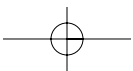
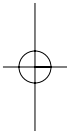
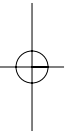


TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT
COMMENTARIES

VOLUME 7

TNTC

1 CORINTHIANS



TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VOLUME 7

GENERAL EDITOR: LEON MORRIS

1 CORINTHIANS

AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

LEON MORRIS



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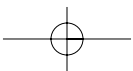
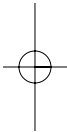
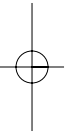
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GENERAL PREFACE

The original Tyndale Commentaries aimed at providing help for the general reader of the Bible. They concentrated on the meaning of the text without going into scholarly technicalities. They sought to avoid ‘the extremes of being unduly technical or unhelpfully brief’. Most who have used the books agree that there has been a fair measure of success in reaching that aim.

Times, however, change. A series that has served so well for so long is perhaps not quite as relevant as it was when it was first launched. New knowledge has come to light. The discussion of critical questions has moved on. Bible-reading habits have changed. When the original series was commenced it could be presumed that most readers used the Authorized Version and comments were made accordingly, but this situation no longer obtains.

The decision to revise and update the whole series was not reached lightly, but in the end it was thought that this is what is required in the present situation. There are new needs, and they will be better served by new books or by a thorough updating of the old books. The aims of the original series remain. The new commentaries are neither minuscule nor unduly long. They are exegetical rather than homiletic. They do not discuss all the critical questions, but none is written without an awareness of the problems that engage the attention of New Testament scholars. Where it is felt that formal consideration should be given to such questions, they are discussed in the Introduction and sometimes in Additional notes.

But the main thrust of these commentaries is not critical. These

books are written to help the non-technical reader understand his Bible better. They do not presume a knowledge of Greek, and all Greek words discussed are transliterated; but the authors have the Greek text before them and their comments are made on the basis of what the originals say. The authors are free to choose their own modern translation, but are asked to bear in mind the variety of translations in current use.

The new series of Tyndale Commentaries goes forth, as the former series did, in the hope that God will graciously use these books to help the general reader to understand as fully and clearly as possible the meaning of the New Testament.

Leon Morris

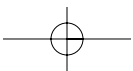
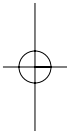
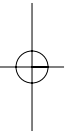
AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

It is no new observation that the letters of St Paul are not easy reading (2 Pet. 3:15f.), but for him who is prepared to take time and trouble their study is immensely rewarding. Not least is this the case with 1 Corinthians, a letter arising out of the practical difficulties besetting a far-from-ideal first-century Greek church. Here we have a typical Pauline letter. The apostle praises his correspondents for their Christian virtues, and rebukes them roundly for their many failings. He adds to their knowledge with some great passages, notably his discussion of love in chapter 13 and of the resurrection in chapter 15. Whatever he touches he deals with in the light of great Christian principles. He sees things temporal always in the light of things eternal. What he writes has relevance to our own, in many ways very different, needs. He shows us how to take our problems back to the light shed upon them by the great Christian verities. We cannot fail to profit as we ponder his words.

In writing this commentary I have been greatly indebted to very many. Notably is this the case with regard to the commentaries to which I have referred in the notes. I have endeavoured to indicate my many indebtednesses in specific matters, but I have learned more from my predecessors than I can sufficiently acknowledge. I have also found some modern translations very helpful, for what are translations but compressed commentaries?

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to Miss G. Mahar and Miss M. McGregor who very kindly typed the manuscript for me.

Leon Morris



AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The call for a new edition of this commentary has given me the opportunity of working through the material again, with the help of much that has been written in the years since the first edition appeared. I have been grateful for the commentaries to which I have referred, and especially to those by Barrett and Conzelmann.

The change from the Authorized Version to the New International Version as the base has meant many small alterations, and I have gone further and rewritten the whole. It is essentially the same commentary, though here and there the reader may notice a change of emphasis and even sometimes of opinion.

