that certain things he says are not the Lord’s word or the Lord’s commandment, everything spoken by Paul in this chapter has nonetheless become part of the divine revelation in the New Testament. This is because Paul was a person absolutely one with God. Even when he says that he does not have a word from the Lord, the Lord speaks in his speaking. Because Paul was one with the Lord, when he spoke, the Lord spoke with him. Thus, with Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 we have an example of the principle of incarnation...

Here we see the highest spirituality, the spirituality of a person who is so one with the Lord that even his opinion expresses the Lord’s mind. Paul was absolutely one with the Lord and thoroughly saturated with Him. Because his entire being was permeated with the Lord, even his opinion expressed the mind of the Lord. (Lee, *Life-study* 379, 382)

THE CORINTHIANS ONLY MANIFESTED THE UNRENEWED MIND OF THE FIRST MAN WITH ITS SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE OF THE THINGS OF MAN, INCLUDING THE PROPER AND PROFITABLE USE OF THE BODY TO MANIFEST, TO GLORIFY, GOD.

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The questions of the Corinthians were related to finding acceptable choices for those who were unmarried or widowed (v. 8), for those who were married but desirous of separation (vv. 10-11), for those who were married to unbelievers (vv. 12-16), and for those who were virgins and unmarried (v. 25). Their questions were indicative of a desire for a change in the status of their human relationships. Such desire emanates from the discontent that is spawned by unfulfilled lusts in the first man but which, nevertheless, are still perceived as lawful needs. Paul responds to these questions with concessions that acknowledge weaknesses related to the flesh and self-control (vv. 5-6), with commandments from the Lord that uphold the God-ordained principle of oneness that is represented in marriage (vv. 10-16), and with spiritual opinions that acknowledge the benefit, but not necessarily the requirement, of waiting on the Lord in order to be free from the distracting elements of the provision of human cares associated with marriage (vv. 25-38). In addition to these practical responses, Paul presents two principles that express the mind of the second man: to not initiate a change in our status and to remain with God in our unfolding circumstances.

The principle of not initiating anything is presented in the section related to circumcision and slavery in verses 17 through 24, which is a seemingly incongruous insertion between the two lengthy passages related to marriage (vv. 1-16, 25-40). In verse 20 of this section, however, Paul presents the first principle that should govern the living of the second man, especially in relation to matters of marriage: "Each one, in the calling in which he was called, in this let him remain." In verse 24, he presents the second principle as an expansion of the first, highlighting the spiritual benefit of accepting our circumstances in order to remain with God: "Each one, brothers, in what status he was called, in this let him remain with God." These principles were foreign to the mind of the Corinthians, who were

very different from Paul. Instead of being absolutely one with the Lord, they exercised their wisdom and philosophy. They philosophized about everything, including marriage. Some thought that it was better not to get married, whereas others strongly preferred married life. The way the Corinthians thought and spoke about marriage indicated that among them there was a great deal of human initiative. Therefore, in answering their questions, Paul indicates strongly that in the matter of marriage we should not initiate anything. (*Life-study* 372)

The initiation of change is an act of that will that carries out the thoughts and desires of the self, the fallen expression of the first man. Consequently, when Paul speaks of not initiating a change in one's status related to spiritual matters (circumcision), to social standing (slaves and free men), and to social relationships (marriage and virginity), he, more deeply, means that the Corinthians should not live according to the will and impulses of the first man. The principle of accepting our circumstances to remain in God is closely related to not initiating a change in our circumstances, but it stresses positive spiritual benefits rather than negative prohibitions: "Those who love the Lord, who are for Him, and who are one with Him must be willing to accept any kind of circumstance or situation...It is very important for us to see that God is always in our circumstances" (*Life-study* 374). To seek a change in status, based on the impulses of the first man, is to not remain with God. It is an implicit denunciation of God, who richly affords us all things for our enjoyment of Him (1 Tim. 6:17), and it is an implicit rejection of His calling related to our indispensable place and function in His Body. Such a denunciation and rejection ultimately engenders the thought that God is withholding something that we, consequently, need to take for ourselves. This was not Paul's thought, and so he remained in his circumstances, and he encouraged the called saints to remain in theirs (1 Cor. 7:8, 11, 40).

This chapter conveys the spirit of a person who loves the Lord, who cares for the Lord's interests on earth, who is absolutely for the Lord and one with the Lord, and who in every

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respect is obedient, submissive, and satisfied with God and the circumstances arranged by Him. (*Life-study* 375)

It is important to not over-spiritualize this principle, ascetically assuming that our circumstances will always be unchanging and that God's calling, in which we are to remain, is not an unfolding one. It simply means that our efforts are not needed to carry out God's unfolding calling. If we are open to God in our circumstances, there will be an ordained time in which any change in status that has been apportioned to us in the second man will become clear.

**I**n chapter 8 Paul responds to questions related to the eating of things sacrificed to idols, which exposed the Corinthians' lack of self-restraint that defiled the conscience of weaker believers and damaged the building up of the corporate Body of Christ. Paul did not respond to these questions based on considerations of right and wrong, which often include the misappropriation and misapplication of spiritual knowledge (vv. 4-7). Instead, his response reflects a considerate realization that the church is composed of believers who are in various stages of growth and who, for the sake of the building up of the Body of Christ as the corporate second man, are in need of varying degrees of care that limit the freedom of members who are relatively more mature.

