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### The Christian Pastor and his Problems- A Pastoral Study of the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians

Mark J. Steege

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, [ir\\_steegem@csl.edu](mailto:ir_steegem@csl.edu)

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THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR AND HIS PROBLEMS

A PASTORAL STUDY

of the

EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

A thesis  
presented to the faculty of  
Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Mo.

by

Mark J. Steege

in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree

of

Bachelor of Divinity

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## INTRODUCTION

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ!"

These words of the Apostle Paul are addressed to every person who wishes to learn what a Christian ought to believe and how he ought to live; but they apply especially to such as would serve Christ in the manner in which Paul served Him, as a minister of the Gospel. Be ye followers of me, not because I preach to you a new religion, but because Christ Jesus Himself has inspired me to speak His Word and has given me grace to walk in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Be ye followers of me! That implies that we study Paul's life. He has written an account of his faith and works in his various letters to the Churches which he founded, letters which we may accept word for word, because they are inspired by God. In these letters his advice receives the sanction of God. His life is judged by God. His commandments are those of Jesus Christ Himself, as though Jesus did beseech us through him.

His life and teachings form also the subject of this essay, insofar as they apply to the office and work of the pastor. Since his letters to the Corinthians are the most valuable in giving us information on just this phase, the essay will be limited to passages taken from these two books of the Bible. The essay is divided into two parts: I. The Pastor; and II. The Pastor's Problems.

## THE PASTOR

It has been said, and rightly so, that the greatest problem in the Church always has been and always will be the pastor himself. On him depends the status of the entire congregation. The average layman is usually satisfied to let his pastor decide his religious problems for him, and in most cases he abides by the advice he receives. It is, therefore, of utmost importance, that the pastor, in view of the great responsibility resting upon him, and being mindful of the confidence placed in his judgment, should strive to attain to the greatest possible perfection in his office as a minister of the Word. Every pastor who is at all concerned about the charge given him by God should search diligently in the Scriptures for hints as to how he is to live and how he is to instruct, guard, and keep the souls intrusted to his care. That such a practice is God-pleasing, is very evident from the story of the rich young ruler. He had judged himself well worth a place among the disciples of Christ; but the Savior pointed out to him that he did not possess some of the main qualities with which a true shepherd of the flock must be endowed. Ought we not, therefore, be concerned about what the Bible has to say regarding the qualifications of the pastor? A study of the letters of Paul to the Corinthians reveals a great number of hints on just this topic.

## A. THE PASTOR'S QUALIFICATIONS

By precept and practice Paul taught the members of the Church of God which was at Corinth what they should expect from a preacher of the Word. And he who feels that God has called him to this high office will do well to follow in the footsteps of the great Apostle, learning of him to serve his Master in ever greater measure and with ever increasing devotion.

The first requirement which every pastor must meet if he wishes to carry out his manifold duties as a steward of God's holy mysteries, is this, that he lead a life of godliness, "We believe and therefore speak," says Paul, "knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you," (2 Cor. 4,13.14). And again he says: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again," (II, 5:14.15). Such faith every true leader of the Church must have.

It seems almost needless to mention such a quality, yet how many are there not in this day and age who call themselves pastors and yet do not know and do not believe the great doctrines of salvation! The Lutheran Church is to this day well grounded in the Scripture doctrine of the redemption of Christ, but is there no danger that she might

also fall away, as have so many other denominations? Knowing the dangers besetting the Church on every hand, it behooves the pastor to follow the example of Paul, who said: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." (1 Cor. 9,27). Paul by a daily inner warfare tamed his flesh for the use of the spirit, being ever mindful that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. And by doing so he gave us all an example to follow. Let the pastor daily kneel at the cross of Christ, and his members will soon be found at his side.

A second demand Paul makes of the ministers of the Gospel is that they be found faithful. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Faithfulness (1 Cor. 4,2). "Fidelitas" has been chosen by many a class of young graduates as a fitting motto to guide them through life. And those among them who are truly faithful - faithful to God and faithful to their fellow men - usually find success attending their humble efforts.

Pastors, of all men, should remain faithful to their calling, for the reason that so much depends thereupon. The Apostle makes this clear when he writes: "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2,13)

At his ordination the young pastor promises to teach the doctrines of the Bible in all their truth and purity. And how much depends upon his faithfulness to his promise! Blessed is the man who can say with Paul: "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." (I,11:23) And again: "As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea." (II,1:18).

Faithfulness also demands it of a pastor, that he should not let reason govern him in his preaching and teaching. Reason often asks why certain doctrines must be preached. Could they not be passed by in silence? Why mention certain sins, which are prevalent in the congregation? Why point out certain duties, which the Old Adam does not like to hear? The faithful pastor does not regard these objections of his reason. He knows it is his duty to preach all of the doctrines of the Bible. Therefore he is also able to say with Paul: "Seeing we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth recommending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God... For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake." (II, 4:1.2.5).

Moreover, faithfulness demands it of a pastor, that he leave not the work he has begun. "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God," is the admonition of Paul. (I,7:24). And if this admonition is

applicable to any calling, it surely is to the ministry. Paul considered the preaching of God's word such a necessity for him that he said: "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" Let every pastor consider this an equally serious matter!

Another requisite, when speaking of the pastor's qualifications, one on which all others depend, is love. Out of much affliction and anguish of heart Paul wrote Love to the Corinthians with many tears; not that they should be grieved, but that they might know the love he had for them in such abundance. (II, 2:4). He called them his own epistle, written in his heart and known and read of all men. (II, 3:2). For all men could see Paul's love flowing out of the Christian life of his Corinthian converts. He sought not their property but rather their souls. (II, 12:14). He called them his dearly beloved, (I, 10:14), his children in Christ. (I, 4:15). This true love of the Apostle for the Church found its source in a true love for Christ. "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus," are his closing words to the Corinthians in his first letter to them. (I, 16:24). And in this same connection he says: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." It is a spurious love that is accursed - a cold false heart which - knowing the Lord - does not really love Him.\* And the best way in which a pastor may show his love for Christ is by loving the souls He bought with His blood.

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\* So G.G. Findlay, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol.2, ad h.1<sup>1)</sup>

Out of faith in Christ and out of love for Him and His congregation flows godly zeal, of which Paul writes: "I am  
Zeal           jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have  
                  espoused you to one husband, that I may present you  
a chaste virgin to Christ." (II, 11:2). He saw the virgin  
which he had intrusted to Christ in great danger of leaving  
Him and clinging to a stranger. This roused his zeal and  
he spoke harsh and earnest words to her. The Corinthians  
should not find him a father like unto Eli, but rather one  
who also used the rod when it was necessary, "having in a  
readiness to avenge all disobedience." (II, 10:6). Yet he  
much preferred to come in love.\* "What will ye?" he asks,  
"shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the  
spirit of meekness?" (I, 4:21).

Paul also had a right to boast of his zeal when forced  
to do so by false teachers. "I labored more abundantly than  
they all," but he adds in the same breath: "yet not I but  
the grace of God which was with me." (I, 15:10).

There is, however, a danger connected with showing zeal  
for the work. The pastor is liable to devote all of his ener-  
gies to the gaining of members for his church, and to forget  
all the while, that souls are won for Christ alone through  
the preaching of the Gospel. Paul therefore sounds a note of  
warning when he says: "Christ sent me...to preach the Gospel;  
not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be  
made of none effect." (I, 1:17). The pastor's zeal should,  
therefore, flow out of a true love for Christ and His Church.

