

**CFM 34 – 1 Cor. 8-13 “Ye are the body of Christ”**

**Potomac Crossing Ward, Ashburn Virginia Stake**

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**Subject**

This letter can be divided up based upon subject as follows:

Various offenses among the Corinthian ecclesia (ch. 1-6)

Divisions based on Doctrine (ch. 1-3)

Be united in Christ, not divided in contention (1:4-17)

Wisdom of God is greater than wisdom of man (1:18-30)

Paul preached in Spirit, not in persuasive words of wisdom (2:1-16)

Build on the foundation of Christ in humility (3:1-23)

Pride (ch. 4), be humble, like us, not arrogant

Avoiding Immorality (ch. 5-6)

Avoid immoral people, laundry list of immorality (5:1-13)

Avoid lawsuits among the ecclesia (v. 6:1-11)

Avoid prostitutes (v. 6:12-20)

Various doctrinal matters addressed (ch. 7-15)

Marriage (ch. 7)

Eating meat sacrificed to idols (ch. 8)

Apostles and missionaries are worthy of support of the ecclesia, but Paul himself has never availed himself of their support (ch. 9)

Don't repeat Israel's mistakes, flee from idolatry (ch. 10).

Women should cover their heads (11:2-16)

Taking the Sacrament seriously (11:17-34)

Seek Spiritual gifts to serve the ecclesia (ch. 12)

Greatest spiritual gift is Christlike love (ch. 13)

Prophecy is a greater gift than speaking in tongues (ch. 14)

Reality of the resurrection (ch. 15)

Closing (ch. 16)

## **Background**

The letter to the Corinthians is a letter of warning and admonition sent by Paul to check improper conduct among people within the Church. Paul was staying at Ephesus, which is a neighboring sea-trading partner with Corinth, when he received word of wrongdoing within the Church (cf. 1:11).

The content of this letter is much different from the content of the letter to Romans. Paul's letter to the Romans is a very deliberate theological treatise that is the result of years of debating in synagogues. This letter is a series of topical responses based on what is going on there at the church at Corinth. No heavy theology here, just Paul responding to specific issues of what is going on locally there at that time. Obviously, there is theological content, but not in the form of his letter to Romans. In this letter, Paul talks about the resurrection, but only because there are members at the Corinthian church who don't believe it.

There was prior written communication between Paul and the Church at Corinth. Paul cites the contents of some letter presently lost to us (cf. 5:9). And in this letter he responds to questions posed (cf. 7:1, 8:1). Based on what we can tell from the present text, the previous letters probably had little or no theological content, so they were not preserved.

Paul is clearly dismayed over their present condition. They have ignored his prior written admonitions to avoid immorality. People within the Church are tolerating gross immorality in the other Church members (cf. 5:1-2), and division is arising within the Church as a result of pseudo-intellectualism (cf. ch. 2).

The result is this letter, wherein Paul addresses their behavior and admonishes them to abandon their Gentile ways.

## Condition of Corinthian Culture



How did the Corinthian Church fall into such problems so quickly? Corinth was a local hub of commerce because it was located at an isthmus between the Ionian and Aegean seas, so it was a natural portage for goods. The result is was a wealthy and cosmopolitan location. The patron deity was Aphrodite/Venus, which lent itself to prostitution, so that added to the popularity of the destination.

Under the entry for Corinth Smith's Bible Dictionary states:

Corinth was a place of great mental activity, as well as of commercial and manufacturing enterprise. Its wealth was so celebrated as to be proverbial; so were the vice and profligacy of its inhabitants. The worship of Venus here was attended with shameful licentiousness.

And Coneybear and Howson in The Life and Epistles of St. Paul state (p. 376-377):

One evil at least, we know, prevailed extensively, and threatened to corrupt the whole Church of Corinth. This was nothing less than the addiction of many Corinthian Christians to those sins of impurity which they had practiced in the days of their Heathenism, and which disgraced their native city, even among the Heathen. We have before mentioned the peculiar licentiousness of manners which prevailed at Corinth. So notorious was this, that it had actually passed into the vocabulary of the Greek tongue; and the very word 'to Corinthianize,' meant 'to play the wanton;' [footnote: it is so used by Aristophanes] nay, the bad reputation of the city had become proverbial, and even in foreign languages, and is immortalized by the Latin poets [footnote: Hor. Ep. i. 17., 'Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum'] Such being the habits in which many of the

Corinthian converts had been educated, we cannot wonder if it proved most difficult to root out immorality from the rising Church.