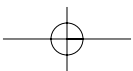
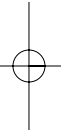
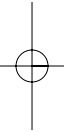
It may help the general reader if I point out that all cross-references have been checked against the Greek text; a reference to the English translation will not always make this clear. For example, I speak of Paul's calling himself a 'slave of Christ' and refer to Romans 1:1. Now NIV has there 'a servant of Christ' and the English reader may wonder a little about the accuracy of the reference. But 'servant' translates *doulos*, which means 'slave'. Despite NIV, Paul really did call himself 'a slave of Christ'. It would have taken up a lot of space to make this sort of thing clear on every occasion, so I have often simply given the reference. But, as I have said, on every occasion the reference has been checked against the Greek.

It remains only for me to express the hope that in its new format this commentary will meet a continuing need. And to express my



appreciation to Mrs D. Wellington, my former secretary, for her kindness in typing the manuscript so expertly.

Leon Morris



CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS

AS	G. Abbott-Smith, <i>A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament</i> (T. & T. Clark, 1937).
AV	The Authorized (or King James') Version.
BAGD	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (trans. of W. Bauer, <i>Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch</i>), ed. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich; second ed. rev. and augmented by F. W. Danker (University of Chicago Press, 1979).
Barclay	William Barclay, <i>The Letters to the Corinthians</i> (Saint Andrew Press, 1956; <i>Daily Study Bible</i>).
Barrett	C. K. Barrett, <i>A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> (Black, 1971; <i>Black's New Testament Commentary</i>).
BDF	F. Blass and A. Debrunner, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , trans. and rev. by Robert W. Funk (Cambridge University Press, 1961).
Beet	J. Agar Beet, <i>A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians</i> (Hodder & Stoughton, 1889).
Bengel	J. A. Bengel, <i>Gnomon of the New Testament</i> (T. & T. Clark, 1873).
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i> .
Bruce	F. F. Bruce, <i>1 and 2 Corinthians</i> (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982; <i>New Century Bible</i>).

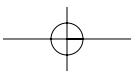
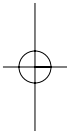
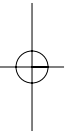
- Calvin John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. by J. Pringle (Calvin Translation Society, 1848).
- CBQ* *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.
- Conzelmann Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (SCM Press, 1975).
- Craig Clarence T. Craig, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Abingdon, 1978; *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10).
- Deluz Gaston Deluz, *A Companion to 1 Corinthians* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963).
- Edwards Thomas Charles Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1885).
- Ellicott Charles J. Ellicott, *St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1887).
- Erdman Charles R. Erdman, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Westminster, 1966).
- EVV English Versions (the Authorized Version and the Revised Version).
- Findlay G. G. Findlay, *St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1901; Eerdmans reprint 1979; *The Expositor's Greek Testament*).
- GNB Good News Bible: Today's English Version, 1976.
- Godet F. L. Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (1893; Kregel reprint 1979).
- Goudge H. L. Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Methuen, 1915).
- Grammar* A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.).
- Green Michael Green, *To Corinth with Love* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1982).
- Grosheide F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954; *New London Commentary*).
- Grudem Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (University Press of America, 1982).
- HDB James Hastings (ed.), *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols. (T. & T. Clark, 1898–1904).

- Héring Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (Epworth Press, 1962).
- Hillyer N. Hillyer, '1 and 2 Corinthians' in the *New Bible Commentary, Third Edition* (IVP, 1970).
- Hodge Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Nisbet, 1873).
- Hurd John Coolidge Hurd, Jr, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (SPCK, 1965).
- IBNTG C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge University Press, 1953).
- IDB *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Abingdon, 1962); supplementary vol. (1976).
- ISBE *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 5 vols. (Howard Severance, 1929; rev. ed., 4 vols, Eerdmans, 1979-).
- JB The Jerusalem Bible, 1966.
- JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*.
- Jones J. D. Jones, *An Exposition of First Corinthians 13* (Klock & Klock reprint, 1982).
- JTS *The Journal of Theological Studies*.
- Kay W. Kay, *A Commentary on the Two Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Macmillan, 1887).
- LAE Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. by L. R. M. Strachan (Hodder & Stoughton, 1927).
- LB The Living Bible, 1972.
- Lenski R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Augsburg, 1963).
- Lightfoot J. B. Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul* (Macmillan, 2 1904).
- LSJ *A Greek-English Lexicon*, compiled by H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, rev. and augmented by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1940).
- LXX The Septuagint Version.
- Mare W. H. Mare, *1 Corinthians* (Zondervan, 1976; *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 10).

