

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 10

In this chapter the apostle cautions the Corinthians against security on account of their gifts, knowledge, and profession, since men of great characters, and enjoying high privileges, have fallen into sin, and have been severely punished; and he particularly cautions against idolatry, and all appearances of it, on which account he again introduces the case of eating things offered to idols, and dissuades from it, when it tended to idolatry, and had the appearance of it; though in some cases he allows of eating them, but directs that all should be done to the glory of God, and without offence to any, as they had him for an example. And now, whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter he had signified his jealousy of himself, lest he should be a castaway, he pursues the thought, and improves it to the use of the Corinthians, that they, on account of their high attainments, should not think themselves secure of all danger; and for this purpose sets before them the instances and examples of the Jewish fathers, of which he would not have them ignorant, who were persons that enjoyed great privileges, and were partakers of things which bore some resemblance to Gospel ordinances; as their passing under the cloud through the sea was a figure of baptism, and their eating manna, and drinking water out of the rock, which was a type of Christ, had some likeness to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, which are meat and drink indeed in a spiritual sense, (~~4500~~1 Corinthians 10:1-4) and yet all these persons that enjoyed these privileges were not acceptable to God; nor did they enter into the land of Canaan, but fell in the wilderness, (~~4505~~1 Corinthians 10:5) in which they were examples to men under the Gospel dispensation, that they may shun the evils which were the cause of their fall and overthrow, (~~4506~~1 Corinthians 10:6) particularly idolatry, of which their making and worshipping the golden calf is an instance, (~~4507~~1 Corinthians 10:7) also fornication, on account of which three and twenty thousand fell in one day, (~~4508~~1 Corinthians 10:8) likewise tempting Christ, which brought upon them destruction by the fiery serpents, (~~4509~~1 Corinthians 10:9) moreover, murmuring against God, and his servants, for which reason the destroyer was sent among them, and destroyed them, (~~4500~~1

Corinthians 10:10). All which happened, and are recorded for the use, instruction, and admonition of professors of religion in these last times, (~~4601~~ 1 Corinthians 10:11) from all which the apostle infers, by way of caution to the saints, that they should not be secure of standing, but take heed lest they fall, since so many and such great persons had before fallen, (~~4602~~ 1 Corinthians 10:12). But for their comfort, under afflictions, he observes, that as they were common to men, so the faithfulness of God was concerned to support them under them, and deliver them out of them, that they might not utterly fail of the grace of God, and perish by them, (~~4603~~ 1 Corinthians 10:13). And in order to their standing, he particularly dehorts them from idolatry, (~~4604~~ 1 Corinthians 10:14) and every appearance of it, as eating things offered to idols, in an idol's temple, which is what he has chiefly in view, as appears by the following verses: and whereas they were men of wisdom and judgment whom he addressed, he was the more encouraged to use the following arguments with them, the force of which they would understand, (~~4605~~ 1 Corinthians 10:15). And his first argument is taken from the Lord's supper, and the communion of his body and blood, which believers have with him in eating the bread, and drinking the wine; suggesting, that in like manner such who eat things offered to idols, as such, had communion with them, and so were guilty of idolatry, and therefore should be abstained from, (~~4606~~ 1 Corinthians 10:16). His next argument is taken from the union and communion which saints have one with another at the Lord's table, whereby they appear to be one body and one bread; and so such that associate themselves with idolaters in their temples, and eat with them things offered to idols, are one with them in a like sense, and chargeable with idolatry, (~~4607~~ 1 Corinthians 10:17). To which is added a third, taken from the priests of the Israelitish nation, who eating of the sacrifices, were partakers of the altar, worshipped the God of Israel, and had communion with him; and so in like manner eating of the sacrifices offered to idols, and especially in one of their temples, might be very well interpreted a partaking of their altars, a worshipping of them, and so idolatry, (~~4608~~ 1 Corinthians 10:18) not that he thought that an idol was to be considered as a deity, or that things offered to it were upon an equal foot with the Lord's supper, or Jewish sacrifices, (~~4609~~ 1 Corinthians 10:19) but as there was a communion in the one, so in the other; for as for the sacrifices of the Gentiles, they were offered to devils, and not to God; and which he mentions to deter them from having the most distant regard to such sacrifices, (~~4610~~ 1 Corinthians 10:20) it being the most inconsistent, as well as shocking thing in the world, to partake of both cups and tables,

those of the Lord, and those of devils, (<4602>1 Corinthians 10:21) wherefore the apostle dissuades from such idolatrous practice, from the pernicious and dangerous consequences of them, stirring up the Lord to jealousy, fighting against him, and being destroyed of him, (<4602>1 Corinthians 10:22). But inasmuch as things offered to idols were in themselves indifferent, the apostle directs to a proper use of them; and observes, that though they might be lawfully eaten, yet the expediency of time and place, and the edification of others, ought to be considered, (<4603>1 Corinthians 10:23) for we are not to seek our own pleasure, but the welfare of others, (<4604>1 Corinthians 10:24). If indeed such meat is sold in the butchers' meat markets in common with others, it may be bought and eat, when no questions are asked about it, what it is, (<4605>1 Corinthians 10:25) and that for this reason, because the earth, and all that is in it, are the Lord's, and his people have a right to all through him, and therefore may make use of every creature in it, (<4606>1 Corinthians 10:26). So if an idolater invites a believer to dine with him, and he accepts the invitation, he may very lawfully eat whatever is before him, even though it be meat offered to idols, provided he asks no questions about it, (<4607>1 Corinthians 10:27). But should anyone present point at certain meat, and say that was offered to idols, then it was advisable not to eat of it; partly for the sake of the unbeliever that pointed at it, who would be hardened in his idolatry by it; and partly for the sake of the conscience of a weak believer present, who might be offended at it; and the reason given to enforce such a conduct is, because there is plenty of other food without it, (<4608>1 Corinthians 10:28). And then the apostle explains whose conscience he meant; not the conscience of him that is invited, but either of the unbeliever, or the weak brother; and suggests a reason why he should not make use of his liberty in their presence, and under such circumstances, lest it should be censured and condemned, (<4609>1 Corinthians 10:29) or he be reproached for what he had, through good will, and had reason to be thankful for, (<4610>1 Corinthians 10:30) wherefore, upon the whole, the apostle advises in this affair, and in all others, to have the glory of God in view in the first place, (<4611>1 Corinthians 10:31) and next to that to be careful not to offend any sort of persons whatever, (<4612>1 Corinthians 10:32) and proposes himself as an example in these things to be followed; who sought not his own advantage, but the pleasure and profit of others, and to promote, as much as in him lay, their salvation, and not hinder it, (<4613>1 Corinthians 10:33).

**Ver. 1.** *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant,* etc.]

The apostle having suggested his own fears and jealousies, lest, notwithstanding all his gifts and grace, he should be left to do anything that might be a means of laying him aside, and rendering him useless in his ministerial work; and which he hints for the use of these Corinthians, who boasted of their knowledge, and made an imprudent use of their Christian liberty, to the hurt of weak minds; he proceeds to lay before them the case of the Jewish fathers, who, notwithstanding the many favours and privileges they were blessed with, yet falling into lust, fornication, intemperance, and idolatry, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest; wherefore the apostle would not have them be ignorant, or unmindful, or take no notice of these things, since they were for ensamples to them, and written for their admonition, and were warnings to them to take care lest they should also fall: particularly the apostle's view is to dissuade from the eating of things offered to idols, though a thing indifferent, and from their imprudent use of their Christian liberty with respect unto it; since it was not only doing an injury to weak believers, but it likewise exposed themselves to danger, who, by using such freedom as to sit in an idol's temple, and there publicly eat, might be drawn into idolatry itself; nor should they depend upon their knowledge, and gifts, and attainments, since it is clear, from these instances, that the highest external privileges, favours, and enjoyments, cannot secure men from falling: for which purpose it was proper to call to mind,

