IN the two previous lectures in this series I have dealt with the letters to the Philippians and the Galatians. For this one I have set down the Corinthian correspondence, a subject of great complexity and difficulty, yet one of endless fascination, and to the serious student greatly rewarding in the light it sheds on the day to day life of the Gentile Church.

The materials for our study are the two canonical Epistles in the New Testament. From evidence supplied by these documents we know that Paul wrote at least four letters to the Church at Corinth during the period with which we are concerned. To avoid confusion I refer to our existing canonical Epistles by the customary names, First and Second Corinthians, while the four letters I call Corinthians A, B, C, and D. The following conclusions about the relations of I and II Cor. to Cor. A, B, C, and D are fairly widely accepted.

Cor. A was written before I Cor. It is possible that a fragment of Cor. A survives embedded in II Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1.

Cor. B is identical with I Cor.

I Cor. was followed by a personal visit to Corinth, which ended in a complete and devastating rebuff for the Apostle. On his return to Ephesus from this ‘Painful Visit’ he wrote Cor. C, the ‘Severe Letter’. It is possible that II Cor. x-xiii is part of this letter.

Cor. D was written on hearing that the severe letter had produced a better frame of mind among the Corinthians and

1 An expansion of the lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on the 8th of January, 1941.

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that relations between them and him were once more to be on
the old footing of mutual confidence and affection. If II Cor.
x-xiii is part of Cor. C, as I am inclined to think, then II Cor.
i-ix will belong to Cor. D. Otherwise our II Cor. as a whole
will be identical with Cor. D.

Now it is clear that one lecture is not enough to deal adequately
with the whole of this correspondence, which is spread over a
considerable period of time and covers a great variety of topics.
I therefore propose a limited objective, namely, the attempt
to picture from the evidence supplied by I Cor. the state of
affairs in Corinth at the time when Paul wrote the letter, and in
particular the divisions within the community and the relation
of those divisions to Paul's own dealings with the Church of
Jerusalem and its leaders. I think that any light we may gain
on conditions at Corinth will also serve to illuminate the much
more obscure and difficult problem of the relations between
Paul and his colleagues at Jerusalem and elsewhere. It seems to
me certain that this period was a critical one for the Apostle,
whose authority and status were constantly being challenged
within and without his Churches, and here in I Cor. as in
Philippians and Galatians we may see many signs that Paul is
on his defence against attempts to question his calling or to
belittle his achievements as a missionary. The defence of Paul's
status, of Paul's Gospel, and of Paul's Churches tends to become
a single and indivisible undertaking.

I shall consequently leave on one side all the rare and refresh-
ing fruit that might be gathered if we approached I Cor. asking
only what we could learn from it about the fundamental principles
of Christian dogma and Christian ethics. Instead I shall try
to relate each part of the letter to the actual situation in which
it was written, in the hope that the situation may help to explain
the letter and that the letter may illuminate the situation and
focus more clearly for us the issues that were at stake. The
letter lends itself readily to this kind of treatment. As you know,
it breaks up on analysis into a number of separate and self-
contained sections, each of which deals with a single topic. It
is clear from the way in which many of these topics are introduced

1 Περὶ δὲ ὅν ἐγράφατε (vii. 1), cf. vii. 25; viii. 1; xii. 1; xvi. 1, 12.
that Paul is answering questions raised in Corinth. In each case we must try to get behind Paul's answer to the minds of those who put the question, to discover what purpose lay behind the enquiry, what answer they hoped to receive, how the question and Paul's answer square with Jewish, Jewish-Christian, and Gentile (Græco-Roman) sentiments and convictions. I venture to think that this method will produce some interesting results. It will raise more questions than it answers, but both questions and answers will be, I hope, worth while.

I Cor. like other Pauline letters opens with the prescript, which runs as follows:

'Paul called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, with brother Sosthenes, to the Church of God which is at Corinth, consecrated in Jesus Christ, called as Saints, with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs and ours, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

The difficulty, and the point of interest, lies in the strange phrase 'with all who call... theirs and ours'. I think it right to take τόπος in the sense which it has in Jewish Synagogue inscriptions—'place of worship'. What Paul means is 'in every church, theirs and ours'. There can be little doubt as to what Paul means by 'ours': it is the churches of his own founding. 'Theirs' will then apply to the other Christian communities founded by other Apostles but owning the same Lord Jesus Christ. The force of the whole prescript is thus to stress the unity of the Church as a whole, and at the same time to insist on the equality of the different communities comprised in the unity. The Corinthian Christians are Saints by calling along with all the others and on precisely the same footing as the others.