- Metzger Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1971).
- MM J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1914–29).
- Moffatt James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1943; *Moffatt New Testament Commentary*).
- NASB The New American Standard Bible, 1963.
- NEB The New English Bible, Old Testament, 1970; New Testament, ²1970.
- NIV The Holy Bible: New International Version, Old Testament, 1978; New Testament, ²1978.
- NTS *New Testament Studies*.
- Orr and Walther William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians* (Doubleday, 1976).
- Parry R. St John Parry, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Cambridge University Press, 1926; *The Cambridge Greek Testament*).
- Proctor W. C. G. Proctor, '1 Corinthians' in *The New Bible Commentary* (Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1953).
- Prolegomena* J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. i, *Prolegomena* (T. & T. Clark, 1906).
- Redpath Alan Redpath, *The Royal Route to Heaven* (Revell, 1960).
- Robertson F. W. Robertson, *Expository Lectures on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians* (King, 1876).
- Robertson and Plummer Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (T. & T. Clark, 1929; *International Critical Commentary*).
- RSV The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Old Testament, 1952; New Testament, ²1971.
- Ruef J. Ruef, *Paul's First Letter to Corinth* (SCM Press, 1977; *Pelican New Testament Commentary*).
- RV The Revised Version, 1881.
- Smedes Lewis B. Smedes, *Love within Limits* (Eerdmans, 1978).
- SPC Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*

	(Glazier, 1983).
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , trans. by G. W. Bromiley of <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum neuen Testament</i> , 10 vols. (Eerdmans, 1964–76).
Theissen	Gerd Theissen, <i>The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity</i> (T. & T. Clark, 1982).
Thrall	Margaret E. Thrall, <i>The First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians</i> (Cambridge University Press, 1965; <i>Cambridge Bible Commentary</i>).
<i>TNTC</i>	<i>Tyndale New Testament Commentary</i> .
<i>TOTC</i>	<i>Tyndale Old Testament Commentary</i> .
Williams	C. S. C. Williams, 'I and II Corinthians' in <i>Peake's Commentary on the Bible</i> , ed. by M. Black and H. H. Rowley (Nelson, 1980).
Wilson	Geoffrey B. Wilson, <i>1 Corinthians</i> (Banner of Truth, 1978).

The translations by E. J. Goodspeed, R. Knox, J. B. Phillips, H. J. Schonfield, A. S. Way and R. F. Weymouth are cited by the translator's surname.



INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The geographical position of Corinth, on the narrow neck of land between the Corinthian Gulf (where its port was Lechaëum) and the Saronic Gulf (and the port of Cenchrea) guaranteed its commercial prosperity. Merchants and sailors sent goods across the isthmus rather than risk the long voyage round the rocky, storm-tossed capes at the south of the Peloponnesus.¹ Trade routes from east to west intersected those from north to south at this city. Corinth was totally destroyed by the Roman, L. Mummius Achaicus, in 146 BC,

-
1. See G. E. Wright and F. V. Filson, *The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible* (SCM Press, 1946), pp. 80, 88f. This meant transshipping cargoes, but small vessels were hauled across the isthmus 'by means of a ship tramway with wooden rails' according to J. E. Harry (*ISBE*, ii, p. 710). Strabo calls it the *diolkos* (*Geography* 8.2.1). Nero tried to cut a canal, but without success. The modern canal follows the route planned by Nero.

but when it was refounded a century later as a Roman colony it speedily regained much of its former greatness.