*how that all our fathers were under the cloud;* which was a symbol of the divine presence with the Israelites, as it was on Mount Sinai, and in the tabernacle and temple; was a protection of them, being in the daytime as a pillar of cloud to screen them from the scorching heat of the sun, and in the night time as a pillar of fire to preserve them from beasts of prey, as well as in both to guide and direct them in the way; and was a type of Christ, who is a covert from the heat, as well as the wind and storm; a protection of his people from the vindictive justice and wrath of God, and from the rage and fury of men and devils. This also might express the state and condition of the former dispensation, which was dark and obscure in comparison of the present one, in which saints, with open face, behold the glory of the Lord; and likewise the state of the people of God in this world, even under the present dispensation, who, in comparison of the heavenly glory, and the beatific vision the saints enjoy there see but through a glass darkly. This cloud, which is sometimes represented as a pillar, was not an erect solid

body, which was at some distance before the Israelites, and merely as a guide, but was all around them; it was before them, and behind them, and on each side, and was over them; (see <sup><0444></sup>Numbers 14:14) so that the apostle rightly says they were under it. And to distant beholders in the daytime it looked like a pillar of cloud; and in the nighttime, the sun being down, it looked like a pillar of fire; for one and the same thing is meant by both and so the Jews say <sup>f167</sup>, that

“the pillar of cloud, **wbbws** encompassed the camp of Israel, as a wall encompasses a city, nor could the enemy come at them.”

Hence those allusions to it in (<sup><2045></sup>Isaiah 4:5 <sup><3045></sup>Zechariah 2:5). The Jews indeed speak of several clouds of glory; nor are they agreed about the number of them:

“when the people of Israel were travelling in the wilderness, they say <sup>f168</sup>, they had clouds of glory, **^rj sm**, “that surrounded them”, four at the four winds of the world, that the evil eye might not rule over them, **^whywl [ ^m dj w** “and one above them”, that the heat and sun, as also the hail and rain, might not have power over them; and one below them, which carried them as a nurse carrieth her sucking child in her bosom; and another ran before them at the distance of three days’ journey, to level the mountains, and elevate the plains, and it slew all the fiery serpents and scorpions in the wilderness.”

And elsewhere <sup>f169</sup> it is said,

“how many were the clouds of glory, **^ypyqm**, “that encompassed Israel” in the wilderness? R. Hoshea and R. Josiah are divided. R. Josiah says five, four at the four winds, and one went before them. R. Hoshea says seven, four at the four winds of the heavens, and one **^l [ml m**, “above them”, and one below them, and one ran before them;”

to which he ascribes the above effects: but the Scripture speaks but of one cloud, which departed at the death of Moses:

*and all passed through the sea*; the Red sea, in a very miraculous manner; Moses by a divine order lift up his rod, and stretched out his hand over it, and the Lord by a strong east wind caused it to go back, and made it dry

land; the waters were divided, and rose up as a wall, on the right hand, and on the left, so that the children of Israel passed through it on dry ground, and all came safe to shore, and not one perished; and yet but two of these entered into the land of Canaan. Origen <sup>f170</sup> says,

“he had heard it as a tradition from the ancients, that in the passage through the sea, to every tribe of Israel were made separate divisions of water, and that every tribe had its own way open in the sea.”

And indeed this is a tradition of the Jews, whom he means by the ancients, or at least such who had received it from them; by which it appears to be a very ancient one.

“R. Eliezer says <sup>f171</sup>, that in the day in which the waters flowed, and were congealed together, there were twelve paths made, according to the twelve tribes, and the waters became a wall.”

The same is related, by others <sup>f172</sup>: Mahomet has it in his Alcoran <sup>f173</sup>, in which he was assisted by a Jew, and from whom he doubtless had it. He observes, it was said to Moses,

“smite the sea with thy rod, and when he had smitten it, it became divided into twelve parts, between which were as many paths, and every part was like a vast mountain.”

But be this as it will, it is certain that they all passed through it, and came safe to shore.

**Ver. 2.** *And were all baptized unto Moses*, etc.] “In or by Moses”; and so the Syriac version renders it, *açwm dyb*, “by the hand of Moses”; by his means and direction, he going before, they followed after him into the sea, and passed through on dry land, and came out on the shore, which carried in it a resemblance of baptism; when they believed the Lord, and his servant Moses, (<sup><Q143></sup>Exodus 14:31) and gave up themselves to him as their leader and commander through the wilderness: and this their baptism was

*in the cloud, and in the sea*; which may be considered either as together or separately; if together, the agreement between them and baptism lay in this; the Israelites, when they passed through the Red sea, hid the waters on each side of them, which stood up as a wall higher than they, and the cloud over them, so that they were as persons immersed in and covered with

water; and very fitly represented the ordinance of baptism as performed by immersion; and which is the way it was administered in the apostles' time, to which he refers; and is the only way it ought to be administered in; and in which only the Israelites' passage through the sea, and under the cloud, could be a figure of it: or this may be considered separately, they were baptized in the cloud; which was either, as Gataker<sup>f174</sup> thinks, when the cloud went from before the face of the Israelites, and stood behind them, and was between the two camps, to keep off the Egyptians from them, which as it passed over them let down a plentiful rain upon them, whereby they were in such a condition as if they had been all over dipped in water; or their being all under the cloud, and all over covered with it, was a representation of the ordinance of baptism, in which a person is all over covered with water; and then they were baptized in the sea, as they passed through it, the waters standing up above their heads, they seemed as if they were immersed in it. Very great is the resemblance between that passage of theirs, and baptism. For instance, their following Moses into the sea, which is meant by their being "baptized into him", was an acknowledgment of their regard unto him, as their guide and governor, as baptism is a following of Christ, who has left us an example that we should tread in his steps; and is an owning him to be our prophet to teach us, and lead us the way; and it is a profession of our faith in him, as our surety and Saviour, and a subjection to him as our King and Governor. This their baptism in the sea was after their coming out of Egypt, and at their first entrance on their journey to Canaan's land, as our baptism is, or should be, after a person is brought out of worse than Egyptian bondage and darkness, and has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and at the beginning of his profession of him, and entrance on his Christian race. The descent of the Israelites into the sea, when they seemed as buried in the waters, and their ascent out of it again on the shore, has a very great agreement with baptism, as administered by immersion, in which the person baptized goes down into the water, is buried with Christ therein, and comes up out of it as out of a grave, or as the children of Israel out of the Red sea; and as they, when they came out of it, could rejoice and sing in the view of their salvation and safety, and of the destruction of all their enemies, so the believer can, and does rejoice in this ordinance, in the view of his salvation by Christ, and safety in him, and of all his sins being buried and drowned in the sea of his blood; witness the instances of the eunuch and jailer. But though the Israelites were all in this sense baptized, yet they did not all inherit the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 3.** *And did all eat the same spiritual meat.*] Meaning the manna; and which the Jews also call <sup>f175</sup> *ynj wr l kam*, “spiritual food”, as also their sacrifices, <sup>f176</sup> *ynj wr μj l*, “spiritual bread”: not that the manna was so in own nature; it was corporeal food, and served for the nourishment of the body; but either because it was prepared by angels, who are ministering spirits, at the command of God, and hence called angels’ food, (<sup>1985</sup> Psalm 78:25) or rather because it had a mystical and spiritual meaning in it; it was not the true bread, but was typical of Christ, who is so: it resembled Christ in its original; it was prepared of God, as Christ is, as his salvation prepared before the face of all his people; it was the free gift of God, as Christ is to the mystical Israel; it came down from heaven, as Christ, the true bread of life did: it answered to him in its nature; it was in form round, expressive of his being from everlasting to everlasting, and of the perfection both of his divine and human natures; it was in colour white, signifying his purity of nature, and holiness of life and conversation; it was in quantity small, setting forth his outward meanness and despicableness in the eyes of men; and in quality it was sweet in taste, as Christ, and all the blessings and fruits of his grace are to believers. The usefulness of the manna was very great, a vast number, even all the Israelites, were supplied with it, and supported by it for forty years together, as all the elect of God, and the whole family of Christ are by the fulness of grace which is in him; and as in order that it might be proper and suitable food, it was ground in mills, or beaten in a mortar, and baked in pans; so Christ was bruised, and wounded, and endured great sufferings, and death itself, that he might be agreeable food for our faith: and as the Israelites had all an equal quantity of this food, none had more or less than others, so all the saints have an equal share and interest in Christ, in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; as they have the same like precious faith, they have the same object of it. To say no more, as the manna was the food of the wilderness, or of the people of Israel, whilst travelling in it, so Christ, and the fulness of grace that is in him, are the food and supply of the spiritual Israel, and church of God, whilst they are passing through this world to the heavenly glory. Now, though all the Israelites did not eat of Christ, the true bread, which was typified by the manna; yet they all ate the same food, which had a spiritual meaning in it, and a respect to Christ, but did not all enter into the land flowing with milk and honey.