The thanksgiving which follows (i. 4-9) again underlines the equal status of the Corinthian Church with the other communities of Christians, this time in respect of gifts and graces. They lack no spiritual endowment (7). This may seem a very odd assertion when we reflect how Paul goes on in this letter to

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1 I am glad to see that Dr. Moffatt assigns the same meaning to the word τόπος. (See his Commentary, p. xxiii.) On the Jewish use of the term see the detached note at the end of this article.
rebuke unsparingly the faults and shortcomings of these same Corinthian Christians. But it is not so strange after all. It is a reminder that we are dealing with a real man who would defend his own against all comers without surrendering his own right to deal faithfully with their faults.

The root of the matter is that all the time Paul is fighting on two fronts. He struggles against those who would assign to the Gentile Christian an inferior status in the Church. As against all such he insists on the absolute equality of all Christians before Christ. On the other hand, he has to contend with those inside the Gentile Christian community who are inclined to play fast and loose with the precious privileges that are theirs as Christians. He fights against those who value Christianity so highly that they grudge its full benefits to the Gentile, and against those Gentiles who fail to realise just how valuable Christianity is, and try to eke it out with remnants of their old pagan inheritance. Against those who cling blindly to the pride and prejudice which they have from the past he declares that Christianity is not primarily a new form of Jewish nationalism or a new development of Greek culture, but an act of God: a proclamation of God’s saving intervention in human affairs, leading to faith in God, which in its turn issues in man’s confession of his faith in God through Jesus Christ, and a new life proper to those who stand in a new relation to God. That is the fundamental thing which is never allowed to get out of the centre of Paul’s picture, and it is an essential part of his greatness that he knows how to keep it in the centre.

But it is a difficult task, the more difficult because of the petty jealousies and divisions that threaten the unity of the Church. To these divisions we are introduced at the beginning of the letter. There is mention of four parties, who take as their rallying cries the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. Paul we know, Apollos we know, Cephas we know (it is the Aramaic name of Peter). But who is the ‘Christ’ who is invoked as the head of a clique in Corinth? The most various answers have been given, and the problem seems as far as ever from solution. It may be that study along the lines already suggested will do something towards clearing up the obscurity.
One party division can, I think, be disposed of fairly easily. The Apollos party does not represent a real split in the community. No doubt there were members of the Corinthian Church who looked to Apollos as their father in the Gospel in the sense that they owed their conversion to Christianity to his preaching. But that did not in any way trench on the authority of Paul. On the contrary, Paul himself recognises Apollos as a useful and valued colleague. ‘I planted, Apollos watered.’ Here there is no rivalry or jealousy: Paul and Apollos collaborate in the work. This is the clear inference to be drawn from iii. 1-9. But in iii. 10-17 there is another, whose name is not mentioned, who is represented as trying to build on Paul’s foundations.\(^1\) What is to be built is the Temple of God, and Paul makes it clear that the community is in fact the Temple. In the community the Spirit dwells. But is this other, who is using Paul’s foundations, really building the Temple or only marring work already done? Paul’s language strongly suggests that he holds the latter view. It also suggests that the mischief is being done where Paul’s work has already been put in—on the foundation. That seems to be the purport of the statement: ‘Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Christ.’ What other foundation would anyone think of laying? There is only one alternative, so far as I know, and that is the one mentioned in Matt. xvi. 18, where Peter is the Rock on which the Church is to be built. Were the Petrine claims already being made in Corinth? And is this ‘other’, who is trying to lay another foundation for the Church, Peter himself or someone acting on his behalf?

These questions at once bring us face to face with the thorny problem of leadership in the primitive community. It is obviously not possible to discuss this adequately here, and I must be content to state briefly some points that seem to be relevant to our main subject.

During the ministry of Jesus the question of leadership did not get past the academic stage. There was only one Leader, whose authority was never questioned from within the group of

\(^1\) That Paul regarded this as a somewhat reprehensible practice is clear from the pains he takes to clear himself of any similar charge in II Cor. x. 12-18 and Rom. xv. 15-24.
His followers. The only disciple to turn against Him had to stab Him in the back. At the same time there was keen interest in the question who should have the second and succeeding places after Jesus, as we learn from the story of the Sons of Zebedee in Mark x. And it is not without significance that John has a leading place in the early chapters of Acts, while James is singled out for destruction by Agrippa. The Sons of Zebedee were clearly not destined to live in obscurity at any time, least of all when Jesus was no longer there in the flesh to hold an undisputed and indisputable primacy.

