



WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT HAS COME



AN ANSWER TO THE "ORTHODOX"
INTERPRETATION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:10



A Summary of Paul's Thought Flow

The Text in Context

The Epistle is Divided Between Answering Reports and Questions

- Paul had received problematic reports which he addresses — **1:11; 5:1**
- Paul had received a letter from the church with questions which he answers — **7:1; 8:1; 12:1**
 - *“That which is perfect”* (**13:10**) — in the section where Paul answers matters brought up concerning spiritual gifts.



A Summary of Paul's Thought Flow

The Text in Context

Concerning Spiritual Gifts — Their Purpose and Practice

- The heart of the context is love — Chapter 13
 - Chapter 12 — Admonishing the lack of love in use of gifts.
(vv. 4-11, 15, 21, 31)
 - Chapter 14 — Exhorting the pursuit of love in use of gifts.
(vv. 1, 6, 9, 12, 26) (cf. Ephesians 4:16)
 - Chapter 13 — The “*more excellent way*” of love.
 - Love will not cease, but the gifts will (v. 8).
 - When the gifts cease, edification will continue through love directed by God's will.



The Main Question and the Eastern Orthodox Position

What is the final and infallible authority for doctrine and practice?

The Church via Apostolic Succession?

- Apostolic succession — the apostles revealed the will of God, but left successors through the laying on of hands. (1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:6, 13; 2:2)
- The model itself contradicts scripture — the episcopate (*episkopē*)
 - Acts 1:20; 1 Timothy 3:1-2, 4; 1 Corinthians 9:1, 5 — qualified or unqualified? — conflation of terms and offices leading to contradiction.



The Main Question and the Eastern Orthodox Position

What is the final and infallible authority for doctrine and practice?

The Inspired Scripture?

- Foundation of apostles and prophets — **Ephesians 2:20-21**
- Spirit inspired revelation — **Ephesians 3:3-5**
- Vocal and written teaching with writing preserved for all time by God's will and providence — **2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Jude 3**



What is “*that which is perfect*?” (1 Corinthians 13:10)

The Eastern Orthodox Position

- “*that which is perfect*” (v. 10) has reference to Jesus at His second coming.
- (v. 11) — present time prior to coming compared to childhood.
- (v. 12) — knowledge is of God in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - “*face to face*” (*theophany*) — with Jesus (cf. 1 John 3:2).
 - “*I know in part*” — reference to knowing Jesus personally.
- Paul’s emphasis of love (vv. 8, 13) — love is an attribute of a person, therefore “*that which is perfect*” is Jesus.



What is “*that which is perfect*?” (1 Corinthians 13:10)

“*That which is perfect*” in Context — Christ’s Complete Revelation of Truth (John 16:13)

- “*that which is perfect*,” **NOT** “He Who is perfect” (neuter form) (cf. Ephesians 4:13 — masculine form)
- “*that which is perfect*” in reference to a thing corresponding to “*that which is in part*” (v. 10)
 - “*in part*” (vv. 8-9) — revelation of truth. (cf. 14:9, 12)
 - “*that which is perfect*” (v. 10) — the same as “*in part*” with difference in quantity. (Whole) (cf. Psalm 119:160)



What is “*that which is perfect*?” (1 Corinthians 13:10)

“*That which is perfect*” in Context — Christ’s Complete Revelation of Truth (John 16:13)

- Paul uses two analogies to demonstrate the temporary nature of the gifts in the process of revealing God’s will (vv. 11-12).
- (v. 11) — childhood — before everything was written spiritual gifts were necessary.
- (v. 12) — looking in a mirror — revelation in piecemeal likened to seeing self in mirror in contrast to “*face to face*.”
- The “*perfect*” and the “*in part*” cannot be separated in context. Grammatically and contextually they refer to the revelation of truth.



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