

Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill,

[1746-63], at sacred-texts.com

1 Corinthians

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Presentation and Dedication

This new edition of Dr. John Gills, “**Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity**”, contains 11 books, now in 5 volumes. It is presented and dedicated to the students, pastors and teachers of Christ-Centered Church Inc. Ministries, Philippines, under the care of William Ola Poloc, its founder and senior pastor (Bishop) on the, 16th January 2020, by David Clarke, founder of Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Inc.

Brief History of the Baguio Christ-Centered Churches Ministries Inc.

Pstr William O. Poloc Sr. was released from the New Bilibid prison in August 2002, where he graduated with a Degree in Theology, and started prison ministries in his hometown Baguio City, with his wife and the aid of a certain missionary from UK, by name David Clarke, the founder of Trojan Horse International. In December 2002 they were able to baptize 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail, 9 inmates in Benguet Provincial jail, along with William's wife Beth Poloc and Josephine Ortis, along with her daughter Karen Basoon, who had all confessed their faith in the lord Jesus Christ. David Clarke returned to the UK in 2003 after his mission.

Later, God gave them a burden to open a church within the city so as to reach out to their families, relatives and the families of my co inmates who are still incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.

By His grace the Baguio Christ-Centered Church Inc. Stood up. As years go by God continued to bless the church by drawing more souls into it. He also bless us with a bible school to train ministers unable to study in an expensive bible schools. Graduates of our school were sent out to reach lost souls and augment Christ Centered mission churches to different places around the archipelago. As a result, by God's grace and providence Christ Centered Churches were established to the different places in the country.



God's work here in the Northern Philippines bloomed most especially here in the city of Baguio. The Baguio Christ-Centred Church is the mother church of all the Christ Centered Churches in the Philippines namely; The Pilot- Christ-Centred Church, The Kamog Christ-Centred Church, The Christ-Centered-Church Theological School(TULIP), The Christ-Centred Radio Ministry, The Christ-Centred Jail Ministries etc.). We'll, we are truly blessed by these works He has entrusted to us. To God be the glory!

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Christ-Centered Ministries Philippines

Personal note from the publisher

It is noted and remarked that this date of publication is the Golden Jubilee ¹(Leviticus 25:8-13 King) of conversion of David Clarke, which took place on, 16th January 1971.

<http://www.Biertonparticularbaptists.co.uk>



David Clarke is the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists who was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The doctrinal foundation of Trojan Horse Mission are those of the Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of religion.

View the Wikipedia Entry for Bierton and view [None Conformist Place of Worship](#)

¹ 8 And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

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WHO IS DR. JOHN GILL

John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

Pastoral Work

His first pastoral work was as an intern assisting John Davis at Higham Ferrers in 1718 at age 21. He became pastor at the Strict Baptists church at Goat Yard Chapel, Horselydown, Southwark in 1719. His pastorate lasted 51 years. In 1757 his congregation needed larger premises and moved to a Carter Lane, St. Olave's Street, Southwark. This Baptist church was once pastored by Benjamin Keach and would later become the New Park Street Chapel and then the Metropolitan Tabernacle pastored by Charles Spurgeon.

Works

In 1748, Gill was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author. His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1725-8), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points.
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–8), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
- A Collection of Sermons and Tracts
- A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)
- A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
- A Body of Practical Divinity (1770)

Gill also edited and re-published the works of **Rev. Tobias Crisp, D.D.** (1600-1643).

NOTE:

We have not included the Greek, Hebrew or Latin text in the interest of economy.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS

This was not the first epistle that was written by the apostle to the Corinthians, for we read in this of his having written an epistle to them before, Co1 5:9, but this is the first epistle of his unto them, that is now extant; and has been received by the churches, as of divine authority, being written by the inspiration of God, of which there has been no doubt in any age. The apostle himself was nearly two years at Corinth; where he preached with great success; and was the instrument of converting many persons, who by him were formed into a church state, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, as is clear from many passages in this epistle, and whom he left in good order, and in great peace and harmony; but quickly after his departure, false teachers got in among them, and bad principles were imbibed by many of them, and evil practices prevailed among them, and they fell into factions and parties, which occasioned the apostle to write this epistle to them, as well as their writing to him concerning certain things, they desired to have his judgment and opinion of, Co1 7:1, It is thought to be written about the year of Christ 55, and in the first year of Nero, though some place it in the year 59. It was written not from Philippi, as the subscription added to it affirms, but from Ephesus, as appears from Co1 16:8, and, it may be, after the uproar raised there by Demetrius, as should seem from a passage in Co1 15:32. The matter of it is various. The apostle first rebukes them for their schisms and divisions; suggests that their regard to the wisdom of men, and the philosophy of the Gentiles, had brought the simplicity of the Gospel into contempt with them; blames them for their conduct in the case of the incestuous person, and urges them to put him away from them; reproves them for going to law with one another before Heathen magistrates, and warmly inveighs against fornication; and then answers several questions, and resolves several cases concerning marriage; treats of things offered to idols, and of the maintenance of ministers; and dissuades from idolatry, and all appearance of it; takes notice of the unbecoming conduct of the members of the church at the Lord's supper; and discourses concerning the nature and use of spiritual gifts, and commends charity above them; observes and corrects some irregularities in the use of their gifts; proves by various arguments the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which some of them denied; exhorts to a collection for the poor saints, and to several other things, and concludes the epistle with the salutations of others, and of himself.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 1

This chapter contains the general inscription of the epistle, the usual salutation, and a special thanksgiving for blessings received; after which the apostle intimates the occasion of his writing, the divisions about their ministers, which gives him an opportunity of discoursing concerning the nature, end, use, and efficacy of the preaching of the Gospel. The inscription is in Co1 1:1, in which an account is given of the persons concerned in this epistle; and first of Paul, the only inspired writer of it, who is described by his name, by which he went among the Gentiles; by his office, an apostle of Jesus Christ; and by the manner in which he came into it, being called to it not through any merit of his own, but through the sovereign will and pleasure of God: and next mention is made of Sosthenes, a brother minister of the Gospel, who was with the apostle, and joined in the salutation of the church, to whom the epistle is written; who are described, by their general character, a church of God; by the place of their abode, and seat of their church state, Corinth; and by their special characters, sanctified in Christ by election, and saints through the effectual calling; and with them are joined all other saints in Achaia, that belonged to them and the apostle, that called upon the name of the Lord; and then follows the salutation in Co1 1:3, usual in all the epistles; after that a thanksgiving to God for the grace they had by Christ in general, Co1 1:4, and particularly for their gifts of utterance and

knowledge, which were plentifully bestowed upon them, Co1 1:5, and were a confirmation to them of the Gospel of Christ, Co1 1:6, and by which it appeared, that they were not behind other churches in these things; and are commended for their waiting for the coming of Christ, Co1 1:7, by whom the apostle assures them, they would be so confirmed in the mean while, as to be presented blameless by him in that day, Co1 1:8, of which they might be assured from the faithfulness of God, who had called them to communion with Christ, Co1 1:9, upon which he exhorts them to unity of affection and judgment, for this end, that there might be no schisms among them; and this he does in a way of entreaty, and that by the name of Christ, and from the consideration of their being brethren, Co1 1:10, suggesting hereby, that there were divisions among them: and signifies, that he had good reason to believe it, having had an account of them from a family of repute among them, Co1 1:11, and then expressly mentions what their differences were about, namely, their ministers, Co1 1:12, and uses arguments to dissuade them from their dividing principles and practices; showing, that one was their Lord and master, Christ, who was crucified for them, and in whose name they were baptized, and not his ministers, Co1 1:13, and since some among them made an ill use of their having been baptized by the apostle, he is thankful that he had baptized no more of them, and mentions by name those that he had baptized, Co1 1:14, and gives a reason for it, taken from the principal end of his mission by Christ, which was to preach the Gospel, and not only or chiefly to baptize, Co1 1:17. The manner in which he was sent to preach, and did preach it, is observed by him, not in the words of human wisdom; and that for this reason, lest either the Gospel should be of no use, or the effect of it should be ascribed to a wrong cause; and then he obviates an objection that might be made to this way of preaching, that hereby the Gospel would be brought into contempt; to which he answers, by granting that it would be, and was reckoned foolishness by them that were blinded and were lost; and by observing on the other hand, that it was effectual to saving purposes to others, Co1 1:18, and though the former sort might be the wise and prudent of this world, this need seem no strange thing, since the infatuation of such persons is no other than what was foretold would be, as appears from a testimony out of Isa 29:14, cited in Co1 1:19, upon which some questions are put, and inquiries made, after men of wisdom and learning, whose wisdom God made foolish, Co1 1:20, the reason of which was, because they did not make a right use of their natural wisdom in the knowledge of God, wherefore it was his pleasure to save men by means esteemed foolishness by them, Co1 1:21, and these wise men, who accounted the preaching of the Gospel foolishness, are distinguished into two sorts, Jews and Gentiles; the one requiring miracles to confirm it, the other seeking wisdom in it, Co1 1:22, but finding neither, though there were really both, the preaching of a crucified Christ was a stumbling to the one, and folly to the other, Co1 1:23, though those that were called by grace from among them, whether Jews or Gentiles, had different sentiments of it, and of Christ preached in it, in whose esteem he was the power and wisdom of God, Co1 1:24, the reason of which was, because there are superior wisdom and power in Christ and his Gospel, which the apostle, an ironical concession, calls the foolishness and weakness of God, to the wisdom and power of men, Co1 1:25, and instances in the effectual calling and conversion of the Corinthians, who for the most part were not the wise, the mighty, and noble, Co1 1:26, but the foolish, weak, and base; and the end of God, in the call of such, was to draw a veil over and bring to confusion the wisdom and power of men, Co1 1:27, and also that no creature whatever should dare to glory before him, Co1 1:29, but the true object of glorying in is pointed at, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the reason of it, all blessings of grace being in him, and from him, is suggested, Co1 1:30, so that whoever glories, should glory in him, Co1 1:31.

1 Corinthians 1:1

Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ,... The author, or rather the writer of the following epistle; for the Holy Ghost was the author and dictator of it, and which was never doubted: he is described by his, name Paul, though his Jewish name was Saul; and very probably he being a Jew by birth, and yet born in a Roman city, might have two names, the one Jewish, the other Gentile; and by the one he went when among the Jews, and by the other when concerned with the Gentiles: and also by his office, “an apostle of Jesus Christ”; immediately called, and sent forth by him; had the Gospel from him by immediate revelation, and a commission to preach it; and which high office was confirmed by signs and wonders, and mighty deeds; by the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred on him, and on others under his ministry; and by the eminent success which attended the preaching of the Gospel by him. This his character he the rather mentions, because some in this church, through the insinuations of the false apostles, demurred upon it; whereas this was not a mere name given him by men, and by which he was only commonly called by them, but was an office he was “called” to by Christ; he did not rush into it, or assume it of himself, but had a divine warrant for it; for he was invested with it,

through the will of God: both by the secret will and purpose of God, by which he was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ among the Gentiles, Act 9:15; and by the revealed will of God, signified by the Spirit of God, who said, “separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have called them”, Act 13:2, and shows, that it was not owing to any worth or merit in him, but purely to the free grace and sovereign will and pleasure of God, that he was made an apostle of Christ:

and Sosthenes our brother. This seems to be the same man, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue of the Jews at Corinth; and was converted to the Christian faith by the Apostle Paul whilst there, as appears from his favouring the cause of the apostle, for which the Jews beat him before the judgment seat, and yet Gallio the Roman deputy took no notice of it, Act 18:17, in the Syriac dictionary (a) mention is made of one Sosthenes, governor of a city, one of the seventy disciples, who was educated at Pontus, and cast into the sea by the order of Nouna; and is also said to be bishop of Colophon in Ionia; see Gill on Luk 10:1; but without any reason. This person the apostle joins with him, not as in equal office with him, but as a brother in Christ, and very probably a ministering brother, and a companion of his; and the rather, because he might be well known to the Corinthians, and respected by them; wherefore he chose to join him with him, to show their agreement in doctrine and discipline, and in advice to them, which might have the greater weight with them; see Act 18:17.

(a) Bar Bahluli apud Castel. Lex. Polyglott. col. 2444. Vid. Euseb, Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.

1 Corinthians 1:2

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,... This epistle is inscribed to the saints at Corinth; who are described by their being “the church of God”, a particular congregated church; a number of persons gathered out of the world, and joined together in holy fellowship, carrying on the worship of God together, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; a very high character this, to be called the church of God, which is the pillar and ground of truth: and it may be observed, that this is here given to a people, among whom were many irregularities, errors, disorders, and divisions; which shows, that a church of God is not to be unchurched for everything that is amiss in them: they are further described by the place of their abode, Corinth, the “metropolis” of Achaia; a very large and opulent city, a place of great trade and commerce, and famous both for its wealth and wisdom; but not so famous for anything as this, that there was a church of Christ in it; of the city of

Corinth; see Gill on Act 18:1; and of the church; see Gill on Act 18:8. The members of it in general, for it cannot be thought to hold good of every individual, are said to be

sanctified in Christ Jesus; not by baptism, for they were sanctified before that; but were set apart, or chosen in Christ from all eternity, to grace here, and glory hereafter; justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, in which sense the word “sanctified” is sometimes used; and to whom Christ was made “sanctification” and righteousness; and in consequence of which they were sanctified by his Spirit in his name, out of that fulness of grace and holiness which is in him: wherefore it follows,

called to be saints; for though they were chosen to holiness in Christ, and through sanctification of the Spirit unto salvation, yet before calling were unholy; though Christ had given himself for them to sanctify and purify them, yet whilst uncalled were impure; they fell in Adam, and became both guilty and filthy through his transgression; and by their first birth were unholy and unclean, and were so in their lives and conversations; nor are any holy by natural descent: these were not born saints, nor made so by their own free will, but were become such through the powerful grace of God in the effectual calling; in which not only desires after holiness, but principles of holiness were wrought in them; and by which they were called to the practice of external holiness, or to live an holy life and conversation. And this epistle is not only inscribed to these saints at Corinth, but to them,

with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; as in Corinth, so in any part of Achaia, of which Corinth was the chief city. Invocation of the name of Christ not only respects prayer to him, but includes the whole of religious worship: see Rom 10:13; and this being given to Christ, and perforated in his name, is a very considerable proof of his true and proper deity; and the Ethiopic version here styles him, “God, our Lord Jesus Christ”; for none but God is to be invoked; nor can any but a divine person, one that is truly and properly God, without idolatry, be regarded as the object of religious worship and adoration. The phrase

both theirs and ours, either, as some think, refers to “every place” and so read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and the sense is, that the apostle inscribes his epistle to all that call upon the name of Christ, whether in Judea or in the Gentile world, in the place where the apostle was, or the Corinthians were, or any of the other saints in Achaia were; signifying, that invocation of God is not confined to any particular place, but that men may now lift up holy hands prayer to God everywhere; or rather it refers to “our Lord”, and shows that Christ is the common Lord of his people, whom they all invoke, and by whom they are called, and therefore ought to love one another.

1 Corinthians 1:3

Grace be unto you, and peace from God,.... This is an usual salutation in all Paul’s epistles; See Gill on Rom 1:7.

1 Corinthians 1:4

I thank my God always on your behalf,.... Now follows a thanksgiving for various blessings bestowed upon this church, which is a proof of the apostle’s great affection for it, and how much its welfare lay at his heart. The object of thanksgiving is God, for as he is the author of all mercies, the glory and praise of them ought to be given to him. The apostle styles him “my God”, to distinguish him from others; and to express his faith of interest in him; and to observe to this church, that all the good

things they enjoyed came from him, who was his God and their God, his Father and their Father; and for which reason he returned thanks to him for them, and by so doing set them an example: the persons on whose behalf he gave thanks were not at this time himself and Sosthenes, but the members of the church at Corinth; and the continuance of his thankfulness for them, is “always”, as often as he went to the throne of grace, or at any other time thought of them: what he particularly gives thanks to God for in this verse is,

for the grace which is given you by Jesus Christ: and includes all sorts of grace, adopting, justifying, pardoning, regenerating, and sanctifying grace; every particular grace of the Spirit, as faith, repentance, hope, love, fear, humility, self-denial, &c. all are gifts of God, and entirely owing to his free grace, and not to man's free will and power, or to any merits of his; and all come through the hands of Christ, and are given forth by him, as the Mediator of the covenant, and in consequence of his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and merit.

1 Corinthians 1:5

col 1:5

That in everything ye are enriched by him,.... This is still a continuation of the thanksgiving for this church, that they were “enriched”, or plentifully and abundantly provided for by Christ, with all grace, with all the riches of grace; with his own unsearchable riches, of which they were made partakers, and the riches of glory, to which they were entitled by him; and all which come to them through his poverty, which makes his grace in the donation of these riches the more illustrious: and particularly the apostle is thankful, that they were enriched by Christ

in all utterance, and in all knowledge; that not only they had the knowledge of the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, concerning the person, offices, grace, and righteousness of Christ in the theory of them, or a speculative notion of them; but for the most part had a spiritual experimental knowledge of these things; and many of them had such large gifts of knowledge, elocution, and utterance, that they were richly qualified to preach the Gospel to others; nay, even had the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, so as to speak with divers tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

1 Corinthians 1:6

col 1:6

Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. By “the testimony of Christ” is meant the Gospel of Christ, which bears a testimony to his deity, his incarnation, his obedience, sufferings, and death, his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at God's right hand, and intercession for the saints; to redemption by his blood, justification by his righteousness, pardon and atonement of sin by his sacrifice, and complete salvation by his obedience and death. This, as it had been preached to the Corinthians, was confirmed and established among them, by the signs and miracles with which it was attended; by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, particularly of prophecy bestowed on many of them; and by the internal power and energy of the Spirit, accompanying and applying it to their souls.

1 Corinthians 1:7

So that ye come behind in no gift,.... Ordinary or extraordinary; a detail of the gifts which were

bestowed on them is made in Co1 12:8; by which it appears that they were not inferior in gifts to any of the churches:

waiting for the coming; or “the revelation”

of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will appear a second time, come in great glory, will raise the dead, and judge both quick and dead; when gifts will cease and be of no more use, and when they must all be accounted for; and therefore, till that time comes, should be diligently made use of, and improved to the interest and service of Christ; who will surely come again, and call his servants and churches to an account for the talents he has intrusted them with; and whose coming is to be believed, loved, looked, and hoped for by all, that love him in sincerity and truth.

1 Corinthians 1:8

Who shall also confirm you unto the end,... The author of this blessing of confirmation is not the Lord Jesus Christ, though he is mentioned in the latter part of Co1 1:7; and seems to be the antecedent to the relative “who” in this, but is not, for this confirmation is made in him; see Co2 1:21; and besides, it is in order that the saints might be blameless in the day of Christ, and so must design some other person distinct from him, which is God the Father, Co1 1:4, to whom the apostle gives thanks, and continues to do so unto this verse; in which he assures the saints of confirmation in grace by God, the author and giver of all grace: and which may be understood of their confirmation in the love and favour of God, from which there can be no separation; and of their establishment in the person of Christ, and in the doctrines of grace; and of the permanency of the grace of the Spirit in them, and of their perseverance in faith and holiness unto the end: that is, of their days; even until the day of Christ, when the good work begun in them shall be performed and finished; that is, “for ever”, as the Ethiopic version reads it; for the love of God to his people always continues; their interest in Christ can never be lost; grace in them is an immortal seed; nor shall they be ever finally and totally moved away from the hope of the Gospel:

that ye may be blameless; not in themselves, for no man is without his faults; none of God’s children are without their failings and infirmities; they have whereof to blame themselves, and may be blamed by God too in a providential way; but they are so in Christ their head, being justified by his righteousness, and washed in his blood; and so in the sight of God, as considered in Christ; and will appear such

in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall descend from heaven, and take his saints to him, and present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, by whom ye were called,... These words contain arguments, assuring the saints of their confirmation in grace, and of their being preserved blameless to the day of Christ, taken from the faithfulness of God, who is always true to his promises: whatever he has said, he will do it; he will never suffer his faithfulness to fail; and since he has made so many promises concerning the establishment of his people, and their perseverance to grace, they may assure themselves of them; and also from his having called them by his grace, for whom he effectually calls by his grace, he glorifies; and particularly from his having called them

into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; to partake of his grace, and to be heirs of glory with him; to enjoy communion with him in private and public exercises of religion, which is an evidence of being in him, and of union to him; for it is not merely into the fellowship of his saints or churches, but into the fellowship of his Son they are said to be called; and such are members of Christ, of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone; and shall never be lost and perish, but shall be confirmed to the end; be preserved in him blameless, and presented to him faultless, and have everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 1:10

Now I beseech you, brethren,... The apostle having observed the many favours and blessings bestowed on this church, proceeds to take notice of the divisions and contentions which were fomented in it; and in the most kind and tender manner entreats them to take every proper step to prevent schisms among them: he does not use his apostolical power and authority, or lay his injunctions and commands upon them, which he might have done, but most affectionately beseeches them; styling them brethren, as they were in a spiritual relation, being children of the same Father, members of the same body, and partakers of the same grace, and is a reason why they should not fail out by the way: and this obsecration is made

by the name of the Lord Jesus; which he wisely judged must have its weight and influence on many of them, to whom that name must be dear and precious, and which they called upon and were called by; and shows, that he was not acting in his own name, and seeking his own profit; but was concerned in and for the name of Christ, and for his honour and interest, which lay at stake by their contentions. His earnest request to them is,

that ye speak the same thing; profess the same truths, and express them in the same words; which shows the lawfulness, yea, necessity and usefulness, of confessions and articles of faith, being made and agreed to by members of churches; and which should be drawn up in a form of sound words, and abode by; for the introducing of new words and phrases is often the means of bringing in new doctrines, and of raising great contentions and animosities; wherefore using the same words to express truth by is a very proper and prudent expedient to prevent them:

and that there be no divisions, or schisms

among you; which are generally made by innovations in doctrine, or worship; by forming new schemes of religion, new articles of faith, and modes of discipline: but

that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; which regards not only the sameness of love and affection, to one another, being, as the first Christians were, of one heart and of one soul; but their agreement in their judgments and sentiments, of both doctrine and discipline; and such an entire harmony and symmetry among them, as in the members of the body, where each member and bone being in their proper place, exactly answer to, and tally with each other; and which is the most effectual way to speak the same things, and so bar against all schisms and divisions; and such an agreement is absolutely necessary to the peace, comfort, and well being of a church; for how should “two”, and much less more, “walk together”, unless they are “agreed?” Amo 3:3.

1 Corinthians 1:11

For it hath been declared unto me, of you, my brethren,.... Lest the above advice of the apostle should be thought to be impertinent and needless, and to proceed upon groundless suspicions and jealousies of his, he signifies that he not only had some broad hints of their contentions and divisions, but the whole affair was laid open, and made manifest to him: the thing was a clear point to him; he had no reason at all to doubt of the truth of it; nor could they deny it, the proof was so strong, the evidence so full, being given

by them which are of the house of Chloe. Some take Chloe to be the name of a place; a city so called is said to have been in Cappadocia; but it seems rather to have been the name of a woman. Horace (b) several times makes mention of a woman of this name, and so does Martial (c). Pausanias (d) calls the goddess Ceres by it, the goddess of husbandry; the word signifying green grass of the field. The person the apostle speaks of was one that very probably lived at Corinth, and was a member of the church there, and at the head of a family of great worth and credit; who being grieved at the growing animosities, and disturbances there raised, wrote to the apostle, and gave him a distinct account of them, desiring him to use his interest to put a stop to them. He mentions this family by name, to show that he had not took up an idle tale, and received reports from anybody, nor from a single person only, but from a family of repute among them; and who could have no other views in the relation of it to him, than the good of the church, and the glory of God: and what they had made out clearly to him was,

that there are contentions among you; about their ministers, as appears afterward, as well as about opinions in doctrines, and ceremonies in worship, which occasioned undue heats, and great indecencies, tending to make rents and schisms among them,

(b) Carrain. l. 3. Ode 7, 9, 19. (c) L. 4. Epigr. 22. & l. 9. Epigr. 13. (d) L. 1. sive Attica, p. 38.

1 Corinthians 1:12

Now this I say that everyone of you saith,.... This the apostle affirms not upon his own personal knowledge, but upon the credit of the report the house of Chloe had made unto him; and his meaning is not that every individual member of this church, but that many of them, and the far greater number of them, were in the following factions, some being for one minister, and some for another: one part of them said,

I am of Paul; he had been instrumental in their conversion: he had baptized some of them, and first laid the foundation of a Gospel church among them; was a solid, brave, and bold preacher of the Gospel, and was set for the defence of it; wherefore he was the minister for them, and they were desirous of being called and distinguished by his name: but there was another party that said,

and I of Apollos; in opposition to Paul, whom they despised, as a man whose aspect was mean; his bodily presence weak, made no figure in the pulpit; his speech low and contemptible; his discourses plain, not having that flow of words, and accuracy of expression, as Apollos had; who was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who coming to Corinth after the Apostle Paul, many were taken with his way of preaching; he was the preacher for them, and they chose to be called after him, and in distinction from others: whilst another company of them said,

and I of Cephas; or Peter, in opposition both to Paul and Apollos; who with them were new upstart ministers, in comparison of Peter, who was with Christ from the beginning, and saw his miracles, and heard his doctrines; and, besides, had the apostleship and Gospel of the circumcision, on which account they highly valued him; for these must be supposed to be the converted Jews among them, who still retained a regard to the ceremonies of the law; wherefore they fixed on Peter as their minister, and to be called by his name: but others said,

and I of Christ; which some take to be the words of the apostle, declaring who he was of, and for, and belonged unto; intimating that they, as he, should call no man father, or master, on earth, or be called by any other name than that of Christ. Others consider them as the words of the Corinthians, a small part of them who were very mean and contemptible, and therefore mentioned last, who chose to be known and called by no other name than that of Christians; but I rather think that these design a faction and party, to be condemned as the others. These were for Christ, in opposition to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and any other ministers of the word. They were for Christ without his ministers; they were wiser than their teachers; they were above being under any ministrations and ordinances; as the others attributed too much to the ministers of the Gospel, these detracted too much from them, and denied them to be of any use and service. Some persons may be, in such sense, for Christ, as to be blame worthy; as when they use his name to deceive men, or divide his interest.

1 Corinthians 1:13

Is Christ divided?.... Some read the words as an assertion, “Christ is divided”; that is, his body, the church, is divided by such factions and parties; though in some copies the note of interrogation, is put before the clause, and so to be rendered, “is Christ divided?” no; his human body was not to be divided; a bone of him was not to be broken, Joh 19:36; the seamless garment he wore was not to be rent asunder, Joh 19:23; nor is his mystical body, the church, to be torn in pieces by schisms and divisions; nor is anyone part of his Gospel different from, or opposite to another part of it; his doctrine is the same as preached by one minister and another, and is all of a piece, uniform and harmonious. Christ is not divided from his Father, not in nature; though he is to be distinguished from him, yet not to be divided; he is one in nature with him, though he is a distinct person from him; nor is he, nor can he, or will be ever separated from him; nor is he to be divided from him in his works and actions, with whom he was jointly concerned in creation, providence, and grace; and such are to be blamed as dividers of Christ from the Father, who talk of Christ to the exclusion of the Father, or to the dropping and neglect of any of his acts of grace; as his everlasting love to his chosen ones, the eternal election of them in Christ, the covenant of grace made with him, and the instance of his grace in the gift and mission of his Son: nor is Christ divided from himself, not in his nature and person; the two natures, human and divine, are united in one person; they are to be distinguished, and not to be confounded, yet not to be separated as to wake two distinct persons: nor in his offices; a whole Christ is to be received; Christ in his kingly as well as in his priestly office; to claim him as a Saviour and disown him as a King, is dishonourable to him; it is to make one end of his death void, as much as in such lies, which is, that he may be Lord of dead and living; and argues a carnal selfish spirit, and that faith in him is not right: such are to be blamed for being for Christ, and as dividers of him, who talk of being saved by him, and yet would not have him to rule over them. Nor is he divided from his Spirit, not from the person of the Spirit; he is to be distinguished from him as a person, but is one in nature with him; nor from his gifts and graces, which he has as man and Mediator without measure; nor from the work of the Spirit; for it is his grace the Spirit of God implants in the hearts of

men: it comes from him, it centres in him, it makes men like him, and glorifies him; such who cry up Christ, and cry down the work of his Spirit upon the soul, are to be blamed for being for Christ, and to be reckoned dividers of them as much as in them lies: nor is Christ divided from his church and people; there is a close union between them, and he dwells in them, and among them; and they are to be blamed that talk of Christ, and never meet with his saints in public service and worship: nor is he divided from his ministers, word, and ordinances; Christ is the sum of the ministry of the word; the ordinances are instituted by him; he submitted to them himself, and is the substance of them, and has promised his presence in them to the end of the world: and what God has put together, let no man put asunder,

Was Paul crucified for you? no; he had taught them another doctrine; namely, that Christ was crucified for them, that he died for their sins, and had bought them with the price of his own blood; and therefore they were not to be the servants of men, or to call any man master, or to be called by his name, or any other man's, only by Christ's, who had redeemed them by his blood; so that they were not their own, nor any other's, but his, and ought to glorify him with their souls and bodies, which were his,

Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul; no; but in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The apostle did not pretend to be the author of a new revelation, or the propagator of a new religion, but was a preacher of the Gospel, and an administrator of the ordinances of Christ; wherefore he baptized not in his own name, but in the name of Christ: to whose worship and service such as are baptized are devoted, and not to the service of men, and therefore not to be called after their names.

1 Corinthians 1:14

I thank God that I baptized none of you,.... The Alexandrian copy and the Syriac version read, "I thank my God"; not that the apostle disliked the ordinance of baptism, or the administration of it; and much less that he thought it criminal, or an evil in him to perform it; nor was he at any time displeased at the numbers of persons who desired it of him; but on the contrary rejoiced where proper subjects of it were brought to a submission to it; but inasmuch as some persons in the church at Corinth made such an ill use of his having baptized them, he was greatly thankful that it was so ordered in providence, that the far greater part of them were baptized by other ministers, either by those who were with him, or came after him; and that he baptized none of them with his own hands,

but Crispus and Gaius. The former of these was the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth, who hearing the apostle, and believing in Christ, was baptized by him, Act 18:8 and the latter was a very liberal and hospitable man, and was the apostle's host, whilst he was at Corinth; see Rom 16:23.

1 Corinthians 1:15

col 1:15

Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "lest anyone should say that ye were baptized in my name"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "that ye might not say we have been baptized in his name". This gives the true reason why the apostle was so thankful he had baptized no more of the members of this church, lest either some should reproach him, as having done it in his own name, and as seeking his own

honour and interest; or lest others should affect, from their being baptized by him, to be called by his name, as if he was the author and patron of a new sect.

1 Corinthians 1:16

And I also baptized the household of Stephanas,.... The same name with “Stephanios”, or “Stephanio” in Pliny (e). Before he says he had baptized none but Crispus and Gaius; but recollecting things, he corrects himself, and observes, that he had also baptized the household of Stephanas, who by the Greek writers is thought to be the same with the jailer baptized by the apostle at Philippi, but was now removed from thence to Corinth, and was become a famous and useful man there. No argument can be formed from the baptism of his household in favour of infant baptism, since it must be first proved that he had any infants in his family, and that these were baptized; and if his household and the jailer’s are the same, it is certain that his household were such who were capable of having the word of God spoke to them, and who actually did believe in God. And if they were not the same, yet it is clear that this household of Stephanas consisted of adult, converted, and very useful persons; they were the firstfruits of Achaia, and had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, Co1 16:15.

Besides, that is, the above mentioned persons,

I know not whether I baptized any other; meaning at Corinth, for he might have baptized, and doubtless did baptize many more in other places, for anything that is here said to the contrary: of this he would not be positive; for though he might fully know, and well remember, on recollection, who, and how many, were baptized by him with his own hands there, yet he could not tell but that some persons might have removed thither, and become members of the church in that place, who had been baptized by him elsewhere,

(e) Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 48.

1 Corinthians 1:17

For Christ sent me not to baptize,.... Some think the apostle refers to his particular mission from Christ, Act 26:16 in which no mention is made of his administering the ordinance of baptism; but no doubt he had the same mission the rest of the apostles had, which was to baptize as well as preach; and indeed, if he had not been sent at all to baptize, it would have been unlawful for him to have administered baptism to any person whatever; but his sense is, that baptism was not the chief and principal business he was sent about; this was to be done mostly by those preachers of the word who travelled with him, or followed after him: he was not sent so much about this work,

but to preach the Gospel; for which he was most eminently qualified, had peculiar gifts for the discharge of it, and was greatly useful in it. This was what he was rather sent to do than the other, and this “not with wisdom of words”. Scholastic divinity, or the art of disputation, is by the (f) Karaites, a sect among the Jews, called , “wisdom of words”: this the apostle seems to refer to, and signifies he was not sent with, or to preach, with words of man’s wisdom, with human eloquence and oratory, with great swelling words of vanity, but in a plain, humble, modest manner; on which account the false teachers despised him, and endeavoured to bring his ministry into contempt with others: but this way and manner of preaching he chose for this reason,

lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect; that is, either lest men's ears and fancies should be so tickled and pleased with the eloquence of speech, the elegancy of diction, and accuracy of expression, the cadency of words, and beauty of the oration, with the manner, and not with the matter of preaching, and so the true use, end, and design of the doctrine of a crucified Christ be defeated; or lest the success of the ministry should be attributed to the force of enticing words, and the strength and persuasion of oratory, and not to the energy of divine power attending the doctrine of the cross,

(f) Sepher Cosri Orat. 5. Sign. 15, 16. fol. 277. 2. 278. 1.

1 Corinthians 1:18

For the preaching of the cross,.... Not of the Christian's cross, which he is to take up and bear for the sake of Christ; though this is a doctrine taught by Christ, and his apostles, and found to be true by the saints in all ages; and is what is had in great aversion and contempt, being very disagreeable to the natural man: but of the cross of Christ, the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ; or the doctrine of peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, and of righteousness, pardon, atonement, and satisfaction by the offering up of himself upon it as a sacrifice for sin, is here intended; and which

is foolishness in the esteem of many; and that because man's wisdom has no hand either in forming the scheme of it, or in the discovery of it to the sons of men; and besides, being revealed, it is very disagreeable to the carnal reason of man. This way of preaching is very impolite and unfashionable, and therefore despised; it is a doctrine which is not received by the wise and learned, but has been in all ages loaded with reproach, stigmatized either as a novel or licentious doctrine, and attended with persecution; though the only doctrine God owns for conversion, which administers comfort to distressed souls, and is food for the faith of believers; yea, it is a display of the highest wisdom; is what angels approve of, and desire to look into; is wiser than the wisdom of men; it has made foolish the wisdom of this world, and is what is only able to make a man wise unto salvation; and yet this doctrine is accounted foolish, yea foolishness itself; but to whom is it so?

to them that perish. All mankind are in a lost and perishing condition, by reason of sin, and want of righteousness. There are some who shall not perish; the Father has chose them unto salvation, the Son has redeemed them, and the Spirit sanctifies them; but there are others who do perish in their sins; wicked and ungodly men, Carried away with their own lusts and blinded by Satan, the god of this world: these are they that are lost, to whom the Gospel is hid, and who judge it foolishness; but their judgment of it is not to be regarded, being no more capable to judge of the glory and wisdom of the Gospel, than a blind man is of colours: but unto us which are saved; who are chosen in Christ unto salvation; whose persons and grace are secured in Christ, and in the everlasting covenant; for whom Christ has wrought out salvation; and to whom it is applied by the Spirit of God; and who are kept unto the full enjoyment of it by divine grace: to thest is the power of God; organically or instrumentally; it being the means of quickening them when dead in sin, of enlightening their dark minds, of unstopping their deaf ears, of softening their hard hearts, and of enemies making them friends to God, Christ, and his people: and it is likewise so declaratively, there being a wonderful display of the power of God in the ministration of it; as may be seen when observed who were the first preachers of it, men of no figure in life, of no education, illiterate mechanics, very mean and abject; into these earthen vessels were put the treasure of the Gospel, that the excellency of the power might appear to be of God, and not man; as also the doctrine they preached, a crucified Christ, disagreeable to the wisdom of men; the manner in which they spread it, not by force of

arms, by carnal weapons, but spiritual ones; moreover, the opposition they met with from rabbins, philosophers, princes, kings, and emperors, and all the states and powers of the world; and yet in how short a time, maugre all opposition, did they carry the Gospel throughout the whole world, to the conversion of millions of souls, and the planting of churches everywhere; and which Gospel has continued and increased, notwithstanding the efforts of persecutors and false teachers, and all the power and artifice of men and devils; all which can be attributed to nothing else but the mighty power of God: add to this, that the Gospel is the power of God in the esteem of the saints, who know it to be so by inward experience; they have felt the power of it on their hearts; it has wrought effectually in them, and therefore they are the best judges, and are capable of giving the best account of it.

1 Corinthians 1:19

As it is written,... The passage referred to is in Isa 29:14 where it is read, “the wisdom of their wise men shall perish; and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid”; and is rendered by the Septuagint, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will hide the understanding of the prudent”: which is much the same with the apostle’s version of it: and the sense of the prophecy is, that in the times of the Messiah, under the Gospel dispensation, the mysteries of grace should be hid from the wise rabbins among the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, who, with all their sagacity, parts, and learning, would not be able to comprehend the doctrines of the Gospel; by these their wisdom and understanding would be nonplussed, so that they would reject them as foolishness, because their carnal reason could not reach them; which shows what an infatuation they were given up to: and if this should be the case, as it was with the wise and learned philosophers among the Gentiles, it need not be wondered at; it was what was foretold in prophecy concerning the Jews, who had the oracles of God, and the advantage of a divine revelation; and therefore it need not be stumbling to them that are saved, that the Gospel should meet with so much scorn and contempt among them that perish in the Gentile world. These words are very pertinently cited by the apostle, since they are acknowledged by the Jews themselves to signify the departure of wisdom from the wise men of Israel, in the times of the destruction of the temple, as Jarchi on the place observes.

1 Corinthians 1:20

Where is the wise? where is the Scribe?... These are the apostle’s own words; though he may allude to Isa 33:18 where there are some phrases much like these, but the meaning is very different. Though they are interpreted by the Talmudists (g) in a sense pretty near the apostle’s; for thus they remark upon them,

“where is the Scribe? he that counts all the letters which are in the law; “where is the receiver, or weigher?” who weighs all the light and heavy things in the law; “where is he that counted the towers?” he who counts, or teaches the three hundred traditions:

so that they understand these of their Scribes and Misnic doctors, and such that are curious searchers into the hidden senses of Scripture. The apostle also seems to allude to a distinction that obtained among the Jews, of wise men, Scribes, and mystical interpreters of the word. They had their “wise men”, which was a general name for men of learning and knowledge; and their “Scribes”, who interpreted the law in the literal and grammatical sense; and their “preachers, or disputers”, who diligently searched into the hidden meaning of the Scriptures, and sought for and delivered out the mystical and allegorical sense of them, and who used to dispute about them in their schools. These

three are sometimes to be met with together, and as distinct from each other. They say (h) that “God showed to the first man every generation, “and its expounders, or disputers”; and every generation, “and its wise men”; and every generation, “and its Scribes.”

And the apostle’s sense is, “where is the wise?” the man that boasts of his superior wisdom and knowledge in the things of nature, whether among the Jews or Gentiles; “where is the Scribe?” the letter learned man, who takes upon him to give the literal sense of the law,

where is the disputer of this world? the Jewish world, who pretends to the knowledge of the more abstruse and secret senses of Scripture; where are these men? they are not to be found among those that God employs in the ministration of the Gospel; he has laid them aside, and chosen others, where are they? what use have they been of to men? are men under their instructions the better, either in principle or practice? where are the thousands that have been turned to God by their wisdom, as can be shown by the faithful ministers of the Gospel? where are they? let them come and produce their cause, and bring forth their strong reasons against the Gospel they account foolishness, and try if these will stand before its superior power and wisdom; where are they? are they not fools, with all their wisdom and learning? The words may be rendered, “where is the searcher, or inquirer of this world?” and may design the same sort of persons whom the Jews call , “the wise men of search, or inquiry” (i), and sometimes , “the men of search, or inquiry” (k); by whom they seem to intend such who search into the nature of things, who study natural philosophy,

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? by bringing in the Gospel scheme, which the men of the world, the greatest wits in it, are not able to understand; by laying their wisdom aside as useless in the business of salvation; by showing it to be vain and empty, and of no service in things spiritual and divine; by detecting, through the ministration of the Gospel, the sophisms of men, and showing that the schemes both Jews and Gentiles give into abound with folly, with stupid notions, and are full of gross errors and fatal mistakes,

(g) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. & Chagiga, fol. 15. 2. (h) Bereshit Rabba Parash. 24. fol. 21. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2. (i) Kimchi in Sopher Shorashim, rad. & in Psal. cii. 26. (k) Aben Ezra in Psal. civ. 29.

1 Corinthians 1:21

For after that in the wisdom of God,.... These words contain a reason proving the infatuation of men, with respect to “the wisdom of God”; by which may be meant either Christ, who is the wisdom of God, was in the world, and yet the world of the Jews, and their chief Rabbins among them, with all their wisdom, neither knew him, nor God his Father; or the Gospel, which is also so called, and though this was come, both into the Jewish and Gentile world, yet neither of them, by their natural wisdom, knew the God of grace, so manifestly revealed in it; or rather the works of creation, in which there is such a visible display of the wisdom of God: yet “the world by wisdom knew not God”; the author of them: the Gentiles knew him not in any spiritual and saving manner, as in Christ, or the God of all grace; yea, they knew him not as the God of nature to be the one, only, true God; they knew him not so as to glorify him as God, or to worship him in a right way and manner: wherefore,

it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; it was his purpose and decree within himself; it was his sovereign good will and pleasure; it was what he, without any motion

from, or merit in the creature, resolved of himself from all eternity that he would “save”, not the wise man, the Scribe, the disputer of this world, the rationalist, the talker, nor the worker, but “them that believe” in his Son; that look unto him, venture on him, and commit the care and keeping of their souls to him, however weak, mean, and despicable they may otherwise be; or whether they believe with a weak, or a strong faith, so be it, it is but true: the Ethiopic version reads, “that believe in this foolish doctrine”; and this he determined to do, and did, “by the foolishness of preaching”; or by that sort of preaching, which both for the matter of it, Christ, that itself, and the manner of it, the world reckons foolishness; and which are the things of the Father’s grace in election, of the Son’s grace in redemption, and the Spirit’s in regeneration: so the wise men of the world, with all their wisdom, are left ignorant of God, and perish in their sins, whilst the Gospel they despise is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe in Christ; this, through efficacious grace, becomes the means of regenerating and quickening men, showing them their need of salvation, and where it is, and of working faith in them to look to Christ for it.

1 Corinthians 1:22

For the Jews require a sign,.... The Jews had always been used to miracles, in confirmation of the mission of the prophets sent unto them, and therefore insisted on a sign proving Jesus to be the true Messiah; except signs and wonders were wrought, they would not believe; and though miracles were wrought in great numbers, and such as never man did, they remained incredulous, and persisted in demanding a sign from heaven, and in their own way; and it was told them that no other sign should be given them, but that of the prophet Jonah, by which was signified the resurrection of Christ from the dead; this was given them, and yet they believed not, but went on to require a sign still; nothing but miracles would do with them, and they must be such as they themselves pleased: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read “signs”, in the plural number:

and the Greeks seek after wisdom; the wisdom of the world, natural wisdom, philosophy, the reason of things, the flowers of rhetoric, the ornaments of speech, the beauties of oratory, the justness of style and diction; as for doctrines they regarded none, but such as they could comprehend with, and account for by their carnal reason, everything else they despised and exploded. Hence we often read (l) of, “the Grecian wisdom”, or wisdom of the Greeks; which, the Jews say (m), lay in metaphors and dark sayings, which were not understood but by them that were used to it; the study of it was forbidden by them, though some of their Rabbins were conversant with it (n),

(l) T. Bab Menachot, fol 99. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. (m) Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 14. (n) Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 25. 1. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 3. fol. 31. 2.

1 Corinthians 1:23

But we preach Christ crucified,.... Regardless of the sentiments and opinions of Jews and Gentiles, of what the one required and the other sought after; and in opposition to all their senseless and groundless cavils, the apostle and his fellow ministers continued preaching the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, and him only; though it was

unto the Jews a stumblingblock; as was prophesied it should be, and as it came to pass; for they not only stumbled at the meanness of his birth, parentage, and education, at his ministry, miracles, company and audience; but especially at his sufferings and death: it was a stumbling to them that he

should die at all, for they understood out of their law, that Christ should abide for ever; and it was more so that he should die the death of the cross, by which, according to their law, he appeared to be accursed; and most of all this was stumbling to them, because they expected a temporal kingdom to be set up by him:

and unto the Greeks foolishness; as that the Son of God should be crucified; that riches should come through his poverty, and men be brought to a kingdom and glory through one so mean and abject; that there should be life for men in his death, and salvation through his crucifixion, or the shameful death of the cross; that blessings should come through his being made a curse; and that his death should be an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men; and that justification should be by one that was condemned; and peace and pardon should be by his blood; and that he should be raised again from the dead. These things were the subject of their ridicule and banter, and, in their opinion, deserved rather to be laughed at than credited. The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate and all the Oriental versions, read, “unto the Gentiles”.

