

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Analysis

- A. Paul gives orders about the collection for the saints and tells about his plans to visit the church at Corinth (1-9).
1. He gives orders for the collection for the saints (1-2a).
 - a) The order is the same as he gave to the churches in Galatia.
 - b) They were to set aside the offering on the first day of every week.
 - c) Each one was to have a part in it.
 - d) Each one was to do as he might prosper.
 2. The reason for this procedure was to avoid gathering the offering when Paul came (2b).
 3. He reminded them of some things to be taken care of when he came (3-4).
 - a) Those who would be approved by the church were to be sent with letters to carry the offering to Jerusalem.
 - b) If it should become fitting for Paul to go also, the brethren would go with him.
 4. He tells of his plans to visit Corinth (5-9).
 - a) He planned to come after he had passed through Macedonia (5).
 - b) He wanted to stay at Corinth through the winter and be helped on his way by them (6-7).
 - (1) His plan to stay with them.
 - (2) He didn't want to make a brief visit.
 - (3) He hoped to stay a while if the Lord would permit.
 - c) He was to remain at Ephesus until Pentecost (8-9).
 - (1) A great and effectual door was open for him there.
 - (2) Many adversaries were there too.
- B. Paul gives information about the plans and work of other workers of the Lord (10-18).
1. He gives instruction about the visit of Timothy and Apollos (10-12).
 - a) The church is told how to receive Timothy (10-11).
 - (1) He is to be with them without fear.
 - (2) He does the work of the Lord just as Paul does.
 - (3) He is to be sent on his journey in peace.
 - (4) Paul was expecting him with the brethren.

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- b) He tells of his desire to have Apollos visit them (12).
 - (1) He calls him Apollos the brother.
 - (2) He had urged him to visit Corinth with the brethren.
 - (3) It was not the will of Apollos to do so at that time but he would do so when he had opportunity.
2. Paul gives direction for the guidance of the church (13).
 - a) "Watch ye."
 - b) "Stand fast in the Lord."
 - c) "Quit you like men."
 - d) "Let all that ye do be done in the Lord."
3. Paul exhorts them concerning Stephanas (15-18).
 - a) He reminds them that they know the house of Stephanas.
 - (1) They were the firstfruits of Achaia.
 - (2) They had set themselves to minister to the saints.
 - b) He urges them to be in subjection to such and to all who help in the work.
 - c) He tells of his joy at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus.
 - (1) His rejoicing.
 - (2) The cause: they supplied what was lacking on the part of the Corinthians.
 - (3) They refreshed Paul's spirit and that of the Corinthians.
 - (4) He asks that they be acknowledged.
- C. Paul writes the closing words of the epistle of the Corinthians (19-24).
 1. Salutations.
 - a) The churches of Asia send their greetings.
 - b) Aquila and Prisca together with the church in their house send greetings in the Lord.
 - c) All the brethren send their greetings.
 - d) Paul asks them to greet one another with a holy kiss.
 - e) Paul writes his greeting with his own hand.
 2. A solemn warning: If any man does not love the Lord, let him be anathema.
 3. A prayer of hope: Our Lord, come.
 4. A gracious benediction: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
 5. An affectionate last word: My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The Collection for the Saints (1-9)
Text

16:1-9. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. 3 And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: 4 and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me. 5 But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I pass through Macedonia; 6 but with you it may be that I shall abide, or even winter, that ye may set me forward on my journey whithersoever I go. 7 For I do not wish to see you now by the way; for I hope to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. 8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; 9 for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Commentary

Now concerning the collection.—The familiar “now concerning” does not introduce some problem that was disrupting the life and harmony of the church. It suggests Paul’s concern for the people he knew and loved. He had a lasting concern for the saints in Judea. Before his conversion he had persecuted them and had tried to make havoc of the church of God (Gal. 1:13, 23). Some time after his conversion when Agabus came to Antioch and predicted a famine over all the world, “the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea; which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:27-30). Still later when Paul was in conference in Jerusalem with Cephas and John and James, he was asked to remember the poor in Judea. This, he said, he was very eager to do (Gal. 2:1-10).

Although Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, he never forgot his own Jewish people (Rom. 9:1-3), but he seemed to be particularly concerned about those from the Jews who had turned to Christ as he had done. In all his labors among the Gentile converts to Christianity, he urged that the suffering saints in Judea be remembered and that offerings be sent for their relief. See II Cor. 8:1-9:15.