Thus, the culture at Corinth was quite decadent.

Regarding some of the sports imagery Paul employs in this letter, he draws on the setting of Corinth itself. Under the entry for Corinth Smith's Bible Dictionary states:

This article would be incomplete without some notice of the Posidonium, or sanctuary of Neptune, the scene of the Isthmian games, from which St. Paul borrows some of his most striking imagery in 1 Cor. and other epistles. This sanctuary was a short distance to the N. E. of Corinth, at the narrowest part of the Isthmus, near the harbor of Schaeenus (now Kalamaki) on the Saronic gulf. The exact site of the temple is doubtful; but where the foot-races were run (1 Cor. 9:24); to the east are those of the theater, which was probably the scene of pugilistic contests (1 Cor. 9:26); and abundant on the shore are the small green pine trees which gave the fading wreath (1 Cor. 9:25) to the victors in the games.

### **Worship of Aphrodite/Venus**

The discussion in ch. 11 and again in 14:34-35 (particularly see the IV/JST on these latter verses) makes it clear there is something going on Corinth with respect to the women among the ecclesia. What specifically gave rise to Paul's comments is a matter of speculation, but the presently available ancient texts and archaeology do give us enough information to be able to determine what was generally going on at the time:

Much like the Vestal Virgins of Rome, the priestesses of Greek religion enjoyed a great many perks that other Greek women did not. In exchange for the commitment to their religious and civic responsibilities, they were often paid, given property, and most importantly, they were respected for their contributions to society – despite being female. The priestesses of the Greek religious cults were celebrities among the masses, and were viewed as role models. The religious role of women in the most powerful of all the Greek cities, Athens, is an example of the power women wielded in this arena, not just in spite of their gender, but also because of it.

<https://www.ancient.eu/article/74/the-women-of-athenas-cult/>

Polytheism's presumed spiritual failures may eventually have led to the Christian ascendancy, but Connelly shows that the system long sustained and nourished Greek women and their communities. In turn, women habituated to religious privilege and influence in the pre-Christian era eagerly lent their expertise and energy to the early church. But with one male god in sole reign in heaven, women's direct connection with deity became suspect, and they were methodically edged out of formal religious power.

“There may be no finer tribute to the potency of the Greek priestess than the discomfort that her position caused the church fathers,” Connelly writes in her understated way. Her

priestesses may be ancient history, but the consequences of the discomfort they caused endure to this day.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/01/books/review/Coates-t.html?mtrref=www.google.com&gwh=92BB4C1728B68C63CBFA7CC37D861E22&gwt=pay&assetType=REGIWALL> which is a review of:

<https://www.amazon.com/Portrait-Priestess-Ritual-Ancient-Greece/dp/0691143846>

Historical documentary quotes about the Cult of Aphrodite:

<https://www.theoi.com/Cult/AphroditeCult.html>

General context:

<https://stravaganzastravaganza.blogspot.com/2018/12/the-cult-of-aphrodite-in-corinth.html>