**Ver. 4.** *And did all drink the same spiritual drink,* etc.] By which is meant the water out of the rock, which was typical of the blood of Christ, which



is drink indeed, and not figurative, as this was, for which reason it is called spiritual; or of the grace of Christ, often signified by water, both in the Old and New Testament; and is what Moses and the law could not give; for righteousness and life, grace and salvation, could never be had by the works of the law: and very unpromising it was, and is to carnal men, that these should come by a crucified Christ, as it was to the Israelites, that water, in such plenty, should gush out of the rock in Horeb; but as those waters did not flow from thence without the rock being stricken by the rod of Moses, so the communication of the blessings of grace from Christ is through his being smitten by divine justice with the rod of the law; through his being, stricken for the transgressions of his people, and being made sin, and a curse of the law in their room and stead. And as those waters continued through the wilderness as a constant supply for them, so the grace of Christ is always sufficient for his people; a continual supply is afforded them; goodness and mercy follow them all the days of their lives:

*for they drank, of that spiritual rock that followed them*; by which the apostle means not Christ himself, for he went before them as the angel of God's presence, but the rock that typified him; not that the rock itself removed out of its place, and went after them, but the waters out of the rock ran like rivers, and followed them in the wilderness wherever they went, for the space of eight and thirty years, or thereabout, and then were stopped, to make trial of their faith once more; this was at Kadesh when the rock was struck again, and gave forth its waters, which, as the continual raining of the manna, was a constant miracle wrought for them. And this sense of the apostle is entirely agreeable to the sentiments of the Jews, who say, that the Israelites had the well of water all the forty years <sup>f177</sup>. The Jerusalem Targum <sup>f178</sup> says of the

“well given at Mattanah, that it again became unto them violent overflowing brooks, and again ascended to the tops of the mountains, and descended with them into the ancient valleys.”

And to the same purpose the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel <sup>f179</sup>,

“that it again ascended with them to the highest mountains, and from the highest mountains it descended with them to the hills, and encompassed the whole camp of Israel, and gave drink to everyone at the gate of his own dwelling place; and from the high mountains it descended with them into the deep valleys.”

Yea, they speak of the rock in much the same language the apostle does, and seem to understand it of the rock itself, as if that really went along with the Israelites in the wilderness. Thus one of their writers <sup>f180</sup> on those words, “must we fetch you water out of this rock?” makes this remark:

“for they knew it not, [I sh Æl hç ypl , “for that rock went”, and remained among the rocks.”

And in another place it is said <sup>f181</sup>,

“that the rock became in the form of a beehive; (elsewhere <sup>f182</sup> it is said to be round as a sieve;) and rolled along, μhm[ tabw, “and came with them”, in their journeys; and when the standard bearers encamped, and the tabernacle stood still, the rock came, and remained in the court of the tent of the congregation; and the princes came and stood upon the top of it, and said, ascend, O well, and it ascended.”

Now, though in this account there is a mixture of fable, yet there appears something of the old true tradition received in the Jewish church, which the apostle has here respect to.

*And the rock was Christ:* that is, it signified Christ, it was a type of him. So the Jews <sup>f183</sup> say, that the Shekinah is called çwdq [I s, “the holy rock”; and Philo the Jew says <sup>f184</sup> of this rock, that the broken rock is η σοφια του ψευου, “the wisdom of God”. Christ may be compared to the rock for his outward meanness in his parentage and education, in his ministry and audience, in his life and death; and for his height also, being made higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, and than the heavens themselves; and for shelter and safety from the wrath of God, and from the rage of men; and for firmness, solidity, and strength, which are seen in his upholding all things by his power, in bearing the sins of his people, and the punishment due unto them, in the support of his church, and bearing up his people under all afflictions and temptations, and in preserving them from a total and final falling away: and a rock he appears to be, as he is the foundation of his church and every believer, against which hell and earth can never prevail; and to it he may be likened for duration, his love being immovable, his righteousness everlasting, his salvation eternal, and he, as the foundation of his church, abiding for ever.

**Ver. 5.** *But with many of them God was not well pleased*, etc.] As he is with none but those that are in Christ; and with none of the services of men, but what are done in faith, which become acceptable to him through Jesus Christ; for in him only persons and services are accepted with God; and this was the way of acceptance in the Old, as in the New Testament dispensation: how many of the Jewish fathers God was not well pleased with, or took no delight in, but hated and abhorred, which is the sense of the phrase here, whether they were the greatest part or not, is not certain; however, they were not all, excepting Joshua and Caleb, as some interpreters understand it; for not all that died in the wilderness were out of the special grace and favour of God, witness Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and, it is to be supposed and hoped, hundreds and thousands more; but the apostle has respect to such who were the instances of God's direful vengeance and displeasure, as appears from the reason given;

*for they were overthrown in the wilderness*: he does not say merely that they died there, for many with whom God was well pleased died there; but these, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, being stricken, thrown down, and overthrown by the immediate hand of God; they did not die a common death, according to the ordinary course of nature; but by the plague, or by the sword, or by fire from heaven, or by fiery serpents, or by a destroying angel, or by one judgment or another, as hereafter mentioned.

**Ver. 6.** *Now these things were our examples*, etc.] Or “types”; that is, these punishments which were inflicted on these persons for their sins, were designed as instructions for others to avoid the like sins, that they may escape the same punishment; just as the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, being condemned with an overthrow, as these men were, were made ensamples to all that should hereafter live such vicious lives and conversations; and in a very lively manner, as in a type or print, these exhibited the displeasure of God against sin, what such must expect who commit it; so men are called out of Babylon, lest, partaking of her sins, they also receive of her plagues. The Jews have a common saying<sup>f185</sup> յոյնի ՚մյս տւբալ [րյազ “that what happened to the fathers is a sign unto the children”; to which the apostle may have respect:

*to the intent that we should not lust after evil things*. The apostle proceeds to enter into particular instances, in which these things were examples, teaching us to avoid sin, and so punishment; and begins with lust, which is the root and foundation of all sin; all the evil in the world arises from it,

and the world itself is full of it, and is in God's account the same as action: and here he particularly strikes at those Corinthians, that lusted after the feasts in the idols' temples; and hints that that arose rather from a carnal sensual appetite, which ought not to be indulged, than from any other principle:

*as they also lusted*; that is, after evil things, the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt, (<sup><0110></sup>Numbers 11:4-6) which though they were not evil in themselves, yet the Israelites sinned in lusting after them, in not being content with the manna, the food which God had prepared for them; and besides, their desire after these things did not arise from want, but from a sensual appetite, and was attended with murmuring against the Lord and his servants, and was highly resented; for though the Lord gave them flesh according to their desire, yet while it was between their teeth, he sent a plague among them, by which multitudes were taken off, and the name of the place was called *hwath twrbq*, "Kibroth Hataavah, the graves of lusts"; the people that lusted being buried there, (<sup><0113></sup>Numbers 11:34).