Because Paul was for Christ and all the members of the Body, when he gave instructions concerning eating idol sacrifices, he did not say whether this practice is right or wrong, good or bad. Paul had a completely different view of the situation...He wanted the saints to realize that they should consider whether the members of Christ would be caused to stumble or be built up by their eating. Paul wanted them to have regard for Christ and the members of Christ. Therefore, Paul answered the questions and gave instructions from the standpoint of Christ and the Body. (*Life-study* 393)

In effect, Paul does not respond to the concerns of those with knowledge (v. 1) but to the needs of those lacking knowledge. The Corinthians' considerations in the first man were countered with Paul's considerations in and for the second man. Consequently, he manifested the divine love in the second man for the weaker members, who are deserving of more abundant honor (v. 1; 12:23). This love kept him from sinning against the brothers by wounding their weak conscience. It also kept him from sinning against Christ, because the conscience of the weaker brothers was the conscience of Christ (8:12). In essence, the weaker brothers, who are Christ by virtue of their being joined to Christ, should be built up in love rather than callously stumbled or destroyed (vv. 1, 8, 11, 13).

**I**n chapter 9 Paul continues to address the matter of marriage that was introduced in chapter 7 and the matter of eating of food sacrificed to idols that was introduced in chapter 8. He presents himself as a pattern of one who does not cause others to stumble, by speaking of his willingness to not assert his right as an apostle in matters related to marriage and food (9:4-5). Consequently, his motives in his stewardship as an apostle could not be questioned, his prudent care for the members of the Body could be understood (vv. 19-22), and the gospel could not be hindered (v. 12). Paul's arguments are not "according to man" (v. 8), indicating that the thought in the minds of the Corinthians was according to the first man. In the minds of the Corinthians, Paul was striving for personal gain and glory. For the sake of the gospel, he responds that he had no desire to receive or partake of material things for the spiritual service he had rendered as an apostle (vv. 7-11), even though this was his spiritual right (v. 12). He further acknowledges that he had nothing to boast of in his advancement of the gospel (vv. 15-16). Rather than pointing to anything worthy of note, other than that the Corinthians themselves were the seal of his apostleship (v. 2), he assumes the position of an unprofitable slave (Luke 17:10), whose worthiness would be determined only at the end of the race that he was continually running in order to receive a prize (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

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PAUL'S APPEAL IS FOR THE CHURCH IN CORINTH, AS THE SECOND MAN, TO CORPORATELY PASS THROUGH THE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF BEING LED BY CHRIST, BEING SAVED BY CHRIST, AND BEING SPIRITUALLY FED BY CHRIST AS FOOD AND DRINK.

In chapter 10 he expands his reference to running to include the corporate experience of the children of Israel. Chapter 10 is not only a continuation of chapter 9 “but also a further definition of running the race covered in 9:24-27, using as an illustration the children of Israel running on the racecourse in the wilderness to enter into the promised land” (Lee, Recovery Version, 10:1, note 1). The race that Israel ran was a corporate race involving all, including those who all were under the cloud, who all passed through the sea, who all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, who all ate the same spiritual food, and who all drank the same spiritual drink (vv. 1-4).

Paul’s appeal is for the church in Corinth, as the second man, to corporately pass through the positive experiences of being led by Christ, being saved by Christ,<sup>9</sup> and being spiritually fed by Christ as food and drink. However, he also warns them that it is possible to be corporately disapproved from receiving the prize by sitting down to eat and drink, standing up to play, and lusting after evil things (vv. 5-8). Just as the children of Israel corporately tested Christ and were strewn along in the wilderness (vv. 9, 5), it was possible for the church in Corinth, as the realization of the corporate type of Israel, to unnecessarily fall by succumbing to the temptations that are common to the first man but for which there is always a way out (v. 13). Paul concludes this chapter by affirming that the fellowship signified by keeping the Lord’s table in the fellowship of the blood and body of Christ is the fellowship, the partaking, that builds up the church (vv. 16, 23).

In chapter 11 Paul answers questions related to head covering (vv. 2-16) and to the Lord’s supper (vv. 17-34). Both of these matters were probably posed to the apostle as if they were unrelated, because the Corinthians were incapable of seeing spiritual connections due to their living according to the mind of the first man rather than the mind of the Lord. Paul, however, realized that both matters, though seemingly unrelated, in fact, touched the matter of God’s administration in complementary ways, with one touching the Head and the other touching the Body of Christ.

In regard to matters related to head covering, Paul speaks of the headship of Christ in the second man, a headship that is reflected in the status of men and women in relation to their corporate manifestation in the old creation (vv. 7-8) and in their corporate manifestation in the new creation (v. 11). In the old creation the woman is out of man, and the man is through the woman (vv. 8, 12). In type, this speaks of Christ, who is the source, as a man, and of created humanity, both male and female, as a woman. Thus, humanity is the issue of Christ, and it was created for the sake of Christ (v. 9). The relationship between the creating God, out from whom are all things (v. 12), and created humanity, therefore, is seen in the old creation in the relationship between man and woman. In the new creation the purpose of this relationship is fully manifested in the second man, who has been charged in Christ to carry out God’s administration, largely through praying and prophesying (vv. 4-5, 13).