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\* Cf. Homiletic Magazine, Vol. 31: Einige Winke fuer unsere  
Predigt aus den beiden Korintherbriefen.

Yet godliness, faithfulness, love, and zeal alone are not sufficient to meet the requirements which God has laid down in His word, for even a child may possess Wisdom any one or all of these qualities. It is, therefore required of a minister of the Word, that he also be endowed with wisdom. "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men," I,14:20. Such advice is to be heeded especially by the pastor because of the confidence placed in him by his members. He ought to know that though all things are lawful unto him, yet "all things edify not," I,10:23. He ought to know what it means to become "all things to all men," that he might "by all means save some," I,9:22. This implies a true understanding of human nature. Though man is essentially the same, yet not all men can be approached alike. To some the pastor must be "a savour of death unto death," to others "the savour of life unto life," II,2:16. He must be a "wise master-builder," laying the true foundation, "which is Jesus Christ," I,3:10, remembering that he is an "ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech" the hearers of the Word through him, II,5:20. He must be apt to teach, an "able minister of the New Testament," II,3:5. He must know how rightly to punish, as did Paul, who could say of himself: "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy," II,1:23f.

And if it is asked, where wisdom may be found, Paul answers: "The foolishness of God is wiser than men," I,1:25, or as we read in Proverbs: "The Lord giveth wisdom; out of

His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up wisdom for the righteous; He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly," Prov. 2:6. From this it also follows, that our wisdom must be in accordance with God's Word. Not "excellencies of speech" or wise sayings, but alone the "testimonies of God concerning Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" are counted true wisdom by God, I,2:1. Let us, therefore, be wise pastors. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament," II,3:5f.

Wise master-builders and able ministers are, therefore, well pleasing unto the Lord. Yet no matter how wise, how accomplished, how learned a pastor may be, he must always remember that "no flesh should glory in the presence of God," I,1:29. Paul admonishes the Corinthians not to think of men above that which is written, "that no one of you be puffed up for one against another," I,4:6. How well he heeded this advice himself! Few men of this world have surpassed him in greatness, but fewer still in humility. "By the grace of God I am what I am," he confesses, after speaking of his ministry. "Do you look on things after the outward appearance?" he asks in surprise, and thus reproves the Corinthians for their false standards of greatness, II,10:7. Later on, defending himself against the slanderous attacks of enemies he humbly adds: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you; for in nothing am I behind

Humility

the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing," II,12:11.

Though I be nothing! These words should cause every preacher to forget any pride that may be lurking in his heart, for if Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, the model preacher and teacher, the great pillar of faith, must admit that he is nothing, then who is there among men who can boast? Nay, "let him that glorieth, glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord," Jer.9:24.

True it is then, that humility is a quality, which every pastor should strive after, for a pastor who is proud, arrogant, haughty. will not easily win his way to the hearts of his members. But necessary as it may be to warn against pride, we must not forget to ward off the danger of falling into the opposite evil, the inferiority complex. Every pastor may feel in a measure his unworthiness for the high calling of the ministry. Such a feeling is perfectly natural and is not at all to be condemned, for we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves," II,3:5. But this feeling of unworthiness should not cause a pastor to shrink back in timid fear when God demands some greater service of him, than he has been rendering in the past.

A plea of unworthiness is often used to cover up an inferiority complex, which should not be found in a pastor. The pastor who is afraid to bring the resolutions of synod to the attention of his congregation, who is afraid to make

mention of laxness in giving or church attendance, who is afraid to preach the law to the erring brother is not only neglecting his duty as a pastor; far more, he is showing thereby a lack of trust in God.

Such a one should learn of Paul to rely upon God for success in his work. Paul, in his earlier days, had been Saul, the persecutor. He had not followed Christ as had the rest of the apostles, had not had that personal contact, had not been blessed by the Savior at His ascension. He, therefore, had ample reason to feel an inferiority to the rest of the apostles. But in no place does he show such an inferiority. Let the other apostles have greater gifts. That does not worry him in the least. He expects the success of his preaching from the Lord, who called him. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase," I,3:6. He does not rely upon the praise or criticism of men, but appoints God the judge, who seeks nothing but faithfulness in his stewards. "Our sufficiency is of God," says he, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament," II,3:5.6. Taking consolation in his call he fearlessly carries out the work which God and the congregation have assigned to him, and thus becomes a fitting example for every pastor to follow. Would that more would learn of him to do their duty and leave the rest to God!

In the course of his epistles Paul makes mention of many other qualifications, which every pastor should seek to obtain,

Other Gifts            such as courage (II,3:1; 10:8-10; 13:2.10), reliability and trustworthiness (II,4:2: 8:20-23; 11:31;

12:16-19), respectability, befitting the dignity of his office (I, 3:9; 4:1; II, 6:1; 8:21; 10:8), conscientiousness (I, 2:3; II, 2:1-4.17), self-denial ( I, 6:12; 9:22; 10:24\*; II, 6:3-10; 11:23-28), etc., but the seven already treated will show amply enough how rich these epistles are in just such hints for the pastor, if he will but pause and meditate while reading them. By praying and working he will thus daily improve himself for his high calling making the words of Paul his own, when he says: "Giving offence in nothing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves, as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings: by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things," II, 6:3-10.

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\* The R.V. correctly supplies the word "good" for the translation "wealth" in the A.V. Findlay, Expositor's Greek Testament says ad h.l.: "to heautou, to tou heterou, implies some definite good."

## B. THE PASTOR'S CALL

"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," writes Paul to the Corinthians, I, 7:20. He sees every man assigned to some certain vocation in life. Some are merchants, some are traders, some are imperial officials, some are tent makers; and Paul tells them to remain at their trades, for they have been called to them by God. God it is, who assigns to each Christian his status. And the Christians may find comfort in this. They know God wants them to serve humanity in general and especially care for themselves and their families in some certain way, and knowing this their work becomes less burdensome.

Yet in what profession is a call of more importance than in the ministry? It is the pastor's duty to preach the word of God as an ambassador for Christ, that is, in Christ's stead. Yet who among men dares to assume this responsibility for himself? Dare a man consider himself fit to take over the work of Christ? By no means. And therefore God, through the congregation, calls men into this important work. "God hath set some in the church, apostles, prophets, teachers," I, 12:28. So Paul was called first directly by Christ and then mediately by the congregation at Antioch. And the fact that he was called gave him courage and authority to preach the gospel, to admonish the evil-doer, to strengthen the faint and warn the strong, to forgive sins, yea, to do all that Christ did while He was on earth. He says that he was "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God," I, 1:1, and this every pastor may say of himself. He

is called by God to serve the Church as an "ambassador of Christ," II, 5:20. His sufficiency is of God who has made him an "able minister of the new testament," II, 3:6. He is a "laborer together with God," I, 3:9, a "minister of Christ," a "steward of the mysteries of God," I, 4:1f. And as such he is placed over the congregation.

Yet he is also called by the congregation and as such is their "servant for Jesus sake," II, 4:5. He belongs to them, for Paul has said: "All are yours," I, 3:22. It is the privilege of the congregation to choose their pastor. For this cause Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem," I, 16:3.