In the earliest days of the Jerusalem community Peter takes a leading place, and this does not seem to be any merely official status. Rather he is outstanding in virtue of two things: (1) He is the first witness to the Resurrection. For this we have the testimony of Paul, who, when he gave it, had no inducement to go out of his way to add to the prestige of Peter; (2) In the critical early days of the infant Church he displayed high qualities of leadership and personal courage, which doubtless earned for him the confidence of the whole community.

In the record of Acts Peter appears as a leader all through the first half, the last mention of him being at xv. 7. In the earlier chapters he is associated frequently with John, the last mention of the pair being at viii. 4. The order of the names is always Peter, John in the Acts, and this is the case also in Gal. ii. 9. This, for what it is worth, suggests the precedence of Peter over John in the early days.

So far we have not moved outside the circle of the Twelve. A further complication was provided by the fact that Jesus had brothers and sisters, and that the brothers, headed by the eldest, James, joined the Christian community in Jerusalem. The question where in the order of precedence the blood-relations of the Lord should find their place could not be shelved, and it seems to have been settled on the most favourable terms for James and his brethren. In I Cor. ix. 5 Paul speaks of ‘the brethren of the Lord and Cephas’, and in Gal. ii. 9 he names James and Cephas and John, in that order, as the reputed pillars of the Jerusalem community. Both these letters belong to the time round about A.D. 55. But it is clear that James had taken an
important, and eventually perhaps the most important, place in the Church before this date. He appears first at Acts xii. 17, in the story of the imprisonment of Peter by Agrippa and his wonderful escape. This event must fall before A.D. 44, the year of Agrippa’s death. It is noteworthy that in the story it is Peter himself who directs that the news of his escape is to be communicated to ‘James and the brethren’. In the account of the Jerusalem Council in Acts xv the position of James is unchallenged, and the status which he enjoys there seems to me to be confirmed by what Paul writes in Gal. ii. 11 ff., where Peter is thrown into a panic by a message from James.1 It is, I think, possible that one factor that helped to establish the primacy of James was the fact that Peter was a good deal out of Jerusalem, whereas James was always on the spot.

The primacy of James was, I think, established by 48 or 49, the date of the Jerusalem Council. I do not think that it can be traced back to a much earlier time. Paul tells us in Gal. i. 18 that some three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Peter, and then mentions almost casually that he also saw James, whom he lumps with the ‘other Apostles’. The natural interpretation of the text requires us to presume that at that time Peter was still the principal man in the community. If it is right to date the conversion of Paul about A.D. 34, the first visit will fall about 37, and it would seem that by that time James was reckoned with the Apostles : before 44 he had reached such a position that Peter regarded him as at least the second in command : by 48 or 49 he seems to be clearly first among the Apostles. This primacy was, I think, already established in 47 or 48, the date I assign to the second visit of Paul recorded in Gal. ii.

It may be mere coincidence, though I think it is more than that, that soon after we get the evidence of the primacy of James, we also get the evidence of attempts to assert the authority of Peter in the sphere of Paul’s work. Whether Peter in this was seeking a new sphere for himself outside the supervision of James, or acting as James’s agent, I do not attempt to determine. It

1 See my article on the Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians in this BULLETIN, Vol. 24, No. 1, April, 1940.
does, however, seem fairly clear that it was only the fall of Jeru-
salem and the consequent dispersal of the Jerusalem community
that stopped the foundation of a regular Christian Caliphate with
its headquarters in the Holy City. We know how vigorously
Paul resisted any attempt to encroach on his authority: we do
not know how the struggle went in Palestine, or indeed whether
there was any struggle at all. What we do know is that at the
beginning the initiative is in the hands of Peter, and that later it
has passed to James.

With this by way of preface we may proceed to consider
some of the matters dealt with in the body of the letter.

We may begin with the reference to the 'Previous letter'
which I call Cor. A (I Cor. v. 9-13). This reference comes in
the course of Paul's remarks on the case of sexual immorality
in the Corinthian Church; but I very much doubt whether it
was prompted by any knowledge of this particular case. Indeed
I should be inclined to doubt whether it was written during
the Ephesian period. It is more probable that what Paul said
in Cor. A was based on his general knowledge of the Christians
in Corinth. Then the letter may have been written at any time
after the Apostle's departure from Corinth in about A.D. 51.
There is one remark that may be significant. It comes in v. 11,
where Paul forbids association with Church members of bad
character and will not sanction even sitting down to a meal in
their company. Is it too hazardous to suggest that we may have
here an echo of the controversy that shook the Church at Antioch
a short time before and required a Council to settle it (Gal. ii.
11 ff.; Acts xv. 28 f.)? May it not be that Paul was giving in
this letter his idea of what constituted a 'kosher' table for
Christians, with all the emphasis on the company rather than the
viands? The matter comes up again later in I Cor.

