

Record of Sermons delivered during the month of
April 2022

(added progressively for each Sunday)

(see following pages)

1 Corinthians 11:17-34
The Lord's Table – Part 2

per S Olyott

1 Corinthians 11:24

²⁴ **and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you.**

This passage, verses 17-34 of 1 Corinthians chapter 11, will occupy us for 3 Sundays. We commenced last week with the plan that we would consider it in two main parts. The first was exposition – where we seek to clarify, verse by verse, what Paul is saying. Then we will go on to the application – what it means to us.

Having commenced the exposition, verses 17- 26, we found it convenient to recognise two headings: *rebuke* and *reminder*. Today we continue from verse 27 to the end of the chapter to consider what can be called *regulation*. Each of these headings having to do with the single circumstance: The practice of the divided Corinthian Church which saw them so distorting the Lord's Supper, that it left the participants worse off than before they came to the formal gathering of that church.

Exposition continued.

3. Verses 27-34. Regulation. This is where the Apostle Paul regulates how the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper should be conducted. He's rebuked the church for doing it incorrectly. He's reminded them of the original institution. He now regulates how the Lord's Supper is to be done, and with what spirit, it is to be observed in the local church. Because it's impossible that they should consider going on as they have been. The Supper is charged with deep meaning. With sacred meaning. It can't continue to be observed as it has been. Think about what it stands for. The fact that it signifies. The blessings of which it speaks. The Person who is the centre of it.

It becomes immediately obvious to any Christian conscience, that the Lord's Supper must be observed with reverence and with care. That's precisely the point which he makes from verse 27 on wards.

"In the light of what I'm saying," he says, "you can't observe the Lord's Supper just as you please. You must approach the table thoughtfully and carefully." What does this word 'unworthy', in verse 27, mean? Many Christians stay away from the table because of verse 27. They say, "we are all unworthy. God is holy, I am unholy. Christ is the Lord of Glory. My life is totally inglorious. I'm not worthy to eat at table with the Son of God. Everyone is unworthy. Maybe there were some special saints of the past who were sufficiently worthy – but certainly none of us."

"Ordinary Christians aren't worthy to eat at that Table." They argue, and so they stay away until the day they die.

It's true that we are all unworthy in that sense. None of us deserve the grace of God which has been shown to us in salvation. But what Paul means here by unworthy, is the manner in which we conduct ourselves.¹ He's not saying that you are an unworthy person so don't come to the Table. He's going to encourage you to come to the Table. But he is saying that we cannot come to the Table – must not come to the Table – we should never come to the Table – in an unworthy manner. In other words: in a way that is not in keeping with what the Table stands for. Which was the error of those Corinthians.

It proclaims Christ's broken body, spilt blood! Look how they came to the Table: that was totally out of keeping – unfitting – it was horrible! You can't observe Christ's Table like that.

“Therefore,” he says, “if you come to the Table like that. You actually share the guilt of those who broke His body and spilt His blood. No”, he says, verse 28, “nobody should come to the Table as a ‘matter of course’,”
How often it happens! Just another Service. “But you must come to the Table by examining yourself first.”

What is the ordinance? Why is it given? Do I today have a frame of mind in keeping with what this table stands for? Do I sincerely desire to thankfully commemorate and display before the world the Lord's death? Do I desire to publicly proclaim that I am in covenant with Christ and God through Jesus' blood? Do I desire to acknowledge before the world that I am in fellowship with the 'body of Christ' as here assembled? Do I, in coming to this Table, earnestly expect the other great fact – the future coming of the Saviour? Am I thoughtfully, pondering and considering exactly what I am doing?

That's what the Apostle is urging us to do in verse 28! That's the sort of frame of mind and spirit which he is laying upon us, as the way Christian people should come to the Table.

“You don't just turn up and eat your food and drink your wine and have no other thought for anybody or anything. It's the Lord's Table!” That's why Paul said that it wasn't the Lord's Supper in the way they were eating. They had no thoughts about the Lord. The centrality of the presence of the absent Lord was not something that crossed their minds. The person who comes to the Table like that, verse 29, is in danger. Because he doesn't distinguish the Lord's Table from other meals. It's ordinary bread. But that bread stands for something. Am I deeply aware, when I take the bread, of what it stands for? Because if you just treat the Lord's Table like any other table, treating this symbolic meal like any other meal, then you'll come under the measure of condemnation which that act

¹ It is interesting to note that the ESV has translated the Greek at this point as 'unworthy manner', rather than 'unworthily', as in the KJV. Since the Greek word ἀναξίως (anaxiōs) – 1 Occurrence – is clearly an adverb, it qualifies the verbs eat and drink, indicating how this is to be done and does not refer to the nature or merit of the person doing them.

deserves.

“Precisely, for that reason,” says Paul, verse 30, “some of you in the church have ill-health.” Please note this verse because we are soon coming to Chapters 12 & 13 and we’ll be talking about the gifts of healing – amongst other things. But in a church, where there were gifts of healing, there were those who were ill! Some so ill that they had died. They were ill and died. Not because they had over-eaten or were drunk, but because it was a punishment – a chastening – from God for their wrong attitude and their wrong approach to the Lord’s Table. God had stepped in, with judgement, in this life, to afflict some of the members of that church with illness and to remove some of the members of the church from this life. That’s the strength of the verb ‘died’ (sleep in KJV) in verse 30.

“If we put a critical eye on ourselves when we came to the Table,” verse 31, “we wouldn’t fall into those judgements. But when God does cause sickness and death amongst us. It’s not to ruin us. He brought sickness into the lives of some of you in Corinth, so that you might repent of your spiritual carelessness. He’s removed some members of the Corinthian church, by illness, to show that you just can not come to the Lord’s Table thoughtlessly and blasphemously. It’s not to condemn it, along with the world, it’s a chastening and correcting work, that God has acted like this in the church.”

“Therefore,” he says, verse 33, “finish with this disgraceful scramble that I have referred to. Reform your attitude to the Table of the Lord. Remember that the purpose of this Table isn’t to satisfy your hunger. That doesn’t come into the figuring at all. If you want to eat: that’s something you put right in the home. But if you come together in the way that I’ve described, then you will come together in a way that doesn’t result in your condemnation.” Verse 34.