From all this it follows that the call into the ministry is also to be a permanent one: 1. since Paul wishes all men to abide in their calling, I, 7:20; 2. since the call is divine, I, 1:1; 12:28; II, 3:6; 3. since it is required of the steward that he be faithful and faithfulness implies that his position be a permanent one; 4. since the congregation is to accord honor and obedience to the pastor, I, 16:15f.\*

With the assurance of a divine and permanent call, the pastor should, therefore, carry out his duties without fear, knowing that God, who has called him into the work, will also give him the proper strength and ability rightly to serve the Church of God as long as he lives.

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\* Cf. Walther, Pastorate, p.42.

### C. THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

He who wishes to become a minister of the word must not only be endowed with certain qualifications but must also know what is required of him by God and the congregation. He must not only be morally, spiritually, and intellectually fit for his position, but must also know just what his position demands of him, so that when he is called upon to serve a congregation as pastor, he will know how far his authority extends and to what extent he is responsible for the souls of his members. The Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians also give much information on this subject, and it is our purpose to discuss in the following the duties of the pastor in his office as preacher, as teacher, as shepherd and friend, as missionary, and as leader in the Church.

#### 1. The Pastor As Preacher

Nowhere in our Epistles or in any other book of the New Testament is preaching in the congregation service mentioned as having been instituted by Christ or the Apostles. Yet it is perfectly natural that it should form an important part of the church service; for the congregation has been given the word of God, has been told to use it, and for this the common service affords the best opportunity. It is, therefore, customary in the Lutheran Church, that the pastor chooses a portion of Scripture on the basis of which he preaches to the congregation what God would have them to know and to believe.

For this cause it is necessary that the pastor devote many hours every week to the contents of his sermons. But if he wishes to do this he must have some general ideas as to what his sermons are to contain, and these ideas he may gather from the Epistles to the Corinthians. It is true, the writings of Paul are letters and not sermons, yet surely they are analogous to sermons. They were written for this purpose, that they be read in the common service; they served the religious needs of the congregation addressed; and their content deals with the Christian knowledge and Christian life of the believers. They are, therefore, well suited to the purpose of enlightening the pastor on what and how he is to preach.

As regards the content of his sermons Paul says Christ has sent him "to preach the gospel," I, 1:17. This gospel, he explains in the following verse, is the preaching of the cross. The word of the cross, forming as it does the central theme of the whole work of redemption, was for Paul the beginning and the end of all wisdom. "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," I, 2:2. A fine resolution, indeed, and Paul carried it out literally! All he said and did was in Christ, through Christ, with Christ, and for Christ, and Him crucified. Yet the crucified Christ was for him at the same time also the resurrected Lord. In all of his writings these two doctrines are very closely linked together, as is seen, for instance, in I Corinthians chapter fifteen. Again and again Paul speaks of Christ's death, but always adds that He was raised again from the dead.

The pastor ought, therefore, to learn of Paul to preach Christ, not as the great teacher and wonder-worker, not as the virtuous son of Joseph, not as the giver of a new and better law, but as the crucified and arisen Savior. The Missouri Synod is at times accused of preaching too much law. Let the pastor take this as a warning and, learning of Paul, determine to know nothing in his congregation save Christ Jesus, and Him crucified. This true Gospel preaching alone can save sinners. This alone can bring about a reconciliation between God and man, for "He hath made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," II, 5:21.

Not all will accept this doctrine. To some it is and always will be foolishness. But the fault lies not with the Gospel but with man himself, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," I, 2:14. Yet "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," I, 1:21, and if it pleased Him we have but to abide by His pleasure. And knowing how effectual the preaching of the cross is in the hearts of the believers, we are glad to have this great privilege bestowed upon us of feeding the flock of Christ.

Paul's preaching was, however, by no means limited to the Gospel. When circumstances demanded it, he knew how to preach the law in all its severity. He preached it in such a manner, that hearts and consciences were really touched by his words. His enemies said his letters were "weighty and powerful," II, 10:10, and as he was in his let-

ters, such were his deeds when he was present among them. Yet he used the law only to work sorrow for sins. When he had accomplished this end he preached the Gospel of forgiveness in order that Satan might not lead the accused into despair, II, 2:11. And this method of preaching the pastor ought to learn ever better to acquire for the saving of souls for Christ.

Paul also gives the searching pastor a few hints on the proper form of the sermon. "Not with excellencies of speech or of wisdom," I, 2:1, not with "enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," Paul preached the wonderful doctrine of salvation, I, 2:4. He clothed his teaching in simple yet beautiful language. For what is more simple and yet at the same time more elevated than the word of reconciliation, II, 5:19-21, or the hymn of love, I, 13? The hymn writer says:

If you cannot speak like angels,  
If you cannot preach like Paul,  
You can tell the love of Jesus,  
You can say He died for all.

Yes, and you can by daily application and study of the methods of Paul improve your own preaching, so that men will want to hear the Gospel from your lips. Let the pastor take his duties as a preacher as seriously as did Paul, and he is bound to succeed.

## 2. The Pastor As Teacher

There is no office of the pastor that is quite as important as that of teaching and edifying the flock. In the foregoing section the work of the pastor as preacher was discussed; yet the subject was by no means exhausted, because much of the material can better be used in connection with the present topic. It was shown in the foregoing, what the pastor must teach his hearers for their souls' salvation. It will be shown in the following, what the pastor must teach his congregation regarding their life here upon earth, their attitude over against the pastor, the individual members, and the world at large, and also as regards their contributions and church attendance. The pastor will have ample opportunity to impress upon his members just what God demands of them in this respect, if he will but use the means at his disposal. Occasion is often given him in his sermons, in Bible-class and Sunday School, in meetings of the ladies' and men's clubs of the congregation, if there are any, to drive home the Bible teaching on one or the other of these points. But it is necessary first of all that the pastor himself have a clear impression of them. And here again a study of the letters to the Corinthians will prove a great help, for even where questions of society are referred to Paul's decision, he judges them so purely on general moral principles, that his opinions are applicable to most any situation or condition.

And when Paul teaches the Corinthians anything, he always starts out with doctrine, and using this as a basis,

he drives home the important truths. Thus when he rebukes the Corinthians because of the factions existing in the congregation, he teaches them first of all concerning the proper attitude of the congregation to the pastor and to the members. So in everything. He first instructs and then admonishes. Let us, then, learn from Paul how we are to preach and speak of such matters as weigh heavily on the minds of the hearers.

"What attitude shall I assume over against my pastor?" is one of the questions the average member of a congregation seeks to answer, and it is the pastor's duty to answer this question for him, giving not his own opinion but that of the Word of God. Paul answers this question in part when he says: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God," I, 4:1, and he gives another answer when he says: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas...all are yours," I, 3:21f. The Christian congregation is, therefore, to consider the pastor a servant of God and at the same time a servant of the congregation. As a servant of God the members ought to accord their minister due honor and obedience, remembering that they are his work in the Lord, I, 9:2, and keep the ordinances as he has delivered them to the congregation, I, 11:2. They ought to be followers of him even as he is of Christ, I, 11:1, and they ought also to trust him, considering him to have the mind of Christ, I, 2:16. Since he is also the servant of the congregation the members ought not overestimate or under-

The Congregation  
And The Pastor-

estimate the capabilities of their pastor. "Let no man glory in men," is the warning of Paul, I, 3:21. The pastor is to be respected not so much for his person, but rather in view of the office he fills. "Have them in love for their work's sake," is the admonition of Paul.