Next we may consider the question (vi. 1-8) of Church
members suing one another before civil courts. In protesting
against this practice Paul is at one with Jewish sentiment and
custom. The authoritative Rabbinical rulings on the subject
are conveniently given by Billerbeck\(^1\) while the actual practice
can be learned from Juster.\(^2\) As to the former, it was laid down

\(^{1}\) *Kommentar*, iii. 362 ff.  \(^{2}\) *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, ii. 93-126.
by R. Tarphon and R. Eleazar b. Azariah (both c. A.D. 100) that Jews must not sue one another before pagan courts. The proof text was found in Exod. xxi. 1, and it is clear that the Rabbis were only declaring what had long been the rule. For in Palestine before A.D. 70 'Jewish tribunals had exclusive competence in civil cases where both parties were Jews'.¹ In the Diaspora it seems clear that Jews went to their own courts, which had competence to deal with civil cases where both parties were Jews. It is true that in the pagan world there were mutual benefit societies whose members were bound to abstain from suing one another in the courts, as well as religious brotherhoods in which all disputes between members were resolved by arbitration within the fellowship.² It does not appear, however, that these admirable bodies had had much influence on the practice of the Corinthian Christians, for they had a lawsuit, and the case against these actions in pagan courts is argued from the Jewish and Christian standpoint with no appeal to the example offered by eranoi, sodalitates, and sunodoi. In fact, vi. 1-6 is the kind of criticism that could have been passed by any Jew or Jewish Christian—including of course, Paul himself—on the doings at Corinth. The characteristic voice of Paul is heard in vv. 7-8, where he protests that the real scandal is not that they go to law before the heathen, but that they need to go to law at all. It seems to me likely that in vv. 1-6 we have the kind of criticism that was passed by the Cephas party speaking from the Jewish Christian standpoint. Paul feels bound to agree with the criticism, but himself goes much further. There should be no dispute to bring before any tribunal, domestic or external. There are thus two distinct points:

(a) Christian cases should be tried by Christian courts. (Cf. Matt. xviii. 15-18, which belongs to the strongly Jewish Christian stratum of the Gospel.)

(b) There should be no cases: Christian courts should have perpetual white gloves. This, I think, is Paul's own view.

With chapter vii begin Paul's answers to a series of queries put to him by the Corinthian Church or some part or parts of it. It is in the study of these topics especially that we may hope for

¹ Juster, op. cit., ii. 95. ² See Moffatt's Commentary, in loc.
some light on what was going on behind the scenes at Corinth. Two points are discussed in chapter vii, family life in general, with special regard to the relations of husband and wife, and the peculiar form of family then coming into vogue in which couples lived together in a relation of brother and sister rather than husband and wife. On matters of this sort Jewish principles were well defined. Marriage and the begetting of children were the norm. Mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews were frowned upon. The husband was the head of the family. In this discussion Paul is clearly moving away from the Jewish dislike of mixed marriages. He is equally clearly engaged in an internal conflict between his inherited conviction that the husband has the last word and the new principle, which I think goes back to Jesus himself,¹ that husband and wife in marriage meet on a footing of real equality. Similarly, in the treatment of the question about the parthenoi. The thing itself seems to be contrary to Jewish sentiment, for which the normal sex-relation of husband and wife is a real good, a privilege accorded and a duty imposed by God. The best non-Jewish opinion, on the other hand, as represented by Stoicism, recognised the naturalness of the biological functions involved but deprecated the engagement of the feelings and the consequent loss of the self-contained, self-possessed calm of the philosopher. Paul takes up a position that is in part eschatological: the fashion of this world is passing away and Christians must adapt themselves to that fact. But there is also the recognition of a tension between the claims of family life and the claims of the Lord—between the ‘morality of my station and its duties’ and the ‘morality of grace’. That tension we are still trying to reduce. We may ask who wanted Paul’s guidance about parthenoi. It seems unlikely that the request would come from those with Jewish-Christian sympathies. One is tempted to think that it was the followers of Apollos or the members of the ‘Christ’ party who were concerned about the matter. It may be suggested that at Corinth there was a movement to establish these ‘spiritual’ unions, and that it was being criticised from the Jewish standpoint by the Cephas party. The same party may well have had

¹ See The Mission and Message of Jesus, pp. 428-430.
a good deal to say about the evil of mixed marriages. Paul has to decide between these conflicting views, and he does it in a way of his own.