“Of course,” he says, “What I have said is not all that needs to be said!” But Paul has told us enough: how to observe the Lord’s Table, in a way that does not bring down the judgement of God. A way which is glorifying to God and in a way which is edifying and helpful to the Christian church. There were some other details which Paul was going to bring to the Corinthian church, whenever he was to visit it. They weren’t urgent matters. But here in this chapter he’s dealt with the most urgent and important things that need to be said about the Lord’s Supper. The rest can wait until he returns.

So runs the passage, briefly. That’s the exposition. In simple terms what the passage means. Now we come (this week and next) to Application, because we need to discover: what this means in practice. What it means for us in the 21st Century.

Application:

We are guided in this with two questions:

1. The first question is this: Can you now see the error of the Mass? Some professing, reformed and evangelical Christians sometimes go to a Mass. Sometimes there are family ‘pressures’ at play. Members of the Protestant

church who have difficulties in this regard are in need of our support and prayers. But the starting point, in the light of this passage, is to acknowledge the error inherent in the practice of the Mass. We also must rejoice in the knowledge that many Reformed Christians have come to Christ having previously had a Roman Catholic background.

We don't rejoice that they have become Protestants! The road to hell is very wide and there are as many Protestant vehicles as RC ones on that road. Our rejoicing is in that they have eventually come to Christ. But nevertheless it would be a great tragedy if the ideas that they used to entertain, about the Mass, have not been completely left behind. Such that they still have some of those ideas as they come to the true Lord's Supper. It would be very sad and it's important for their Christian growth that the error of the Mass is seen and the truth about what the Lord's Supper is, is truly recognised.

Also most of us know RC neighbours, friends and relatives. We know that they consider the Mass to be of immense importance. Many of them have put their hopes for salvation into the hands of the Mass. How can we help them? How can we witness to them? How can we speak meaningfully to such people? They who rely on the Mass for their hopes for heaven. If we ourselves have not understood the error of the Mass.

There is sufficient in this passage to show to us what a gross error the Mass is.

But first, we should be clear about what the RC church teaches about the Mass. (Taken from official RC catechisms.²)

“The blessed Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. In the holy Eucharist the entire substance of bread and wine, in all its reality, is changed into the blood and body of Christ. The change that takes place is most suitably described by the word transubstantiation. The bread and wine are changed into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, when the words of consecration, spoken by Christ at His last Supper, are pronounced by the priest, in Holy Mass. Christ's body and blood remain present in the blessed Eucharist as long as the appearance of the bread and wine remain. We are bound to give to the blessed Eucharist the divine worship that we give to God alone. For the blessed Eucharist is God. The Mass is not a mere remembrance of Calvary, but the actual re-presentation of Christ's death. The continuation of His sacrifice and, in itself, that same sacrifice. The Mass is the chief and central act of Catholic Worship. The greatest act of worship that can be offered to God. An infinite source of graces for the living and dead. The value of a Mass is without limit because it is the same as the sacrifice of Calvary. So that in every Mass, the infinite merits of Christ are applied to our finite souls in the measure of our dispositions.”

That is the official dogma of the RC church!

Now consider this. If what the Apostle Paul teaches is different from what the RC church teaches one of them is wrong. You must either decide that the Scripture is true and the church false, or the church true and the Scripture false. But both can not be true if they contradict. There is sufficient in comparing the two to show to you that the doctrine of the Mass is not the doctrine of the Apostle.

Look at verse 24: ²⁴ *and when he had given thanks, ...* Now listen to what the RC church says: “The bread and wine are changed into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, when the words of consecration, spoken by Christ at His last Supper, are pronounced by the priest,“ ... Now if Jesus, when He took the bread, giving thanks – pronounced words of consecration – those words of consecration, if you look at verse 24, are not to be found. That is what some have said, “Is an unpardonable omission”, if the Lord Jesus Christ was actually consecrating the bread, in a way which priests were to follow throughout the Centuries since.

We have no idea what the Lord Jesus said. All we know is that the Greek verb tells us that it was a giving of thanks. It was not a pronouncement of consecration! The actual words are not recorded. Which is unthinkable if we were to consecrate the bread through the ‘long centuries’ since. It is unthinkable that the very words that we needed (to justify this practice) would have been left out.

Here we pause for today, to continue next week. Noting that the case for the rejection, on Biblical grounds, of the RC Mass is still to be completed then.

[2275]

Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.

1 Corinthians 11:17-34
The Lord's Table – Part 3

per S Olyott

1 Corinthians 11:28

²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

This passage is taking 3 Sundays of consideration. Last week we paused as we were considering Biblical references that clearly show that the RC doctrine of the Mass is grossly in error. By comparison of the RC doctrinal statement and verse 24, we have found we must reject transubstantiation and the associated consecration of the bread and wine.

We continue to consider verse 24: ²⁴ ... *“This is my body ... That is made the ‘proof text’ of transubstantiation! But think about it. Jesus was there in the body. It’s impossible for those who sat (or reclined) around the table to identify the bread that they ate with His body. They knew as they took the bread, that the bread that they took was not actually His body because He was there in the body. In their minds they didn’t identify that bread with the actual flesh of Christ because He was standing there in the flesh. It was obvious to them that he was speaking about that bread broken as a symbol of His body about to be broken. They understood the words, “this is my body”, the same as they had understood the words, “I am the light of the world”; “I am the vine”; “I am the door”.*

And the same way as we understand the words of 1 Corinthians 10:4, which say, ⁴ *and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and **the Rock was Christ**.* We don’t believe, for a moment, that that rock in the wilderness was Christ. We don’t believe that God, the Son, became a rock! We do believe that God, the Son was the source of all their blessings, some of which flowed to them in the form of water, from that rock. But we don’t have a false literalism. The same as when I pick up a photo and show it to you, you might say it’s ‘so-and-so’. But you don’t mean it’s really him! But none the less it is a vivid ‘picture’, of a reality that exists, that is him. That sort of language we all use. That sort of language the bible uses.