And if the pastor is a servant of God and the congregation, then he should also receive of the things of God and of the congregation. This Paul proves very conclusively by means of a long argument in chapter nine of his first epistle. He shows not only that it is in accordance with the law of Moses: "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," but he also shows that it is the will of God, for as "they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar, even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," I, 9:13f.

This, in short, is what Paul says regarding the attitude of the congregation toward their pastor. The members of the Church should not forget what they owe to their pastor, namely, obedience to his word as long as it is in accordance with God's Word, and liberality in caring for his earthly wants. They are not to look at the gifts he possesses, but at the Word which he, as a steward of the mysteries of God, preaches unto them. And it is the pastor's duty to impress these obligations upon them. For if the pastor neglects this duty it cannot be expected of the members that they have the right knowledge concerning their own duty.

Another teaching concerning Christian life which most men need to be told of again and again is the teaching concerning the attitude they are to take toward the fellow member of the Church.

The Congregation  
And the Members

The Corinthians, especially, needed advice on this phase of Christian life, and hence the letters of Paul are filled with sound doctrinal teaching concerning this matter.

Paul says in the beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians: "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," I, 1:10, and later on he gives the reason for thus preserving unity among themselves when he says: "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ\*. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," I, 12:12f.

This was also Paul's idea of a true Christian congregation, a congregation in which the members all formed one body in Christ. There should be no divisions, but all should be of the same mind; all should be joined together in the same judgment. They should look upon each other as brethren. Paul uses the term sixteen times in his first letter for this very reason, that his readers should learn to repeat it

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\* Findlay, Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 890 says concerning the word Christ: "Christ stands by metonymy for the community united through Him and grounded in Him. This substitution shows how realistic was Paul's conception of believers as subsisting 'in Christ,' and raises the idea of Church-unity to its highest point."

after him. They should look upon all, both the weak and the strong, as men "for whom Christ died," and they should learn from the Love of Christ to love also their brothers in Christ. To say it in one word, Paul wanted to bring unity into the Church at Corinth.

When he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians the congregation was far from being united. Three major causes of dissension so threatened to undermine the work which the apostle had carried on in their midst, that he feared for the worst. These evils he discussed at great length with the Corinthians and advised as to how they should be removed.

There were first of all the church factions springing up because of differences of opinion as to who was the greatest among their teachers. Some liked to hear Paul preach; others thought Peter was more forceful; still others judged APollos to be the best of the three; and there were some who thought all three could greatly improve themselves and become more like unto Christ. Those who had been converted by Paul clung to him. Those whom Apollos had brought into the Church considered him their leader. And there were also some who called Peter their pastor. Yet what did Paul say of their criticisms? "Who is Paul," he asks, "and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase," I, 3:5-7. The Corinthians were on the wrong track. They were putting more

stress upon who their teacher had been than upon what he had taught them, and Paul now shows them that all three teachers, he, Apollos, and Peter, were agreed. All taught the same doctrines, and all relied upon God to give the increase.

Man cannot work faith. Yet some Christians give us the impression that they actually believe this to be the case. They want one certain pastor to serve them throughout their life and they will not let him take another charge; or they refuse to go to church because the pastor whom the congregation has chosen does not meet with their approval. Such people are the cause of dissension in the Church. They are the fault finders and they should be referred to the words of Paul who spoke by the command of God when he said: "Whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal?" I, 3:3. They should be admonished to be perfectly joined together with the rest of the congregation and give in to the wish of the majority in these and similar matters. Thus, and thus alone, will unity be gained in the Church.

Another cause of dissension in Corinth was the false notion some of the members had concerning Christian liberty.

Abuse of Liberty      In order to show how this originated it will be necessary to make a digression and consider briefly the former life of the Corinthian Christians.

Living in a pagan city and having been reared in pagan families, they had naturally been given to idolatry before they were converted to the Christian faith. They were especially fond of going to love feasts at which sacrifices

were brought to the idol which were later served as food to those present. At such feasts they found they could make many friends and they thus became regular attenders of these "clubs" as we might call them.\*

Now when Paul came to Corinth he showed them what folly it was to serve an idol, for "an idol," he taught them, "is nothing in the world," I, 8:4. He told them of the "one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by Him," I, 8:6. And they believed his words. They learned to confess that an "idol is nothing in the world and that there is none other God but one," I, 8:4.

Yet when Paul left the congregation, the bolder Christians argued that since Paul had told them all things were lawful unto them and had said also that an idol is naught, they could again visit their love feasts, for if the idol is a vain thing it cannot pollute the creatures offered to it. And they had no scruples of conscience when they ate of the sacrificed meat. Yet there were others among them who could not harmonise this practice with Christianity. They felt their brethren were taking liberties of which Paul would not approve, and they were offended. They argued with the brethren, but these, instead of heeding the words of the weaker Christians, made light of the matter, and tried to convince them that there was no wrong in their practice. Yet what was Paul's judgment?

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\* For a discussion of these love feasts see Ramsay's Historical Commentary on the Letters to the Corinthians, an article in the Expositor of 1900, especially pages 337ff and 431ff.

"If a man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend," I, 8:10-13.

Paul put these "wise" Corinthians to shame. They had knowledge about idols; yes, but they had no knowledge about Christian love and forbearance. Is it not often so? "There is no wrong in dancing," says a "strong" brother, and therefore he feels he is permitted to dance and give offence to every one who considers it wrong. Wonderful logic! And the same may be said of any or all of the amusements which the "weak" brother considers un-Christian. Usually this "weak" brother might better be called the more indoctrinated. Let the pastor, therefore, learn of Paul to get at the source of the trouble, and learn also the true and only cure for that trouble, the love of God and the love of the neighbor. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, that wonderful hymn of love, is an actual cure-all for all spiritual sickness in the congregation. But it is effective only when applied to those who need it! And it is the pastor's duty to apply it. It is no hard task to instruct the members on the love they owe to the fellow man for Christ's sake, and once they have learned this lesson it is but another step from love to self-denial and sacrifice.

A third cause of dissension which Paul settled in a similar manner was the practice of the Corinthians to hire heathen umpires or arbiters to settle the litigation disputes they had among themselves on matters of every day life. It was customary in Greece to settle such minor troubles outside of court by hiring an umpire or arbiter, whose decision would be considered binding by both parties concerned in the dispute. But what does Paul think of this practice? "Dare any of you," he asks, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?...If the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" I, 6:1f. And what advice does he give? "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church," I, 6:4.\*

These words were also spoken by Paul to shame the Corinthians. Again he showed them that they needed a lesson on Christian love and charity. He admits all things are lawful unto them, but all things are not expedient. And rather than offend a weak brother, he tells them to do without anything which might give offence, and that not only for

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\* Ramsay, Expositor, Vol.I, p 274 says concerning this passage: "Paul here is not thinking of serious questions of crime and fraud so much as of the small matters, which persons of a litigious character - such as the Greeks were - are always ready to make into causes of disagreement and legal action. Now such small cases were ordinarily decided in Greece by umpires or arbiters chosen by the parties themselves. The expressions used throughout the passage suggest rather informal proceedings than formal trials on legal principles before judges (dikastai). The terms used are krino, krinomai, kriterion, krima, all of which are appropriate to cases tried according to the least strict procedure by umpires whom the parties select and who decide not according to formal written law but according to their own conception of right and wrong."

a day, but for life. Yes, indeed, charity suffereth long and is kind, and, therefore, it never faileth. It is the strongest weapon the pastor has in his hands to defeat the powers of the evil one, stronger than faith and hope, for charity abideth forever.

