

Such at least is the divine plan. It can take place only "in the Lord." "All things are of God." Without Him the most blessed natural relations become perverted and poisoned: the authority of the husband over the wife becomes a cruel despotism, and the love of the husband, which is her natural heritage, is turned to hatred. Yes, it is "the blessing of God that maketh rich; and He addeth no sorrow with it."

(B) *Administration of the Lord's Supper.* The description of the Lord's Supper as observed at Corinth is so strange that many persons have thought that the Apostle is describing not the Supper, but a love feast. This, however, can hardly be. The subject is introduced by the remark that *in the Church* there were divisions, other than those dwelt on in the first chapter. The divisions or separations seem to have been between rich and poor. They were such that those that had houses of their own to feast in "shamed those that had not." It would seem that the communicants brought each his own portion of meat and drink, and that instead of sharing it one with another the rich fed greedily on their own, in some cases even to the point of drunkenness, while the poor were left to themselves. It may seem strange that such a perversion of the Lord's Supper could even have occurred, but probably none of the Gospels was yet published. Corinth was far away, and the Corinthian Christians were mostly gentiles, who had not got rid altogether of their pagan associations.

We admire the calm dignity and authority with which the Apostle sets himself to rectify this atrocious departure from the primitive model.

1. He makes the Lord Himself the authority for the right method of commemorating His death.

2. He lays emphasis on the solemn act of prayer with which the Lord instituted the feast.

3. Doing away with all idea of a gorgeous feast, he reminds them that his

Lord made bread and wine the simple materials for the supper.

4. Rehearsing the words and acts of Christ, he brings up the glorious blessings of redemption, of which the Supper was designed to be the symbol and the channel.

5. He further solemnizes their minds by emphatic reference to the *death* of Christ, His death of atonement for men's guilt.

6. And still further he introduces the words, not found in the gospels, about His second coming, so well fitted to lift their minds above the idea of a carnal feast and its sensual delights, and to remind them that His true followers were all brethren.

The work is done. The paganized festival is demolished; the simple Christian feast has taken its place. Again, as in the early part of the Epistle, it is by lifting up CHRIST—by showing Jesus in the touching light of an atoning Savior—that error is dissipated and misconduct rectified. Well did the Apostle know what even the thought of Christ's presence could effect. As of old, He stilled the winds and waves on the Sea of Galilee, so evermore, when His presence is realized and His redeeming love and grace laid to heart, disorder retreats before Him, and there is a great calm.

(C) *The Exercise of Gifts* (Ch. xii., xiii.). No Church, as we have said, was so richly endowed with gifts as Corinth, and in the very imperfect condition in which its members were, there was a strong temptation to those who had brilliant gifts to glory over those who had not, and likewise a strong temptation to use their gifts for display and self-aggrandizement. Our space prevents enlargement; we merely note the two great considerations by which the Apostle strives to correct this spirit and bring into operation the true spirit of Christ.

1. All gifts proceed from the Holy Spirit; are bestowed for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, and are to be exercised with a due sense of the