Still in 24: ²⁴ ... *“... Do this in remembrance of me³.”* Which makes it quite plain that when the disciples broke bread in the future the Lord, Himself, would be absent! One of the great concepts of the Communion Service is that the Lord is present, but also that He is absent. Such that we observe such Services until He is no longer absent. *Until He comes!* He’s ‘present’ because He’s always spiritually present, where His people meet. This bread is a symbol of His body and this wine is a symbol of the covenant in His blood. But He Himself, bodily, is absent. The glory of the Communion Service is that we sit at table with the ‘absent Lord’,

with His spiritual presence. This doesn't agree with the concept which stresses nothing else except the presence of the Lord in the form of bread and wine.

Verse 25: Which did Jesus say? Did He say, "This is my blood."? Or did He say, "... this is the new covenant in my blood."? If Jesus really wanted us to believe transubstantiation – that that wine is actually His blood. Surely He would have said to His church as He took the cup, "This is my blood". But that's precisely what He did not say. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." It's quite plain that He did not require us to believe that the wine in the cup was His actual physical blood – just with the appearance and taste of wine.

It's quite plain that He gave both the bread and the wine to the disciples. Verse 26 also makes it clear that the 'early church' ate the bread and drank the wine. While Paul's warning in verse 27, is meaningless unless the people in the church both ate the bread and drank the wine. How can you drink in an unworthy manner if you are in a church where the ordinary members are forbidden to drink it! Once again the Mass is seen to be completely different from the Lord's Supper.

Look again at verse 25. 'Do this to remind me', is not what it says. It says, 'Do this ... in remembrance of me'. The Supper is for our remembrance. It's not to remind God. The Supper is to remind me! It's not a memorial sacrifice to remind God of His sacrifice on Calvary. It's a memorial Supper to remind me of Christ's death for His church on Calvary. It's a memorial meal to remind us.

Verse 26: ²⁶ *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.* The Roman church takes that to mean that the Communion Service is a re-enactment – a re-presentation – of Calvary. (As we can notice from their Catechism read last week.⁴) The Mass is like an old fashioned "Passion Play". Where everything that took place is acted out again. That's what the Roman church teaches. But that's not what Paul says! For many in the past – who only had the KJV – will notice the word 'shew'⁵ in verse 26. This is one of the normal words used in the New Testament for the preaching of the Gospel. It means preach, pronounce (or as the ESV renders it – proclaim). You preach and proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Not re-enact and re-present!

In addition note the word in verse 26 rendered as *shew* in the early English

4 "The blessed Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. In the holy Eucharist the entire substance of bread and wine, in all its reality, is changed into the blood and body of Christ. The change that takes place is most suitably described by the word transubstantiation. The bread and wine are changed into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, when the words of consecration, spoken by Christ at His last Supper, are pronounced by the priest, in Holy Mass. Christ's body and blood remain present in the blessed Eucharist as long as the appearance of the bread and wine remain. We are bound to give to the blessed Eucharist the divine worship that we give to God alone. For the blessed Eucharist is God. The Mass is not a mere remembrance of Calvary, but the actual re-presentation of Christ's death. The continuation of His sacrifice and, in itself, that same sacrifice. The Mass is the chief and central act of Catholic Worship. The greatest act of worship that can be offered to God. An infinite source of graces for the living and dead. The value of a Mass is without limit because it is the same as the sacrifice of Calvary. So that in every Mass, the infinite merits of Christ are applied to our finite souls in the measure of our dispositions.

5 **καταγγέλλετε** (katangellete) — 1 Occurrence: From *kata* and the base of *aggelos*; to proclaim, promulgate -- declare, preach, shew, speak of, teach.

translation. Nowhere in the New Testament is a word⁶, with the same root, used in the sense of being towards God. But in every occasion, in the whole Scripture, the word is used about an activity towards men. So when we observe the Lord's Supper we are not, by that, re-presenting Calvary to God. But we are preaching the death of Christ to the world which observes us.

Of course Calvary can't be re-presented. Scripture insists that it is once for all. And of course we don't have to re-present Christ's sacrifice to God, because Christ is in heaven as a man with the marks of His crucifixion, still upon Him. The Supper is a vivid proclamation of the Lord's death.

Verse 34: Paul says, "The rest I will set in order, when I come." The RC church incredibly preaches this: The Apostles taught the church the doctrine of the Mass. It's not found in Scripture, but there were unwritten Apostolic teachings. Paul wrote down here things that were necessary for the church, but the remainder of the things that were necessary for the church to know, he taught the church by word of mouth. That's what they teach!

One of the things that the Apostles taught the church by word of mouth, says the Roman church, is the doctrine of the Mass. Incredible! We read in that example of a catechism of theirs this: The Mass is the chief and central act of Catholic Worship. The greatest act of worship that can be offered to God. Is it really feasible that the Apostle would have written down some things about the Lord's Supper, but the things that are **the greatest act of worship that a Christian can offer**, he didn't write down about at all and he kept those things back until he later visited the Corinthian church! Is it feasible?

Here we find ourselves agreeing with the original doctrinal standards⁷ of the Church of England. There is an irony in this Century, where we believe their Standards, while sadly many of the Anglican clergy no longer follow them.

Transubstantiation, (says the old Article 28) that is, the change of the substance of the bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture; overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament; and have given occasions to many superstitions. And Article 31 includes: The sacrifice of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.

Now, as originally promised, we come to the second point of application. Which is:

2. Do you now have most of your questions about the Lord's Table answered?
We review 5 such questions.

6 Strong's Concordance list 18 instances: Acts 3:24; 4:2; 13:5, 38; 15:36; 16:17, 21; 17:3, 13, 23; 26:13; Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 2:1; 9:14; 11:26; Phil 1:17, 18; Col 1:28.

7 What became the 39 Articles under Elizabeth the First for the State church of England is in no conflict with the Westminster Standard. The lengthy and thorough development of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms took as its starting point the 39 Articles and built on them.

I. Where should the Lord's Table take place?

In the 'gathered' church. There's no proven occasion in the New Testament, where the Lord's Table took place anywhere else. Except the original institution where the Head of the Church met with the Apostles of the Church. Paul here, takes it for granted, and assumes, that the Lord's Supper takes place when the church comes together. His quarrel is not with where the Lord's Supper took place. But how the Corinthians observed it in the church.