Next comes the question of meat that had come to the butcher’s block by way of the heathen altar. As we well know the Jewish conscience was extremely sensitive about anything connected with idolatry, and there is an a priori presumption that where this question is raised, Jewish or Jewish-Christian scruples are involved. I have argued elsewhere¹ that this question had been raised at Antioch, as described in Gal. ii. 11 ff., and that the answer had been given in the finding of the Jerusalem Council in Acts xv. These events are prior to the writing of I Cor. Why does Paul now discuss the problem as if the Jerusalem Council had never met? I cannot help thinking that the question was raised at Corinth by the Cephas party, and that Paul’s way of dealing with it is, and is meant to be, a snub. He takes it as a matter of purely domestic concern within the Gentile-Christian community, the implication being that the Jerusalem compromise is doubtless suitable for Churches like that of Antioch with a mixed membership, but that in predominantly Gentile-Christian communities Jewish taboos do not count and Jewish-Christian visitors cannot presume to legislate in these matters for Gentile-Christian Churches.

At this point Paul breaks off into an impassioned defence of himself, his status as an Apostle, and his missionary methods (ch. ix), returning to close the discussion about meats sacrificed to idols in chapter x. It is highly significant that the status of the Apostle is intruded in this way: it means that it is something of critical moment to Paul, something that is very much on his mind, something that touches his deepest feelings. He takes his stand on two facts: the fact that he has seen the Lord and the fact that his mission has produced results. In virtue of these facts he claims equality of status with the other Apostles. He claims rights even though in actual practice he refrains from exercising them. In particular there is the matter of sustentation. Paul lays down the principle that the Apostle is entitled to be maintained by those to whom he ministers. The army lives on

¹ In The Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians.
the country it conquers. This is in accordance with the procedure laid down by Jesus when He sent out the Disciples during the Ministry. (The abuse of this privilege is implied in the Didache, xi ff.) Against this we may set the slight indications that at Jerusalem there was a central fund for the maintenance of the Church personnel there. The tendency seems to have been to replenish this fund by means of tribute paid by other Churches in somewhat the same way that the synagogues of the Diaspora sent their annual tribute to the Temple authorities in Jerusalem. Paul could claim that he stood nearer to the intention of Jesus in this matter.¹

After this long digression about apostolic status, the Apostle returns to the question of meats offered to idols and solves it in his own way. As he sees it, the essential point is not the defence of the abstract principle of pure monotheism but the assertion of the exacting demands of the Christian's fellowship with Christ and His Church. 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons' (x. 21). There is given in Christianity a relation to Christ so intimate that it can be adequately figured only by the relation between the body and its component limbs. Such an intimacy excludes other fellowships. It is not merely that they are wrong: it is that they are impossible, so long as fellowship with Christ continues to be a reality. It is possible to have one or the other, but not both. In stressing this point Paul emphasises what is the specifically Christian

¹ It may be noted here that ix. 5 breaks the thread of the argument—in characteristic Pauline fashion. Here is something else that Paul is entitled to but does not take. It is interesting to note how the other Christian leaders are named: (1) The other apostoloi; (2) The Lord's Brethren; (3) Cephas. Why is Cephas singled out from the apostoloi? Is it that he does in fact stand apart—the rival of the blood-kindred of the Lord? Or is it that he is actually present in Corinth? Or that special claims are being made for him there? Or some combination of these possibilities?

Another interesting point is in ix. 20-23, where Paul deals with the question of what may be called 'missionary tactics'. We may compare and contrast Gal. ii. 14. What criticism is Paul meeting in ix. 20-23? Was it being urged, for example, that missionaries of Jewish origin were not free to abandon the Law, whatever might be the case with their converts? Or that all genuine Apostles strictly observe the Law themselves, whatever concessions they may make to others?
objection to idolatrous practices, as distinct from the general monotheistic position common to Judaism, Christianity, and—later—Islam. Here as elsewhere Paul, even when accepting the Jewish-Christian conclusion, insists on supplying it with an entirely Christian basis. It is fortunate for us that he chose to do so; otherwise we might never have had the glorious digression about the Lord’s Supper in chapter xi, a passage which seems to be suggested to the Apostle by his previous reflections on the subject of communion.