1 Corinthians 1:24

But unto them which are called,... Effectually, by the grace of God, not merely externally, but internally; these have other sentiments of Christ, and the doctrine of salvation by him; for being called out of darkness, and savingly illuminated by the Spirit of God, they see wisdom, beauty, glory, excellency, and suitableness in Christ, and in his Gospel; and having felt the power of it upon their souls, with them,

both Jews and Greeks, of whatsoever nation they be, and whatsoever their prejudices have been, Christ, to them is,

the power of God, and the wisdom of God: he is “the power of God”; this is opposed to the Jews who stumbled at his weakness, his sufferings and death, even the death of the cross; and is to be understood of him, not as God, in which sense he is Mighty, yea, the Almighty, and which appears by his works of creation and providence; but as Mediator, and of him in his low and mean estate, and even when he was crucified through weakness; in respect to that very thing in which he was weakness, and so stumbling, to others, he is to them that are called the power of God; as is clear by his bearing all the sins of his people in his own body, on the tree, the cross whereon he was crucified, and all the punishment due thereunto; and yet he failed not, nor was he discouraged, nor did he give out, till he had satisfied law and justice perfectly, and made a full end of sin, and an entire reconciliation for iniquity; as also by destroying, by his death, the devil, who had the power of death, and spoiling all his principalities and powers, triumphing over them on his cross; by redeeming his people from all their sins, and the curse of the law, and from him that was stronger than they; by abolishing death, and at last raising himself from the dead; all which show him, even when and “though” crucified, to be the power of God, or to be possessed of Almighty power; for these are things which a mere creature could never have done: and he is “the wisdom of God”, also, in the account of these persons; and which likewise is to be understood, it being opposed to the opinions the Greeks had of him, not of him as the essential wisdom of God, as he is the wise Creator and Governor of the universe; but of him as Mediator, and in respect to that for which the Greeks accounted him foolishness: for in redemption and salvation by a crucified Christ, God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence: there is in this article a high display of the wisdom of God; for hereby justice was satisfied in that nature which sinned, and Satan destroyed in that nature which he himself had been the ruin

of; hereby sin was condemned, and yet the sinner saved; pardon and justification came to be in a way of grace, and yet of strict justice; all the divine perfections harmonize, and are glorified, and God has hereby executed his wise designs and counsels of old; yea, even the wisdom of God is seen in Christ's dying the death of the cross, whereby he appeared to be made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, and that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us.

1 Corinthians 1:25

Because the foolishness of God,... Not that there is any such thing as "foolishness" in God, nor the least degree of weakness in him; but the apostle means that which the men of the world esteem so, and therefore, by an ironical concession, calls it by those names; by which is intended either Christ, who, as crucified, is counted foolishness; yet he "is wiser than men": yea, even than Solomon, who was wiser than all men besides; Christ is greater than he in wisdom, having all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him; yea, in redemption by the blood of his cross, which is accounted such an egregious instance of folly, there is such a display of wisdom as surpasses all the wisdom of men and angels: and though he is, as crucified, esteemed as

the weakness of God, yet in this respect,

is stronger than men; stronger than the strong man armed; and has done that by his own arm, has brought salvation for his people, which neither men nor angels could ever have done: or all this may be understood of the Gospel of Christ, which is condemned as folly and weakness, and yet has infinitely more wisdom in it, than is to be found in the best concerted schemes of the wisest philosophers; and has had a greater influence on the minds and manners of men than theirs ever had; it is the manifold wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. Moreover, these words may be applied to the saints, called in Co1 1:27.

the foolish and weak things of the world; and yet even these, in the business of salvation, how foolish soever they may be in other respects, are wiser than the wisest of men destitute of the grace of God; and however weak they are in themselves, in their own esteem, and in the account of others, they are able to do and suffer such things, through the strength of Christ that no other men in the world are able to perform or endure. The phrases here used seem to be a sort of proverbial ones; and the sense of them is, that whatever, in things divine and spiritual, has the appearance of folly and weakness, or is judged to be so by carnal men, is wiser and stronger not only than the wisdom and strength of men, but than men themselves with all their wisdom and strength. It is very likely, that proverbial expressions of this kind, with a little alteration, were used by the Jews. The advice the young men gave to Rehoboam is thus paraphrased by the Targumist (o), , "my weakness is stronger than the strength of my father"; which is very near the same with the last clause of this verse,

(o) In 2 Chron. x. 10.

1 Corinthians 1:26

For ye see your calling, brethren,... That is, those that were called by the grace of God among them; for as circumcision and uncircumcision stand for circumcised and uncircumcised persons, and election for elect persons, and righteousness for righteous persons, Rom 3:30 so here "calling" designs men called by grace; the manner of whose calling, and what sort of persons they were, the apostle

signifies, they did or might, or ought, to see, observe, and consider; for respect is here had, not, as some have thought, to the first preachers of the Gospel, who were mechanics, fishermen, illiterate persons, very mean and despicable; but to the members of the church at Corinth, whether public preachers, or private members. The city of Corinth had in it many noble families, of high birth and quality, abounded with learned philosophers and rich merchants; and yet it was easy to be seen,

how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. The apostle does not say that there were none of the wise, the mighty, and noble called; for there were Crispus, and Sosthenes, rulers of the synagogue, and Gains a rich hospitable man, and Erastus the chamberlain of the city, and it may be some others of a like or better figure in life; but there were not many of them; instances of this kind are but few recorded in the Scripture; as Joseph of Arimathea a rich counsellor, Paulus Sergius a Roman deputy, Dionysius the Areopagite, and some in Caesar's palace; which show that nobility, riches, and learning, as they do not at all contribute towards a man's salvation, so neither can they hinder it where grace takes place; but, generally speaking, God has thought fit, for wise reasons, to choose and call persons of different characters.

1 Corinthians 1:27

co1 1:27

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world,.... So the Jews, in distinction from their wise Rabbins and doctors, call others, , "the fools of the world" (p); the persons whom God made choice of from all eternity, as appears by his calling them in time, are such who with respect to the wisdom of the world are foolish; have not those natural parts and abilities, that sagacity and penetration in things natural and civil, that knowledge and learning which many others have; and are therefore esteemed foolish by the men of the world, in comparison of whom; who are the wise and prudent, they are but babes: and God's end in his choice of them, and calling them, is

to confound the wise; who sooner or later will be brought to shame and confusion, to see such idiots, as they took them to be, wiser than they in the business of salvation; having been directed and influenced by divine grace to choose that good part, which shall never be taken from them, when they will be stripped of their nobility, wealth, and wisdom; to see these men go into the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves shut out:

and God hath chosen the weak things of the world; who cannot boast of their birth and pedigree, of their ancient and illustrious families; have no titles of honour to aggrandize them, nor estates, possessions, and worldly substance to support themselves with; and this he has done,

to confound the things which are mighty; as Haman was by the advancement of Mordecai. It will be to the utter confusion of the rich and mighty, to see persons of the lowest class in life made kings and priests by Christ, set among princes, and upon the throne of glory; and they themselves fleeing, and calling to the mountains to fall upon them, and cover them from the sight of him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb,

(p) Zohar in Numb. fol. 63. 3. & 65. 4.

1 Corinthians 1:28

And base things of the world,... Who are reckoned the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; men of mean birth, education, and business of life:

and things that are despised; and set at nought, as poor persons generally are; yet God

hath chosen them; even the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom:

yea, and things which are not; some think the Gentiles are here intended, who by the Jews are called “things that are not”: as in the apocryphal books:

“O Lord, give not thy sceptre unto “them that be nothing”, and let them not laugh at our fall; but turn their device upon themselves, and make him an example, that hath begun this against us.” Est 14:11

“56 As for the other people, which also come of Adam, thou hast said that “they are nothing”, but be like unto spittle: and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel. 57 And now, O Lord, behold, these heathen, which have ever been “reputed as nothing”, have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us.” (2 Esdras 6)

See Gill on Rom 4:17 for note on non-entities, or such who are not in being, are meant; but who are not accounted of, or are reckoned as nothing; and these the Lord calls by his grace, as a fruit and evidence of electing love:

to bring to nought things that are; who, on the account of their noble birth, large possessions, and high attainments in knowledge and learning, thought themselves something; all which will one day be abolished, and will stand them in no stead with regard to future happiness and glory. The Jews (q) have a saying quite contrary to all this, that “the Shekinah, or presence of God, does not dwell on any but upon a wise man, a mighty man, and a rich man.

(q) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 92. 1.

1 Corinthians 1:29

That no flesh should glory in his presence. That is, “in the presence of God”, as some copies, and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read; not in their blood, birth, families, lineage, and natural descent; nor in their might, power, and dominion; nor in their riches, wealth, and substance; nor in their wisdom, learning, and parts: for however these may be gloried in before men, yet not before God. These are of no account with him, nor will they be regarded by him, or men on account of them; and he has taken a method in choosing and calling the reverse of these, to stain the glory of all flesh, that no man may attribute his salvation to any thing of the creature, but wholly to the sovereign grace and good pleasure of God.

1 Corinthians 1:30

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,... These words, as they direct to the proper object of glorying, Christ, so they show the high honour the called ones are brought to in and through Christ, and are opposed to their outward meanness, folly, weakness, poverty, and contempt. They are first of God the Father, of his own rich free grace and goodness, without any regard to any motive, merit, or desert of

theirs, put into Christ by electing grace, in whom they are preserved and blessed; and which is their original secret being in him; and is made manifest by regenerating grace, by their being made new creatures; which also is not owing to their blood, or to the will of the flesh, or to the will of man, but to God and his free favour in Christ: and in consequence of their being in Christ, as their head and representative, he becomes all to them, which is here expressed,

who of God is made unto us wisdom. Though they are foolish creatures in their own and the world's esteem, yet Christ is their wisdom; he is so "efficiently", the author and cause of all that spiritual wisdom and understanding in divine things they are possessed of; he is so "objectively", their highest wisdom lying in the knowledge of his person, blood, and righteousness, of interest in him, and salvation by him; with which knowledge eternal life is connected: and he is so "representatively"; he is their head, in whom all their wisdom lies; he acts for them as their wisdom to God, he is their Counsellor, their Advocate, who pleads and intercedes for them, and as their wisdom to men, and gives them a mouth and wisdom which their adversaries are not able to gainsay; and having the tongue of the learned, he speaks a word in season to themselves, when weary, distressed, and disconsolate, and for them in the court of heaven; he is their wisdom, to direct their paths, to guide them with his counsel, in the way they should go, safe to his kingdom and glory:

and righteousness. He is the "author" of righteousness; he has wrought out and brought in one for them, which is well pleasing to God, satisfying to his justice, by which his law is magnified and made honourable; which justifies from all sin, and discharges from all condemnation, is everlasting, and will answer for them in a time to come; this he has brought in by the holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, and by his sufferings and death: and which is "subjectively" in him, not in themselves; nor does it lie in any thing wrought in them, or done by them; but in him as their head and representative, who by "imputation" is made righteousness to them; and they the same way are made the righteousness of God in him; or in other words, this righteousness, by an act of the Father's grace, is imputed, reckoned, and accounted to them as their justifying righteousness:

and sanctification; Christ is the sanctification of his people, through the constitution of God, the imputation of the holiness of his nature, the merits of his blood, and the efficacy of his grace, he is so "federally" and "representatively"; he is their covenant head, and has all covenant grace in his hands for them, and so the whole stock and fund of holiness, which is communicated to them in all ages, until the perfection of it in every saint: this is sanctification in Christ, which differs from sanctification in them in these things; in him it is as the cause, in them as the effect; in him as its fountain, in them as the stream; in him it is complete, in them it is imperfect for the present: and they have it by virtue of union to him; sanctification in Christ can be of no avail to any, unless it is derived from him to them; so that this sanctification in Christ does not render the sanctification of the Spirit unnecessary, but includes it, and secures it: likewise Christ is the sanctification of his people "by imputation", as the holiness of his human nature is, together with his obedience and sufferings, imputed to them for their justification; Christ assumed an holy human nature, the holiness of it was not merely a qualification for his office as a Saviour, or what made his actions and sufferings in that nature significant and useful, or is exemplary to men; but is a branch of the saints justification before God: the law required an holy nature, theirs is not holy; Christ has assumed one not for, himself, but for them, and so is the end of the law in all respects: and this may be greatly designed in the whole of this passage; "wisdom" may stand in general for the wise scheme of justification, as it is laid in Christ; "sanctification" may intend the holiness of his nature; "righteousness" the obedience of his life; and "redemption" his sufferings and death, by which it is obtained: but then justification and

sanctification are not to be confounded; they are two distinct things, and have their proper uses and effects; sanctification in the saints does not justify, or justification sanctify; the one respects the power and being of sin, the other the guilt of it. Moreover, Christ is the sanctification of his people “meritoriously”; through the shedding of his blood, whereby he has sanctified them, that is, expiated their sins, and made full atonement for them; see Heb 10:10. Once more, he is their sanctification “efficiently”; by his Spirit, as the author, and by his word, as the means; he is the source of all holiness, it all comes from him, and is wrought by his Spirit in the heart; which lies in filling the understanding with spiritual light and knowledge; the mind with a sense of sin, and a detestation of it; the heart with the fear of God; the affections with love to divine objects and things; the will with submission and resignation to the will of God in all respects; and is exercised in living a life of faith on Christ, and in living soberly, righteously, and godly, before God and man: and this, though imperfect now, will be perfected from and by Christ, without which it is impossible to see the Lord:

and redemption; which he is by the appointment of his Father, being foreordained to it before the foundation of the world; and this sense of the word made will agree with every clause in the text; and he is so efficiently, having obtained eternal redemption from sin, Satan, the law, and this present evil world, for his people; and “subjectively”, it being in him, and every other blessing which is either a part of it, and comes through it, or is dependent on it, as justification, adoption, and remission of sins. Moreover, this may have respect not only to redemption past, which is obtained by Christ; but to that which draws near, the saints are waiting for, and to which they are sealed up by the Spirit of God; even their redemption and deliverance from very being of sin, from all sorrow and sufferings, from death and the grave, and everything that is afflicting and distressing.

1 Corinthians 1:31

That, according as it is written,.... Jer 9:23.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord; not in his own wisdom, riches, and strength; but in Christ, as his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 2

The apostle, in this chapter, pursues the same argument as before, that the Gospel needed not the wisdom and art of men: this he illustrates by his own example; and then he extols the Gospel above all the wisdom of men; and observes how it comes to be made known to men, even by the Spirit of God: hence it follows, that it is to be taught in his words, and not in the words of men; and that it can be only known and judged of by the spiritual, and not by the natural man. He instances in himself, and in his own ministry, when at Corinth, where he preached the Gospel in a plain and simple manner, without using the ornaments of speech, and human wisdom, Co1 2:1 his reason was, because he had determined with himself to preach not himself, but a crucified Christ, Co1 2:2. His manner of behaviour is more largely declared, Co1 2:3 that he was so far from being elated with his human literature, and priding himself with that, and making use of it in an ostentatious way, that he was attended with much weakness, fear, and trembling; and his discourses were not adorned with the flowers of rhetoric, but were delivered with the power, evidence, and demonstration of the Spirit, Co1 2:4. And his end and view in this method of preaching were, that the faith of his hearers should not be ascribed to human wisdom, but to a divine power, Co1 2:5 but lest the Gospel should be thought meanly and contemptibly of, because of the plain dress in which it appeared, the apostle

affirms it to be the highest wisdom, as those who had the most perfect knowledge of it could attest; a wisdom superior to the wisdom of this world, or of its princes, since that comes to nothing, Co1 2:6 the excellency of which he expresses by various epithets, as the wisdom of God, mysterious wisdom, hidden wisdom, ancient wisdom, ordained before the world began, for the glory of the saints, Co1 2:7 a wisdom unknown to the princes of the world, who otherwise would not have been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, Co1 2:8 and that this far exceeds the capacity of men, and could never have been found out by them, he proves, Co1 2:9 by a testimony out of Isa 64:4 and then proceeds to show how it comes to be known by any of the sons of men, that it is by the revelation of the Spirit of God, Co1 2:10 which is illustrated by the nature of the spirit of man within him, which only knows the things of a man; so in like manner only the Spirit of God knows the things of God, and can make them known to others, Co1 2:11. And in this way he observes, that he and others became acquainted with these things; namely, by receiving not the spirit of the world, which at most could only have taught them the wisdom of the world, but the Spirit of God, whereby they knew their interest in the blessings of free grace, published in the Gospel, Co1 2:12. And seeing the Gospel is made known by the Spirit of God, it should be delivered, not in the words of man's wisdom, but in the words of the Holy Spirit, as the apostle affirms he and other ministers did deliver it, returning to his former argument, Co1 2:13. And also it follows from hence, that the things of the Gospel, which the Spirit reveals, cannot be known and received by the natural man, who has no discerning of them, and so no value for them, Co1 2:14 and can only be discerned, judged, and approved of by spiritual men, Co1 2:15 and who are not to be judged by natural and carnal men, because they have not the mind of Christ, and so cannot instruct them; but spiritual men have it, such as the apostle and others, Co1 2:16.

1 Corinthians 2:1

And I, brethren, when I came to you,.... This account the apostle gives of himself is occasioned, either by what he had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, concerning the choice God has made of the foolish, weak, base, and despicable things of the world, and of his calling them by his grace both to fellowship with the saints in common, and therefore he accommodated his ministry unto them, and in particular to the ministry of the word, of which he himself was a like instance and an example; or else by what he had declared in Co1 1:17 of the same chapter, that he was sent to preach the Gospel,

not with wisdom of words; which he here reassumes, and affirms agreeably, that when he first came to Corinth, he

came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom; for though he was not only versed in Jewish learning, being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but had also a good share of Grecian literature, and was capable, upon proper occasions, to cite the Greek poets, as he does Aratus, Act 17:28 and Menander, Tit 1:12 and so could, had he thought fit, have adorned his discourses with pompous language, with the flowers of rhetoric, and the eloquence of the Grecians; yet he chose not such a high and florid style, and which savoured so much of human wisdom and art; for the subject he treated of required no such dress, nor any great swelling words of vanity, or a bombast style to set it off, and gain the applause and assent of men: for what he delivered were plain matters of fact, attested by God himself,

declaring unto you the testimony of God; that is, the Gospel, which bears a testimony to the love,

grace, and mercy of God, his kindness and good will to the sons of men, in giving and sending his only begotten Son to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them; and in which God bears a testimony of his Son, of his sonship, deity, mediation, incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, of his resurrection, ascension to heaven, session at his right hand, intercession for his people, and his second coming to judgment, and of eternal life and salvation by him. All which being matter of fact, and depending upon the witness of God, which is greater than that of men, needed no art nor oratory of men to recommend it: it was enough in plain words, and easy language, to declare it, with the evidence by which it was supported. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “the mystery” of God: and so the Syriac version, “the mystery of God” one of Stephens’s copies reads, “the mystery of Christ”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “the testimony of Christ”.

1 Corinthians 2:2

For I determined not to know anything among you,.... This was a resolution the apostle entered into before he came among them, that though he was well versed in human literature, and had a large compass of knowledge in the things of nature, yet would make known nothing else unto them, or make anything else the subject of his ministry,

save Christ, and him crucified: he had a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ himself, and which he valued above all things else; and this qualified him to make him known to others; and which knowledge he was very willing and ready to communicate by preaching the Gospel, which is the means of making known Christ as God’s salvation to the souls of men; and on this subject he chiefly insisted, and in which he took great delight and pleasure; he made known the things respecting the person of Christ, as that he was God, the Son of God, and truly man. God and man in one person; the things respecting his office, as that he was the Messiah, the mediator, prophet, priest, and King, the head, husband, Saviour, and Redeemer of his church and people; and the things respecting his work as such, and the blessings of grace procured by him; as that justification is by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, peace, reconciliation, and atonement by his sacrifice, and salvation alone and entirely by him. His determination was to preach none but Christ; not himself, nor man; nor the power and purity of human nature, the free will and works of the creature, but to exclude all and everything from being partners with Christ in the business of salvation. This was the doctrine he chose in the first place, and principally, to insist upon, even salvation by Christ, and him, as

crucified: that which was the greatest offence to others was the most delightful to him, because salvation comes through and by the cross of Christ; and he dwelt upon this, and determined to do so; it being most for the glory of Christ, and what was owned for the conversion of sinners, the comfort of distressed minds, and is suitable food for faith, as he knew by his own experience.

1 Corinthians 2:3

And I was with you in weakness,.... Meaning either the weakness of his bodily presence, the contemptibleness of his voice, and the mean figure he made as a preacher among them, both with respect to the matter and manner of his ministry in the eyes of many; or his lowly and humble deportment among them, not exerting the power and authority Christ had given him as an apostle; but choosing rather to work with his own hands, as he did at Corinth, to minister to his own necessities, and those of others; or the many persecutions which he endured there for the sake of preaching a crucified Christ; and which he sometimes calls “infirmities”; see Co2 12:9 wherefore it is

added,

and in fear, and in much trembling: not only on account of the greatness and awfulness of the work in which he was engaged, and lest the souls he ministered unto should be drawn aside from the truth, and into a sinful compliance; but because of the violence of men against him, threatening his life, and lying in wait for it: hence, the Lord, to encourage him, spake in a vision to him, and bid him not be afraid, but boldly preach his Gospel, and not be silent; assuring him of his presence, and that no man should set on him to hurt him, for he had many chosen vessels there to call by his grace through his ministry, Act 18:9 which no doubt greatly served to remove the fears and tremor that attended him.

1 Corinthians 2:4

And my speech, and my preaching,.... As he determined, so he acted. As the subject matter of his ministry was not any of the liberal arts and sciences, or the philosophy and dry morality of the Gentiles, but salvation by a crucified Christ; so his style, his diction, his language used in preaching,

was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; with technical words, words of art, contrived by human wisdom to captivate the affections; and with bare probable arguments only, a show of reason to persuade the mind to an assent, when nothing solid and substantial is advanced, only a run of words artfully put together, without any strength of argument in them; a method used by the false teachers, and which the apostle here strikes at, and tacitly condemns:

but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; partly by making use of solid proofs out of the writings of the Old Testament, indited by the Spirit of God, and which amounted to a demonstration of the truths he delivered; and partly by signs, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, those extraordinary instances of divine power, which greatly confirmed the doctrines he preached: and besides all these, the Spirit of God wonderfully assisted him in his work, both as to words and matter; directing him, what to say, and in what form, in words, not which human wisdom taught, but which the Holy Ghost taught; and accompanying his ministry with his power, to the conversion, comfort, edification, and salvation of many.

1 Corinthians 2:5

That your faith should not stand,.... “Or be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”. The Spirit of God directed him, and he under his influence chose, and by his assistance pursued this way of preaching, with this view, and for this reason, that faith in Christ, and in the doctrines of his Gospel, which comes by hearing, might not be attributed to the force of human eloquence and oratory; or stand upon so sandy a foundation, as that which might, if that was the case, be puffed away by a superior flow and force of words; but that it might be ascribed, as it ought to be, to almighty power, stand in it, be supported by it, and at last be finished and fulfilled with it.

1 Corinthians 2:6

Howbeit we speak wisdom,.... Though the wise philosophers among the Gentiles accounted the Gospel foolishness; and though the apostle, by an ironical concession, had called the ministry of it the foolishness of preaching, and the foolishness of God, and had thought best, for wise reasons, to deliver it in a plain and simple manner, without the embellishments of human wisdom; yet he

vindicates it from the charge of folly: it was not folly, but wisdom, which he and his fellow ministers preached, and that of the highest kind, as appears from what follows. Though it was not esteemed so by all men, yet

among, or with

them that are perfect; adult, at age, opposed to babes and children; such who have their understandings enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation; who have their senses exercised to discern between divine and human wisdom; and who are perfect in a comparative sense, having more spiritual knowledge and understanding than others; for none, in the present state of things, are absolutely perfect in knowledge; they that know most, know but in part: now to such the Gospel and the doctrines of it appear to be the highest wisdom; for the apostle's sense is not that he and other Gospel ministers preached the more sublime doctrines of it to a select set of persons that had more judgment and a better understanding of things than others: if this could be thought to be the apostle's meaning, he might be supposed to allude to a custom among the Jews, not to deliver the sublime things of the law, but to persons so and so qualified.

"Says R. Ame (r), they do not deliver the secrets of the law, but to him who has the five things or characters in Isa 3:3"

So they did not suffer the first chapter of Genesis and the visions of Ezekiel to be read until thirty years of age (s); and from them the Pythagoreans took their notion of not declaring their mysteries but to "perfect ones", the word here used (t); but the apostle's sense is, that to such that were perfect, and even to everyone that had the least degree of spiritual knowledge, the Gospel was wisdom. Some refer this clause not to persons, but things; and so the Arabic version reads it, "we speak wisdom concerning things that are perfect"; as the things of the Gospel are, such as a plenteous redemption, perfect righteousness, full pardon, plenary satisfaction, and complete salvation and happiness:

yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: meaning not the idolatry, superstition, curious and magic arts introduced by demons, which principalities and powers, with all their works, are spoiled and destroyed by Christ; but either the political wisdom and crafty schemes of the civil governors of the world, against Christ and his Gospel, who were by this time most, if not all of them, dead; or the vain philosophy of the wise and learned among the Gentiles, who every day were less and less in vogue, through the quick and powerful spread of the Gospel; or rather the highest pitch of wisdom and knowledge in divine things, which the doctors and Rabbins among the Jews attained to in the age before the Messiah's coming; called "this world" in distinction from the times of the Messiah, which in Jewish language was, "the world to come", as Dr. Lightfoot observes; who with all their wisdom were confounded and brought to nought by the superior wisdom of the Gospel.

(r) T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 1. (s) Hieron. prefat. in Ezekiel & ad Paulin. Tom. III. fol. 3. 2. (t) Hierocles in Pythag. Carmin. p. 302.

1 Corinthians 2:7

But we speak the wisdom of God,... Not of men, not of the wise politicians, the learned philosophers and Rabbins; that which human wisdom has no hand in forming, nor in revealing, nor in

propagating, and which is disliked and disapproved of by it: the Gospel is the sole produce of divine wisdom, and in which there is a glorious display of it; even in those doctrines which are the most charged with folly, as salvation by a crucified Christ, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, satisfaction by his sacrifice, &c.

in a mystery; it is mysterious wisdom. The Gospel is full of mysteries; there is the mystery of God, of a trinity of persons in the divine essence; the mystery of Christ, of his person, as God manifest in the flesh, of his divine sonship, and incarnation in the womb of a virgin; the mystery of the Spirit's grace in regeneration, of the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the same body, the change of living saints at Christ's coming, with many others:

even the hidden wisdom; the Gospel lay hid in God, in the thoughts of his heart, in the deep things of his mind, the counsels of his will, and purposes of his grace; it was hid in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; it was hid under the types and shadows of the ceremonial law; and is hid in the Scriptures, which must be diligently searched for it, as for hidden treasures. It was hid from angels, and from Adam, until revealed; it was in some measure hid from the Jews under the former dispensation, to whom it was made known; and in some sense from believers, under the present dispensation, who as yet know it but in part; and is entirely hid from natural men, even from the most wise and prudent among them. This epithet expresses the preciousness, secrecy, and also security of the Gospel; hidden things being commonly of value, and being kept secret, are also safe; hidden and secret wisdom has been always esteemed, both by Greeks and Jews: hence that saying (u) of the latter,

“he that would be rich in learning of the law, “and that wisdom which is hidden”, in a hidden and secret place, should hide and secrete himself from the children of men.”

The apostle adds,

which God ordained before the world. The Egyptians and Grecians boasted much of the “earliness” of their wisdom, but neither of them are to be mentioned with the Gospel for the antiquity of it; it is the birth of God's counsels of old, the produce of his purposes, which he purposed in Christ before the world was; a scheme of things he drew in his eternal mind; it is a transcript of the council of peace and covenant of grace, which were from everlasting; what the Jews (w) say of the law, is much more true of the Gospel,

“that it was treasured up with God (they say two thousand years, and sometimes nine hundred and seventy four ages), before the world was created;”

and often speak of it as one of the seven things created before the world was (x). Moreover, this was to our glory; under the present dispensation, which by reason of the Gospel has a glory in it surpassing the former; it is to the glory both of the ministers of it, whose honour it is to be employed in preaching it, and in being by it the instruments of converting such who will be their glory another day, and to the glory of all believers who are by it called to the obtaining of the glory of Christ Jesus.

(u) Caphtor, fol. 81. (w) T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1. Zohar. in Exod. fol. 20. 4. & 35. 1, 2. & 66. 3. & in Numb. fol. 66. 3. (x) T. Bab. Pesachim. fol. 54. 1. Nedarim, fol. 39. 2. Zohar. in Lev. fol. 14. 4. Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. iii. 24.

1 Corinthians 2:8

Which none of the princes of this world knew,... Meaning not the devils, as some have thought, who had they known what God designed to do by the death of Christ, would never have been concerned in bringing it about; nor so much the political governors of the Roman empire, particularly in Judea, as Herod and Pontius Pilate, who also were entirely ignorant of it; but rather the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jewish church state, called , “this world”, in distinction from , “the world to come”, or times of the Messiah; see Heb 2:5 such as the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, the Rabbins and learned doctors. These knew nothing of the wisdom of the Gospel, or the wise counsels of God concerning salvation by Christ; they knew not the Messiah when he came, nor the prophecies concerning him; the Jews and their rulers did what they did through ignorance, and fulfilled those things they knew nothing of; see Act 3:17.

for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. They would have received him, believed in him, and not put him to death: a very great character is here given of Christ, “the Lord of glory”, or the glorious Jehovah; reference seems to be had to Psa 24:7 where he is called, “the King of glory”, and is an argument of his true and proper deity: he is so called because possessed of all glorious perfections, and is the brightness of his Father’s glory; the same honour and glory are due to him as to the Father; and the same ascriptions of glory are made to him by angels and men. This is an instance of what the ancients call a communication of idioms or properties, whereby that which belongs to one nature in Christ, is predicated of his person, as denominated from the other: thus here the crucifixion of him, which properly belongs to his human nature, and that to his body only, is spoken of his person, and that as denominated from his divine nature, “the Lord of glory”; and he being so, this rendered his crucifixion, sufferings, and death, in human nature, efficacious to answer all the purposes for which they were endured.

1 Corinthians 2:9

But as it is written,... Not in an apocryphal book, called the Apocalypse of Elijah the prophet, as some have thought, but in Isa 64:4 with some variation; and is brought to prove that the Gospel is mysterious and hidden wisdom, unknown to the princes of this world, and ordained before the world was, for the glory of the saints: for the following words are not to be understood of the glories and happiness of the future state; though they are indeed invisible, unheard of, and inconceivable as to the excellency and fulness of them, and are what God has prepared from all eternity, for all those on whom he bestows his grace here; but of the doctrines of grace, and mysteries of the Gospel, as the context and the reason of their citation abundantly show; and are what

eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: which could never have been seen to be read by the eye of man, nor the sound thereof ever heard by the ear of man, had not God been pleased to make a revelation of them; and though they are to be seen and read in the sacred writings, and to be heard either read or expounded, with the outward hearing of the ear; yet are neither to be seen nor heard intellectually, spiritually, and savingly, unless, God gives eyes to see, and ears to hear; the exterior senses of seeing and hearing are not sufficient to come at and discover the sense of them; flesh and blood, human nature cannot search them out, nor reveal them, no nor the internal senses, the intellectual capacity of men:

neither have entered into the heart of man; this clause is not in the original text; but is a phrase often used by the Jews, for that which never came into a man's mind, was never thought of by him, or he ever had any conceptions, or the least notion and idea of; so the elders of the city, at the beheading of the heifer, are represented not only as saying, "our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it"; but also neither, "hath it entered into our hearts", that the sanhedrim hath shed blood (y); and elsewhere (z) it is said, this matter is like to a king, , "into whose heart it entered", to plant in his garden, &c.

The things which God hath prepared for them that love him; in the original text it is, "for him that waiteth for him"; the sense is the same, for such as hope in the Lord and wait for him, are lovers of him; and the meaning is, that God has prepared and laid up in his own breast, in his counsels and covenant, in the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the old law, in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, such doctrines and mysteries of grace as were not so seen, heard, known, and understood by the Old Testament prophets and saints; and has reserved for his people under the Gospel dispensation, the times of the Messiah, a more clear discovery of them: so the Jews themselves own that these words belong to the world to come (a), which with them commonly signifies the days of the Messiah; though here they think fit to distinguish them, and interpret the phrase, "eye hath not seen", of the eye of the prophets: their words are these (b);

"all prophesied not, but of the days of the Messiah; but as to the world to come, eye hath not seen, O God, besides thee."

The gloss on it is,

"the eye of the prophets hath not been able to see it."

Indeed, the mysteries of the Gospel are more clearly discerned now, than by the prophets formerly.

(y) T. Bab. Sota, fol. 46. 2. (z) Sepher Bahir in Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. (a) Zohar in Exod. fol. 64. 4. & 67. 2. (b) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. Sabbath, fol. 63. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. Maimon. in Misn. Sanhed. c. 11. sect. 1. & Hilch. Teshuva, c. 8. sect. 7. & Jarchi in Isa. lxiv. 4.

1 Corinthians 2:10

But God hath revealed them unto us,.... Should it be said, that since this wisdom is so hidden and mysterious, the doctrines of the Gospel are so unknown, so much out of the sight and understanding of men, how come any to be acquainted with them? The answer is ready, God has made a revelation of them, not only in his word, which is common to men, nor only to his ministers, but to private Christians and believers,

by his Spirit; which designs not the external revelation made in the Scriptures, though that also is by the Spirit; but the internal revelation and application of the truths of the Gospel to the souls of men, which is sometimes ascribed to the Father of Christ. Mat 16:17 sometimes to Christ himself, Gal 1:12 and sometimes to the Spirit of Christ, Eph 1:17 and who guides into all truth, Joh 16:13, and here to the Father by the Spirit:

for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; which does not suppose any ignorance

of these things in the Spirit, antecedent to his searching of them; but his complete and perfect knowledge of them; even as God's searching of the hearts of men expresses his omniscience, and through knowledge of all that is in them: the "all things" the Spirit searches into, and has a perfect knowledge of, do not design in the utmost extent everything which comes within the compass of his infinite understanding; but every thing that is in, or belongs to the Gospel of Christ, even the more mysterious and sublime, as well as the more plain and easy doctrines: for the "deep things of God" intend not the perfections of his nature, which are past finding out unto perfection by men; nor the depths of his wise and righteous providence; but the mysterious doctrines of the Gospel, the fellowship of the mystery which was hid in God, his wise counsels of old concerning man's salvation, the scheme of things drawn in his eternal mind, and revealed in the word.

1 Corinthians 2:11

For what man knoweth the things of a man,... The thoughts of a man's heart, the conceptions of his mind, the schemes he is drawing there, his designs, purposes, and intentions; these can never be known by another man, no, nor by angels or devils; not by any creature; by none

save the spirit of a man which is in him? which is only conscious to, and can only make known the things that are in him:

even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God; and which, as it proves how secret, hidden, unknown, the mysteries of grace are, until revealed by the Spirit; so it gives full evidence to the deity of the Holy Ghost, and clearly shows he must be God, who is in him, knows the thoughts of his heart, the counsels of his mind, his purposes and decrees, and what is contained in them.

1 Corinthians 2:12

Now we have received not the spirit of the world,... Meaning either Satan, the god of the world, the spirit that is in it, and rules over it; or the sinful carnal disposition of the men of the world, which is a spirit of covetousness, uncleanness, pride, malice, and error; or rather the carnal wisdom of the world, which is common to worldly men, lies in the knowledge of worldly things, and is pursued and exercised for worldly advantages:

but the Spirit which is of God; the Holy Ghost, which proceeds from the Father and the Son, is the gift of God to his people, and whom they receive through the doctrine of faith into their hearts, as a spirit of illumination, faith, comfort, adoption, truth, and as a seal and earnest of future glory:

that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; who has given himself, his Son, and all things freely along with him, as a justifying righteousness, remission of sins, adoption, and eternal life; all which were provided for them in the council and covenant of peace, and made up that grace given unto them freely in Christ before the world began; for there was not only an eternal purpose to bestow these gifts, in the mind of God, and a promise of them in covenant, but a real donation of them to them, as considered in Christ so early: besides, God gave his Son, and Christ gave himself for them before they knew anything of the matter; and therefore must be unknown, until made known by the Spirit of God, who is sent unto them, and into their hearts, for this purpose, to make them known; which he does, by showing all this grace, and by opening and applying the truths of the everlasting Gospel: and this knowledge is not a mere notional one, but spiritual, experimental, and

approbational, joined with affection and admiration; and is a knowledge of interest in these things, and which makes both humble and obedient.

1 Corinthians 2:13

Which things also we speak,.... Namely, the things which have not been seen by the eye, heard by the ear, or understood by the heart of man; the things God has prepared for his people; the deep things of God; the things of God which are only known to the Spirit; the things that are freely given to them of God, and made known to them by the Spirit of God: these things are spoken out, preached, and declared to the sons of men,

not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; which are learned in the schools of the philosophers, put together by human art, and "in the taught words of human wisdom", as the clause may be rendered; such as are taught and acquired by human learning, so artificially formed in their order and structure as to work upon the affections of men, captivate the mind, and persuade to an assent.

But which the Holy Ghost teacheth; or "in the taught" words "of the Holy Ghost"; in the language of the Scriptures, edited by the Spirit of God; or such as the Holy Spirit taught them, suggested to them, directed them to the use of; for he not only supplied them with matter, but furnished them with words, with proper and spiritual oratory:

comparing spiritual things with spiritual; the things of the Spirit of God, the doctrines of the Gospel, with the spiritual writings of the Old Testament, whereby their truth and harmony are demonstrated; speaking as the oracles of God, and prophesying or preaching according to the analogy of faith; and adapting spiritual words to spiritual truths, clothing them with a language suitable and convenient to them, not foreign and flourishing, but pure, simple, and native; or accommodating and communicating spiritual things, as to matter and form, to spiritual men; which sense the Arabic version favours and confirms, such being only capable of them; and with these there is no need to use the eloquence, oratory, wisdom, and words of men.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man,.... Not a babe in Christ, one that is newly born again, for though such have but little knowledge of spiritual things, yet they have a taste, and do relish and desire, and receive the sincere milk of the word, and grow thereby; but an unregenerate man, that has no knowledge at all of such things; not an unregenerate man only, who is openly and notoriously profane, abandoned to sensual lusts and pleasures; though such a man being sensual, and not having the Spirit, must be a natural man; but rather the wise philosopher, the Scribe, the disputer of this world; the rationalist, the man of the highest attainments in nature, in whom reason is wrought up to its highest pitch; the man of the greatest natural parts and abilities, yet without the Spirit and grace of God, mentioned Co1 1:20 and who all along, both in that chapter and in this, quite down to this passage, is had in view: indeed, every man in a state of nature, who is as he was born, whatever may be the inward furniture of his mind, or his outward conduct of life, is but a natural man, and such an one

receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: not the things relating to the deity, personality, and perfections of the Holy Spirit, though these the natural man knows not, nor receives; nor the things done by him, particularly the operations of his grace on the souls of men in regeneration, concerning

which he says, as Nicodemus did, “how can these things be?” but the truths of the Gospel before spoken of; so called, because they are contained in the Scriptures edited by the Spirit of God, are the deep things of God, which he searches into and reveals; and because they are made known by him, who is given and received for that end and purpose, that the saints might know them; and because they are delivered by the preachers of the Gospel, in words which he teacheth; now these the natural man receives not in the love of them, so as to approve of and like them, truly to believe them, cordially embrace them, and heartily be subject to them, profess and obey them, but on the contrary abhors and rejects them:

for they are foolishness unto him; they are looked upon by him as absurd, and contrary to reason; they do not agree with his taste, he disrelishes and rejects them as things insipid and distasteful; he regards them as the effects of a crazy brain, and the reveries of a distempered head, and are with him the subject of banter and ridicule:

neither can he know them: as a natural man, and whilst he is such, nor by the help and mere light of nature only; his understanding, which is shut unto them, must be opened by a divine power, and a superior spiritual light must be thrown into it; at most he can only know the literal and grammatical sense of them, or only in the theory, notionally and speculatively, not experimentally, spiritually, and savingly:

because they are spiritually discerned; in a spiritual manner, by a spiritual light, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God. There must be a natural visive discerning faculty, suited to the object; as there must be a natural visive faculty to see and discern natural things, so there must be a spiritual one, to see, discern, judge, and approve of spiritual things; and which only a spiritual, and not a natural man has.

1 Corinthians 2:15

But he that is spiritual,... Meaning not any particular individual person, not the pope of Rome, as his adherents vainly imagine, whom they fancy to be a supreme and infallible judge in things spiritual, from whose judgment is no appeal, and who himself comes not under the judgment of any; for he is so far from being a spiritual man, or having judgment in spiritual things, that he stands described as the man of sin, the son of perdition, the wicked one, the beast, to whom a mouth is given, speaking great things and blasphemies; but a set of men are here meant, and not such who are only outwardly reformed in their lives and conversations, who are at best but moral, and not spiritual men; nor all that have a form of godliness, an appearance of spirituality; there may be such who may have this, and yet deny the power of it, in which the principle and essence of spirituality lies; nor all such who have spiritual gifts, which may be where there is no spiritual grace; or that have a greater degree of spiritual knowledge than others, or that even have a greater degree of real grace than others; for though these are certainly spiritual men, Co1 3:1 yet they are not the only ones; others that have less knowledge and grace, are spiritual also, and are comprehended in this character; much less does it design such who have no flesh or sin in them, for there are none without sin in the present state; and if this was essential to a spiritual man, there would be no spiritual man in the world; such are only the saints in heaven, who are without fault before the throne: and after the resurrection will have spiritual bodies, as well as their spirits or souls are now made perfect: but here a spiritual man intends every man that is born of the Spirit; seeing what is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, or spiritual; from whence the regenerate man is denominated spiritual, he is such an one that is quickened by the Spirit of God,

and lives spiritually by faith on Christ; he breathes after spiritual things, salvation by Christ, and an interest in him, communion with God, conformity to Christ, pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, and eternal life: he has spiritual senses, and these in exercise; he has a spiritual sight of things, of himself, and his lost state by nature, and of the person, grace, and things of Christ; he has a spiritual hearing of the Gospel, by which faith comes; he hears so as to live, and he lives so as that he hears the joyful sound with understanding, approbation, and acceptance; he has a spiritual taste of things, of the grace of God, the fruit of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel; and he smells a sweet savour in them; he has a spiritual feeling, he feels the weight and burden of sin, the gracious influences and operations of the Spirit, and handles Christ, the word of life: he talks the spiritual language of Canaan, and his speech betrays him to be a spiritual man; and he walks spiritually by faith on Christ, and in the paths of holiness, righteousness, and truth: he is one that is renewed by the Holy Spirit, in the spirit of his mind; has a new heart, and a new spirit put within him; and is become a new creature in Christ: he has the good work of grace wrought in his soul; and in him grace is the reigning principle; in him the Spirit of God himself dwells, and he is led by him out of himself to Christ, and into all truth, and walks after him, and not after the flesh: his conversation is spiritual and heavenly; he is spiritually minded, he minds not the things of the flesh, but the things of the Spirit; and though there is a great deal of carnality in him, in his thoughts, his words, and actions, yet this is matter of grief to him, and is his daily complaint: and such an one

judgeth all things; or “discerneth all things”; not all things in nature, or which fall within the compass of human knowledge; there are many things he may have no knowledge of, nor judgment in, being for the most part not the wise and prudent, but the foolish things of the world who are spiritual; but things divine and spiritual, the things of the Spirit of God, the doctrines of the Gospel before spoken of; and these not every difficult passage of Scripture, or knotty point of controversy, but the several articles of faith, necessary and essential to salvation; these are plain and easy to him, they stand before him in a clear light; as that salvation is alone by Christ, pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, &c. these he has seen and tasted of, and relishes, and can discern things that differ, and approve those which are more excellent; he can distinguish truth from error, and the voice of Christ from the voice of a stranger; and knows when the Gospel is preached, and when not, of which he judges by the word of God and his own experience: not that every spiritual man has a like degree of spiritual knowledge and judgment, but everyone discerns and judges according to the measure of the gift of Christ:

yet he himself is judged of no man; or “discerned of no man”: that is, not of any natural man; who is not capable of discerning and judging who and what he is; only a spiritual man can discern and judge of his spiritual light, grace, and state; as the churches of Christ do, when persons are proposed to, them for communion; the other knows him not, but takes him to be a weak, or a wicked man, an hypocrite and a deceiver; and it is a small thing with him to be judged of man’s judgment; he cares not what judgment the natural man passes upon him; nor does his faith in things spiritual, stand upon the authority and judgment of men; nor will he submit to it; nor can he be reproved, convinced, and refuted by such a person: for though a thousand sophistic arguments may be used with him which he cannot answer, he has a witness within himself to the truths of the Gospel, which opposes itself, and stands its ground against all objections; as with respect to the impurity of human nature, the impotency of man to anything that is spiritually good of himself, the insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God, the proper deity and real excellency of Christ, his blood and righteousness, and the internal work of the Spirit of God on the heart; sooner may a rock be removed out of its place, than a truly spiritual man can be convicted by a natural man of the falsehood of these

things, of which he has had an inward experience, as well as is instructed in them by the word of God; nor can he be better taught and instructed by the natural man.