In God’s administration there is headship (v. 3) and, hence, a need for submission in recognition of God’s established order through the proper and measured functioning of the members whom God has placed in the Body. If this submission is proper, it will be demonstrated first by a man and then by a woman (cf. the order in vv. 4-5), both of whom, however, are inseparable from one another in the Lord (v. 11). Thus, Paul emphasizes both the Lord’s headship over man and woman in the Lord and their mutual submission to the Lord. Finally, given the necessity for submission to the Head in the churches, there is, rightly so, no place for contention concerning this matter (v. 16).

In regard to questions related to the Lord’s supper, which is also related to God’s administration, Paul refers to the detrimental impact of the Corinthians’ practices on the Body of Christ, which is the means for carrying out God’s administration. Thus, he speaks of the need for discerning the body, not the body of the Lord (v. 29).

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The apostle used the expression *the body* instead of *the body of the Lord*. This may imply the fact that, in addition to the physical body of the Lord (v. 24), there is the mystical Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4). Therefore, when we participate in the Lord's table, we must discern whether the bread on the table signifies the one Body of Christ or any division of man (any denomination). In discerning the Body of Christ, we should not partake of the bread in any division or with any divisive spirit. Our participation in the Lord's table must be the unique fellowship of His unique Body without any division in practice or in spirit. (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 29, note 3)

**A**lthough the church in Corinth was proper in its practice of assembling together as one in a locality, it was rife with internal factions and oblivious to the divisive spirit they displayed when they gathered together to eat the Lord's supper (vv. 18-19). When they came together to eat the Lord's supper, they were not truly eating the Lord's supper (v. 20). Instead, a proper remembrance of the Lord through eating the bread and drinking the cup had given way to something that was little more than a meal in which each one took his own supper while others were hungry and still others were drunk (v. 21). It was a profligate display of the wealth and status of some, rather than a remembrance of the Lord. It was an offensive declaration of the lascivious walk and living of the first man,<sup>10</sup> rather than a declaration of the death of Christ that had terminated their former manner of life (Eph. 4:19, 22; 1 Cor. 11:26).

In the apostle's time the believers had a custom of coming together for supper, the main meal of the day, with the rich bringing more and better food for the mutual enjoyment and the poor, less food. This was called a love feast (2 Pet. 2:13; Jude 12), and it came from the background of the passover feast (Luke 22:13-20). At the end of their love feast they ate the Lord's supper with the bread and the cup to remember the Lord (vv. 23-25). The Corinthians did not do it properly. They did not wait for one another (cf. v. 33). Each took his own supper first. The rich became drunken and the poor were hungry (v. 21). This caused divisions and parties among them (v. 18) and spoiled the Lord's supper. Thus, their eating was not the eating of the Lord's supper (v. 20). (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 21, note 1)

**I**n their divisiveness and profligacy, the Corinthians were unable to properly discern the body and despised the church of God, putting other members of the Body to shame and bringing governmental discipline upon themselves (vv. 22, 29-34). This discipline was directly related to their failure, as the Body of Christ, to manifest God's governmental administration. Their offenses did not merely taint the fellowship of the Body; they also called forth the Lord's judgment. By improperly touching the instrument of God's administration, the Body, they came under judgmental pronouncements of weakness, sickness, and even death from the Lord as the administering Head. Because the proper manifestation of God's administration is carried out through Christ as the Head and the church as the Body, Paul implicitly stresses the reality of Christ as the Head in his discussion of head covering and the reality of church as the Body of Christ in his discussion of eating the Lord's supper. It is fitting that Paul concludes his responses to the various problems in chapters 5 through 11 with an implicit appeal for the Corinthians to manifest the second man as the Head of the Body and the Body of the Head, leaving the rest to set in order when he would come to them (v. 34).

### **The Manifestation of the Image of the Second Man in Chapters 12 through 16**

Even though at the end of chapter 11 Paul seemingly puts off any further responses to the rest of the problems in Corinth (v. 34), he continues to address problems related to spiritual gifts in chapters 12 through 14, to resurrection in chapter 15, and to the collection of gifts in chapter 16. All these problems were present in the church, but they differ in nature from the problems dealt with in chapters 5 through 11. There the problems are associated with the fullest expressions of the first man, but in these concluding

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GOD'S PLACEMENT OF THE MEMBERS IN THE BODY ACCORDING TO HIS WILL IS THE ONLY FACTOR THAT COUNTS. CONSEQUENTLY, THERE IS NO GROUND FOR DIVISION IN THE BODY BASED ON PERCEIVED DISTINCTIONS AMONG THE MEMBERS.

chapters the problems are related to a shortage in the growth and building up of the second man. In the truest sense, the former problems are fleshly in nature, while the latter problems are spiritual in nature. Consequently, Paul treats them differently by not including them with the problems related to the flesh. Rather than urging the church to turn from these problems, as he did in regard to the problems in chapters 5 through 11, he urges the church to grow in their experience of spiritual gifts, in their experience of the resurrection life available to them through the life-giving Spirit, and in their practical care for the churches. The problems in chapters 12 through 16 afford Paul the opportunity to speak very directly about the practical manifestation of the second man through the mutual and unique functioning of the members of the Body, through the mutual and indispensable care of the members in love, and through the building up of the members through prophesying, all of which are sustained and made possible through the second man's partaking of the resurrection life supplied by Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