As the new city was a Roman colony, its inhabitants were at first Romans. Eventually Greeks came back in numbers and the city also attracted people from other races. Included among them was a Jewish population large enough to have a synagogue (Acts 18:4).² The Roman element³ is illustrated by the number of Latin names associated with Corinth in the New Testament, such as Lucius, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, Quartus (Rom. 16:21–23), Titius Justus, Crispus (Acts 18:7–8), Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17). But Greek ways of thought lie behind some of the questions raised in Paul's letters to Corinth and the manner in which they are treated. Edwards says of Corinth: 'Of Greek cities the least Greek, it was at this time the least Roman of Roman colonies.'⁴ It was a city where 'Greeks, Latins, Syrians, Asiatics, Egyptians, and Jews, bought and sold, laboured and revelled, quarrelled and hob-nobbed, in the city and its ports, as nowhere else in Greece'.⁵

Old Corinth had been a by-word for licentiousness,⁶ and this hotch-potch of races would have hastened the process by which the

-
2. An inscription on part of the lintel of a synagogue has been found. It is agreed that this is later than the time of Paul, but it may show the site (*LAE*, p. 16, n. 7; G. E. Wright, *An Introduction to Biblical Archaeology* [Duckworth, 1960], p. 177).
 3. Parry sees evidence of the Roman character of the city in that it was the first city of Greece to admit the gladiatorial games (p. ix). Robertson and Plummer maintain that by New Testament times the descendants of the original Italian colonists 'had become to a large extent Hellenized' (p. xi). Corinth's population was a medley of races which had apparently retained most of the worst features of the original stocks.
 4. Edwards, p. xii.
 5. Moffatt, p. xvii.
 6. There were more than a thousand prostitutes connected with the temple of Aphrodite in old Corinth (Strabo, 8.6.20). This goddess could be styled Aphrodite Kallipygos, 'Aphrodite of the Beautiful Buttocks' (Athenaeus, 12.554c). Shrines were 'everywhere' erected to 'Aphrodite the *hetaira* ('courtesan') 'as patroness of harlots' (ibid., 13.559a and note,

new Corinth acquired an equally unsavoury reputation. A. M. Hunter says that in the popular mind Corinth suggested ‘culture and courtesans ... “Corinthian words” implied pretensions to philosophy and letters, and to “Corinthianize” was popular Greek for “go to the devil”.’⁷

Yet for all that the city was one of the most important in Greece. It was populous⁸ and wealthy.⁹ It was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. And the finest athletes were attracted to the Isthmian Games celebrated near the city, games so important that

Loeb ed.); this was presumably the reason for the ‘ancient custom in Corinth ... whenever the city prays to Aphrodite in matters of grave importance, to invite as many prostitutes as possible to join in their petitions’ (*ibid.*, 13.573c). Murphy-O’Connor doubts whether Corinth was worse than other ports in the Eastern Mediterranean. He thinks both Strabo and Athenaeus were in error (*SPC*, pp. 55–57, 127f), and ascribes much to Athenian propaganda. But even he admits that Corinth had ‘a certain reputation in sexual matters’ (*SPC*, p. 56), and the ancient writers account for it better than he does. Dio Chrysostom speaks of Diogenes observing large numbers gathering at Corinth because of its harbours and its prostitutes (*Discourses*, 8.5). Murphy-O’Connor quotes from Plutarch a reference to ‘the great army of prostitutes’ at Corinth, and explains them as ‘city prostitutes’ rather than the servants of Aphrodite (*SPC*, p. 106). But they were still prostitutes and there was an army of them, even if Murphy-O’Connor is right.