Such shall be the attitude of the Christian toward his brother in Christ. But how shall he treat the unbeliever?

The Congregation                      Shall he have no dealings with him what-  
And The World                        soever? G. Findlay has reproduced the  
letter, which the Corinthians wrote to Paul and in it he  
puts these words into the mouth of the leaders of the Church:

"Thou biddest us separate ourselves from the unclean and have no fellowship with those who live in the sins of the Gentiles. Are we to take this injunction in its unrestricted sense? Our city, as thou well knowest, teems with impurities. If we may not in any wise mix with transgressors, we must depart from Corinth - nay, we doubt whether in the whole world we should find any spot where men dwell that is clear of defilement. We stand in doubt, therefore, and beg thee to write once more, giving us instructions that none can mistake; for it is our wish to be ruled by thee to please thee in whatsoever is possible."\*

Paul also answers these questions for the congregation in both letters. He shows first of all that the world is opposed to God. We read: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit of God," I, 2: 12. Furthermore

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\* G.G. Findlay, The Letter of the Corinthian Church to St. Paul, an article in Expositor, Vol. I, p.403.

the "wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," I, 3:19. And in his second letter Paul asks: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" II, 6:14f. The answer in every case is, of course: None whatsoever.

Having made this point Paul proceeds with the statement: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Purge out therefore the old leaven," I, 5:6. "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat," I, 5:11. For "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils," I, 10:20. "Flee from idolatry," I, 10:14, and finally "be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," II, 6:14.

These passages make it very clear that the Christian is not to be on intimate terms with the unbeliever. He is not to eat with him as a brother, i.e., considering himself of the same mind with the unbeliever. For this cause Paul also forbade the Corinthians to take part in the love feasts of the heathen, for in these feasts a mystic bond of union joined the guests together in one brotherhood, (So Ramsay).

Yet this separation must not be stressed as referring to all intercourse with the heathen. Paul very definitely states: "Not altogether...for then must ye needs go out of the world," I, 5:10. "One may mix in ordinary society, even though one knows that the Pagan does not obey those principles of pure life which the Christian must comply with. One may do business with Pagans, accept their invitations, eat and drink

with them, but one should not bind oneself to them by the tie of a common solemn ritual, which exercises a strong constraining force on the will and nature of man, and prevents him from real devotion to Christ."\*

Neither is the Christian to judge the unbeliever. "Them that are without God judgeth," I, 5:13. To the congregation He has given the command to try to gain the unbeliever, to "convince him, so falling down on his face he will worship God," I, 14:25. And this should guide the Christian in his conduct toward the unbeliever. He must show no undue familiarity toward him, yet his heart must be filled with love for his soul, for whom Christ died. And it is well that the pastor teach his congregation these truths, that they may live in conformity with the Word of God also in this respect.

There is one phase of a pastor's work which some consider quite distasteful, namely, the duty of the pastor to instruct his hearers on the blessedness of giving. The only reason why it becomes distasteful to some to speak of giving is that they look upon it as being distasteful and burdensome to the congregation to be told of their obligations in this respect. Yet if the congregation does not want to have a congregation treasury, the reason is plainly the fact, that the members do not know how to give and why to give. They must be taught, not told, to be liberal. And Paul's letters give some fine hints to the pastor who wishes rightly to instruct his congregation.

*Is there any  
such con-  
gregation?*

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\* Ramsay, Expositor, Vol. II, p.439

Let it be said at the very outset, that the law will never accomplish this task, and in no place does Paul use the law for this purpose. His sermons on giving are based alone on Gospel truth. Let us first of all note the reasons he gives the Corinthians for showing their liberality. *1 Cor. 9:8.*

One reason he mentions is the dire need of the Christians in Jerusalem. Famines in Judea had brought with them poverty, and the Jews were constantly suffering want (I, 16:1; II, 8:4; 9:12); another reason is to prove the sincerity of their love (II, 8:8). If they have any love for their brethren in Christ, they should show it by helping them; a third is the fact that "God loveth a cheerful giver," II, 9:7, and out of love to God they ought to do what is well pleasing unto Him; a fourth is to show their thankfulness to God for having "enriched" them "in everything to all bountifulness," II, 9:11; a fifth is the great blessings they will receive in return, for "he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully," II, 9:6; a sixth is to show their love for their pastor, who may rejoice in their liberality, but must be ashamed if they fail in their obligations (II, 9:2-5); but there is still a greater reason than any of these. Paul says: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich," II, 8:9. Such reasons are more than sufficient for the true Christian, but he must know of these reasons. And who is better qualified to instruct him than the pastor?

Paul also gives a few hints on the methods of giving. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by

him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come," I, 16:2. Four points are mentioned in this verse: Every one should give; every one should give regularly; every one should give as God hath prospered him, i.e., give as much as he can; and this should be carried out before the money is needed. That surely rules out the practice of bringing a check to the pastor at Christmas time to make up for the entire year, and it also rules out the practice of the father paying for the family. The next verse points out the good of having a well qualified finance committee: "Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem, " I, 16:3. Incidentally Paul calls it a liberality, not a forced payment. He shows them how to make it a willing offering by telling them of the Philippians, who "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God," II, 8:5, and then adds: "See that ye abound in this grace also," 8:7. The pastor who follows Paul in teaching his congregation of the blessings of giving need never be ashamed to hand in his report to synod. His congregation will be comparatively well above the average!

Finally, the pastor ought also impress upon the congregation the sacredness of the church service. The service at

The Congregation In Worship Paul's time was different from what it is today, for many Christians had the gift of prophecy and tongues, and therefore a direct parallel cannot be drawn. But this much we may learn from Paul's letters, that everything ought to be done "decently and in order," I,14:40.

Love should regulate the whole service so that everything will go along smoothly, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints," I, 14:33. Therefore, "let everything be done unto edifying," is the admonition of Paul.

He mentions also proper decorum in church. Abide by the customs of the time. Do not seek to make a show in dress or otherwise. At Paul's time it was considered a disgrace for a woman to come to church with uncovered head and for a man to have his head covered while prophesying. Therefore he admonished that the members abide by common usage, I, 11. The text is useful to warn against making a public show of oneself in church. This also the pastor should consider it his duty to teach his congregation.

As has been said before, these teachings on Christian life are all very easily impressed upon the congregation if the pastor uses the proper foundation for his teaching, namely, the love of the Christian for Christ and for his fellow man. If he will pursue this method of teaching, his duties as a teacher will not be greater than he can easily manage with the help of God.