The Lord's Supper is not something for conventions, Ministers' Fraternal's, private groups or the Minister to administer to one church member. The Lord's Supper is a church ordinance and is to be observed in the church.

II. Who should take part in the Lord's Supper?

Amongst Ministers and Pastors generally there is a wide range of views and practices. Some consider solely verses 28 & 29. They consider that it is up to the conscience of the individual. However when it comes to the other Sacrament, Baptism of adults, that would not be offered to someone who 'just felt like it'. Who is the table for? It's for the redeemed. It's for those for whom the body was broken. For those for whom the blood was shed. Those who are the mystical 'body' of Christ. It's for those who are waiting for the coming of Christ. It's for the church. It's for the whole church. Which was part of Paul's complaint about them in Corinth because they were causing some to be left out. That is it's not an optional extra. Part and parcel of the Christian life. Part and parcel of local church life.

The pattern displayed in the early church was that a person was converted, was baptised as a 'sign & seal' of this; joined a local church; and in the church as professing Christians – entered into the life of that congregation. Including observance of the Lord's Supper. The principal requirement is that the person possesses true regeneration of the once fallen human 'nature'. Which is recognised by the 'marks'⁸ of a Christian (more than a mere verbal 'confession' with no evidence of the 'marks'). Remember that 'ministers' with oversight of His church have the right – the duty – to make sure that for those for whom it is impossible to recognise the 'marks' of a Christian, that they are excluded from participating – though not from attending.

1 Corinthians, Chapter 5, comes before Chapter 11 remember. There we read that there are certain people who are not to be admitted to the fellowship of the church and therefore not to be admitted to the supper.

III. What manner? What is the administration of the Supper?

It's really quite simple. Bread is taken; thanks are given; bread is broken; bread is distributed; bread is eaten. Wine is taken in the same way, wine is distributed; wine is drunk. Very simple. No parades; no little wafers; no procession; no elevating. Just a simple symbolic meal, where the 'family' gather.

8 See John's fist letter and the various analyses that we have provided previously.

IV. What is the meaning?

We call to mind the fact. We call to mind the substitution. We call to mind the covenant blessings. We call to mind the consummation in glory. I eat because it was for me. We eat because it was for us. I eat relishing the fact that the substitution was for me. The covenant blessing is for me. Christ is coming for me. I repose my soul on Him again. I love Him, I adore Him, I feed on Him, I embrace Him, I call on Him. I love Him and pour down tears because it was for me. For me!

But we do it together because it was for us. For us! Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. So it's His body, His blood, His people, His coming. Him that we think of as we 'sit' at the Table.

V. In what spirit do we eat?

Believing the fact, we come with self examination (verse 28). Believing the fact. Having faith in the substitution. Embracing the covenant blessings. Longing for the 'coming'. Being in fellowship with the people of the church. In short, being fully aware of what this meal is and what it is for. Not treating it as just another Service or as a 'matter or course'. Rather, recognising it as something special and distinctive, being around this Table.

And avoiding the reaction against the sentimentalism of Rome causing us to forget and overlook, what a marvellous means of grace the Lord's Table is.

How is love for Christ stirred up? By the Table. How are the great Gospel centralities set vividly before our minds? By the Table. How is our expectation of the advent excited? By the Table. How is love for Brethren made more embracing? By the Table. To abuse the Table, like the Corinthians, and like the Roman church, is sin! To come to the Table thoughtlessly – not thinking of what it is about – is sin, which brings down judgement. To neglect the Table and never, or seldom, to go there – even though it was instituted and commanded by the Head of the Church, and the Saviour of the 'body' – is sin!

But to sit at the Table with my absent Lord and His people (His 'body') to thankfully remember His Cross; to look forward to His coming; to embrace His 'body' is one of the greatest privileges we have. So our feeble love is fed until He come.

[2341]

Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.

1 Corinthians 12:1-31
Spiritual Gifts

per S Olyott

1 Corinthians 12:26

26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

We have been working our way through Paul's first recorded letter to the Christian church in Corinth and have arrived at Chapter 12 – some 2/3 of the way through the whole letter.

This Chapter starts a completely new subject. Paul at this point in his letter is dealing with questions or problems which he knew to be present in the Corinthian church. It's almost certain that they had contacted him with questions. So he's had a 'check list', from which he is ticking off answers as he writes his letter. This is why, as he starts this Chapter, he says, ¹ *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, and sisters I do not want you to be uninformed.* This Chapter and the next two are all on the subject of *Spiritual Gifts*.

We begin by doing a survey of the Chapter, since there may not be a generally existing knowledge of it. This will help us approach what is an important Chapter. Then we will seek to see why it is so important. Especially in the light of what popular opinion⁹ – which is commonly abroad – is saying about it.

The survey: The first three verses are an introduction. Paul will find it necessary to rebuke as he continues, so as usual he prepares his readers for this by assuring them of his affection for them. So he begins in a brotherly spirit, saying that as far as spiritual gifts are concerned I don't want you to be misinformed. Because he says, verse 2, "Being misinformed, is a thing of the past for a Christian. Previously you worshipped sticks and stones. Dumb idols. Why on earth did you worship such sticks and stones? Because you were led into it. Because you were carried away with that sort of mindless religion. There were spiritual powers which drove you to worship those sticks and stones. You couldn't explain what you were doing or why you were doing it. The whole thing was mindless and irrational. You were just swept into it."

"Well being swept into anything is a thing of the past.

As we come to talk about spiritual gifts, I don't want you to be swept into any views about spiritual gifts. I want you to come to this subject thoughtfully, intelligently and with minds that are informed." He says.

Verse 3. We are to realise that they had come out of pagan religion. Did the pagan religion 'speak in tongues'? Yes. Was there 'speaking in tongues' going on in the Christian church at that time? Yes. Did the pagan religion have prophets? Yes. Did the early church have prophets? Yes. Were there miraculous cures going on in the

pagan temple? Yes. Were there miraculous cures going on in the Christian church? Yes.

So they had a problem when it came to spiritual gifts. How could they tell when this particular prophecy or this particular speaking in tongues or this particular miraculous cure was of the Spirit of God or not.