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who hath known the mind of the Lord,... The deep counsels of his heart, the scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, as drawn in his eternal mind, the sense of the Spirit of God in the writings of the Old Testament, the things of the Spirit of God, or the doctrines of grace more clearly revealed under the Gospel dispensation; not any natural man, by the light of truth and strength of reason, has known any of these things. The apostle either cites or alludes to Isa 40:13

that he may instruct him? not the Lord, who needs no instruction from any, nor can any teach and instruct him, nor would any be so bold and insolent as to attempt it nor does the knowledge of the mind of the Lord qualify any for such a work; since if he knows ever so much of it, he cannot know more than the Lord himself: but the spiritual man, whom a natural man, being ignorant of the mind of the Lord, cannot instruct; and so the words give a very proper and sufficient reason why the spiritual man is not discerned, judged, convinced, and instructed by the natural man:

but we have the mind of Christ; the same with “the mind of the Lord” which proves that Christ is the Lord, or Jehovah, and so truly and properly God; and which is to be understood, not only of the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, but of all true believers; and therefore want no instruction, as they can have none from the natural man; though chiefly of the former, whereby they were abundantly qualified for the further instruction even of spiritual men.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle returns to the charge of schisms and contentions upon the Corinthians, which were the occasion of the epistle; and reproves them for their divisions, which were about their ministers; and gives them their just and due character, and who, though they were useful and commendable in their places, were not to be gloried in; and especially it was a great piece of weakness and folly, to set up one against another, when they had an equal interest in them all. Having, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, made mention of the spiritual man, the apostle tells the Corinthians, to whom he writes, that he could not address them as spiritual, but as carnal; and not as perfect men, among whom he spake the wisdom of God, but as babes in Christ, Co1 3:1 and this rudeness and ignorance of theirs account for his conduct towards them, in delivering the plain and easy, and not the sublime doctrines of the Gospel to them, because they were not able to bear them; nor were they yet able, notwithstanding the length of time, the proficiency they had made, and the many teachers they had had among them, Co1 3:2 and to prove that they were carnal, and not spiritual, he instances in their envy, strife, and contentions, which were carnal works, or works of the flesh, Co1 3:3 and gives some particulars of their contentions about their ministers, which put it out of all doubt that they were carnal, Co1 3:4 and reproves them for such contentions, and argues the folly and sinfulness of them; partly from the character of their preachers, as servants and ministers, who were the instruments of their faith and conversion, through the grace of God, and therefore not to be set up at the head of them as their lords and masters, Co1 3:5 and partly from the unprofitableness of their ministry, without a divine blessing, Co1 3:6 and also from the unity and equality of the ministers among themselves, though their labours and reward were different,

Co1 3:8 and therefore parties and factions were not to be made on their account; and besides, as they were labourers with God, and the church were his husbandry and building, in which they were employed, Co1 3:9, though they might differ in some superstructure points, yet they agreed in the foundation; and the apostle instances in himself under the character of a wise master builder, laying the foundation, and others building on it, Co1 3:10 and declares what this foundation was, which he and other Gospel ministers agreed in laying; nor was there any other that could be laid, to any good purpose besides, which is Jesus Christ, Co1 3:11 and then distinguishes between the different sorts of builders, the one laying on the foundation things of the greatest worth and value, and others things very trifling and useless, Co1 3:12 and intimates that there would be a time, when there would be a revelation and declaration of every man's work, of what sort it is, Co1 3:13 so that, according to their different structures, there will be a different reward, as is suggested, Co1 3:8 for though both sorts of preachers are upon the foundation, and so their persons will be safe, yet what they have built upon that foundation, according to the nature of it, shall either abide or be destroyed, Co1 3:14 wherefore inasmuch then as the church of Christ is a temple, a building laid on such a foundation as Christ, it ought not to be defiled by factions and divisions, by errors and heresies; especially since it is holy, and the Spirit of God dwells in it; and whoever does defile it shall surely be destroyed; and therefore the apostle dissuades from it, both from the turpitude of the action, and the danger of it, Co1 3:16 he cautions against the wisdom of this world, which was the cause of their divisions; as being self-deceiving, and contrary to true wisdom, Co1 3:18 and as being foolishness in the account of God, which he proves by some passages of scripture, Co1 3:19 and concludes, therefore, that no man ought to glory in men, in the best of men, not even in ministers, Co1 3:21 so as to separate and divide them, one from another, and set up one above another, since they, and all things else, were theirs, Co1 3:22 the ground and evidence of which their right and property in them are given, they being Christ's, and Christ's God's, Co1 3:23.

1 Corinthians 3:1

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you,... Though the apostle was a spiritual man himself, had spiritual gifts, even the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, could judge all things, had the mind of Christ, and was able to speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, yet could not speak it to them,

as unto spiritual; not but that they had the Spirit of God in them, and a work of grace upon them; for they were, as the apostle afterwards says, the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelt in them; they were washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; but had not that spiritual discerning, or judgment in spiritual things, which some believers had, at least when the apostle was first with them; and now they were under great spiritual declensions, and had not those spiritual frames, nor that spiritual experience and conversation, which some other Christians had:

but as unto carnal: not that they were in a carnal state, as unregenerate men are; but had carnal conceptions of things, were in carnal frames of soul, and walked in a carnal conversation with each other; though they were not in the flesh, in a state of nature, yet the flesh was in them, and not only lusted against the Spirit, but was very predominant in them, and carried them captive, so that they are denominated from it:

even as unto babes in Christ; they were in Christ, and so were new creatures; they were, as the Arabic version reads it, "in the faith of Christ"; though babes and weaklings in it, they were believers in

Christ, converted persons, yet children in understanding, knowledge, and experience; had but little judgment in spiritual things, and were unskilful in the word of righteousness; at least this was the case of many of them, though others were enriched in all utterance and knowledge, and in no gift came behind members of other churches.

1 Corinthians 3:2

I have fed you with milk,.... It is usual with the Jews to compare the law to milk, and they say (c), that “as milk strengthens and nourishes an infant, so the law strengthens and nourishes the soul;”

but the apostle does not here mean, “the milk of the law”, as they (d) call it, but the Gospel; comparable to milk, for its purity and wholesomeness, for the nourishing virtue there is in it, and because easy of digestion; for he designs by it, the more plain and easy doctrines of the Gospel, such as babes in Christ were capable of understanding and receiving: and not with meat; the more solid doctrines of the Gospel, and sublime mysteries of grace; the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom; such truths as were attended with difficulties, to which the carnal reason of men made many objections, and so were only fit to be brought before such who are of full age, young men, or rather fathers in Christ; who have had a large experience, and a long time of improvement in spiritual knowledge, and have their senses exercised to distinguish between truth and error. The reason he gives for this his conduct is,

for hitherto ye were not able to bear it; they could not receive, relish, and digest it; it was too strong meat for them, they being weak in faith, and but babes in Christ; wherefore he prudently adapted things to their capacities, and that in perfect consistence with that faithfulness and integrity, for which he was so remarkable: for the Gospel he preached to them, which he calls “milk”, was not another Gospel, or contrary to that which goes by the name of “meat”: only the one consisted of truths more easily to be understood, and was delivered in a manner more suited to their capacities than the other: he adds,

neither yet now are ye able; which carries in it a charge of dulness and negligence, that they had been so long learning, and were improved no more in the knowledge of the truth; were as yet only in the alphabet of the Gospel, and needed to be afresh instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God; for anything beyond these was too high for them. The apostle seems to allude to the manner and custom of the Jews, in training up their children to learning; as to their age when they admit them scholars, their rule is this (e),

“they introduce children (into the school) to be taught when six or seven years of age, , “according to the child’s strength, and the make of his body, and less than six years of age they do not take any in.””

But sooner than this, a father is obliged to teach his child at home, concerning which they say (f),

“from what time is his father obliged to teach him the law? as soon as he begins to speak, he teaches him the law Moses commanded us, and “hear O Israel”, and after that he instructs him, , “by little and little, here and there a verse”, till he is six or seven years of age, and, , “all this according to the clearness of his understanding”;

i.e. as he is able to take things in; and even till twelve years he was to be used with a great deal of tenderness:

“says R. Isaac (g), at Usha they made an order, that a man should “use his son gently”, until he is twelve years of age; the gloss upon it is, if his son refuses to learn, he shall use him , “with mildness and tender language.””

(c) Kimchi in Isa. lv. 1. Abarbinel, Mashamia Jeshua, fol. 26. 1. (d) Jarchi in Cant. v. 12. (e) Maimom. Talmud Tora, c. 2. sect. 2. (f) Ib. c. 1. sect. 6. (g) T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 50. 1.

1 Corinthians 3:3

For ye are yet carnal,... The Syriac reads it, , “ye are in the flesh”: a phrase the apostle elsewhere uses of men in an unregenerate state; but this is not his meaning here, as before explained, but that carnality still prevailed among them, of which he gives proof and evidence:

for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? They envied each other's gifts and knowledge, strove about words to no profit, entered into warm debates and contentions about their ministers, and went into factions and parties, which were distinguished by the names they were most affected to; in all which they gave too clear evidence of their prevailing carnality, that they too much walked as other men, who make no profession of religion; that they were led by the judgment of men, and were carried away with human passions and inflections; and in their conduct could scarcely be distinguished from the rest of the world. The things that are here mentioned, and with which they are charged, are reckoned by the apostle among the works of the flesh, Gal 5:19 the phrase, “and divisions”, is omitted in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions.

1 Corinthians 3:4

col 3:4

For while one saith, I am of Paul,... This shows what their envying and strife, and divisions were about, and from whence they sprung; and which serve, to strengthen the proof, and support the charge of carnality brought against them; for when one sort made a party for Paul, and set up him as their minister above all others; and said

another, I am of Apollos, preferring him for his eloquence above Paul, or any other preacher, as appears from Co1 1:12 there was a third sort for Cephas, whom they cried up as superior to the other two, or any other man; and a fourth were for Christ, and despised all ministers whatever:

are ye not carnal? all this was a demonstration of it: they could never clear themselves from it, they must be convicted in their own consciences of it; to which the apostle appeals: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “are ye not men?”

1 Corinthians 3:5

col 3:5

Who then is Paul? and who is Apollos?.... The apostle's name being used, and he a party concerned,

could speak the more freely upon this head, and ask what they thought of himself, and other preachers, whether they were more than men? what authority and power they had, whether they looked upon them as the authors of a new religion, or the founders of a new sect, that were to go by their names? and directs them what light to consider them in, how that they were

but ministers by whom ye believed: they were servants to Christ and to his churches, and not lords; they did not assume any dominion over men, or pretend to lord it over God's heritage; there is but one Lord and master, and that is Christ, whom they served, and taught others to obey; they were only instrumental in the hand of God, by whom souls were directed, encouraged, and brought to believe in Christ; as for faith itself, that is the gift of God, the operation of his power, and of which Christ is the author and finisher; they laid no claim to this as their work, or imagined they had any dominion over it; that they could either implant it, or increase it of themselves; but thought it honour enough done them, that it came by their ministry; and that that, and the joy of it, were helped and furthered by their means: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "his ministers whom ye believed"; that is, the ministers of Christ, whom they believed in; not in the ministers, but Christ; the Arabic version renders it, "but two ministers, by whom ye believed"; referring to Paul and Apollos, who are meant:

even as the Lord gave to every man; gifts to minister with, and success to his ministry; making him useful to this and the other man, to bring him to the faith of Christ; all which is owing to the free grace and sovereign good will and pleasure of God.

1 Corinthians 3:6

I have planted,... That is, ministerially; otherwise the planting of souls in Christ, and the implanting of grace in them, are things purely divine, and peculiar to God, and the power of his grace; but his meaning is, that he was at Corinth, as in other places, the first that preached the Gospel to them; and was an instrument of the conversion of many souls, and of laying the foundation, and of raising and forming a Gospel church state, and of planting them in it;

Apollos watered; he followed after, and his ministry was blessed for edification; he was a means of carrying on the superstructure, and of building up souls in faith and holiness, and of making them fruitful in every good word and work: each minister of the Gospel has his proper gifts, work, and usefulness; some are planters, others waterers; some are employed in hewing down the sturdy oaks, and others in squaring and fitting, and laying them in the building; some are "Boanergeses", sons of thunder, and are mostly useful in conviction and conversion; and others are "Barnabases", sons of consolation, who are chiefly made use of in comforting and edifying the saints: but God gave the increase: for as the gardener may put his plants into the earth, and water them when he has so done, but cannot cause them to grow, this is owing to a divine blessing; and as the husbandman tills his ground, casts the seed into it, and waits for the former and latter rain, but cannot cause it to spring up, or increase to perfection, this is done by a superior influence; so ministers of the Gospel plant and water, cast in the seed of the word, preach the Gospel, but all the success is from the Lord; God only causes it to spring up and grow; it is he that gives it its increasing, spreading, fructifying virtue and efficacy.

1 Corinthians 3:7

So then, neither is he that planteth anything,... Not that he is the happy instrument of beginning the

good work:

neither he that watereth; who is the means of carrying of it on: not that they are simply and absolutely nothing, without any restriction and limitation; they are men, they are Christians, they are ministers, and useful ones, by whom others believe; they are labourers together with God, ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and so to be accounted of; but they are nothing in themselves, nor in their own account, or with respect to God: they are nothing of themselves as ministers; they have nothing but what they have received; all their gifts are from God, nor can they exercise them aright without the grace of God, not being able to think a good thought as of themselves; nor are they anything in making their planting and watering effectual; and so no glory belongs to them; nothing is to be ascribed to them, they have no part or lot in these things:

but God that giveth the increase; he gives them their abilities, assists them in the exercise of their gifts, makes their ministrations useful, and he has, as he ought to have, all the glory.

1 Corinthians 3:8

Now he that planteth, and he that watereth are one,... Not in every respect so; they were different as men, they were not the same individual persons, nor in the same office; Paul was an apostle, Apollos only a preacher of the Gospel; nor had they the same measure of gifts, nor did they labour alike, or were of the same usefulness; but they had one and the same commission to preach the Gospel; and the Gospel they preached was the same; and so were their views, aims, and ends, which were the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls; and they had the same love and affection for one another; they were one in their work, judgment, and affection; and which carries in it a strong reason and argument why the members of this church should not contend and divide about them:

and every man shall receive his own reward; either from men, that double honour he is worthy of, maintenance and respect; or rather from God, not a reward of debt, for his labours are by no means meritorious of anything at the hands of God, from whom he has all the grace, strength, and abilities he labours with; but of grace, even the reward of the inheritance, because he serves the Lord Christ; which is by bequest, through the death of the testator, and common to all the children of God, and heirs of glory:

according to his own labour; and not another's; and not according to the success of it, but according to that itself; not that that is the measure of the reward, for the reward infinitely exceeds it; but is that to which God has graciously annexed the promise of the reward, as an encouragement to it.

1 Corinthians 3:9

For we are labourers together with God,... The ministers of the Gospel are labourers in the Lord's vineyard, and not loiterers; their work is a laborious work, both to body and mind; which lies in close study and meditation, in diligent reading and constant prayer, in frequent ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances; besides reproofs, admonitions, and exhortations, counsels, and instructions, which are often necessary: it is a work, which no man is sufficient for of himself; what requires diligence, industry, and faithfulness; is honourable, and, when rightly performed, deserves respect: nor do they labour alone, but with God; not as co-ordinate, but as subordinate workers; for though they labour in planting and watering, yet they bear no part with him in giving the increase; he

is the husbandman, the chief master builder, they are labourers under him; however, he works with them; hence their labours are not in vain, and they have great encouragement to go on in their work; and they are God's labourers with one another, which is a sense of the phrase not to be overlooked. The apostle often, in his epistles, speaks of his fellow workmen, and fellow labourers, who wrought together with him under God:

ye are God's husbandry; or tillage; he is the proprietor of the field, the occupier of it, the husbandman who breaks up the fallow ground of the hearts of his people; he casts in the seed of grace, he makes the ground good, and causes it to bring forth fruit; the churches of Christ are his property, land of his fertilizing, and all the fruit belongs unto him; they are gardens of his planting, and vineyards of his watering, and which he keeps night and day, lest any hurt:

ye are God's building; as the former metaphor is taken from agriculture, this is from architecture: believers in a church state are God's house, in which he dwells, and which he himself has built; he has laid the foundation, which is Jesus Christ; he makes his people lively stones, and lays them on it; he raises up the superstructure, and will complete the building, and ought to bear all the glory, and in all which he makes use of his ministers as instruments.

1 Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God which is given unto me,... Lest the apostle should be thought to be too much elated with the characters he had given of himself, and other ministers, or to assume too much to himself, in what he was about to say of himself, he ascribes all the gifts he had, and the usefulness he was of, as a labourer and builder in the church of God, to rich grace; by which he was called unto, and qualified for such work: as a wise master builder. This same phrase, , "a wise master builder", is used by the Septuagint interpreters, in Isa 3:3 by which they render , "the cunning artificer", or the wise man of the carpenters, or artificers. The architect of all is God the Father, Son, and Spirit; God the Father is the builder of all things; Christ builds his church on himself the rock; and the saints are built up an habitation for God, through the Spirit; ministers are builders under God, instruments he makes use of, and who would labour in vain, unless the Lord build the city: such an one was the apostle, though he calls himself a master builder with respect to inferior ministers; he being in the highest office in the church, as an apostle, and not a whit behind the chief of them; and was the chief apostle of the Gentiles, and was principally concerned in preaching the Gospel to them, and in raising churches among them. The allusion is to the Jews, who use to call the Rabbins and doctors, and the disciples of the wise men, "builders": they ask in a certain place (h), ,

"who are the builders? says R. Joehanna, these are the disciples of the wise men, who employ themselves in the building of the world all their days (i)."

That is, the law, as one (k) of their writers explains this building; hence they are sometimes called builders of the law, and which was looked upon to be an high character: it is said (l) of a certain person, that

"R. Zeira praised him, and called him, , "a builder of the law.""

But the apostle was a Gospel builder, a builder of Gospel churches in Gospel truths, and in faith and holiness; these were foolish builders, but he a wise one; and his wisdom lay in the knowledge of

Christ, in preaching him, and in winning souls unto him; and particularly in that he took care in his ministry, to lay a good foundation:

I have laid the foundation; meaning not only that as at other places, so at Corinth, he first preached the Gospel to them, and was the first instrument of their conversion, and laying the foundation of a Gospel church state; but that in his preaching he laid Christ as the one and only foundation, for men to build their faith and hope upon, for everlasting life and happiness, mentioned in the following verse:

and another buildeth thereupon; which designs not a private Christian, who was directed in the apostle's ministry to build his soul upon the rock of ages, Christ the sure foundation laid in Zion; though there is a truth in this, the apostle laid Christ as a foundation, and encouraged others to build their faith and hope upon him, as to eternal salvation; and many were enabled to do so, which was the happy fruit of his ministry, and what gave him pleasure; and in this sense he also himself built upon this foundation, for this cannot be said of another, to the exclusion of himself; he would never lay a foundation, and direct others to build on it, and not build upon it himself; but another minister of the Gospel is meant, as Apollos, or any other who might follow him, and be a means of carrying on the building upon the foundation he had laid; and of edifying and establishing souls upon it; and of rearing up superstructure truths, upon the foundation one:

but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon; that he builds by line, evenly, according to the analogy of faith; that he builds in proportion to the foundation; and lays such things upon it as are becoming it, and suitable to it.

(h) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 114. 1. (i) Jarchi, Maimon. Sampson, & Bartenora in Misn. Mikvaot, c. 9. sect. 6. (k) Juchasin, fol. 81. 1. (l) T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 48. 4.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For other foundation can no man lay,.... Men may attempt to lay other foundations than Christ, and build upon them, but to no purpose; they will be of no avail; all besides him are sandy foundations; such as fleshly privileges, a carnal descent, a religious education, an external profession of religion, a man's own righteousness, and the absolute mercy of God; but men ought to lay no other, nor can they, that will be of any advantage to themselves or others:

than that which is laid; by Jehovah the Father, both in his eternal counsels and covenant, when he set forth and appointed Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; and in the fulness of time, when he sent him forth under the same characters; and by the Spirit of God, when he reveals Christ to them, and forms him in them; and by the ministers of the Gospel, who jointly agree to lay him ministerially, as the foundation for souls to build their hope upon: hence he is called the "foundation of the apostles and prophets", as here,

which is Jesus Christ; he is the foundation personally considered, as God-man and Mediator, on which the church, and every believer is built; he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, and of eternal salvation; of the faith and hope, peace, joy, and comfort of all the saints; and of the building of God, that house not made with hands, that city which has foundations, eternal glory in the other world; and he is the foundation, doctrinally considered; or the doctrines of his proper, deity, of

his divine and eternal sonship, of his incarnation, of his Messiahship, of his obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, &c. are fundamental ones: the Jews were wont to call the principal articles of their religion, “foundations”: Maimondes has entitled one of his tracts, “the foundations of the law”; but the doctrines respecting the person, offices, and grace of Christ, are the only foundation of the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 3:12

Now if any man build upon this foundation,.... The different materials laid by one and the same man, on this foundation, or the different doctrines advanced upon it, are some of them comparable to

gold, silver, precious stones; for their intrinsic worth and value; for the purity and sincerity of them; for their weight, importance, solidity, and substantiality; for their durableness; for the great esteem they are had in by those, who know the worth of them; and for the great usefulness they are of unto them, being rich in themselves, and enriching to them; and these are the great, momentous, and valuable truths of the Gospel, which agree with and are suitable to the foundation they are built upon: so the Jews (m) compare their oral and written law, the former to gold, and the latter to precious stones, but the metaphors much better suit the doctrines of the Gospel: others are like to

wood, hay, stubble; by which are meant, not heretical doctrines, damnable heresies, such as are diametrically opposite to, and overturn the foundation; for one and the same man builds the former, as these, and is himself saved at last; neither of which is true, of such that deliver doctrines of devils: but empty, trifling, useless things are meant; such as fables, endless genealogies, human traditions, Jewish rites and ceremonies; which through the prejudice of education, and through ignorance and inadvertency, without any bad design, might by some be introduced into their ministry, who had been brought up in the Jewish religion; as also the wisdom of the world, the philosophy of the Gentiles, oppositions of science falsely so called, curious speculations, vain and idle notions, which such who had their education among the Greeks might still retain, and be fond of; and through an itch of vain glory, mix with their evangelic ministrations; and in a word, everything that may now be advanced in the Gospel ministry, not so honourable to the grace of God, or so becoming the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, nor so consistent with the Spirit’s work of grace, may be meant hereby; the same minister at different times, and sometimes at one and the same time in his ministry, lays the foundation, Christ, and builds on it for a while excellent valuable truths, raises a superstructure of gold, silver, and precious stones, and then covers the edifice with trifling, impertinent, and inconsistent things, with wood, hay, and stubble; and so at last, of this promising fine stately building, makes a thatched house,

(m) Koheleth Jaacob in Caphtor, fol. 109. 2.

1 Corinthians 3:13

Every man’s work shall be made manifest,.... The doctrine he preaches shall be sooner or later made manifest to himself, and to his hearers; who shall see the inconsistency, irregularity, and deformity of such a building; at first so well laid, then piled up with such excellent materials, and at last covered in with such trifling or incoherent stuff:

for the day shall declare it; meaning not the day of judgment, though that is often called the day, or that day, and will be attended with fire, and in it all secrets shall be made manifest; but the apostle intends a discovery that will be made of doctrines in this world, before that time comes: wherefore this day rather designs a day of tribulation; as of persecution, which tries men's principles, whether they are solid or not; and of error and heresy, when men are put upon a re-examination of their doctrines, whereby persons and truths that are approved are made manifest; or of some great calamity, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, whereby many wrong notions the Jews yet retained were discovered: but it is best of all to understand this day of the Gospel day, and of the progress of Gospel light, especially in some particular periods of it; as in the primitive times, at the reformation from popery, and the more remarkable Gospel daylight, which will be in the latter times, when the impertinence and inconsistency of many things which now obtain in the ministry will be seen; see Eph 5:13.

Because it shall be revealed by fire: not that day, but the man's work, or doctrine:

and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is; by the fire is meant, not the general conflagration of the world, when that, and all that is therein, will be burnt up; much less the fire of purgatory, the "papists" dream of, for the punishment of evil actions; for the apostle is not speaking of the actions of men, good or bad, but of the doctrines of ministers; rather the fire of tribulation and affliction, which, as it is for the trial of the grace of faith, so of the doctrine of faith, whereby it becomes much more precious than of gold that perisheth; or of some fiery dispensation of God's vengeance, as on Jerusalem: though the word of God, which is as fire, seems to be intended; which in some certain times so blazes forth, and will more especially in the latter day, that by the light of it, both ministers and churches will be able to see clearly the bright shining lustre of the gold, silver, and precious stones; and with so much heat, as to burn up the wood, hay, and stubble; when the difference between these things will be most easily discerned.

1 Corinthians 3:14

If any man's work abide,... That is, if any minister's doctrine will bear the test of daylight, to be looked into, and abide the fire of the word; as gold, silver, and precious stones will, or such doctrines as are comparable to them, which will shine the brighter for being tried by this fire:

which he hath built thereupon; upon the foundation Christ, in entire consistence with, and proportion to it, and highly becoming it:

he shall receive a reward; either from the churches of Christ here, who shall honour and respect him for his faithful labours in the ministry; or from Christ hereafter, who will say, well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:15

If any man's work shall be burnt,... If any minister's doctrine he has preached shall be destroyed and disappear, shall be disapproved of, and rejected by the churches, not being able, to bear the light and heat of the fire of God's word:

he shall suffer loss; of all his labour and pains he has been at, in collecting together such trifling,

useless, and inconsistent things; and of all that glory and popular applause he might expect from men, on account of them, and which was the snare that drew him into such a way of preaching:

but he himself shall be saved; with an everlasting salvation; not by his ministerial labours, much less by his wood, hay, and stubble, which will be all burnt up; but through his being, notwithstanding all the imperfections of his ministry, upon the foundation Christ:

yet so as by fire; with much difficulty, and will be scarcely saved; see Pe1 4:17 with great danger, loss, and shame; as a man that is burnt out of house and home, he escapes himself with his own life, but loses all about him: so the Syriac version reads it, , “as out of the fire”: see Zac 3:2. Or the sense is, that he shall be tried by the fire of the word, and convinced by the light of it of the errors, irregularities, and inconsistencies of his ministry; either in his time of life and health, or on a death bed; and shall have all his wood, hay, and stubble burnt up, for nothing of this kind shall he carry with him in his judgment to heaven; only the gold, silver, and precious stones; and will find that the latter doctrines, and not the former, will only support him in the views of death and eternity.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,... The apostle having spoken of the saints as God's building, of himself as a wise master builder, of Christ as the only foundation, and of various doctrines as the materials laid thereon, proceeds to observe to this church, and the members of it, that they being incorporated together in a Gospel church state, were the temple of God; and which was what they could not, or at least ought not, to be ignorant of: and they are so called, in allusion to Solomon's temple; which as it was a type of the natural, so of the mystical body of Christ. There is an agreement between that and the church of Christ, in its maker, matter, situation, magnificence, and holiness; and the church is said to be the temple of God, because it is of his building, and in which he dwells: what the apostle here says of the saints at Corinth, the Jewish doctors say of the Israelites (n), , “the temple of the Lord are ye”; and which being usually said of them in the apostle's time, he may refer unto; and much better apply to the persons he does, of which the indwelling of the Spirit was the evidence:

and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you: in particular members, as a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, faith, and adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of their future glory; in their ministers to fit and qualify them for their work, and carry them through it; and in the whole church, to bless the word and ordinances, for their growth, comfort, and establishment. This furnishes out a considerable proof of the deity and distinct personality of the Spirit, since this is mentioned as an evidence of the saints being the temple of God, which would not be one, if the Spirit was not God, who dwells therein; and since a temple is sacred to deity, and therefore if he dwells here as in a temple, he must dwell here as God; and since he is mentioned as distinct from God, whose Spirit he is, and dwelling, a personal action is ascribed to him, he must be a distinct divine person.

(n) R. Alshech in Hag. ii. 5.

1 Corinthians 3:17

If any man defile the temple of God,... By the wisdom of the world, through philosophy, and vain deceit; by bringing in false doctrines, errors, and heresies, and hereby corrupt their minds from the

simplicity that is in Christ; and make rents, factions, and divisions among them:

him shall God destroy; body and soul in hell; for as their wicked principles and heretical notions are pernicious to others, they are damnable to themselves, and will bring upon them that judgment which lingereth not, and that damnation which slumbereth not. The false prophet, as well as the beast, and the devil, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. God is not only an avenger of all immoralities committed against his righteous law, but of all false doctrine and false worship, and of everything that is contrary to the Gospel, and to the order and ordinances of it. The reason of this is,

for the temple of God is holy; alluding to the holiness of Solomon's temple,

“into which a man might not go with his staff, nor with his shoes on, nor with his purse, nor with dust upon his feet, nor might he make it a thoroughfare, and much less spit in it (o).”

And yet, how was it polluted in our Lord's time by the Jews, who made it a den of thieves, instead of an house of prayer?

which temple ye are. This is added for further confirmation, and to assert their holiness in doctrine, worship, and conversation, and to deter the false teachers from making use of any means to corrupt them in either.

(o) Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5.

1 Corinthians 3:18

Let no man deceive himself,... With vain notions of serving God and religion, and of doing the churches good by his carnal and worldly wisdom, and with false hopes of escaping the vengeance of God for sowing the tares of error, heresy, and discord among his people.

If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world; either a member of them, or a preacher among them, who thought himself wise in worldly wisdom; or was desirous to be thought so by others; or would be a truly wise man in this world, whilst he lives in it, and before he goes out of it:

let him become a fool that he may be wise; not that, properly speaking, folly is the way to wisdom; but that that man that would be wise in a spiritual sense, must first learn to know himself; must be convinced of, and acknowledge his own folly, embrace the Gospel of Christ, which is esteemed foolishness by the world; submit to the ordinances of Christ, which are despised by men; and take up the cross of Christ, and follow him, bear reproach and persecution for his sake, than which nothing is more ridiculous with carnal men: he must deny his worldly wisdom, his carnal and righteous self, and wholly rest and rely on Christ, and his righteousness, for eternal life and happiness, and so will he become truly wise unto salvation. The Jews (p) have a saying,

“that everyone, “that makes himself a fool”, for the words of the law, at the end, shall be exalted.”

(p) Raya Mehimua in Zohar in Numb. fol. 104. 2.

1 Corinthians 3:19

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,.... The wisdom of the Jewish, or Gentile world. It is had in no account with him; it is despised and neglected by him; he makes it foolish, destroys it, and brings it to nothing; he lays it aside as useless, to make men wise unto salvation, and by the foolishness of preaching saves them that believe; he passes by the wise and prudent, and hides the things of the Gospel from them; so, that, with all their learning and wisdom, they can neither apprehend nor comprehend the mysteries of grace, whilst he reveals them unto babes, and chooses the foolish things of this world to spread the knowledge of himself, his Son, his Gospel, and the truths of it, and whom he makes successful, to the confusion of the wise and learned.

“For it is written”, an usual form of citing Scriptures with the Jews; it is in Job 5:13 he taketh the wise in their own craftiness, or by it. What Eliphaz says of the wise politicians of the world, who are often disappointed of their crafty devices, and cannot perform the enterprises they have took in hand, but their schemes are broken, and the snares they laid for others they are taken in themselves, is applied by the apostle to the Jewish doctors, or the Gentile philosophers, or rather to the false teachers among the Christians; whose schemes they have formed to corrupt the churches, and demolish the Gospel, prove their own destruction; nor will they, with all their cunning, be able to get out of the hand of God, and escape his awful vengeance. The allusion is either to the taking of wild beasts and birds in snares and nets, or to the taking of men in flight, laying hold of them with the hand, and grasping them hard, that they cannot get loose. The Targum interprets the words of the wise men of Pharaoh, and of the Egyptian astrologers, schemes they have formed to corrupt the churches, and demolish the Gospel, prove their own destruction; nor will they, with all their cunning, be able to get out of the hand of God, and escape his awful vengeance. The allusion is either to the taking of wild beasts and birds in snares and nets, or to the taking of men in flight, laying hold of them with the hand, and grasping them hard, that they cannot get loose. The Targum interprets the words of the wise men of Pharaoh, and of the Egyptian astrologers.

1 Corinthians 3:20

And again,.... Not in the same place, nor in the same book, but in the Psalms, in Psa 94:11. This form of citing Scriptures answers to and moreover, used by the Jewish doctors when the matter does not so clearly appear from the first proof, and therefore they produce another (q): and so here the apostle, for the further confirmation and illustration of this point, that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, to the testimony of Eliphaz, adds this of David,

the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain; in the Psalms it is, “the Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vanity”; which the apostle not only cites, but explains and teaches; as that by men is meant men of wisdom and knowledge, of the greatest capacities, whose thoughts, reasonings, schemes, and devices, the omniscient God not only knows, but makes known, and discovers them, sooner or later, to be vain and fruitless, yea, vanity itself; and notwithstanding all their machinations and contrivances, his counsel shall stand, his Gospel shall be maintained, his truths shall prevail, and his ordinances shall be continued, and his work go on.

(q) Vid. Surenhusii Biblos Katallages, p. 11, 531.

1 Corinthians 3:21

Therefore let no man glory in men,.... The apostle means ministers, who are but men, even the best of them, and therefore not to be gloried in; and has chiefly respect to the false teachers, whose wisdom, learning, and eloquence, the Corinthians were greatly taken with, and boasted of; it was so ensnaring to them, that they even idolized them for it, called them their masters, pinned their faith on their sleeve, gave up themselves to them, and were greatly under their authority, influence, and direction, which is here condemned; and which was so far from being right, that they ought not to behave in such manner to the best of ministers, nor to glory in anyone above another; no, not in Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas;

for all things are yours; all the ministers, and all they are endowed with; these were all for their use and service, for their benefit and advantage; wherefore it was very wrong to set up one above, or against another, or for any party to engross anyone minister, when he belonged to them all; and great weakness to reject others, when they had a common right and property in them.

1 Corinthians 3:22

Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,.... These are particularly named, because their disputes were chiefly about them; but what is said of them is true of all other, and all the ministers of Christ, that they are the church's. The gifts which Christ received for them, and has bestowed on them, are not their own, but the church's, and are given to them, not so much for their own use, as for the good and benefit of others. They are made able ministers of the New Testament, not by themselves, nor by man, but by God; who disposes of them as blessings to his churches, and gives them to be pastors and teachers of them, to feed them with knowledge, and with understanding; they are qualified by the Spirit of God for the service of the saints, and are separated by him to it, and are constituted overseers of the flock by his direction; they are placed as stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God, to dispense them with wisdom and faithfulness to all in his family, and are the servants of the churches for Jesus' sake, and therefore not to be gloried in; though to be respected in their place and station:

or the world: this, with what follows, is an amplification of the account, and is as if the apostle should say, you should be so far from glorying in man, in a few poor weak instruments, and especially in that in them, which with God is foolishness and vanity, that not only all the ministers of the word are yours, but even the whole world is yours; though called out of it, esteemed the filth of it, and have so little a share of it. The world was made for the sake of the saints, and is continued on their account; when they are called by grace, it will soon be at an end. It is their Lord's, and so theirs, both as Creator and Mediator: the good things of the world are enjoyed by the saints in a peculiar way, as covenant mercies and blessings, so as they are not by others, The evil things of it, as the sins and lusts of it, are escaped by them; and the afflictions they meet with in it are made to work for their good; and as they are heirs of the world, as Abraham was, so they shall inherit it in a much better form than it now is: the present heavens will pass away, the earth and all therein will be burnt up, and new heavens and a new earth arise, in which will dwell none but righteous persons: the world, in its present state, is an inn, suited to the condition of the saints, as pilgrims and strangers; but then it will be as a palace, fit for the spouse and bride of Christ.

Or life; in every view of it: the life of Christ, which he lived here on earth, in obedience to his Father's will, and which he now lives in heaven, where he ever lives to make intercession for his people, and for their good; that fulness of life that is in him, and that eternal life which is through him, are all

theirs. The lives of the ministers of the Gospel are for their profit and advantage; and they are spared and continued on their account; their own lives are theirs, though not to live to themselves, nor to the lusts of men, but by faith on Christ, and to the glory of God, and which is what they desire.

Or death: the death of Christ was for them, in their room and stead, for their sins, to make satisfaction to divine justice for them; and the benefits of it are enjoyed by them. The death of good men, ministers, martyrs, and confessors, is theirs, serves to confirm their faith, animate their zeal, and encourage them to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering. Their own death is a blessing to them; the sting is taken away by Christ; the curse is removed; it is no penal evil to them; it is a deliverance of them from all the sorrows and troubles of this life, and is their passage into endless glory and happiness.

Or things present; whether prosperous or adverse; and these, whether they be their own or others, all work together for their good.

Or things to come; future troubles and exercises; or future good things, either in this world, or in the world to come; the invisible glories of a future state:

all are yours; which is repeated for confirmation sake, and to observe, that if there was anything that was omitted, or could not be thought to be included in any of the above expressions, that also was theirs.

1 Corinthians 3:23

And ye are Christ's,... This is the ground and foundation of all things being theirs, and shows in what way they come by them, and what gives them their claim and property: they are Christ's, he has an interest in them, and they in him; they are his, not only by creation, as all men are, but by the Father's special gift of them to him, as his spouse and bride, his children, his sheep, his portion, and his jewels; they are his through the purchase of his own blood, and by a voluntary surrender of themselves unto him, under the influence of his Spirit and grace; they are his by their profession of him; they avouch themselves to be the Lord's and call themselves by his name; and they are his by his possession of them, and dwelling in their hearts by faith; and all they have are his. Their worst things are his; their sins are accounted to him, and laid on him by imputation, and have been bore and done away by him: their griefs and sorrows are his, their reproaches his, and their afflictions and sufferings his. Their best things are his; their temporal mercies come from him, and through him; and all their spiritual blessings, they are blessed with in him; and all the good things done by them are done in his strength, by the assistance of his Spirit, and in virtue of his grace.

And Christ is God's; he is his Son, his own, his only begotten and well beloved Son, as he is a divine person; and as man he is his creature, made by him, and inferior to him; he is the head of him, as the man is of the woman; and as Mediator, he is his righteous servant, whom he has chosen, called, brought forth, upheld, and in whom he is glorified: so that, upon the whole, the saints should not glory in men, though ever so great and good, but in God, and in Christ, as of God, made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 4

The chief heads of this chapter are the account that ought to be had of the ministers of the Gospel; cautions against censoriousness, rash judgment, pride, and self-conceit; the uncomfortable circumstances and situation of the ministers of the Gospel for the sake of preaching it; the apostle's fatherly affection to the Corinthians, and his authority over them; his resolution in submission to the will of God of coming to them, and the manner in which it might be expected he would come. The apostle exhorts to have in proper esteem the preachers of the Gospel, and that because they are Christ's ministers and stewards of his grace, and faithful in the discharge of their duty, Co1 4:1. And as for himself, whom he includes in the number of the faithful dispensers of the word, he cared not what judgment was passed upon him; nor should he think fit to be set down by it, partly because it was human, and arose from an ill spirit; and partly because he judged himself; as also because his conscience testified that he faithfully discharged his office; and besides, the Lord was his judge, Co1 4:3 who in his own time would judge him; and he, as every other faithful minister, shall have praise of God, and therefore before that time judgment was not to be passed by men, Co1 4:5 and then gives a reason why he had mentioned his own name, and the name of Apollos, under such figurative expressions as he had done in the preceding chapter, that they might be examples of modesty and humility for others to follow, Co1 4:6 and expostulates with those who were vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds; that seeing they were no better than others, and what gifts they had were not of themselves, but of God, they had no reason to glory and vaunt it over others, Co1 4:7 and in an ironical way expresses the exalted and flourishing condition they were in, and which he rather wishes than asserts, and which carries in it a sort of a denial of it, Co1 4:8 and goes on to represent the miserable condition that the faithful preachers and followers of Christ were in, and that in order to abate the pride and swelling vanity of these men, Co1 4:9 showing, that it was far from being a reigning time in the churches of Christ; his end in mentioning which, as well as the sharpness he had used in reproof, were not in order to expose them to shame, but for their admonition, Co1 4:14 and that he did not take too much upon him in dealing thus freely and roundly with them, appears from the spiritual relation he stood in to them, as a father, Co1 4:15 and therefore it became them as children to submit to him, and imitate him, Co1 4:16 and an instance of his paternal care of them, and love to them, was his sending Timothy among them, whose character he gives, and whose work and usefulness he points out to them, Co1 4:17, and closes the chapter with a promise of coming to them, if it was agreeable to the will of God; and the rather he was bent upon it, because some had given out he would not come, and rejoiced at it; wherefore, in order to try them, whether they were only verbal or powerful professors, he was desirous of coming to them, Co1 4:18 since religion did not lie in talking, but in an inward powerful experience of things, Co1 4:20 which he feared was wanting in some by their outward conversation; and therefore puts a question in what way they would chose he should come unto them, and hence should accordingly order their conversation and behaviour, Co1 4:21.

1 Corinthians 4:1

Let a man so account of us,.... Though the apostle had before said that he, and other ministers of the Gospel, were not any thing with respect to God, and, with regard to the churches, were theirs, for their use and advantage; yet they were not to be trampled upon, and treated with contempt, but to be known, esteemed, and honoured for their works' sake, and in their respective places, stations, and characters; and though they were but men, yet were not to be considered as private men, and in a private capacity, but as in public office, and as public preachers of the word; and though they were not to be regarded as lords and masters over God's heritage, but as servants, yet not as everyone's, or as

any sort of servants, but

as the ministers, or servants, of Christ; as qualified, called, and sent forth by him to preach his Gospel; as ambassadors in his name, standing in his place and stead, and representing him, and therefore for his sake to be respected and esteemed; and as such who make him the subject of their ministry, preach him and him only, exalt him in his person, offices, blood, righteousness and sacrifice, and direct souls to him alone for life and salvation:

and stewards of the mysteries of God; though they are not to be looked upon as masters of the household, that have power to dispose of things in the family at their own pleasure; yet they are to be regarded as stewards, the highest officers in the house of God; to whose care are committed the secret and hidden things of God; whose business it is to dispense, and make known, the mysteries of divine grace; such as respect the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of Christ, the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person, the church's union to him, and communion with him, with many other things contained in the Gospel they are intrusted with.

1 Corinthians 4:2

Moreover, it is required in stewards,... Upon mentioning that part of the character of Gospel preachers, as stewards, the apostle is put in mind of, and so points out that which is principally necessary in such persons: as,

that a man be found faithful; to the trust reposed in him; to his Lord and master that has appointed him to this office; and to the souls that are under his care: and then may a minister be said to be so, and which is his greatest glory, when he preaches the pure Gospel of Christ without any human mixtures, the doctrines and inventions of men; and the whole Gospel, declaring all the counsel of God, keeping back nothing which may be profitable to souls; when he seeks not to please men, but God; and not his own glory, and the applause of men, but the honour of Christ, and the good of souls: and such a faithful steward was the apostle himself.