The Eucharist is discussed in xi. 17-34, and in the course of the discussion Paul gives us the oldest account of the Institution of the Sacrament in existence. We cannot, however, stay to discuss Eucharistic origins: we must rather try to see what Paul was fighting against at Corinth. In this passage he arraigns those who treat the Supper as a jollification. Against these he insists on its connexion with the Passion. The following phrases are significant:—

εν τῇ νυκτὶ ἦν παρεδόθη.
eis tihn emhn anâmhn.
ēn tâ ëmô ôímati.
tôn thânaton toû kuroû kataaggellete.

Further, he arraigns those who treat it as a selfish jollification. Against them he insists on its significance as the Sacrament of the unity of the Church, the Body of Christ. Failure to discern—and respect—this Body and this unity entails judgement. It is the same thing as despising the Church of God.

In all this the fundamental thing is the unity of the Church, the body of Christ, and the real fellowship of believers with Him and with one another in the Church. If we ask who are the people that Paul is criticising here, the kind of answer that suggests itself is that the Church feasts at Corinth were open to censure from two sides. To the devout Jewish-Christian the glaring scandal was that it was not a kosher table; to Paul the most disquieting thing was the lack of a true spirit of brotherhood. His whole treatment of the complex issues in these chapters is governed by the conviction that if the spirit of the Church is right, there will be no real difficulty about settling the details of Church life and worship. We must, I think, conclude that the
folk who failed to maintain the true standard were Gentile-
Christians, who had carried over into their new life some of the
characteristics of the cult meals to which they were accustomed
in their pagan days. Paul insists on radical reform, but his
reform is to be based not on Jewish dietary rules but on the true
nature of the Lord's Supper as determined by its Founder in
the circumstances and manner of its foundation. The reformed
practice in Corinth will not be nearer to Judaism: it will be
nearer to that of Christ 'in the night in which He was betrayed'.

Next comes the answer to a question about what are called
'spiritual gifts' (xii-xiv). Paul begins, as usual, by laying down
general principles to serve as a basis for the discussion of the
particular case. He does it this time by setting out a series of
contrasts: first, between the 'dumb idols' and the God who
speaks; next, between the variety of spiritual manifestations
and the one God who is behind all of them; third, between the
variety of spiritual manifestations and the unity of the Body
which they all serve; fourth, between this variety of spiritual
gifts and the one supreme principle of the spiritual life, which is
love. What Paul is arguing in these contrasts seems to be
something like this. Your spiritual life is first, last, and all the
time, Christian. This means that it is founded upon God, who
is the only source of spiritual power; that it is lived in and for
the Church, the Body of Christ; that within the spiritual sphere
there is a hierarchy of values, at the head of which stands love.
Love is not merely the complete satisfaction of the demand of the
Law (Gal. v. 14); it is also the crown and consummation of all
spiritual gifts.

Having laid down these foundation principles Paul is now in
a position to face the specific issue. It is the phenomenon known
as γλωσσολαλία—'speaking with tongues'.

The usual treatment of this part of the Epistle begins by
making glossolalia a symptom of the exuberant religious enthu-
siasm of Paul's Corinthian converts, and seeking its psychological
roots in the mobile excitable Greek temperament. The principal
evidence offered is the ἑδοῖ of the Dionysiac votaries, helped

1 This fourth contrast is set out in chapter xiii, which is properly understood
only when it is held in its context, and studied along with chapters xii and xiv.
out by gleanings from the magical papyri. The latter need not
detain us long. The complicated mess of alphabetic permuta-
tions and combinations, interlarded with battered relics of divine
names, which appears in the papyri is the product of perverted
ingenuity rather than religious ecstasy. It is not glossolalia,
whatever else it may be. Nor is the Bacchic ἐνοι. Ἐνοι is the
cry by whose constant repetition the votaries of the god work
themselves up into a frenzy or ecstasy. The shouting is one of
the causes of the ecstatic condition, not a result of it. But in the
glossolalia of the New Testament the falling into the ecstatic
state comes first, and the strange utterances are the outward
sign of the inward condition. The Spirit falls upon the persons,
and they speak with tongues.

Further, it would seem that the cults which tended towards
the ecstatic were not native to Greece. That of Dionysus was
of Thraco-Phrygian origin, for example. No doubt there were
elements in the Greek temperament which made it responsive
to this kind of thing, but all the evidence that can be brought
forward falls far short of proving that glossolalia originated in
Corinth. On the contrary, the phenomena described by Paul
in I Cor. seem to be akin to those outbursts in the Palestinian
Church, of which we read in Acts. These again have their closest
analogues in the prophetic ecstasies described in the Old Testa-
ment on the one side, and in the accounts of Phrygian Montanism
on the other. The most natural place to seek for the origins of
glossolalia is not Corinth but Jerusalem.

