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## 1 Corinthians

### 1 Corinthians 1:1-31

#### 1 Cor. 1:7-8

Waiting for Christ.

I. St. Paul had found the Corinthians in great darkness of mind, worshipping many different gods, of whom they had different fancies and notions, worshipping the goddess of Pleasure above all. They had a dream of some God, some Father, some Friend; at times they fancied these gods to whom they were doing homage were likenesses of Him, His children to whom He had given power in various places and over various things. But then it seemed to them that there was more evil than good in the world, and that these powers must oftener mean evil to them than good, and that He from whom they got their power must be harder and sterner than they were, and must design worse and more terrible mischief to the creatures He had formed. The Corinthians believed the Apostle's gospel; they renounced their idols. They found that there was a love stronger than the evil that was in them, stronger than the evil that was in their brethren—one which could convert the most rebellious to itself. But still the world was full of misery. There was the tyranny of the Roman empire established over the great part of it; in each particular country and neighbourhood there were crimes, divisions, and oppressions.

II. Besides believing, then, the Corinthians had need to hope and to wait. What had they to hope and wait for? That He who had been declared to be the Deliverer of the world, who had proved Himself so by dying for it, who was proving Himself so in their hearts, would come forth, would declare Himself to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, would put down the wrong, would establish the right. To work for this, to wait for this, was, the Apostle tells them, the best thing for them, one and all.

III. So it was with the Corinthians. Why is it to be different with us? We have heard that Christ is the great Deliverer and King. Every event that has happened in any nation of the earth, any great judgment that has befallen it, any great deliverance that has been wrought for it, has been a day of the Lord, an appearing of Christ, a proof that He is in deed, and not in name only, our Sovereign. Christ's light is about us at this moment; we need not wait for that till another day; we may come to it; we may ask Him to scatter the darkness that is in us now.

F. D. Maurice, *Sermons in Country Churches*, p. 29.

References: [1 Cor. 1:12](#).—G. Salmon, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, p. 50. [1 Cor. 1:13](#).—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 166; H. P. Liddon, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 379;

*Ibid.*, *Easter Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 224; *Ibid.*, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1113. [1 Cor. 1:14-22](#).—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 28.

### 1 Cor. 1:17

What makes the Cross of Christ of none effect?

I. The making it identical with the crucifix, as though the Cross of Christ were nothing more than His crucifixion.

II. The exhibition of false doctrine and of speculation concerning the Cross of Christ.

III. The exhibition of the Cross of Christ without a personal recognition of its claim.

IV. The multiplication and complication of the requirements of the Cross of Christ.

V. Lack of faith in the power of the Cross.

VI. The use of the Cross for objects foreign to itself.

S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 1st series, p. 198.

References: [1 Cor. 1:17](#).—J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 20. [1 Cor. 1:17](#), [1 Cor. 1:18](#).—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 104.

### 1 Cor. 1:18

The Two Paths.

These phrases, "Them that are perishing," "Us which are being saved," have not in themselves to do with the final state of the persons spoken of, not with the state when religious truth has been finally accepted or rejected, but rather with the anterior condition, their condition when it is preached to them, the condition of which their accepting or rejecting it is a test or an incident.

I. St. Paul divides the world into two classes, not in respect of their ultimate destiny,—he did not pretend at this moment to look on to that,—but in respect of their present state, their state when religious truth was set before them, and when the question was how they would look on it. The one class were in the way of safety, of progress, making the best of themselves, rising ever to things higher and better; the other class were in the way of ruin, going to waste, undoing themselves, going farther from God and happiness and life. And to these two classes, he said, religious truth comes with exactly opposite results. The one class recognise and welcome the good, can see moral beauty, have tender consciences, and unspoilt hearts; the other class are blind to heavenly outlines—they see no difference between them and coarse and clumsy imitations of fraud. "The Cross to them is foolishness."