1 Corinthians 4:3

But with me it is a very small thing,... It stood for little or nothing, was of no account with him, what judgment and censures were passed on him by men with regard to his faithfulness in the ministry not even by the Corinthians themselves:

that I should be judged of you; not that the apostle declined, or despised the judgment of a church of Christ, rightly disposed, and met together in the fear of God, to try prove, and judge of his ministry, and his fidelity in it; but he made no account of theirs, and slighted it as being under bad influence, the influence of the false teachers, who had insinuated many things among them to the prejudice of the apostle's character; wherefore he set it at nought and rejected it, and rightly refused to submit to it, and, indeed, to any mere human judgment:

or of man's judgment: it is in the Greek text, "or of man's day": in distinction from the day of the Lord, or the day of judgment; and because that men have their stated days for judgment, and because of the clearness of evidence, according to which judgment should proceed. This is not a Cilicism, as Jerom thought, but an Hebraism; so the Septuagint render, in Jer 17:16, "man's day"; and very frequently in

the Talmud (r) is the distinction of , “the judgments of God” and , “the judgments of men”; the former the apostle was willing to be subject to, but not to the latter; he appealed from men to God; he cared not what any man thought or said, or judged of him; he not only was indifferent to the judgment of the Corinthians concerning him, whether they did or did not praise him, but of any other person; and so the Syriac version renders it, , “or of any man”: he adds,

yea I judge not mine own self; for though as a spiritual man he judged all things, and so himself, his conduct, state, and condition; examined his own heart and ways, and was able to form a judgment of what he was and did; yet he chose not to stand and fall by his own judgment; and since he would not abide by his own judgment, who best knew himself, much less would he be subject to theirs, or any human judgment, who must be greater strangers to him; and this he said, not as conscious to himself of any unfaithfulness in his ministerial work.

(r) T. Bab Bava Koma, fol. 22. 2. 29. 1. 47. 2. 55. 2. 56. 1. 91. 1. 98. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 82. 2.

1 Corinthians 4:4

For I know nothing by myself,... Which must be understood with a restriction to the subject he is upon, faithfulness in the ministry; otherwise he knew much by himself of indwelling sin, and the corruption of his nature, which he sometimes found very strong and prevalent in him, and of the daily infirmities of life; but as to his ministerial service, he was pure from the blood of all men; he honestly declared what he knew to be the mind of God, and concealed nothing that might be useful to men; in this he had a clear conscience, void of offence both towards God and men,

Yet am I not hereby justified; from all fault and blame, which might possibly escape his knowledge and observation; for in many things all offend, and no man can understand all his errors; and there might be some mistakes which the apostle was not privy to, or conscious of; and were he even free from all, he declares, that such an unstained integrity, in the discharge of his ministerial work, was not the matter of his justification before God, nor did he depend upon it:

but he that judgeth me is the Lord; either who adjudges me to eternal life, justifying me through the righteousness of his Son, in which alone I desire to be found, living and dying; or he that knows my heart, and all my ways, will be my judge at the last day; and to his judgment I appeal and submit, and sit easy in the mean while under all the censures and calumnies of men. The apostle did, as his Lord and Saviour had done before him, who, when he was reviled and reproached by men, conscious of his own innocence and integrity, committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the time,... This is said to prevent rash and precipitate judgment, and agrees with that well known Jewish maxim, , “be slow in judgment” (s); not hasty to pass sentence; it is best to leave things to the great day of account, than to be free in censuring one another. There is a time “fixed” for the awful judgment, though of that day and hour knows no man: judge nothing

until the Lord come; who at the fixed time will certainly come to judgment, and that suddenly, at unawares, in an hour no man knows of:

who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; meaning not so much vices, immoralities, wickedness of all sorts committed in the dark, and which it is a shame to speak of; but those hidden things of dishonesty, those secret arts and private methods which false teachers have made use of to conceal themselves, and carry on their base designs to the injury of truth, the souls of men, and the cause of Christ:

and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; what were the views and intentions, the aims and ends of these men in taking upon them to be preachers of the word; when it will appear that these were not the glory of God, and the good of the souls of men, but filthy lucre, popular applause, or some such mercenary view, and sinister end.

And then shall every man have praise of God. Every regenerated soul; everyone that is a Jew inwardly; everyone that has the circumcision of the Spirit; and particularly every faithful minister, who is more especially designed; to whom it will be said, “well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”. The apostle, in these words, has respect to the false teachers who sought the praise of men, and not the honour which comes from God; and which the true ministers of the word will have another day, however despised and criticised by men now.

(s) T. Bab Sanhed, fol. 7. 2. & Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 4:6

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred,... Not what he had said concerning the different factions at Corinth, one being for Paul, and another for Apollos, and another for Cephas, as if these several parties did not really go by those names, but by those of others, the false teachers; only the apostle, to decline everything that looked like reflection, put these, as the Syriac version renders it, “upon” his own “person”, and Apollos’s, the sooner and better to put an end to such divisions; for it is certain, from his way of arguing and reasoning, that these are not fictitious names, but they were really divided, and were quarrelling among themselves about himself, Apollos, and Cephas: but his meaning is, when he says,

I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos these things; that he had “brought these comparisons”, as the Arabic version reads it, concerning himself and Apollos; namely, that one was a planter, and another a waterer; that they were both labourers and builders, ministers or servants, and stewards: and these similes, and such a figurative way of speaking he had made use of, as he says,

for your sakes; for the sake of the members of this church, that they might have right notions of them, and accordingly account of them, and behave towards them: or, as he adds,

that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written: meaning, either in the word of God in general; or in some particular passages of Scripture he might have respect to; or rather in the above places in this, and the foregoing chapter, where he gives the fore mentioned characters of ministers; where, in the apostles themselves, in their own words, from their own account, they might learn, on the one hand, not to ascribe too much to them, nor, on the other hand, to detract from their just character and usefulness: and also,

that no one of you be puffed up for one against the other; speak great swelling words of vanity, and

envy, for one minister against another; when they are all one, bear the same character, are in the same office, and are jointly concerned in the same common cause of Christ and the good of immortal souls.

1 Corinthians 4:7

For who maketh thee to differ from another,... This question, and the following, are put to the members of this church, who were glorying in, and boasting of the ministers under whom they were converted, and by whom they were baptized, to the neglect and contempt of others; when the apostle would have them consider, and whatever difference was made between them and others, was made, not by man, but God; that whatever good and benefit they had enjoyed under their respective ministers, were in a way of receiving, and from God; and therefore they ought not to glory in themselves, nor in their ministers, but in God, who had distinguished them by his favours: whatever difference is made among men, is of God; it is he that makes them to differ from the rest of the creation; from angels, to whom they are inferior; and from beasts, to whom they are superior; and from one another in their person, size, shape, and countenance, which is a physical, or natural difference. It is God that makes them to differ from one another in things of a civil nature; as kings and subjects, masters and servants, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, which may be called a political, or civil difference; and there is an ecclesiastical difference which God makes in his own people, who have gifts differing one from another; there are diversities of gifts, administrations, and operations among them, and all from the same spirit: but the grand distinction God has made among men, lies in his special, distinguishing, and everlasting love to some, and not others; in his choice of them in Christ unto everlasting salvation; in the gift of them to Christ in the eternal covenant; in the redemption of them by his blood; in his powerful and prevalent intercession for them; in God's effectual calling of them by his grace; in his resurrection of them from the dead to everlasting life, placing them at Christ's right hand, and their entrance into everlasting glory; when the distinction will be kept up, as in the above instances, throughout the endless ages of eternity; all which is owing, not to anything of man's, but to the free grace, sovereign will, and good pleasure of God.

And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? whatever mercies and blessings men enjoy, they have in a way of receiving, and from God the Father of all mercies: all natural and temporal mercies are received from him; even such as respect the body, the make, form, and shape of it, perfection of limbs, health, strength, food, raiment, preservation of life, continuance in being, with all the comforts of it: and such as relate to the soul, its formation, which is by the father of spirits, its powers and faculties, natural light, reason, and understanding, all its endowments, abilities, all natural parts, and sharpness of wit; so that no man ought to glory in his wisdom, as if it was owing to himself, when it is all of God. All supernatural and spiritual blessings are received from God; such as a justifying righteousness, sanctifying grace, remission of sin, the new name of adoption, strength to perform good works, to bear and suffer reproach and persecution for Christ, and to persevere to the end, with a right and title to eternal glory.

Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? To glory in any mercy, favour, or blessing received from God, as if it was not received from him, but as owing to human power, care, and industry, betrays wretched vanity, stupid and more than brutish ignorance, horrid ingratitude, abominable pride and wickedness; and is contrary to the grace of God, which teaches men humility and thankfulness. To God alone should all the blessings of nature, providence, and grace be ascribed; he ought to have all the glory of them; and to him, and him only, praise is due

for them. That proud Arminian, Grevinchovius (t), in answer to this text, said,

“I make myself to differ; since I could resist God, and divine predetermination, but have not resisted, why may not I glory in it as of my own?”

(t) Contr. Ames. p. 253.

1 Corinthians 4:8

Now ye are full,... That is, in their own opinion: these words, and some following expressions, are an ironical concession. They were not full of God, and divine things; nor of Christ, and of grace out of his fulness; nor of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, as Stephen and Barnabas are said to be; nor of joy and peace in believing; nor of goodness and spiritual knowledge; but they were full of themselves, and were pulled up in their fleshly minds with an opinion of their abilities, learning, oratory, and eloquence, of their ministers, and of their own great improvements in knowledge under their ministrations. They fancied they had got to a perfection in knowledge and were brimful of it; and as the full stomach, from which the metaphor is taken, loathes the honeycomb, so these persons loathed the apostle's ministry, and the pure preaching of the Gospel; imagining that they had attained to something above it, and stood in no need of it; when, alas! they were but babes, children in understanding, and needed milk instead of strong meat; so far were they from being what they thought themselves to be.

Now ye are rich; not in faith; nor in good works; nor in spiritual gifts and knowledge, though some among them were; but that is not here intended: the meaning is, they were rich, and abounded in knowledge in their own account. Like the Laodiceans, they conceited themselves to be rich, and increased with goods, when they were poor, and wretched, and miserable.

Ye have reigned as kings without us. The saints, in the best sense, are kings, made so by Christ; and have not only the name, and the ensigns of royalty, as crowns and thrones prepared for them, but kingdoms also: they have a kingdom of grace, which they enjoy now, and shall never be removed; in which they reign as kings under the influence of the Spirit of God, over the corruptions of their own hearts, which are laid under the restraints of mighty grace; and over the world, which they have under the feet; and over Satan, who is dethroned and cast out of them; and they shall inherit the kingdom of glory hereafter; but nothing of this kind is here intended. The sense of the words is, that these persons imagined that they had arrived to such a pitch of knowledge, as to be independent of the apostles; needed no instructions and directions from them, and were in great tranquillity and ease of mind, and attended with outward prosperity, so that they lived, as kings, the most happy life that could be desired; upon which the apostle expresses his hearty wish for them:

and I would to God ye did reign; not in carnal security, and in affluence of worldly enjoyments, which the apostle was not desirous of for himself, and other his fellow ministers; nor in a spiritual sense, merely as believers in common, and as he then did; but with Christ in his kingdom state here on earth:

that we also might reign with you; for all the saints will be together when Christ takes to himself his great power, and reigns; they will all reign with him on earth a thousand years; this is a faithful saying, nothing more true, or to be depended on, that those that suffer with him shall also reign

with him; and not a part of his people only, but the whole body: hence the apostle wishes, that this reigning time for the church of Christ was come, then he and the rest of the apostles would reign also: but, alas! it was a plain case, from the condition they were in, of which the following words give a narrative, that this time was not yet.

1 Corinthians 4:9

For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last,... Meaning either in time, in respect to the prophets and patriarchs under the former dispensation; and to the apostles, who were sent forth by Christ when on earth; when he, and Barnabas, and others, had received their mission since his ascension; or in state and condition, who though they were set in the first place in the church, yet were the least in the esteem of men; and were treated as the most mean, vile, and abject of creatures; were set or showed forth to public view, and made a gazing stock by reproaches and afflictions. And

as it were appointed to death; were continually exposed unto it; were in death oft, always carrying about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus; and were all the day long killed for his sake; all which the apostle not only thought, but believed, were not casual things, fortuitous events, but the determinations and appointments of God; and were brought about in his wise providence to answer some valuable ends, which made him the more easy under them, and reconciled unto them.

For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. The word translated “spectacle” signifies a “theatre”; and the allusion is to the Roman theatres, in which various exercises were performed, for the gratification of the numerous spectators, who were placed around in a proper distance to behold; and not so much to the gladiators who fought, in such places, for the diversion of the multitude, as to those unhappy persons who were cast to the wild beasts, let loose upon them to devour them; which horrid barbarities were beheld by the surrounding company with great pleasure and satisfaction; and such a spectacle were the apostles in their sufferings and persecutions to the “whole” world, distinguished into “angels” and “men”. By “angels” may be meant the devils, who stirred up the princes of this world against the apostles, to persecute and afflict them; than which nothing was a greater pleasure to these envious and malicious spirits: though good angels may be also included, as witnesses of the faith, courage, and constancy of the saints, and as comforters of them in all their tribulations; but evil angels seem chiefly designed: and by “men” are meant wicked men, who are as much pleased to behold the barbarities and butcheries committed upon the people of God, as the Romans in their theatres were to see the tragical scenes that were acted there.

1 Corinthians 4:10

We are fools for Christ’s sake,... They were so in the esteem of men, for their close attach merit to a crucified Christ; and for preaching the doctrine of salvation by him; and for enduring so much reproach, affliction, and persecution, for his sake and the Gospel’s:

but ye are wise in Christ. This is ironically said; for his meaning is not that they were truly wise in Christ, in the knowledge and faith of him, in preaching his Gospel, or professing his name; but they were so in their own eyes, and made use of much worldly wisdom and carnal policy in their profession of religion. Their ministers took care to preach, and they to profess Christ, in such a manner as to retain the favour of the world, and to escape reproach and persecution.

We are weak; in your account; our bodily presence is weak, and speech contemptible; we are men of mean capacities and abilities; nor are we able to express ourselves in that strong and masculine way, with those masterly strokes of eloquence and oratory your ministers do; or we are pressed down with infirmities, and afflictions, and persecutions.

But ye are strong; your ministers are men of great parts, strong voice, masculine language, and powerful oratory; and you abound in outward prosperity, and are free from persecution for the cross of Christ.

Ye are honourable; high in the favour and esteem of men for your wisdom and learning, your riches and wealth, power and grandeur.

But we are despised; are in dishonour and disgrace, for the mean appearance we make, the Gospel we preach, and the cross we bear.

1 Corinthians 4:11

Even unto this present hour,... What is about to be related was not what befell the apostles now and then, and a great while ago; but what for a considerable time, and unto the present time, was more or less the common constant series and course of life they were inured to:

we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked; wanted the common necessities of life, food to eat, and raiment to put on, and gold and silver to purchase any with; which might be, when, as it was sometimes their case, they were in desert places, or on the seas; or when they fell among thieves; or had given all away, as they sometimes did, for the relief of others; or when they were not, as sometimes, taken notice of, and provided for, where they ministered, as they ought to have been.

And are buffeted; not only by Satan, as the apostle was, but by men; scourged, whipped, and beaten by them; scourged in the synagogues by the Jews with forty stripes save one; and beaten with rods by the Romans, and other Gentiles.

And have no certain dwelling place; were in an unsettled state, always moving from one place to another, and had no place they could call their own; like their Lord and master, who had not where to lay his head; and like some of the Old Testament saints, who wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, in deserts, and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

1 Corinthians 4:12

col 4:12

And labour, working with our own hands,... As the apostle did at Corinth, Act 18:3 and elsewhere; partly to minister to his own necessities, and those of others; and partly that he might not be burdensome to the churches; and also to set an example of diligence and industry to others; though he had a right and power to claim a maintenance of those to whom he ministered.

Being reviled, we bless; as Christ commanded, Mat 5:44 and the apostle himself directed and exhorted to, Rom 12:14

being persecuted, we suffer it; that is, patiently; neither resisting our persecutors, nor murmuring and repining at our unhappy circumstances; but taking all in good part, as what is the will of God, and will make for his glory.

1 Corinthians 4:13

Being defamed, we entreat,... Being blasphemed, as the word signifies, being evil spoken of, our good name taken away, and characters hurt; we entreat or pray to God for them, that he would convince them of their evil, give them repentance unto life, and remission of their sins, according to Christ's direction, Mat 5:44 and in imitation of his example, Luk 23:34 or we entreat them; so the Syriac version reads it, , "we beseech them": not to blaspheme and speak evil of us, since it will be to their own hurt; we give them smooth words, and soft language, not rendering railing for railing, or reviling for reviling:

we are made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things unto this day; referring, as some think, to Lam 3:45 or to the lustrations and expiations among the Heathens, who when any calamity was upon them, particularly a plague among them, used to take one of the refuse of the people, and sacrifice him by way of expiation; or any living creature, as a sheep which with imprecations they cast into a river, or into the sea, fancying it carried away all the contagion along with it; hence, by way of reproach, such that were under disgrace, and were ejected, and exiled, were called "purgations"; the refuse of the people, by which the rest were purged (u) or the reference is to any dirt, or filth in common, swept out of houses, and trodden under foot; and so expresses the mean and abject condition of the apostles, and with what disdain and contempt they were treated in the world: all which shows that they were far from reigning as kings; and whilst this was their case, who were at the head of the interest of Christ, it must be a vain conceit of the Corinthians, that they reigned as kings without them.

(u) Vid. Turnebi *Adversaria*, l. 19. c. 22. & 26. 7. & 27. 16.

1 Corinthians 4:14

I write not these things to shame you,... Though they had a great deal of reason to be ashamed of the vain opinion they had of themselves, and that they suffered the faithful ministers of Christ to want the necessities of life, when they abounded so much with the good things of it; and though the apostle's view in giving this narrative was to bring them under a sense of their faults, and to a conviction of them, and so to shame for them, in order to their future reformation and amendment; yet it was not merely to put them to the blush, but to admonish and instruct them, that he enlarged on these things:

but as my beloved sons I warn you; they being his children in a spiritual sense, for whom he had the strongest love and affection, as their spiritual Father; and as it was his place, and became him standing in such a relation to them, he warned, admonished, and put them in mind of their obligations and duty to him.

1 Corinthians 4:15

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ,... Or "schoolmasters"; by whom he means the

false teachers, whom, for argument sake, he admits to be instructors in Christ, or ministers of his, as in Co2 11:23 and who were many, and of whose number the Corinthians boasted; though they were not so numerous as here supposed; for the expression is hyperbolical: perhaps some reference may be had to the multitude of schoolmasters, tutors, and governors, and who also were called “fathers”, which those that were Jews of this church at Corinth had before they believed in Christ; as the members of the great sanhedrim, the great number of doctors, wise men, Scribes and Pharisees, who pretended to instruct them: now though it should be allowed, that the present teachers among them were instrumental in instructing them further in the knowledge of Christ; or as the Arabic version reads it, “in the love of Christ”; yet they had no hand in their conversion; the apostle first preached the Gospel to them, and ministerially laid Christ the foundation among them, and directed them unto him, and was the minister by whom they believed; these teachers at most and best built on his foundation, and that only wood, hay, and stubble; and whereas they were only a sort of schoolmasters, and not fathers, they taught with mercenary views, and for lucre’s sake, and with severity, as such men do; and not with such a single eye to their good, and with that tenderness and affection a parent has, and in which relation he stood to them:

yet have ye not many fathers; as it is in nature, so it is in grace; how many masters and instructors soever a child may have, whether together or successively, he has but one father; and so how many after instructors, either nominally or really, believers may have to lead them on, or who pretend to lead them on to a further knowledge of Christ; yet have they but one spiritual father, who has been the happy instrument and means of their conversion, as the Apostle Paul was to the Corinthians;

for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel; which is to be understood of regeneration, a being born again, and from above; of being quickened when dead in trespasses and sins; of having Christ formed in the soul; of being made a partaker of the divine nature, and a new creature; which the apostle ascribes to himself, not as the efficient cause thereof, for regeneration is not of men but of God; not of the will of the flesh, of a man’s own free will and power, nor of the will of any other man, or minister; but of the sovereign will, grace, and mercy of God, Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father of Christ beget us again according to his abundant mercy; and the Son quickens whom he will; and we are born again of water and of the Spirit, of the grace of the Spirit; hence the washing of regeneration, and renewing work are ascribed to him: but the apostle speaks this of himself, only as the instrument or means, which God made use of in doing this work upon the hearts of his people; and which the other phrases show: for he is said to do it “in Christ”; he preached Christ unto them, and salvation by him, and the necessity of faith in him; he directed them to him to believe in him, and was the means of bringing of them to the faith of Christ; and it was the power and grace of Christ accompanying his ministry, which made it an effectual means of their regeneration and conversion: and which were brought about “through the Gospel”; not through the preaching of the law; for though by that is the knowledge of sin, and convictions may be wrought by such means; yet these leave nothing but a sense of wrath and damnation; nor is the law any other than a killing letter: no regeneration, no quickening grace, no faith nor holiness come this way, but through the preaching of the Gospel; in and through which, as a vehicle, the Spirit of God conveys himself into the heart, as a spirit of regeneration and faith; and God of his own will and rich mercy, by the word of truth, by the Gospel of grace and truth, which came by Christ, so called in distinction from the law which came by Moses, begets us again as his new creatures; which shows the usefulness of the Gospel ministry, and in what account Gospel ministers are to be had, who are spiritual fathers, or the instruments of the conversion of men.

Wherefore, I beseech you,.... Though he might have used the power and authority of a father, yet he chose rather to entreat and beseech them; saying,

be ye followers of me; for who should children follow, but their parents? The Vulgate Latin, adds, “as I am of Christ”; so Chrysostom in his time read it; and Beza says he found it so written in one Greek exemplar; and so it is in one of Stephens’s; it seems to have crept in from Co1 11:1. However, though it might not be now expressed by the apostle, it is to be supposed; for he never desired any to follow him any more, or further than he followed Christ; particularly he was desirous that these his spiritual children would follow him, and abide by him in the doctrine of a crucified Christ, he had preached among them, and not the false apostles, who had represented his ministry as weak and foolish; and in his life and conversation, especially in his humble carriage and deportment among them, and in his tender love and affection for them; observing their growing pride, haughtiness, and vain opinion of themselves, and those unnatural divisions and animosities which were fomented among them; and also in bearing reproach and persecution cheerfully and patiently, for the Gospel of Christ; a detail of which he had given them in some preceding verses.

1 Corinthians 4:17

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus,.... This is an instance of his care of them, concern for them and respect unto them; that he not only writes unto them, giving his best advice and counsel, promising to come unto them; but in the mean while sends Timothy to them, whose character is here given as one dear to him, and in all things trusty and faithful:

who is my beloved son; so, in his epistles to him, he often styles him his son, his own son in the faith, his dearly beloved son; not that he was the instrument of his conversion, for he was a disciple of Christ before the apostle was acquainted with him; see Act 16:1 but either because of his age, he being younger than he; or because of his great affection for him; and chiefly because, as a son with a father, he served him in the Gospel, Phi 2:22 and since he was so familiar with him, and so much loved by him, it might reasonably be thought he full well knew his ways and methods of doctrine and practice.

And faithful in the Lord; a faithful steward of the mysteries of grace; faithful in the Gospel of Christ, and to the souls of men; a faithful minister of the Lord’s; one who had been tried, proved, and found faithful, and therefore might be trusted to, and depended upon:

who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways; his way of preaching, and the doctrines he taught; and what should be the manner of life and conversation agreeably thereunto, and to his own; and all those rules and orders he gave for the discipline and management of the affairs of churches; all which he had formerly delivered to them, though they, through length of time, and the ministry of the false teachers among them, had greatly forgotten them: wherefore Timothy is sent, not to teach them new ways, nor, indeed, to teach at all, whose youth they might be tempted to despise; but only to put them in mind of what the apostle had formerly taught them: and which are recommended by their being such ways,

which be in Christ; the doctrines he had preached among them, the sum and substance of them were Christ, and him crucified; the ordinances he had delivered to them were what he had received from Christ; and all the rules and methods he had proposed to them for the regulation of their conduct,

and the management of their ecclesiastical affairs, were such as were agreeably to the mind of Christ, and tended to his glory; he took no step, nor proposed any to be taken, but in Christ, and for the good of his interest: and he adds,

as I teach everywhere, in every church; the faith he delivered everywhere was one and the same; the Son of God, preached by him, was not yea and nay; the trumpet he blew always gave a certain sound; the rules prescribed by him, and orders he laid down, for the conduct of life, and government of churches, were exactly alike in all places; he taught no doctrines at Corinth, nor enjoined the observance of any rule, but what all other churches were taught and directed to; his plan of doctrine and discipline was the same everywhere.

1 Corinthians 4:18

Now some are puffed up,.... Some with their gifts, learning, and eloquence, and with the high station they were in, in the church; believing they should continue therein undisturbed, thinking them selves safe and secure through the absence of the apostle, and which they flattered themselves would always be the case:

as though I would not come to you; and others that were for Apollos and Cephas against Paul, were puffed up against their fellow members on the same account; hoping they should never see him more, to put them in any other situation than what they were in, by demolishing their factions and parties; and others, as the incestuous person, and those that took encouragement to sin by his example, were also puffed up upon this score, and mourned not over, nor repented of their iniquities, but remained secure and hardened; believing the apostle would never more come among them, to call them to an account for their malpractices.

1 Corinthians 4:19

But I will come to you shortly,.... This he said as threatening them, but not by way of prophecy; for it is not certain that he ever did come to them after this; but by way of promise, as it was then the real intention, inclination, and resolution of his mind, though with this condition,

if the Lord will; which is rightly put, and what the apostle had a continual regard unto, in all things he was concerned; see Rom 1:10 and though it is not absolutely necessary that this should be expressed by us always in so many words; though should it, as the sentence is short and full, there would be no impropriety in it; yet this should always be the sense of our minds and conduct in all the affairs of life; see Jam 4:13

and will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power; meaning chiefly the false teachers; and that his concern would be, not so much to observe their masterly language, the eloquence of their speech, the quaintness of their expressions, the cadency of their words, how nicely they were put together, and how fitly pronounced; but what life there was in their ministry, what power went forth with their words, and how effectual their preaching was to the, conversion of sinners, and the edifying of the church of God.

1 Corinthians 4:20

For the kingdom of God,... By “the kingdom of God” is not meant the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints; though that is a kingdom prepared by God, which he gives to his children, calls them to by his grace, and will give them an abundant entrance into, when time shall be no more with them; and though that is not attained to “in”, or “by word”, by mere talk and profession; not everyone that says Lord, Lord, shall enter into it; or that professes the name of Christ, and prophesies in it; but “in” or “by power”; through the power of God, beginning, carrying on, and finishing a work of grace upon the soul, and keeping it, through faith, unto salvation: nor the kingdom of grace, or that internal principle of grace in the soul, which reigns, and by which Christ reigns there, and by which the saints appear to be kings as well as priests unto God: though this also does not lie “in word”, in a profession of faith, in talking about love, and in making pretensions to the knowledge of divine things; nor merely in deeds, and outward actions, in bodily exercise, in a form of godliness, and a round of religion, and a show of righteousness;

but in power: in internal powerful godliness; for true godliness is a powerful thing; faith is powerful, and so is love; and so is prayer, and preaching; and so is all religion, internal and external, where there is the life and truth of grace, and that in exercise. But I rather think the Gospel is here meant, often in Scripture called the kingdom of God, and the doctrines of it, the mysteries of the kingdom; because it is a message from the King of kings; the means of setting up the kingdom or grace in the heart; its subjects are things concerning the kingdom of God; it is what has brought life and immortality, or an immortal life to light; and gives the best account of the invisible glories of the heavenly state, and points out the saints’ meetness for it, and title to it; declaring that except a man is born again, and has a better righteousness than his own, even that of Christ’s, he shall neither see nor enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now the Gospel is not in “word”; though it lies in the word of God, the Scriptures of truth: and treats of the essential word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; and cannot be preached without words, even the words of men; yet is not to be preached with wisdom of words, with enticing words of man’s wisdom, or in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth; nor does the efficacy of it lie in, or depend upon the words of the preacher, or on mere moral persuasion: for whenever it is effectual, it comes not “in word only, but also in power”; Th1 1:5 and by “power” is meant, not a power of working miracles the first preachers of the Gospel had, and by which it was greatly confirmed; nor a godly life and conversation which that enforced upon, and engaged both ministers and people to; but the powerful efficacy of the Spirit, attending the preaching of the Gospel to the quickening of dead sinners, the enlightening of blind eyes, and unstopping of deaf ears; the softening of hard hearts, the delivering of persons from the slavery of sin and Satan, the transforming and renewing of them both inwardly and outwardly; and to the comforting, enlivening, strengthening, and establishing of the saints; all which can never be ascribed to the persuasive language of men, but to the power of God; and which is the more apparent when it is observed what mean and despicable instruments in the eyes of men are made use of: what the doctrines are that are preached, not being of man, nor agreeably to his carnal reason, but esteemed foolishness by him; and the manner in which they are propagated, not in a carnal way, by outward force, but by the foolishness of preaching; and the opposition made to it both by the enmity of man’s heart unto it, by the men of the world, and by Satan and his principalities and powers.

1 Corinthians 4:21

What will ye?.... Or “how will ye, that I should come unto you?” as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read it: since the apostle had determined upon his coming to them: and had made mention of it, he puts it to them, in what manner they themselves would choose he should come unto them;

shall I come unto you with a rod; either as a schoolmaster, as were their false teachers, with a “ferula”; or as a father with a rod of correction and chastisement, assuming his paternal authority, putting on severe looks, and using roughness; or rather as an apostle with the apostolical rod; by which is meant not excommunication, which is what belongs to a whole community, and not any single person; but a power of inflicting punishment on the bodies of delinquents, by smiting with diseases, and even with death itself; for as the prophets of the Old Testament had a power from God of inflicting diseases and death upon offenders; so had the apostles of the New, as appears from the instances of Ananias, and Sapphira, and Elymas the sorcerer:

or in love, and in the spirit of meekness? with the affection of a father, with a pleasant countenance, and a meek spirit; in opposition to that roughness and sharpness, he had an authority, as an apostle of Christ, to use in proper cases; and therefore as the latter would be most eligible by them, his suggestion is, that they would behave accordingly, that there might be no occasion to come to them in the former manner, which was not desirable by him, There seems to be an allusion to a practice among the Jews, in the punishing of a drunkard or gluttonous person; the rule for which was this (w),

“they first correct him “with words”, or “with a rod”, as it is written, Deu 21:18 and have chastened him; but if he adds and repeats (i.e. goes on in his sin), then they stone him.”

Or rather the allusion is to the judges in the sanhedrim, one of the instruments or ensigns of whose office was “a rod or staff” to smite with; it is said (x) of R. Hona, when he went to the sanhedrim, he used to say, bring me the instruments of the Tabernae (the place where the sanhedrim sat); what are they? “the staff” (in Cocceius’s edition it is “the rods”, and the sandals, the trumpets, and the thongs); the gloss is, “the thong” for scourging, “the staff” (or rods) for beating the rebellious until they return, the “trumpets” for excommunication, and the “sandals” for plucking off the shoe; things in which the judges of the court were concerned, and here the apostle proposes to come as judge; see Co1 5:3.

(w) R. Elias in Adderet apud Trigland. de sect. Karaeor. c. 10. p. 161. (x) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 7. 2.

1 Corinthians Chapter 5

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 5

In this chapter the apostle blames the Corinthians for conniving at a sin committed by one of their members; declares what he was determined to do, and what should be done by them in this case; and in general advises to shun conversation with wicked men; in Co1 5:1 mention is made of the sin committed by one among themselves, and which was publicly known, and commonly talked of; and which in general was fornication, and particularly incest, a man lying with his father’s wife; and which is aggravated by its being what was not named, or could not be named among any virtuous persons among the Gentiles without offence: and yet the members of this church, at least the majority of them, were unconcerned at it, and were so far from mourning over it, and taking any step to remove the person from them that had done it, that they were swelled with pride, and gloried on account of their gifts, and perhaps on account of this man, who had committed the iniquity, Co1 5:2. This affair being related to the apostle, though at a distance; and he well knowing all things concerning it, as though he was present, resolved what should be done in this case by himself, Co1 5:3 and that was to deliver the man to Satan, in the name, and with the power and authority of Christ, when the

members of this church were gathered together, and his Spirit with them; the end of which was for the destruction of the man's body, and the salvation of his soul, Co1 5:4 and then the apostle returns to blame them for their glorying in men, and in external gifts, and pleading these as a reason why the man should be continued, and not removed from them; not considering the danger they were exposed to, and which he illustrates by the simile of leaven, a little of which affects the whole lump: suggesting thereby the danger they were in by continuing such a wicked person among them, Co1 5:6 wherefore pursuing, the same metaphor, taken from the Jewish passover, he exhorts to remove from them the man that had sinned, as the Jews at the passover removed the leaven out of their houses; that so they might appear to be a church renewed, and purged, and clear of leaven, keeping the true and spiritual passover, which they were under obligation to do, since Christ, the antitype of the passover, was sacrificed for them, Co1 5:7 wherefore it became them to keep the feast of the Lord's supper; and indeed, to have the whole course of their conversation so ordered, as to avoid sin and sinners, and to behave in truth and uprightness, Co1 5:8 when the apostle goes on to put them in mind of what he had formerly written unto them, as suitable to the present case, which was, that they should not keep company with wicked men, particularly with fornicators, such as this man, though in a more heinous manner, Co1 5:9 and explains what was his meaning; not that they were to have no manner of conversation with persons of such a character, and of such like evil characters, in things of a civil nature, for then there would be no living in the world, Co1 5:10. But his sense was, that they should keep no company with persons guilty of the sins mentioned, who bore the name of Christian brethren, and were members of the same church state with them, from whose communion they ought to be removed; and indeed, so much familiarity with them should not be indulged, as even to eat with them, Co1 5:11. The reason of this difference, which he made between wicked men, who were not members of the church, and those that were, is because he had nothing to do, nor they neither, with them that were without the church, as it was their business only to take cognizance of them that were within, Co1 5:12 but neither of them had anything to do, to judge and censure those that did not belong to the church, but should leave them to God, the righteous Judge; and then closes all, Co1 5:13 with what he had chiefly in view throughout the whole chapter, and that is, that they would remove from their communion the wicked person who had been guilty of the sin first mentioned.

1 Corinthians 5:1

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,... The apostle having reproved the Corinthians for their schisms and divisions about their ministers, proceeds to charge them with immoralities committed among them, and which were connived at, and took no notice of by them; and particularly a very notorious one, which he here mentions with its aggravated circumstances. It was done among them; not only by one of their citizens, nor merely by one of their hearers, but by one of their members, and so was cognizable by them as a church; for though they had nothing to do with them that were without, yet they were concerned with them that were within: this was a public offence; it was known by everyone, and it was in everybody's mouth; it was heard in all companies; it was "commonly", "universally" talked of, and reported; it was generally known at Corinth, and in all Achaia, so that the church could not plead ignorance, nor could they be excused from blame in not as publicly declaring their abhorrence of the fact, as it was committed, which was fornication: fornication, "generally" taken, might be committed among them in all the branches of it, as that may include simple fornication, adultery, incest, and all acts of uncleanness; wherefore the apostle proceeds to describe that particular instance of fornication, that one of their members was guilty of:

and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's

wife; not but that such unnatural copulations were practised, as among the Indians, Moors, Bactrians, Ethiopians, Medes, and Persians, as reported by sundry writers (y); and among the Arabians, before prohibited by Mahomet (z); but then such marriages and mixtures were not allowed of among the more civil and cultivated nations, as the Grecians and Romans, and never mentioned but with detestation and abhorrence: and if this man was a Jew, it was an aggravation of his sin, that he should be guilty of a crime decried by the Gentiles, as well as it was a violation of a known law of God given to the Jews, Lev 18:7 and, according to the Jewish writers (a), such a man was doubly guilty: their canon is,

“ba tva le abh he that lies with his father’s wife is guilty, on account of her being his father’s wife, and on account of her being another man’s wife, whether in his father’s life time, or after his death, and whether espoused or married;”

and such an one was to be stoned. Of this kind was this man’s crime; he had his father’s wife, not his own mother, but his stepmother; for there is a distinction between a mother and a father’s wife, as in the above canon.

“These are to be stoned, he that lies with his mother, or with his father’s wife.”

Whether this man had married his father’s wife, or kept her as his concubine, continuing in an incestuous cohabitation with her, is not certain, and whether his father was dead or living; which latter seems to be the case from Co2 7:12 his iniquity was abominable and intolerable, and by no means to be winked at in church of Christ.

(y) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 24. Curtius, l. 8. c. 2. Philo, de special. leg. p. 77. 8. Tertul. Apolog. c. 9. Min. Foelix, p. 34. Clement. Alex. Paedagog. p. 109. Origen. contr. Cels. l. 6. p. 331. Hieron. adv. Jovin. l. 2. fol. 26. (z) Koran, c. 4. Vid. Pocock. spec. Arab. Hist p. 337, 338. (a) Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4.

1 Corinthians 5:2

And ye are puffed up,.... Either with the gifts, learning, and eloquence of their preachers, and particularly of this man, who, by some, is thought to be one of their teachers; and though he was guilty of so foul a crime, yet they still applauded him, and cried him up for a wonderful preacher: or one party was puffed up against another; that which was opposite to the party this man belonged to, boasting over the other as free from the scandal that was exposed unto; or the other were puffed up with their lenity and forbearance, boasting of it as an act of humanity and good nature, and an instance of charity, showing that they were not severe upon one another, for mistakes in life: or else were puffed up and gloried in the thing itself, as an instance of Christian liberty, and their freedom from the law, through a sad mistake of it; and in which they might be strengthened by a notion of the Jews, that it was lawful for proselyted Gentiles to do such things, for so says Maimonides (b).

“The sentence of the law is, that it is free for a Gentile, “to marry his mother”, or his sister that are made proselytes; but the wise men forbid this thing, that they may not say we are come from a holiness that is heavy, to one that is light.”

But this writer concludes that a proselyte might marry his father’s brother’s wife, and his father’s wife;

and so says his commentator (c), and observes, that it was the opinion of R. Akiba, which Rabbi was contemporary with the Apostle Paul: so that this notion prevailed in his days, and does in some measure account for the commission of such a sin by a church member, and the church's negligence about it:

and have not rather mourned; not only personally, and separately, but as a body; they ought to have met together as a church, and humbled themselves before God for this scandalous iniquity done in the midst of them, and pray unto him,

that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you; not by excommunication, for that they could and ought to have done themselves; but by the immediate hand of God, inflicting some visible punishment, and taking him away by an untimely death, which the Jews call "cutting off", by the hand of God; and such a punishment, they say, this crime deserved; according to them, there were six and thirty cuttings off in the law, or so many things which deserved death by the hand of God; and the two first that are mentioned are these, he that lies with his mother or with his father's wife (d).

(b) Hilchot Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 12, 13. (c) Auctor Ceseph Misna in ib. (d) Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 5:3

For I verily, as absent in body,... As he really was, being now at Philippi, if any dependence is to be had upon the subscription of this epistle; or rather at Ephesus; however, wherever he was, it is certain he was not at Corinth:

but present in spirit; in his affection to them, care of them, and concern for their good, and the glory of God:

have judged already; he had considered of the matter, thought very deliberately about it, and was now come to a point, to a determination concerning it, what to do in it:

as though I were present; upon the spot, in person, to do what he had resolved upon:

to him that hath so done this deed; this infamous one, and in so scandalous a manner, and which was continued in: what that was which the apostle, upon mature deliberation and judgment, determined to do with this wicked man, is expressed in Co1 5:5 which is to be connected with this, the whole fourth verse being to be read in a parenthesis, and that was to deliver him to Satan.

1 Corinthians 5:4

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,... These words contain an account of the several things and circumstances, that should attend the awful act of the apostle, in delivering this man to Satan; it would be done "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"; by his command, power, and authority, and for his glory; in whose name all miraculous actions, as this was one, were performed:

when ye are gathered together; as a church, in a public manner, in one place; not to do this business, for this was purely apostolical; but to be witness of this wonderful operation, to acknowledge the

justice of God in it, and that they might fear and take warning by it:

and my spirit; meaning that though he was absent in body, he should be present in spirit; and that the extraordinary gift of the Spirit of God bestowed on him would be visibly exercised upon this man before them all, as if he himself was in the midst of them; and this not by any power of his own, but

with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ; to which all such miraculous effects, as this hereafter related, are to be ascribed.

1 Corinthians 5:5

To deliver such an one unto Satan,.... This, as before observed, is to be read in connection with Col 5:3 and is what the apostle there determined to do with this incestuous person; namely, to deliver him unto Satan; by which is meant, not the act of excommunication, or the removing of him from the communion of the church, which is an act of the whole church, and not of any single person; whereas this was what the church had nothing to do with; it was not what they were to do, or ought to do, but what the apostle had resolved to do; and which was an act of his own, and peculiar to him as an apostle, see Ti1 1:20. Nor is this a form of excommunication; nor was this phrase ever used in excommunicating persons by the primitive churches; nor ought it ever to be used; it is what no man, or set of men, have power to do now, since the ceasing of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which the apostles were endowed with; who, as they had a power over Satan to dispossess him from the bodies of men, so to deliver up the bodies of men into his hands, as the apostle did this man's:

for the destruction of the flesh; that is, that his body might be shook, buffeted, afflicted, and tortured in a terrible manner; that by this means he might be brought to a sense of his sin, to repentance for it, and make an humble acknowledgment of it:

that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; that he might be renewed in the spirit of his mind, be restored by repentance, and his soul be saved in the day of Christ; either at death, when soul and body would be separated, or at the day of the resurrection, when both should be reunited; for the flesh here means, not the corruption of nature, in opposition to the spirit, as a principle of grace, but the body, in distinction from the soul: nor was the soul of this man, only his body, delivered for a time unto Satan; the end of which was, that his soul might be saved, which could never be done by delivering it up to Satan: and very wrongfully is this applied to excommunication; when it is no part of excommunication, nor the end of it, to deliver souls to Satan, but rather to deliver them from him. The phrase seems to be Jewish, and to express that extraordinary power the apostles had in those days, as well in giving up the bodies to Satan, for a temporal chastisement, as in delivering them from him. The Jews say, that Solomon had such a power; of whom they tell the following story (e):

“one day he saw the angel of death grieving; he said to him, why grieveest thou? he replied, these two Cushites have desired of me to sit here, “he delivered them to the devil”; the gloss is, these seek of me to ascend, for their time to die was come; but he could not take away their souls, because it was decreed concerning them, that they should not die but in the gate of Luz, “Solomon delivered them to the devils”, for he was king over them, as it is written, Ch1 29:12 for he reigned over them, that are above, and them that are below.”

The phrase is much the same as here, and the power which they, without any foundation, ascribe to

Solomon, the apostles had: this is their rod which they used, sometimes in striking persons dead, sometimes by inflicting diseases on them themselves; and at other times by delivering them up into the hands of Satan to be afflicted and terrified by him, which is the case here. And it may be observed, that the giving up of Job into the hands of Satan, by the Lord, is expressed in the Septuagint version by the same word as here; for where it is said, Job 2:6 “behold, he is in thine hand”; that version renders it, “behold, , I deliver him to thee”, that is, to Satan; and which was done, that his body might be smote with sore boils by him, as it was; only his life was to be preserved, that he was not suffered to touch.

(e) T. Bab. Succa, fol. 53. 1.

1 Corinthians 5:6

Your glorying is not good,... Their glorying in their outward flourishing condition, in their riches and wealth, and in their ministers, in their wisdom and parts when under such an humbling dispensation; and especially if their glorying was in the sin itself, and their connivance at it, it was far from being good, it was very criminal, as the consequence of it was dangerous:

know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? This, in nature, is what everybody knows; and the proverb, which is much used by the Jews (f), was common in the mouths of all, and the meaning of it easy to be understood: thus, whether applied to the leaven of false doctrine, nothing is more manifest, than when this is let alone, and a stop is not put to it, it increases to more ungodliness; or to vice and immorality, as here; which if not taken notice of by a church, is not faithfully reprov'd and severely censured, as the case requires, will endanger the whole community; it may spread by example, and, under the connivance of the church, to the corrupting of good manners, and infecting of many.

(f) Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 41. 1.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Purge out therefore the old leaven,... Meaning either the incestuous person, whose crime might well be compared to sour “leaven”, and be called old because of his long continuance in it; whom the apostle would have removed from them; this is properly the act of excommunication, which that church was to perform, as a quite distinct thing from what the apostle himself determined to do. The allusion is to the strict search the Jews made (g), just before their passover after leaven, to purge their houses of it, that none of it might remain when their feast began; which they made by the light of a lamp, on the night of the fourteenth of the month Nisan, in every secret place, hole, and corner of the house: or this may be an exhortation to the church in general with respect to themselves, as well as this man, to relinquish their old course of sinning, to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man”, Eph 4:22 the same with the old leaven here; it being usual with the Jews (h) to call the vitiosity and corruption of nature , “leaven in the lump”; of which say (i),

“the evil imagination of a man, as leaven the lump, enters into his bowels little, little, (very little at first,) but afterwards it increases in him, until his whole body is mixed with it.”