**Ver. 7.** *Neither be ye idolaters*, etc.] To which they seemed inclined to be, at least there was great danger that such they would be, by carrying their liberty to such a pitch, as to sit in an idol's temple, and there eat things sacrificed unto them; and which the apostle cautions against, and uses arguments to dissuade them from in the following part of this chapter:

*as were some of them, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*: referring to (<sup><0236></sup>Exodus 32:6) when the Israelites, whilst Moses was in the mount, made a molten calf, and worshipped it, built an altar before it, and instituted a feast and a play; and which was performed by dancing about the calf, and singing to the honour of it, (<sup><0238></sup>Exodus 32:18,19) for their sitting down to eat and drink is not to be understood of an ordinary meal, but of a feast kept in honour of the golden calf, and which they covered by calling it a feast to the Lord; and their playing also was on the same account, in imitation of the Heathens, who made feasts, and appointed plays to the honour of their deities: some indeed interpret <sup>f186</sup> this last action of uncleanness, which they committed after their feast was over, and which also was sometimes done in the Heathen temples, the word being sometimes used in this sense; (see <sup><0344></sup>Genesis 39:14,17) but others understand it of the act of idolatry; so two of the Chaldee paraphrases interpret the words in Exodus <sup>f187</sup>; "they rose up

to play”, *harkwn anj l wpb*, in strange service, i.e. idolatry; and though the apostle does not mention their punishment, yet it was a very great one, three thousand persons fell the sword on that account, (~~02728~~ Exodus 32:28).

**Ver. 8.** *Neither let us commit fornication*, etc.] To which the Corinthians were much addicted: hence the apostle elsewhere, in this epistle, makes use of arguments, to dissuade from it, as he does here, they judging it to be no evil:

*as some of them committed*; i.e. fornication; as they did at Shittim, with the daughters of Moab, (~~02510~~ Numbers 25:1) which was a stratagem of Balaam’s, and the advice he gave to Balak king of Moab, to draw them into that sin, which made way for their commission of idolatry, which they committed by eating the sacrifices of their gods, and bowing down unto them; particularly they joined themselves to Baal Peor, the same with Priapus, one part of whose religious rites lay in acts of uncleanness, and this brought the divine displeasure on them:

*and fell in one day three and twenty thousand*; in (~~02510~~ Numbers 25:9) the number said to be “twenty and four thousand”: and so say all the three Targums on the place <sup>f188</sup>, and both the Talmuds <sup>f189</sup> and others <sup>f190</sup>; on the other hand, all the Greek copies of this epistle, and the Oriental versions, agree in the number of twenty and three thousand; so that it does not appear to be any mistake of copies, in either Testament. To reconcile this matter, or at least to abate the difficulties of it, let the following things be observed; as that the apostle does not write as an historian, and so not with that exactness as Moses did; besides, he does not say that there fell “only” three and twenty thousand, and this beings lesser number than is contained in his, and so a certain truth; moreover, Moses and the apostle use different words in their account; Moses says there died so many, including the heads of the people that were hanged up against the sun, and all that perished by the sword; the apostle says, that there fell such a number, referring only to the latter, who only could be properly said to fall, and not those that were hanged up: now the heads of the people that suffered the first kind of death, might, as is very probable, be a thousand; and they that died in the other way, three and twenty thousand, which make the sums to agree, and both are expressed by Moses, under the general name of a plague or stroke; to all this, that the apostle uses a limiting clause, which Moses does not, and says that these three and twenty thousand fell in one day. So that it is very likely that the heads of the people, supposed to be a thousand,

were hanged up in one day; and the three and twenty thousand that fell by the sword died the next, which the apostle only takes notice of. Hence the Jew<sup>f191</sup> has no reason to charge the apostle with an error.

**Ver. 9.** *Neither let us tempt Christ*, etc.] As all such persons do, who, presuming on the power and grace of Christ to keep them, or upon what they have received from him, unnecessarily expose themselves to snares and temptations, and so to danger; and as many of the Corinthians did, who are here chiefly respected, who trusting to their gifts and attainments, their knowledge and Christian liberty, would go into an idol's temple, sit down at meat there, and exposed themselves great and imminent danger; which was a tempting Christ, whether he would preserve them or not:

*as some of them also tempted*; that is, as some of the Israelites tempted, which they did more than once; but what is referred to here, is the time they spake against God and Moses, in (<sup><0215></sup>Numbers 21:5,6) as appears from the punishment annexed, their being destroyed by serpents. The Arabic version adds "him", meaning Christ, which is a right interpretation of the text; otherwise there would be no force in the apostle's reasoning; for Christ was the angel that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, the angel of God's presence, that bore, and carried, and saved them; he is the Jehovah they tempted at Massah and Meribah, and elsewhere, and God they spake against at this place referred to; hence it is clear that our Lord existed before his incarnation, and that he is truly and properly God; the Alexandrian copy reads, "neither let us tempt God", and so the Ethiopic version: "and were destroyed of serpents"; fiery ones, which were sent among them by the Lord Christ, they tempted and spoke against, which bit them, and of these bites many of them died. This might lead to the consideration, of the original cause of man's sin and fall, and the ruin of human nature, by the means of a serpent; and may be an emblem of the future destruction of the wicked, which will be everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, the old serpent, and his angels.

**Ver. 10.** *Neither murmur ye*, etc.] Against the true apostles of Christ, and faithful ministers of the word; nor against the laws and ordinances of Christ, or providences of God; so some of the members of this church did, or were inclined to do:

*as some of them also murmured*: as against the Lord, so against Moses and Aaron. The people of Israel were very prone unto, and often guilty of this sin; but what the apostle here has respect unto, is either their murmuring

upon the report the spies made of the good land, in (<sup><0400></sup>Numbers 14:1-5), or that of Korah and his company against Moses and Aaron, as principal officers, who were for setting all upon a level; and of all the people against them, for the death of these men, (<sup><0400></sup>Numbers 16:1-35),

*and were destroyed of the destroyer*; meaning either some judgment of God upon them, as the earth's opening and swallowing up Korah and all that belonged unto him; and the fire that came down from heaven, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense; and the plague which swept away fourteen thousand and seven hundred of those that murmured against Moses and Aaron, on the account of the death of the said persons; and any other judgment by which the carcasses of those fell in the wilderness, that murmured upon the report of the spies; or else since angels were usually employed by God, in inflicting such judgments, by the destroyer may be meant an angel, such an one as smote the firstborn in Egypt, and bears the same name, (<sup><3103></sup>Hebrews 11:28) and as smote Israel with a pestilence upon David's numbering the people, and was about to have destroyed Jerusalem, had he not been restrained, (<sup><0245></sup>2 Samuel 24:15,16) and as, smote an hundred fourscore and five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians, in one night, (<sup><1295></sup>2 Kings 19:35). So that though an angel may be intended, it is not necessary, on account of the character given him, to understand an evil angel; it is true indeed, that Satan is by the Jews <sup>f192</sup> called **tyj çmh**, "the destroyer"; and Samuel, the same with Satan, is called "the angel of death"; to which the allusion is in (<sup><3024></sup>Hebrews 2:14) and evil angels are frequently styled **hl bj ykal m**, "destroying angels" <sup>f193</sup>; as distinct from ministering ones, and to which some think the apostle here refers.

**Ver. 11.** *Now all these things happened unto them*, etc.] All these punishments came upon them in various ways, not by chance, but by the will of God, and as their sins deserved:

*and were for ensamples*; to others, to their future posterity, and to the churches of God in all ages:

*and they are written for our admonition*; that men in a church state particularly may take warning, by these instances of their sin and punishment, to avoid the one and escape the other, and not presume upon their external privileges and favours:

*upon whom the ends of the world are come*; “or in whom the ends of ages are met”; for the apostle does not mean this material visible world, the universe and all things in it, which has continued, since the writing of this, about two thousand years: but the Jewish ages, or times of the Mosaic economy, which begun when these instances of sin and punishment were, and which now in the times of the apostles were at an end; everything in those periods that were figurative and emblematical, having their fulfilling end and accomplishment, and also were now abrogated: likewise the ages or times of Gentile darkness and ignorance may be intended, which now were come to an end, through the light of the Gospel, and the power of God attending the ministration of it; and hence the ends both of the Jewish and Gentile ages may be said to come upon, or meet in the apostles and their times, who had the advantage of looking back on former ones, and of receiving instruction from thence.