II. We may ruin ourselves. There is no doubt or limitation there. We may be doing so, beginning to tread that dreadful path already. And in a sense we may *save ourselves*, but not in the same full sense. Walk dutifully with God, trust Him, come back to Him whenever you have offended, however deeply, and *He will save you*, save you daily, give you ever more and more of life and peace and happiness, till the struggle and risk is over and heaven is won.

E. C. Wickham, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 240.

References: [1 Cor. 1:18](#).—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1611; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 212; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 190; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 1; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 94; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 10th series, p. 23.

### 1 Cor. 1:21

I. What was the preaching referred to in the text? The word might fairly be rendered "the truth preached," for St. Paul is not thinking of the action and process of announcement, but of the message announced. In his eyes mere discourse or oratory, irrespective of the claims of the subject on which it was employed, would have had no charm or dignity whatever. The world was saved by the substance of a message from heaven, not by the human words that conveyed it. Now, one leading characteristic of the apostolical preaching which gave it its saving power was its positive and definite character. Resting on solid evidence, planting its feet firmly on the soil of earth, and in the full daylight of human history, the Christian creed raised its head to heaven, unveiled to the believer the inner being of God, displayed the manner in which when God the Son took our nature upon Him a bridge was really constructed between earth and heaven, and even discovered to us the inmost heart of the All Merciful in the true meaning and value of the Sacrifice which was offered on Calvary for the sins of the whole world. From that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness flow all the hopes of pardon, all the reinforcements of grace, all the power of sacraments, by which the work of the Redeemer is carried forward in the sphere of sense and time, in preparation for the momentous, the endless future.

II. Of this preaching, what was the object? St. Paul answers, "To save them that believe." When the Apostle speaks of salvation, he means a salvation of the individual human soul from ruin, ruin begun here and rendered beyond the grave permanent and irretrievable, salvation from eternal death. And the preaching of the apostles presented Christ to men, in St. Paul's phrase, as evidently set forth crucified among them, as their Saviour, as their all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the utmost those that come unto God by Him.

III. Who are capable of receiving this salvation? "Them that believe." As a matter of fact, then, the recipients of salvation are a limited class. Belief is, in its essence, the act by which the soul accepts salvation. This belief is a movement of the whole soul, of all its powers going forth to meet the appointed truth; it is thought, it is affection, it is trust, it is self-surrender, face to face with the unseen, but clearly apprehended, Christ. Faith does not, cannot of itself, save; but faith is the hand which we hold out to receive the salvation which is wrought for us, and which we must thus receive in this our hand in order to make it our own.

H. P. Liddon, *Family Churchman*, July 28th, 1886.

References: [1 Cor. 1:21](#).—J. Hunter, *Story of Daniel*, p. 39; J. B. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 200. [1 Cor. 1:21-23](#).—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 47; H. Allon, *Sermons in Union Chapel, Islington*, p. 40; *Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 1. [1 Cor. 1:22](#).—J. B. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 225. [1 Cor. 1:22-24](#).—Magee, *The Gospel and the Age*, p. 1; Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 261; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 45; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 539. [1 Cor. 1:22-25](#).—*Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 339. [1 Cor. 1:23](#).—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. ii., p. 119; T. R. Stevenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 246. [1 Cor. 1:23](#), [1 Cor. 1:24](#).—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., Nos. 7, 8; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 92; *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 340; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, pp. 120, 134; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 83; W. J. Knox-Little, *The Mystery of the Passion*, p. 85; J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 34; Bishop Stubbs, *The Anglican Pulpit of Today*, p. 49. [1 Cor. 1:23-25](#).—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 408. [1 Cor. 1:23-30](#).—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 406. [1 Cor. 1:24](#).—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 132; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 186; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 85; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 377. [1 Cor. 1:26](#).—H. Phillips, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 358; *Saturday Evening*, p. 247. [1 Cor. 1:26-29](#).—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 587. [1 Cor. 1:26-31](#).—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 133. [1 Cor. 1:27](#).—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 25; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 165. [1 Cor. 1:28-31](#).—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 377.

## [1 Cor. 1:30](#)

Christ the Source of all Blessings.

