

1 Corinthians 4

by John Nelson Darby

In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul addresses the Corinthians' pride and divisions, emphasizing God's judgment and the unity of gifts within the church.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:8

Topics: "Authority in Christ", "Gifts from God"

Description

John Nelson Darby explores the depth of the apostle Paul's heart in 1 Corinthians 4, emphasizing the irony in the Corinthians' self-perception of being rich and reigning as kings. He highlights that true judgment comes from God, not from self-assessment, and that all gifts and differences among believers are given by God. Darby also notes Paul's gentle assertion of authority and his commitment to teaching the ways of Christ and the kingdom of God, reminding the Corinthians of their unity in Christ and the source of their gifts.

Transcript

This chapter is a remarkably beautiful working of the apostle's heart, but with no particular subject in it. "Ye are full, ye are rich; ye have reigned as kings without us." This, in a sense, is written in irony, but all is of exceeding interest; v. 8-13.

216 "I know nothing by myself" (v. 4), means I know nothing against myself as an accusation. It is an old English form which was familiar enough two hundred years ago; you will find it in Bishop Hall's writings, though quite obsolete now. "Yet am I not hereby justified," means that that does not clear me, for the Lord judges or examines me. "Then shall every man have praise of God" (v. 5) does not mean that every man will have praise, but that the praise would be of God. When God makes manifest the counsels of the heart, some will get praise; this indeed will be worth something, but now it is all a mere nothing.

"Who maketh thee to differ?" (v. 7) is, If anyone has more gift than another, where does it come from? It all came from God. One was saying, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, but the apostle says to such, It is all yours; and if one is greater than another, who made him to differ? Just as John says, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above."

From verse 14, though he bears everything, he lets them know he has power and warns them. Some said he was not coming, but he was, and he would shew the value of their speech. He does assert his power, though very gently, and indeed he was afterwards afraid he had said too much. "My ways in Christ" (v. 17)

are the ways in which he conducted himself among the saints, as "I teach everywhere in every church." "The kingdom of God," v. 20. He preached the kingdom of God, as elsewhere he says, "Ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God." He was the minister of the kingdom of God, the minister of the new covenant, and the minister of the church.

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