

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Analysis*

- A. Paul now considers the dereliction of the church in the matter of moral discipline (1-8).
1. He expresses amazement at the shocking condition that was allowed to go unrebuked in the church (1-2).
    - a) He presents the details of the case.
      - (1) Fornication was actually heard and generally known to be present among them.
      - (2) The existing immorality was of such a nature that even the pagans around them would not tolerate it.
      - (3) The shameful conduct was this: A certain one—Paul did not name him, but they surely knew who he was—had his father's wife, living with her as his own.
    - b) He shows his attitude toward their failure to act.
      - (1) They were puffed up—their pride prevented them from being aware of their duty to deal with this situation.
      - (2) They did not mourn, but that is what they should have done in such shameful situations.
      - (3) They had failed to see that the one who had done such a thing was taken away from among them.
  2. He gives the inspired directive for dealing with this thing which they had neglected to handle (3-5).
    - a) He shows just how he had arrived at the decision.
      - (1) Although he was absent in body, he was present in spirit, that is, he was actually taking part in the case.
      - (2) His judgment on the guilty party.
        - (a) He had already passed sentence on the guilty one just as if he were present.
        - (b) He did this in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, by the Lord's authority exercised through the inspired apostle.
        - (c) He was present in spirit when they gathered together to hear this verdict.
    - b) He points out the effective power and purpose of this action.
      - (1) The power to execute the sentence was the power of the Lord Jesus.

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- (2) The sentence was to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.
  - (3) The purpose of the decision was in the hope that the spirit of the one judged may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
3. He rebukes them for their pride which caused them to fail to take action in this situation (6-8).
- a) Their boasting was not good, that is, their pride in position of leadership was not good for it had caused them to neglect their duty in this case.
  - b) He asks them a revealing question: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" The whole church was in danger of being corrupted because of the immoral conduct of one man which they had neglected to correct.
  - c) He indicates the course of action they were to take.
    - (1) They were to purge out the old leaven, that is, they were to remove the sinful condition from their midst.
    - (2) The purpose of this action was that they might become what they were designed to be, a new lump, that is, a body of clean-living Christians.
    - (3) The reason for this is seen in the fact that Christ, our passover lamb, has already been sacrificed.
    - (4) They were therefore to keep the whole Christian life free from malice and wickedness by filling it with sincerity and truth.
- B. Paul explains the instructions he has given for handling cases such as the one that existed in their midst (9-13).
1. He wrote in his epistle that they were to have no company with fornicators (9).
  2. He explains what he meant by this remark (10-11).
    - a) It did not refer to the people of the world who were fornicators, covetous persons, and idolators.
    - b) This would require them to go out of the world, an evident impossibility.
    - c) But he did write to them that they were not to keep company with a brother in Christ if that one was a fornicator, or a covetous person, or a drunkard, or an extortioner.
    - d) They were not to eat with such a person—no social functions that implied approval of sinners in the church.

3. The reason for this standard of conduct (12-13a).
  - a) He had nothing to do with judging those who are outside of the church.
  - b) But they did have a responsibility to act in such matters where brethren were concerned.
  - c) They were reminded that God will judge the outsiders.
4. As a final statement about the action they were to take, he said: "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (13b).

### *The Matter of Moral Discipline (1-8)*

#### *Text*

5:1-8. It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife, 2 And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, 4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: 8 wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

#### *Commentary*

*It is acutally reported.*—The problem of division in the church at Corinth had been reported to Paul by those of the household of Chloe. It is possible, although we cannot be certain about it, that his information about certain derelictions in the church came from the same source. The church had failed to take proper action in at least three issues, moral discipling, litigation, and use of the body. Bad as the sin of division was, these three additional sins coupled with the failure of the church to do anything about them constituted an even worse condition. There is little wonder that the apostle expresses amazement at the shocking condition of the church.

*there is fornication among you.*—Immoral conduct stands high on the list of sins that degrade man and rob him of the privilege of maintaining family relations within the limits of the purity that God intended him to observe. The apostle condemns the sin and also implies that the failure of the responsible leaders to discipline the guilty part is equally serious.