That ye may be a new lump; that they might appear to be what they professed to be, new men, new

creatures in Christ, by their walking in newness of life; and by removing that wicked person, they would be as the apostles were, when Judas was gone from them, all clean through the word of Christ:

as ye are unleavened; at least professed to be. They were without the leaven of sin; not without the being of sin in their hearts, nor without the commission of it, more or less, in their lives; but were justified from it by the righteousness of Christ, and had the new creature formed in their souls, or that which was born of God in them, that sinned not. The apostle compares the true believers of this church to the unleavened bread eaten at the passover, for the grace of their hearts, and the simplicity of their lives; as he does the incestuous man to the old leaven, that was to be searched for, and cast out at the feast:

for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. This is observed, to show the pertinency of the similes of leaven and unleavened, the apostle had made use of; and to make some further improvement of them, for the use, comfort, and instruction of this church; saying, that Christ is “our passover”, the Christians’ passover; the Jewish passover was a type of Christ; wherefore Moses kept it by faith, in the faith of the Messiah that was to come; see Heb 11:28 as it was instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, so likewise to prefigure Christ, and the redemption of his people by him. The Jews have a saying (k),

“that in the month Nisan they were redeemed, and in the month Nisan they will be redeemed;”

which was the month in which the passover was kept; and for the confirmation of which, they mention the following texts, Mic 7:15. There is an agreement between the passover, and Christ, in the sacrifice itself, and the qualities of it; it was a “lamb”, as Christ is the “Lamb” of God, of his appointing and providing, and fitly so called, for his innocence and harmlessness, his meekness, humility, and patience; it was a lamb “without blemish”, as Christ is, without spot and blemish, without the spot of original sin, or blemish of any actual transgression: it was a male, as Christ is the son or man, the head of the body, and the “firstborn” among many brethren; it was a male of the first year; in which it might prefigure Christ in the flower of his age, arrived at man’s estate, and having had experience of a variety of sorrows and afflictions. There is also some likeness between them in the separation and slaying of it. The passover lamb was to be “taken out from the sheep, or from the goats”; as Christ’s human nature was chosen out from among the people, and, in God’s eternal counsel and covenant, separated from the rest of the individuals of human nature, and taken into a federal union with the Son of God, and preordained before the foundation of the world, to be the Lamb slain; it was also wonderfully formed by the Holy Ghost in the virgin’s womb, and separated and preserved from the infection of sin; and in his life and conversation here on earth, he was separated from sinners, from being like them, and is now made higher than the heavens. This lamb was kept up from the “tenth” of the month, to the “fourteenth”, before it was killed; which might typify preservation of Christ, in his infancy, from the malice of Herod, and, in his riper years, from the designs of the Jews upon him, until his time was come; and it is to be observed, that there was much such a space of time between his entrance into Jerusalem, and his sufferings and death; see Joh 12:11. The lamb was “slain”, so the Prince of life was killed; and “between the two evenings”, as Christ was in the end of the world, in the last days, in the decline of time, of the age of the world, and even of the time of the day, about the “ninth” hour, or three o’clock in the afternoon, the time between the two evenings; the first evening beginning at noon as soon as the sun began to decline, the other upon the setting of it. There is likewise a comparison of these together to be observed, in the dressing and eating of it. The passover lamb was not to be eaten “raw nor sodden”; so Christ is to be eaten not in a carnal, but in a spiritual

way, by faith; it was to be “roast with fire”, denoting the painful sufferings of Christ on the cross, and the fire of divine wrath that fell upon him; it was to be eaten “whole”, as a whole Christ is to be received by faith, in his person, and in all his offices, grace, and righteousness; not a “bone” of it was to be “broken”, which was fulfilled in Christ, Joh 19:36 it was to be eaten “with unleavened bread”, which is spiritualized by the apostle in the next verse; and also with “bitter herbs”, expressive of the hard bondage and severe afflictions, with which the lives of the Israelites were made bitter in Egypt; and significative of the persecutions and trials that such must expect, who live godly and by faith in Christ Jesus: it was eaten only by Israelites, and such as became proselytes, as Christ, only by true believers; and if the household was too little, they were to join with their “neighbours”; which might typify the calling and bringing in of the Gentiles, when the middle wall of partition was broken down, Christ, his flesh and blood being common to both. The first passover was eaten in haste, with their loins girt, their shoes on, and staves in their hands, ready to depart from Egypt to Canaan’s land; denoting the readiness of believers to every good work; having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; their loins girt about with truth, their lights burning, and they like men waiting for their Lord’s coming; hasting unto the day of the Lord, being earnestly, desirous of being absent from the body, that they might be present with him: in a word, the receiving of the blood of the passover lamb into a bason, sprinkling it on the lintel, and two side posts of the doors of the houses, in which they ate it, which the Lord seeing passed over those houses, when he passed through Egypt to destroy the firstborn, whence it has its name of the passover, were very significative of the blood of sprinkling, even the blood of Christ upon the hearts and consciences of believers; whereby they are secured from avenging justice, from the curse and condemnation of the law, and from wrath to come, and shall never be hurt of the second death. Thus Christ is our antitypical passover, who was sacrificed, whose body and soul were offered as an offering and sacrifice unto God for us, that he might be proper food for our faith; and also in our room and stead, to make satisfaction to divine justice for all our sins and transgressions.

(g) Misn Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 2. sect. 3, 4. (h) T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 29. 4. Caphtor, fol. 38. 2. & 41. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 73. 2. 84. 4. 86. 1. 87. 3. 95. 3, 4. & 119. 4. Baal Hattarim in Lev. ii. 11. (i) Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 3. (k) T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 11. 1, 2. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3.

1 Corinthians 5:8

Therefore let us keep the feast,.... Not the feast of the passover, which was now ceased, though this is said in allusion to it; when the master of the house used to say (l),

“everyone that is hungry, let him come and eat; he that hath need, let him come “and paschatize”, or keep the feast of the passover:”

but rather the feast of the Lord’s supper is here meant, that feast of fat things Isaiah prophesied of; in which are the richest entertainments, even the flesh and blood of Christ; though it seems best to understand it of the whole course of a Christian’s life, spent in the exercise of spiritual joy and faith in Christ; he that is of a merry heart, as the believer of all men in the world has reason to be of, “hath a continual feast”, Pro 15:15 of spiritual mirth and pleasure, rejoicing always in Christ, as he ought to do: which feast, or course of life, is to be kept “not with old leaven”; in the old, vain, sinful manner of conversation, as before:

neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; not in malice to any man, or one another, nor in any sort of wickedness, living in no known sin, and allowing of it:

but with the unleavened bread of sincerity; as opposed to malice, of sincere love to God and Christ, and to his people: and of truth; of Gospel doctrine, discipline, and conversation.

(l) Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 4. Ed. Rittangel.

1 Corinthians 5:9

I wrote unto you in an epistle,..... Not in this same epistle, and in Co1 5:2 as some think; for what is here observed is not written in either of those verses, but in some other epistle he had sent them before, as is clear from Co1 5:11 which either came not to hand, or else was neglected by them; and so what he here says may be considered as a reproof to them, for taking no notice of his advice; but continuing to show respect to the incestuous person, though he in a former epistle had advised them to the contrary: no doubt the apostle wrote other epistles to the Corinthians, besides those that are in being; see Co2 10:10 nor does such a supposition at all detract from the perfection of Scripture; for not all that were written by him were by divine inspiration; and as many as were so, and were necessary for the perfection of the canon of Scripture, and to instruct us in the whole counsel of God, have been preserved; nor is this any contradiction to this epistle's being his first to this church; for though it might not be his first to them, yet it is the first to them extant with us, and therefore so called: what he had written to them in another epistle was not

to company with fornicators; which he had not so fully explained, neither what fornicators he meant, nor what by keeping company with them; he therefore in this distinguishes upon the former, and enlarges his sense of the latter; declaring that they were not so much as to eat with such persons; which shows, that this prohibition does not regard unclean copulation, or a joining with them in the sin of fornication, they had been used to in a state of unregeneracy, for some sort of companying with fornicators is allowed of in the next verse; whereas no degree of a sinful mixture with them would ever be tolerated: but that it is to be understood of a civil society and familiar conversation with them; which might bring a reproach upon religion, be a stumbling to weak Christians, and be of dangerous consequence to themselves and others; who hereby might be allured and drawn by their example into the commission of the same sinful practices. The apostle seems to allude to the customs and usages of the Jews, who abstained from all civil commerce and familiar acquaintance with unbelievers. They say,

“that everyone that does not study in the law, , “it is forbidden to come near him, and to exercise merchandise with him, and much less to walk with him in the way”, because there is no faith in him (m).”

(m) Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 2.

1 Corinthians 5:10

Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world,.... By “the fornicators of this world” are meant, such as were guilty of this sin, who were the men of the world, mere worldly carnal men, who were never called out of it, or ever professed to be; in distinction from those that were in the church,

that had committed this iniquity; and the apostle's sense is, that his former prohibition of keeping company with fornicators was not to be understood as referring to such persons as were, out of the church, as if no sort of civil conversation and commerce were to be had with men of such, and the like infamous characters; or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters: that is, of this world; for this clause is to be understood of each of these; so we read (n) of , “the covetous of the world”; by the covetous are meant, either such who are given up to inordinate lusts, who work all uncleanness with greediness, and can never be satisfied with their filthy enjoyments; or such who are greedily desirous of riches and wealth, and of increasing their worldly substance by any method, right or wrong; and who not only withhold that which is meet from others, but will not allow themselves what is proper and necessary: “extortioners” are either “ravishers”, as the word may be rendered: such who by force violate the chastity of others, youths or virgins; or robbers, who, by violence and rapine, take away that which is the right and property of others; or such who oppress the poor, detain their wages by fraud, or lessen them, and extort that by unlawful gain, which is unreasonable: idolaters are those who worship the false deities of the Heathens, or any idol, graven image, or picture of God, or men, or any creature whatsoever, or any but the one Lord God. The apostle, under these characters, comprises all manner of sin against a man's self, against his neighbour, and against God; against himself, as fornication; against his neighbour, as covetousness and extortion; and against God, as idolatry: and since the world abounded with men guilty of these several vices, all kind of civil correspondence with them could not be avoided,

for then must you needs go out of the world; meaning not out of Greece, or of any of the cities thereof, into other parts, but out of the world itself; they must even destroy themselves, or seek out for a new world: it is an hyperbolical way of speaking, showing that the thing is impracticable and impossible, since men of this sort are everywhere; and were all trade and conversation with them to be forbidden, the families of God's people could never be supported, nor the interest of religion maintained; a stop would soon be put to worldly business, and saints would have little or nothing to do in the world; wherefore, as the Arabic version reads it, “business would compel you to go out of the world”.

(n) Zohar in Exod. fol. 31. 2.

1 Corinthians 5:11

But now have I written unto you,... Which shows, that what he had written before was at another time, and in another epistle; but not that what he was now writing was different from the former, only he explains the persons of whom, and the thing about which he has before written:

not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator; or if any man that is a brother is called, or named a fornicator; or covetous, or an idolater; or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no, not to eat. The apostle's meaning is, that in his prohibition of keeping company with men of the above character, he would be understood of such persons as were called brethren; who had been received into the church, and had been looked upon, and had professed themselves to be such; and who might be mentioned by name, as notoriously guilty of fornication, covetousness, idolatry, and extortion, mentioned in the former verse; to which are added two other sins any of them might be addicted to, as “railing” either at their fellow brethren and Christians, or others giving reproachful language to them, and fixing invidious characters on them: and “drunkenness”; living in the frequent commission of that sin, and others before spoken of; and

that such persons remaining impenitent and incorrigible, still persisting, in such a vicious course of life, after due admonition given them, were not only to be removed from their religious society, from the communion of the church, and be debarred sitting down, and eating with them at the Lord's table, or at their love feasts, but also were to be denied civil conversation and familiarity with them, and even not suffered to eat common food at the same table with them: which though lawful to be used with the men of the world, yet for some reasons were not advisable to be used with such; partly for vindicating the honour of religion, and preventing the stumbling of the weak; and partly to make such offenders ashamed, and bring them to repentance. The apostle alludes to the behaviour of the Jews, either to persons that were under any pollution, as a woman in the days of her separation, when her husband, "might not eat with her" off of the same plate, nor at the same table, nor on the same cloth; nor might she drink with him, nor mix his cup for him; and the same was observed to persons that had issues on them (o): or rather to such as were under "the sentence of excommunication", and such an one was obliged to sit the distance of four cubits from others, and who might not eat nor drink with him; nor was he allowed to wash and shave himself, nor a sufficiency of food, nor any to sit with him within the space of four cubits, except those of his house (p).

(o) Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 11. sect. 17, 18, 19. & Tumaot Okelim, c. 16. sect. 11. & R. Abraham in ib. (p) T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1. & Piske Tosaph. in ib. art. 67, 68.

1 Corinthians 5:12

For what have I to do to judge,.... To admonish, reprove, censure, and condemn:

them also that are without? without the church, who never were in it, or members of it; to whom ecclesiastical jurisdiction does not reach; and with whom the apostle had no more concern, than the magistrates of one city, or the heads of one family have with another:

do not ye judge them that are within? and them only? The apostle appeals to their own conduct, that they only reprov'd, censured, and punished with excommunication, such as were within the pale of the church, were members of it, and belonged unto it; nor did they pretend to exercise a power over others; and it would have been well if they had made use of the power they had over their own members, by admonishing and reprov'g such as had sinned; by censuring delinquents, and removing from their communion scandalous and impenitent offenders; and therefore they need not wonder that the apostle only meant fornicators, &c. among them, and not those that were in the world, by his forbidding to company with such: reference seems to be had to ways of speaking among the Jews, who used not only to call themselves the church, and the Gentiles the world, and so them that were without, both their land and church; but even those among themselves that were profane, in distinction from their wise and good men. They say (q),

"if a man puts his phylacteries on his forehead, or upon the palm of his hand, this is the way of heresy (or, as in the Talmud (r), the way of the Karaites); if he covered them with gold, and put them upon his glove (or on his garments without, so Bartenora, or, as Maimonides interprets it, his arm, shoulder, or breast), lo, this is, "the way of them that are without":

on which the commentators (s) say, "these are the children of men, who walk after their own judgment, and not the judgment of the wise men": and Maimonides (t) says, they are such who deny the whole law, and neither believe anything, either of the written or the oral law.

(q) Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 8. (r) T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 2. (s) Jarchi, Bartenora, & Yom Tob, in Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 8. (t) In. ib.

1 Corinthians 5:13

But them that are without God judgeth,... Or “will judge”, in the great day of judgment; wherefore though such persons did not fall under the censures and punishment of the apostle, nor of a church of Christ, yet they shall not go unpunished; God will call them to an account for their fornication, covetousness, idolatry, extortion, &c. and will judge, condemn, and punish them, according to their works; and therefore since they do not fall under the cognizance of the churches of Christ, they are to be left to the tribunal of God; and all that the saints have to do is to watch over one another, and reprove, rebuke, and censure, as cases require, and as the case of this church did.

Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person; not that wicked thing, as some read it, but that wicked one; meaning not the devil, who is sometimes so called; a sense of the words proposed by Calvin, not asserted; but that wicked man, that, incestuous person, whom the apostle would have removed from among them, by excommunication; which was what became them as a church to do, and which lay in their power to do, and could only be done by them, and was to be their own pure act and deed: reference seems to be had to those passages in Deu 17:7 where the Septuagint render the phrase, , “thou shalt put away that wicked one among yourselves”.

1 Corinthians Chapter 6

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 6

The principal view of this chapter is to dissuade Christians from going to law with one another before Heathens, and also from fornication: the apostle begins with the first of these, and argues against it, from its being a daring, dangerous, and scandalous practice; and from the different characters of the persons, before whom controversies about civil things among Christians should and should not be brought; the one being saints, and so conscientious persons, and would do the right thing; the other unjust, and so justice could not be expected to be done by them, Co1 6:1, and that the former, and not the latter, should be appointed judges in such cases, is argued from the greater to the lesser; that seeing these will judge the world, much more then should they be employed in matters of less consequence, Co1 6:2 and by the same sort of argument it is further urged, that even angels themselves shall be judged by the saints; then much more might affairs appertaining to this life, be brought before them, and be decided by them, Co1 6:3 yea, even the things that were litigated by them, and which they had power of judging in, were such as might be determined by the men of the least capacity among them, and therefore had no need to bring them before Heathen magistrates, Co1 6:4 besides, it could not be spoken of, but to their shame, that after all their boast of their gifts, learning, and eloquence, there was not one man of wisdom and ability among them, to judge in matters of civil property, Co1 6:5 and this evil of commencing law suits in Heathen courts of judicature, is aggravated by its being done, not between Christians and heathens, but between one Christian brother and another, and that before men that were infidels, Co1 6:6 and which to do, showed a great deficiency of love, wisdom, and care; and much better it was to take and suffer wrong, than to be guilty of such criminal conduct, Co1 6:7 yea, those, that drew their brethren before

such judgment seats, did them wrong, both by bringing them thither, and by getting their cause in an unjust manner, Co1 6:8 wherefore, to deter from such unrighteous procedures, the apostles declares, that all injurious persons, and wicked men in any way, and of any sort, should not inherit the kingdom of God, Co1 6:9 and whereas some of those the apostle writes to had been such, but now through the grace of God were otherwise, this should be considered as an argument, why they should not contend with one another before persons destitute of the grace they were partakers of, Co1 6:11 and now the apostle having mentioned fornication as a sin which excluded from the kingdom of God, and this being reckoned by the Gentiles an indifferent thing; he first observes of indifferent things in general, that are really so, that though they are lawful to be used, it is not expedient to use them at all times, and under all circumstances; and especially care should be taken, that by the use of them, we do not become slaves unto them, Co1 6:12 and then particularly instances in meats, which without distinction might be lawfully eaten, they being made for the belly, and the belly for them; which was answering the original design of them, though hereafter both will be destroyed; yet fornication must not be put upon a level with them, and reckoned indifferent as they are; since the body was not made to be abused and defiled, or for fornication: but to be redeemed and sanctified by the Lord, and to serve him, and who was appointed for the redemption and sanctification of that, Co1 6:13 moreover, the sin of fornication is dissuaded from, by the consideration of the resurrection of the body as a glorious one, by the power of God, of which Christ's resurrection is a pledge; and therefore should not be defiled with this sin, Co1 6:14 as also from the bodies of the saints being the members of Christ; and therefore should not be made the members of an harlot by fornication, these things being utterly absurd and inconsistent, Co1 6:15. Which is illustrated by observing, that he that is joined in unlawful copulation with an harlot, becomes one flesh with her, Co1 6:16 which is confirmed by a passage cited out of Gen 2:24 which regards carnal copulation in general; but one that is in union with Christ, and is become a member of him, is one spirit with him; and therefore since there is such a spiritual union between them, fornication, which joins, unites, and makes a man one with an harlot, should be carefully avoided, Co1 6:17 and in order the more to deter from this sin, the apostle observes, that it is not like some other sins, which are without the body, but this is by it, and with it, and against it; it is dishonourable, and may be hurtful to it, Co1 6:18 to which he adds, that the bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, where he dwells, and therefore should not be polluted with fornication, Co1 6:19 and closes all with an argument, taken from their bodies not being their own property, to use and abuse at pleasure, but the purchase of Christ's blood; and therefore it was incumbent upon them to glorify him with them, as well as with their spirits, and not defile them with fornication.

1 Corinthians 6:1

Dare any of you, having a matter against another,...., Any thing in difference, an action, cause, or suit. The apostle having dispatched the affair of the incestuous person, and blamed this church for their conduct therein: and having given them instructions what they should do, proceeds to lay before them another evil among them he had to complain of; which was, when any difference arose among them about their worldly concerns, they would

go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints; a method of proceeding condemned by the Jews, who would not suffer any causes of theirs to be tried before Gentiles, only before Israelites; their canon runs thus (u),

“he that tries a cause before the judges of the Gentiles, and before their tribunals, although their

judgments are as the judgments of the Israelites, lo, this is an ungodly man; and it is as if he blasphemed and reproached, and lift up his hand against the law of Moses our master, as it is said, Exo 21:1 now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them, , “and not before the Gentiles”; , “and not before idiots”, private or illiterate men.”

They looked upon such an action as bad as profaning the name of God; hence they say (w),

“we must not try a cause in the courts of the Gentiles, for they come from the strength of judgment; this is Esau an hairy man, for they have no concord nor mercy--and he that comes before thee , “profanes the name of God”, who is gracious and merciful, and honours the name of an idol--wherefore he that brings a cause before the Gentiles, is the occasion of spreading the property of judgment in the world---therefore let a cause be tried before the Israelites, for they are the secret of mercy, and not before the Gentiles, nor before idiots:”

they affirm (x) it to be a greater sin than murder, and that not only profanations of the name of God, but rapine and violence are comprehended in it; and that to give evidence in an Heathen court against an Israelite, deserves excommunication; for so it is said, (y).

“he that bears witness against an Israelite , “in the courts of the Gentiles”, and by his testimony gets money from him, which is not according to the judgment of the Israelites, they excommunicate him until he repays it.”

Again (z).

“it is forbidden to order causes in the courts of (the rest of the nations) idolaters, for they have no part in the side of our faith.”

The apostle here dissuades from this practice, of going to law before Heathen magistrates, not only from its being an imprudent, but an impudent, “daring”, rash and adventurous action; and seems surprised that any should attempt it, when it must unavoidably expose their weaknesses and faults to their enemies; nor could they expect justice to be done them by men of such a character, as “unjust”, who neither feared God, nor regarded men; were not only destitute of righteousness, but filled with all unrighteousness, and had not so much as the principles of common justice and equity in them; when on the contrary, from the saints, men who have the principles of grace and holiness wrought in them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, who have the fear of God before their eyes, and upon their hearts; they might reasonably conclude, were matters brought before them, they would be adjusted according to judgment and truth, without exposing the sin and weakness of any party to the world.

(u) Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 26. sect. 7. Vid. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 38. 2. (w) R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 80. 4. (x) R. Bechai in Kad Hakkemach, fol. 21. 4. apud Buxtorf, Lex. Talm. col. 1666. (y) Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 6. sect. 14. (z) Zohar in Exod. fol. 103. 3.

1 Corinthians 6:2

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world,... The apostle appeals to them concerning this matter, as a thing well known unto them, or might easily be known by them; for this was either a

traditional notion among the Jews, many of whom were in this church, that good men should judge the world; as is said of the righteous in the apocryphal book:

“They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever.”
(Wisdom 3:8)

and so the Jews say (a), that

“the first day of the month is the beginning of judgment in the whole world, and Isaac sat on a throne, , “to judge the world”.”

or this might be collected, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, out of Dan 7:18, but the difficulty is, in what sense the apostle means the saints shall judge the world; not merely in a comparative sense, for so even will the Heathens, the men of Nineveh, and the queen of Sheba, judge and condemn the Jews; nor as assessors on the throne with Christ, for though they shall sit on the same throne with him as reigning, yet not as judging with him, all judgment is solely committed to him: nor merely as approving that judiciary sentence, that will be pronounced by him on the world; for even wicked men themselves, and devils, will be obliged to own the justice of it; but his meaning is, that in a little time the saints, Christian men, men under a profession of Christianity at least, should be governors in the world, and bear the office of civil magistracy in it; which came to pass in a few centuries after the writing of this, and has been more or less the case ever since; and will be more so in the latter day, when kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church; and when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High: upon which the apostle strongly argues,

and if the world shall be judged by you; if such men as you shall bear sway in it, fill up all civil offices in it, even the highest; shall sit upon the benches of judges, and on the thrones of kings, and at last have the government of the whole world; since such honour the saints shall have, and be abundantly capable of it,

are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? is it too high a post, and can you be thought to be unqualified for, and unfit to have such trivial things, of little or no moment and importance, things relating to the common affairs of life, brought before you, and be tried, and judged by you?

(a) Ibid. in Lev. fol. 13. 4.

1 Corinthians 6:3

Know ye not that we shall judge angels,.... Meaning not the ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, called “angels”, Rev 1:20 whose doctrines are examined, tried, and judged by the saints, according to the word of God; nor the good angels, who, were it possible that they could, or should publish a Gospel contrary to what has been preached by the apostle, would be contradicted, condemned, and accursed by him, see Gal 1:8 but the evil angels, the devil and his angels: and this is to be understood not of their future final judgment and condemnation at the last day, when saints will subscribe unto, and approve of the sentence pronounced upon them, and will triumph over them in their destruction; but of the judgment of them, and of their ejection out of the Gentile world, out of their oracles, idols, and idol temples, to which Christ refers, Joh 12:31 and calls the judgment of

this world, and the casting out of the prince of it by the ministry of his apostles; and which was now already begun, and ere long would be fully accomplished: accordingly the Syriac version renders it, “know ye not, that we are about to judge angels?” and the Arabic, “know ye not that we judge angels?” from whence the apostle infers very justly,

how much more things that pertain to this life? this animal life; to the trade and business of life; to pecuniary matters, to estates and possessions in this world, about which differences may arise between one saint and another.

1 Corinthians 6:4

If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life,... Not judgements relating to life and death, for these were not in the power of a Jewish sanhedrim now, and much less of a Christian community, but were wholly in the power of the Roman magistrates; but judgments relating to the common affairs of life, or what the Jews call, “pecuniary judgments” (b), in distinction from, “judgments of souls”, or capital ones. The Jews say (c),

“that forty years before the destruction of the temple, capital judgments were taken from Israel; and in the days of R. Simeon ben Jochai, pecuniary judgments were taken away from Israel.”

Now this Rabbi lived many years after the times of the apostles, so that as yet the Jews had a power of exercising such judgments; and no doubt the Christian’s also, who as yet were very little, if at all, distinguished from the Jews by the Romans: and therefore since such judgments were within the compass of their authority, the apostle advises

to set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church; meaning, not those of the lowest circumstances of life, and of the meanest abilities and capacities; for in the next verse he requires a wise man for such a business; but private persons, laymen, who were not in any office and authority in the church, in distinction from pastors, elders, and rulers, that were in office, power, and high esteem, whom he would not have troubled with cases of this nature; but should rather choose out from among the laity persons of the best judgment and capacity, to be umpires and arbitrators in such worldly matters, which do not so properly come under the notice and cognizance of spiritual guides. The phrase, “to judge”, is not in the original text, where it is only “set”, or “put in the chair”; but is added in the Vulgate Latin version; and to which agree both the Syriac and Arabic versions; the former reading the words, “they that are despised in the church, set for you in judgment”; and the latter, “make them to sit judges”. The Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, besides their great sanhedrim of seventy one persons, and that other of twenty three in their cities of note, and their triumvirate in every synagogue, had also two sorts of benches, who judged of lesser matters; the one was called, “the bench of authorized persons”, experienced men, that were approved of, and had their authority from the sanhedrim; and the other was called, “the bench of idiots” (d), or private persons, or, “the bench of those who were not authorized” (e), or had not their authority, from the higher courts; but being judged proper persons, were chosen by the people to arbitrate matters in difference between them; and these are the men the apostle means, at least alludes to, before whom he would have the causes brought.

(b) Misn Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 1. (c) T. Hieros. Sanhedrin. fol. 24. 2. (d) T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 32. 1. (e) Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 17. sect. 13. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 88. 2. Gloss. in. ib.

1 Corinthians 6:5

I speak to your shame,.... Not that they did set such persons to judge, but that they did not; and instead of so doing went to law with their brethren before the unjust:

is it so that there is not a wise man among you? this also the apostle speaks to their shame, who had so much gloried in their wisdom, and boasted of their parts and abilities to the contempt of others, and even of the apostle himself; and yet acted as if there was not a wise man among them capable of judging and determining trivial matters, but they must carry them before unconverted persons:

no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? for though the above mentioned benches consisted of three persons, yet the contending parties might choose one man to be an arbitrator and judge between them. The rule with the Jews was this (f);

“pecuniary judgments are by three, but if he is authorised or approved by the majority, , “he may judge alone”. Says R. Nachman, as I judge pecuniary judgments alone; and so says R. Chaijah, as I judge pecuniary punishments alone.”

(f) T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 5. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhed. c. 5. sect. 8.

1 Corinthians 6:6

But brother goeth to law with brother,.... The relation meant is spiritual; it was usual for members of churches to be called brethren, they professing to be born again of the same Father, and belonging to the same family under Christ, the son, firstborn, and master of it: and a very wicked and shameful thing it was, that persons in such a relation, being of such a family, should go to law with one another at all:

and that before the unbelievers; which is an aggravation of their sin and folly. The apostle before calls them “unjust”, now “infidels”, such as had no faith in Christ, disbelieved the Messiah, and denied the whole Gospel, and therefore no faith or confidence should be put in them; for, generally speaking, such as have no faith, are not only wicked, but unreasonable men, men of no reason, conscience, justice, and equity; and therefore very improper persons for believers to bring their causes before.

1 Corinthians 6:7

Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you,.... Or a “defect”: a want of brotherly love, or there would be no occasion to go to law at all; a want of wisdom and conduct, or proper persons would be pitched upon, and chosen out from among themselves to be arbitrators and judge between them; and a want of care among their leaders, who else would have pointed out to them such a method of accommodation, and not have suffered them to go the lengths they did:

because ye go to law one with another; which would never be, was there not a declension among you, a decay of your first love, and of the power of religion and true godliness:

why do ye not rather take wrong why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? than to go to

law, especially before unjust persons and unbelievers, taking the advice of Christ, Mat 5:40 It is more advisable to a believer to suffer wrong than to go to law with any man, and especially with a brother. It is a petition in the Jewish liturgy (g),

“let it please thee, O Lord God, and the God of my fathers, to deliver me this day, and every day--- from hard judgment, and a severe adversary, , “whether he be a Son of the covenant, or whether he be not a son of the covenant””

(g) Seder Tephillot, fol. 3. 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 5. 2. Ed. Amst.

1 Corinthians 6:8

Nay, you do wrong and defraud,.... So far were they from taking and acting up to the advice given, that instead of taking wrong, they did wrong; and instead of suffering themselves to be defrauded, they defrauded others:

and that your brethren; that were of the same faith, of the same religion, and in the same church and family: in short, neither party, not the plaintiff, nor the defendant, sought anything more or less than to wrong, trick, and defraud each other; such a sad corruption and degeneracy prevailed among them: hence the apostle thought to deal plainly and closely with them, as in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 6:9

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?.... A way of speaking much like that in the Talmud, “know thou, that the world to come is not made but for the righteous?” (h) Without a righteousness there will be no entrance into the world of bliss and happiness hereafter; and this must be a better righteousness than what a sinful creature is capable of working out, and no other than the righteousness of Christ. It was a loss and want of righteousness that cast the angels down from heaven, and turned Adam out of paradise; and whoever of his posterity: are destitute of one, will fall short of enjoying the glory of God; for it is not agreeable to the holy nature of God, to his infinite justice and righteous law, to admit any into heaven without a righteousness: hence a judgment seat is erected, before which all must stand; and those that will be found without a righteousness, will be forever excluded the kingdom of heaven; and could any unrighteous persons be received there, it would spoil the pleasure and happiness of the saints. Now this is said, partly to dissuade the Corinthians from going to law with each other before unrighteous persons, who have no right to the kingdom of God, and living and dying as they are, will have no share in it; and therefore since they are not to be fellow heirs and companions with them in another world, they should not bring their causes before them in this; and partly to reprove them for their injurious and unrighteous actions among themselves, their tricking and defrauding of one another, with other sins they were guilty of; which, if not repented of, would show, that notwithstanding their profession, they were destitute of the grace of God, were unfit to be in the kingdom of God, in a Gospel church state here below, and would be shut out of the kingdom of heaven hereafter.

Be not deceived imagining, that through your knowledge and profession you shall be saved, live as you will:

neither fornicators, such as are guilty of uncleanness with persons in a single state:

nor idolaters; who worship more gods than one, and not the true God; who do service to them that are not gods, and perform what the Jews call “strange service”: and not only fall down to stocks and stones, but serve divers lusts and pleasures, the idols of their own hearts:

nor adulterers: such as have criminal conversation with persons in a married state:

nor effeminate; or “soft”, or, as the Syriac renders it, “corrupters”; that is, of themselves, by voluntary pollution, such as are guilty of the sin of Onan, Gen 38:8.

Nor abusers of themselves with mankind; sodomites.

(h) T. Bab. Yebamot, fol 47. 1.

1 Corinthians 6:10

Nor thieves,.... Who take away another man’s property, secret or openly, by fraud or force.

Nor covetous: insatiable, in the lust of uncleanness; or greedy of worldly gain, bent upon increasing their substance at any rate, by circumvention, fraud, and deceit; and do not use the things of this life as they should, for their own good, and that of others.

Nor drunkards who are strong to drink strong liquors; who give up themselves thereunto: who sit down on purpose to intoxicate themselves, and are frequent in the commission of this sin.

Nor revilers; who are free with other men’s characters, load them with reproaches, and take away their good names; either openly or secretly, either by tale bearing, whispering, and backbiting, or by raising and spreading scandalous reports in a public manner.

Nor extortioners ravishers of virgins; or plunderers of men’s substance in an open and forcible way; or who extort unlawful gain:

shall inherit the kingdom of God; not that these sins, any or all of them, are unpardonable; for such who have been guilty of them may, through the blood of Christ, receive the remission of them, and through the grace of the Spirit of God obtain repentance for them, and have both right and meetness for the kingdom of heaven, as the following words show.

1 Corinthians 6:11

And such were some of you,.... Not all, but some of them; and of these everyone was not guilty of all these crimes; but some had been guilty of one, and others of another; so that they had been all committed by one or another of them. The Corinthians were a people very much given to uncleanness and luxury, without measure (i), which was the ruin of their state: and among these wicked people God had some chosen vessels of salvation; who are put in mind of their former state, partly for their present humiliation, when they considered what they once were, no better than others, but children of wrath, even as others; and partly to observe to them, and the more to illustrate and magnify the grace of God in their conversion, pardon, justification, and salvation; as also to point

out to them the obligations that lay upon them to live otherwise now than they formerly did.

But ye are washed; which is not to be understood of external washing, of corporeal ablution, or of their being baptized in water; so they might be, and yet not be cleansed from their filthiness, either by original or actual transgressions; nor of the washing of regeneration, which more properly comes under the next head; but of their being washed from their sins by the blood of Christ, through the application of it to them, for the remission of them; which supposes them to have been polluted, as they were originally, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; naturally, for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? and internally, in heart, mind, and conscience; also universally, both as to persons, and as to the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and that they could not wash and cleanse themselves by any ceremonial purifications, moral duties, or evangelical performances; but that this was a blessing of grace they enjoyed through the blood of Christ, by which they were washed from their sins, both in the sight of God, his justice being satisfied for them, they were all pardoned and done away, so as to be seen no more, and they appeared unblamable and irreprovable in his sight; and also in their own apprehensions, for being convinced of their pollution, and being directed to Christ for cleansing, the Spirit of God took his blood, and sprinkled it on their consciences, to the appeasement of them, the removal of sin from thence, and a non-remembrance of it.

But ye are sanctified; which designs not their sanctification by God the Father, which is no other than the eternal separation of them from himself, or his everlasting choice of them to eternal happiness; nor the sanctification of them, or the expiation of their sins by the blood of Christ, this is meant in the former clause; nor their sanctification in Christ, or the imputation of his holiness with his obedience and death for their justification, which is intended in the following one; but the sanctification of the Spirit, which lies in a principle of spiritual life infused into the soul, in a spiritual light in the understanding, in a flexion of the will to the will of God, both in grace and providence, in a settlement of the affections on divine objects, and in an implantation of every grace; which is a gradual work, as yet not perfect, but will be fulfilled in all in whom it is begun.

But ye are justified; not by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ. Justified they were from all eternity, as soon as Christ became a surety for them; and so they were when he rose from the dead, who were justified as their head and surety, and they in him; but here it is to be understood of their being justified in the court of conscience, under the witnessings of the Spirit of God; who having convinced them of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and having brought near the righteousness of Christ unto them, and wrought faith in them to lay hold on it, pronounced them justified persons in their own consciences; whence followed joy, peace, and comfort.

In the name of the Lord Jesus; which may refer, as the following clause, to all that is said before: by “the name of the Lord Jesus” may be meant he himself; and the sense be, that they were washed by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and justified by his righteousness; or it may intend the merit and efficacy of Christ’s blood, sacrifice, and righteousness; as that their sins were pardoned, and they cleansed from them through the merit of the blood of Christ shed for the remission of their sins; and that they were regenerated and sanctified through the efficacy of Christ’s resurrection from the dead; and were instilled by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ: or else the name of Christ may design his Gospel, through which they received the knowledge of God’s way of pardoning sinners, and justifying them, and the Spirit of God, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification:

and by the Spirit of our God; who sprinkled the blood of Christ upon them, to the cleansing of them; who sanctified their hearts, and revealed the righteousness of Christ unto them for their justification, and pronounced the sentence of it upon them. It is to be observed, that all the three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, are here mentioned, as being jointly concerned in those acts of grace.

(i) Aelian. Hist. var. l. 1. c. 19.

1 Corinthians 6:12

All things are lawful unto me,.... That is, which are of an indifferent nature; otherwise everything is not lawful to be done:

but all things are not expedient; when the doing of them destroys the peace, comfort, and edification of others; when it stumbles and grieves weak minds, and causes offence to them; see Co1 10:23

all things are lawful for me; which is repeated for the sake of saying the following words:

but I will not be brought under the power of any; which would be very inexpedient, should any by the use of liberty in things indifferent, on the one hand, offend his brethren, and, on the other, bring himself into bondage to those very things he has the free use of; and therefore the apostle determines, that these shall not have the mastery over him, that he will use them, or not use them, at his pleasure. It is somewhat difficult to know what in particular he has respect unto, whether to what he had been treating of before, concerning going to law before unbelievers; and his sense be, that however lawful this might be in itself, yet it was not expedient, since it was exposing of themselves to ungodly persons, and a putting themselves under their power to judge and determine as they pleased; or whether to the use of meats forbidden under the law, or offered to idols; which though in themselves lawful to be eaten, every creature of God being good, and not to be refused and accounted common and unclean; yet it was not expedient to use this liberty, if a weak brother should be grieved, or a man himself become a slave to his appetite.

1 Corinthians 6:13

Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats,.... All sort of food is appointed and provided to satisfy the appetite and stomach, to fill the belly, and nourish the body; and the belly, and all the parts through which the food passes, are purposely formed by God for the reception and digestion of the food, for its secretion, chyfication, and nutrition by it, and the ejection of the excrementitious parts.

But God shall destroy both it and them: at death, and in the grave, when the one shall be consumed, and the other be needless and useless; and though that part of the body, with the rest, will be raised at the last day, since the body will be raised perfect, consisting of all its parts; yet there will be no appetite, no desire in the stomach after meats, no need of them to fill the belly, and so no use of these parts for such purposes as they now are; for the children of the resurrection will be like the angels, and stand in no need of eating and drinking.

Now the body is not for fornication. Though meats are appointed for the belly, and the belly for them, and this and the other sort of meats are of an indifferent kind, which may or may not be used; yet this cannot be said of fornication, which the Corinthians, and other Gentiles, took to be equally

indifferent as meats; but the apostle shows there is not the same reason for the one as the other. The body was not originally made and appointed for fornication; this is quite besides the will of God, who has provided marriage as a remedy against it:

but for the Lord; for Jesus Christ, for whom a body was prepared in God's council and covenant; and for the sake of which, and after the exemplar of it in God's eternal mind, the body of man was first formed; and which was also made, as after the image, so for the glory of Christ, to be a member of his, to be redeemed by him, and to serve him in, in righteousness and holiness, and at last to be raised by him, and made like to his glorious body at the great day.

And the Lord for the body; he was preordained in the council of God, and provided in the covenant of grace, and sent in the fulness of time to be a Redeemer and Saviour of the body, as well as the soul; to be a sanctifier of it, and the raiser of it up from the dead in the resurrection; all which are so many arguments to dissuade from the sin of fornication.

1 Corinthians 6:14

And God hath both raised up the Lord,... God the Father has raised up from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, though not exclusive of the Son, who was equally concerned in the resurrection of himself, whereby he demonstrated himself to be the Son of God, truly and properly God.

And will also raise up us by his own power; for the resurrection of the dead, whether of Christ, or of his people, is an act of power, of God's own power, even of his almighty power, and is what the power of a mere creature could never effect. Now as Christ, the head, is raised, so shall all his members by the same power; their bodies will be raised powerful, glorious, incorruptible; and spiritual; an argument that they were never made for fornication, nor to be defiled with such uncleanness.

1 Corinthians 6:15

Know ye not that your bodies are the members, of Christ,... The whole persons of God's elect were chosen in Christ, and given to him, and made one with him, their bodies as well as their souls; and both are redeemed by him, and, in union with him, are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones:

shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. Signifying, that it is a most absurd, indecent, abominable, and detestable thing, that the bodies of the saints, which are the members of Christ, should be joined in carnal copulation with an harlot.

1 Corinthians 6:16

What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot,... Not in marriage, but in carnal copulation, and unclean embraces, is one body with her

for two ("saith he", Adam, or Moses, or God, or the Scripture, or as R. Sol. Jarchi says, the Holy Spirit, Gen 2:24)

shall be one flesh; what is originally said of copulation in lawful marriage, in which man and wife,

legally coupled together, become one flesh, is applied to the unlawful copulation of a man with an harlot, by which act they also become one body, one flesh; and which is made use of by the apostle, to deter the members of Christ from the commission of this sin, which makes a member of Christ one body and flesh with an harlot, than which nothing is more monstrous and detestable. The apostle here directs to the true sense of the phrase in Genesis, “and they shall be one flesh”; that is, man and wife shall only have carnal knowledge of, and copulation with each other. Some Jewish (k) writers interpret this phrase, “on account of the foetus”, which is formed by the means of them both, and which becomes “their one flesh”: others (l), thus as if they were, or because they are, like as if they were one flesh; but others (m), in more agreement with the apostle, think that this has respect, “to that conjunction”, by which the fixing of the species is completed; and others (n) expressly thus, “they two shall be one flesh”, “that is, in the place where both of them make one flesh”: which is equally done by unlawful copulation with an harlot, as with a man’s own wife.

(k) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 3. Jarchi in Gen. ii. 24. (l) Aben Ezra in ib. (m) R. Levi ben Gersom in ib. (n) Bereshit Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 15. 3. T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 3.

1 Corinthians 6:17

He that is joined unto the Lord,... As every elect person is; his whole person, soul and body, is united to the Lord Jesus Christ, to his whole person, as God-man and Mediator; even as Adam and Eve, whose marriage was a representation of the marriage between Christ and his church, were personally united, and were called by the same name; and as the whole human nature of Christ, consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul, was united to the person of the Son of God; and as appears from the influence that union with Christ has upon the redemption, sanctification, and resurrection of the body. The ground, foundation, and bond of which union is, not the Spirit on Christ’s part; for the Spirit being received as a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, &c. is a fruit of union to Christ, and an evidence of it; nor faith on our part, which as a grace is not ours, but the gift of God, and is a fruit of union; nor is it of an uniting nature, but is a grace of communion; and the foundation of all its acts, as seeing Christ, going to him, receiving of him, walking on in him; &c. is a previous union to Christ; but it is the everlasting and unchangeable love of Christ to them, shown in his choice of them, in his covenant with his Father on their behalf, in his engaging for them as a surety, in assuming their nature, and acting, both in time and eternity, as the representative of them, which is the bond and cement of their union, and from which there can be no separation. This union is first discovered in the effectual calling, and will be more manifest hereafter. Now he that is in this sense united to Christ,

is one spirit; for this union is a spiritual one; it is complete and perfect; near and indissoluble; by virtue and in consequence of it, God’s chosen ones come to have and enjoy the same spirit in measure, which Christ their head and Mediator has without measure: hence they have the Spirit of God, as a spirit of illumination and conversion, of faith and holiness, of adoption, and as the earnest, pledge, and seal of their future glory. And since so it is, fornication, which makes them one flesh with an harlot, ought studiously to be abstained from.

1 Corinthians 6:18

Flee fornication,... As that which is hurtful, scandalous, and unbecoming Christians; avoid it, and all the occasions of it, that may lead unto it, and be incentives of it:

every sin that a man doth is without the body not but that other sins are committed by the body, and by the members of it as instruments; they are generally committed by the abuse of other things that are without, and do not belong to the body; and so do not bring that hurt unto and reproach upon the body, as fornication does:

but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body; not meaning his wife, which is as his own body; but his proper natural body, which is not only the instrument by which this sin is committed, but the object against which it is committed; and which is defiled and dishonoured by it; and sometimes its strength and health are impaired, and it is filled with nauseous diseases hereby.