### 3. The Pastor As Shepherd And Friend

The Pastor's office has well been likened to that of a shepherd, for as a shepherd tends not only the flock as a whole, but is also concerned about each individual sheep, so the pastor ought to know the special needs of the individual in his congregation, and be able to supply these needs according to the Word of God. As a shepherd of souls Paul stands out as a fitting example for all time. This apostle, who was able to speak weighty words of law against the Judaizers and their false doctrine of work-righteousness, who was bold enough to defend himself against mobs and before kings and rulers, had in his bosom the heart of a loving father and showed as much concern for his children in Christ as an anxious mother for her child. He lived in love as he spoke of it, I, 13.

Paul was especially qualified to be a shepherd of souls and friend of sinners because he realized so very fully in his own person the grace and mercy of God. He knew what it meant to receive the grace of God, for Christ had appeared to him from heaven and had converted him. He knew also the mercy of God, for often in his daily sufferings he had received the necessary strength from above to bear them patiently. He blessed "God, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God," II,1:3.4.

And so the pastor ought also thank God when he has suffered and received strength to bear it that God is thus fit-

ting him out for the work of his calling. That work consists in becoming a "servant unto all men" in order to gain them for Christ. It means becoming weak to the weak, putting oneself into their position, looking at life from their angle in order to reach their hearts and souls with just the right word of comfort. It means taking the work so seriously that the pastor will fear and tremble while carrying out his duties, I, 2:3. It means making the joys and sorrows of the individual his own, II, 2:1-4. It means that he ought truly to love his flock and look upon every one in that flock as a brother or sister for whom Christ died. It means being on the alert for any false doctrine that one or the other might be guilty of, I, 15:12("How say some among you that there is no resurrection?"). It means considering all men equal, not preferring one before another, I, 1:10, and all the while bearing in mind that the pastor is a laborer together with God, that his work is not his own, but Christ's, that his members are not his own, but Christ's, and that, therefore, his comfort and advice should not be his own, but Christ's. This practice Paul carried out in everything and this we may learn of him by studying his letters.

#### 4. The Pastor As Leader

In this field especially the pastor must bear in mind that he is not only a servant of Christ but also a servant of the congregation. His leadership must, therefore, be not so much one of authority as one of loving guidance according to God's Word. He must bear in mind that the congregation is supreme in all things and that he has been called by the congregation at the command of God to carry out the duties assigned to him by God and the congregation. He must, therefore, under no circumstances usurp the authority of the congregation. A few examples from Paul's attitude toward the Corinthians will very well establish this point.

Paul plainly shows that it is the duty of the congregation to excommunicate such as have fallen and do not repent. He leaves the carrying out of the sentence to the Corinthians, telling them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when they are gathered together, "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," I, 5:4. But at the same time he shows that it is the duty of the pastor to guide the congregation in such actions, making known unto them when a case is deserving of such punishment. The pastor, in other words, is the leader of the congregation in exercising Church discipline, not in the sense that he has more authority than any member of the congregation, but in the sense that he has more knowledge concerning the advisability of such actions, Cf. I, 5:3. If the congregation tries the case and finds the sinner unworthy of so great a punishment the pas-

only

tor dare not usurp authority and excommunicate the man himself, but must abide by the wish of the members, II, 2:10. ?

Another matter which is entirely in the hands of the congregation is the church treasury. Paul leaves the collecting of money to the Corinthians, II, 8 and 9, yet he, as a leader, points out to them that it is the will of God that they carry out their duty. He mentions no sum which they must give but leaves the matter entirely to their own judgment. They should give willingly, for God loveth a cheerful giver.

It is furthermore the duty and privilege of the congregation to accept such as apply for membership in the church, yet the pastor, as leader, must point out what God requires of members, namely, that they be baptized (I, 12:13, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."); that they have the knowledge of God (I, 15:34, "Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame,"); that they are able to examine themselves (I, 11:28, "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup,"); and that they lead a Christian life (II, 6:17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature").

The pastor, as leader, will also see to it that the organized congregation have regular meetings of the voters. Paul's letters to the Corinthians imply that he wishes them to hold meetings, for he says I, 5:4 : "When ye are gathered together" then excommunicate; I, 6:2, "Are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"; I, 10:15, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."; I, 12:7, "The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.": II, 2:6,

"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted by many," for if many inflicted the punishment, there must have been a meeting.

The congregation ought also respect the word of the pastor as leader in such matters, remembering that it is God who has set rulers over the church, I, 12:28. And if the spirit of love guides both pastor and members, there will be no usurping of authority on the part of the pastor, and no show of disobedience on the part of the congregation, but all will be done decently and in order.

This, in short, is the description of the office of the pastor as given in the letters to the Corinthians. The pastor who follows the methods of Paul, as they have been outlined in the foregoing pages, who learns of him to be a follower of Christ, who takes his work as seriously as did Paul, remembering that he is a steward of God's holy mysteries, may also be assured of the success which God promises him who is faithful. His labor will not be in vain in the Lord, I, 15:58, and a great "door and effectual" will be opened unto him, I, 16:9, to preach the Gospel to the glory of God and the salvation of many souls.

## THE PASTOR'S PROBLEMS

In several instances, already in the preeeeding chapter, the pastor's problems have come up for discussion. Yet in no instance was the subject treated in an exhaustive manner. It is, therefore, fitting when making a pastoral study of the Letters to the Corinthians to devote more time and space also to this important field.

Paul mentions many problems in his letters which the pastor must often face in the course of his daily activities. We recall the problem of congregation meetings, order in the church service, collecting of funds, the right use of Christian liberty, unity in the congregation, and many others. But three especially engage the apostle's attention when he writes to the Corinthians. They are first the ppoer use of the Sacraments, secondly, questions regarding marriage and divorce, and thirdly, the subject of church discipline and excommunication. These three we wish in the following to discuss in the order mentioned.

## A. THE PROPER USE OF THE SACRAMENTS

True it is that the Apostle Paul gives us no dogmatical treatise on the Sacraments. He treats both sacraments as though they were well known to the Corinthians. Yet he does touch upon their proper use, and this is the very point that concerns us, for we are considering not doctrine but practice. What hints, then, may the pastor find as to the

proper use of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians?

Paul speaks of Baptism in three distinct sections of his first letter to the Corinthians, namely in 1: 13-17; 10:1-5; and 12:13. In these passages we learn something about the formula used in Paul's day, of the persons to be baptized, and of the spiritual significance of the sacrament.

We read, I, 1:13: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" The Apostle has been arguing against factions which were arising in the congregation. The Corinthians were losing sight of Christ by thinking too much of their teachers. They were placing Paul before Christ. He therefore asks: "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" If so, then Christ is divided. Yet since Christ is not divided ye must rather have been baptized in the name of Christ. That is Paul's argument, and in this argument we see a hint at the formula used by Paul. It seems to have been: I baptize thee in the name of Christ. This formula is in perfect accord with the teaching of Christ on Baptism, for in Him the entire Godhead is concealed and revealed. If Paul baptized in His name he showed thereby that not the sound of the words but rather their meaning makes the simple washing a sacramental act, and that is the position which has always been held by the Lutheran Church. We are baptized in the name of the triune God, whether we mention each of the three persons or merely use one name, e.g., that of Christ. This passage should not move the pastor to discard

the generally adopted formula in which all three persons of the Godhead are mentioned, but should be used by him to uphold the teaching of the Lutheran Church that words alone are not sufficient, but that the meaning of the words is the all-important question.