*not even among Gentiles.*—This is a remarkable statement in view of the fact that Corinth was known for its luxury and licentiousness. There were limits to things that even pagans tolerated. God's divine plan for the home given at the time of creation of man (Gen. 2:23-24) and upheld by Our Lord (Matt. 19:4-6) should have been restored to its proper place in the life of the church. It is true that polygamy was known among pagans and practiced by some of the believers in God in Old Testament times, but the case of incest in the church at Corinth could not be justified by either pagan or Jew or Christian who held to the divine standard for the home.

*his father's wife.*—Polygamy was practiced and concubinage was approved in the culture of that day, but this thing was shocking to all whose moral sense was not dulled by selfish pride and desire to receive praise from men. This one—whoever he was we do not know for Paul does not name him—was probably living with one of the wives of his father, certainly not with his mother. Nothing said about the father, but in all probability he was dead.

With the church tolerating such conduct, how could they hope to win pagans to Christ? Pagan standards, it would seem, were higher than those of the church at Corinth. No effective presentation of the cause of Christ can be made unless it is supported by the transformed lives of the members of the church.

*And ye are puffed up.*—Once again Paul hurls this charge at the Corinthians. They were guilty of being self-centered and arrogant. This came from the situation that resulted in the divided state of the church. Their cliques, where men received glory from men, were the cause of their failure to act in these cases that required disciplinary action. It does not seem that they were proud of the immoral conduct on the part of this brother, but their sin lay in the fact that they failed to do their duty and remove the immoral one from their midst.

*did not rather mourn.*—They had lost their sense of shame. The fact that such a sin existed in their midst should have caused them to mourn as a sign of disapproval. Instead, they were carrying on their efforts to promote one leader above another as if totally unaware of

the presence of sin in their midst. The whole church was being put to shame in the eyes of the pagans, but they were unaware of it.

*he that had done this deed.*—Paul did not name him. There was no need to do so for he must have been well known to the church and to the pagan community. Perhaps the name was withheld with the hope of helping the guilty brother. Remedial action was called for. The final judgment, of course, would take care of those who would not heed the admonition of the gospel. The man mentioned in II Cor. 2:5-11 could be the same as the one mentioned here, although most commentators doubt it. If it is true, then it is evident that the effort Paul put forth to correct the situation in Corinth was not in vain. At any rate, the principle of forgiveness would apply in the event the man, whether the same one or not, did repent and show evidence of it by a changed life.

*taken away from among you.*—Paul had stated that "fornication is among you." Now the one who did the deed must "be taken away from you." Immorality and all other violations of God's law for His people simply cannot remain in the church without destroying the church. Better to remove the diseased member than to loose the whole body. But the analogy ends here, for the removed one could be saved in the end if he should repent and ask God for forgiveness. This should be the end in view in all such cases. To condone sin, however, is to virtually seal the doom of the sinner. To take him away from the other members is the only possible hope of saving him. The problem is, How shall this be done? This Paul proceeds to show in detail.

*For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit.*—It did not require the physical presence of the apostle to settle this matter. God knows the hearts of all men, and His inspired Word is sufficient to direct the course of action designed to remedy all such cases. It is possible that the Corinthians felt there was nothing they could do since the apostle was not present. They may not have reckoned on the information reaching him. Perhaps they were too smug in their exalted positions with'n the cliques in the church to care much about his absence or their duty in the matter. But this situation demanded action, and Paul tells them what to do about it.

*have already as though I were present judged him.*—This is like a case being tried before a judge. Paul as the inspired apostle of Christ hands down the verdict. The heart of this involved sentence is this: "I have already decided to hand him over to Satan." There was no call for a formal assembly to try the case. This had already been done by

one competent to do so, for he was directed in his action as an apostle by the Holy Spirit. All that was left for the church was to carry out the order of the judge—hand over such a one to Satan. This order was just as binding as if Paul had been there in person to pronounce sentence.