As I gave order.—The apostle did not hesitate to lay down regulations to be followed by the church in fulfilling their obligations to others. He had already reminded them that what he was writing was

the commandment of the Lord (14:37). He had given the same orders to the churches in Galatia.

upon the first day of the week.—The expression clearly indicates the first day of every week. Each one was to participate in the collection. He was to set aside an amount which he was to determine on the basis of his being prospered.

no collections be made when I come.—Some take this to mean that the members of the church were to put their weekly offerings into a common treasury. Paul's concern was that the money be ready when he came. In order to have it so, it was necessary for the brethren to begin early and set it aside on every first day of the week. Each one could have brought what he saved when Paul arrived. It would be difficult to say just how they did it. The important thing was to save regularly for the offering so that it would be ready when Paul arrived. He did not want to spend time waiting for them to get it together after he came. Most people will find it easier to save something each week than to get a large sum ready at one time.

whomsoever ye shall approve.—Paul was careful about handling funds that belonged to others. The people were to approve the ones to take the offering to Jerusalem. He was willing to go along if it should be the thing to do, but he was not giving his critics an opportunity to condemn him in the handling of the collection. A good example for all who handle church funds!

them will I send with letters.—Those who were to be appointed by the church to perform this task were to have letters of commendation from Paul to the brethren in Jerusalem. This is further evidence of his concern that everything be done in a manner that was above criticism. The Lord's people were giving the money for the suffering saints of the Lord and the Lord's servants were taking every precaution to have it done for His glory.

But I will come unto you.—Paul planned for the future. Sometimes he was hindered in carrying out his plans. He had already written of his intention to visit them in connection with other matters (4:18-21). He looked forward to the visit with joy and hope that the problems would be taken care of and that the collections would be made by the time he arrived. His trip was to take him through Macedonia, but he planned to stay through the winter at Corinth.

that ye may set me forward.—It is not likely that he had in mind any financial support (9:15). Luke records the facts of the farewell which the Ephesian elders gave Paul at Miletus (Acts 20:36-38). Something like it may have been in his mind as he wrote this word to the brethren at Corinth.

if the Lord permit.—Paul was always conscious of the Lord's hand in all of his plans and journeys. See also James 4:15.

a great and effectual door.—Paul was at Ephesus when he wrote the epistle. He planned to stay there until Pentecost. This does not suggest that he was planning to keep the feast there but rather that he was aware of the great door of opportunity before him to do an effective work for the Lord.

Ephesus was the third great radiating center of early Christianity. Jerusalem was the first; Antioch was the second. All Asia heard the gospel as a result of Paul's work at Ephesus (Acts 19:9-10). The apostles did not neglect the rural areas, but they concentrated their efforts on the great centers of population from Jerusalem to Rome.

there are many adversaries.—This was another reason for remaining at Ephesus. Paul was not one to run because of opposition. He was confident that the Lord would always lead him in triumph in Christ in every place as he proclaimed the gospel (II Cor. 2:14-17). He was eager to preach the gospel in Rome also, for it is the power of God (Rom. 1:16).

Workers in the Work of the Lord (10-18)

Text

16:10-18. Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: 11 let no man therefore despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace, that he may come unto me: for I expect him with the brethren. 12 But as touching Apollos the brother, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren: and it was not at all his will to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 14 Let all that ye do be done in love.

15 Now I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints), 16 that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth. 17 And I re-

joyce at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they supplied. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours: acknowledge ye therefore them that are such.

Commentary

Timothy.—Paul had mentioned him earlier in the epistle (4:17). Now he gives directions for their reception of his fellow-worker. He was a young man when Paul selected him to travel with him. It may be because of his youth that Paul said, "see that he be with you without fear." Or it may be that Timothy was timid. Whatever the cause, they knew his value to Paul who declared that "he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." The attitude of Paul as an older minister toward Timothy as a young evangelist is one that should be seen far more often today than it is.

The brethren were to help Timothy as he continued on his way. Just what was involved is not stated.

Apollos.—He had been prominent in the work at Corinth. See 1:10 and 3:4-6. Paul looked upon him as a brother in Christ and a fellow-worker for the Lord. His affectionate concern for those who worked with him is one of the marks of Paul's true greatness.

It is interesting to note that Paul did not order Apollos to go to Corinth. He had urged him to go but recognized his right to decide when it was best for him to do so. Paul was sure that the opportunity would come.

Watch ye.—Certain things were to direct the church as they faced the opportunities of service and the problems that were involved. Like good soldiers, they were to be alert. Like true followers of the Christ, they were to "stand fast in the faith" and not be frightened from the truth by any adversary. Like dedicated servants of the Lord, they were to conduct themselves as men. Like citizens of the heavenly kingdom, they were to be strong and rely on Him who had conquered at Calvary and who would give them the victory in all their work for Him. Paul said, "Let all that ye do be done in love." He had already explained just what that meant (13:1-13).

the house of Stephanas.—They were among the first of Paul's converts at Corinth (1:16). He calls them "firstfruits" because they were the first of the harvest for the Lord. There were to be others like them.

