

## LESSON XLV—THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

### I. Its Establishment:

1. The City. 400,000 population. A center of commerce. Burned in 146 B.C., rebuilt by Caesar in 46 B.C.; colonized with freed men of the Roman Empire. Citizenship of dishonest and licentious people. The character of its people seen in the fact that it contained the Temple of Venus with 1,000 priestesses dedicated to harlotry.
2. The message preached. The Gospel (I Cor. 15:1-4; 1:18; 2:1-5; II Cor. 1:4-6; I Cor. 4:15).
3. The Response (Acts 18:8). "Heard, believed, were baptized." (I Cor. 6:11) "But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God."
4. The Means. The establishment of the Corinthian Church was made possible not only by Paul's labors (I Cor. 9) but also by other churches supporting him (II Cor. 11:7-9).

### II. Its Character:

1. The virtues of the Corinthian Church.
  - a. Complied readily with counsel — were teachable (II Cor. 7:6-11).
  - b. Responsive to opportunity to do good. In benevolent work readiness and willingness were shown (II Cor. 8:9-11; 9:1-5).
  - c. Loyal to the truth they had learned (II Cor. 1:24; 7:13-16; I Cor. 15:1).

"The gospel which I preached unto you ... wherein ye stand."

    1. Though sin had been committed and wrong had been done, Corinth had not compromised the truth not forsaken it.
2. The vices of the Corinthians. Things for which they were reprov'd.
  - a. Division.
    1. Its cause — carnality (I Cor. 3:1-3).
    2. Its effect — divided body of Christ (I Cor. 1:13). Destroy the Temple of God (I Cor. 3:16).
    3. Its cure — speak the same thing; let no division exist; grow together into the same mind and the same judgment (I Cor. 1:10).
  - b. Striving about preachers (I Cor. 3:4-9; 1:13).
  - c. Sin permitted (I Cor. 5).
    1. Its danger — Leaven the whole lump in addition to condemning the one guilty (I Cor. 5:6).
    2. Its cure (I Cor. 5:3-5). (See lesson on discipline of the Church No. XXXV.)
  - d. Brother going to law against brother (I Cor. 6:1-8).

- e. Indifference to conscience of weak (I Cor. 8:7-13). Personal liberty must not be exercised to the injury of the weak. Christian liberty not to be misused (I Cor. 10:23-33).
- f. Disorder in worship.
  - 1. At the Lord's Table (I Cor. 11:17-34).
  - 2. Confused as to use of gifts (I Cor. 14:33; 14:4) "Let all things be done decently and in order."
- g. Seeking precedence. Should seek good of whole body (I Cor. 12:18-31; 14:12, 26). "Let all things be done unto edifying."
- h. Losing identity. Destroying separateness from world (II Cor. 6:14-7:1).
- i. Glorifying in men (II Cor. 10:7). Comparing men with men wrong (II Cor. 10:12).
  - 1. Should glory only in the Lord (II Cor. 10:17-18).

### III. Exhortations Delivered to the Corinthians:

- 1. "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).
- 2. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love" (I Cor. 16:13-14).
- 3. "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1).
- 4. "But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also" (Liberality) (II Cor. 8:7).
- 5. "And herein I give my judgment; for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. But now complete the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability" (II Cor. 8:10-11).