In chapter 12 Paul begins to speak of the problem of spiritual gifts (v. 1), which can be resolved only by experientially knowing the oneness of the corporate Christ (v. 12), in whom there are distinctions of gifts, ministries, and operations, but in whom there is also no spiritual separation between the members who are in the same Spirit, same Lord, and same God (vv. 4-6). In many ways chapter 12 can be considered as Paul's answer to his question in 1:13: "Is Christ divided?" It is his explanation of how Christ is not divided even though there are many members with different functions (12:12). In the Body these different functions are the issue of distinction in gifts, which produce ministries that manifest themselves in operations. Since the majority of these gifts, including the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, prophecy, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues (vv. 8, 10), are manifested primarily through speaking, Paul initially stresses that "no one speaking in the Spirit of God...can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit" (v. 3). And since all can surely say, Jesus is Lord! the operations of the Holy Spirit can be manifested in all according to His purpose and placement of the members in the Body (v. 11). Later, in verse 28, when Paul speaks of the placement of members in the Body as apostles, prophets, and teachers, the role of speaking is also the primary operation of the Spirit in these members.

All the gifts are distributed to the members for the sake of their participation in the corporate building up of the Body of Christ, which Paul identifies as the Christ (v. 12); they are not distributed for the individual edification of any one member. These distributions carry out the operation of the Spirit to declare and testify of the reality of the oneness of the Body of Christ (v. 11), a oneness that was initiated by the members being baptized into one Spirit and that is maintained by the members continually partaking of this one Spirit (v. 13). In the one Body, therefore, every baptized and drinking member is indispensable; there is no place for self-deprecating appraisals of one's function (vv. 15-16), which depreciate and deny the reality of the indispensability of every member, each of whom has a specific and necessary function in their place in the Body, a place set according to the will of God (v. 18). A member may think that he is not of the Body because he is not a hand or an eye, but this thought does not vitiate the reality that every member is of the Body (vv. 15-16).

God's placement of the members in the Body according to His will is the only factor that counts. Consequently, there is no ground for division in the Body based on perceived distinctions among the members. In contrast to the self-deprecation of a member, there is also no place in the Body for self-elevation: "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (v. 21). Consequently, there also is no ground for division in the Body based on actual distinctions among the members. Rather, every member, even one who appraises himself as weaker and even one who actually is weaker, is necessary (v. 22). The necessity of each member requires a covering with more abundant honor and an application of



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the same care for one another in recognition of God's desire to blend the Body together (vv. 23-25). In the Body there is no ground for comparisons, but there should be a recognition that some are apostles, some are prophets, some are teachers, and some have been given gifts of healing, helps, administrations, and various kinds of tongues (vv. 28-30). Of these gifts, those related to speaking are considered greater (v. 31), because the Body is built up through speaking, through prophesying. Consequently, an earnest desire for the greater gifts should be linked with an earnest desire to build up the Body, a desire that is sourced in the divine love as the most excellent way to build up the Body (v. 31).

**I**n chapter 13 Paul strengthens his emphasis on the manifestation of the corporate Christ by speaking of the divine love as the means for living in and bearing the image of the second man through its care for the many members of the one Body of Christ. Chapter 13 should not be viewed as a general discourse on love as a virtue but on the manifestation of love in the Body of Christ for the building up of the Body. This chapter is an obvious extension of Paul's thought in chapter 12 because in it he presents the most excellent way to build up the Body (v. 31), and immediately following this short discourse on love, Paul returns to the appropriateness of having an earnest desire for spiritual gifts that enable one to excel for the building up of the Body (14:12). The placement of this short discourse between two chapters that are related to the exercise of spiritual gifts for the building up of the Body shows that the motivation for seeking spiritual gifts should be a desire to build up the church (v. 4). Such a motivation can come only from the realization and practice of the divine love that is resident within the corporate heart of the second man. Consequently, when Paul describes the characteristics of love, he presents them in relation to their expression in and for the Body:

Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up; it does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil; it does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (13:4-7)

In the Body there is a need for long-suffering and kindness toward those who are dispositionally different, a need for the absence of jealousy that comes from self-comparisons, a need for the acknowledgement that one's placement in the Body is of God alone, a need for comely behavior toward the members in all situations, a need for avoiding self-promotion, a need for restraint in one's reactions, and a need for not focusing on the faults of others. Instead, with love there is a rejoicing realization of the truth, a covering of every fault, a belief that God's hand is in every situation involving the saints, a corollary hope that God will work out His intended purpose in the saints in these situations, and a willingness to persevere in this hope. Such a love is a sign of maturity in the Body of Christ (v. 11), and its maturing manifestation completes the Body (v. 10).