*that hath wrought this thing.*—There was no need to repeat the sordid details; they had been given and were well known to the church. Note Paul's remark to the Ephesians, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph. 5:3). But such a sin had to be removed.

*in the name of our Lord Jesus.*—That is, by His authority. As an apostle of Christ, Paul is acting for Christ. This could only be so because he was being directed by the Holy Spirit. Note Jesus' words to the apostles during one of His appearances after the resurrection, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:22-23). A similar word was spoken to the apostles at an earlier time, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these he shall speak: and he shall declare unto the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and declare it unto you" (John 16:13-14). Upon still another occasion Jesus said to the twelve, "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). There is no doubt that Paul had same authority as all the other apostles. The decision of one judge is the decision of the whole group. The decision which he made in this case is the divine decision, and it had to be carried out as an act of obedience to God.

*ye being gathered together, and my spirit.*—This shows the conditions under which the judgment of the apostle was to be carried out. The church was to assemble with the apostle's presence represented by his inspired epistle which gave direction for their action. The directive was just as authoritative as if Paul were actually present. The absence of living apostles today does not justify the church in disregarding the instruction of the Word in such matters if they should occur.

This was not a trial as if the church were attempting to arrive at a solution of the problem. The facts were too well known; they were rumored everywhere. The decision was that of the inspired apostle. The church had only one thing to do: let it be known that they were

acting on the orders of the Lord through His apostle. The church, the one who had done this deed, and the community in which it occurred were all to know that they were no longer to be mixed up with the one guilty of immoral conduct.

*with the power of the Lord Jesus.*—It is the Lord's power functioning through His inspired Word through an obedient church that actually hands over the guilty one to Satan. Christ alone can exclude one from His body just as the Lord alone can add to His body those who are being saved. But He accomplishes both through the church as it complies with His instructions.

There are numerous examples of the exercise of divine power to punish the wicked. Some of them have been exhibited in miraculous demonstrations. Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). They, of course, thought they were dealing with the apostle Peter when they misrepresented their generosity. Not every one who lies is immediately stricken dead, but the judgment of the Lord is against the liar (Rev. 21:8). Elymas the sorcerer was stricken blind for interfering with the effort of Paul to present the gospel to Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:9-12).

The miracle of a transformed life faithfully demonstrated in the daily conduct of the church would have just as great effect on the unsaved as these miracles in the physical realm. The Corinthian brethren could yet impress the pagan community that the Lord was real to them by excluding sin from their midst. The church that actually abides by the instruction of the Lord in His Word can effectively show a wilful sinner that no one approves his deeds but Satan.

*to deliver such a one unto Satan.*—The Lord was to do this through His obedient church. But how? Note the clear statements of the course of action that was to be taken as set forth in this context: (1) "taken away from among you" (v. 1); (2) "deliver such a one to Satan" (v. 5); (3) "purge out the old leaven (v. 7); (4) "have no company with fornicators" (v. 9); (5) "put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (v. 13).

Note that no formal trial is indicated. It was not a question of the church trying to decide one's guilt; the apostle had already made that decision. It was simply a matter of the church complying with the Lord's instruction through His inspired apostle. In other words, the church is to follow the standard of daily conduct revealed in the Word of God. That forbids getting mixed up with immoral

persons so as to imply approval of their conduct. Where the Word is faithfully preached and effectively backed up by the lives of all concerned, there will be no doubt as to the position of the church on matters such as faced the church at Corinth. When the church shows by its conduct that it does not approve immoral conduct, the only one left to do so is Satan and his slaves to sin.

Should such a person be permitted to attend church services? While this is a matter of opinion, it seems that if the Word is faithfully preached and the church is faithfully living it, this would be the ideal place for sinners of all sorts to hear what to do to be saved from sins. But under no circumstances should they be put into positions of leadership and responsibility in the church. No action of the church should be such as to lead the one at variance with the truth of the gospel to imply approval of his life.