**Ver. 12.** *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth*, etc.] Since the Jewish fathers, who enjoyed such peculiar favours and eminent privileges, had such various judgments inflicted on them; since they stood not, but many of them were visible instances of God’s displeasure; they were overthrown and cast down, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest; therefore all such persons who think themselves safe and sure, trusting to themselves, or depending upon the knowledge and gifts they have, the favours and privileges they enjoy; everyone of these should

*take heed lest he fall.* This advice was exceeding proper, whether it be considered as spoken to true believers, or formal professors; for true believers may fall into temptation, into sin, from a degree of steadfastness in the Gospel, and from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace; but not finally, totally, and irrecoverably; since they are enclosed in the arms of everlasting love, secured in the hands of Christ, built on a foundation that will never fail, and are kept by an almighty power which can never be overcome; but yet, since they may fall to the dishonour of God, the reproach of the Gospel of Christ, the grieving of the Spirit of God, the wounding of their own souls, the stumbling of weak believers, and the strengthening of the hands of the wicked; such an exhortation is not superfluous, even to such; and many and strong are the reasons and arguments why they should take heed lest they fall; nor are admonitions needless to that which God’s decree and promise secure: since these are often the means in and by which God executes his decree, and makes good



his promise; (see ~~4072~~ Acts 27:22,24,31). Moreover, if this exhortation be considered as given to formal professors, it is very pertinent; for such as these may fall, as they often do, from that which they seemed to have, from the truths of the Gospel, and a profession of them, and into scandalous sins, and at last into condemnation; and the rather since the apostasy of such persons is injurious to the honour and interest of true religion; hereby the ways of God are evil spoken of, the name of Christ blasphemed, profane sinners hardened, and weak believers stumbled, as by the falls of real Christians: besides, it must be worse for themselves, who hereby bring upon themselves a severe punishment; (see ~~61021~~ 2 Peter 2:21) and indeed these seem to be the persons the apostle chiefly respects; not such who truly: thought they stood, and did really stand; for such stand in the true grace and love of God, in Christ, in whom they are chosen, and by whom they are redeemed and saved, and by that faith which he is the author and finisher of; and so shall never finally and totally fall away; but such “that thinketh”, ο δοκων, “who seemeth”, to himself and others, “that he standeth”; and manifestly designs such who were swelled with a vain opinion of themselves, their gifts and knowledge; who tempted God, and “trusted” to themselves, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and despised weak believers; but lest real believers should be hereby discouraged, the apostle adds,

**Ver. 13.** *There hath no temptation taken you,* etc.] Some, indeed, understand these words by way of reproof, that whereas their trials and exercises which had attended them were very light ones, and comparatively trivial; and yet they had given way to these temptations, and had sunk under them, and fallen by them, for which they were greatly to be blamed; or as threatening them with something more severe than anything as yet had befallen them, signifying that though they had as yet stood, and thought they still should; yet they ought not to presume on their own strength, or depend on outward things; since the temptations that as yet had come upon them were such as men might easily bear; there was no great trial or experiment of their grace and strength by them; they had not yet resisted unto blood; there were heavier and severer trials they might expect; and therefore should not be too secure in themselves, but take heed lest when these things should come upon them, in such a time of great temptation, they should fall away: but I rather think the words are spoken by way of comfort to the saints; intimating that as no temptation or affliction had befallen them, so none should, but what either came from

men, or was common to men, or which men by divine assistance, and under divine influence, might bear; and therefore should not distress themselves with the apprehensions of it, as if it was some strange or unusual thing, and as if they must unavoidably perish and be destroyed by it:

*but such as is common to man:* “or is humane”. There are divine temptations, or such as come from God; God may be said to tempt his people, as he did Abraham, by enjoining them things very hard and disagreeable to nature; and by afflicting them either in body or estate; and by withdrawing his presence, and withholding the communications of his grace, to try their faith, show them their weakness and need of himself. There are also diabolical temptations, or such as come from Satan; who tempts by soliciting to sin, by suggesting blasphemous thoughts, and filling with doubts and fears; and by dissuading from the use of means, as attending at the throne of grace, and on the word and ordinances: but the apostle here speaks of human temptations, such as come from men; meaning reproaches and persecutions, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and which are temptations or trials of grace, as of faith and patience, and under which there is great danger of falling away: now when the apostle says that none but such temptations had befallen them, he does not mean that they had been, or were, or would be entirely free from other temptations; but that those which they mostly dreaded, and were in danger by, were but human, such as came from men, and were, as our version suggests, common to Christian men, their brethren, who were in the flesh as they, and might be endured by men, strengthened by the grace of God; wherefore they had nothing to fear from hence, especially when they considered the faithfulness, care, and power of God next observed:

*but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able:* no man can be tempted, afflicted, or persecuted by men, but by a divine permission, and that voluntary; nor more than, or above that measure which God hath determined; who proportions the affliction to the strength he determines and promises to give, and does give, and the strength of his people to the temptation or affliction he suffers to befall them; for which his faithfulness is engaged, having promised that as their day is, their strength shall be; that he will never leave them nor forsake them, and that he will bear, and carry, and save them unto the uttermost, and that they shall hold on and out unto the end:

*but will with the temptation make a way to escape*; for as he by his permission makes way for the temptation or affliction, which otherwise could not come; and as he knows how, in what manner, and at the best time, to deliver his people out of temptations; so he does and will, in his providence, open a way that they may escape out of them, at least so as not to be overpressed and destroyed by them:

*that ye may be able to bear it*; for God does not always think fit to remove at once an affliction or temptation, though at the earnest request of his people, as in the case of Paul, (<sup>471217</sup>2 Corinthians 12:7,8) yet he gives them grace sufficient to endure and stand up under it, yea, to get the victory of it, to be more that conquerors, and triumph over it.

**Ver. 14.** *Wherefore, my dearly beloved*, etc.] Some copies add, “brethren”; as do the Complutensian edition, and Ethiopic version; all which endearing epithets are used to persuade to attend to the exhortation enforced upon the foregoing considerations; since the Jewish fathers, who were idolaters, fell so much under the divine displeasure; and since such who thought they stood were so liable to fall, and the temptation to which they exposed themselves was of such a dangerous consequence; therefore,

*flee from idolatry*; as what is most dishonourable, pernicious, and abominable: the apostle’s meaning is, not only that they would not worship idols, or commit plain downright acts of idolatry; but that they would stand at the greatest distance from idols, not so much as go into an idol’s temple, and there sit down and eat; which if not a real act of idolatry, had at least the show of one; and his sense is, that they would abstain from all appearance of idolatry, from every occasion of it, and whatsoever led unto it; particularly he means, that they would not eat of things sacrificed to idols as such, and in an idol’s temple; which he considers as a species of idolatrous worship, and by a similar instance he after proves it to be so, even a partaking of the table of devils.

**Ver. 15.** *I speak as to wise men*, etc.] That is, what he was now going to say concerning the Lord’s supper, and the communion which believers have with Christ in it, which they as Christians must have knowledge of; and concerning the participation of the altar the Israelites had, who ate of the sacrifices of it, which many of them, being Jews, as such must know; and therefore being fully persuaded of the propriety and pertinency of the instances he was about to produce, and of the justness of his reasoning

upon them, he appeals to the Corinthians, as men of wisdom and understanding in these things, and makes them themselves judges thereof:

*judge what I say*; consider and weigh the matter well, and you will discern and judge that what I say is proper and pertinent, just and right.

**Ver. 16.** *The cup of blessing, which we bless*, etc.] Meaning the cup of wine used in the Lord's supper, which being set apart for that service, is taken up, and the name of the Lord called upon over it; and he is blessed and praised for his wondrous love and grace, in the gift and mission of his Son, to shed his precious blood for us, for the remission of our sins; the whole church joining with the administrator, both in the act of blessing and praise over the cup, and in the participation of it. This cup is so called in allusion to the cup of wine used at common meals, or at the passover among the Jews, which they used to take and bless God with, and give him thanks for their mercies, and was commonly called **hkrb l ç swk**, "the cup of blessing"<sup>f194</sup>.