7. A. M. Hunter, *Introducing the New Testament* (SCM Press, 1945), p. 76.
8. Hunter puts the population at half a million (*ibid.*), while Godet (p. 5) and *ISBE* (ii, p. 713) say it was between 600,000 and 700,000. J. Cambier gives this figure with some precision, speaking of 200,000 free men and 400,000 slaves (A. Robert and A. Feuillet, *Introduction to the New Testament* [Desclee, 1965], p. 413). Ellicott, however, thinks of 100,000. Murphy-O’Connor, discussing archaeological work at Corinth, says no hypothesis about the population has been put forward (*SPC*, p. 32). It is clear that the population was large, but just how large it is impossible to say with our present knowledge.
9. Strabo calls Corinth ‘wealthy’ and gives three reasons: its position, so advantageous for trade; the Isthmian Games; and the thousand prostitutes (8.6.20). He refers to the city’s statesmen, its painters and

they continued to be celebrated even when the city was destroyed (*SPC*, p. 14). There was fertile soil nearby, and grapes flourished (our word ‘currant’ derives from ‘Corinth’ and is a reminder of the success of the city’s horticulture).

The city to which Paul came preaching the gospel was, then, a very cosmopolitan place. It was an important city. It was intellectually alert, materially prosperous, but morally corrupt. There was a pronounced tendency for its inhabitants to indulge their desires of whatever sort. In the words of von Dobschütz:

The ideal of the Corinthian was the reckless development of the individual. The merchant who made his gain by all and every means, the man of pleasure surrendering himself to every lust, the athlete steeled to every bodily exercise and proud in his physical strength, are the true Corinthian types: in a word the man who recognised no superior and no law but his own desires.¹⁰

Corinth was a prestigious centre from which the gospel could radiate out to the surrounding districts. There was a large floating population, with merchants and travellers staying a few days and then going their way. Anything preached in Corinth would be sure of a wide dissemination.

2. Paul at Corinth

When Paul first reached Corinth he had experienced a great deal of discouragement. At Philippi he had had a promising beginning smashed by the opposition of fanatical Jews. The same thing had happened at Thessalonica and Beroea. In Athens he had had little suc-

craftsmen, but does not speak of philosophers. He also refers to its great paintings and works in bronze (8.6.23). Pausanias has a detailed description of the city (*Description of Greece*, 2:1–5). Horace quotes a proverb, ‘It is not every man’s lot to get to Corinth’ (*Epistles*, I.17.36); the Loeb editor explains that this ‘originally referred to the great expense of a self-indulgent life at Corinth’.

10. Cited in Parry, p. x.

cess. Small wonder that he came to busy, proud, intellectual Corinth 'in weakness and fear, and with much trembling' (1 Cor. 2:3). His companions on this missionary journey, Silas and Timothy, were occupied in Macedonia, so that Paul was probably alone, which would not have made things any easier. In Corinth he lodged with Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who had been expelled from Rome by a decree of the Emperor Claudius (which most date in AD 49). Like Paul, they were tent-makers (=leatherworkers?) by trade. In due course Silas and Timothy rejoined him and brought news that, despite all opposition, Paul's converts at Thessalonica were standing firm. Paul saw that, despite the difficulties and discouragements he had met, the blessing of God was upon the work that he had done. The news put new heart into him and he gave himself over to the proclamation of the gospel with renewed energy. He 'devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ' (Acts 18:5).

But his preaching did not prove acceptable to the Jews and he had to leave the synagogue. Not very tactfully he went to the house of Justus, right next door,¹¹ and this apparently became his new preaching base.¹² Crispus, the 'synagogue ruler', believed, together with his household (Acts 18:8).¹³ But these are the only Jewish converts in

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11. Cf. K. Lake, 'It must be admitted that he chose a position which was not likely to avoid trouble, though it had the advantage of being easily found by the God-fearer who had previously frequented the synagogue' (*The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* [Rivingtons, 1911], p. 104).
 12. This appears to be the meaning of Acts 18:7, rather than that he ceased living with Aquila and Priscilla and came to live with Justus.
 13. It is possible that there is another Jew. The Sosthenes who is joined with Paul and Timothy in the salutation (1 Cor. 1:1) may be the synagogue ruler of Acts 18:17. But this is far from certain. J. Massingberd Ford emphasizes the Jewish element in the Corinthian church in an article entitled, 'The First Epistle to the Corinthians or the First Epistle to the Hebrews?' (*CBQ*, xxviii, 1966, pp. 402-416). But others, e.g. T. W. Manson, see the Corinthian church as largely Gentile (*Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* [Manchester University Press, 1962], pp. 190-209). This seems indicated by Acts 18:6; 1 Cor. 12:2 (though there were some Jewish Christians, 1 Cor. 7:18).