If so, we must go on to ask when it made its way to Corinth.
Most commentaries on the Epistle take it almost for granted
that it is something of old standing in the community there.
It is said that Paul treats the topic as one that will be quite
familiar to the Corinthian Christians. The opposite seems to me
to be the case. He deals elaborately with it as though it were
a new thing about which the Corinthians needed detailed in-
struction and guidance. Moreover, Paul was eighteen months
at Corinth and saw the early growth of the Church. He laid
down the lines along which he wished it to develop. If the
problem of glossolalia had arisen during that time, presumably he
would have dealt with it there and then. Indeed, if his exposition
of the Gospel had included this phenomenon at all, doubtless he would have given some kind of instruction about its place in the scheme of Christian values and the importance to be attached to it in comparison with other aspects of the Christian life. The fact that at this late date he has to begin an explanation is evidence that the thing is something of a novelty in the Corinthian Church. And the fact that Paul can thank God that he has done more of it himself than the entire Corinthian community, strongly suggests that the practice has not yet reached any very imposing proportions there, especially in view of the fact that Paul himself does not appear to have gone out of his way to seek experiences of this sort.

I venture, therefore, to think that what the Apostle is dealing with in these chapters is not a surfeit of glossolalia at Corinth, but a demand which was being made on the Church to produce this particular fruit of the Spirit. I suggest that the demand came from the leaders of the Cephas party, and was part of the concerted move to instil Palestinian piety and Palestinian orthodoxy into the Corinthian Church. Paul’s converts were being told that here was something most important, indeed absolutely essential to the Christian life. Paul had said little or nothing about it when he was with them; what had he to say now? That is the question that is faced and answered in these three chapters, and at the end Paul has made it clear just how important he considers glossolalia to be, and just how many things take precedence of it in the Christian life.

Chapter xv introduces a new problem, that of the resurrection, the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of believers. Once more it turns out that the question is mixed up with the question of Paul’s status as an Apostle.

The resurrection of the Lord is vitally important. The Gospel hangs on it. Paul’s own status as an Apostle hangs on the fact that he is a witness to the resurrection, the last witness and the least of the Apostles, unworthy of the title because he had been a persecutor of the Church. Yet, having received the title, he claims that he has justified its bestowal by his exertions as a missionary, exertions more strenuous and more prolonged than those of the other Apostles.
There were some in Corinth who did not care for this article of the Christian Faith, just as at Athens there were some who at once dismissed it as absurd, while others preserved an open mind (Acts xvii. 32). Now the dogma of the resurrection is just about the most Jewish thing in the whole Christian Gospel. The resurrection of Jesus was an event that took place in Palestine and was vouched for by Jewish witnesses. The belief in a resurrection was a characteristically Jewish belief, which could be traced back certainly as far as the book of Daniel. If we ask who in Corinth would be likely to question the doctrine, the answer is not far to seek. It was certainly not the followers of Cephas or Paul, the first and last witnesses to the appearances of the Risen Lord. We are left with the Apollonians or those who took the name of Christ as their party name. In any case it is the intelligentsia, under whatever name. For them, no doubt, the immortality of the soul was the sound doctrine, the reasonable and philosophical creed, while the idea of resurrection was crude and barbarous. Moreover, the belief in resurrection involved a cosmic eschatology, a religious philosophy of history, and that, too, was unacceptable to the intelligentsia.

It is again noticeable how Paul in defending the doctrine is at pains to safeguard his own independence. To the resurrection of Jesus he is an independent witness. There are others of course of older standing than himself, but his testimony does not derive from theirs, though theirs may serve to corroborate his. The belief in the resurrection of believers he will defend by arguments of his own, and by the reasonableness of his arguments, and not by any appeal to the authority of the older Apostles, he will convince the doubters in Corinth.

Concerning the collection for the Saints I have little to say, and almost all of it has already been said by Karl Holl. The main point, I think, is that in Jerusalem the contributions of the Gentile Churches were regarded as tribute rather than charity. Paul, at the outset of his 'Foreign Mission' campaigns, had agreed to raise these contributions, and he cannot go back on his promise. But he does elsewhere try his hardest to produce proof, apart from the Jerusalem claim to primacy, that it is a

1 Gesammelte Aufsätze, ii. 58-62.
good thing to bring gifts to the original nucleus of the world-wide Church.

We may now attempt to sum up this rather rambling discourse. The probabilities that emerge, and I do not rate them higher than probabilities, are these:

1. At the time when I Cor. was written Paul was engaged in a struggle with agents of Palestinian Jewish Christianity either under the direct leadership or acting in the name of Peter.