“The answer,” he says, “You don’t ask what is going on and you don’t ask how you feel, when these things are going on. The way to tell what is not of the Spirit and what is of the Spirit is: you give it a ‘doctrinal test’. You ask, what do they say? Do they acknowledge the Lordship of Christ? Not just in words but in practice? What is not of the Spirit of God is revealed in not acknowledging the Lordship of Christ.” Of course an unconverted man can say the three words, ‘Jesus is Lord’ but he doesn’t know the meaning of those three words in his life. Whatever is of the Spirit of God, acknowledges the Lordship of Christ! Whatever has a low view of Christ is not of God. Whatever has a high view of Christ is of God.”

That’s Paul’s introduction to this whole subject of spiritual gifts. The rest of the topic must be understood in the light of this introduction. Many have failed to do this!

Now Paul in verses 4 to 7, tells them what spiritual gifts are. Verse 4: There are diversities of gifts. Verse 5: Administrations. Verse 6: Operations.

The word gifts in verse 4 refers to a gift which you don’t deserve. Something that is bestowed upon you as an act of God’s Grace. So certain people have gifts given to them by God. What sort of gifts? Verse 5, ‘administrations’ (KJV)– the Greek word¹⁰ meaning ‘to serve’. Certain people were gifted in serving the church in a certain way. Verse 6, ‘operations’ (KJV) – the Greek¹¹ here is for ‘activities’. That is, certain people were gifted by the Spirit of God to serve the church by means of certain activities. That’s what spiritual gifts are.

Look again at verses 4, 5 & 6. ‘Varieties’ (diversities, & differences in KJV) are mentioned. All sorts of spiritual gifts in the church. All sorts of different activities. People were gifted in all sorts of different ways. There are all sorts of different ways of serving and benefiting the church. One was gifted one way and another one, a completely different way. All sorts of gifts. All serving the church.

They’re of a public nature – done for the common good – verse 7. The manifestation of the Spirit! Also every person has one or some. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every member. It’s all for the good of the church! ⁷ *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

There are all these different gifts and activities which people are able to perform. They are of a public nature – nothing private about spiritual gifts in the New Testament (no

10 **διακονιῶν** (diakoniōn) — 1 Occurrence. c. of the ministration or service of all who, endowed by God with powers of mind and heart peculiarly adapted to this end, endeavor zealously and laboriously to promote the cause of Christ among men, as apostles, prophets, evangelists, elders, etc.: 1 Corinthians [12:5](#);

11 **ἐνεργημάτων** (energēmatōn) — 1 Occurrence.

such thing as a privately executed spiritual gift – it doesn't exist – it's a man-made idea.).

Who is the author of these gifts? Verse 4: Spirit; verse 5: the same Lord; verse 6: the same God. The Spirit, the Lord, God – these gifts are Trinitarian. They come from the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ and they come from God, the Father. They are gifts from the Triune God to individuals so that they are capable of performing certain activities for the good of the church. That's what spiritual gifts are.

We now continue with verses 8-11, in our survey, which gives some examples of the spiritual gifts which were then current in the Corinthian church. This isn't a comprehensive list, because at the end of the chapter the Apostle will talk about some other gifts – which aren't mentioned in these verses. (There are also others mentioned in Romans 12 and Ephesians 4.) So here we have just some examples of spiritual gifts. "They are all different," he says, in verse 11, "but they all have the same source. Who decides who has which gift? The Spirit Himself."

"You can't say, 'I'm going to have such and such a gift.' It's the Spirit who decides which member of Christ 'body' has which gift."

Let's look at some of the examples: Verse 8, *the utterance of wisdom*. Some people could stand in the church and give an authoritative statement of wisdom. While another could give knowledge in a similar way. Verse 9, faith! Some people had more than 'saving faith'. They had a faith that was associated with miraculous activities. 'Faith that could move mountains', as it were. Others had gifts of healing. Some people had the power, under God, to effect miraculous cures. Verse 10. ¹⁰ *to another the working of miracles, ...* Notice that there are other miracles, beside cures, in the New Testament. Stilling of storms; feeding of 5000; smiting Elymas the sorcerer *blind*; smiting Ananias and Sapphira dead. There were some people who were able to exercise such miraculous powers!

Further in verse 10, prophesy. Remember this isn't just preaching or witnessing, in New Testament days. Prophecy was speaking the very words of God to the people of God with all the authority of God in such a way so as to be binding on all the people of God. In that early church some people had this gift of prophesy. They could speak to the church the very words of God, with the authority of God, in the way that it was binding on the whole church of God.

Then there was the discerning of Spirits. Some people had infallible discernment of truth and error. And the gift of tongues. Some people were able to speak actual languages which they had never learned and these were messages of Divine Revelation to the church. However how could such messages be understood so as to be received by the church? Again in verse 10. Some people had the gift of interpreting 'tongues'.

Notice therefore in Paul's list of examples two sorts of gifts. There were some sorts of people who could speak to the church: "Thus saith the Lord!" They were vehicles of

Divine Revelation. And there were other people who could infallibly – whenever they wished, under God – work various sorts of miracles.

Now in our survey we work through verses 12-20 to discover the purpose of these gifts.

What did God give these gifts for? Verse 12: ¹² *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.* The Church – the Corinthian church, any church – is the spiritual ‘body’. Every single person in it is an ‘organ’ of the whole – like a body. A simple illustration to understand. How do you become a member of that body? Verse 13 tells us: you are baptised into it by the Holy Spirit. “Every Christian,” he says, “has been baptised into the ‘body’ and every Christian has been made to drink of the one Spirit – that applies whether you were a Jew or a Gentile a bond-man or a free-man! You’ve all – if you are Christians – had this experience, of the baptism of the Spirit which made you members of the ‘body’.”

He goes on in verses 14-20 to amplify this illustration of a ‘body’.

“There is only one body, but there are many organs. Each of you,” he says to the Corinthians, “is an organ in the ‘body’. There’s unity: because there is one body. There’s diversity: because there are different gifts. The reason you have a particular gift. Is because God has set you in a ‘body’ in a particular place. He did it as it pleased Him. And just because you haven’t got somebody else’s gift you can’t say you aren’t a member of that ‘body’. Not having a spectacular gift doesn’t put you out of the ‘body’.”