Corinth of whom we read in Acts (unless Aquila and Priscilla were converted there). It is in harmony with this that Jewish names do not figure largely in the Corinthian Epistles. But many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized. Paul was encouraged by a vision, perhaps at the time of his expulsion from the synagogue, assuring him that God had ‘many people in this city’ (Acts 18:10). He remained in Corinth for eighteen months and evidently made many converts. We are not told expressly, but it seems likely that here, as elsewhere, the bulk of the believers came from the group of devout pagans who attached themselves loosely to the synagogue. They were dissatisfied with paganism and found themselves attracted by Judaism’s lofty morals and pure monotheism, but repelled by its narrow nationalism and by ritual practices like circumcision. Such people found in Christianity a faith that satisfied and was free from what they found objectionable in Judaism.

Some of the converts were people of substance. Gaius gave hospitality to Paul and to the whole church (Rom. 16:23, almost certainly written from Corinth). Erastus was ‘the city’s director of public works’ (Rom. 16:23; an inscription in Corinth speaks of an Erastus who laid down a pavement at his own expense¹⁴ and this might be the same man). Some see Chloe as another wealthy Corinthian Christian, but we do not know whether she was a believer or not, nor whether she came from this city or elsewhere. But Paul’s references to believers engaging in litigation and attending private banquets point to men of means. It seems, however, that these were exceptions, and that most of the believers came from the lower social strata (1 Cor. 1:26–29).¹⁵

14. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 177; Murphy O’Connor, *SPC*, p. 37.

15. Theissen, while agreeing that most of the Corinthians were lower class, points to evidence that some were not. Thus nine out of seventeen persons (or circles of people) linked with Corinth engaged in travel (pp. 91f.), not normally an occupation of the poor. Some reproached Paul ‘repeatedly’ for not accepting hospitality (p. 97; he cites 9:1ff.; 2 Cor. 10–13), which argues the means for providing it; the eating of meat (chs. 8–10) concerned the wealthy rather than the poor (pp. 125f., 128). He finds all this important, for ‘associations of the ancient world were,

Throughout Greece the Jews tended to stir up opposition whenever Paul's missions looked like being successful.¹⁶ The Thessalonian Epistles, almost certainly written from Corinth, show us something of the determined opposition he was experiencing (1 Thess. 2:15; 2 Thess. 3:1f.). He was compelled to cease preaching in the synagogue and was even brought before the proconsul Gallio and accused of 'persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law' (Acts 18:13). But he had broken no Roman law and Gallio refused to hear the charge. He saw it as merely a dispute among Jews (which incidentally gave Christianity protection for the time being; Gallio had classed it as part of Judaism; cf. Bruce, p. 20). Paul was free to continue his work unhindered. From the length of his stay we gather that he regarded his mission at Corinth as possibly the most important he had undertaken up to this point.

3. Paul's subsequent relations with the church at Corinth

Some time after Paul left Corinth Apollos, a learned man from Alexandria, arrived there. He had been in Ephesus teaching Christianity, though he knew only John's baptism. There Aquila and Priscilla 'explained to him the way of God more adequately' (Acts 18:26). Armed with this new knowledge, Apollos went to Achaia, of which province Corinth was the capital. Here his eloquence was employed in 'proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ' (Acts 18:28). This implies that preacher and hearers alike looked for the coming of the Messiah (the Christ). Apollos was able to say, 'The Messiah you expect is Jesus and Scripture makes this clear.'¹⁷

to a great extent, socially homogeneous. Religious associations give evidence of expressing class-specific forms of sociability to an even greater degree than do professional groups ...' (p. 146). The Christians differed in including people of various social classes and treating them all as 'brothers'.