*for the destruction of the flesh.*—Paul has spoken of the members of the Corinthian congregation as “made of flesh” and “belonging to flesh.” That was a reference to their spiritual immaturity. But “flesh” in this context refers to the sinful practice that was the outgrowth of perversion of powers inherent in the physical body. For a list of such sins which Paul calls the “works of the flesh” see Gal. 5:19-21.

The destruction of the flesh then does not imply bodily harm as in the cases of Ananias and Elymas. It does suggest the conquering of those desires that arise out of physical impulses such as led to the shocking state of affairs in Corinth.

*that the spirit may be saved.*—Man is a two-fold being—a spirit dwelling in a physical body. Much of what becomes sin in his life is a perversion of those things which are connected with his physical being. The physical body dies, but it will be raised in the resurrection of the dead at the last day. Paul declares, “as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Cor. 15:22). Speaking of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus said, “the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29).

It was with this hope in mind that Paul gave instruction to the church to deliver the guilty one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. He hoped that the guilty one would repent and change his ways and be saved. Now we see why such peremptory action is commanded. It isn't kind to condone sin and encourage one to go on in sinful activity



that can lead only to his being lost. Deliver him to Satan; let him know by teaching and action that he has only Satan's approval, and it might bring him to his senses. Of course, a Christian attitude toward all such individuals at all times is necessary. The church should show a willingness to forgive at the least sign of repentance. See II Cor. 5:5-11; II Thes. 3:14.

*Your glorying is not good.*—Their glorying over men and being puffed up with pride while a sinful situation was being disregarded to the disgrace of the whole church and the inevitable loss of the sinner was not praiseworthy. As leprosy destroys the beauty of the body, so sin destroys the attractiveness of the church.

*a little leaven leavens the whole lump.*—Were some saying that this was an isolated case that did not necessarily affect the whole church? Paul is not saying that the whole church was practicing such sin. But the whole body was in danger of being affected by the sin of one member. The effectiveness of the church in preaching Christ was ruined by this one example that even pagans could not approve. Just as a small amount of the leavening agent spreads through all the dough, so this evil thing would spread to the whole church. That's why they had to get rid of it in the manner prescribed by the inspired apostle.

*purge out the old leaven.*—At the passover feast, the Jews were to remove all leaven from their midst. Leaven in this instance stands for sin. It is associated with the old life before one becomes a Christian. The church is to get rid of sinful conduct that belongs to its former life. Paul made this clear in the Roman letter: "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we might walk in the newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away so that we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Rom. 6:4-6). See also Col. 3:5-11 where Paul declares that the members on earth which are involved in sin such as fornication and the like are to be put to death.

*that ye may be a new lump.*—The Christian life is completely new. The Christian is a new creature (II Cor 5:17). He has a new name (Acts 11:26). He has a new master (Rom. 6:16-18). He has a new hope (Heb. 6:18-20). He has a new destiny (II Pet. 3:11-13). With all this, he certainly should be living the new life (Rom. 6:1-5; 12:1-2).

*even as ye are unleavened.*—God set the Christian free in Christ. The church is, in His sight, sanctified or separated from sin. Since that is what they are in God's eternal purpose, church members are to conduct themselves accordingly. The church is not to be like ancient Israel that was delivered from bondage in Egypt but continually longed to go back to their former state and were forever doing the things that brought disgrace upon themselves and their God who redeemed them.

*For our passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ.*—See Ex: 12:1-51 for the account of the passover. The lamb represents Christ. John the Baptist called Him "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Paul says, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). The point is this, Christ has already died for our sins. We are under obligation to live the life separated from sin (Rom. 6:1-2).

*let us keep the feast.*—The whole Christian life is likened to the passover feast. Just as leaven which represented sin was to be excluded during the feast so sin is to be put away from the whole Christian life. The Christian is to live the life of separation from sin seven days a week for as long as life lasts. It is not for just one day a week, but for the duration of life (Rev. 2:10). This earnest exhortation expresses the apostle's hope that the church at Corinth will put this sinful person with his immoral conduct out of their midst.