**I**n chapter 14 Paul appeals to the Corinthians to pursue love for the growth in life in order to develop the gifts that they have been given to build up the Body of Christ. His focus, however, is especially on the gift of prophesying (v. 1), which is the speaking forth of God in one's speaking for God. He contrasts prophesying with an unintelligible speaking in tongues that builds up only the speaker (vv. 6-11, 4). Prophesying, however, builds up the church as the corporate manifestation of God (vv. 4-5, 12), and Paul's desire for building up dominates his thought in this chapter. He refers to the matter of building up through prophesying six times in this chapter. He equates prophesying to building up in verse 3. He identifies those who prophesy as those who build up the church in verse 4. He speaks of the church receiving building up through prophesying in verse 5. He identifies prophesying as the excelling gift that builds up the church in verse 12. He confirms that unintelligible speaking does not, in contrast to

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prophesying, build up others in verse 17. And in verse 26 he identifies five kinds of speaking that build up according to the principle of prophesying. Through the mutual prophesying of intelligible words one by one (v. 31), there is encouragement for all because in the spiritual exercise of the gift of speaking for God in the meetings of the church, there is also a speaking forth of God, an impartation of God, into those who hear and receive. In this speaking, God is manifested to convict unbelievers, and the church is built up further as the manifestation of God. The practice of prophesying begins with revelation in the spirit (v. 30), followed by its interpretation in the mind with understandable words (vv. 15, 19, 9) and then its utterance through the mouth in an act of the will (v. 32). In the practice of prophesying, all the renewed parts of the second man are involved in the manifestation of the second man in a peaceful and orderly way that is devoid of any of the divisiveness associated with the first man (vv. 33, 40).

In chapter 15 Paul rebuts the heretical teaching that there is no resurrection of the dead, which was being promulgated by some of the Corinthians. However, he does not acknowledge this heretical teaching or begin his rebuttal until verse 12. Rather, he begins by speaking of the content of the gospel, which includes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (vv. 3-4), and of actual events in time attested to by the Scriptures and witnessed by the apostles and the disciples (vv. 5-11). It is as if Paul puts aside the immediate acknowledgement of the heretical teaching in Corinth in order to simply proclaim the reality of resurrection. This is because resurrection is essential in order for the church to stand and to be consummately saved through the experience of Christ as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption and to thereby manifest the mystery of God by bearing the image of Christ as the second man (vv. 1-2, 47-49). Resurrection is an intrinsic element of the divine life; it is a life that resurrects because its very essence is resurrection. This life was in Christ, and it was manifested in His incarnation and human living (John 1:4; 11:25; 1 John 1:2), released through His death (John 12:24), and imparted into His chosen and redeemed in His resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3). Without the reality of resurrection, the problems that are rooted in the first man's defiled flesh, corrupted soul, and deadened spirit cannot be effaced with palliatives involving ethical teachings, moral imperatives, or even Christian discipline. There is a need for the death of Christ to terminate the life and nature of the first man, and there is a need for the resurrection of Christ to germinate the life and nature of the second man within those who have been called into the fellowship of the Son. The earthy nature of the first man must pass through the death of Christ, and the heavenly nature of the second man must be imparted through the resurrection of Christ into God's chosen and redeemed, who in turn, become the many members of His Body in resurrection.

Paul begins to address the heretical teaching in Corinth only after his strong affirmation of the resurrection of Christ, and even then he makes no effort to defend this truth with human arguments. Instead, he draws out the spiritual implications of saying that there is no resurrection, including that Christ has not been raised (1 Cor. 15:13, 16), that the apostles' proclamation of His resurrection and the believers' response of faith are vain and futile (v. 14), that the power of sin and sins is still operative (v. 17), and that the condition of those whose future only involves death is most miserable (vv. 18-19). In verse 20 when Paul begins to speak of the future that awaits the resurrected believers, he does not use the conditional word *if*, as he did in his rebuttal in verses 12 through 19; instead, he employs the emphatic words *but now* and *has been*. Paul's presentation of the unfolding eschatological history of resurrection involves the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruits<sup>11</sup> (v. 20, 23), the resurrection of those who are Christ's at His coming (v. 23), the deliverance of the kingdom to His God and Father (v. 24), the putting of all things under the feet of His Body (v. 27), and the abolition of death itself (v. 26), which results in an orderly subjection and arrangement of all things according to the resurrection life of the God who will be manifested as being all in all (vv. 27-28).

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In contrast to the orderly rule of the kingdom brought in by the consummation of the manifestation of resurrection, Paul characterizes both the living of those who were corrupting the good morals of the believers in Corinth and the living of those who were being corrupted by the heretical diminution of resurrection as being a living in a drunken stupor brought on by the lack of moral restraint upon the indulgences of the flesh (vv. 29-34). Anticipating the sobering effect of this word, Paul realizes that the convicted believers will want to know how the body is resurrected (v. 35), and so he proceeds to define resurrection as a process of sowing, of dying in order to live (v. 36). In the sowing of death, the corruption and dishonor of a believer's soulish body are replaced with the incorruption and glory of a spiritual body (vv. 42-43), following the pattern that was present in the resurrection of the last Adam, who became the life-giving Spirit, making the soulish spiritual (vv. 45-46).