That explains, quite easily, the purpose of the gifts. The gifts exist for the ‘body’. Why does one have their eyes? To preserve and serve the body. Why have feet? To carry the body around. Why hands? So the body can serve and be served. Hearing? (and so on) Every organ in the body exists not for the sake of itself, but for the sake of the whole body. So, every single spiritual gift that Paul is talking about is for the good of the ‘body’. Not for the good of the individual who has the particular gift. It’s for the benefit of the ‘body’! That’s the purpose of the gifts.

He closes the chapter, verses 21-31, by telling us about the Spirit in which these gifts are to be exercised.

Verse 21: ²¹ *The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”, nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”* Can you imagine it? The head saying to the feet, “I don’t need you.” Because the feet have been chopped off. How would the head ‘get around’? There were some people in that Corinthian church who claimed to have some excellent gifts and they looked down on the others who appeared to have lesser gifts. Further, they thought they could manage quite well without the others and their gifts. The fact that one organ is working doesn’t mean that you can do without the others. If the eyes work well you still need the feet. And so on. Every organ in the body is necessary. That’s why God gives to the people in His church their particular

gifts. Every one of them is necessary. Some gifts may bless the church more than others, as we shall see shortly, but all are necessary!

There's is a gradation in the gifts. Some are better gifts – more important – but all are necessary. Verse 22: Even the most insignificant gift is necessary. There's none you can dispense with and not suffer a consequence. The body can't function properly. Why should any despise another because they have a 'lessor' gift.

Verses 23,24: "You think through this analogy of the human body," says Paul, "the parts of the body you are most ashamed of, are the parts of the body you take the most care to clothe. While the good looking parts need no adornment. So you don't give them any. That's the way it is in the spiritual 'body'. God gives the most honour to those parts which would naturally lack it. And in that way there is no conflict in the 'body'. There's harmony. A blending together of all the various gifts."

Verse 25,26: "That's how division is avoided in the 'body'. God's plan", he says, "is that members should seek the good of the whole. If one member is suffering, all should suffer with them. If one member is honoured, then all should rejoice with them. We don't live for ourselves. We live for the good of the 'body'! We don't live for ourselves, we live for the good of the church." he says.

So he closes the Chapter by telling them to recognise a number of things:

From Verse 27: Recognise that the church belongs to Christ. ²⁷ *Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.* Recognise that there are different gifts and that they are not all of the same importance. The most important is that of Apostle, then Prophets, then teachers. The most important gifts are the ones which bring the Word of God to a congregation. After them are miracles, healing, helping, administration and various kinds of tongues.

Don't think that everybody will have the same gift. Are all Apostles? Unthinkable, Are all prophets? No they are not." For those with some study of the Greek, you will know that there are different ways of asking a question in Greek. In this particular passage it's the form of question which expects the answer "no"!¹² (Just like in English – the 'rhetorical' question.)

"As a church," he says, however, "make sure you seek the best gifts. Make that your ambition as a Corinthian church. And yet there is something even better than the best gifts and something of greater importance than even the most important gifts!" It's on that note that he closes the chapter.

That then is the brief survey of the contents of the Chapter. It's important, whoever we are as Christians, how often we have read this chapter, that we now have the whole of

12 It's interesting to note that the New American Standard Version uses: ²⁹ All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they? ³⁰ All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

the chapter and its broad thrust in our mind. Hopefully we can retain all this until next week when we will find its importance to us in the early 21st Century.

[2570]

Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.

Delivered Sunday 24th April, 2022

1 Corinthians 12:1-31
Spiritual Gifts – Part 2

per S Olyott

1 Corinthians 12:1

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

Last week we looked quite closely at what Paul said in the Chapter to the Church in the First Century. Today we consider an analysis which brings out the importance of the implications of this teaching for the Twenty First Century:

To begin with we must take the Chapter as a whole. And keep the broad thrust of the Chapter always in our minds as we do this.

For some 50 years or more we have been experiencing the result of a sweeping and mighty force that has become known as the Charismatic Movement. If you look at Chapter 12 verse 4, there are *varieties of gifts*. The Greek word is derived from *charisma*¹³, meaning an unmerited gift. Also a derivative of the same word is found in verse 31. It's from this Greek word *charisma* that we get the English word Charismatic.

As well as making inroads into the evangelical churches it is also sweeping into the Liberal world. (Liberals are those who study the Bible, but do not believe it to be the infallible Word of God.) In addition it is infecting the Catholic world, Roman and Anglican. So there is this mighty force sweeping through the religious world.

What this mighty force is doing is: it is popularising the philosophy of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. What those theologian/philosophers were unable to convey to the ordinary 'man in the pew', the Charismatic movement has succeeded in doing! Those two theologian/philosophers were, *existential subjectivists*, which, when interpreted, means: the most important thing in life is not whether a thing is true or false or whether a thing is right or wrong (according to them). The most important thing in life is your experience and feeling. So as long as your experience is good and your feeling is helpful, then the other question – is a thing right or wrong? Is it true or false? Is a question of mere academic importance. Not a question which really matters very much.

That's the teaching of these relatively recent philosophers.

That teaching has been taken up by the Charismatic Movement! Which makes 'impressions' more important than the Word of God! Its catch phrase is 'the leading of the Spirit'. It talks a great deal about one's experiences – particularly if the experi-

¹³ **χαρισμάτων** (charismatōn) — 1 Occurrence. The root word being: *charisma* "extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit"

ences are dramatic and exciting. The tragedy of the Charismatic movement is that, when people get into it, afterwards it is almost impossible – because of the philosophical ‘brain washing’ which they undergo – to reach their minds with truth. To get them to think seriously about God’s truth.

Generally speaking, people who are ‘charismatic’, spend little time studying the Word of God. Seriously pondering the Word of God.

This Charismatic Movement is a fanatic force and it is a diversion from the Christianity of the New Testament. Therefore it is extremely dangerous. However it appeals to this chapter and the next two in such a way that it sounds very plausible. So that countless millions of people, believe that the Charismatic Movement is a ‘revival’ of New Testament Christianity! So they use the word ‘renewal’. They believe that their churches have at last been renewed, so that they are ‘experiencing’ again the experiences of the New Testament church.