*old leaven.*—The leaven that represents sin and that belonged to the old life before becoming a Christian.

*unleavened bread.*—The new life in Christ is to be characterized by sincerity and truth. The Corinthian church was guilty of living a life of hypocrisy and falsehood. They were preaching remission of sins through the blood of the Lamb, but living in sin and lending approval to others who were doing so. Pagans could not be won to the Lord by such conduct. The gospel which is the word of truth must be supported by a life of sincerity and truth in Christ.

*Paul Explains the Instruction he has Given (9-13)*

*Text*

5:9-13. I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; 10 not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: 11 but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or

covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. 12 For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

### Commentary

*I wrote to you in my epistle.*—Literally, "in the epistle." See the reference to Sosthenes who is called "our" brother, although it is literally "the" brother (1:1). This often presents a problem in translation, for the article could be used in a number of different ways. In this case, it could refer to the epistle which the Corinthians were reading (our First Corinthians).

The tense of the verb also presents a translation problem. Normally it would indicate action occurring in past time just as our English text says, "I wrote." But the Greeks also used this tense with another meaning. For example, Paul could be thinking of his readers in such a manner as to suppose that he was actually with them when they were reading the letter. If this is true, he would be saying, "In this letter, I wrote to have no company with fornicators." This, in substance, is what he did write in 1-9. Note verse 2, "he that had done this thing might be taken away from you," and "Purge out the old leaven" (5:7). In other words, he could be explaining in greater detail what he had just written. All are agreed that this is the sense in which "I wrote" is verse eleven is to be taken.

While some of the early commentators take this view about verse nine, most of the later ones think of it as a reference to an epistle which he wrote prior to our First Corinthians. It is, according to this view, "the lost epistle" of Paul's. While we must concede that this is possible, the fact remains that it is not a proven fact and that it does not make sense to take "I wrote" as suggested above. While all this is interesting and should be taken into consideration, it does not change the import of this passage in the slightest. We still have the inspired instruction about such cases of misconduct in the church and the explanation as given in this section (9-13).

*no company with fornicators.*—Literally, "not mixed up with." Do not mingle or associate with those guilty of immoral conduct such as this one who had his father's wife.

*not at all meaning with fornicators of this world.*—What the apostle had said on this subject in this epistle—or in the so-called "lost epistle"—was not to be understood as saying that church people were

never to associate with people of the world. Of course, they were not to mingle with them in such a manner as to become one like them and lend approval to sinful practice. The Pharisees attempted to discredit Jesus by insinuating that His presence at social functions of His day where tax collectors and sinners were present was lending approval to sinful practice. Jesus' answer to this charge was this, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9:12). Christian people cannot afford to associate with the world and partake of its sinful practices, but they must make contact in such a manner as to help the lost sinner of the world to find the Savior.

*for then must ye needs go out of the world.*—Paul was afraid that they might misunderstand what he had written on this subject. Was it a former epistle or the one he was just writing? This, of course, was no problem to the Corinthians. If they had received an earlier epistle, this language would be clear to them. If, on the other hand, all he had written was this letter, then it would be equally intelligible to them. But this need not trouble us, for the meaning is the same whether written in some earlier epistle or in the earlier paragraph.

Christian people are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. It is not possible to go out of the world, and if it were, it would be contrary to God's plan to save the believer to do so. God's plan calls for the preaching of the word of the cross by the faithful church that men might hear and believe and be saved.

*if any man that is named a brother.*—What Paul wrote concerned the church composed of brethren in Christ. The church is in the world but not of it, just as Jesus said of the apostles (John 17:11-14). Living in the world where sinners live does not mean that Christians approve the sinful things of the world. To condone sin in the church, however, does mean that the church is lending approval to sin. This idea is completely out of harmony with the terms by which Paul had addressed the church in the opening words of this epistle. There he called them "sanctified" and "saints" which implied separation from the world of sin.