Through incarnation He [Jesus Christ] had a soulish body, as Adam had; through resurrection He has a spiritual body. His soulish body has become a spiritual one through resurrection. Now He is a life-giving Spirit in resurrection, with a spiritual body, ready to be received by His believers. When we believe into Him, He enters our spirit, and we are joined to Him as the life-giving Spirit. Hence, we become one spirit with Him (6:17). Our spirit is made alive and is resurrected with Him. Eventually, our present soulish body will become a spiritual body in resurrection, just like His (vv. 52-54; Phil. 3:21). (Lee, Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 15:45, note 1)

**B**y becoming the life-giving Spirit, Christ is able to enter into those who have been called into the fellowship of the Son, empowering them with the divine life to no longer bear the image of the earthy, the first man but rather to bear the image of the heavenly, the second man. In *Outlines of the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, C. A. Coates notes, "The last Adam is a life-giving Spirit. He is the One who is able to quicken with His own life those who come under His headship, so that they are competent to live in the region of divine purpose...patterned after the second Man" (117).<sup>12</sup> The life that the life-giving Spirit gives is the resurrection life that was concealed in the Son; it is the life that was released through Christ's death and resurrection; it is the life that produced the second man (v. 47); it is the life that manifests the image of the heavenly to those who had previously borne only the image of the earthy (vv. 48-49); it is the life that will consummate in victory in the next age (vv. 54-57); it is the life that motivated Paul to be steadfast and unmovable in his appeal to the Corinthians to manifest the image of the second man;<sup>13</sup> and it is the life that assured him that his labor was not in vain (v. 58).

With such a life in view, Paul addresses one final matter in chapter 16—the collection of gifts for the churches—because there is victory over the power of material possessions only through the operation of this life (vv. 1-2). This power is greatly diminished by the willingness of the churches to attend in love to the cares and needs of other churches in other cities (v. 3). Following this, Paul expresses his sincere desire to further minister to the churches (vv. 4-9). He then expresses his deep love and appreciation for those who serve in the Body (vv. 10-12), for those who minister to the saints in the Body (v. 15), and for those who refresh the spirit of others in the Body (vv. 17-18), that is, for those who are patterns in their manifestation of Christ as the mystery of God. In the end he commends the church to the grace of the Lord Jesus that manifests the Lord Jesus in the church (v. 23), and he extends the love that is in Christ Jesus to the church for their building up and manifestation of Christ as the mystery of God (v. 24).


## Conclusion

Paul viewed the church in Corinth as being in Christ, the corporate second man, but he also realized that they were living in Adam, the corporate first man. They were

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living according to the impulses of their lust-filled body, their untransformed soul, and their conscience-defiled spirit. All the problems in Corinth were corporately manifested, stemming from a corporate living in the first man. But since Christ is the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, Paul also realized that the church in Corinth could mature and become full-grown by functioning according to the distinctive operations of the distinctive gifts that they had been given as indispensable members of the Body of Christ. And through their effectual ministering to one another in love, most particularly through prophesying, they could, like Paul, become faithful stewards of the mysteries of God in order to manifest the mystery of God by bearing the image of Christ as the second man. And so Paul thus appealed to the Corinthians in his first letter to them, and he still continues to appeal to all those who have been called into the fellowship of the Son, through the speaking contained in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. 

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The sections in chapter 15, as presented here, are taken from the Witness Lee's outline of the chapter in the Recovery Version of the Bible. His outline of the entire Epistle similarly serves as the basis for my discussion in this article of Paul's appeal to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:14, 17; 10:11).

<sup>2</sup>It is easy to read, as many Christian's do, the word *things* as representing material blessings rather than spiritual things, specifically the things of Christ (Phil. 2:21). The things of Christ, however, are most clearly seen in the Body of Christ, which manifests distinct gifts, distinct ministries, and distinct operations for the building up of the one Body of Christ.

<sup>3</sup>These initial gifts include the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23) and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) as the heavenly gift (Heb. 6:4), not the miraculous gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 (Lee, Recovery Version, 1:7, note 1).

<sup>4</sup>Paul's references to both himself and Apollos in verses 3 through 5 and to Cephas in verse 22 indicate that the manifestation of division in the corporate Christ was still the backdrop of this chapter.

<sup>5</sup>Given the problems related to the flesh that were present in Corinth, Paul speaks in chapters 1 through 4 of the problem of division in relation to its expression through the three parts of the first man. However, even though he addresses this problem, his more pressing burden is to appeal to the Corinthians to manifest the image of the second man through the three parts of the second man. Paul's references to the parts of the first man begin in 1:10 and 11, where he speaks of divisions that come out of their corporate strife, which involve self-serving choices of the will and fickle impulses of the emotion. Furthermore, their choices and emotions reflected and were justified by the wisdom of the world that filled their unrenewed mind (vv. 19, 21). Because the corporate expression of the faculties of the soul of the first man—the mind, emotion, and will—was given free reign in Corinth, there was also a corporate boasting of the flesh before God (v. 29). The Corinthians, as a corporate man, a soulish man, were incapable of receiving the things of God in their will, incapable of appreciating them in their emotion, and incapable of properly discerning them in their mind (2:14). They were fleshly, and they were walking according to the manner of man, the first man (3:3).