What does the Apostle say of the persons to be baptized? In chapter one he tells us he baptized Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas. These three men were well indoctrinated. Crispus was the former ruler of the Jewish synagog; Gaius had the high office of entertaining the guests of the congregation; and Stephanas had been chosen as one of the delegates to bear the Corinthian letter to Paul. Those whom Paul baptized were, therefore, Christians. This is brought out more clearly later on in the epistle where it is stated that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," I,12:13. This body, Paul explains, is the Church. Baptism was the means of entering into fellowship with the Christians. Now Paul was very careful that no unbeliever should be joined to the Church. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is his command, and therefore only such as believed were baptized by him.

Yet another expression especially interests us in this section. Paul baptized the "household" of Stephanas. We surely may infer from this passage, as also from Acts 16:33 where we are told of the baptism of the prison-keeper "and all his," that Paul also baptized children. That he considered them children of God is clear from I, 7:14, where he says: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were

your children unclean; but now are they holy." This last passage may not prove that Paul baptized children, but it surely shows that he considered them "worthy" of Baptism, for there is no holiness without faith. If these passages are taken in connection with Matth. 28, 19 and Mark 10, 14, there is no doubt left in our minds that the Lutheran Church is carrying out the command of God in its practice of infant Baptism.

Paul also mentions the spiritual significance of Baptism. By it the believers are joined together in one spiritual body in Christ. They are baptized "into one body," 12:13, a fact from which the Christian may derive much comfort. Yet the act of Baptism alone must not be stressed, as all-sufficient for salvation. There is a possibility even after Baptism to fall away from Christ. And in order that the pastor will rightly warn his flock concerning this danger, the Apostle proves the point by drawing a parallel to it from the Old Testament. He reminds the Corinthians of the Israelites, who "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," I, 10:2, yet in spite of this fact God was not pleased with them, "for they were overthrown in the wilderness," v.5. The warning that the Apostle himself draws from this Old Testament parallel is this: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," v.12. Baptism alone is not sufficient. The Christian must also constantly be aware of his baptism and must believe that by it he has become the partaker of the merits earned for him by Christ. This ends the discussion by Paul on Baptism.

Concerning the proper use of the Sacrament of the Altar the Apostle Paul is much more specific, and the reason for The Sacrament Of The Altar this is that errors had crept into the Church regarding this means of grace. Paul, therefore, teaches the Corinthians the very fundamentals of this doctrine.

He mentions first of all the elements of the Lord's Table. They are the bread, which is broken, showing that it is real bread, I, 10:16.17; 11:25-28, and the cup, as Paul calls it, I, 10:16.21; 11:25-28. In I, 10:16 he calls it the cup of blessing. This was the name given the third cup at the Passover, the cup which Christ used when He instituted the holy sacrament.

Paul mentions also the consecration of these elements. He says, I, 10:16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" By blessing the cup it "becomes" the communion of the blood of Christ. The sacramental union of Christ's blood and the wine take place. Paul mentions the blessing in connection with the cup alone since there is this similarity between the cup of the Lord's Supper and the third cup of the Passover, that both are cups of blessing. He does not wish to say thereby that the bread should not be blessed, for he shows that not all bread is the communion of the body of Christ, but only that "which we break," which is being used at the Lord's Supper and has there, with the cup, been consecrated and blessed.

We find in this chapter also the formula used at the

distribution of the holy sacrament: "Take eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me," v.24; and "This is the cup of the New Testament in my blood; this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me," v.25.

Paul's answer to the question: Who is permitted to receive the Lord's Supper? is brought out in v.28: "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." <sup>It</sup> must, therefore, be a Christian, one who has been instructed in the chief parts of Christian doctrine. But not only knowledge is necessary. Love must also be present. Paul draws attention to this when speaking of the common meal which the Corinthians held immediately before the celebration of the Sacrament. If they wished to partake of the Lord's body and blood they could not first show a lack of love for their brethren, as this was not at all in harmony with the idea of the Lord's Supper, which is a "communion" so that the partakers being many are "one bread and one body," even as they are partakers of that one bread, I, 10:17. They enjoy the closest fellowship and union with one another in virtue of their common relation to the sacrifice of Christ. A communicant must also be ready to renounce the world, for Paul says: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils," I, 10:21.

Since Paul is so explicit in his teaching concerning this sacrament, the pastor ought also follow his advice and give the proper instruction to his people regarding the proper celebration of the Lord's Supper. This is especially necessary because of the heinousness of the offence of which

an unworthy communicant is guilty. Paul says of such a one that he is "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," I,11:27. For every one who receives the sacrament, whether he believes it or not, receives also in with and under the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ. If, therefore, he receives the Lord's Supper without due reverence and devotion, he disrespects the Lord Himself. And the punishment of such an act is "damnation," v.29. Findlay wishes us to "distinguish krima (unhappily rendered 'damnation' in the A.V.), a judicial sentence of any kind, from Katakrima, the final condemnation of the sinner."\* It is true, eating and drinking the sacrament unworthily will not at once damn the sinner forever. He is not immediately judged and sentenced to hell, but he has nevertheless committed a grave and terrible sin, which, if not repented of, will lead to the katakrima, the final condemnation. We must not try to argue away any guilt attached to the unworthy reception of the sacrament by showing that the translation of the A.V. is not exact, for the word "damnation" may well be used if we look at the final outcome, in case the sinner persists in his irreverence and does not repent.\*\*

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\* Findlay, Expositor's Greek Testament, ad h.l.

\*\* Cf. J.T. Mueller, The Church of Corinth, p. 118.

## B. QUESTIONS REGARDING MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The subject of marriage and divorce was brought up by the Corinthians themselves in a letter which they wrote to the Apostle Paul while he was at Ephesus. In this letter they described their peculiar predicament and asked for Paul's advice. His answer treats the problem quite thoroughly and his suggestions and commands are in many cases just as applicable today as they were two thousand years ago.

Concerning marriage, for instance, he points out that it is a divine institution. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," he writes, "nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband," I, 7:1-3. This is the moral law placed upon man, that, to avoid fornication, he marry a wife. God so regulates man's desires, that marriage will continue as long as the world remains. The same thought is brought out very clearly in Chapter eleven: "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God," vv 11.12. And that this marriage relation is well pleasing to God, is shown by the fact that God considers the unbelieving husband sanctified by the wife and the unbelieving wife sanctified by the husband. So close is this union, that God takes pleasure even in the unbeliever for the sake of the Christian spouse. ?

Another point Paul makes is that the marriage bond is sacred. The Corinthians, whose spouses did not become Christian with them often led a life that was well nigh unbearable. They, therefore, asked Paul whether they were allowed to separate. In answer to this question Paul points out the sacredness of the marriage band. "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away," and vice versa, I, 7:12.13. "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband," v.10, for "the wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth," v.39. The words are so plain that there is no need of further remarks.

Paul also mentions some God-given rules regulating married life. "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other," I, 7:3-5. Marital intercourse is one of the great purposes of marriage, and God Himself has ordained that it should be so. Therefore, neither the man nor the woman may deny the wishes and desires of his spouse. "She is as much the mistress of his person as he the master of hers," says Findlay.