I. St. Paul seems to have had in his mind a conception of the gradual growth of the Christian spirit under the hand of Christ, from its dawn of grace to its final fulfilment in glory. He seems to view Christ as the great Dispenser of the Father's treasures, accumulating gifts upon the believer's soul until it brightens into the very image of Himself; to view it rising higher and higher, as it is drawn nearer and nearer to Him, till the crisis of the final redemption is come and it is lost from the eye, hidden beyond the clouds. The words are as the ladder to the Patriarch's vision, "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

II. Wisdom—the apprehension of the true and Divine knowledge—is the first stage on the path of peace; the clearing of the eye of reason for the prospect itself of eternity and of God. Christ is here declared to be made unto us wisdom, not so much because He is the Giver of wisdom as because He is the ground and object of it; not so much because He declares to us the truth as because He *is* the truth. He gives us knowledge in giving us Himself. The "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" are ingredients of the wisdom. Christ is our wisdom in being to us these things: that is, He is the prime object of all true wisdom inasmuch as He is the source of all true blessedness.

III. Weigh well the force of the expression "is made unto us." *As one with Christ* we obtain the whole inheritance of grace and glory. The instant that we are incorporated into the mystical body of which He is the Head, that instant we possess the seed of the entire life of the Christian—yea, all his eternity is but the less or greater development of the Christ he bears within, around, and upon him. To receive Him is to receive the germ of every blessing that is written in the book of God.

W. Archer Butler, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 1.

References: [1 Cor. 1:30](#).—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 376; R. S. Candlish, *The Gospel of Forgiveness*, p. 301; *Homilist*, new series, vol. i., p. 240; *Ibid.*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 240; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 271.

### 1 Cor. 1:30-31

Righteousness not of Us, but in Us.

In every age of the Church, not in the primitive age only, Christians have been tempted to pride themselves on their gifts, or at least to forget that they were gifts, and to take them for granted. Ever have they been tempted to forget their own responsibilities, their having received what they are bound to improve, and the duty of fear and trembling while improving it. One of the first elements of knowledge and a Christian spirit is to refer all that is good in us, all that we have of spiritual life and righteousness, to Christ our Saviour; to believe that He works in us, or, to put the same thing more pointedly, to believe that saving truth, life, light, and holiness are not *of* us, though they must be *in* us.

I. Whatever we have is not of us, but of God. This is that great truth which is at the foundation of all true doctrine as to the way of salvation. All teaching about duty and obedience, about attaining heaven, and about the office of Christ towards us, is hollow and unsubstantial, which is not built *here*, in the doctrine of our original corruption and helplessness; and in consequence, of original guilt and sin.

II. While truth and righteousness are not of us, it is quite as certain that they are also in us if we be Christ's; not merely nominally given to us and imputed to us, but really implanted in us by the office of the Blessed Spirit. Let us never forget this great and simple view, which the whole of Scripture sets before us. What was actually done by Christ in the flesh eighteen hundred years ago is in type and resemblance really wrought in us one by one even to the end of time. Christ Himself vouchsafes to repeat in each of us in figure and mystery all that He did and suffered in the flesh. He is formed in us, born in us, suffers in us, rises again in us, lives in us; and this not by a succession of events, but all at once; for He comes to us as a Spirit, all dying, all rising again, all living. We are ever receiving our birth, our justification, our renewal, ever dying to sin, ever rising to righteousness. His whole economy in all its parts is ever in us all at once; and this Divine presence constitutes the title of each of us to heaven; this is what He will acknowledge and accept at the last day. As the king's image appropriates the coin to him, so the likeness of Christ in us separates us from the world and assigns us over to the kingdom of heaven.

J. H. Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 128.

References: [1 Cor. 1:30](#), [1 Cor. 1:31](#).—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 991. [1 Cor. 1:31](#).—*Ibid.*, vol. xx., No. 1178; *Saturday Evening*, p. 260. [1 Cor. 2:1](#), [1 Cor. 2:2](#).—W. Morley Punshon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 168; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, pp. 448, 465. [1 Cor. 2:1-5](#).—*Ibid.*, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 148; W. Baxendale, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 364, vol. xxx., p. 168. [1 Cor. 2:1-7](#).—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 36.