Despite the Corinthians' puffed-up behavior toward one another and the apostle (4:5-6, 18-19), Paul speaks of the manifestation of the second man through the renewed and uplifted parts of the second man. His direct and implied references to the human spirit are the most noticeable in this regard (2:11, 14-15; 3:1; 4:21). The regenerated human spirit is a corporate spirit that was corporately regenerated through the resurrection of Christ from the dead (John 3:6; 1 Pet. 1:3). This spirit is expressed through the soul of the second man that is corporately attuned to the same mind of Christ and corporately displayed through a bodily manifestation of the church as the temple of God (1 Cor. 1:10; 2:16; 3:16). In the operation of Christ in the one spirit of the second man, through the one soul of the second man, and in the one body of the second

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man, the testimony of Christ was confirmed in the Corinthians (1:6). Having received the same Spirit in their spirit (2:12), the Corinthians were enriched in their soul in all utterance and all knowledge to the point that they truly had the capacity to boast in the Lord (1:5, 31).

To support his view that the church in Corinth could manifest Christ as the wisdom of God through righteousness in the spirit, sanctification in the soul, and redemption in the body, Paul speaks of God's wise operation in relation to his personal experience in being a steward of the mysteries of God (4:1). In his service of ministry he exercised his will to know only Christ, comporting himself in fear that he might miss Christ and in trembling that he might be overly influenced by the Corinthians' pursuit of human wisdom (2:2-3). Further, his speaking reflects a wisdom that was not derived from this age or from the minds of the rulers of this age (vv. 6-7). Instead, his knowledge came from the Spirit of God whom he had received and with whom his human spirit was mingled (vv. 11-12).

Thus, Paul was equipped not only to know the mind of Christ in general, but he also knew the mind of the Lord in regard to the many particular problems in Corinth (v. 16). In his dealing with the marriage life in 7:40, for example, even though he acknowledged that he had only an opinion, he linked his opinion to the Spirit of God, indicating that in his consideration his mind was attuned to the Spirit, who makes known the things of God. This consideration is certainly validated, given its inclusion in the Word of God as the word of God.

Paul also includes a striking reference to the body as the temple of God because the Spirit of God dwells in the believers' physical body (3:16). Even in a body of humiliation, which will be conformed to the body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21), Paul manifested Christ as the wisdom of God. He labored physically even though he was in hunger and thirst, even though he was naked and buffeted, and even though he wandered without a home like the Son of Man who had nowhere to lay His head (1 Cor. 4:11; Matt. 8:20). Furthermore, when he was reviled, he blessed, and when he was persecuted, he endured (1 Cor. 4:12), physically magnifying Christ in his body (Phil. 1:20). Given his manifestation of the spirit, soul, and body of the second man in his own spirit, soul, and body, it is not surprising that in his desire to come to the church in Corinth in order to deal with their expression of the first man, he chose to come in a spirit of meekness (1 Cor. 4:21).

<sup>6</sup>In every use of the words *profit* (7:35; 10:24; 13:3; 14:6; 15:32) and *profitable* (6:12; 10:23; 12:7) in 1 Corinthians, the context involves spiritual matters generally and often the Body of Christ particularly, which points to the importance of the manifestation the second man.

<sup>7</sup>Philippians 3:21, which speaks of transfiguring "the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory," is a concise restatement of 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 and a confirmation that our bodies will be members of Christ. In our resurrection with the Lord in His resurrection (Eph. 2:6), our bodies became members of Christ.

<sup>8</sup>Many Christians, who blanch at the notion of our bodies being members of Christ, will often readily and happily proclaim that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, using verse 6:19 to promote virtuous responses to the impulses of our flesh. Witness Lee, however, properly connects the matter of our bodies being members of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit, saying,

In order for our body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit our entire being—spirit, soul, and body—must be involved. Since we are a whole entity, none of the parts of our being should be separated from the others. On the one hand, it is our bodies that are members of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, our spirit is also involved. For this reason, in the passage where he emphasizes that the body is a member of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, Paul tells us that we are one spirit with the Lord (6:17). (*Life-study* 385)

<sup>9</sup>Paul speaks of the children of Israel being saved in the context of being "baptized unto Moses" when they passed through the sea with Moses (1 Cor. 10:2). In his utterance here and in Hebrews 3:1-6, Paul uses Moses as a type of Christ, just as he uses manna and the cleft rock as types of Christ in 1 Corinthians 10:3-4.

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THE PREDOMINANT  
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<sup>10</sup>The predominant focus of Paul's appeal in chapters 5 through 11 is on the wayward corporate expression of the image of the first man through the three parts of the first man. He begins by speaking of the part most expressive of the fallen impulses of the first man—the body—by addressing the matter of fornication (5:1) and then proceeds to the part that initiates and boastfully justifies the actions of the body, the puffed-up mind (vv. 2, 6). Because of the Corinthians' puffed-up mind, there was an unjust treatment of the brothers, a willingness to defraud the brothers (6:8), and a return to the unrighteous practices of the body that disqualify one from inheriting the kingdom (vv. 9-10). The Corinthians were corporately under the power of the flesh through their bodily enslavement to food and sex (vv. 13, 16, 18), and they were unwilling to turn from these practices of the body because of their reliance on the knowledge within the mind of the first man, a knowledge that both puffed up and destroyed (8:1, 11). In their corporate lusting after evil things (10:6), in their corporate seeking for their own profit (v. 24), and in their corporate divisiveness (11:19), there was a corporate judgment of weakness, sickness, and even death upon their bodies (v. 30).