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,... What is said in Co1 3:16 of the saints in general, is here said of their bodies in particular. The Holy Spirit, in regeneration and sanctification, when he begins the good work of grace on a man, takes possession of his whole person, soul and body, and dwells therein as in his temple. So the Jews (o) call the body of a righteous man the “habitation” of the Holy Spirit. Now it is most abominably scandalous and shameful that that body, which is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, which is sacred to him as a temple, should be defiled by the sin of fornication: it is added,

which is in you, which ye have of God; meaning the Holy Spirit which was in them, as in his temple; which dwelt in their hearts, and influenced their bodies, lives, and conversations; and which they received of God as a wonderful instance of his grace and love to them; that he should be bestowed upon them, to regenerate, renew, and sanctify them, to implant every grace, to make them a fit habitation for God, and meet for the inheritance of the saints in light:

and ye are not your own: their own masters, at their own dispose, to live to their own lusts, or the lusts of men; men have not power over their bodies to abuse them at pleasure by fornication, or such like uncleanness, neither single nor married persons; see Co1 7:4 and of all men, not the saints, who are neither their own nor other men’s, nor Satan’s, but God’s; not only by creation, but by choice and covenant; and Christ’s by gift, by purchase, and powerful grace, and in a conjugal relation to him; wherefore fornication ill becomes them.

(o) R. Joseph Albo. apud Pocock. Not. in Pert. Mosis, p. 120, 121.

1 Corinthians 6:20

For ye are bought with a price,... Not with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as the whole church, and all the elect of God are. This proves them to be the Lord’s, not only his redeemed ones, being ransomed by a price from the bondage of the law, sin, Satan, and the world; but his espoused ones, and which is chiefly designed here; for one way of obtaining and espousing a wife among the Jews was by a price (p);

“a woman (they say) is obtained or espoused three ways; “by silver”, by a writing, and by lying with; by silver, the house of Shammai say, by a penny, and the value of a penny; the house of Hillel say, by a “pruta”, and the value of a “pruta”: how much is a “pruta?” the eighth part of an Italian farthing.”

That is, be it ever so small a price, yet if given and taken on the account of espousals, it made them valid; and it was an ancient rite in marriage used among other nations (q) for husband and wife to buy each other: Christ, indeed, did not purchase his church to be his spouse, but because she was so; but then his purchasing of her with his blood more clearly demonstrated and confirmed his right unto her, as his spouse; he betrothed her to himself in eternity, in the everlasting covenant of grace; but she, with the rest of the individuals of human nature, fell into sin, and so, under the sentence of the law, into the hands of Satan, and the captivity of the world; to redeem her from whence, and by so doing to own and declare her his spouse, and his great love to her, he gave himself a ransom price for her; which lays her under the greatest obligation to preserve an inviolable chastity to him, and to love and honour him.

Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's; by "God" is here meant more especially the Lord Jesus Christ, by the price of whose blood the bodies and souls of his people are bought, which lays the obligation on them to glorify him in and with both; and contains a very considerable proof of the deity of Christ; who is "glorified", when all the perfections of the divine nature are ascribed to him; when the whole of salvation is attributed to him, and he is looked unto, received, trusted in and depended on as a Saviour, and praise and thanks are given unto him on that account; and when his Gospel is embraced and professed, and walked worthy of, and his ordinances submitted to, and his commandments kept in love to him: and he is to be glorified both in body and spirit; "in body", by an outward attendance on his worship, and a becoming external conversation; by confessing and speaking well of him; by acting for him, laying out and using time, strength, and substance, for his honour and interest; and by patient suffering for his name's sake: "in spirit", which is done when the heart or spirit is given up to him, and is engaged in his service, and when his glory lies near unto it; the reason enforcing all this, is because both are his; not only by creation, but by his Father's gift of both unto him; by his espousal of their whole persons to himself; and by his redemption of both soul and body from destruction: the Vulgate version reads, "bear" or "carry God in your body", and leaves out the next words, "and in your spirit", which are God's; and which also are left out in the Ethiopic and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others.

(p) Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1. (q) Servius, in Virgil. Georg. l. 1. lin. 31.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 7

In this, chapter, various cases concerning marriage being proposed to the apostle, are answered by him; and he discourses of the nature, use, and end of marriage, and of the duties of married persons to one another; and gives advice to such as were unmarried, and points at the advantages of a single state, where it can be continued in without danger. Some of the Corinthians having written to him upon these heads, he returns for answer in general, that abstinence from marriage was most advisable; that is, at that time of persecution, and by those who had the gift of continence, and for reasons after mentioned, Co1 7:1 though, in order to avoid fornication, it was absolutely necessary for truth who had not that gift to enter into it, and act agreeably thereunto, Co1 7:2 and therefore advises both parties in such a state to yield due benevolence to each other, Co1 7:3 giving this as a reason for it, that neither of them had power over their own bodies, but over each other's, Co1 7:4 wherefore abstinence from the marriage bed ought not to be but with the following limitations; that it be by mutual agreement, and only for a time, and that only for the sake of devotion but that they come together again, lest Satan should take an advantage of their incontinency, and tempt them to evil, Co1 7:5 though in all this the apostle would be understood to speak, not in an authoritative, but a

permissive way, and rather by way of counsel than of command, Co1 7:6 and expresses his hearty wish, that everyone was, and would continue, in a single state, as he himself; though he corrects himself by observing, that it was not the pleasure of God to bestow the gift of continency on everyone, and therefore suggests, that it was right for everyone to act according to the gift he had received, Co1 7:7 and then addresses persons in a single state, whether they had ever been married or not, and advises them so to abide, partly by his own example, and partly by the profitableness of it, Co1 7:8 but if they had not the gift of continency, his counsel is, that they enter into a marriage state, giving this reason for it, that it is better to enter into such a state than to be inflamed with lust, Co1 7:9 and then he directs himself to married persons; and these he commands, not in his own name, but in the name of the Lord, to live together; and particularly, that the wife should not leave her husband for any trivial matter, or on account of any difference that might arise between them, Co1 7:10 and that if she so did, she ought to remain unmarried, or seek to be reconciled to her husband, and come to him again; and, on the other hand, the husband ought not to divorce his wife, unless in case of adultery and wilful obstinate desertion, Co1 7:11. And as to another case of conscience which was moved unto him, whether a believer, having married an unbeliever, should live together; he answers, that if a Christian brother had married an unbelieving wife, and she thought fit to continue with him, he should not put her away, Co1 7:12. And so a Christian woman that had married an unbelieving husband, if it was his pleasure to dwell with her, she ought not to forsake him, Co1 7:13 giving this reason for it, because they were legally married to each other, or otherwise their children must be reckoned bastards; whereas by maintaining the validity of their marriage, and abiding by it, they would appear to be legitimate, Co1 7:14 but if the unbeliever, whether man or woman, thinks fit to desert the believing wife or husband, so be it, the party deserted may make themselves easy, nor are they under obligation to remain unmarried: however, as they are called to peace they ought to seek it, and endeavour to live quietly together, Co1 7:15 and that for this reason, because they may be the means of the conversion, and so of the salvation of the unbelieving party, Co1 7:16 hence the apostle takes an occasion to exhort every man in general to walk and abide in the calling wherein he is called, this being an order he had given to all the churches, Co1 7:17 and which he exemplifies by particular instances, as that those who are called in circumcision, or in uncircumcision, should abide so, Co1 7:18 because these are nothing, or indifferent things, which may be, or may not be; but keeping the commandments is binding, and not to be dispensed with, Co1 7:19 wherefore the general rule is repeated, that it might be the more regarded and observed, Co1 7:20. And another instance given, illustrating it, as that if a man is called while a servant, he should make himself easy, and continue so; though if he can have his freedom it is most eligible, Co1 7:21. The reason persuading him to be satisfied with his condition is, because he that is called by grace, though a servant in a civil sense, is the Lord's freeman in a spiritual sense; and, on the other hand, he who is free in a civil sense when called, is in a spiritual sense a servant of Christ, Co1 7:22 as clearly appears by his being bought with the price of his blood; and therefore neither one nor the other should be servants of men in matters of religion, Co1 7:23. Wherefore, as before, it becomes every man to abide in the station in which he is called, until it please God in his providence to change his situation, Co1 7:24. After this the apostle returns to his former subject about marriage, and addresses the virgins particularly, concerning whom he declares he had no express commandment from the Lord, but however was willing to give his judgment and advice, with all sincerity and uprightness, as one that had the honour to be counted faithful by the Lord himself, Co1 7:25 and his judgment was, that considering the present persecution of the churches of Christ, it was better for single persons, men or women, to remain so, Co1 7:26 though he advises those that were married by no means to desert one another, or seek to dissolve the marriage bond; as, on the other hand, those that were free from it, he would not have them seek out for a wife, Co1 7:27 though should they, it would not be criminal in them; and whether young men or

maidens, it was not unlawful for them to marry, only it was not so convenient for the present; and such therefore must expect trouble in the world, Co1 7:28. However, it was proper, since time was short, and every worldly enjoyment was fading and perishing, that care be taken that there be no abuse of any, in whatsoever state and condition, or circumstance men were in; neither to be too much depressed with afflictive providences, nor too much elated with prosperous ones; and by no means to indulge to lasciviousness and luxury, Co1 7:29. And whereas the married life is a careful one, and the apostle was desirous the persons he writes to should be without any distressing care, he advised so strongly as he did to a single state; and in order to persuade to it, he puts the difference between an unmarried and a married man, who though they both had their cares, yet about different things; the former about divine and religious things, in order to please the Lord; the latter about worldly things, in order to please his wife, Co1 7:32. And just the like difference he observes there is between a wife and a virgin; the virgin, she is concerned about and taken up in religious matters, that she may increase in holiness, both inward and outward; and the wife is engaged in worldly and domestic affairs, which engross her thoughts and time, in order to please her husband, Co1 7:34 wherefore the advice he had given to continue single, was manifestly for the profit and advantage of such persons in spiritual things; though he gave it with no design to ensnare any, who had not the gift of continence, but advised to it, when it could be done, in a comely manner, and that they might attend upon the worship of God, without distraction by worldly cares for their families, Co1 7:35 but in case, when a virgin is ripe for marriage, and there is a necessity for it, it is by no means advisable in parents to behave uncomely to her, and refuse to marry her, and so deprive her of the remedy against incontinence; when such is the case, she ought to marry, that being not sinful, yea, it would be sinful to do otherwise, Co1 7:36 yet where there is no necessity, where persons have the gift of continency, are steadfastly determined not to marry, but, to keep their virginity, this is commendable as well as profitable, Co1 7:37 whence this conclusion is drawn, that they that marry do well, rather than burn in lust, or commit sin, but they that do not marry, having the gift of continency, do better, both for themselves, and for the Lord, Co1 7:38. And whereas whilst an husband is living, the wife is bound by law to continue with him; and when he is dead, she may marry whom she will, So be it she seeks the Lord, and has his glory in view, Co1 7:39 yet in the judgment of the apostle she would be a much more happy person should she continue a widow; and this was not only his own private judgment, but he had reason to believe it was according to the mind of the Spirit of God, Co1 7:40.

1 Corinthians 7:1

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me,.... Though the false apostles had greatly influenced the members of this church, yet there were many among them that had a very great respect for the apostle, and kept up a correspondence with him, though at a distance from him, by writing; in which way they informed him of their doubts and difficulties, that arose in their minds about certain things, and desired his judgment in them, to which they paid a very great deference. The things they wrote to him about, here referred to, may be collected from the contents of this chapter, and some others following; as whether a Christian man ought not to abstain from the use of women; whether a believer ought to live with an unbelieving yoke fellow; whether such as had been circumcised should not make use of some methods to draw on the foreskin of their flesh; whether apprentices, who were called by the grace of God, ought to serve out their time with their masters; and concerning celibacy or virginity, the eating of things offered to idols, and the maintenance of ministers: and he begins with the first; to which he answers,

it is good for a man not to touch a woman; which is to be understood, not of merely touching a

woman, which can neither be criminal, nor in all cases inexpedient, or be attended with any ill, or dangerous consequences; nor of the matrimonial contract, which is lawful and honourable; but of the act of carnal copulation with a woman: in this sense the Jews use the phrase,

“there are three (they say (r)) that fled from transgression, and the blessed God joined his name with them; and they are these, Joseph, and Joel, and Phalti. Joseph, as appears from what is said, Psa 81:5 “a testimony in Joseph is his name”; what is the meaning of the phrase “in Joseph?” this testifies concerning him, , “that he did not touch Potiphar’s wife” (i.e. he did not lie with her); Jael, as is clear from what is said, Jdg 4:18 “and Jael went forth to meet Sisera, and she covered him with a mantle”; what is the meaning of the phrase, (which is rendered, “with a mantle”;) our Rabbins here (in Babylon) say with a linen cloth; but our Rabbins there (in the land of Israel) say with bed clothes; says Resh Lekish, if we run over the whole Scripture, we shall not find any household goods so called; wherefore what is it? it is all one as , “my name is thus”: and the meaning is, my name witnesses concerning her, , “that that wicked one (Sisera) did not touch her” (s); (i.e. had not carnal knowledge of her;) Phalti, as is evident from hence, one Scripture says, “and Saul gave Michal his daughter to Phalti”, Sa1 25:44 and another Scripture says Phaltiel; sometimes he is called Phalti, and sometimes he is called Phaltiel; who takes Phalti? and who gives Phaltiel? but I testify concerning him; , “that he did not touch David’s wife”; (i.e. did not lie with her;)”

see Gen 20:6. And in this sense also is the word “touch” used, both by Greek and Latin authors. The apostle’s meaning is not that it is unlawful to marry, or that it is sinful to lie with a woman in lawful wedlock; but that it is much better, and more expedient on several accounts, to abstain from the use of women, when persons have the gift of continency.

(r) Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 4. & 165. 1. Vid Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 4. (s) Vid. Kimchi in Jud. iv. 18.

1 Corinthians 7:2

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication,... Or “fornications”; meaning either the frequent commission of that sin; or all sorts of uncleanness and pollution, which may be avoided by wedlock, and the proper use of the marriage bed, where the gift of continency is not bestowed: wherefore to prevent unlawful copulations, as of single persons with one another, or of a married person with a single one, the apostle advises, as being what is right and proper,

let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband; that is, let every man that has a wife enjoy her, and make use of her, and let every woman that has an husband, receive him into her embraces; for these words are not to be understood of unmarried persons entering into a marriage state, for the words suppose them in such a state, but of the proper use of the marriage bed; and teach us that marriage, and the use of it, are proper remedies against fornication; and that carnal copulation of a man with a woman ought only to be of husband and wife, or of persons in a married state; and that all other copulations are sinful; and that polygamy is unlawful; and that one man is to have but one wife, and to keep to her; and that one woman is to have but one husband, and to keep to him.

1 Corinthians 7:3

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence,... The Syriac version renders it, , “due love”; and so the Arabic; and may include all the offices of love, tenderness, humanity, care, provision, and protection, which are to be performed by the husband to his wife; though it seems chiefly, if not solely, here to respect what is called, Exo 21:10 “her marriage duty”, as distinct from food and raiment to be allowed her; and what is meant by it the Jewish doctors will tell us: one says (t), it is , “the use of the marriage bed”; and, says another (u), , “it is to lie with her”, according to the way of all the earth. And so the phrase here, “due benevolence”, is an euphemism, and designs the act of coition; which as it is an act of love and affection, a sign of mutual benevolence, so of justice; it is a due debt from divine ordination, and the matrimonial contract. The Jewish doctors have fixed and settled various canons (w) concerning the performance, of this conjugal debt: and the apostle may not be altogether without some view to the rules and customs which obtained in his own nation.

And, likewise also the wife unto the husband; she is not to refuse the use of the bed when required, unless there is some just impediment, otherwise she comes under the name of a “rebellious wife”; concerning whom, and her punishment, the Jews (x) give the following rules:

“a woman that restrains her husband from the use of the bed, is called rebellious; and when they ask her why she rebels, if she says, because it is loathsome to me, and I cannot lie with him; then they oblige him to put her away directly, without her dowry; and she may not take any thing of her husband’s, not even her shoe strings, nor her hair lace; but what her husband did not give her she may take, and go away: and if she rebels against her husband, on purpose to afflict him, and she does to him so or so, and despises him, they send to her from the sanhedrim, and say to her, know thou, that if thou continuest in thy rebellion, thou shalt not prosper? and after that they publish her in the synagogues and schools four weeks, one after another, and say, such an one has rebelled against her husband; and after the publication, they send and say to her, if thou continuest in thy rebellion, thou wilt lose thy dowry; and they appoint her twelve months, and she has no sustenance from her husband all that time; and she goes out at the end of twelve months without her dowry, and returns everything that is her husband’s.”

This account, with a little variation, is also given by Maimonides (y).

(t) Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, praecept. neg. 81. Sol. Jarchi in Exod. xxi. 10. (u) Maimon. Hilch. Isbot, c. 12. sect. 2. Vid. Aben Ezra in Exod. xxi. 10. (w) Vid. Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 6. & Mikvaot, c. 8. sect. 3. (x) Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 81. (y) Hilch. Ishot, c. 14. sect. 8, 9, 10. Vid. Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 7. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

1 Corinthians 7:4

The wife hath not power of her own body,... To refrain the use of it from her husband; or to prostitute it to another man:

but the husband; he has the sole power over it, and may require when he pleases the use of it:

and likewise also the husband has not power over his own body: to withhold due benevolence, or the conjugal debt from his wife; or abuse it by self-pollution, fornication, adultery, sodomy, or any acts of uncleanness: but the wife; she only has a power over it, a right to it, and may claim the use of it: this power over each other’s bodies is not such, as that they may, by consent, either the husband allow the

wife, or the wife the husband, to lie with another.

1 Corinthians 7:5

Defraud ye not one the other,... By withholding due benevolence, denying the use of the marriage bed, refusing to pay the conjugal debt, and which is called a “diminishing of her marriage duty”, Exo 21:10 where the Septuagint use the same word “defraud”, as the apostle does here; it is what both have a right to, and therefore, if either party is denied, it is a piece of injustice, it is properly a defrauding; though with proper conditions, such as follow, it may be lawful for married persons to lie apart, and abstain from the use of the bed, but then it should never be done,

except it be with consent: because they have a mutual power over each other's bodies, and therefore the abstinence must be voluntary on each side; otherwise injury is done to the person that does not consent, who is deprived against will of just right; but if there is agreement, then there is no defrauding, because each give up their right; and such a voluntary abstinence is commended by the Jews (z);

“everyone that lessens the use of the bed, lo, he, is praiseworthy; and he who does not make void, or, cause to cease the due benevolence, but , “by consent of his wife”;

i.e. he also is praiseworthy: another condition of this abstinence is that it be only for a time; which shall be agreed unto, and fixed by both parties; not for ever which would be contrary to the will of God; the institution and end of marriage, and of dangerous consequence to either party. The Jews allow of a vow of continency for a while; and which they limit to different persons; thus (a),

“if a man by a vow excludes, wife from the use of the bed, the school of Shammai say it is for the space of two weeks, the school of Hillel say one week; scholars go out to learn the law, without leave of their wives, thirty days, workmen one week;”

which vow, for such a limited time, they seem to allow of, without mutual consent; and herein they disagree with the rule the apostle gives; and who further observes, the end to be had in view by such a voluntary separation for a time,

that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; not that this was necessary for the ordinary discharge of such service, as for private acts of devotion among themselves, and constant family prayer; but either when times of fasting and prayer on some emergent occasions were appointed by themselves, or by the church, or by the civil government on account of some extraordinary and momentous affairs; and this seems to be observed by the apostle, in agreement with the customs and rules of the Jewish nation, which forbid the use of the bed, as on their great and annual fast, the day of atonement (b), so on their fasts appointed by the sanhedrim for obtaining of rain (c): the word “fasting” is omitted in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and so it is in the Alexandrian copy, two of Stephens's; and others: the apostle adds,

and come together again; to the same bed, and the use of it, and that for this reason,

that Satan tempt you not for your incontinence; for not having the gift of continency, should they pretend to keep apart long: Satan, who knows the temperament and disposition of men and women,

may tempt them not only to hatred of, and quarrels with one another, but to impure lusts and desires, to fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness; a very good reason why, though abstinence from the marriage bed for a short time, by the consent of both parties, for religious purposes, may be lawful, yet ought not to be continued; since Satan may hereby get an advantage over them, and draw them into the commission of scandalous enormities. The Jews have a notion of Satan's being a tempter, and of his tempting men to various sins, which they should guard against, as idolatry, &c. So say they (d),

“thou mayest not look after idolatry, according to Deu 4:19 and again, thou must take heed lest this be a cause of it to thee, , “and Satan tempt thee” to look after them, and do as they do:”

and again (e), frequently should a man think

“upon the unity of the blessed God, lest there should be anything above or below, before him or behind him, or by him, and so, , “Satan tempt him”, and he come into heresy.”

(z) Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 21. sect. 11. (a) Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 6. (b) Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1. (c) Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 6. (d) Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 14. (e) Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 15.

1 Corinthians 7:6

But I speak this by permission,... Referring either to what he had said before, though not to all; not to Co1 7:2 that for the avoiding of fornication, every man should make use of his own wife, and every woman of her own husband; since this is not by permission, but by command, Gen 2:24 that carnal copulation should be between one man and one woman in a married state; nor to Co1 7:3 for that married persons ought to render due benevolence to, and not defraud each other, having a power over each other's bodies, is a precept, and not a permission, Exo 21:10 but to Co1 7:5 their parting for a time, and coming together again: it is not an absolute command of God that they should separate for a time, on account of fasting and prayer, but if they thought fit to do so by agreement, they might; nor was there any positive precept for their coming together again directly, after such service was over. The apostle said this,

not of commandment; but, consulting their good, gives this advice, lest Satan should be busy with them, and draw them into sin; but if they had the gift of continence, they might continue apart longer; there was no precise time fixed by God, nor did the apostle pretend to fix any: or it may refer to what follows after, that he would have all men be as he was; though he laid no injunction, but left them to their liberty; unless it can be thought to regard marriage in general, and to be said in opposition to a Jewish notion, which makes marriage a “command”;

“a man, they say (f), is bound to this command at seventeen years of age, and if he passes twenty and does not marry, he transgresses, and makes void an affirmative precept;”

but the apostle puts it as a matter of choice, and not of obligation.

(f) Maimon. Hilch, Isbot, c. 15. sect. 2.

1 Corinthians 7:7

For I would that all men were even as I myself,.... The apostle speaks not of his state and condition, as married or unmarried, for it is not certain which he was; some think he had a wife, others not: it looks, however, as if he had not at this time, as appears from Co1 7:8 but be it which it will, it can hardly be thought he should wish all men to be in either state, either all married, or all unmarried; but he speaks of the gift of continency, which he had, as the following words show; and this he desires for all men, that they might not be in any danger from Satan's temptations, and that they might be more fit for and intent upon the service of Christ. The Syriac version adds, in "purity", or "chastity"; which may be preserved in a marriage state, as well as in single life:

but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that: all the gifts of nature and grace which men have, they have of God, and not of themselves; and every man has a gift proper to himself; no one man has all gifts, but some one, and some another; and with respect to the case in hand, one man has the gift of continency, another the gift of marriage; all cannot contain themselves, only to whom it is given: and all are not disposed to marriage; some are inclined to a single life, and some to a marriage state; and of those that are married, some can abstain from the use of the marriage bed longer than others, without being in danger of being tempted by Satan for their incontinency; and such a disposition is desirable.

1 Corinthians 7:8

I say therefore to the unmarried and widows,.... Not by way of command, but advice: by the "unmarried" he means, either such men who never were in a married state, or else such who had been married, but their wives were dead; which latter sense seems more agreeable, since they are joined with "widows", who had lost their husbands:

it is good for them if they abide; unmarried, and do not change their condition any more; not that it was sinful to marry again, for he allows of it in the next verse, in case they have not the gift of continence; and therefore "good" here, is not opposed to evil, only signifies that it would be better for them, more expedient and profitable for them; they would be more free from the cares of life, have less trouble, and be more at leisure to serve the Lord; and which he knew by experience, and therefore, proposes himself as an example:

even as I; that is, as he was then; for at that time it seems certain that he had no wife; though whether he had had one, and she was now dead, or whether he had never been married, may be matter of dispute; the former seems most agreeable, since he proposes himself as an example to widowers and widows; and having known what a married and single state both were, was better able to give his judgment of both, and proper advice to such persons which must come with more force and strength, and a better grace, from such an one.

1 Corinthians 7:9

But if they cannot contain, &c. Or "if they do not contain", as the words may be rendered, and as almost all versions do render them; if they have not the gift of continency; if they are not willing, and do not think fit to contain, for none are to be compelled; if either therefore they want a will or power to contain, let them marry; it is not only lawful for them to marry, but it is right and best for them; hence it appears that second marriages are lawful, which were condemned by some of the ancients:

for it is better to marry than to burn; or be burnt; not with material fire, as Judah ordered Tamar to be brought forth and burnt with, for whoredom; nor with hell fire, the just demerit of uncleanness; but with the fire of lust itself; and so the Syriac version reads it, “it is better to marry than to be burnt” “with lust”; when persons not only find in them some lustful motions and desires, and a glowing heat of concupiscence; but are as it were all on fire with the lusts of the flesh, and in great danger of being drawn into the commission of fornication, adultery, or other pollutions, and even unnatural lusts; it is much better to enter into a marriage state, though it may have its cares, inconveniences, and difficulties, than to be under temptations and inclinations to such defilements: so the Jews often express the lust of concupiscence by fire; they tell (g) us a

“story of R. Amram, that he redeemed all the captives, men and women; and the women and the virgins dwelt in a chamber in his house alone; one time, Satan kindled in him, , “the fire of lust”, and he set a ladder to go up to them, and when he came upon the steps of the ladder, he began to cry with a loud voice, , “fire in the house of Amram, fire in the house of Amram”: and the men came to quench the fire, and found nothing burning; for it was only his intention to cause to cease from him the fire of lust; and his thought ceased and his mind grew cool; and they asked him, why he mocked them? he replied, for this is a greater “fire” than all the fires in the world, for it is the fire of hell:”

This story is also told in the Talmud (h), with some little variation: so we read of one that is , “inflamed” (i), or all on fire “with the corruption of nature”, who does not direct his heart to God: and such a man that finds his corruptions prevail over him, he ought to marry, they say (k), as a proper remedy against it:

“he whose mind is intent upon the law continually, and learns it as Ben Azzai, and cleaves to it all his days, and does not marry a wife, there is no iniquity in his hands, and that because his corruption does not prevail over him; but if his corruption prevails over him, , “he ought to marry a wife”.”

and that for the very reason the apostle here gives. The Ethiopic version reads, “it is better to marry than to commit fornication”; that and adultery both are expressed by fire and burning, with the Jews, as they prove from Hos 7:4 (l).

(g) Caphtor, fol. 62. 1. (h) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 81. 1. (i) Zohar in Lev. fol. 21. 1. (k) Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 15. sect. 3. (l) Vet. Nizzachon, p. 43, 44.

1 Corinthians 7:10

And unto the married I command,... To the unmarried and widows he spoke by permission, or only gave advice and counsel to remain unmarried, provided they could contain; but if not, it was advisable to marry; but to persons already in a married state, what he has to say to them is by commandment, enjoining what they are under obligation to observe, not being at liberty to do as they will:

yet not I, but the Lord; not as if he took upon him the dominion over them, to make laws for them, and, in an imperious authoritative way, oblige them to obedience to them; no; what he was about to deliver, was not a law of his own enacting and obtruding, but what their Lord, their Creator, head, husband, and Redeemer, had ordered and enjoined; and this grave solemn way of speaking he makes use of, to excite their attention, command awe and reverence, make the greater impression upon their

minds, and show the obligation they were under to regard what was said:

let not the wife depart from her husband; for the same law that obliges a man to cleave to his wife, obliges the wife to cleave to her husband, Gen 2:24 and those words of Christ, “what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder”, Mat 19:6 regard the one as well as the other; and the rules he has given, forbidding divorces only in case of adultery, Mat 5:32 are as binding upon the wife as upon the husband. The wife therefore should not depart from her husband upon every slight occasion; not on account of any quarrel, or disagreement that may arise between them; or for every instance of moroseness and inhumanity; or because of diseases and infirmities; nor even on the score of difference in religion which, by what follows, seems to be greatly the case in view. The apostle observes this, in opposition to some rules and customs which obtained among Jews and Gentiles, divorcing and separating from one another upon various accounts; not only husbands put away their wives, but wives also left their husbands: for women to put away, or leave their husbands, were not in former times allowed of among the Jews, but from other nations crept in among them; indeed if a man married one under age, and she did not like him for her husband, she might refuse him, and go away without a bill of divorce; the manner of refusal was, by saying before two witnesses, I do not like such an one for my husband, or I do not like the espousals, with which my mother or my brother espoused me, or in such like words; and sometimes a written form of refusal was given (m); but otherwise where marriage was consummated, such a departure of the wife was not allowed. Salome, the sister of Herod, is thought to be the first that introduced it, who sent a bill of divorce to Costobarus (n) her husband; and in this she was followed by Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, who left her husband, and married Herod Antipas (o); and it seems certain, that this practice prevailed in Christ’s time, since not only such a case is supposed, Mar 10:12 but a very flagrant instance is given in the woman of Samaria, Joh 4:18 who had had five husbands, not in a lawful regular manner, one after another upon their respective deaths, but she had married them, and put them away one after another: and as for the Gentiles, the account the Jews (p) give of them is, that though they had

“no divorces in form, they put away one another; R. Jochanan says, , “a man’s wife might put him away”, and give him the dowry:”

though, according to other accounts, they had divorces in form, which, when a man put away a woman, were called , “letters of dismissal”; and when a woman left her husband, , “letters of dereliction”, such as Hipparchia the wife of Alcibiades gave to him (q); and Justin Martyr (r) gives us an instance of a Christian woman, who gave her husband what the Roman senate called a divorce.

(m) Maimon. Hilch. Gerushim, c. 11. l. 8. 11. & Ishot, c. 4. sect. 3. (n) Joseph. Antiqu. l. 15. c. 7. sect. 10. (o) lb. l. 18. c. 6. sect. 1. (p) Bereshit Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 15. 3. (q) Plutarch. in Alcibiade. (r) Apolog. 1. p. 41, 42.

1 Corinthians 7:11

But and if she depart,... This is said, not as allowing of such a departure, which only in case of fornication is lawful; but supposing it a fact, that a woman cannot be prevailed upon to stay with her husband, but actually forsakes him upon some difference arising between them,

let her remain unmarried: she ought not to marry another man; her departure does not make the

marriage void; nor is it to be made void by any difference between them, either on religious or civil accounts, only in case of adultery; and therefore, if upon such separation she marries, she is guilty of adultery:

or be reconciled to her husband; which is rather to be chosen, than to remain separate, though unmarried; if she has given the offence, and is the cause of the separation, she ought to acknowledge it, and ask forgiveness of her husband, and return to him and live in peace with him; and if the fault is on his side, she ought to make use of all proper methods to convince him of it, bring him into good temper, forgive any injury done her, and live peaceably and comfortably together:

and let not the husband put away his wife; as the Jews were wont to do, upon every trifling occasion; See Gill on Mat 5:31, Mat 5:32

1 Corinthians 7:12

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord,... He had spoken before to married persons in general, and had delivered not his own sentiments barely, but the commandment of the Lord, that such should never separate from, or put away each other; in which he has respect to such as were upon equal foot in matters of religion, who were both of them believers in Christ; but now he speaks to the rest, to such as were unequally yoked, the one a believer, the other an unbeliever; and what he delivers on this head, concerning their living together, there being no express determination of this matter by the Lord himself, he under divine inspiration gives his sense of it; as that such marriages were valid, and that such persons ought to live together, and not separate on account of difference in religion: or the sense is, that as “to the rest” of the things they had wrote to him about, besides what he had given answer to already, he should speak to under divine illumination; though he had not an express law of Christ to point unto them, as the rule of their conduct: and particularly, whereas they had desired his judgment and advice upon this head, whether one who before conversion had married an unbeliever, ought to live with such an one, or whether it would not be advisable to leave, or put such away, to it he answers,

if any brother hath a wife that believeth not; that is, if any man who is now a brother, one called by the grace of God, and is in church fellowship, has a wife to whom he was married whilst in a state of unregeneracy and infidelity; who is as she was when he married her, entirely destitute of faith in Christ; not one that is weak in the faith, or only makes an outward profession, but that has no faith at all in Christ, nor in his Gospel, not so much as an historical one; who disbelieves, denies, and rejects, the truths of the Gospel:

and she be pleased to dwell with him; loves her husband, chooses to continue with him, notwithstanding their different sentiments of religion:

let him not put her away; infidelity is no reason for a divorce. The Gospel revelation does not dissolve the natural obligations men and women are in to one another. The Jews had a law prohibiting marriages with Heathens and idolaters; and such marriages were dissolved, and such wives put away, Exo 34:16 but this was a law peculiar to that people, and was not obligatory on other nations, and especially has no place under the Gospel dispensation.

1 Corinthians 7:13

And the woman which hath an husband that believeth,.... The apostle puts the case both ways, there being the same reason for one as for another; that if she that was a sister, who was partaker of the grace of God, and a member of the church, had a husband to whom she was married before her conversion; who was an unbeliever, had no faith in Christ, nor any notion of the Gospel, but an infidel to both:

and if he be pleased to dwell with her; loves her, and is willing to continue with her; neither puts her away from him, nor departs from her on account of her Christianity:

let her not leave him; but continue, and cohabit with him as man and wife; this is the advice the apostle gives, as agreeably to the light of nature and reason; as becoming the Gospel of Christ, and as what might serve to recommend it, and spread the knowledge of it.

1 Corinthians 7:14

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife,.... That is, “by the believing wife”; as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, and so it is read in some copies; and likewise in the next clause the same is read,

by the believing husband; this is a reason given by the apostle why they should live together. This cannot be understood of internal sanctification, which is never the case; an unbeliever cannot be sanctified by a believer in this sense, for such a sanctification is only by the Spirit of God; nor external sanctification, or an outward reformation, which though the unbelieving yoke fellow may sometimes be a means of, yet not always; and besides, the usefulness of one to another in such a relation, in a spiritual sense, urged as a reason for living together, in Co1 7:16 nor merely of the holiness of marriage, as it is an institution of God, which is equally the same in unbelievers as believers, or between a believer and an unbeliever, as between two believers; but of the very act of marriage, which, in the language of the Jews, is expressed by being “sanctified”; instances almost without number might be given of the use of the word in this sense, out of the Misnic, Talmudic, and Rabbinic writings; take the following one instead of a thousand that might be produced (s).

“The man “sanctifies”, or espouses a wife by himself, or by his messenger; the woman “is sanctified”, or espoused by herself, or by her messenger. The man “sanctifies”, or espouses his daughter, when she is a young woman, by himself or by his messenger; if anyone says to a woman, “be thou sanctified”, or espoused to me by this date (the fruit of the palm tree,) “be thou sanctified”, or espoused to me by this (any other thing); if there is anyone of these things the value of a farthing, “she is sanctified”, or espoused, and if not she is not “sanctified”, or “espoused”; if he says, by this, and by this, and by this, if there is the value of a farthing in them all, “she is sanctified”, or espoused; but if not, she is not “sanctified”, or espoused; if she eats one after another, she is not “sanctified”, or espoused, unless there is one of them the value of a farthing;”

in which short passage, the word which is used to “sanctify”, or be “sanctified”, in the Hebrew language, is used to espouse, or be espoused no less than “ten” times. So the Jews (t) interpret the word “sanctified”, in Job 1:5 he espoused to them wives; in the Misna, the oral law of the Jews, there is a whole treatise of “sanctifications” (u), or espousals; and in the Gemara or Talmud (w) is another, full of the disputes of the doctors on this subject. Maimonides has also written a treatise of women and

wives (x), out of which might be produced almost innumerable instances in proof of the observation; and such as can read, and have leisure to read the said tracts, may satisfy themselves to their heart's content. Let it be further observed; that the preposition which is in most versions rendered "by", should be rendered "in" or "to" or "unto", as it is in the next verse, and in many other places; see Mat 17:12 Col 1:23 if it be rendered in the former way, "in", it denotes the near union which by marriage the man and woman are brought into; if in the latter, it designs the object to which the man or woman is espoused, and the true sense and even the right rendering of the passage is this: "for the unbelieving husband is espoused to the wife, and the unbelieving wife is espoused to the husband"; they are duly, rightly, and legally espoused to each other; and therefore ought not, notwithstanding their different sentiments of religion, to separate from one another; otherwise, if this is not the case, if they are not truly married to one another, this consequence must necessarily follow; that the children born in such a state of cohabitation, where the marriage is not valid, must be spurious, and not legitimate, and which is the sense of the following words:

else were your children unclean, but now are they holy; that is, if the marriage contracted between them in their state of infidelity was not valid, and, since the conversion of one of them, can never be thought to be good; then the children begotten and born, either when both were infidels, or since one of them was converted, must be unlawfully begotten, be base born, and not a genuine legitimate offspring; and departure upon such a foot would be declaring to all the world that their children were illegitimate; which would have been a sad case indeed, and contains in it another reason why they ought to keep together; whereas, as the apostle has put it, the children are holy in the same sense as their parents are; that as they are sanctified, or lawfully espoused together, so the children born of them were in a civil and legal sense holy, that is, legitimate; wherefore to support the validity of their marriage, and for the credit of their children, it was absolutely necessary they should abide with one another. The learned Dr. Lightfoot says, that the words "unclean" and "holy" denote not children unlawfully begotten, and lawfully begotten; but Heathenism and Christianity; and thinks the apostle alludes to the distinction often made by the Jews, of the children of proselytes being born in "holiness", or out of it, that is, either before they became proselytes or after; but it should be observed, that though the word "holiness" is used for Judaism, yet not for Christianity; and besides, the marriages of Heathens were not looked upon as marriages by the Jews, and particularly such mixed ones as of a Jew and Gentile, they were not to be reckoned marriages; for so they say (y),

"he that espouses a Gentile woman, or a servant, , "they are not espousals"; but lo, he is after the espousals as he was before the espousals; and so a Gentile, or a servant, that espouses a daughter of Israel, , "those espousals are no espousals";"

nor do they allow children begotten of such persons to be legitimate. This learned writer himself owns such a tradition, and which he cites (z),

"that a son begotten in uncleanness is a son in all respects, and in general is reckoned as an Israelite, though he is a bastard, , "but a son begotten on a Gentile woman is not his son";"

all which are just the reverse of what the apostle is here observing; and who, it must be remarked, is speaking of the same sort of holiness of children as of parents, which cannot be understood of Christianity, because one of the parents in each is supposed to be an Heathen. The sense I have given of this passage, is agreeable to the mind of several interpreters, ancient and modern, as Jerom, Ambrose, Erasmus, Camerarius, Musculus, &c. which last writer makes this ingenuous confession;

formerly, says he, I have abused this place against the Anabaptists, thinking the meaning was, that the children were holy for the parents' faith; which though true, the present place makes nothing for the purpose: and I hope, that, upon reading this, everyone that has abused it to such a purpose will make the like acknowledgment; I am sure they ought.

(s) Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 1. (t) Vajikra Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 152. 1. (u) Massech. Kiddushin. (w) T. Bab. & Hieros. Kiddushin. (x) Hilch Ishot. c. 3. & 4. & 5. & 6. & 7. & 8. & 9. (y) Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 4. sect. 15. (z) Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 12. sect. 7. Vid. Ib. Hilch. Nechalat, c. 2. sect. 12.

1 Corinthians 7:15

But if the unbelieving depart,.... If the unbelieving party, man or woman, separate themselves from the believing party on account of religion, and in hatred to it, and will not live with the believer unless Christ is denied, his Gospel abjured, and his ordinances and worship relinquished:

let him depart; he or she, though not without making use of all proper means to retain them; but if, after all, they will go, unless such things are complied with as are unreasonable and sinful, they are not to be held, but let go; and the deserted person may sit down contented, being not to be blamed, the fault entirely lying upon the deserter:

a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. The Ethiopic version reads it, "to such an one"; one that is called by grace a church member, and so a brother or sister in Christ, is not to be subject to an unbeliever in matters of conscience, in things appertaining to the worship of God, and the service and glory of Christ; nor, being in such circumstances, that either Christ must be forsaken, or the unbeliever will depart, are they obliged to yield to such an one, but rather suffer a departure; nor are they bound to remain unmarried, but are free to marry another person, after all proper methods have been tried for a reconciliation, and that appears to be impracticable; desertion in such a case, and attended with such circumstances, is a breach of the marriage contract, and a dissolution of the bond, and the deserted person may lawfully marry again; otherwise a brother, or a sister in such a case, would be in subjection and bondage to such a person:

but God hath called us to peace; which ought to be sought after and maintained, so far as it can be consistent with truth, the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and interest of religion. The believing party being threatened with a desertion, ought as much as possible to seek for peace and reconciliation, and do all that can be to prevent a departure; for saints are called by the grace of God, to follow after and cultivate peace, not only with one another in their Christian communion as saints, but with all men, even their enemies, and especially with such as are so nearly allied; wherefore the departure should not be easily admitted, or a new marriage be suddenly entered into, reconciliation, if it can be obtained, being most eligible and becoming a Christian.

1 Corinthians 7:16

For what knowest thou, O wife,.... These words may be understood, as containing a reason either why the believing party should be easy at the departure of the unbeliever, after all proper methods have been used in vain to retain him or her; taken from the uncertainty and improbability of being of any use to them, to bring them to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; "for what knowest thou, O wife"; thou dost not know, thou canst not know, thou canst not be sure,

whether thou shall save thy husband? be the means of bringing of him under the means of grace, and so of his conversion and salvation; there is no likelihood of it, since he is such an implacable enemy to Christ, and so bitterly averse to the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; and therefore since he is determined to separate, even let him go: or else, as rendering a reason why the believer should seek for peace and reconciliation, and by all means, if possible, continue to dwell with the unbeliever; taken from hopes of being serviceable under a divine influence and blessing, for their spiritual and eternal good, the wife for the good of the husband; by whose conversation he may be won over, and prevailed upon to entertain a better opinion of the Christian religion; to take a liking to the Gospel, and to attend upon the ministry of the word, which may be made the power of God unto salvation to him:

or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shall save thy wife; this may possibly be done, in the same manner as now suggested: persons in such a relation have often great influence upon one another, and are by divine Providence often great blessings to each other, in things spiritual as well as temporal. This puts me in mind of a case related by the Jewish doctors (a):

“it happened to a holy man that he married a holy woman, and they had no children; say they, we are of no manner of profit to the blessed God; they stood up and divorced one another; he went and married a wicked woman, and she made him wicked; she went and married a wicked man, “and she made him righteous”;

or, to use the apostle’s phrase, “saved him”.

(a) Bereshit Rabba, sect. 17. fol. 14. 4.

1 Corinthians 7:17

But as God hath distributed to every man,... This text is so placed, and the words of it so expressed, as that it may have regard both to what goes before, and follows after; it may have respect to every man’s proper gift, whether of continence, or of disposition to marriage, which every man has of God, Co1 7:7, and accordingly ought to live in a single, or in a married state; or it may refer to the last verse,

what knowest thou, &c. and , which we render “but”, be translated either “unless”; and then the sense is, thou knowest not, O man or woman, whether thou shalt save thy wife or husband, nor any other, unless God, who distributes his, grace to everyone as he pleases; or else it may be rendered if “not”, and the sense be, if thou shouldst not save thy husband, or thou, man, shouldst not save thy wife; yet “as God hath distributed to every man” his own proper gift, both as to nature and grace; his proper sphere of usefulness, and the station in which he would have him be, and the place he would have him fill up, and the business he must do in life; so let him act, and

as the Lord hath called everyone; which is to be understood of that particular station of life, and those circumstances of it, in which men are providentially placed by God, or are found in when he calls them by his grace; as whether married or unmarried; whether joined to a believer or an unbeliever; whether circumcised or uncircumcised; whether bond or free; a servant or a master; and so may refer to what follows, as well as to what goes before:

so let him walk; contented with his station and kind of life, agreeably to the profession he makes of the Gospel, doing all the good he can to those he is concerned with:

and so ordain I in all churches; the decisions and determinations he had made, in the cases proposed to him about marriage, the rules and orders he had prescribed, what he had given out by way of precept or permission, by command or counsel, or what he was about to deliver, were no other than what he in common enjoined other churches; and therefore they ought not to think that they were used with more strictness and severity than others; and might be induced hereby to attend to what was advised or enjoined, since it was what was common to all the churches.