"Three things (says R. Judah<sup>f195</sup>) shorten a man's days and years; when they give him the book of the law to read, and he does not read, **Ærbl hkrb l ç swk**, "the cup of blessing to bless with", and he does not bless, and when he accustoms himself to government."

Again, so they comment on (~~Q2K8~~Genesis 21:8)<sup>f196</sup>

"what is the meaning "of the day that Isaac was weaned?" the holy blessed God will make a feast for the righteous, in the day that he weans the people of the seed of Isaac, and after they eat and drink, they give to Abraham **Ærbl hkrb l ç swk**, "the cup of blessing to bless with"; he says to them, I will not bless, because Ishmael sprung from me; they give it to Isaac, he says to them, I am not fit to bless, for Esau came from me; they give it to Jacob, he says unto them I will not bless, for I married two sisters in their lifetime, which the law forbids me; they say to Moses, take it and bless, he says to them I will not bless, for I was not worthy to enter into the land of Israel, neither in life nor in death; they say to Joshua, take it and bless, he says I cannot bless, for I am not worthy of a son, as it is written, Nun his son, Joshua his son; they say to David, take thou it and bless, he saith unto them I will bless, and it is comely for me

to bless; as it is said, “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord”.”

Once more they ask <sup>f197</sup>,

“what is a beautiful cup? *hkrb l ç swk*, “the cup of blessing”;

and which, they <sup>f198</sup> observe, ought to hold the fourth part of a log of wine. These instances clearly show from whence the apostle borrowed this expression, and which he chooses to make use of because well known to the Jews, and as being very appropriate to the cup in the Lord’s supper, he is speaking of:

*is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?* it is; that is, it is a sign, symbol, and token of fellowship with Christ in his death; it is a means of having communion with him, and of enjoying the blessings of grace which come through his blood; such as righteousness, peace, pardon, and atonement; all which true believers are made partakers of; and this part of the Lord’s supper, the cup being drank of, is a testimony and an indication of the same: “the bread which we break”; which is the other part of the ordinance, which, though performed first, is mentioned last, because of the argument the apostle pursues upon it. The act of breaking the bread does not only design the distribution and eating of it, but the manner also in which it is prepared for distribution and eating, namely by breaking it into pieces; and which is aptly expressive of the body of Christ, which was wounded, bruised, and broken for us:

*is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* it is; for not only believers by this act have communion with his mystical body, the church, but with his natural body, which was broken for them they in a spiritual sense and by faith eat his flesh, as well as drink his blood, and partake of him, of his sufferings and death, endured in his body, and of all the blessings of grace consequent thereon. The apostle’s view in this instance, and his argument upon it, is this, that if believers, by eating the bread and drinking the wine in the Lord’s supper, spiritually partake of Christ, of his body and of his blood, and have communion with him; then such who eat of things sacrificed unto idols, have in so doing communion with them, and partake of the table of devils, and so are guilty of idolatry, which he would have them avoid.

**Ver. 17.** *For we being many, are one bread and one body*, etc.] The several members of the church of Christ; particular believers are indeed many, considered in themselves, in their own persons; yet by virtue of their union to Christ, which is manifested by their communion with him, they are one bread with him, the bread of life, and one body with his, signified by the bread; they are of one and the same mass and lump, they are incorporated together, they are flesh of his flesh, and one spirit with him: or they are one bread and body among themselves; as bread consists of many grains of corn which have been ground and kneaded together, and make up one loaf; and as the members of an human body are many, and make up one body; so believers, though they are many, yet are one body, of which Christ is the head; one in union with him and one another, and one in their communion together at the Lord's table; and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "as therefore the bread is one, so we all are one body"; having communion with Christ and one another:

*for we are all partakers of that one bread*; in the supper, which is all of the same nature and kind, and is a symbol of the body of Christ, and our fellowship with him and each other. The application designed is this, that as believers, by partaking of the same bread, appear to be the same body, and of the same mass and lump with one another; so such as eat things sacrificed unto idols, appear to be of the same mass and lump with Heathen idolaters: Dr. Lightfoot has very pertinently produced some passages out of Maimonides, concerning mixing, associating, or communion of neighbours in courts on sabbath eves, that so they may enter into each other's houses on the sabbath day, for the illustration of this passage; of which mixing the Jews have a whole treatise in their Misna and Talmud, which they call Erubin; and of which they say <sup>f199</sup>

"but how is this mixture or association? it is thus, they mix together, **dj a l kamb**, "in one food", which they prepare on the eve of the sabbath; and it is as if they should say, for we are all mixed together, and have all one food; nor does anyone of us divide the right from his neighbour — they do not mix in courts, but **hmyl ç tpb** "with a whole loaf" only; though the mass or lump baked may be the quantity of a "seah", yet if it is broken, they do not associate with it; but if it is whole, though it be but the value of a farthing, they mix with it — how do they mix or associate together in the courts? they collect **hmyl ç tj a hl h**, "one whole

cake”, out of every house, and put all in one vessel, in one of the houses of the court — and the whole association being gathered together, blesses the Lord — and eats:”

upon which the above learned writer observes, that if it were customary among the Israelites, to join together in one political or economical body, by the eating of many loaves collected from this, and that, and the other man; we are much more associated together into one body, by eating one and the same bread, appointed us by our Saviour.

**Ver. 18.** *Behold Israel after the flesh*, etc.] So the apostle calls them, to distinguish them from the Israel of God, the spiritual Israel, whether Jews or Gentiles; who are born again, believe in the true Messiah, worship God in a spiritual manner, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in fleshly things; but these were the descendants of Jacob or Israel by carnal generation, were carnal men, in the flesh, in a state of unregeneracy, and were employed in a carnal worship, in the observance of carnal commandments and ordinances; these the apostle directs to, to see, consider, and take notice of what they were doing; from whence some instruction might be taken, for the further clearing of the present point:

*are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?* yes, they are. The priests and Levites who waited at the altar, and ministered about holy things there, who brought the sacrifices and laid them upon the altar of the burnt offerings, where the altar consumed and devoured one part by fire, and that which was left they ate among themselves; and so as they had communion with one another in eating, they partook of the altar, of the things, or sacrifices of the altar, and showed themselves to be of the Jewish religion, and professed and declared that they worshipped the God of Israel, and would be thought to have communion with him in so doing; in like manner, such who eat of things sacrificed to idols, declared themselves to be idolaters, to be of the Pagan religion, to be worshippers of idols, and to have fellowship with them.

**Ver. 19.** *What say I then?* etc.] Or may be objected to, or inferred from, what I say;

*that an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to idols is anything?* to which must be answered, as the Syriac version reads, **al**, “no”, by no means; by running the parallel between Christians having communion with the body and blood of Christ, in the Lord’s supper, through eating the

bread and drinking the wine, the Israelites partaking of the altar, by eating of the sacrifices of it, and men's joining with idols and idolaters, by eating things sacrificed to idols; it follows not that an idol has anything of deity in it, and is to be set upon a level with God, when, as he had said before, an idol was nothing, and what he now said did not at all contradict that; or that things offered to idols are to be had in the same account, or to be equalled to, or be thought to have any thing in them, as the elements of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, or the sacrifices that were offered by the Israelites on the altar, according to the divine command; he meant no such thing, but only argued from the greater to the lesser, and his sense is more fully declared in the next words.

**Ver. 20.** *But I say*, etc.] This is my sense and meaning,

*that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto devils, and not to God*; reference is had to (<sup>48217</sup>Deuteronomy 32:17) for what the Gentiles sacrificed, though they did not sacrifice intentionally to the idols of gold, silver, wood, and stone, but to God in them, as they pretended; yet inasmuch as in such worship and sacrifices they were directed, instigated, influenced, and assisted by devils, who took up their residence in these idols, and gave forth their oracles from them, they sacrificed to them; and which some have done, as in India and China, professedly and openly, and all other idolaters, eventually, virtually, and covertly:

*and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils*; as all wicked men have, in the commission of any lust, sin, or immorality; and as all idolaters have in their superstitious practices, and idolatrous worship; and if grace prevent not, will have to all eternity in everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; wherefore the apostle would have the Corinthians flee from idolatry, and all appearance of it, and abstain from eating things offered to idols, of which they could not eat without having fellowship with devils; this he says, to deter them from such practices, which must be very horrible and shocking, and bespeaks in him great care of them, and affection for them.