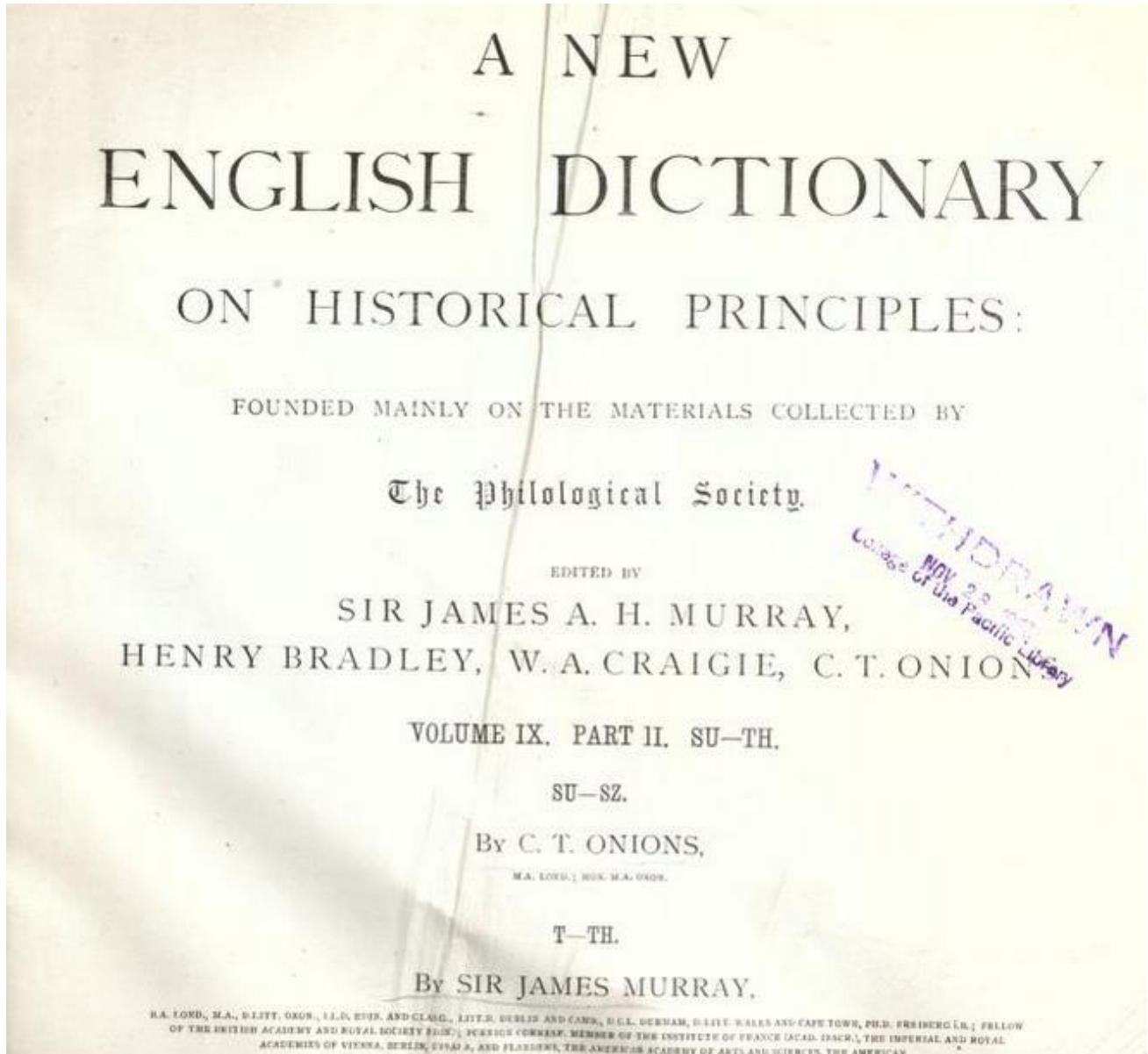
which is quoting *Andreas Forrer in "History Magazine", USA, December 2018/January 2019, excerpts pp. 47-50.*

The women of the early church at Corinth were likely influenced by the power women held in the local cult of Aphrodite, and they didn't respect the traditional method of worship the early Christian Church had inherited from Rabbinical Judaism. The result is there appears to be contention within the ecclesia over the role of women in leadership positions with the church. Given their prior history of largely running the cult of Aphrodite, they were having difficulty relinquishing their social, political and religious power in the Christian church.

It is common for modern readers to see this text as evidence of Biblical sexism, but this is the only point at which Paul is specifically addressing women over this particular issue. He doesn't address this issue in any of his other letters. It is safe to conclude this matter is specific to the church at Corinth, and no others. It is also good to remind people that taking a modern context and putting it onto an ancient text is not consistent. Paul's point of view would have been that of the ancient Christian church's method of worship, which was largely derived from Rabbinical Judaism, versus the Hellenistic method of worship of the cult of Aphrodite. Trying to shoehorn that into a Victorian classical context or modern Feminism isn't reasonable.