One of their favourite texts is 1 Corinthians 14:39. ³⁹ *So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.* They say, “We earnestly desire to have prophesy in our churches, and we don’t forbid people to speak in tongues. You apparently don’t want a revival of New Testament prophets and you don’t have any desire, apparently, to see the gift of tongues. Well we do. We have God on our side. Why don’t you obey what the Word of God says?” This is one of the ways the Charismatic Movement talks to us. And when it talks like that, it sounds very plausible indeed!

Then they go on to say something like this: “Most Christians live their life at a desperately low level.” Regrettably that is true, isn’t it? “There’s no need,” they say, “for Christians to live at so low a level. You can have all your longings for holiness and spiritual power satisfied, or at least be put well on the way to having them satisfied, by having a ‘second’ experience. Which often is as dramatic and as marked as Conversion itself.” Is what they say.

They call this experience the ‘baptism of, or in, or by the Holy Spirit’. Most Charismatics say that the proof that you have the baptism of the Spirit is that you will speak in tongues. Or at the very least, you will exercise one of the miraculous gifts. But more likely you will speak in tongues! That is the ‘sign’ of the spiritual man. Therefore the thinking of the Charismatic Movement is basically this:

These gifts which existed in the New Testament church should exist today. You can have a new experience after your conversion which will bring you into the realm of these gifts. There is a connection between spirituality and the miraculous.

That’s their teaching and if you haven’t yet met ‘believers’ who believe that, you most likely will do so, perhaps presently. Because Charismatic teaching has become the new orthodoxy. If you don’t believe the Charismatic way you’re very soon going to be a misfit in the evangelical world.

Now there are two things to say arising from 1 Corinthians 12 relating to that:

1. Come back to verses 1-3. Notice how the Apostle introduces the subject of 'spiritual gifts'. Verse 1 is an appeal to have an intelligent approach to the whole subject. "Engage your minds; think it through! I don't want you to be uninformed." We will eventually note that he will say something similar in chapter 13 verse 6¹⁴. Talking about love rejoicing in the truth! And again in 14:20. ²⁰ *Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.* All the time that he is speaking about spiritual Gifts, he's going to insist that no Christian should be in a 'mindless state' when they consider this subject.

This is very important because many well believing, sincere Christians have been totally caught up in the Charismatic Movement. Swept away with it. Never stopping to ask serious questions about it. They have not come to the subject with an informed mind. They have been swept into the Movement by its claims and its promises and they have not stopped to think about what is happening.

The Apostle Paul is absolutely against being swept into anything. Verse 2: The reason for that: being the great risk of being swept into heathenism. The great feature of heathenism is that people are 'carried away' by irrational influences. Their mind is suspended. Their mental powers are arrested. They have all sorts of experiences, that they are not able to explain; put into words; or define what is happening to them. They don't ask questions. They don't think it through. Just swept away!

"Now," he says, "you're Christians. You're not to be like that."

What we need to understand is that 'mindlessness' is not part of New Testament Christianity! Look at 1 Corinthians 14:29-33: Which shows to us that even when the most extraordinary gift of all was able to be exercised in the New Testament church, it was to be exercised with self control and reason. ²⁹ *Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.* In other words even while the prophets are speaking, you've to exercise your mind to weigh up what is being said. ³⁰ *If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.* That is if a second prophet has something to say the first is to stop. He can't, as if in a trance or a fit, say, "I can't stop! I can't help it!" He's to stop! Letting the other person have his say. ³¹ *For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged,* You can't have two or three prophets speaking at the same time. They can't say, "I couldn't help it I was carried away by the Spirit of Prophecy!" You're to prophesy one by one in an orderly and thoughtful manner for the benefit of all concerned. So that the whole church will learn and be comforted. ³² *and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.* Meaning that the one who is speaking can never claim to be out of control. ³³ *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.*

This is so important! Wherever you get the Spirit of God. You get self control.

¹⁴ ⁶ it (love) does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

That's one of the fruits of the true Spirit. Conversely where there is not self control there is heathenism – the heathen rolls on the floor in a fit of demonic ecstasy. "I couldn't help it." is the language of a pagan. Wherever the Spirit of God works, there is always self control and the greater the work of the Spirit the greater is the measure of self control. There is never any loss of self control in a true spiritual person. The mind is never suspended. He is never carried away by anything. He is not caught up in anything without thought!

The spread of God always works through a person's mind. That's precisely why the Apostle said, earlier in Chapter 14: ²⁰ *Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.* You became a Christian like that didn't you! Peter tells us that in Chapter 1 of his letter: That the Holy Spirit took hold of the Word of Truth. It was because you had an intelligent grasp of truth that you became Christian. The Spirit worked through truth. He brought something to bear upon your mind. And the first work of the spirit on your life was done by the Spirit working through the Word – appealing to your mind. Anything that does not appeal to your mind, does not stimulate, tax or exercise your mind, is not of the Spirit of God.

Those who Worship God must Worship Him in Spirit and in truth.¹⁵ To Worship God in the Spirit alone is forbidden as it is (you hyper-Calvinist) to Worship in truth alone! This is effectively what Paul is saying in verse 3.

Not all Worship is divine worship and to find out which is which, you have to use an intelligent test. That's what he is saying there. Adopt a doctrinal test: the first question to ask of any Movement, is: What does it say and teach? What does it say and teach, particularly, about the Lord Jesus Christ?

1 John 4:1-3: If you go to a Charismatic Meeting, such as Pentecostal, and there are people throwing away their crutches; the blind are claiming to see; there's speaking in tongues and apparently interpretation of them; with words of prophesy. But you doubt whether it's of God. They will insinuate that you doubt whether God can do those things. But the Bible commands you to be sceptical. Don't take anything for granted. Test and examine everything. ¹ *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.* (How then does one know which is the Spirit of God and which isn't? ² *By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,* ³ *and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*

The first question you always ask is: What does this movement teach about the Lord Jesus Christ? (That is exactly the same test as 1 Corinthians 12:3, above.)

Now, the application of that test will instantly make every thinking Christian suspicious about the Charismatic Movement. Of course it will. Where did the Charis-

matic Movement spring from? The church of Edward Irving¹⁶ in the 19th Century. A church which was heretical on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why you have the 'Jesus Only'¹⁷ people. Strongly established in Northern Ireland and East Anglia. That's why one of the most widely read publications in the Charismatic Movement is a book called 'Reflected Glory'¹⁸, which is a re-hash of Irving's teaching. Having a low, and hence a heretical, view of Christ.