**Ver. 21.** *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils*, etc.] Not only they ought not, but they could not rightly, truly, and really drink the cup of wine in the Lord's supper, in the true faith of Christ's bloodshed, and his sacrifice offered up for them, in remembrance of his love, and to the honour of his name; and also the cup of wine of libations, poured out and drank to the honour of the Heathen deities; these things are



utterly inconsistent; no man can serve two masters, God and mammon, or God and Baal; nor is there any concord between Christ and Belial, or agreement between the temple of God and idols:

*ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils;* no man can spiritually, however he may externally partake of the entertainment provided, on the table of the Lord, at his supper instituted and kept in commemoration of him; and also with gust and pleasure, and without any concern for the peace of weak minds, and the honour of God, eat things set upon a table in an idol's temple, and before the idol, and as sacrificed unto it.

**Ver. 22.** *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?* etc.] As they do who are guilty of idolatry in any shape: nothing is more highly resented by God, or stirs him up more to wrath and fury, and to inflict punishment; he cannot bear, nor will he admit of a rival in religious worship; he is a God jealous of his own honour; nor will he give, or suffer to be given by others, his praise and glory to graven images:

*are we stronger than he?* to give into idolatrous practices, is to proclaim and enter into a war against God; and what madness must this be? who can be so sottish and stupid as to think of succeeding? when God is omnipotent, and man a poor feeble impotent creature, a worm, and but dust and ashes: thus the apostle dissuades from idolatry, and every species and branch of it; partly from its ill effect, in bringing men into fellowship with devils; and partly from the impossibility of practising it, in consistence with a true and real participation of the cup and table of the Lord; and from the absurdity and stupidity of it, and its dangerous consequence, in exposing men to the vengeance of an almighty incensed Being.

**Ver. 23.** *All things are lawful for me,* etc.] All sorts of food are lawful to be eaten, every creature of God is good, there is nothing common or unclean in itself, polluted or polluting; and so things offered to idols may be lawfully eaten, but not as such, or in an idol's temple, or before a weak brother; to do which is contrary to the honour of God, and the edification of the saints: and therefore

*all things are not expedient;* to be done always, and in all places, and before all persons. The apostle suggests, that though they might be lawful to him, and he might make use of his liberty in eating them; yet they might not be expedient, or of service, but on the contrary hurtful to others; and

which therefore ought to be judged a sufficient reason for the omission of them:

*all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not*; though things of an indifferent nature may be lawfully used, yet they do not always tend to the edification of others, which should be consulted; and when this is the case, they ought to be disused. This is observed in answer to an objection taken from the doctrine of Christian liberty, allowing the free use of all the creatures, and disengaging men from an observance of the distinction of meats and drinks which the apostle grants; and yet argues from his own example, and the edification of the saints, that this is not always to be closely pursued; but believers should forego what they have a right to use, when the peace and welfare of their fellow Christians require it.

**Ver. 24.** *Let no man seek his own*, etc.] His carnal pleasure and private advantage in eating things sacrificed to “idols”, to the hurt and disadvantage of his brethren; otherwise it is lawful for a man to seek his own good, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, to seek for the necessities of life, his spiritual peace and comfort, and his everlasting welfare and happiness; but then he should not only seek his own,

*but every man another’s wealth*, or “that which is another’s”; for the word “wealth” is not in the original text. The apostle’s meaning is, that a man, in the use of things indifferent, should not seek the gratifying of his sensual appetite or other passions, what may be pleasing or profitable to himself; but should consult the profit and edification of others.

**Ver. 25.** *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles*, etc.] the word *μακελλον*, rendered “shambles”, here used, is a Latin word, and is made use of by Latin writers in the same sense as here, for a place where food was sold <sup>f200</sup>. The original of the name is said <sup>f201</sup> to be this; one Macellus, a very wicked and profane man, being for his robberies and filthy life condemned to die, a place was built in his house by Aemylius and Fulvius, censors, for selling of provisions, and which from his name was called “Macellum”. The Syriac version retains the word here, and so do the Talmudists, and Rabbins <sup>f202</sup> frequently; who say <sup>f203</sup>,

“*yl wqm*, the “shambles”, and the butchers of Israel, though flesh of them is found in the hand of a stranger, it is free:”

into these places the priests sent to be sold what was offered to their idols, which they could not dispense with themselves, or thought not lawful to make use of; for the Egyptians, as Herodotus says <sup>f204</sup>, used to cut off the heads of their beasts that were sacrificed, and carry them into the market and sell them to the Greeks, and if there were no buyers they cast them into the river. Now the apostle allows, that such meat that was sold in the shambles might be bought and eat of, but not in an idol's temple; there was a difference between an idol's temple, and eating things sacrificed to idols there, and buying them in shambles or meat market, and eating them at home:

*that eat*; buy, carry home, dress and eat, in your own houses:

*asking no question*; whether it was sacrificed to idols, or not:

*for conscience sake*; either a man's own, which may be hurt, wounded, and defiled, by eating contrary to it, should he know that what he eats had been offered to an idol; whereas if he asks no questions, and knows nothing of the matter, his conscience will not be afflicted: or else another man's that may stand by whilst the meat is bought, and sold; and who hearing questions asked and answered, and yet observes the meat, though sacrificed to idols, dressed and ate by the buyer, his conscience being weak, may be offended and grieved.

**Ver. 26.** *For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*, etc.] Which words are taken out of (~~1390~~ Psalm 24:1) and to be understood of Christ, who by creation and preservation is Lord of the whole earth, and as Mediator has all in his possession; and having broken down the middle wall of partition, gives his people the free use of all creatures, of the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, and the trees, fruits, and plants of the earth, which are the fulness thereof; and therefore as the saints have a full right from Christ, to make use of all the creatures in a moderate way, and with thankfulness, they need not fear being defiled by any of them; provided they do not act contrary to the honour of God, and in favour of an idol, or against their own conscience, and the peace of weak believers.

**Ver. 27.** *If any of them that believe not*, etc.] In Christ, and make no profession of faith in him; but are infidels to his person, office, grace, righteousness, Gospel, and ordinances, as there were many such at

Corinth: “bid you” to a feast; invite you to dine or sup with them in their own houses:

*and ye be disposed to go*; the apostle does not lay any commands upon them to go, or not go, but leaves them to their own will, inclination, and discretion; for as circumstances might be, it might be either proper or improper to listen to an invitation from such a quarter; but if they were inclined, and did think fit to go, which they might without sin; for as it is lawful to trade, so to eat and drink with unbelievers; then his advice is,

*whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience sake*; that is, as before, as whether it is offered to idols or not; lest either their own, or another’s conscience should be hurt thereby.

**Ver. 28.** *But if any man say unto you*, etc.] Either a weak believer, to prevent the doing of what he thought to be sinful; or the unbeliever, that invites to try the integrity of his Christian guest, and to draw him into a snare:

*this is offered in sacrifice unto idols*; the meat that is in that dish, or that portion of food which stands in such a part of the table, came out of an idol’s temple, and was sacrificed to idols; which with the Jews were forbidden<sup>f205</sup>: for

“everything that came out of an idol’s temple was forbidden, and was reckoned as the sacrifices of the dead; for it was not thought possible it could be there, and not offered to idols:”

now when any at the feast, either believer or unbeliever, should thus point at any particular dish, and affirm this of it; then the apostle’s advice is,

*eat not for his sake that showed it*: who, if a weak believer, will be grieved and wounded; and if an infidel, will be hardened in his impiety, and be furnished with an opportunity of reproaching the Christians, as variable, insincere, and unfaithful in their religion:

*and for conscience sake*; which is explained in the following verse:

*the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof*; which words are neither in the Syriac version, nor in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and are thought by some to be added, from (<4605>1 Corinthians 10:26) though the repetition of them is far from being impertinent; since they contain a very good reason why such a man should

abstain from things sacrificed to idols, seeing there is such a plenty and variety of creatures for his use, which he has a right to eat of; and therefore is under no necessity to eat of such sacrifices, nor is it any hardship upon him to forbear the use of them.