## Etymology of the word "Telestial"

Regarding the origin of the word "telestial", below is an entry from the New English Dictionary (1911), which is the predecessor to the Oxford English Dictionary, or OED. The screen grabs below are from <https://archive.org/details/oed9barch/page/n557> under the "T" section on page 146, as follows:





+ **Tele, tel**, *sb. Obs.* Forms: 1 *tæl*, 4 *tél*, *teyl*, 5 *tele*. [OE. *tæl* fem. (also *tál*: see **TOLE**) = OHG. *zāla* danger, snare, trap, ON. *tál* bait, allurement. OTeut. \**tēlā* str. fem., had app. some such general sense as 'hostile or malevolent attack, persecution', whence the specialized senses in the various langs. See also **TELE v.**]

1. Evil speaking, detraction, calumny, blame.

c 897 K. ÆLFRED *Gregory's Past. C.* xxxiii. 222 Ælc ðweora, & ælc ierre. & tæl sie anumen fram eow. a 1000 *Gloss.* in Wr.-Wülcker 196/16 *Blasphemia, uituperatio*, tæl. *Ibid.* 220/23. 1303 R. BRUNNE *Handl. Synne* 2042 But þogh a man sey neuer so weyl Vnto hys sawys men fynden teyl.

2. Deceit; enticement, allurement.

c 1300 *Havelok* 191 Þat he sholde yemen hire wel With-uten lac, with-uten tel Til þat she were tuelf winter hold. a 1450 *MYRC Par. Pr.* 368 So with cha[r]mes & wyth tele, He ys l-broȝte aȝeyn to hele.

+ **Tele, v. Obs.** Forms: 1 *télan* (*télan*), 2-3 *tælen* (3 (*Orm.*) *tælenn*, 3-5 *tellen*), 2-4 *telen*, 3-4 *tele*. [OE. (WSax.) *tēlan* (Angl. *tēlan*) = ON. *tēla* to deceive, betray, entice:—OTeut. \**tēljan*, f. *tēlā*: see **TELE sb.** Cf. OHG. *zālōn* (:—*tēlōjan*) to rob, pillage.]

1. *trans.* To speak evil of, or to; to revile, calumniate; to mock, scorn, deride.

c 888 K. ÆLFRED *Boeth.* xxxviii. § 3 Ic wolde unðeawas tælan & goode herian. c 890 *Laws K. Ælfred* c. 37 Ne tæl ðu ðinne Dryhten. a 900 *Kentish Gloss.* in Wr.-Wülcker 55/19 *Et detraxerunt*, and his teldan. *Ibid.* 75/13 *Deridet*, teld. *Ibid.* 76/31 *Detrahent*, telað. c 950 *Lindisf. Gosp.* John xii. 48 Seðe mec teles [c 975 *Rushw. teleð*]. 10. *Glosses* (Cott. Cleop.) in Wr.-Wülcker 373/26 *Carpere*, telan. c 1160 *Hatton Gosp.* Luke xiv. 29 Ealle þe hit ȝe-seoð aginned hine tælen [*Ags. Gosp.* tælan]. c 1200 *ORMIN* 2039-40 ȝiff þatt tu wilt tælenn me þe birrþ ec hire tælenn. a 1250 *Prov. Ælfred* 237 in *O. E. Misc.* 116 Byfore he þe menep, by-hynde he þe teleþ. c 1490 *Prompt. Parv.* 488/1 (MS. K.) Tellynge, or grochyng, *murmuracio*.

2. To deceive, entrap [cf. ON. *tēla* to betray].

c 1325 *Metr. Hom.* (1862) 12 His [Christ's] godhed in fleis was felid Als hok in bait, quare thoru he telid The fend, that telid our fadir Adam. *Ibid.* 152 That he no haf miht us to tele With gastly dranc and wit darnele. 13. *Metr. Hom.* (Vernon MS.) in Herrig's *Archiv* LVII. 276 But faste he fondeþ mon to tele. Vre lord vs schilde from his teolyng.