In contrast to the corporate expression of the image of the first man, Paul speaks of the renewed parts of the second man and demonstrates the operation of these renewed parts in his personal, yet still corporate, experience. Even though he was absent in the body from the Corinthians, he was present with them in the spirit (5:3), even assembling together with them in his spirit (v. 4). Given this joining in spirit, he was organically concerned about the salvation of the spirit of a sinning brother, even at the cost of the destruction of that brother's flesh (v. 5). With his spirit as the leading component of his being, Paul knew in his renewed mind that judgment had been given to the second man in regard to both angels and the things of this life (6:2-3).

Paul had the capacity to properly discern such matters and a willingness to accept the wrongful defrauding of those living in the first man (vv. 5, 7). He saw the clear relationship between the body and the spirit that comes from the body being a member of Christ and from the spirit being joined to the Lord as one (vv. 15, 17). Thus, Paul treated the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19), capable of expressing God's glory (v. 20). He was willing to remain in the status of his calling (7:20), knowing that his circumstances were of God (v. 24). He possessed spiritual knowledge (8:4) but refused to utilize this knowledge in any way that could stumble a brother whose conscience was weak (vv. 7, 9, 13), thereby demonstrating the sensitivity in his own conscience, which was one in spirit with all the brothers. He willingly enslaved himself to all to gain the more (9:19), buffeting his body and making it a slave in order to be approved (v. 27). He shunned the things that tested Christ and avoided the murmurings of the first man (10:9-10), cherishing instead the reality of the fellowship of the Body (v. 16). And he willingly bore the submissive will of the second man in the Lord (11:3), honoring the Head and living according to a proper discernment of the Body of Christ (v. 29). With such a proper spiritual discernment, Paul could, after addressing the problems that so clearly exposed the expression of the image of the first man in chapters 5 through 11, concentrate in the remaining chapters on matters that would enable the church in Corinth to practically manifest the image of the second man.

<sup>11</sup>The term *firstfruits* is an implicit reference to the resurrection not only of Christ, the Head, but also of the church, the Body. Witness Lee notes, "Christ as the firstfruits of resurrection is the Firstborn from among the dead that He might be the Head of the Body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:20-23). Since He, the Head of the Body, has been resurrected, we, the Body, also will be resurrected" (Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 15:20, note 2).

<sup>12</sup>William Milligan in *The Resurrection of the Dead: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians XV* also provides incisive insight into the relationship between the death and resurrection of Christ and His becoming the life-giving Spirit. Christ became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection because the divine life that He came to give and give abundantly (John 10:10) was confined and restrained within the shell of His humanity prior to His death as the last Adam.

It is true that our Lord, even during His earthly life, was in possession of the Spirit, and St. Paul's conception of Spirit is, that it always acts towards what is external to it, that it is always in itself "life-giving." But herein lay the peculiarity in the case of Christ,—He was *Himself* limited, confined, restrained by the "flesh" which He had assumed; and,

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inasmuch as in giving His Spirit He gives *Him self*, not merely something else which He has to bestow, it necessarily follows that the Spirit dwelling in Him could not, during the days of His humiliation, exercise that quickening or life-giving power on others which properly belonged to it. Only when the limits occasioned by the “flesh” were broken through could Christ communicate *Himself*, and therefore only then could He communicate His Spirit, with perfect freedom. Thus, although Christ always possessed in Himself a fulness of the life-giving Spirit, He could not *become* that life-giving Spirit to others until, rising from the dead in a glorified body, He threw aside for ever the wrappings of earth by which He had been previously confined. (172-173)

<sup>13</sup>Given the spiritual nature of the problems spoken of in chapters 12 through 16, Paul refers to the three parts of humanity almost exclusively in relation to their corporate expression through the second man. Although there are many verses in these five chapters that refer to the church in Corinth’s immature corporate expression of Christ through the three parts of the second man, there is only one verse in chapters 12 through 16 that refers to the church’s fallen corporate expression of Adam, and this verse does not specifically mention any of the three parts of his humanity: “Awake from the drunken stupor righteously and do not sin, for some of you are ignorant of God. I speak to your shame” (15:34). All the other references to these three parts of humanity, either explicitly (12:3, 25; 13:4; 14:2, 14-16, 32; 15:37, 44; 16:14, 17, 24) or implied (12:7, 12, 23; 13:5; 14:1, 9, 31, 39-40; 15:2, 10, 52; 16:2, 7, 13), are related to the expression of these three parts through the second man.

Although Paul speaks of the three parts of the first man in chapters 1 through 4, his primary emphasis is on the three parts of the second man in order to show their importance in the manifestation of the second man. In chapters 5 through 11 Paul’s primary emphasis is on the three parts of the first man as obstacles to the manifestation of the second man; nevertheless, he still speaks of the three parts of the second man. In chapters 12 through 16, however, he returns to his emphasis on the three parts of the second man, which, through the operation of the resurrection life, manifest the image of the second man. In effect and in stylistic arrangement, the problems of the first man in chapters 5 through 11 are structurally covered in love by the reality of the second man that is presented in chapters 1 through 4 and by the practical manifestation of the second man that is presented in chapters 12 through 16.

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GIVEN THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE PROBLEMS IN CHAPTERS 12 THROUGH 16, PAUL REFERS TO THE THREE PARTS OF HUMANITY ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN RELATION TO THEIR CORPORATE EXPRESSION THROUGH THE SECOND MAN.