When Paul was at Corinth the first time, the Lord had revealed to him that He had "much people in the city" (Acts 18:9-10). This family had set themselves to the task of ministering to the saints. Just what was involved in this ministry is not stated, but it was such that Paul recommended that others align themselves with these servants of the Lord and all others who helped in the work.

the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus.—Paul received these brethren from Corinth with great joy. There were times when it had become necessary to reprove the Corinthians for sinful practices. Even then he admonished them as beloved children (4:14). It was not possible for the whole church to pay him a visit, but his spirit and theirs was refreshed by the coming of these who represented all the brethren at Corinth.

Paul's Closing Words (19-24)

Text

16:19-24. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. 22 If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Marana tha. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Commentary

The churches of Asia.—Paul had opened the epistle with a reference to the saints who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place (1:2). In sending greetings from Ephesus and the churches of the other cities of Asia, Paul was showing the brethren at Corinth something of the meaning of fellowship in the churches of the saints. Corinth was not alone; what he taught them, he had taught in all the churches (11:16; 14:33).

Aquila and Prisca.—This is the couple with whom Paul labored when he first came to Corinth (Acts 18:1-4). They sailed with him when he left Corinth and came to Ephesus where Paul left them (Acts 18:18-19). They were responsible for having "expounded the way of God more accurately" to Apollos (Acts 18:26). It is fitting that

he should include their greeting to the church at Corinth. When he wrote to the church at Rome, he sent his own greetings to them for they had moved back to that city. He called them his fellow-workers in Christ Jesus and mentioned the fact that they had laid down their own neck for his life (Rom. 16:3-4).

the church that is in their house.—This phrase is in the Roman letter also (Rom. 16:5). It gives some insight into the effort of this faithful couple to promote the gospel wherever they lived. In the absence of church buildings, the church gathered in their house. The church did not always meet in homes. Paul started his preaching in many cities in the synagogues of the Jews. At Ephesus, he "separated the disciples and reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9-10). The place of meeting seems to have been a matter of expediency; the church was the temple of God where the Spirit of God dwelt (3:16-17).

Salute one another with a holy kiss.—This was the custom of Paul's day. Our culture suggests the handshake. The principle of friendly greeting between Christians is that which matters. Only such as deny the teaching of Christ are to be denied this greeting (II John 9-10). *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.*—This the mark of genuineness in Paul's epistles. See II Thes. 3:17; Gal. 6:11.

If any man love not the Lord.—We cannot be sure that he had in mind any specific individual. This is a general warning similar to the one in the Galatian letter (Gal. 1:8-9). He had already warned them about "evil companionships" (15:33). Anathema means accursed or devoted to destruction. Paul was careful not to lend approval to the enemies of the Lord. See 5:11; 6:9-10; Phil. 3:17-19.

Maranatha.—This Aramaic word must have been something like a watchword to the early Christian. Paul did not translate it for the Corinthians. This shows they knew what it meant: "Our Lord Come!" How much have we lost by letting this word drop from our vocabulary? It is like the prayer of John at the close of Revelation: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.—The epistle closes as it began with a prayer for God's unmerited favor to be with His people.

My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.—This affectionate, personal, Christian word was to assure the church to whom he had written in serious words about problems that beset them that the apostle loved all his brethren in the Lord. Amen.

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Summary

Paul had been deeply concerned over the problems that had confronted the church at Corinth. He had written to them as the inspired apostle of Christ to give authoritative directives for the correction of the sinful practices that had been allowed to develop in the church. He had advised them as one who was worthy to be trusted. He had admonished them as a father would have done. It is in the closing chapter of the epistle, however, that we get a deeper insight into his personal feeling for all the brethren at Corinth as well as his fellow-workers elsewhere.

His concern for the suffering saints in Judea comes first in the brief statement about matters that lie close to his heart. He had already given instruction to the churches in Galatia about the collection for the saints. He had sent his collaborators to tell the Macedonians to be ready to help those in need. He was depending also on the Corinthians to prove their love for the brethren in Judea.

He asked each one to have a part in this effort. Each one was to set aside an amount on the first day of every week as he might prosper. This was to avoid gathering up the funds after Paul arrived.

Paul was careful in handling the funds of the Lord. The brethren were to appoint those who were to carry their "bounty" to Jerusalem. Paul would send letters of introduction to the brethren in Jerusalem, or, if it seemed best, he would have the brethren travel with him.