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## 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

### [1 Cor. 2:2](#)

I. Apart from the crucifixion of our Lord, there was much in Jesus Christ to commend Him both to the Jew and to the Gentile. There was no need for the introduction of that which was such a stumblingblock to the one and such foolishness to the other. The Apostle preaching Christ to the Jews might have dwelt upon the fact that He was one of their own nation, that this certainly very great and wonderful man, this worker of miracles, evidently sent from God, was one of themselves, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," and a great honour to their race. He might further have told the Jews how Jesus had revered the law of Moses; how religiously He had observed the Sabbaths and the feasts; how He had referred to the Scriptures and told people to search them; and how He had said, "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." And speaking about Jesus Christ to Greeks and other Gentiles, the Apostle might have pointed to the fact that our Lord was Himself a very loyal subject of the Gentile government then existing in His country. With so much else to testify concerning our Lord, why should the apostles speak so much of His crucifixion?

II. Now, I think we may answer thus: that as men of common sense—to claim for them nothing more—the apostles would never have adopted this course unless they had been convinced that there was something of special and extraordinary importance in the death of their Master; something really more important in His death than in anything that had taken place during the whole course of His life. They believed—and their Master had told them to believe—that His death was to be the life of the world; and on this account, and this account only, can we understand or reconcile with good sense the immense predominance which is everywhere given to the sufferings and death of our Lord.

III. If the apostles had not preached the doctrine of the Cross, and had not made Christ crucified the great theme of their ministry, you and I would never have heard of Christianity at all. They might have preached Christ's noble example, they might have referred much to His discourses and the beauty of His character; but if they had not preached the Cross, and salvation through the sacrifice of the Cross, their preaching would have been forgotten on the road. Christ crucified is a truth that never can come amiss, and of which too much never can be said.

H. Stowell Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii. p. 289.

## The Exaltation of the Cross.

I. The great truth which the Apostle had to impress on the Corinthians was, that in spite of their sinfulness and alienation they were still beloved by the one true God. And how better could he do this than by displaying the Cross? The greater the humiliation to which the Son of God submitted, the greater is the demonstration of the Divine love to man. This it is which, as an immortal being and yet a sinful, I have most interest in ascertaining, and this it is in which, if once ascertained, I have most cause to exult. Come, then, a teacher to those sunk in heathenism, and what shall he teach? One may go and tell them of their being objects of God's providence, fed by His bounty, guided by His light, and curtained by His shadows. Another may tell them of their having been made after His image, endowed with immortality, illuminated by reason. I would not be insensible to the excellence of such teaching, to the beauty of these proofs of the love of the Creator; but feeling that these heathen are in danger of eternal destruction, and knowing that the sacrifice made on their behalf is such as irresistibly proves that God so loved them as to do everything to save them except to dishonour Himself, give me a teacher who would exclaim with the Apostle, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

II. Although to the eye of sense there is nothing but shame about the Cross, yet spiritual discernment proves it to be hung with the very richest trophies. Christ triumphed by being apparently defeated, He vanquished in the act of yielding to the enemy, and therefore was His death glorious, aye, unspeakably more glorious than life, array it how you will with circumstances of honour.

H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1745.

References: [1 Cor. 2:2](#).—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1264; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 1; A. Saphir, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 385; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 42; F. W. Aveling, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 100; E. W. Shalders, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv. p. 219; Cartwright, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 117; E. M. Goulburn, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 374; Deems, *American Pulpit of Today*, p. 161. [1 Cor. 2:2-5](#).—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 1. [1 Cor. 2:4](#).—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 359. [1 Cor. 2:5](#).—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 340; *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 340; J. Van Dyke, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 156.