*covetous.*—People are sometimes known by the company they keep. This is true of words also, for the other terms with which a word may be associated tend to influence its meaning. Immoral conduct was abhorrent to God and should also be to godly people. But how often do we think of "covetousness" as being in the same category? Paul says that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). In this context he lists

it with the fornicator, the idolater, the reviler, the drunkard, and the extortioner.

*with such a one no, not to eat.*—So what he writes is not limited to one particular sin such as fornication. The whole list is condemned. Christians are not to try to go on living in sin of any sort.

“Not to eat” does not refer to the Lord’s supper. It is rather a reference to what has just been said about not getting mixed up with sinners in such a manner as to lend approval to sinful conduct. Paul indicates in 10:27 that it would not be wrong for a Christian to eat with a non-Christian provided it did not involve a compromise of Christian principles.

*judging them that are without.*—Paul’s responsibility was clearly with the church, not outsiders. He pronounced inspired judgment on those who were in the body of Christ. The world was in another category. The gospel was to be preached to all the world that they might believe and be baptized and so be saved (Mk. 16:15-16). Until men of the world get this done, they are not under the standard of conduct that governs the Christian.

*God judgeth.*—God will judge the sinner of the world in the day of the Lord. This warning should cause sinners within and without to repent (Acts 17:30-31). Therefore Paul says, “Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.”

#### *Summary*

As was to be expected, a divided church that was more interested in promoting a party spirit than in becoming a living demonstration of the power of the word of the cross to transform a life had neglected its duty toward its own members. For example, one who wore the name of “brother” was guilty of the sin of having his father’s wife; others were going to law before pagan judges to the disgrace of the church in the eyes of the gentile world; still others were guilty of sinning “against the body” that God intended to be a temple of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle severely condemns the revolting sin of immoral conduct. But the attitude of the whole church toward this sin and their failure to do their duty in correcting the condition are even more severely criticized by Paul in this chapter.

Even the Gentiles would not tolerate such a sin as a man having his father’s wife, but the church had neglected to act in the case of a “brother” practicing this disgraceful thing. They were “puffed up” over divisions among them and had entirely neglected to consider the

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enormity of the sin that should have caused the deepest sense of shame and sorrow to the whole church.

Paul, although absent from them, had made up his mind what should be done. He told them of his decision which stood just as if he were actually present. The church should gather together and be aware of his presence "in spirit" because of the letter he was writing to them. The church could then act in the name of Christ, doing what Christ Himself would do, and deliver this one to Satan. The power to do this belonged to the Lord and was exercised through the inspired instruction of the apostle in connection with the obedience of the church. The action prescribed was designed to show the guilty one that Satan was the only one left to approve his guilty conduct. Pagans would then see that such a one was completely discredited as a representative of anything belonging to Christ and His church.

The purpose of this action was the destruction of the "flesh"—the source of the sinful conduct that led to this violation of God's law of righteous conduct. That it is remedial in intent is evident from the expressed hope that the "spirit" might be saved in the day of the Lord.

They could not escape the meaning of the solemn decree which Paul as the Lord's inspired spokesmen sent to them in writing: "For I, although absent in body, but present in spirit, have already passed judgment (decided the case), as if I were present, on the one who did such a thing—that is, in the name of the Lord Jesus, when you and my spirit have gathered together, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to hand such a one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."

Their boasting over the superiority of one leader to the disparagement of another was not a very pretty thing. It had caused the church to be discredited in the eyes of the Gentile community. How then could they hope to win pagans to Christ? Didn't they know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? The whole church was condemned because it condoned the sin of one who was known as a "brother."

Following the analogy of the passover feast during which all leaven was excluded from the homes of God's people, Israel, Paul commands the church to rid itself of this sin for Christ their passover had already been slain. They had been separated from sin when they became Christians; they should continue, not in sin, but in the new life with Christ.

Paul explains that he had written—in the preceding paragraph or in "the lost epistle"—that they were not to get mixed up with

## I CORINTHIANS

sinner. He did not mean that they were to get off the earth to avoid contact with evil. He had written to say that they should not get mixed up with an immoral person, or a covetous man, or an idol worshipper, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner who may bear the name of "brother." No social contact that implied approval of such sinners was permitted.