**Ver. 29.** *Conscience I say, not thine own,* etc.] Which is well informed about these things, and is fully persuaded that an idol is nothing, and that things sacrificed to idols are nothing; and as they cannot profit a man, or help forward his comfort, peace, and happiness, so they cannot hinder them:

*but of the others;* either the weak brother, or the unbelieving master of the feast; it is for the sake of their consciences such food must not be eaten, lest either the one should be grieved, or the other reproach:

*for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?* this is not an objection of the Corinthians, setting forth the unreasonableness of being condemned, for the use of their Christian liberty by another's conscience, be he who he will, believer or unbeliever, when they had an undoubted right to such an use, and their own consciences did not condemn them: but they are the words of the apostle, expressing his own sense, that it was not right and fitting that he should make use of his liberty, and eat under such a circumstance as here pointed out, and so his liberty should be condemned as sinful by another man's conscience; since the weak believer would be apt to censure, judge, and condemn him as a libertine, and the unbeliever as an atheist, or one that had no regard to any religion at all; and therefore he reasons, that it was best to abstain from eating, rather than expose his liberty to such a censure and condemnation.

**Ver. 30.** *For if I by grace be a partaker,* etc.] Either of Christian liberty, through the grace of God; or of the creatures God has given men to eat of through his goodness, and which are enjoyed by the saints with thankfulness:

*why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?* that is, why should I expose myself to evil tongues, the blasphemies and reproaches of men, by eating things of this kind, under this circumstance, when there are so many creatures I can use without offence, and be thankful for? or why should my liberty be reproached through an imprudent use of it, for which I have the utmost reason to be thankful? wherefore upon the whole it is best

to deny one's self in such a case, rather than risk one's character, the glory of God, and the honour of religion.

**Ver. 31.** *Whether therefore ye eat or drink*, etc.] Which may principally refer to eating things sacrificed to idols, and drinking the libations of wine offered to them, since this is the subject of the apostle's discourse; in doing of which he directs them to have the glory of God in view, and so to conduct, that that end may be answered: and it may also be applied to common eating and drinking, or to ordinary meals upon food, about which there is no dispute; and which common actions of life are done to the glory of God, when every mercy is considered and owned as coming from him; and when we confess ourselves unworthy of any; and when we ascribe all we have to the free and unmerited goodness of God; and enjoy every mercy of this kind, as a fruit of our Father's love to us, as a blessing of the covenant, and as coming to us through the blood of Christ; when we are contented and satisfied with what we have, and act faith continually on God for future fresh supplies, and give thanks for all we receive: and if this, then much more eating and drinking in an ordinance way should be directed to the glory of God and Christ, as eating the bread, and drinking the wine in the Lord's supper; and which is so done, when it is done in a decent and reverend manner, in the exercise of faith, discerning the Lord's body, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood in a spiritual manner, without dependence on the actions done, and in remembrance of the love of God and Christ.

*Or whatsoever ye do*; in a natural, civil, or religious respect, in preaching, hearing, praying, fasting, giving of alms, etc. whatever in the closet, in the family, in the church, or in the world, in private, or in public:

*do all to the glory of God*; God's glory is the end of all his works and actions; in creation, providence, and grace; in election, in the covenant, in the blessings and promises of it, in redemption, in the effectual calling, and in bringing many sons to glory. The same is the end of all Christ's actions, as man and Mediator, of his doctrines and miracles, of his obedience, sufferings, and death in this world, and of his interceding life in the other; who, as he lives to make intercession for us, lives unto God, to the glory of God; and therefore the glory of God should be the end of all our actions: besides, without this no action can be truly called a good one; if a man seeks himself, his own glory, and popular applause, or has any sinister and selfish end in view in what he does, it cannot be said, nor will it be

accounted by God to be a good action. The Jews have a saying much like this,  $\mu\upsilon\mu\sigma\zeta \mu\epsilon\lambda\iota \text{ wyhy } \text{Æ}\epsilon\zeta [m \text{ I } k$  “let all thy works be done to the glory of God”<sup>f206</sup>; which one of their commentators<sup>f207</sup> explains thus:

“even when thou art employed in eating and drinking, and in the business of life, thou shalt not design thy bodily profit, but that thou mayest be strong to do the will of thy Creator.”

**Ver. 32.** *Give none offence*, etc.] Avoid everything that may be the occasion of offence, of the stumbling and falling of others; whether things indifferent, when they are offensive to weak minds, and grieve, and wound, and stumble them; especially things sinful, which as they offend God, and are therefore called “offences”, so they are offensive to the churches of Christ, and are cognizable by them; they are staggering and stumbling to weak believers, when committed by professors of religion; are the means of inducing others to sin, and of hardening profane sinners in their iniquities, and give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme: but things that are good, and are made our incumbent duty, are not to be avoided, though persons may be offended thereat; such as the pure preaching of the Gospel, the profession of it, and submission to the ordinances thereof; for an offence is either taken or given; to give offence is one thing, which we should carefully avoid; and to take it, when there is no just reason for it, is another, and not to be regarded:

*neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God*; which may be considered as having a peculiar respect to the people of God: the two first of these, namely, Jews and Gentiles, being what constituted the first churches, and this at Corinth, so that they may be thought to be the parts, and the church the whole; and the apostle first mentions the one, and then the other, signifying, that they were not to give offence neither to single persons, nor to the whole church; and particularly in the case of eating things offered to idols, care was to be taken that neither Jews nor Gentiles were offended, being both members of the church. Or these may be considered as including all sorts of persons; for Jews and Gentiles include the whole world, and may here mean all that are without, that have no true faith in Christ, nor any spiritual knowledge of him; and “the church”, all such as know him, believe in him, and profess his name: so that the apostle’s sense is, that care should be taken that no offence be given to any sort of men, neither to the men of the world, of whatsoever character, nor to professors of religion, and more especially the latter; since offending

one of the least of them that believe in Christ, is displeasing to him; and since he was so careful to guard against the offence of them, and will, by his angels, at the last day, gather out of his kingdom all such as offend; and has ordered his churches to mark them which cause offences and divisions; and since it is so hard a thing to reconcile an offended brother, who is harder to be won than a strong castle; though that is not his excellency, yet as it makes the case so difficult, it should be guarded against.

**Ver. 33.** *Even as I please all men in all things*, etc.] The apostle sets himself as an example, though he was far from being a man pleaser, in the bad sense of that phrase; nor must these all things, in which he is said to please all men, be taken in the largest sense; but are to be understood of things indifferent, which might be done or avoided, without breaking the law of or contradicting the Gospel of Christ, or any of its rules and ordinances, to all which the apostle was inviolably attached; nor did he in these things seek to please men, but in all to act the part of a faithful servant of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of grace; (see ~~409~~ 1 Corinthians 9:19-22). Moreover, it is not to be thought that in fact he pleased all men; it is certain he did not; but he studied to please them; he did all that in him lay; he took the most proper methods to do it, though they were sometimes ineffectual.

*Not seeking my own profit*; worldly profit and advantage, riches, wealth, the emoluments of life, ease, rest, and pleasure; and chiefly he means the use of liberty in things indifferent; he was willing to forego all for the good of others:

*but the profit of many, that they may be saved*; he neglected his own private advantage, and the gratifying of himself in anything which was otherwise lawful, when he saw that would be an offence to others, be an hinderance of the Gospel, and deter any from embracing the Christian doctrine; that so he might be the, means of promoting the spiritual profit and edification of many souls, that they might be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; He does not say all, but many, knowing that all will not be saved, only the elect of God; and whereas he knew not who these were, nor where they lay, he behaved in this manner to all men, that he might be the instrument of the spiritual good and salvation of the chosen ones among them, by preaching the Gospel to them without offence.