## [1 Cor. 2:6-16](#)

### Mystery Revealed.

I. The redemption of Jesus Christ is a great mystery of the Divine thought and heart. The Apostle uses a singular term to designate those to whom the revelation is made. "We speak wisdom," he says, "among them that are perfect,"—among those who have qualifications for receiving the wisdom. Spiritual religion is utterly incomprehensible to many intelligent people. They can understand theology as a science of God; they can understand religion as a theory, but they have no conception of its spiritual character; they have no conception of it as a spiritual sentiment, as a passionate affection, as a fellowship with God, a yearning and joy of the man's whole

consciousness. This is what St. Paul means when he says—"The natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit"; they are discerned only by a spiritual faculty. This, then, is what is meant when it is said that the gospel of Christ is wisdom unto the perfect—that is, to the spiritual, to the susceptible, to the spiritual man with spiritual faculties.

II. The mission of Christ and the purpose of Christian teaching are to reveal this mystery to men—to men of spiritual faculty, to men whom the Spirit of God touches and teaches. Our poor human thoughts cannot compass infinite things. All religion runs up into the mysterious, and must do so. Apart from Christianity, the mystery of the Divine Being is just as inscrutable as the revelation of Jesus Christ. Instead of adding to the mystery of God, Jesus Christ gives us our highest understanding of God. We understand more of God through Jesus Christ than we can on any other theory. And yet even so, how much remains that is impenetrable! Who can fathom the mystery of the incarnation, the mystery of the atonement, the mystery of the quickening of spiritual life in men, the mystery even of moral feeling, moral principle, the working of moral life, the mystery of conscience, which is the consciousness of God? In the love of Christ, in the love of God, there are heights and depths that pass knowledge.

H. Allon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 97.

Reference: [1 Cor. 2:6](#), [1 Cor. 2:7](#).—W. C. Magee, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 257.

### **1 Cor. 2:6-16**

The Gospel and the Intellect.

I. The natural man in Paul's eyes is like an undeveloped organism. A man as he grows, in the true sense of growing, as he attains his full stature or perfection, becomes spiritual. The natural man is stunted; growth has been in some abnormal way arrested. The natural man only exists to become the spiritual man, just as a chrysalis only exists to become a butterfly. Who are the natural men nowadays? (1) Those who tell us that matter can explain spirit—the people whom we call Materialists. They cannot apprehend the wisdom of the gospel. (2) Those who speak as of the understanding could answer all the questions and meet all the needs of the human spirit.

II. The wisdom which Paul speaks among the perfect is nothing less than the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the spirit of the Christian man. Just as consciousness alone can be aware of our own inward life, so God's consciousness alone can understand the depths of God; and only by being made partakers of God's consciousness can we search those depths. But we, as believers in Christ, are partakers of that consciousness. A Spirit of God given to a man through faith in the incarnate Son of God takes all the things of the revealing Christ—His person, His word, His work—and slowly unveils them to the amazed and enraptured heart. He who is the Saviour is also the key to creation.

III. Paul found in the good news of the gospel a wisdom far surpassing the wisdom of this world. Many Christians do not exercise the reason, and have no special desire for its satisfaction. But those who dare not in honesty suppress or violate that master-faculty are permitted to have the thirst quenched, the reason satisfied. In Christ, the manifestation of God, they find certain things



which are revealed, they find a clue to God, a clue to life, a clue to the world. The mystery is an open mystery, though losing none of its charm.

R. F. Horton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 317.

References: [1 Cor. 2:9](#).—G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, 2nd series, p. 23; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 249; Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 143.

### 1 Cor. 2:9-10

I. In the text we have the revelation given us as to the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. There seems to be wonderful beauty and expressiveness in this thought of the preparation God makes for His children, showing the Divine forethought, and the infinite fulness and carefulness of the love that has them in its regard, and that prepares for them things that are yet to come in the blessings that are bestowed upon them now; to remember how in the creation the world was prepared before man came upon it, and all its beauty and grandeur were ready to receive the crowning illustration of God's creative power that was found in man, whose brow bore the image of the Divine presence.