16. 'He was not merely a renegade Pharisee who believed in messiah, but a successful one' (Moffatt, p. xiii). That is what they found impossible to forgive.
17. Cf. K. Lake, *op. cit.*, p.110

His method of preaching probably differed from that of Paul. Paul's preaching had a studied simplicity (1 Cor. 2:2–4), that of Apollos was probably highly rhetorical (Acts 18:24, 27–28). There was no fundamental difference in the message preached, for Paul speaks of Apollos as continuing the work that he had begun (1 Cor. 3:6, 8). But the difference in presentation was enough to cause a certain partisanship with some of the Corinthians.¹⁸

Some time after this Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian church, a letter that has perished. The evidence for its existence is Paul's statement that he had previously written a letter telling the Corinthian believers 'not to associate with sexually immoral people' (1 Cor. 5:9). We know nothing more about this letter or how Paul came to write it. Some scholars think that part of it is preserved in 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1. If, as is probable, this hypothesis is to be rejected, the letter has entirely disappeared.¹⁹ This need cause no surprise. The letter had been misunderstood (1 Cor. 5:9–10) and Paul mentioned it only to clear up a misconception. The newer letter superseded the older, and thus there was no point in preserving it.²⁰

Next came some contacts with the Corinthians. The household of Chloe brought him news of cliques in the church (1 Cor. 1:11).

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18. 'In these cities, with their mobile, eager, and excitable populations, crazes of some kind are not only a common feature, but almost a social necessity ... As Renan says ... let there be two preachers, or two doctors, in one of the small towns in Southern Europe, and at once the inhabitants take sides as to which is the better of the two. The two preachers, or the two doctors, may be on the best of terms: that in no way hinders their names from being made a party-cry and the signal for vehement dissensions' (Robertson and Plummer, p. xx). Proctor remarks that the process would have been helped by the multiplicity of races at Corinth (p. 969).
19. See the Introduction to Colin Kruse's Commentary on 2 Corinthians (*INTC*).
20. Hurd thinks that the letter the Corinthians wrote to Paul (1 Cor. 7:1) was in reply to the misunderstood letter. He holds that an examination of what Paul says about the Corinthians' letter enables us to reconstruct something of Paul's lost letter (pp. 213–239).

The church wrote him a letter (1 Cor. 7:1), presumably brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17), who would have added their own comments. Paul answered with the letter we know as 1 Corinthians. From it we learn that all was not well in the Corinthian church. There is some very plain speaking.

The situation was serious and Paul determined to send Timothy to Corinth; indeed, he had sent him before he despatched 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10–11). Timothy is joined with Paul in the salutation in 2 Corinthians, so his visit was short (if indeed he ever reached Corinth). Clearly he was not able to do much.

The situation worsened. It is curious that we do not know the nature of what was plainly a very serious dispute. It may have been one of the matters mentioned in 1 Corinthians, but if so we have no way of knowing which. But clearly it involved a denial of Paul's authority. Paul felt it necessary to leave his work in Ephesus and pay a hurried visit in the attempt to set things right. This visit is implied in passages in 2 Corinthians which speak of Paul as being ready to pay a third visit to Corinth (2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1; his second visit is past in 2 Cor. 13:2). When Paul wrote this letter he had clearly made a visit additional to the one when the church was founded. The words will not refer, as some have maintained, to Paul's intentions and not to an actual visit. As Moffatt cogently argues, 'Against people who suspected his consistency and goodwill, it would have been of little use to plead that he had honestly intended to come, that he had been quite ready to visit them.'²¹ His references to coming again in sorrow (e.g. 2 Cor. 2:1) show that that visit had been an unpleasant one.