He was planning to come to Corinth after going through Macedonia, where he would encourage the brethren to help in the offerings. He hoped to spend the winter at Corinth, if the Lord permitted. He was planning to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a great door of opportunity to further the cause of the gospel was open to him and there were many adversaries.

Perhaps in no place are we to see the respect, admiration and love which Paul had for his fellow-workers in the Lord than in his remarks about Timothy, the young man who had been his traveling companion in so many places and who was soon to come to Corinth on a mission for him. He was eager to have the brethren receive Timothy in a manner that would allow him to be with them "without fear." No one was to "despise" him. They were to help him on his journey which would bring him back to Paul.

Paul had been urging Apollos to make the trip to Corinth, but he was not ready to do so. But as soon as he had opportunity he would visit them.

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Suddenly, it seems, there flashed upon the mind of Paul the vision of the church at Corinth going forth as an army to fight "the good fight of the faith." He could see them ready to press the battle to victory. He issues orders for the battle: "Watch ye." "Stand fast in the faith." "Quit you like men." "Be strong." But this is no ordinary fight and he adds, "Let all that ye do be done in love."

He called their attention to the house of Stephanas as an example for them to follow. It is important to line up with the right kind of people. These were among the first converts at Corinth. They had set for themselves the goal of serving the saints. The visit of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus had refreshed him. He was confident that the whole church had been blessed in sending these to see him.

It was time to close the epistle. Greetings from the churches in Asia and from Aquila and Prisca and the church in their house are written. All the brethren are sending greetings. Then he adds, "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

Now he is signing the letter as he sends his own greetings. But once again he is reminded of those who had caused so much trouble in the church and he hastily writes, "If any man love not the Lord, let him be anathema."

The mention of the love of the Lord may have prompted him to add this watchword of the early church, "Maranatha"—Our Lord, come. Then he added, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Still he could not close the letter without this last word, "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."

Questions

1. How does the subject matter of this chapter, introduced by the familiar "now concerning," differ from that of the other chapters introduced by the same phrase?
2. What was Paul's attitude toward the churches in Judea before his conversion?
3. How did he feel about his Jewish brethren after he became a Christian?
4. Why was he concerned for the saints in Judea?
5. How did he propose to help them?
6. What churches besides Corinth were asked to have a part in the matter?

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7. What rules did Paul lay down to govern the brethren in getting the money ready by the time he arrived?
8. What precautions did he take to avoid criticism in handling the funds?
9. Who was to select the one to carry the money to Jerusalem?
10. How was Paul to cooperate in the matter?
11. What were his plans for the journey to Corinth?
12. Why was he going to go through Macedonia?
13. How long did he plan to stay at Corinth?
14. How were they to help him on his journey?
15. Upon what condition did he make his plans?
16. Did he carry them out as planned?
17. Where was he when he wrote First Corinthians?
18. Why did he plan to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost?
19. What did he mean by the great and effectual door that was opened to him?
20. What was his attitude toward the adversaries at Ephesus?
21. Why did he mention Timothy and Apollos?
22. What was his estimate of the person and work of Timothy?
23. When did he expect Timothy to reach him?
24. Why didn't Paul as an apostle order Apollos to go to Corinth?
25. What was Apollos' view of Paul's suggestion?
26. What caused Paul to say, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith"?
27. Why did he add that they were to do all things in love?
28. What did the Corinthians know about the house of Stephanas?
29. Why did Paul say that they were the firstfruits of Achaia?
30. What goal had they set for themselves?
31. What was to be the attitude of the church toward such people?
32. What was Paul's attitude toward the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus?
33. What was lacking that they supplied?
34. How had they refreshed the spirit of Paul and of the church?
35. Why did Paul send the greetings of the churches of Asia to the church at Corinth?
36. What was the connection of Aquila and Prisca with the church at Corinth?
37. How did they happen to be at Ephesus?
38. Where were they when last mentioned in Paul's letters?
39. What is to be said of the church in their house?
40. What is known of the buildings in which Paul preached?

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41. Why did he say to greet one another with a holy kiss?
42. What is to be said of the importance of friendly, Christian greetings today?
43. From what one is this greeting to be withheld?
44. Why did Paul write his own greeting with his own hand?
45. How account for the sudden recollection of those who do not love the Lord?
46. What does "Maranatha" mean?
47. Why didn't Paul translate the term?
48. How could the church today make use of the meaning of this term in its conversation?
49. With what thought did Paul begin and close the epistle?
50. Why did he close the letter with an expression of his love?

For Discussion

1. In the light of what Paul says in this chapter, how can the church avoid developing a spirit of selfishness?
2. Recall those whom you know whose examples could be followed by all the church.
3. What can be done today to further the cause of brotherly kindness and love in the churches?