II. But now we turn for a moment to the revelation of the Spirit in which these things are made manifest to us. "God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." Let the ministry of God the Holy Spirit be acknowledged and honoured. It is in proportion as individuals or as churches honour the Holy Spirit that we shall be prospered in the Divine work, that we shall be made strong for labour, wise for difficulty, comforted in sorrow, triumphant in all endeavour, and rejoicing in all things in the grace and glory of our Lord.

III. But then there is the third point of the condition that is essential to this, in the character of those who are to be the recipients of the blessing which God hath prepared for them that love Him. If we are children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ we ought to seek after the love that shall put the lovely into the unlovable, as the grace of God does with us. It is one of the most grievous mistakes about Christian fellowship that people are ever expecting to be loved, instead of seeking to love. We shall never have true Christian fellowship in the Church except as every one seeks to love the rest, and then all are sure to be loved and every one to be loved by all, because all realise the blessing of the indwelling Christ, of the Spirit of God, and the love that is imparted thereby.

J. P. Chown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 273.

### The Story of the Cross.

I. It is true of all the great tragedies which affect mankind that they owe their power to the spiritual element in them, to the depth and truth of the ideas which they bring in living substance before our eyes. And the story of the Cross is the supreme tragedy of life, the sorrow which is like no other sorrow, but yet is the type of all sorrows; the victory in which all victory is contained, in which all the agonies, hopes, aspirations of human nature find their explanation, fulfilment, and relief. The spiritual element in it is the whole of it. The outer story is necessary to

the inward truth; but without the key it would be futile, meaningless. Who invented that key? Who invented the ideas which lie at the bottom of that story, which, if they are true, make it intelligible, credible, the source of life and peace, hope and renovation without end, but which, if they are baseless, a figment of the human brain, make it an idle tale, a purposeless fragment from the story of human cruelty and human credulity?

II. We may distinguish three ideas on which, beyond others, the truth of that story rests. These are immortality, sin, the fatherhood of God. Can we believe that any of these is the baseless creation of the human fancy? What a picture to have been imagined!—a picture of which not merely the special combinations are due to human fancy, but of which the materials must in that case be due also—a picture too beautiful, infinitely too beautiful, to be true. Is it not more reasonable to believe with the Apostle that as in the world of sense, so in the things which touch our life more closely, our imagination instead of exceeding, falls far short of the wonders of Divine provision; that God has prepared for them that love Him not less, but infinitely more, than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or than has entered into the heart of man?

E. C. Wickham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 360.

References: [1 Cor. 2:9](#), [1 Cor. 2:10](#).—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 56; Bishop Westcott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 193; D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 183. [1 Cor. 2:10](#).—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 292.

### [1 Cor. 2:11](#)

I. To give the adequate history of a religion you must first have believed it. This is our primary datum, and this means surely that the elements of that rational intelligibility, which comes to the surface under the action of the critical reason, are to be found *within* the living material of the belief itself. Reason does not find its ground, its justification, its credibility, its evidence in itself, in its own separate and distinct working; it goes for these to that on which it works. There lies all its intelligibility. The gain achieved by the reason is simply the disclosure that the belief was already rational. All that it discloses was already the life and substance of that effort which we call faith.

II. What an immense task has reason undertaken when it attempts the critical portrayal of a spiritual faith. Yet if religion is the expression, the act of the entire man, and not merely of some peculiar and isolated organ in his being, it is inevitable that reason which is part and parcel of that wholeness which is the man, should have its say about that action in which it itself in its corporate capacity, as bound up with the unity of spirit, has already borne its share. "To write the history of a religion a man must have believed it *once*." Yes, and if it be needful once, then if the criticism is ever to be other than fragmentary, if it is ever to be vital and fruitful and entire, it cannot but be needful always; for to have lost the belief is, as the formula confesses, to have lost the key to its history. It is surely only in sad irony, bitter mistrust, that it is added, "he must have believed it once, but he must have believed it no longer."