1 Corinthians 7:18

Is any man called being circumcised?.... That is, if any man that is a Jew, who has been circumcised in his infancy, is called by the grace of God, as there were many in those days, and many of them in the church at Corinth:

let him not become uncircumcised; or “draw on” the foreskin; as some did in the times of Antiochus, for fear of him, and to curry favour with him, who, it is said, 1 Maccab. 1:15, “made themselves uncircumcised”, and forsook the holy covenant; and so did Menelaus, and the sons of Tobias, as Josephus reports (b); and there were many, in the days of Ben Cozba, who became uncircumcised by force, they had their foreskins drawn on by the Gentiles against their wills, and when he came to reign were circumcised again (c); for, according to the Jews, circumcision must be repeated, and not only four or five times (d), but a hundred times, if a man becomes so often uncircumcised (e) They make mention of several particular persons who voluntarily became uncircumcised, or, to use their phrase, and which exactly answers to the word used by the apostle, “that drew over his foreskin”; as Jehoiachin (f), Achan (g), yea even the first Adam (h); one guilty of this, they say, makes void the covenant (i); it was accounted a very great sin, so great that he that committed it was reckoned (k) among them that shall have no part in the world to come, but shall be cut off and perish; physicians say, this may be done by the use of an instrument they call spaster, which has its name from the word used in the text. The apostle’s sense is, that such as had been circumcised, and had now embraced the faith of Christ, had no reason to be uneasy, or take any methods to remove this mark from their flesh, because it was abolished by Christ, and now of no significance; since as it did them no good, it did them no hurt:

is any called in uncircumcision? let him not become circumcised?; that is, if a Gentile who was never circumcised is called by grace, let him not submit to circumcision, which is now abrogated, and is altogether unnecessary and unprofitable in the business of salvation; yea, hurtful and pernicious if done on that account, since it makes men debtors to do the whole law, and Christ of none effect unto them.

(b) Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 1. (c) Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 1. & Sabbath, fol. 17. 1. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 72. 1. & Gloss. in ib. (d) Bereshit Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 41. 4. (e) T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 72. 1. (f) Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 161. 1. (g) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 1. (h) Ib. fol. 38. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1. & 40. 4. (i) Hieros, Peah, fol. 16. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 3. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 41. 4. (k) Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 3. sect. 6. & Milah, c. 3. sect. 8.

1 Corinthians 7:19

Circumcision is nothing,.... In the affair of justification before God, and acceptance with him; it cannot make any man righteous in the sight of God, nor recommend him to the divine favour; it is no evidence of a man's calling, or of his having the truth or grace of God in him; nor is it of any avail in the business of salvation. It was something formerly; it was a command and an ordinance of God, to Abraham and his natural seed; it pointed at the corruption and pollution of nature; was typical of the effusion of the blood of Christ, for pardon, and cleansing, and of the internal circumcision of the heart; it was a sign and seal to Abraham, that he should be the father of many nations, and that the righteousness of faith should come upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; and was a distinguishing character of the people of the Jews, until the Messiah came: but now it is nothing, nor has it any of these uses, being with the rest of the ceremonies abolished by Christ; it gives no preference to the Jew above the Gentile; he that has this mark in his flesh, is not a whit the better for it, and he that is without it, is not at all the worse; and is a reason why both the one and the other should be easy, and not attempt any alteration in themselves with regard to this, or think the better or worse of themselves on account of it. This is said in direct opposition to the sentiments of the Jews, who extol circumcision to the skies. The apostle says it is nothing, and they say it is everything, and everything is nothing without it; they say, it is the hinge of their whole law (l), and that it is equal to all the precepts in the law (m); their extravagant commendations of it take in the following passage (n);

“says R. Eliezar ben Azariah, uncircumcision is rejected, because by it the wicked are defiled, as it is said, “for all the Gentiles are uncircumcised”; says R. Ishmael, , “great is circumcision”; for on account of it, thirteen covenants were made; says R. Jose, “great is circumcision”, for it drives away the sabbath, the weighty (command in the law, that is, it is obliged to give way to it); R. Joshua ben Korcha says, “great is circumcision”, for it was not suspended to Moses the righteous one full hour; R. Nehemiah says, “great is circumcision”, for it drives away plagues; says Rabba, “great is circumcision”, for notwithstanding all the commands which Abraham our father did, he was not called perfect until he was circumcised; as it is said, “walk before me, and be thou perfect”; says another, “great is circumcision”, for had it not been for that, the holy blessed God would not have created his world; as it is said, “thus saith the Lord, if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth””

More of this kind might be produced, but enough of this.

And uncircumcision is nothing; it does not hinder any having an interest in, and partaking of the blessings of grace; nor their enjoyment of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances; nor their communion and fellowship with the churches of Christ, much less their everlasting salvation, as say (o) the Jews;

“the holy blessed God (say they) rejects the uncircumcised, and brings them down to hell; as it is said, Eze 32:18 “son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down”; and so says Isaiah, Isa 5:14 “therefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth”, ; that is, to him that hath not the law of circumcision; as it is said, Psa 105:10 “and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant”; for no circumcised persons go down to hell:”

but the keeping of the commandments of God; that is something; not that the commands of God, and the observance of them, are of any avail to procure the pardon of sin, acceptance with God, justification in his sight, and eternal salvation; yet they are of moment, as they are the commands and ordinances of God; and ought to be kept in faith and fear, as they were delivered from a principle

of love, and with a view to the glory of God; and though for keeping of them there is no reward of debt, yet in keeping of them there is a reward of grace; peace of mind is had, and the presence of God enjoyed; obedience to them, upon Gospel principles and motives, is a fruit of grace, an evidence of faith, and of the new creature; it is the ornament of a Christian profession, and is profitable to men.

(l) Shebet Judah, p. 94. Ed. Gent. (m) Zohar in Lev. fol. 6. 1. T. Bab. Nedarim, fol 32. 1. Caphtor, fol. 9. 2. (n) Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11. Maimon. Hilch. Milah, c. 3. sect. 8, 9. (o) Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4. Vid. Maimon. in Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 6.

1 Corinthians 7:20

Let every man abide in the same calling,.... Civil calling, station, and business of life,

wherein he was called; that is, in which he was when he was called by the grace of God; and is to be understood of such a calling, station, and business of life, as is lawful, honest, and of good report; otherwise he ought not to abide in it, but betake himself to another, as Matthew and Zacchaeus, when called by grace, left the scandalous employment of a publican: nor is it the apostle's sense, that a man that is in an honest way of living, may not change that for another that is equally so, as if a man was bound down to that sort of business he is in when first called; for no doubt it may be lawful, and there may be just reason for it in Providence, why a man should change his calling and station in life; though this ought not to be done rashly and unadvisedly, and without wise and good reasons; but the chief view of the apostle is to teach contentment in every condition, and station of life, and that persons should not be uneasy and restless in it, and seek for an alteration when there is no just occasion; and particularly he seems to have reference, either to the different state of married and unmarried persons, he had before been speaking of; see Co1 7:27 or to the different circumstances of Jew and Gentile, as circumcised or uncircumcised, as in the foregoing verse; or to the different condition of bond and free, servant and master, in the following verse; and persuades them to remain easy and satisfied, for that the Christian religion does not necessarily require a change in a man's civil circumstances of life.

1 Corinthians 7:21

Art thou called being a servant?.... That is, called by grace whilst in the condition of a servant,

care not for it; do not be troubled at it, and uneasy with it; be not anxiously solicitous to be otherwise; bear the yoke patiently, go through thy servitude cheerfully, and serve thy master faithfully; do not look upon it as any objection to thy calling, any contradiction to thy Christian liberty, or as unworthy of, and a reproach upon thy profession of Christ:

but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. The Syriac renders the last clause, , “choose for thyself to serve”; perfectly agreeable to the sense given of the words, by several great critics and excellent interpreters, who take the apostle's meaning to be, that should a Christian servant have an opportunity of making his escape from his master, or could he by any art, trick, and fraudulent method, obtain his liberty, it would be much more advisable to continue a servant, than to become free by any such means: yea, some seem to carry the sense so far, that even if servants could be made free in a lawful way, yet servitude was most eligible, both for their own and their master's good: for their own to keep them humble and exercise their patience; for their master's not only temporal, but

spiritual good; since by their good behaviour they might be a means of recommending the Gospel to them, and of gaining them to Christ; but one should rather think the more obvious sense is, that when a Christian servant has his freedom offered him by his master, or he can come at it in a lawful and honourable way, this being preferable to servitude, he ought rather to make use of it; since he would be in a better situation, and more at leisure to serve Christ, and the interest of religion: however, certain it is, that the apostle's design is, to make men easy in every station of life, and to teach them how to behave therein; he would not have the freeman abuse his liberty, or be elated with it, nor the servant be uneasy under his servitude, nor be depressed by it, for the reasons following.

1 Corinthians 7:22

For he that is called in the Lord,... Which is to be understood, not of any civil calling, or of calling to an office; or of the outward call by the ministry of the word only; but of an internal, special, powerful, evangelical, and saving call by the grace of God; which is of persons out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, from their sinful companions to the company and society of Christ and his people, from off themselves and their own righteousness, to the grace and righteousness of Christ, and out of the world unto a kingdom and glory. And this may be said to be, in the Lord; either because it is by him, he is the efficient cause of it, his grace the moving cause, and his glory the end; or because it is in consequence of being in him, united to him, persons are first in the Lord, and then called by him; or because they are called into fellowship and communion with him; the whole is true, and make up the sense of the text; for he that is effectually called by grace, is called by the Lord, and by virtue of being chosen in him, and in union to him, and to partake of all the blessings of grace and glory that are with him. And such an one,

being a servant; in a natural and civil sense when called, in a spiritual sense

is the Lord's freeman; he is free from sin, not from the being, but from the servitude, guilt, and damning power of it: he is free from Satan, not from his temptations and insults, but from his dominion and captivity; he is ransomed from him, by the redemption of Christ, and is turned from his power in conversion; he has not that influence over him he before had; and he is so safe and secure from him, that he can never be destroyed by him, and in a short time Satan will be bruised under his feet: he is free from the law, the observance of the ceremonial law, and all its numerous burdensome rites; and from the moral law, not from obedience to it, as in the hands of Christ, but from the bondage, curse, and condemnation of it, as ministered by Moses: he is free of the company of saints, of the church of God below, and of heaven, the city God has built and prepared for his; he is free to the use of all things indifferent, provided it is done in faith, the peace of weak brethren secured, and the glory of God preserved; he is free to all the privileges and immunities of the house of God, and to the throne of grace, come when he will; and therefore though a servant, in another sense he is a very happy man; he is free indeed, and can never be disenfranchised, or arrested, or cast into prison; the various privileges he is free unto and enjoys, show him to be a happy man; and the effects following on his freedom prove it, as peace with God, the presence of Christ, joy in the Holy Ghost, fellowship with saints, and a well grounded hope of glory; he is not only called to the liberty of grace, which he enjoys, but will be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God; and therefore has no reason to be uneasy with his civil servitude: on the other hand,

likewise he that is called being free; he that is called by the grace of God, with an holy and effectual calling, being a freeman, his own master, and it may be the master of others in a civil sense, he, in a

spiritual one,

is Christ's servant: he is bought by Christ with his money, with the price of his blood; and therefore he has a right unto him, and a claim to his service; and he becomes a voluntary servant to him, through the power of his grace upon him; and though he serves his Lord Christ without mercenary views, freely, readily, and cheerfully, from a principle of love and gratitude, he shall not fail of a reward of grace; he shall be honoured of God, approved of men, and shall receive the reward of the inheritance: Christian liberty, and the service of Christ, are not at all inconsistent; nor should we entertain any other notions of liberty, but what are consistent with serving the Lord; whatever liberty contradicts, that is no true liberty; though it may have the face of it, it is no other than bondage.

1 Corinthians 7:23

Ye are bought with a price,.... Some read these words interrogatively, as Co1 7:18, "are ye bought with a price?" and suppose them directed to such who had bought out their time of servitude with a sum of money, and ought not to return to their former condition; but they are rather to be read affirmatively, and to be understood of all, whether freemen or servants, that are bought with the inestimable price of Christ's blood, as in Co1 6:20 and contain in them a reason why such as are called by the grace of God, whilst in a state of civil servitude, are Christ's freemen, because they are redeemed by him from sin, Satan, the law, and from among men; and also why such as are called by the grace of God, being in a state of civil liberty, are Christ's servants, because he has purchased them with his blood, and therefore has a right unto them, both to their persons and service:

be not ye the servants of men: not that the apostle dissuades such as are redeemed by Christ, and are believers in him, from being the servants of men in a civil sense; for this would be to contradict himself, who here and elsewhere exhorts servants to continue in the service of their masters, and to perform it heartily and cheerfully, and with great sincerity and integrity; but his meaning is, that since they were redeemed from a vain conversation by the blood of Christ, they should not be servants to the lusts of men, nor obey them in things sinful and wicked, which were contrary to law and Gospel, and which were made unlawful by the word of God, and were a breach of the command of their Lord and master Christ; nor should they in matters of religion and the worship of God submit to the authority of any set of men whatever, or be subject to the doctrines and commandments of men; whether these relate to Jewish ceremonies, or Gentile superstitions, or be a mixture of both: they were to call no man master upon earth; nor suffer any to lord it over them, as the false teachers very much did in this church; but to acknowledge Christ, who had bought them to be their only Lord and master. The allusion seems to be to a tradition of the Jews, that the Israelites being redeemed out of Egypt were the servants of God, and not of men (p);

"R. Jochanan ben Zaccai was explaining this Scripture, Exo 21:6 how different the ear is from all the members of the body; says the holy blessed God, the ear that heard my voice on Mount Sinai, at the time I said, the children of Israel are my servants, , and "not servants to servants"; and this goes and gets itself a master, let it be bored: R. Simeon ben Ribbi was explaining the same Scripture, how different the door and the door post were from all the parts of the house; says the holy blessed God, the door and the door post, which were witnesses in Egypt, at the time that I passed by the threshold, and by the two door posts, and I said, the children of Israel are my servants, and not servants to servants, and I brought them out of bondage to liberty; and this goes and gets itself a master, let it be bored before them."

(p) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 2.

1 Corinthians 7:24

Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, The apostle repeats the advice given in Co1 7:20 and prefaces it with that tender and affectionate appellation, “brethren”, the more to engage them to attend to it; showing also that whatever difference there was in their civil state and condition, there was none in their religious one; they were all brethren, one of another, they were his brethren, yea, even the brethren of Christ:

therein abide with God; that is, abide in his civil calling and station of life, be it what it will, as knowing he is in that state it is the will of God he should be in; and as in the sight of God, who knows all men, and what is best for them, and who sees and observes all their actions and conduct of life; and with whom there is no respect of persons, of bond or free, of masters or servants; they are admitted equally to enjoy the same favours and privileges in the house of God; have the same access to the throne of grace, and enjoy the same communion with God; and therefore should be content in their present situation, discharging the several duties of their station aright, and exercise a good conscience both towards God and man.

1 Corinthians 7:25

Now concerning virgins,.... Whether they should continue in the same state or not, whether they should marry or not, was one of the cases put to the apostle, and which the Corinthians wrote to him about, and to which he returns this answer:

I have no commandment of the Lord: neither in the Old Testament, in the law of Moses, or writings of the prophets; nothing is therein enjoined concerning celibacy, or commanding persons to live a single life; but on the contrary there are many things directing and exciting to a marriage state; nor had the apostle any command from the Lord Jesus Christ, under the Gospel dispensation, obliging to virginity; nor any special orders, or peculiar revelation from the Spirit of God, fixing and settling this point:

yet I give my judgment, what will be most advisable, convenient, and prudent to be done, considering persons, times, and circumstances. The apostle does not make use of his power and authority, as such, to make decrees, and prescribe rules, binding on the consciences of men; only humbly and modestly gives his opinion, which if thought well of, might be followed by them: and the more to engage them to take his advice, he adds,

as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful; the meaning of which is, not that he, through the goodness and mercy of the Lord, had with great integrity preserved his virginity, and so proposes himself, as an instance and example of retaining it; for it is not certain, that though the apostle was now single, that he had never been married; it seems rather that he had, and therefore this cannot be his sense; nor does he refer to his faithfulness, to the Gospel committed to his trust, and the faithful discharge of his whole ministerial service, and which was owing to divine grace and mercy; but to that plainness, honesty, and integrity, which appeared in the whole course and conduct of his life, and in all his conversation with men; and particularly in giving advice about any matter, or

declaring his sentiments on any subject: and when a man is free and faithful, and openly and honestly tells his mind, it greatly recommends him, and commands attention and regard to what he says; and faithfulness, it may be observed, considered in this sense, is not of nature, but of grace; it is obtained not by a man's own power and strength, but by the grace and mercy of God; to which it is here ascribed.

1 Corinthians 7:26

I suppose, therefore, that this is good,... The opinion of the apostle, the sentiment of his mind, his judgment in this case were, that it was better, more advisable and eligible, for persons that were single to continue so; his reason for it follows,

for the present necessity; by which is meant not the shortness of life, and the necessity of dying, when husband and wife must part, upon which trouble ensues; nor the various sorrows, cares, encumbrances, trials, and exercises that attend a conjugal state, as bearing and bringing forth, and bringing up children, provision for the family, &c. which are common to all, and at all times more or less; but the present time of persecution, under which the churches of Christ were; agreeably the Syriac version reads it, , “because of the necessity of the time”, or season: using the very Greek word in text; as the Targumists (q) also have frequently adopted it into their language, and use the phrase , “an hour, or time of necessity”, for a time of great affliction and distress, just as the apostle does here; because this was the present case of the Christians, he thought it most prudent for such as were single to remain so; since as they were often obliged to move from place to place, to fly from one city to another, this would be very incommodious for married persons, who might have young children to take care of, and provide for; see Mat 24:19 upon a like account, the Jewish doctors advise to the same the apostle here does (r);

“from the day that the empire is extended, which decrees hard decrees upon us, and causes the law and the commandments to cease from us, and does not suffer us to circumcise children; it is right that we agree among ourselves, , not to marry, and beget children:”

I say it is good for a man so to be; to remain unmarried, to live a single life, to be a virgin; for the word “virgin”, as here used, relates to men as well as maidens, and denotes the single state of either. The apostle does not add, “even as I”; as he does in Co1 7:8 which seems to confirm the conjecture already made, that he was not a bachelor, but a widower; otherwise he would doubtless have enforced this advice by his own example, as before.

(q) Targum Jon. & Hieros. in Gen. xxii. 14. & xxxviii. 25. & Targum Sheni in Esth. v. 1. (r) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 60. 2.

1 Corinthians 7:27

Art thou bound unto a wife?... Or to a woman; either by promise, or by espousal, or by consummate marriage; either of which is a tie, or obligation, a bond, and especially the latter; marriage is such a bond as cannot be dissolved, but by the death of one of the parties; see Rom 7:2 unless in case of adultery, or of wilful desertion: and it is a bond which mutually obliges; as the husband is bound by the law of marriage to live chastely and lovingly with his wife, and to take care of her, and provide for her; so the wife is bound by the same law to live in like manner with her husband, and to submit unto

him, and obey him:

seek not to be loosed; do not depart from her, nor seek to be divorced, nor even desire to be loosed by death:

art thou loosed from a wife? being either never married, or else if having been married the wife is dead, or legally divorced for a just cause:

seek not a wife, or woman; make no inquiry after one; be content to live without one; enter not into a marriage state, nor take any step towards it; it is best to continue loosed, for the reason above given, that is, provided the person has the gift of continence, otherwise not; see Co1 7:5.

1 Corinthians 7:28

But and if thou marry, thou sinnest not,.... If a man that has never been married, or one that has, if legally loosed from his wife, thinks fit to marry, he commits no sin, he breaks no law of God, far from it; marriage is honourable in all. The apostle would be understood, that in the advice he before gives, he is not dissuading from marriage, as a thing sinful and criminal; only that it was more advisable to such as could to abstain from it, under the present circumstances of things; and what he says of a man holds equally true of a virgin:

and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned; the one may as lawfully marry as another; there is no law forbidding virgins to marry, any more than young men; and if they think fit to enter into such a state, they break no law of God, and consequently sin not:

nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh; that is, such young men and virgins, who choose to marry, and who generally promise themselves a great deal of pleasure, shall meet with a great deal of trouble; and that even where they expected the most satisfaction and delight, “in the flesh”; the body, the outward man, and external circumstances of life. This “trouble” is the same with the present necessity before mentioned, the persecutions and tribulations the saints should suffer in the flesh, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; not that married persons should be the only ones that should have trouble in this way, but that such persons would be less able to bear it, or to escape from it. Moreover, this may be extended to all the sorrows, troubles, and distresses which attend a married state:

but I spare you; the sense of which is, either that the apostle, out of his great tenderness to such who were inclined to marry, and could not contain, just gave this hint, that such should have trouble in the flesh; but did not dwell upon it or enter into particulars, lest they should be discouraged from it, and fall into temptation, sin, and a snare; or because of the great respect he had to the Corinthians, he gave the above advice to keep themselves single, that they might the better bear afflictions and persecutions, for the sake of their profession, and escape many troubles which others endure.

1 Corinthians 7:29

But this I say, brethren, the time is short,.... This is another reason, with which the apostle supports his advice to virgins, and unmarried persons, to remain so; since the time of life is so very short, and it is even but a little while to the end of the world, and second coming of Christ; and therefore seeing the marriage state is so full of care and trouble, and it affords still less time for the service of

Christ and religion, he thought it most advisable for them to, continue in a single life, that they might be more at leisure to make use of that little time they had for their spiritual good and welfare, the edification of others, and the glory of Christ: unless it should be rather thought that the apostle is still enlarging upon the former argument, taken from the present time, being a time of distress and persecution; and so the phrase, “the time is short”, or “contracted”, and full of anguish and affliction, is the same with the present necessity, and trouble in the flesh; and since this was the case, he suggests again, that an unmarried state was most preferable:

it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none: and as for the rest, they that were married, his advice to them was, that they should so behave as if they were not married; not that he would have them put away their wives, or fancy with themselves that they had none, or make no use of the marriage bed; but suggests a moderate use of it; he would not have them give up themselves to lasciviousness and carnal lusts and pleasures, even with their own wives, and spend their time altogether in their company and embraces: but since the time of life was short, and that full of troubles, they should spend it in the service and worship of God, private and public, as much as possible; and not in the indulging and satisfying of the flesh.

1 Corinthians 7:30

And they that weep, as though they wept not,.... They that weep for troubles and crosses, things adverse and afflicting in a marriage state, for the loss of wives or children, should express their sorrow in such a manner and degree, as if they wept not; not that the apostle here introduces and establishes a stoical apathy, and would have persons show no manner of concern for these things; but he directs to a moderate use of sorrow, to such a degree as not to hinder and divert from the exercises of piety and religion:

and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; such who are blessed with great prosperity, and with whom everything goes well; they have married wives, and have children, and thrive in the world; let them rejoice on the account of these things, in such a still, silent way, as if they rejoiced not, their hearts not being set upon their outward felicity, nor elated with it; but rejoicing rather that their names were written in heaven, that they had an interest in Christ and his grace, and a right and title to the glories of another world, and at the same time be thankful to God for what they enjoy in this:

and they that buy as though they possessed not; meaning, not any sort of buyers, everyone is a buyer in some sense; but such as purchase estates, buy houses and lands, and become proprietors of large tracts. These the apostle would not have hold their substance for themselves, but hold it as if they did not hold it, parting with it for the use of others; and as persons that are only stewards, and not properly owners, and in a little time must quit it all, and be accountable for their use and disposition of it.

1 Corinthians 7:31

And they that use this world, as not abusing it,.... Such as have a large affluence of the things of this world, should use them in a moderate and temperate manner; should not squander them away extravagantly, or spend them on their lusts, and use them intemperately, which is to abuse them:

for the fashion of this world passeth away; not the nature, matter, and substance, but the figure and

form of it; for after this world is burnt up, a new one, as to form and fashion, will arise, in much more beauty and glory; all that looks glorious and beautiful in the present world, as riches, honour, &c. are all mere show and appearance, having nothing solid and substantial in them; and are all fluid and transitory, are passing away; there is nothing firm and permanent; in a little time, all will be at an end, the world itself, as to its present form, and all that is in it; when there will be no more marrying, nor giving in marriage, no more buying and selling, no more of the present changes and vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity, of joy and sorrow; these scenes will be all removed, and quite a new face of things appear: wherefore what the apostle exhorts unto, with respect to present conduct and behaviour, must be right and good.

1 Corinthians 7:32

But I would have you without carefulness,.... This is another reason, by which the apostle confirms the advice he gives to virgins to remain such, because the married state is full of cares, whereas the single life is no more free from them; and therefore he wishes them to continue in such a state, that they might be without anxious and distracting cares of temporal things, things relating to the good decorum and sustenance of a family, and so be more free and at leisure for the service of God; which he illustrates, by showing the different cares that married and unmarried persons are involved in:

he that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord; such as hearing the word, reading it, meditating upon it, praying to God and attending upon all ordinances, taking every opportunity to glorify God, and do good to others; but this is not to be understood as matter of fact, that unmarried persons are so studiously concerned for these things, or that this is the case of all of them; there are many unmarried persons think nothing about them; and are not at all concerned with them; but the meaning is, that such persons are more at leisure, and can more conveniently attend to these things, and ought so to do; and they that have the grace of God will be more or less solicitous to observe them:

how he may please the Lord; for when these things are attended to in faith and fear, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, the good of their own souls and others, they are well pleasing to the Lord; and though they are not meritorious of eternal life, yet they are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and will be taken notice of with approbation, and followed with a reward of grace another day.

1 Corinthians 7:33

But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world,.... Attending diligently to the business and calling of life, he is engaged in, that he may provide food and clothing, and other necessities for the support and sustenance of his family:

how he may please his wife: and make her and his children easy and comfortable. This also is not to be understood of every individual person in a married state as matter of fact; for, on the one hand, there are some who take no care to please their wives and provide for their families, and are worse than infidels; and, on the other hand, there are others who take a proper care to make a suitable provision for their wives and children, to the satisfaction of both; and yet this is not their only care, they also care for the things of the Lord, and concern themselves much for his honour and glory: but the sense is, that, generally speaking, persons in such a state are greatly involved in worldly cares, and

have not that leisure, and those opportunities, that single persons have to attend religious exercises; wherefore the single state, on this account, is, in the apostle's opinion, the more preferable.

1 Corinthians 7:34

There is difference also between a wife and a virgin,.... The word translated “there is difference”, stands in some copies at the end of the last verse, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, by which it is rendered, “and is divided”; referring to the married man, whose thoughts are distracted with the cares of the world, and his mind divided between the Lord and his wife, between the things that please the one, and those that please the other; so that he cannot attend upon the Lord without distraction, as the unmarried person may; see Col 3:35. But the more generally received reading is what we follow; in which words the apostle shows, that there is just the same difference between a married and an unmarried woman, as there is between a married and an unmarried man. There is no difference in their nature, nor sex, but in their state and condition, and in the cares which involve the one and the other.

The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord; not everyone that is unmarried, but one that has the grace of God, being in a single state; as such an one is more at leisure, and can more conveniently attend on the service of the Lord, so she ought, and generally speaking does: and her end in so doing is,

that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; not in body only, but in spirit also; for outward chastity, without internal holiness, will be of little avail: but as a close adherence to the Lord, and to his worship and service, may be a means of preserving from external pollutions of the body, so likewise of carrying on the internal work of grace upon the soul; not that it is to be thought that unmarried persons are the only ones that are holy in body and spirit; there are some that are so in neither; and there are many married persons that are chaste in their bodies, and possess their vessels in sanctification and honour, and are blessed with inward spiritual purity.

But she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband; not by beautifying and adorning herself with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; though this is all that some care for; but with good works, taking care of her household and family affairs, bringing up her children in an orderly manner, honouring and obeying her husband, doing everything to oblige him, and to engage his love and affection to her, as becomes her; nor is this said of her by way of criticism, only that such is her state and situation in life, that she has not the opportunities and advantages the unmarried person has of serving the Lord; on which account the single life is represented as most advisable to abide in.

1 Corinthians 7:35

And this I speak for your own profit,.... The apostle suggests, that in giving the advice he did to unmarried persons to abide single, he had nothing else in view than their temporal and spiritual advantage; that they might be better able to meet and grapple with persecution for the sake of the Gospel; that they might be more free from the cares and encumbrances of life, and more at liberty to serve the Lord; whereby not only his glory, but their spiritual good, might be promoted; not that he thought that marriage was unlawful, or that the single life was a more honest, and a more chaste way of living, or that it was absolutely necessary, and an incumbent duty upon them to remain single,

nor would he be so understood: all that he had said was by way of advice; he had very faithfully laid before them the advantages and disadvantages of both states, and now leaves them to their full liberty to do as they pleased to take his advice, or not:

not that I may cast a snare on you; as fowlers on birds: had he enjoined virginity as necessary, and insisted upon it, that it was absolutely their duty to live a single life; this would have been laying an obligation upon them, and an ensnaring and entangling of them: hereby some might have engaged in a single life, who had not the gift of continence, and so might have been drawn into the sin of fornication, or into unnatural lust, and such impurities as would be very scandalous unto, and highly reflect upon, the Gospel of Christ. But the apostle delivered himself on the subject with no such view, and in such a manner as is plain he meant not to ensnare any:

but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction: all he aimed at, by advising them to a single life, was that they might more orderly and constantly, and without distraction of mind, through the cares of the world, wait upon the Lord, and serve him; which, in his opinion, was choosing the good part with Mary; whilst others, like Martha, were troubled, divided, and distracted with many things.

1 Corinthians 7:36

But if any man think,... This some understand of a man that is engaged, or betrothed to a virgin, and protracts marriage, who may use his prudence in consummating it, if he pleases, for any thing the apostle has said to the contrary: but it is better to understand it of a parent, or one that has the care and guardianship of virgins; if such an one is of opinion,

that he behaveth himself uncomely towards his virgin: by exposing her to contempt and reproach, in retaining her at home, and not giving her in marriage when at proper age for such a state; it being reckoned reproachful to be at, or past the age of marriage, or to be in years, and not married; or by so doing lay her under temptation to do that which is uncomely, to commit fornication, which would be uncomely, both to him, and to her; and such a tendency has living in a single state, contrary to inclination. The apostle may have respect to a Jewish tradition founded upon the supposed sense of Lev 19:29 “do not prostitute thy daughter to cause her to be a whore” (s).

“Says R. Eliezer, this is he who marries his daughter to an old man. Says R. Akiba, (who was contemporary with the apostle,) this is he who detains his daughter at home when she is marriageable.”

If she pass the flower of her age; that is, one that is arrived to years of maturity, is ripe for marriage, and is what the Jewish doctors call who, according to them, was one of twelve years and a half old (t), at which age virgins were judged fit to marry: hence that saying of theirs (u).

“if thy daughter, “is ripe”, or come to the flower of her age, make thy servant free and give her to him.”

Moreover, according to their canons, such an one was no longer under her father’s power; for so runs the canon (w),

“hrgbv Nwyk “when she is at the flower of her age”, she is no more under her father’s power:”

her father cannot make void her vows, though a husband can (x):

and need so require: that she be given in marriage to a man; if she has not the gift of continence; if she is in danger of falling into the sin of fornication, and the father or guardian are sensible of this:

let him do what he will, he sinneth not; he is under no obligation by what the apostle had said to detain her in a single life; he may give her in marriage if he pleases: he may

do what she will, as it may be rendered; comply with her inclination and desire in marrying her to some person; in doing which, neither he nor she will break any law of God, and so not sin therein:

let them marry; let parents marry their children when this is the case; let the young men and young women marry who are so disposed; there is no reason why they should not; there is nothing contrary to it in the word of God, nor in the advice of the apostle; nay, according to him, it was much better to marry than to burn, or to be exposed to any snare and temptation.

(s) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 1. (t) Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 2. sect. 2. (u) T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 113. 1. (w) Misn. Nidda, c. 5. sect. 7. (x) Misn. Nedarim, c. 10. sect. 2. T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 70. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 11, sect. 7.

1 Corinthians 7:37

Nevertheless, he that standeth steadfast in his heart,.... The apostle returns to confirm his former advice, where it can be attended to with safety; and observes, that notwithstanding what he had allowed might lawfully be done, and was proper to be done; yet a man that had deliberated upon, and had well weighed the matter of virginity, the case of a single life, and was at a point about in, having no hesitation nor fluctuation of mind concerning it: and also “having no necessity”; of acting otherwise, either through the meanness of his circumstances, or rather through the weakness of his virgin, she not having the gift of continency:

but hath power over his own will; his daughter’s will being the same with his, and she entirely consenting to live a single life; otherwise he would have no power of acting as he pleased in such a case:

and hath so decreed in his heart: it is a fixed point on mature deliberation, in which he himself is hearty and determined, and his child perfectly assents to it, so that on all hands it is an agreed matter:

that he will keep his virgin; at home with him, unmarried, and not give her to any man in marriage:

doth well: or that which is for both temporal and spiritual profit and advantage, as before observed. Some understand all this of a man’s keeping his own virginity, and determining to continue unmarried.

1 Corinthians 7:38

col 7:38

So then he that giveth her in marriage doth well,... Does that which is in its own nature good; that which is agreeable to the will of God, is of his institution and appointment, and therefore must be good, and answer many good ends and purposes. Such an one that marries his daughter, he seeing a necessity for it, and a propriety in it, does a very good thing; secures her chastity, and his own credit; prevents fornication, and other evils that might follow; consults the good of mankind, and the honour of religion.

But he that giveth her not in marriage doth better; not a better action in itself, simply considered; but more profitable and advantageous under such and such circumstances, with such and such conditions and consequences; since hereby a single person is more fit to encounter with and endure persecutions, is freer from the cares of life, and more at liberty to wait upon the Lord, and give up himself to his service.

1 Corinthians 7:39

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth,... That is, she is bound to her husband, by the law of marriage, during his life; nor can the bond of marriage between them be dissolved but by the death of one of them, except in the cases of adultery, and wilful desertion, see Rom 7:2.

But if her husband be dead; or “asleep”, for so the word may be rendered; though it designs death: death is often expressed by sleeping in Scripture; for the dead will not always remain in such a state, but be raised from thence at the last day, just as persons are awaked out of sleep. The Alexandrian copy reads “dead”; and so seems the Ethiopic version to have read.

She is at liberty to marry whom she will: so that second marriages are lawful, though condemned by many of the ancients: the liberty of a widow is greater than that of a virgin, because a virgin is under the power, and at the dispose of her parents; but a widow is at her own dispose; and death having dissolved her former obligation, she is at entire liberty to marry, or not marry, and to marry whom she pleases, that is not forbidden by the laws of God:

only in the Lord; not that it is absolutely necessary that her husband should be in the Lord, a converted person, a believer in Christ; though such an one should be most desirable and eligible: but either that she should continue in the possession of her faith in Christ, and not relinquish it for the sake of an husband; or that she enter into this state in the fear of the Lord, calling upon him, and consulting him in such an important affair; and take care that whom she marries is not within the line prohibited by the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:40

But she is happier if she so abide,... That is, a widow, in an unmarried state; which is to be understood not of the happiness of another world, but of this: the apostle’s meaning is, that she would be more free from cares, and less liable to trouble, would live with more peace and quietness, and be more at leisure to serve the Lord, second marriages oftentimes proving more disagreeable than the first; but in this the apostle only gives his opinion, enjoins nothing by way of command, or in an authoritative manner: and therefore adds,

after my judgment: according to his sense of things, and agreeably to the advice he had before given

to unmarried persons, whether virgins or widows, such a person was likely to have most peace, and least trouble, remaining a widow, than if married, and so consequently more happy: and in order to engage such to regard his counsel, he further says,

and I think also that I have the Spirit of God; that though he had no express command, nor did he pretend to any, nor did he lay any injunction on any, but left them to their liberty; yet he could not but think, nay, he was assured, though he thus modestly expresses himself, that he was directed to give this advice by the Spirit of God.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 8

In this chapter the apostle proceeds to consider the case of eating things offered to idols, which, though an indifferent thing, was abused by many in the Corinthian church, to the scandal and hurt of weak Christians; wherefore the apostle dissuades from the use of it, and refutes the arguments which were used by them in defence of their practice. And the general foundation on which they proceeded being their knowledge of Christian liberty, he begins with that; and makes answer to it, by granting, that he, and they, and all had knowledge in general; and by distinguishing between knowledge and charity, the one puffing up, and the other edifying: wherefore to argue from the one, to the disuse of the other, was wrong, Co1 8:1 seeing that kind of knowledge, which was not accompanied with love, was no true knowledge, Co1 8:2 but that was right which had annexed to it love to God, and our neighbour, Co1 8:3 and then applies this observation to the case of things offered to idols; and explains the knowledge which some had, and boasted of, that an idol was nothing, and that there was but one God, Co1 8:4 which latter he proves and confirms, partly by allowing that there were many nominal gods and lords, both in heaven and earth; but then they were only so by name, not by nature, Co1 8:5 and partly by observing the common faith of Christians, that there is but one God, and one Lord Jesus, who are both described by their names and properties, Co1 8:6 But now, though there was such knowledge concerning an idol, as nothing, and things offered to it, as indifferent, in some, this was not the case of all; who, as their knowledge was small, their consciences were weak, and were defiled by eating such things through the example of others, Co1 8:7 wherefore it became such who had greater knowledge to abstain from eating them; partly from the unprofitableness of such eating to them with respect to divine acceptance, it making them neither better nor worse, Co1 8:8 and partly from the harmfulness of it to others, it being a stumblingblock to the weak, which ought not to be laid in their way, Co1 8:9 and emboldening to do so likewise to the injury of their weak consciences, Co1 8:10 and so was to the loss and ruin of their peace and comfort, which is aggravated by their being brethren, and such for whom Christ died, Co1 8:11. Thus by wounding their weak consciences, they that drew them into this practice, by their example, sinned both against their brethren, and Christ himself, Co1 8:12. From all which the apostle concludes, that rather than offend a weak brother, it was right never to eat any flesh at all; and this he strengthens by his own example and resolution, Co1 8:13.

1 Corinthians 8:1

Now as touching things offered unto idols,.... This was another of the things the Corinthians wrote to the apostle about, desiring to have his judgment in; it was a controversy that had been before moved, whether it was lawful to eat things that had been sacrificed to idols. This was considered in the council at Jerusalem, Act 15:28 and it was agreed to, for the peace of the churches, that the Gentiles, among other things, be advised to abstain from them; which, it seems, the church at Corinth knew

nothing of, for the controversy was now moved among them: some that were weak in the faith, and had not, at least, clear notions of Gospel liberty, thought it very criminal and sinful to eat them; others that had, or boasted they had, more knowledge, would not only eat them privately at home, having bought them of the Heathen priests, or in the common meat markets, where they were exposed to sale, and at public feasts, to which they were invited by their friends; but would even go into an idol's temple, and sit and eat them there, to the great grief and prejudice of weak Christians; and what they had to plead in their own defence was their knowledge, to which the apostle here replies:

we know that we all have knowledge; said either affirmatively and seriously; and the meaning is, that the apostles and other Christians knew, and were conscious to themselves of their light and knowledge, and were assured, and might affirm with confidence, that they all, or the most part, only some few excepted, see Co1 8:7 had the same knowledge of Christian liberty as they had; knew that an idol was nothing, and that eating meats offered to them could not defile, or do them any hurt; for they were very sensible there was nothing common or unclean of itself, and yet did not think fit to make use of their knowledge to the grieving and wounding of their fellow Christians: or else this is said ironically, we are wise folks; you particularly are men of knowledge, and wisdom will die with you; you know that you know; you are very knowing in your own conceits, and very positive as to your knowledge. It was the saying of Socrates, that that this one thing he knew, that he knew nothing; but men wise in their own opinions know everything:

knowledge puffeth up; not true knowledge; not that which comes from above, which is gentle and easy to be entreated; not sanctified knowledge, or that which has the grace of God going along with it; that makes men humble, and will not suffer them to be puffed up one against another; but a mere show of knowledge, knowledge in conceit, mere notional and speculative knowledge, that which is destitute of charity or love:

but charity edifieth; that is, a man that has knowledge, joined with love to God, and his fellow Christians, will seek for that which makes for the edification of others; and without this all his knowledge will be of no avail, and he himself be nothing.

1 Corinthians 8:2

And if any man think that he knows anything,.... Whoever has an opinion of himself, or is conceited with his own knowledge, and fancies that he knows more than he does; which is always the case of those that are elated with their knowledge, and treat others with contempt, and have no regard to their peace and edification:

he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; if he did, he would know this, that he ought to consult the peace, comfort, and edification of his brother; and therefore whatever knowledge he may fancy he has attained to, or whatever he may be capable of, and hereafter obtain, for the present he must be put down for a man that knows nothing as he should do; for he knows neither his duty to God nor man; if he knew the former, he would know the latter.

1 Corinthians 8:3

But if any man love God,.... As they do, and show it, who love their brethren, and are careful not to

grieve them; and make use of their superior knowledge, not for their destruction, but edification:

the same is known of him; is taught by him, made to know more by him; such an one increases in spiritual knowledge, or he is highly approved of, esteemed, and beloved by God: he takes a special and particular notice of him, manifests his love to him, and will own and acknowledge him another day, when proud, haughty, overbearing, and hard hearted professors, will be rejected by him.

1 Corinthians 8:4

As concerning therefore the eating of those things,.... The apostle having enlarged on the head of knowledge, which those who made an ill use of their Christian liberty urged in favour of their conduct; he returns to the subject in question, in relation to meats,

that are offered in sacrifice unto idols. The determinations of the Jewish schools concerning this affair are as follow, which admit of no manner of profit by them in any shape:

“a beast, the whole of which they offer to idols, is forbidden of profit, even its dung, and its bones, and its horns, and its hoofs, and its skin, all is forbid to be of any profit” (y).

Again (z),

“flesh or wine, or fruits, which are brought in to be offered up to idols, are not forbidden to profit with, although they are brought into the idol’s temple, until they offer them up before it; “but when offered up before it”; they become an offering; and though they may return them, and bring them out, lo, these are forbidden for ever; and all that is found in an idol’s temple, even water and salt, are forbidden of profit by the law, , “and he that eats anything thereof” is to be beaten.”

Once more (a),

“an Israelite that lifts up a cheese to worship it, but does not worship it, but a Gentile worships it, it is forbidden of profit, because the lifting of it up is an action; and so if he lifts up an egg, and a Gentile comes and worships it, it is forbidden; he that cuts a gourd, or any such thing, and worships it, it is forbidden, &c.”

But by these decrees we Christians are not bound;

we know that an idol is nothing in the world; among the things created by God in the world; for though the matter of it may be of God, the form is of men; nor has it any share in the government of the world: and though that of which it may be made, as gold, silver, brass, &c. is something; yet as it is a form and representation of God, it is nothing, because there can be no representation of the invisible God; it is nothing, that is, it has no divinity in it, it is no God. Though it may have an existence, as the sun, moon, and stars, yet not divinity; and in that sense nothing. The apostle here speaks the language of the Jewish doctors, who say (b),

“why dost thou envy an idol? , “since it is nothing, or there is nothing it.””

And again (c),

“the Rabbins say, since , “there is nothing in an idol”, why do they call them deities;”

Very likely the apostle may have reference to the Hebrew word for idols, which signifies things of nought, that are good for nothing, are of no value, and are as nothing, Isa 2:20.

And that there is none other God but one. This clause may be considered either as a reason of the former, why an idol is nothing, is no deity, is no God, “for there is none other God but one”, as it may be rendered; or as a part of what believers know; for as they know an idol is nothing, so they know, both from reason and revelation, from the books of the Old and New Testament, that there is but one God, and consequently that idols are nothing, and that they cannot defile them, nor anything that is offered to them.

(y) Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, &c. c. 7. sect. 3. (z) Ib. sect. 15. (a) Ib. c. 8. sect. 3. (b) Prefat. ad Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 3. (c) Debarim Rabba, fol. 236. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 135. 2. & 138. 2. & 141. 4.

1 Corinthians 8:5

For though there be that are called gods,.... That are so by name, though not by nature; who are called so in Scripture, as angels and magistrates, or by men, who give them such names, and account them so:

whether in heaven; as the sun, moon, and stars:

or in earth; as men who formerly lived on earth; or various creatures on earth, who have been accounted deities; or stocks and stones graven by man's device:

as there be gods many: almost without number, as were among the Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, and others; yea, even among the Jews, who falling into idolatry, their gods were according to the number of their cities, Jer 2:28

and lords many; referring to the Baalim, or the several idols that went by the name of Baal, or lord, as Baal Peor, Num 25:3 Baal Zephon, Exo 14:2 Baal Zebub, Kg2 1:2 Baal Berith, Jdg 8:33.