As to the outsider, Paul said, "It is not for me to judge him." God will judge sinners in the day of the Lord, but the church is responsible for carrying out the directives of the Lord with respect to the sinful conduct of its members. Paul's final word left no doubt about what they were to do. They were to remove the evil one from their midst and do it immediately. The nature of the sin demanded peremptory action by the whole church.

### *Questions*

1. How had Paul learned about the sinful situation in the church?
2. In what way was the whole church guilty?
3. What was the nature of the sin?
4. In what other sins that tended to discredit the church before the pagan community had they failed to take proper action?
5. What was Paul's attitude toward the failure of the church to act in these cases?
6. What kind of a reputation did Corinth have in regard to moral standards?
7. What was their attitude toward this sin?
8. Explain how this one could have his father's wife.
9. What did this sin which was allowed to go unreprieved by the church do to their effectiveness in preaching Christ and Him crucified?
10. What was the church puffed up about?
11. What should have been their reaction to this situation?
12. Why didn't Paul name the one who had done this thing?
13. What should the attitude of the church be toward a member who repents of his sin and desires to change his way of living?
14. What order did the apostle give the church in the case of the brother who was living in sin?
15. Is it better to remove a diseased member of the body than to let the whole body die?
16. What, in all probability, will become of the sinner if the church condones his sin?
17. What will become of the whole church that fails to rebuke those

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of its members who habitually practice conduct unbecoming to a Christian?

18. Why was the physical presence of Paul unnecessary in order for the church to act in this case?
19. How was his presence represented?
20. What was implied by the fact that Paul had already decided the case against the wicked man?
21. By what authority did he make the decision?
22. What was the sentence of the Lord's inspired apostle?
23. What is meant by taking this action "in the name of our Lord Jesus"?
24. How could the apostles be trusted to act in His name?
25. What of Paul's authority in relation to that of the other apostles?
26. Where was the apostolic decree against the guilty man to be made known?
27. When the church assembled on this occasion what were they to remember about the absence of Paul?
28. Why was the church not to hold a trial in this case?
29. What are some of the examples of physical punishment visited on outstanding sinners?
30. How can the church have just as great effect on the unsaved sinner as the demonstrations of such physical punishment?
31. Who was to deliver the sinner to Satan?
32. What was the part of the church in carrying out the sentence?
33. What are the various expressions that show exactly how this was to be done?
34. Should a condemned "brother" such as the one at Corinth be allowed to attend church?
35. What should a church refuse to do until he repents?
36. What should they do when he repents?
37. What was the purpose of the sentence against the wicked one?
38. What was the church glorying about?
39. Why did Paul say that it was not good?
40. Why did Paul say that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
41. What are the facts of the passover feast as presented in Exodus?
42. What bearing did this have on the situation at Corinth?
43. In what ways is the Christian life completely new?
44. What did Paul imply by the remark, "even as ye are unleavened"?
45. In what way is Christ our passover lamb?
46. What is the relation of the passover feast to the whole Christian life?



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47. What does the old leaven represent?
48. What was to be done with it?
49. How does this apply to the case of the immoral man in the Corinthian church?
50. What does the unleavened bread stand for?
51. What are the two ways to understand Paul's statement: "I wrote to you in my epistle?"
52. If there should be a "lost epistle" of Paul to the Corinthians, what bearing would it have on our understanding of First Corinthians?
53. What is the literal meaning of the expression, "no company with fornicators?"
54. What limit did Paul place on the church in regard to social contacts?
55. What did Jesus say about the relation of His disciples to the world?
56. Why did Paul say, "then ye must needs go out of the world"?
57. To whom did Paul's directive apply?
58. How does Jesus' statement about the apostles in relation to the world illustrate that of the church?
59. What other sins besides immorality did Paul include in this decision?
60. What is said about judging the world?

### *For Discussion*

1. How can the church have an effective voice in upholding the Christian standards of morality in our society?
2. What do you think about sermons on hell and the judgment?