It is also natural that persons entering the state of holy wedlock should share each others cares and worries and be ever concerned about how they may please each other. "He that is married careth for the things that are of the world how he may please his wife," v.33, and "she that is married

careth for things of the world, how she may please her husband," v.34. Paul does not at all discourage this attitude of true devotion. He looks upon it as perfectly natural. Thus it may be seen that Paul wishes marriage to be a real union. A married couple ought to live together regularly, trusting one another, loving each other, living for each other, and all this in the Lord.

The Corinthians were also anxious to know whether it was wrong for a man or woman to remain unmarried. Not at all, says Paul. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," 7:1. He does not, however, say, that it is better as a rule for a man not to touch a woman. It is merely good. There is nothing wrong in such an action. Later on he shows that in view of the "present distress" it is even better for the unmarried man to remain so, since in marriage he will have trouble in the flesh, vv. 26-28. Yet this last advice is pertinent only in times of great distress. At other times the first rule holds, namely, that there is no wrong in the celibate state. Yet a very important restriction is placed upon this rule. The person who wishes to remain unmarried must observe absolute purity. He must be like Paul was, v.7, who had the gift of continence. Yet since there are so very few in this world who have this gift, Paul says: "It is better to marry than to burn." Here every man must judge for himself. If he has the gift of continence, let him remain unmarried if he so chooses. He will be able to devote more of his time to the work of the Lord, since he has not the earthly cares of the married man. Yet if he has not this gift he should marry a wife, for it is better to

marry than to burn. He who forces himself into the celibate state sins against the body which the Lord has given him and defeats the purpose for which God has given him his desires, namely the procreation of the human race.

Closely connected to this point is the advice Paul gives the fathers of daughters in verses 36-38. He tells them that they need not consider it an inexorable duty to find husbands for them. Some parents are so anxious to have their daughters marry that they feel in duty bound to seek until they find a partner for them. Paul shows that this is not necessary, for it is good, it is not wrong, for the woman to be unmarried.

Another point which Paul makes in his letters is that there are certain relations and conditions prohibiting marriage. "It is commonly reported," says he, "that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife," I, 5:1. Paul upheld the rules regarding close relationships as found in Leviticus 18. All blood relationships prohibit marriage.

Another condition prohibiting marriage for a Christian is godlessness. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," II, 6:14. Surely if this rule applies to anything it applies also to marriage, for where is there a closer union of two persons than in the marriage relation? The difference between these two conditions, however, is this: In the former the man and woman are living in fornication and must, therefore, separate. In the latter there is nothing wrong with the marriage itself, and the marriage bond, when

once contracted, should not be broken.

Consent of the parents is also necessary for a rightful betrothal and marriage, for according to I, 7:36-38 it is the parent who gives his daughter in marriage. These God-given rules on the question of marriage every Christian ought to know, and it is, therefore, the duty of the pastor to instruct his people regarding them.

The general rules regarding divorce are given in chapter seven, verses twelve and following. They might be stated thus: A Christian should in no case seek divorce, but rather try at all times to bring about a reconciliation, for "God has called us to peace," v.15. If, however, one of the couple deserts, especially if the deserting one is an unbeliever, the Christian may submit to it. "A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases," v.15. If the guilty person refuses to be reconciled, he thereby deserts his spouse, and desertion in the sight of God is not a reason for divorce but is divorce itself. A Christian in such cases is permitted to get a divorce from the State also. Desertion also consists in denying the spouse the due right of the body, for if the stubborn person is consistent in his denial, he thereby sins against the very purpose of marriage as given in I, 7:3-5. Of course this always must be kept in mind that God has called us to peace and that the Christian should do all in his power to bring about a reconciliation. Where this is not possible and the conditions stated above exist, even a Christian has the right to get a divorce, yet the pastor must do all in his power to help bring about a reconciliation before this step is taken.

### C. CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND EXCOMMUNICATION

A case worthy of church discipline existed in Corinth and the Apostle, therefore, had occasion to instruct the Corinthians and Christians of all times as to the application of the words of Christ in Matthew 18.

The grounds for excommunication in Corinth were these: A man had taken his father's wife in marriage. "From II,7:12 it would appear that the father (assuming him, as seems inevitable, to be the wronged man there mentioned) was still living and known personally to Paul, and therefore presumably a Christian. On the other hand, the entire silence about the woman's conduct and about any punishment for her is hardly reconcilable with the idea that she was a Christian. If she were not a member of the Church, her conduct did not fall under the cognizance either of the Church or of Paul. On the whole, then, it would appear probably that the Pagan wife had separated from her husband, and that her stepson had thereupon married her. Any other supposition seems excluded by some of the conditions of the case."\* Paul now commanded that the son who had married the woman should be excommunicated, for he was living in a gross sin. He belonged in the class which Paul mentions later on as being such with whom the Corinthians should not keep company. "I have written unto you," says he, "not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater,

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\* Ramsay, Expositor, Vol.I, p.108.

or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat," I, 5:11. And he concludes with the remark: "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," v.13. This man was wicked because he was living and continuing to live in a gross sin. He was puffed up, and showed no signs of repenting and putting away his father's wife. Herein consists the grounds for excommunication, that a person openly be known as a sinner who is not ready to repent from his sins.

The mode of excommunication is briefly stated in I,5:4.5. It should be a public act, carried out by the whole congregation in the name and power of the Lord, and should consist in delivering the accused unto Satan, putting away from their midst the wicked person, v.13.

The purpose was also stated by Paul, v.5. The Apostle hoped that this action would bring the sinner to repentance after which he could again be taken into membership by the congregation. Excommunication should be the last step taken by a congregation, yet it should still be a step taken for the purpose of saving the sinner. When the Corinthians received this command they were deeply touched and stirred up. They had up to this time not realized the serious nature of the crime, but seeing their wrong they were ready to carry out Paul's injunction. Yet when they met together they found that the fornicator himself had not realized his great sin and was touched as much by Paul's letter as they were. He had promptly put away his unlawful wife and showed himself truly penitent. What could the Corinthians do in view of this but forgive him? This they did, and with this Paul was

also satisfied. But since some still felt that Paul's first command should be carried out, he wrote in his second letter: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted by many so that contrariwise ye ought rather forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him," II, 2:6-8. The command had had its desired results. The Corinthians were truly repentant. The incident had wrought carefulness, indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal, yea, revenge in them, and Paul could again say that he was comforted and exceedingly joyful, II, 7:8-13. From this it is evident that excommunication should always have as its goal the final salvation of the sinner. What part the pastor plays in such actions has already been discussed under the topic: The Pastor as Leader.

The necessity of such excommunication lies in this, that an impenitent sinner in a congregation is liable to influence others also for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," I, 5:6. It is, therefore, the duty of the pastor to show deep concern for his congregation, rooting out all error, and calling the attention of the congregation to all cases, where discipline is needed, instructing them at the same time as to the methods and purpose of excommunication, that all may be done to the glory of God and the salvation of the sinner.

Paul has in this paper probably told us much which was already known to us, yet a review of some of these hints of pastoral theology is by no means out of place from time to

time. The pastor who wishes to abide by God's word must continually study the Bible, to find therein the many truths so necessary for him in his pastoral work. It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful, faithful to his calling, faithful to his congregation, and above all, faithful to his God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

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Note: The books mentioned were especially helpful in  
suggesting passages which might be used to prove the  
various subjects treated.