So the application of this test will immediately make you suspicious of the Charismatic Movement and not only so, but also, when you see where this movement is spreading, your suspicions deepen. For example to the Roman Catholics who deny that Christ's work on the Cross is complete and finished, never to be repeated. They have a low view of Christ as Priest. In addition it is spreading amongst the 'liberals', who deny that Jesus Christ was right in His view of Scripture. They believe therefore that He was in error. This movement is spreading quickly amongst all these.

And also among those evangelicals, who seldom apply their mind to the Word of God!

Even the best Charismatics. And thank God there are many sincere and godly folk in this movement. But even the best of them degrades the office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, because he implies that what Jesus did in revealing God, while He was here on earth, is insufficient. He says that the Bible is inspired but he says that the Bible is not enough! If you don't yet recognise that that is what they teach you could read Catherine Marshall – a very popular Charismatic writer – in her book, 'Something More'. Where she says: 'Christ is saying more to the church today than He did in the days of the New Testament'.

Also the best known Charismatic writer and speaker is David Du Plessis who in his book, 'The Spirit Bade Me Go', claims that his words are the words of the Holy Spirit. And that's why he has gone into print as he has.

Recently, a group of Anglicans in the United States have written a book which doubts the inerrancy of the Bible, but which goes on to say that Charismatic Prophecy is 'words from God'. That what is being experienced in Charismatic meetings is the gift of Prophecy again being experienced in the church. " 'Thus says the Lord', is the key word to prophecy", is what they say. Even the best Charismatic, when pressed, has to admit that in some areas, at least, he believes the Scriptures to be insufficient. That we need something more – and it has been given to us! Therefore they claim that the gifts of Chapters 12, 13 & 14 have been restored to the church by them. They claim that what they have, are those New Testament Gifts.

Now, they are right in their understanding of what those Gifts were (as we made

16 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Irving

17 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oneness_Pentecostalism

18 *Reflected Glory: The spirit in Christ and Christians. Smail, Thomas Allan*

clear last week). Those truly were gifts of revelation. Those Prophets then were actual vehicles of divine revelation. They did speak the very words of God. And if those gifts have been restored that is what is going on!

But if there is such new revelation, then Jesus Christ was not a perfect Prophet. What did it imply when a Prophet stood up in the Corinthian church? When a Prophet stood up in the Corinthian church and spoke. What did it imply? It implied that the Bible that that church had was insufficient. And that was the case. The Bible which the Corinthian church had was insufficient. All it had was the Old Testament Scriptures. But the Lord Jesus had come and the church was now under the New Covenant. The church, to survive as a Christian Church, must 'live' on the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore while the Apostles – commissioned by Christ – were writing the New Testament and distributing it. There were these gifts which existed in the church, so the New Covenant church might exist and live on the Lord Jesus Christ and be able to continue to exist as a distinct entity from Old Testament, Judaism.

But Once the Apostles had finished writing, there could be no possible reason for the continuation of those gifts. (Take to heart the final verses of the final book of the Scriptures – Revelation.)

Just imagine it. Just imagine that the Lord had told us everything that we needed to know. And He had commissioned His Apostles to write it and to distribute it and then the gift of Prophecy continued after that! That would imply that what our Lord had done, and commissioned His Apostles to do, was incomplete and insufficient. And that something more was needed.

That would imply that the Lord Jesus Christ was not a perfect Prophet. He hadn't revealed all things necessary, that we needed to know. That the Scripture isn't able to make you perfect – truly furnished unto all good works.¹⁹

“So when you come to this matter,” says the Apostle, “think about it. Don't be swept away by any tides. Don't be swept away by what people say is happening. Think about it, face the question intelligently. Apply this doctrinal test. Test, examine and weigh up what is going on. Otherwise the evangelical church will lose its mooring completely. David Wilkerson wrote his book, 'The Cross and the Switchblade'. (Which incidentally doesn't have any mention of a Cross in it.) In writing this book he had a wide readership. Subsequently he wrote other books and distributed films, records and tapes, where he claimed to have had certain divine revelations, which are binding upon all the churches of Christ. Once we follow that sort of thing, the evangelical church has really lost its moorings. Instead we would follow anybody at all who chooses to claim that he is a prophet. We are taken right away from the impregnable 'rock' of Holy Scripture.

So we will need to continue this from next week because we still need to cover the second matter derived from Chapter 12: namely, verses 13 and 30 which provide a direct contradiction of modern Charismatic teaching. So much so that 1 Corinthians 12

¹⁹ Paraphrase of 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

and the point of view of the Charismatic Movement are directly and irreconcilably opposed, to the point where if you believe one you cannot possibly believe the other.

For today then we close with this emphasis: We are to use our minds about everything. Any emotion which is not stirred by truth is to be suspect. Any excitement. Any experience. Any thrill which comes to me other than by truth is to be suspect. I'm not to believe anything on the ground of miracles, or prophecies – even the raising of the dead. Until applying to it the intelligent tests laid down by Holy Scripture. I'm to go through life as a sceptic. Examining everything and putting it under the 'searchlight' of God's Holy Word. That which doesn't tally exactly with God's Holy Word, is not to be received. That which has not a 'high view' of Christ, cannot possibly be of the Spirit of Christ.

The other practical thing that has been shown so far is the early Church emphasis upon living for the 'body'. So many Christians are 'caught up' with the development of their own personal Christian life and their own 'experience' and worst still, in these times, with special gifts that they believe God has given them. That is a total departure from the emphasis of this Chapter. Where I learn that any gift that God has given me. Any ability which I have. Any usefulness which I enjoy. God has given me, not for my own satisfaction, but for the benefit and spiritual progress of the church to which I belong. We must get rid of the false individualism which has arisen from a pietism that has existed for the past couple of hundred years. We must learn to understand again that I live for the 'body'. If my spiritual life is low, the 'body' suffers. If my spiritual life is sinful, then its ache and sin is causing some victories to depart from the 'body'. Only an exemplary Christian is not a liability to the Christian Church.

[3395]

Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.