Hence + **Teling vbl. sb.** (also 3 *teolunge*, 4 *-yng*, *teliinge*, 4-5 *telyng*, *teeling*), deception, sorcery, witchcraft.

a 1225 *Ancr. R.* 208 Sigaldren, & false teolunges, leuunge on ore & of swefnes & alle wichchecraftes. c 1315 *SHOREHAM* III. 178 By-lef þou in no wychecraft, Ne ine none teliinge. 13. [see **TELE v.** 2]. 1387 *TREvisa Higden* (Rolls) III. 343 He triste on his endyng [v. r. *endityng*] and tellynges [v. r. *teelingis*, *telyngs*, *telyngys*] as olde wifes useþ. a 1450 *MYRC Par. Pr.* 360 Wychecraft and telyng. c 1490 [see **TELE v.** 1].

Note the two scripture quotes above are John 12:48 (judgement to condemnation theme) and Luke 14:29 (mockery theme).

Also note the rhyme from the circa 1450 MYRC:

So with cha[r]mes & wyth tele,

He ys I-brozte azeyn to hele.

Thus, we have:

Concise Oxford Dictionary, 8th Ed., Copyright 1991 Oxford Univ. Press

/celestial/ <<sI"lestI@l>> adj.

1. heavenly; divinely good or beautiful; sublime.
2.
  - a. of the sky; of the part of the sky commonly observed in astronomy etc.
  - b. of heavenly bodies.

ME f. OF f. med.L caelestialis f. L caelestis

And,

Concise Oxford Dictionary, 8th Ed., Copyright 1991 Oxford Univ. Press

/terrestrial/ <<t@"restrI@l>>, <<tI->> adj. & n.

adj.

1. of or on or relating to the earth; earthly.
2.
  - a. of or on dry land.
  - b. [Zool.] living on or in the ground (opp. /aquatic/, /arboreal/, /aerial/).
  - c. [Bot.] growing in the soil (opp. /aquatic/, /epiphytic/).
3. [Astron.] (of a planet) similar in size or composition to the earth.
4. of this world, worldly ("terrestrial sins"; "terrestrial interests").

ME f. L terrestris f. terra earth

And, from above:

tele, teles[tial]

n.

1. Evil speaking, detraction, calumny, blame.
2. Deceit; enticement, allurement.



v.

1. To speak evil of, to revile, calumniate; to mock, scorn, deride.
2. To deceive, entrap, betray.

Related to teling (meaning deception, sorcery, withcraft).

Note the descriptions of the telestial kingdom from D&C 76 follow this definition rather well.

Thus, the divinity of caelestis is opposed to the lowliness and vulgarity of teles.

Yes, perhaps Smith was the first one to put the "-tial" on the teles, but he was by no means the originator of tele/teles any more than he was the originator of caelestis or terrestris.

The original triplet occurs in the Genesis Creation account.

Gen. 1:6-10

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

Each time God gives a name to the creations He has made and they are "Heaven", "Earth", "Seas".

The sun, moon, stars triplet employed by Paul in 1 Cor. 15 has its origin in the Creation account as well.

Gen. 1:16

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

The heaven, earth, seas triplet also appears elsewhere in the Scriptures:

Exod. 20:4

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

The triplet occurs as "heaven above", "the earth beneath [the heavens]", and "the water under the earth".

Isa. 44:23

23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

The triplet occurs as "ye heavens", "ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein", and "ye lower parts [depths] of the earth". The seas are not explicitly identified, but rather the depths of the earth.

Psalm 148

1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights!

2 Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his host!

3 Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!

4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created.

6 And he established them for ever and ever; he fixed their bounds which cannot be passed.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

8 fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

9 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

10 Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

12 Young men and maidens together, old men and children!

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the LORD!

All of creation is addressed from the lowest (v. 7) to the middle (v. 8-12) to the heights (v. 2-6).

Paul also use the triplet in Philipp. 2:10.

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

Thus, Smith in emending 1 Cor. 15:40 to include "telestial" is not taking liberties with the text or creating some novelty. Neither the term "tele" nor the triplet had their origin with Smith.