2. This struggle had two aspects. Outwardly it was an attack by the representatives of Palestinian orthodoxy on a number of alleged abuses and laxities in the Corinthian community. Beneath this surface it was an attack on Paul himself, as the person chiefly responsible for Corinth, and a challenge to his status and authority as an Apostle.

3. This latter fact explains why, wherever Paul finds himself forced to endorse the criticisms of the Cephas party, he is careful to find his own grounds for agreeing with them.

4. The operations of the Cephas party look very like an attempt to establish in the Gentile churches an authority superior to Paul's, thus going behind the agreement reached at the beginning of the campaign and described in Gal. ii. What were the precise relations between Cephas and his followers at Corinth, and James and the church of Jerusalem, remains an unsolved but fascinating problem.

5. We may hazard a guess about the nature of the 'Christ party'. It seems to stand at the opposite extreme to the Cephas party. I should be very much inclined to think that they were a group for whom Christ meant something like 'God, freedom, and immortality', where 'God' means a refined philosophical monotheism; 'freedom' means emancipation from the puritanical rigours of Palestinian barbarian authorities into the wider air of self-realisation; and immortality means the sound Greek doctrine as opposed to the crude Jewish notion of the Resurrection. For Paul this kind of thing was a deadly peril, more deadly than the threat to his own status involved in the attacks of the Cephas party. He is forced to fight on two fronts, and his most serious difficulties—and our most difficult problems of exegesis—
arise from that fact. His solution of the difficulties may rank as one of the major triumphs of his career.

Detached Note on the Jewish use of מִקְרוֹם, מָנוֹרָה, and תוֹפָס as designations for places of worship.

The following references and materials may be of interest:—


'It is interesting to note that these [the Synagogue] inscriptions almost invariably designate the synagogues by the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek words for “place” (τόπος, מִקְרוֹם, מָנוֹרָה).

Examples: (References are given to S. Klein’s *Jüdisch-Palästinisches Corpus Inscriptionum* and to J. B. Frey’s *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*).

Kafr Bir‘im (Klein, p. 8), מִקְרוֹם שִׁירָאֵל.

‘Alma (Klein, p. 6), מִקְרוֹם חוֹזֶה עֶז.

‘Ain Dûk (Klein, p. 3), II. 6 f., דֶּל[כ] הַבָּדֶנֶן אֲתָרַה.

‘Ain Dûk (Na‘aran), another inscr., I. 3. בָּדוֹן אֲתָרַה.

Stobi (Sukenik, pp. 79 f., Frey, i. 694), τοῦς μὲν οἴκους τῷ ἄγιῳ τόπῳ κτλ.


El Hammeh (Sukenik, op. cit. p. 69), . . . ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄγιου τοῦτου ανενε[ςεν τὸ κτίσμα τῆς κώμης κτλ.

See also S. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertümner*, on the names of the synagogues. The following examples are noteworthy:—


Philo, *Quod omn. prob.*, c. 12, εἰς ἱεροὺς . . . τόπους αὐτοῦ καλοῦνται συναγωγαί.

*In Flacc.*, c. 7 (§ 49).
"Αγιός τόπος is used of a synagogue between Gaza and Jaffa (Clermont-Ganneau, Rec. d’Arch. Or., iv. 139, No. 8), and of a synagogue in Antioch (Chrysostom, adu. Iud., i. 5).


We may ask whether there are other traces of the possible use of this idiom in the New Testament. I am strongly inclined to think that Mk. vi. 11 is a case. The two accounts of the ‘sacrament of rejection’ in Mk. and Q are not perfectly clear about details, but there are indications which suggest that the ceremony is to take place inside the town. This is clearest in Lk. x. 10 (Q); and Mk. vi. 11, taken by itself, is consistent with that. The interpretation will then be that the disciples are to proclaim their message in the synagogue. If they are rejected, they come out of the synagogue (τόπος) into some open space in the town and there perform the ceremony.

Lk. xi. 1 is a possibility; though I do not know of any evidence that the synagogue was particularly used as a place for private devotions.

It is possible that the use of τόπος has been extended to cover Christian places of worship in I Cor. i. 2; II Cor. ii. 14; I Thess. i. 8; I Tim. ii. 8. The example given by Robert, mentioned above, is presumably neither Jewish nor Christian.