Some scholars place this visit before the writing of 1 Corinthians,²² but no good reason has been shown for this. That Epistle seems to imply one previous visit only, the one when the church was founded (e.g. 2:1; 3:2; 11:2). Another visit is foreshadowed (4:19), but is not yet an accomplished fact. Paul's knowledge of recent affairs at Corinth is not personal, but derived from Chloe's people (1:11; cf. 5:1; 11:18), and from a letter from the Corinthian church (7:1). The

21. J. Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (T. & T. Clark, 1927), p. 117.

22. See the list in Robertson and Plummer, p. xxiv.

second visit was clearly a very painful one and the general tone of 1 Corinthians is inexplicable after such a visit. It is much more likely that the situation implied in 1 Corinthians deteriorated after the receipt of that letter. Thus the 'painful' visit became necessary. But, despite some plain speaking, it failed to clear up the situation, and Paul went away profoundly disturbed.²³

The apostle determined to write another letter. This obviously had a very severe tone and cost him much to write (2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8). Had it not been successful it might conceivably have meant a final rupture between Paul and this church he had founded. Like his first letter, this 'severe' letter has been lost, unless, as some scholars think, part of it is preserved in 2 Corinthians 10 – 13.²⁴ The letter

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23. T. W. Manson denies that Paul visited Corinth from Ephesus. He holds that Paul completed his work in Ephesus, then paid the 'painful' visit to Corinth, after which he went on to Macedonia (2 Cor. 1:15ff). But Paul speaks of that plan as though it was not carried out, and a further disadvantage is that Manson has to postulate a special missionary expedition in the neighbourhood of Troas, for Paul was certainly there (2 Cor. 2:12; see *Studies*, pp. 211–217). It is better to see the 'painful' visit as an interruption of the Ephesian ministry.
24. The view is held strongly by some. Thus K. and S. Lake maintain that 'there is overwhelming reason for believing that 2 Cor. 10 – 13 is part of the severe letter and that 2 Cor. 1 – 9 is a later letter' (*An Introduction to the New Testament* [Christophers, 1938], p. 122). So also Willi Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 79ff. On the other hand, M. Dibelius says, 'ancient letters had a fairly certain protection against such accidental interweavings, in the fact that the address of the letter stood on the reverse of the papyrus. This would make it difficult accidentally to take part of one letter for another letter, and an editor who without visible grounds made two letters out of four would be a strange figure, especially if he deleted from the intermediate letter the essential matter referred to in 2 Cor. 2 and 7, and yet used a fragment of that letter in 2 Cor. 10 – 13. Hence we shall have to content ourselves with the loss of these two letters, viz. the original first and the intermediate third' (*A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* [Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1936], p. 154). See also

was apparently taken by Titus, who was to return via Macedonia and Troas. Paul was impatient to know how it had been received. He went to Troas but Titus was not there. Unable to rest, he crossed to Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12–13). Here Titus met him with the news that all was well (2 Cor. 2:12–17; 7:6–7). Out of his great relief and joy Paul wrote the letter we call 2 Corinthians. Almost certainly he visited the church soon afterwards.

Thus we have knowledge of three visits Paul paid to Corinth:

1. When the church was founded.
2. The ‘painful’ visit.
3. A visit after 2 Corinthians had been sent.

There were four letters:

1. The ‘previous’ letter.
2. 1 Corinthians.
3. The ‘severe’ letter.
4. 2 Corinthians.

A more detailed discussion of this framework more properly belongs to the introduction to 2 Corinthians. Here it is sufficient to notice enough of the evidence for us to place 1 Corinthians in its proper place in the sequence of Paul’s dealings with the church at Corinth.

4. The occasion and purpose of 1 Corinthians

The immediate occasion of the Epistle was the letter Paul had received from the Corinthian church, for which a reply was necessary. But what mattered much more to Paul was clearly the news that had come to him independently of the letter. There were disquieting irregularities in the conduct of the believers at Corinth. Paul was troubled by the ‘tendency on the part of some members to make the break with pagan society as indefinite as possible . . . The Church was in the world, as it had to be, but the world was in the Church, as it ought not to be’.²⁵ So much did this matter to Paul that he spent six

Orr and Walther, pp. 21–24. R. Batey rejects the idea that 2 Cor. 10–13 is part of the ‘severe’ letter, and sees it as later than the others, part of a fifth letter to the Corinthians (*JBL*, lxxxiv, 1965, pp. 139–146).

25. Moffatt, p. xv.