H. Scott Holland, *Logic and Life*, p. 41.

References: [1 Cor. 2:11](#).—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 191. [1 Cor. 2:12](#).—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 264; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 125; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascensiontide to Trinity*, p. 209. [1 Cor. 2:13](#).—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 94.

### [1 Cor. 2:14](#)

The Spiritual Life.

I. If we cast our eyes over the world of human things, it cannot fail to strike us that there are certain inevitable classifications of mankind depending immediately upon the constitution of human nature. Thus you may classify men by their bodily gifts and graces, distinguishing them as the strong and vigorous, on the one hand, who scarcely know the meaning of pain or bodily weakness, who would scorn to ask if this present life, which is to them so glad a thing, be worth the living; and on the other hand, after many gradations of health or sickness, others whose cheek is pale and whose frame is wan and feeble from disease, whose life is a pain to them, who have little experience of earthly happiness, who, if they could, would flee away and be at rest. Or, again, you may classify men by their intellectual endowments, according as some men seem to grasp the truth of things by lightning flashes, and others cannot see the light at all despite their efforts, or, if they see it, are only dazzled by its brilliancy. Is there not yet another classification, that of the spirit? Is not the spiritual side of human nature as true as the intellectual or the physical? God made man in His own image; and human nature (be it reverently spoken), like the Divine nature, is a trinity in unity. It is to the spiritual side of man that religion appeals. For the natural man, as St. Paul says—*i.e.*, the psychical man, the man of physical and intellectual culture—receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.

II. I plead, then, for a frank recognition of the spiritual side or aspect of human nature. It is man's necessity to look beyond himself and the world of which he is a part, and to feel, however feebly, after the God who made him. And as the spiritual faculty is supreme in human nature, so is it essentially most delicate. It is hard to preserve in its sensitiveness; it is soon and easily blighted. Do not neglect, then, your own spirituality. You are responsible for it; your character depends on it. It is possible so to live, in such an atmosphere of clear and holy light, that you can as little doubt of God's Being as of your own. But it is possible also so to live that the primary elemental facts of human nature, upon which religion finally depends, shall seem to you as you reflect on them no better than the unsubstantial fabric of a dream. There is a faith which is stronger than reason, and which abides in the hour when human reason fails.

J. E. C. Welldon, *The Spiritual Life and Other Sermons*, p. 1.

References:—ii. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 407; J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 225; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 152; E. White, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 360; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 98. [1 Cor. 2:14](#), [1 Cor. 2:15](#).—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 348.

### [1 Cor. 2:15](#)

(with [1Tim. 3:15](#))

The religious or spiritual man, then, is characterised not by taking his judgment from other men, not by living on a decision formed by others, but by a personal private judgment of his own. Religious truth, like other truth, nay, much more than other truth, is a personal conviction, and not merely a conviction, but a judgment, part of the man's own rational being—the very life of his rational being—that in which he looks out upon and judges of men and things, when he is most conscious of exercising his own faculties. Nay, more than this, he holds this truth, not merely on his personal private judgment, but with a certain strenuous insistence upon its independence in the face of other men, even within the Church.

I. What is the antithesis to this tenure in conscious personal and rational judgment of religious truth? It cannot be, what is impossible, that we should hold a body of truth on the external authority of the Church, while it does not commend itself to our own individual judgment. To refuse to exercise our own faculties of judgment, to take things generally, and merely passively on the external authority whether of science or of the Church, is not to be humble, but to be ignorant and to ignore a primary duty.

II. But it is only in our shallowest moments that we shall suppose this repudiation of absolute and unconditional authority which leaves room for an exercise of our judgment, to involve in any sense the repudiation of authority at all, or the denial that truth should be held finally, on mere external authority, to involve the rejection of external authority from its proper place in the formation of our minds. Indeed, those portions of the truth which do not come under the verification of our own faculties must permanently be held on external authority, but the authority itself must then come under verification. It is, for example, only reason to take on the authority of Christ truths about the future which cannot come under our present cognisance, if we have reason to believe that they come under His. The place of authority, then, is primarily and mainly in helping us to form our judgment. Our judgment ought not to be formed in an isolated individualistic manner. It is out of committing ourselves to authority that right reason normally and naturally grows. Each man is not meant to start afresh. Reverence as well as thought must go to the making of a true judgment. To receive in the Church of Christ in earliest years—in education, at the time of our confirmation—a body of truth, and a system of practice emphasising and embodying holiness of life, to receive it on her loving authority, and to grow up, as our faculty develops, into the intellectual recognition of her truths and practices on our own judgment—this is the normal growth of man.

III. The scheme of Christian truth coheres. To a Christian believer who has advanced to any measure of understanding the whole is one and indissoluble. He recognises that it would be unreasonable to pick and choose; he recognises the coherence of the same sort of means by which we recognise the similar connection, far beyond our personal knowledge, in the department of science. Thus he abides under the shelter of the whole creed. He takes it on trust as a whole. The Christian Church seems to his spiritual faculties eminently trustworthy. He waits while the Spirit leads him into all the truth. That is, he waits while, in the growing experience of life, in the vicissitudes of failure and success, of joy and suffering, of growth and manhood, point by point, the truth becomes realised to his experience and his understanding. We teach children a language greater than childhood's wants will justify, the language of grown men, knowing that

they will grow up to want it; and God deals with us thus in His Church in that sphere of our life where experience is slow in coming, where indeed all life is childhood in relation to immortal manhood.

C. Gore, *Oxford Review*, Jan. 28th, 1885.

### 1 Cor. 2:16

I. What is the mind of Christ? Is it some high intellectual attainment? Or is it some great moral victory over the affections? The expression is evidently a very full one; for you may take the words of a man and you may take the actions of a man, and still fall short of the mind of that man. For the mind of a man is the spirit of a man. It is the motive which actuates him; it is the feeling which is unconsciously moulding his conduct every moment; it is the inner life which is continually giving the tone and the character to his outer being.

II. The believer is always striving after the mind of Christ. Nothing less will satisfy him, because nothing less will satisfy God. The soul of Jesus, infinitely stored with the Holy Spirit, becomes a fountain from whence again that Spirit is always pouring out into His own people; so that if ever we receive any grace of the Spirit, we are actually receiving a portion, however small, of the mind of Jesus Christ.

III. See, then, the way by which you are to obtain the mind of Christ. Every way you can, live close to Him, think of Him, meditate upon Him, hold communion with Him, lie at His feet, do constantly acts for His sake, suffer for Him, laud Him; talk of Him, lean upon Him, realise communion with Him, and invariably as you do this you are catching His mind.

IV. Note some of the advantages which belong to those who really have the mind of Christ. (1) No man can really understand the Bible who does not bring to the study of it the mind of Christ. (2) The possession of the mind of Christ is a wonderful clue to bear with us in the intricate windings of the daily labyrinth of life. (3) They have the benefit of the mind of Christ who wish to pray rightly. Those who bring Christ in them to their knees, having the mind of Christian asking, know what is the mind of Christ in giving.

J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 144.

References: 1 Cor. 2:16.—*Homilist*, vol. ii., p. 274. 1Cor 2—W. Simpson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 28. 1Cor 2—F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 197. 1 Cor. 3:1.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 293. 1 Cor. 3:1-10.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 39. 1 Cor. 3:3.—T. Binney, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 341. 1 Cor. 3:6.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 383; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 409. 1 Cor. 3:6-8.—*Homilist*, new series, vol. iii., p. 208. 1 Cor. 3:6-9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1662. 1 Cor. 3:8.—G. D. MacGregor, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 269. 1 Cor. 3:9.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 339; F. H. Marling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 255; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 329; *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 132; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 71; J. Stalker, *The New Song*, p. 38. 1 Cor. 3:9-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. 1 Cor. 3:9-17.—R. S.

Candlish, *The Gospel of Forgiveness* p. 322. [1 Cor. 3:10-13](#).—W. Morley Punshon, *Good Words*, vol. ii., p. 355.