1 Corinthians 8:6

But to us there is but one God, the Father,.... In this Christians and Jews agree with the best and wisest philosophers of the Gentiles, that there is but one God; which is clear from the perfections of God, as necessary existence, eternity, infinity, omnipotence, all-sufficiency, goodness, and perfection; from one first cause of all things; from the government of the world; and from the writings of the Old and New Testament: so that to us believers this point is out of all doubt; but who this one God is the Gentiles knew not, and the Jews are very ignorant of; but we Christians know him to be “the Father”; by whom meant either God essentially considered, the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, called the Father, not in relation to any person in the Godhead, but in relation to the creatures: so this one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, is the Father of spirits, the creator of angels, and the souls of men, the God of all flesh, the Father of all the individuals of human nature, the Father or author of all the mercies and

blessings the children of men enjoy. Or else personally considered, and so designs the first person in the Godhead, who is called so in relation to his Son, who is styled the only begotten of the Father: and when he is said to be the one God, it must be understood, not as exclusive of the Son and Spirit; for if the Son stands excluded in this clause from being the one God with the Father, by the same rule of interpretation, the Father, in the next clause must stand excluded from being the one Lord with Christ; but as dominion or lordship belongs to the Father, so deity to the Son, and also to the Spirit.

Of whom are all things; all created beings and things; angels are of him, are created by him, serve and worship him; devils are of him, and under him, and at his control, though they have rebelled against him; all mankind are of him, and are his offspring; the whole universe, the heavens, the earth, and seas, and all that in them are, are of him; all things in nature, providence, grace, and glory, come of him: he is the author of every mercy, temporal and spiritual.

And we in him: or “for him”: as creatures we are not only made by him, but live in him, and are supported in him, and by him, and are created for his glory: though this seems rather to respect what believers are, as new creatures; they are in God; they are interested in him as their covenant God, and in his everlasting and immutable love; they are engraven on his hands, and set as a seal on his heart; they are “into him”, as it may be rendered; they are brought into nearness to him, and communion with him; and are “for him”, are chosen, redeemed, regenerated, and called for the glorifying of his grace, and to show forth his praise.

And one Lord Jesus Christ; so called, not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit, but in opposition to the lords many before mentioned, and with respect to all his people. Christ is the one Lord of all, as he is God over all, the Creator and Former of all things; and he is so likewise as Mediator, having all power, dominion, and government put into his hands: he is, in a special sense, the one Lord of his people, and that by right of marriage to them; by right of redemption of them; through his being an head unto them, and King of them; and by a voluntary surrender of themselves to him, rejecting all other lords, as sin, Satan, and the world, who have formerly had dominion over them, they acknowledge him to be their one and only Lord:

by whom are all things; in nature; all the created beings of this, or the other world, whether visible or invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, are by him; no creature was made without him, and all by him; and all things in grace, our election, redemption, reconciliation, pardon, justification, and everlasting glory and happiness,

And we by him; we are redeemed by him from sin, Satan, the law, death, and hell; we are by him what we are, as Christians, as believers in him; by him, and from him, we have all the grace and the supplies of it we have; by him we have access to the Father, and fellowship with him; by him we are governed, influenced, protected, and preserved to his kingdom and glory; and by him we are, and shall be, saved with an everlasting salvation.

1 Corinthians 8:7

Howbeit, there is not in every man that knowledge,.... The apostle is not speaking of Heathens, in whom there was no knowledge of the one true God, the author of all things, and of the one Lord Jesus, the only saviour and Redeemer; but of Christians, in whom there was the knowledge of these things, but not in all of them; the knowledge of this, that an idol was nothing; for though they knew

that an idol was not God, and had no true deity in it, nor was it any true representation of God, yet fancied that it had an influence upon food that was offered to it, to defile it, and render it unclean, so that it ought not to be eaten; and since there were such persons that were so ignorant and weak, it became those who had more knowledge to be careful how they laid stumblingblocks in the way of such, to the prejudice of their consciences: that there were such, the apostle affirms,

for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; that is, there were some persons even at that very time, though they had been so long converted from Heathenism to Christianity, yet had such an opinion of an idol, that they really thought in their own consciences, that there were something in an idol, they could not well tell what, that defiled meats offered to it, and made them unlawful to be eaten; and yet, through the influence of the example of others, were prevailed upon to eat of them, having at the same time a notion of such food, as if it was not common food, but had received some virtue from the idol; and not without some regret, and uneasiness of mind, as being polluted with it. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “through custom of the idol”; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read: and the sense is, that some having been formerly accustomed to worship idols, and to eat things offered to them, as having received some virtue from them, still retained an opinion, that there was some difference between such meats and others.

And their conscience being weak is defiled; because such act against the dictates of their own conscience; which, though weak, is binding, and sinned against, defiles, according to the rules given by the apostle, Rom 14:14.

1 Corinthians 8:8

But meat commendeth us not to God,... These words are said by the apostle, either as expressing the argument of such as had knowledge in favour of themselves, that what they did was a thing indifferent, by which they were made neither better nor worse; nor did they look upon it as meritorious, or expect any favour from God on account of it, and therefore were not to be blamed for using their liberty in the manner they did: or else they are spoken by him as his own sense: and the meaning is, that eating of meat, any sort of meat, and so that which is offered to idols, or abstinence from it, neither one nor the other recommends any to the love and favour of God; , “does not bring near”, or give access to God, as the Syriac version renders the phrase; does not ingratiate any into his affectionate regards, or make them acceptable unto him:

for neither if we eat are we the better; or “abound”, not in earthly but spiritual things, in the graces of the Spirit, and particularly in the esteem and good will of God, upon which such an action can have no influence:

neither if we eat not are we the worse; or are deficient; meaning not in temporal things, but, as before, in spiritual; true grace and piety are not a whit the less; nor are such persons less in the love and favour of God, which is not to be known and judged of by any such action, or the omission of it.

1 Corinthians 8:9

But take heed lest by any means,... This is either a reply to the instance of such as argued in favour of eating things offered to idols; or a limitation and explanation of the apostle’s own concession, that it

made a man, with respect to the favour of God, neither better nor worse: yet care should be taken, lest

this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak; he owns they had a liberty, or a right, or power, as the word may be rendered, of eating, or not eating, as they pleased; but then they ought to be cautious, lest they should be the means of offending, or causing to offend, such who were weak in the faith, and had not that knowledge of Christian liberty they had: not the use of their power and liberty is here denied, but the abuse of it is guarded against; for though the action itself was indifferent, yet as it might be used, it might be sinful, being attended with very bad consequences, such as hereafter mentioned.

1 Corinthians 8:10

For if any man see thee which hast knowledge,... That is, not any person whatever; not one that has equal knowledge, and can with a good conscience take the same liberty; but one that is weak in the faith, that has not such a clear sight of the doctrine of Christian liberty: if such an one should observe one that is famous for his superior abilities, learning, and knowledge,

sit at meat in the idol's temple; or at table, or at a feast, where, it seem, after the sacrifice was over, a feast was made of what was left, and friends were invited to partake of it; and some such there were in this church, who to show their Christian liberty, and their knowledge of it, would go and sit down at these feasts publicly, looking upon such meats as having nothing different from common food, or what they bought in the markets, or brought up as their own:

shall not the conscience of him that is weak; in knowledge, who is not clearly instructed in the doctrine of Christian liberty, but has some doubts upon his mind whether it is lawful to eat such meats, imagining them to be polluted by the idol: "be emboldened"; Greek for "edified"; that is, induced by such an example, and confirmed by such an instance with boldness, and without fear, to eat those things which are offered to idols, contrary to his light, and knowledge, and conscience; and so upon a reflection on what he has done, wound his weak conscience, destroy his peace, and distress his soul. This the apostle proposes to the consideration of these men of knowledge and liberty, as what might be the case, and which they could not well deny, to dissuade them from the use of their liberty, in all places and times, and under all circumstances; all which ought to be seriously weighed and attended to in this business.

1 Corinthians 8:11

And through thy knowledge,... These words contain an aggravation of the sin such persons are guilty of, who are the means, by their example, of ensnaring weak minds, and causing them to stumble and fall, even in some sense so as to perish:

shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? every word almost carries in it an exaggeration of this matter; it is not some slight injury that is done to the person, but even causing him to "perish"; and this is not said of any person, but a "brother", to whom the strongest affection, and strictest regard, should be shown; and a "weak" brother, of whom the greater care should be taken; and therefore it is an instance of cruelty to do damage to such an one, and that not ignorantly, which cannot be pretended, but "through thy knowledge"; not through the true use, but abuse of it: those that have knowledge should know better, and improve it to the edification, and not the destruction of

fellow Christians; and all this done in a case of indifference, that might as well be let alone, of which there was no necessity for the doing of it: but what aggravates most of all is, that this affects a person for “whom Christ died”; that he had such a value for as to purchase and redeem with the price of his own blood; and yet these men made so little account of, as by so trifling a thing to risk their good and welfare. Some would from hence conclude the doctrine of universal redemption, that Christ died for all men, even for them that perish; but it should be observed, that the words are put by way of interrogation, and prove no matter of fact, even supposing they could be understood of eternal ruin and destruction; and at most only imply the danger and possibility thereof through offences given, were they not preserved by the power and grace of God through Christ, who died for them, and so will not suffer them to perish; though this is no thanks to them who lay stumblingblocks in their way, and, as much as in them lies, cause them to perish, in this sense: besides, the “perishing” of this weak brother is to be understood of his peace and comfort, and is explained by “defiling” his conscience, Co1 8:7 by wounding it, Co1 8:12 and making him to offend, Co1 8:13 through an imprudent use of Christian liberty in those who had the greater knowledge, and by a participation of things offered unto idols, in an idol’s temple, and not of his eternal damnation in hell; which could never enter into the apostle’s thought, as to be brought about hereby, as appears from Co1 8:8 and so is no proof of Christ’s dying for such as perish eternally: for those for whom Christ has died, he has by his death procured such blessings for them, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace with God, reconciliation unto him, and eternal salvation, which will for ever secure them from perishing in such sense.

1 Corinthians 8:12

But when ye sin so against the brethren,... Through sitting at meat in an idol’s temple, and thereby violating the new commandment of love; by which saints are obliged to love one another as brethren, and take care to do nothing that may hurt and prejudice one another’s peace and comfort, it being an incumbent duty upon them by love to serve one another: and

wound their weak conscience: as before observed: it is contrary to the law of love to wound a brother; it is an aggravation of the sin to wound a weak one; what greater cruelty than to strike or beat, as the word here used signifies, a sick and infirm man? and greater still to strike and wound his conscience than any part of his body; for a wounded spirit is insupportable without divine aid and influence; and what serves most to enhance the crime and guilt is,

ye sin against Christ, who has so loved this weak brother as to die for him; and between whom there is so close an union, as between head and members; and from whence such a sympathy arises, that what is done to or against such a person, Christ takes as done to himself. The Syriac version emphatically adds, “himself”.

1 Corinthians 8:13

Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend,... This is the conclusion of the whole, which the apostle makes with respect to himself, and proposes for the imitation of others; that since an imprudent use of Christian liberty, in this article of eating things offered to idols, might be attended with such bad consequences, as to lay a stumblingblock in the way of weak Christians, and be a means of emboldening them to do things contrary to their consciences, and so break the peace of their minds, wound their spirits, grieve and afflict their souls, and not only so, but so to do would

be to sin against Christ himself; rather than do any of these things, or be accessary to them, he determines, in the strength of divine grace, that

he will eat no flesh while the world standeth; or “for ever”: not only he resolves he will not eat flesh offered to idols, but no other flesh, if this was an offence to a weak brother; and he not only concludes to abstain a few days, or months, or years, but as long as he should live in the world: he chose rather to live on herbs, or any other food but this,

lest, says he,

I make my brother to offend: this is truly Christian charity, a proof of brotherly love, and it shows a concern for the peace and welfare of others, when a person foregoes his own right, and drops the use of his liberty, rather than grieve, wound, and offend a brother in Christ.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 9

The principal things in this chapter are the proof of the apostle’s office and authority; arguments for his own maintenance, and the maintenance of Gospel ministers; reasons why he did not make use of his right and privilege in this respect: and the whole is concluded with an exhortation to diligence and perseverance in the Christian course of life, of which he himself was an example. He begins with his office, as an apostle, and proves it; partly by his independency on men, not having his call and mission from them; and partly by his corporeal sight of Christ, and the authority which he in person received from him; and also by the success of his ministry among the Corinthians, Co1 9:1, wherefore, whatever might be objected to him by other persons, they had no reason to object to his apostleship, seeing they, being converted under his ministry, were so many seals of it, Co1 9:2, and since his call to the ministry was firm and valid, he had a right, as other ministers, to a maintenance of himself and family, should he have any, from the churches, without labouring with his own hands, Co1 9:3, which he proves from the law of nature and nations, exemplified in the cases of soldiers, planters of vineyards, and keepers of flocks, who by virtue of their calling and service have a right to a livelihood, between whom, and ministers of the Gospel, there is some resemblance, Co1 9:7, and also from the law of Moses, particularly the law respecting the ox, which was not to be muzzled when it tread out the corn; and which he observes is to be understood, not only and barely in the letter of oxen, but of ministers of the word, who are as husbandmen that plough and thresh in hope, and therefore should be partakers of their hope, Co1 9:8. Moreover, the apostle argues the right of the maintenance of the ministers of the Gospel, from the justice and equity of the thing, that seeing they minister spiritual things, it is but reasonable that they should receive temporal ones, Co1 9:11, and which the apostle argues for himself, and Barnabas, as from the instances of other apostles, Co1 9:5, so from the examples of those that succeeded him in Corinth, who were maintained by that church; though he did not think fit, when among them, to claim his right, and make use of his power, lest any check should be put to the progress of the Gospel, Co1 9:12. And he goes on to make this point clear and manifest from the case of, the priests and Levites under the former dispensation, who ministering in holy things, had a provision made for them, Co1 9:13. And lastly, from the constitution and appointment of Christ himself, who has ordained it as a law of his, that the preachers of the Gospel should live of it, Co1 9:14, though the apostle himself did not make use of this his privilege; nor would he ever make use of it, especially at Corinth, for which he gives his reasons; and his principal one was, that his glorying might not be made void, Co1 9:15 which did not lie in preaching the Gospel, for that he was obliged to do, Co1 9:16, for if he had engaged in it of his own

accord, he would have had his reward; but since it was through necessity, he could not claim any, Co1 9:17, or if any, it could be no other than to preach the Gospel “gratis”, and without charge, which was the thing he gloried in, Co1 9:18, and thus, though he lived independent of men, both with respect to his office and his maintenance, yet in order to gain souls to Christ, and be the instrument of their salvation, he became a servant to all, Co1 9:19, who are distributed into three sorts, the Jews that were under the law, Co1 9:20, the Gentiles that were without the law, Co1 9:21, and weak Christians, Co1 9:22, all which he did, not with any lucrative view to himself, but for the sake of the Gospel, that he might partake of that, and of the glory he was called unto by it, Co1 9:23 which, and not temporal things, he was looking unto, and pressing after; and which he illustrates by a metaphor taken from the Grecian games, well known to the Corinthians, particularly that of running races, in which all ran, but one only had the prize: wherefore he exhorts the Corinthians to run in like manner, that they may obtain the prize which he mentions, and describes as an incorruptible crown, in opposition to a corruptible one, which others strove for, Co1 9:24, and to this he animates by his own example and conduct, which he expresses in terms borrowed from racers and wrestlers, expressive of his humility, sobriety, and temperance; which things he exercised, that whilst he was a preacher to others, he might not be worthy of reproof and disapprobation himself, Co1 9:26.

1 Corinthians 9:1

Am I not an apostle? am I not free?.... The Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions, put the last clause first; so the Alexandrian copy, and some other copies; and many interpreters are of opinion that it is the best order of the words; the apostle proceeding by a gradation from the less to the greater, having respect either to his freedom in the use of things indifferent, as eating of meats, &c. for though he did not think fit to use his liberty, to the wounding of weak consciences, it did not follow therefore that he was not free, as some might suggest from what he had said in the latter part of the foregoing chapter: or he may have respect to his freedom from the ceremonial law in general; for though, for the sake of gaining souls to Christ, he became all things to all men; to the Jews he became a Jew, that he might gain them; yet in such a manner as to preserve his liberty in Christ, without entangling himself with the yoke of bondage. Some have thought he intends, by his liberty, his right to insist upon a maintenance, and that he was no more obliged to work with his hands than other persons, of which he treats at large hereafter; but to me it rather seems that the words stand in their right order; and that, whereas there were some persons that either denied him to be an apostle, or at least insinuated that he was not one, nor was he to be treated as such, he goes upon the proof of it; and the first thing he mentions is his freedom, that is, from men; no man had any authority over him; he was not taught, nor sent forth, nor ordained by men as a minister, but immediately by Jesus Christ, as apostles were; they were set in the first place in the church, and had power to instruct, send forth, and ordain others; but none had power over them; and this being the apostle's case, proved him to be one; he was an apostle, because he was free:

have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? He had a spiritual sight of him by faith, but that did not show him to be an apostle; this is what he had in common with other believers: whether he saw him in the flesh, before his crucifixion and death, is not certain; it is very probable he might; yet this was no more than what Herod and Pontius Pilate did; but he saw him after his resurrection from the dead, to which he refers, Co1 15:8 and designs here, as a proof of his apostleship, this being what the apostles were chosen to be eyewitnesses of, Act 10:41 and publish to the world: now our apostle saw him several times; first at the time of his conversion, next when in a trance at Jerusalem, and again in the castle where the chief captain put him for security, and very probably also when he was caught up

into the third heaven:

are not you my work in the Lord? as they were regenerated, converted persons, and were become new creatures; not efficiently, but instrumentally; they were God's workmanship, as he was the efficient cause of their conversion and faith; his only, as an instrument by whom they believed; and therefore he adds, "in the Lord"; ascribing the whole to his power and grace: however, as he had been the happy instrument of first preaching the Gospel to them, and of begetting them again through it; of founding and raising such a large flourishing church as they were; it was no inconsiderable proof of his apostleship.

1 Corinthians 9:2

If I be not an apostle unto others,.... This is said by way of supposition, not concession; for he was an apostle to many others; he was an apostle of the Gentiles in general; as the apostleship of the circumcision belonged to Peter, that of the uncircumcision fell to his share: but however, as if he should say, be that as it will,

yet doubtless I am to you; all the signs of apostleship were wrought among them; not only the grace of God was implanted in them under his ministry, but the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were received by them through it; and many signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, were done in the midst of them by him: see Co2 12:12 which were sufficient to put the matter quite out of doubt with them:

for the seal of mine apostleship, are ye in the Lord; alluding to the sealing of deeds and writings, which render them authentic; or to the sealing of letters, confirming the truth of what is therein expressed; and the sense is, that their being converted persons, and so openly in the Lord, in union with him; or being made new creatures by the power of his grace, through his preaching, was an authentic proof of his apostleship, and served him instead of a letter testimonial and commendatory; see Co2 3:1. Some copies read, "the seal of my epistle", and so the Ethiopic version.

1 Corinthians 9:3

Mine answer to them that do examine me is this. These words are referred by some to the following, as if the apostle's answer lay in putting the questions he does in the next verses; but they rather seem to belong to the preceding, and the meaning to be this, that when any persons called in question his apostleship, and examined him upon that head, what he thought fit to say in answer to them, and in defence of himself, was by referring them to the famous church at Corinth, who were as particular persons, and as a church, his work in the Lord, and everyone of them as so many seals of his apostleship; he being the first preacher of the Gospel to them, the founder of them as a church, and the instrument of their conversion.

1 Corinthians 9:4

Have we not power to eat and to drink? Having proved his apostleship, he proceeds to establish his right to a maintenance as a Gospel minister; which he expresses by various phrases, and confirms by divers arguments: by a "power to eat and drink", he does not mean the common power and right of mankind to perform such actions, which everyone has, provided he acts temperately, and to the glory of God; nor a liberty of eating and drinking things indifferent, or which were prohibited under the

ceremonial law; but a comfortable livelihood at the public charge, or at the expense of the persons to whom he ministered; and he seems to have in view the words of Christ, Luk 10:7.

1 Corinthians 9:5

col 9:5

Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife,.... The phrase “a sister, a wife”, is an Hebraism, and answers to “my sister, spouse”, Sol 4:9. The Jews called their wives, sisters, not on account of religion, which also is not the meaning here; but because of the common relation that men and women, all mankind, stand in to one another, antecedent to any nearer relation, as that of man and wife. The sense the Papists put on these words, to secure them from being a proof of the lawfulness of the marriage of the ministers of the Gospel, can by no means be the true one; which is, that they are to be understood of a rich woman, or women, the apostles had a power to carry about with them, to minister of their substance to them, and provide for them; for such a sense is directly contrary to the subject and argument the apostle is upon; which is to show the right that he and others had, of casting themselves entirely upon the churches for a maintenance; whereas this is contriving a way for relieving the churches of such a charge; besides, the act of “leading”, or carrying “about”, is expressive of such a power over them, as cannot be thought to agree with persons of such substance; and whose voluntary act this must be, to go along with them and supply them; add to this, that for the apostles to lead about with them wherever they went women, whether rich or poor, that were not their wives, would be of no good report, and must tend to hurt their character and reputation: moreover, though these words clearly imply the lawfulness of a minister’s marriage, and suppose it, yet they do not express the act itself, or the lawfulness of entering into such a state, but rather what follows after it; and the sense is this, that the apostle and others, supposing them to have wives, and it may be added also, and children, they had a right to take these with them wherever they went, and insist upon the maintenance of them, as well as of their own, at the public expense:

as well as other apostles; who it seems did so, that had wives and families, as Philip the Evangelist had four daughters, Act 21:8.

And as the brethren of the Lord: who it seems were married persons, and took such a method; by whom are meant James, Joses, Judas, and Simon; who were the near kinsmen of Christ, it being usual with the Jews to call such brethren:

and Cephas; that is, Peter, who it is certain had a wife; see Mat 8:14 and therefore it is with a very ill grace that the pope, who pretends to be Peter’s successor, should forbid the marriage of ecclesiastical persons.

1 Corinthians 9:6

Or I only and Barnabas,.... Who were for a great while companions and fellow travellers; are we alone? are we exempted from those rights and privileges, common to others?

have not we power to forbear working? that is, with their hands, at their trades and occupations, to get their living by: Paul worked at his trade, and so it seems Barnabas did likewise: Paul wrought with his hands at Corinth, in company with Aquila and Priscilla, they being tentmakers as he, Act 18:3 and so he did in other places; he appeals for the truth of this to the elders of the church at Ephesus,

Act 20:34 and to the church of the Thessalonians, Th1 2:9 not but that he had a right and power to leave off business, to forbear working, and require a maintenance from those to whom he ministered; but for some reasons he chose not to make use of this his power and liberty, because he would not be chargeable to them; and lest that upon his first preaching the Gospel to them, they should think he had worldly selfish ends in view, and not the good of souls, and glory of Christ; however, he hereby lets them know, that though Barnabas and he continued to get their bread by their own hand labour, they had a right to quit their trades, and throw themselves upon them for a maintenance. The apostle seems, in this, to imitate the ancient, wise, and holy men of his nation, who taught the law freely, and took nothing for it; not that they thought it was unlawful, or that they had no right to a maintenance on account of it, but for the honour of religion, and that piety they professed; and lest the law should be thought to be made a trade of, they chose not to insist upon it (d).

(d) Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 5.

1 Corinthians 9:7

Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?.... Some people have done so, as did the Habessines (e), and the ancient Romans (f); though before the apostle wrote this, the senate had made an act, that the soldiers should have a stipend from the public; and this being now so common, and universally obtaining everywhere, the apostle puts the question he does; and his meaning is, that since ministers of the Gospel are the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and are engaged in a warfare state, in fighting the good fight of faith, against his enemies, and those of his church, it is but reasonable that their charges should be bore, and they maintained at the public expense:

who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? The church of Christ is a vineyard, it is often so called in Scripture; ministers are planters, vinedressers, and labourers in it; and as the mystical Solomon, the owner of the vineyard, ought to have his thousand, the cultivators of it, the keepers of the fruit, should have their two hundred, Sol 8:12

Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? The churches of Christ are compared to flocks of sheep; the ministers of the word are pastors, or shepherds, who have the care and oversight of them, and feed them with knowledge and understanding; and it is but right and just that they enjoy the fruit of their labours, and have a proper and suitable maintenance, as it is that he who feeds a flock should eat of the milk which that produces.

(e) Ludolph. Hist. Ethiop. l. 2. c. 14. (f) Liv. Hist. l. 4. prope finem. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 22.

1 Corinthians 9:8

Say I these things as a man?.... After the manner of men, reasoning from things common among men, and obvious to everyone's observation:

or saith not the law the same also? As the subject the apostle is upon was capable of being illustrated and confirmed by instances common unto, and easy of observation among men; so it might be supported by divine authority; it was not only a clear point from the reason of things, but was certain by the law of God.

1 Corinthians 9:9

For it is written in the law of Moses,.... Deu 25:4

Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. The manner of threshing, or beating out the corn among the Jews, was not the same with ours; it was not done by the flail, at least not always, but by the means of oxen; and by these not only treading upon it to and fro, but drawing a wooden instrument after them, the bottom of which was stuck with iron teeth, and the top of it filled with stones, to press it down close by the weight thereof; the sheaves put in proper form, the oxen were led to and fro upon them, drawing this threshing instrument after them, by which means the grain was separated from the husk and ear (g); see Isa 41:15 The learned Beckius (h) has given us a figure of this instrument, and the manner of using it: now according to this law, whilst the ox was thus employed, its mouth was not to be muzzled, but it might freely eat of the corn it trod upon, excepting, the Jews say (i), what was dedicated to sacred uses. They give many rules relating to this law, and particularly observe, that it is to be extended to all sorts of creatures, as well as the ox, and to all sorts of business (k); and that what is said of the ox, is much more to be observed with respect to men (l); and which agrees with the apostle's reasoning here:

doth God take care for oxen? yes, he does, and for creatures of less importance than they, even the fowls of the air, and the most worthless of them, sparrows, two of which are sold for a farthing; but not for them only, nor principally, but chiefly for men.

(g) Ben Melec. in 2 Sam. xii. 31. & Jarchi in Isa. xli. 1, 5. (h) Not. in Targum in 1 Chron. xx. 3. p. 210. Vid. Surenhusii Biblos Kattallages, p. 535. (i) Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Meilah, c. sect. 6. & Trumot, c. 9. sect. 3. (k) Jarchi in loc. Maimon. Hilch. Shecirot, c. 13. sect. 1, 2, 3. Moses Kotsensis Mitzot Tora, pr. neg. 184. & affirm. 91. (l) T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 88. 2.

1 Corinthians 9:10

Or saith he it altogether for our sakes,.... That is, God says this, or delivers out this law, forbidding the muzzling the ox, while it treads out the corn; not merely for the sake of the ox, but chiefly for the sake of men; and so Jarchi upon the place says, that the ox is mentioned, , “to express man”; and so another of the Jewish writers (m) interprets the law in Deu 22:6. “Thou shalt not take the dam with the young”;

“the intention of the command is, not to have mercy on birds, “but for the sake of men”, he (God) says this, whom he would accustom to meekness and compassion:”

and particularly this is here said, for the sake of ministers of the Gospel, who for their spiritual strength, and labours in their work, may be compared to oxen; see Eze 1:10. This law is elsewhere produced by the apostle, and urged in favour of the maintenance of ministers, as here, Ti1 5:17 and therefore

for our sakes no doubt it is written; to teach men, that as any workmen are not to be deprived of proper sustenance, so neither they that labour in the word and doctrine:

that he that ploweth should plow in hope; of enjoying the fruit of his labours:

and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope; of having a supply out of that he is threshing.

(m) R. Menuachem apud Ainsworth on Deut. xxii. 7. & Drusium in loc.

1 Corinthians 9:11

If we have sown unto you spiritual things,.... The preachers of the Gospel are compared to sowers of seed; the seed they sow is the word of God, which is like to seed, for its smallness and despicableness in the eyes of carnal men; and yet as the seed is the choicest which is laid by for sowing, the Gospel is most choice and excellent to true believers; like seed, it has a generative virtue through divine influence; and whereas unless sown into the earth, it brings forth no fruit, so neither does the word, unless it has a place in the heart, where, as seed in the ground, its operation is secret, its increase gradual, and its fruitfulness different. The ground they sow upon is, very various; some of their hearers are like the wayside, careless, ignorant, and on whom no impression is made; others are like the stony ground, who though for a while they express some affection and liking, yet not having the root of grace in them, whenever persecution arises, forsake the hearing of it; others are like the thorny ground, which are at first very promising, and greatly reformed, but inwardly full of the cares and lusts of the world, which choke the word, and make it unfruitful; and others are like the good ground, who are made good by the grace of God, understand the word, receive it, hold it fast, and in whom it is fruitful: sowing requires skill and art, and so preaching the Gospel does, and that more than human; and is constantly in its returning season to be attended to, notwithstanding the winds and clouds, and so the ministry of the word, notwithstanding all reproaches, persecutions, and afflictions; and as the same sort of seed, without mixture, and in plenty, is to be cast into the earth, so the same pure and unmingled Gospel of Christ is to be preached, and that without keeping back any thing that is profitable: and once more, as the sower, when he has cast his seed into the earth, waits long and with patience for its springing up and increase, so do the faithful dispensers of the Gospel: and what they sow or minister is of a spiritual nature; it comes from the Spirit of God, he is the dictator of it; he by his gifts qualifies men to preach it, and by his power makes it effectual to the souls of men; and through it conveys himself to them, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification: the matter of the Gospel is spiritual; it contains spiritual doctrines, such as justification, pardon of sin, adoption, regeneration, &c. and are what concern the souls and spirits of men, and their spiritual and eternal welfare:

is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? meaning temporal ones, what concern the flesh, the body, the outward man, and the support thereof. The argument is from the greater to the less, and much the same with that in Rom 15:27. The difference between carnal and spiritual things is very great; the one has a vastly superior excellency to the other; and therefore if for carnal things men receive spiritual ones, they can be no losers thereby, but must be gainers; nor should it be thought any hardship or burden upon them, or any great and wonderful thing done by them, to support and maintain such who are so useful to their souls, and the spiritual welfare of them.

1 Corinthians 9:12

If others are partakers of this power over you,.... Meaning not any tyrannical power and jurisdiction

over them, with respect either to faith or practice; but the right of a maintenance, which either the false apostles, or the true ordinary ministers of the word there, justly claimed, and did enjoy:

are not we rather? he and Barnabas, especially himself, who was more than an ordinary minister, an apostle, and the first preacher of the Gospel to them:

nevertheless, we have not used this power; though others had, and they had a right to it, but did not choose to insist upon it; and, rather than do so, worked with their own hands; their not making use of this power was not because they stood in no need of it, and enjoyed an affluence of temporal things, for the reverse of this was their case:

but suffer all things: famine, thirst, nakedness, hard labour, and many other hardships:

lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ; some might suggest, that they preached the Gospel only for gain, and not for the good of souls, and glory of Christ; and other mean spirited persons might be backward of embracing and professing the Gospel, lest it should become chargeable to them; wherefore that the Gospel might not be retarded in its course by the calumny of some, and the sordidness of others, the apostle thought fit to drop his claim to a maintenance from them; though at the same time he would have them know it was a just due, and therefore goes on to defend it by other arguments.

1 Corinthians 9:13

Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things,... Not the priests in the temples of the Heathen deities, as the Ethiopic version suggests; but the priests in the temple at Jerusalem, who were employed in slaying the sacrifices, taking off their skins, cutting them into pieces, laying them in order with the wood upon the altar, and burning them, with other services they there performed, which were well known to the Corinthians, many of this church being Jews:

live of the things of the temple; the tithes and firstfruits, and other oblations, and presents in money or goods, thither brought; nor had they any other way of living and supporting their families; for the priests and Levites had no inheritance among the children of Israel, and therefore provision was made for them in this way:

and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar; some read it, “who sit at the altar”; but none might sit in the temple but a king of the house of David (n); the priests and Levites always stood in their ministry, some doing one thing, and some another; some slew the sacrifice, others sprinkled the blood; some took away the ashes, others laid the wood, others brought up the parts of the sacrifice when slain, skinned, and cut asunder, and laid them on the altar (o), and these partook with the altar; some parts the altar devoured, being consumed by fire upon it; but then there were other pieces which by law were reserved for the priests, and upon which they and their families lived: hence the distinction of , the food of the altar, and , “the food of man” (p); and therefore as it was but just and equitable that persons so employed should be maintained out of the revenues of the temple and altar, it is but right that Gospel ministers should be provided for with a suitable maintenance.

(n) Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1. (o) Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 3. Tamid. c. 3. sect. 1. (p) Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Menachot, c. 3. sect 1.

1 Corinthians 9:14

Even so hath the Lord ordained,.... That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Mat 10:10 it is an order and appointment of his that his ministering servants, who labour in preaching his Gospel, should be sufficiently taken care of, as to a comfortable livelihood; he has not indeed fixed it in the same way as the priests and Levites had theirs under the law; but as the one was just and right, that they should be maintained out of the things belonging to the temple and altar, and live on them, so it is his will and pleasure,

that they which preach the Gospel; that continue to do so, that labour, and not loiter in the word and doctrine, who do the work of the ministry fully and faithfully, and not bear the name only of Gospel preachers: should live of the Gospel; not the Gospel itself, which is spiritual, and not corporeal food; but the sense is, that in consideration and because of their preaching the Gospel, they should be supplied with the proper necessities of life: the learned Mr. Mede has proved, by various instances, that the word here rendered “Gospel”, and which signifies good news and glad tidings, is in other writers used for a reward, given to such that bring good tidings; and has rightly observed, that the Hebrew word which signifies the same, is used in a like sense in Sa2 4:10 and accordingly the sense here will be, that it is the ordination of Christ, that such who faithfully bring the news and glad tidings of salvation to sinners, should, as a reward for such good news, be provided for with a comfortable maintenance, on which they should live.

1 Corinthians 9:15

But I have used none of these things,.... Either none of these arguments or reasons, for a minister’s maintenance, taken from the reason of things, the law of Moses, the examples of the priests and Levites, and the order and appointment of Christ, in favour of himself, and that he might be provided for by them accordingly; or none of the things he had a right to do as other apostles, as to eat and drink at the public expense, to lead about with him a sister, a wife, had he any, and to forbear working with his own hands:

neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me; it was not on his own account that he gave these strong reasons, urged these instances, and so undeniably proved this point, that ministers should be maintained by the people; and this he says to prevent what some might be ready enough to suggest, that though the apostle had as yet took nothing of the church at Corinth, it was plain, that for the time to come, he meant to do it; and therefore had written these things with such a view, to make way for his after supply from them. This he denies, and gives his reason for it,

for it were better for me to die; through want, with famine, could he be supplied no other way, than to take the least farthing of them:

or than that any man should make my glorying void; meaning not so much his inward pleasure, joy, and satisfaction in preaching the Gospel freely, it being more blessed to give than to receive; but his boasting or glorying, not before God, but against the false apostles; that he had never taken anything of the church at Corinth for preaching, nor never would, when they had insinuated he preached for gain, and by artful methods had got their money, and drained their purses.

1 Corinthians 9:16

For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of,.... The sense is not, that if he preached the Gospel in order for a livelihood, and to serve his private advantage, he should have no room for glorying; since, if this was the case, he should be obliged to do it, or perish for want: but his meaning is, that though he preached the Gospel ever so well, or ever so freely, and might glory before men, and against the false teachers, who insulted him in his character and office; yet not before God, from whom he received all his gifts, abilities, and qualifications, to preach the Gospel; all his light and knowledge in it; all his enlargements in meditation, and liberty in expression; all his faithfulness and integrity, courage and intrepidity, in the discharge and performance of his work, were by divine grace and assistance; and his success in it owing to the power and Spirit of God, so that he had nothing to glory of on any of these accounts: hence these words are a correction, or rather an explanation of the preceding:

for necessity is laid upon me; not of getting a livelihood by preaching, for he could have got, and did get this another way, even by labouring with his hands; nor of force and compulsion, for no one more readily engaged in it, or more cheerfully performed it; but of obligation from the divine call to this work, and from his own conscience, in which he knew it to be an heavenly one, and from the nature of the trust committed to him, and because of the good of immortal souls, and the honour of Christ; all which lay with weight upon him, and obliged him in duty, love, and gratitude, to attend to it:

yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel; which is to be understood, not of any temporal affliction, as reproach, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword, &c. for such sort of woes frequently attend those that do preach the Gospel; but of the wounding of his conscience, and exposing himself, through the neglect of his calling, and contempt of the divine will, to the wrath and curse of God for ever; not that the apostle feared this would be his case, or that it possibly could be; but he thus speaks, to show what he or any other minister of the Gospel would deserve, at the hand of God, who having abilities to preach, should not make use of them; or should preach, but not the Gospel; or only a part of it, and not the whole; or should entirely desist from it, through self-interest, or the fear of man, or through being ashamed of Christ and his Gospel, or as not able to bear the reproach and persecution attending it.

1 Corinthians 9:17

For if I do this thing willingly,.... That is, not freely and without receiving anything for preaching, without seeking any temporal profits and advantages; nor in pure love to Christ, and the good of souls, without any fear of punishment, or hope of reward; but the apostle supposes a case which was not, and his sense is, that supposing no necessity had been laid upon him, or any injunction or command given him to preach the Gospel, but he had entered on it without any obligation upon him, then, says he,

I have a reward; or should have one, or might expect one; so the Jews (q) say, that a reward is given to him, who does anything unbidden:

but if against my will, or unwillingly,

a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me; which was his case; the Gospel was committed to

his trust, as anything is to the trust and charge of a steward by his lord, who is obliged to take care of it, and is accountable for it, and of whom faithfulness is required; he did not undertake this economy, or dispensation of the Gospel of himself, of his own mind and will, but it was enjoined him by one that had the command over him, and could and did oblige him to take the charge of it; though he made him willing, as well as able to do it: and therefore since this was the case, that it was not at his own option whether he would preach the Gospel or not, but he was obliged to it by one, that had a superior power and influence over him; hence, though he performed it ever so well, and with never so much faithfulness and integrity, he asks in the following verse,

(q) Maimon. apud Hammond in loc.

1 Corinthians 9:18

What is my reward then?.... None at all, I have none to expect, hope for, or claim, in a way of debt; I am a servant intrusted by my Lord with the Gospel, and an unprofitable one I am; I do, at most and best, but what is my duty, and for that I can claim no reward: all the reward that remains is only this,

verily, that when I preach the Gospel, which I am obliged to do,

I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge; to them that hear it, as he did to the Corinthians, which was his glorying in Co1 9:15 and is the same with his reward here; for this means not any reward from God, but his glorying among men, and against the false teachers; that when he preached the word at Corinth, he was not chargeable to any, nor would he ever be: his reason for it is,

that I abuse not my power in the Gospel; his right of having a maintenance, whilst he was preaching the Gospel; to have made use of which would have been an abuse of it, since it would have given occasion to the false apostles to reproach and calumniate, and might have been an hinderance to the Gospel of Christ, and a stumbling to some weak minds.

1 Corinthians 9:19

For though I be free from all men,.... As an apostle, being in the highest office in the church, he had none superior to him, that could exercise any power and authority over him, and was also independent of men for his maintenance, which he got by his own hand labour: though it may be observed, that the word “men” is not in the original text, and the word “all” may as well have respect to things as men; and the sense be, that he was free, as from the curse of the moral law, so from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and all the rituals of it, and might, if he would, make use of his Christian liberty; the following verses seem to incline to this sense, as the preceding ones do to the former:

yet have I made myself servant unto all; in faithfully and indefatigably preaching the Gospel to them; undergoing all manner of affliction and persecution for the sake of that and them; behaving towards them with all meekness and humility; condescending to their weakness, and accommodating himself to their capacities and customs:

that I might gain the more; than other apostles have done, or than it could be reasonably thought he should, had he behaved in a more lordly and domineering manner: his end was not to amass wealth, to gain riches and treasures of good things to himself, but many souls to Christ, who otherwise must

have been lost; but being brought to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him through his ministry, it was profit to them, and gain to Christ: the metaphor is taken from merchants, who spare no pains, but take every method to acquire gain and profit; the ministers of the word are spiritual merchants, their traffic lies in the souls of men, whom they are studiously and anxiously careful to bring to Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:20

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew,... That is, in religion; or with respect to some religious observances peculiar to the Jews, for he himself was really a Jew by nature; who became as one unto them in this sense, when he for their sakes circumcised Timothy at Derbe, or Lystra, purified himself at Jerusalem, shaved his head at Cenchrea, observed their sabbath, and abstained from some sorts of food forbidden in the law; and his end in so doing was, not to confirm them in such usages, but that he might hereby have the greater influence over them, and by little and little bring them off of these things, or, as he says,

that I might gain the Jews; bring them over to Christ, and off of a dependence on their own righteousness, for justification before God:

to them that are under the law, as under the law; the Vulgate Latin version adds, “when I was not under the law”, and so the Alexandrian copy and some others; by whom seem to be meant the same persons as before; though some have thought that the Samaritans are intended, and others the Sadducees: but if any as distinct from the former are designed, they should rather seem to be the converted Jews; who though they believed in Christ, looked upon themselves to be still under the law, and therefore observed it; with whom the apostle on certain occasions complied, as if he was under it too, that he might have the greater share in their affections and credit; hoping in time that by such means he might be able to prevail upon them to relinquish these things, and wholly attend to the Gospel and ordinances of Christ, or, as he says,

that I might gain them that are under the law; meaning the Jews, who were observers of the law of Moses.

1 Corinthians 9:21

To them that are without law, as without law,... Meaning the Gentiles, who, though they were not without the law of nature, nor without many good civil laws, by which the more cultivated and civilized nations among them were governed, yet they were without the written law of Moses; a description of the Gentiles, usual with the Jews; see Rom 2:12. And to these the apostle accommodated himself, as if he was without the law; by conversing with them without any difference; by eating any sort of food with them; by not circumcising Titus, when the Jews would have had it done; and by resisting Peter, when he, by his example, would have influenced the Gentiles to have lived as did the Jews:

being not without law to God; or “the law of God”, the moral law; for though he was delivered from the curse and condemnation of it, and as a covenant of works, and the ministry of it by Moses, yet not from the matter of it, and obedience to it, as a rule of walk and conversation: and therefore his compliance with the Gentiles was not in anything that was contrary to the moral law; nor did he act

as one that had nothing to do with that law, “but” as one that was

under the law to Christ, or “under the law of Christ”; that is, the law of love, which obliged him to take every lawful and proper method for the good of such souls:

that I might gain them that were without law; to believe in Christ for life and salvation, and to serve the law of God as in the hands of Christ, the only Lawgiver and King in his church; in testimony of their gratitude to him, for the blessings of grace received by him, without having any dependence on their obedience to it, for acceptance with God.

1 Corinthians 9:22

col 9:22

To the weak became I as weak,.... That is, to weak Christians, who were weak in faith, and had not such clear knowledge of Gospel liberty, and therefore scrupled the eating of some sorts of meat, and particularly meats offered to idols; and the apostle so far consulted the peace and edification of these weak brethren, and so far complied with them, and became as one of them, that, rather than offend them, he determined to eat no meat while the world stood:

that I might gain the weak; promote their edification and welfare, who otherwise might be stumbled, be in danger of falling from, and laid under a temptation to desert the faith of the Gospel:

I am made all things to all men; which is to be understood, as in all the other instances of his being so, not in cases and things criminal and sinful, contrary to the moral law, and the dictates of his own conscience, subversive of the Gospel of Christ, and of the order and discipline of it, but in cases and things of an indifferent nature:

that I might by all means save some; that is, that he might be the means of saving some of Jews and Gentiles, and of all sorts of men; by preaching the Gospel of salvation to them, and by directing them to Christ, the only Saviour of lost sinners; thus he explains what he means by so often saying that he might gain them.

1 Corinthians 9:23

And this I do for the Gospel's sake,.... The Alexandrian copy and some others read, “all things I do”, &c. and so the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; that is, he became all things to all men, and so and so to different persons; not for his own sake, for his own temporal advantage, or to curry favour with men; not for the sake of gaining wealth, or honour and applause to himself, but for the spread of the Gospel, and its greater usefulness among men: to which he adds,

that I might be partaker thereof with you; meaning either the fruit of the Gospel, the conversion and salvation of sinners, which would be matter of joy both to him and them; or the blessings of grace and eternal life, which the Gospel reveals and promises, which he desired to enjoy in common with others, not only with the Corinthians, for the word “you” is not in the original text, but with Jews and Gentiles; with men of all sorts, who may be gained over to Christ, and saved by him, through the ministry of the word.

Know ye not that they which run in a race,... The allusion in this and the following verses is to the Grecian games, which consisted, among other things, of running of races, and of wrestling, combating, and fighting; and which are in this and the context particularly mentioned: and the apostle the rather makes use of these terms, and refers to these things, because they were well known to the Corinthians, and refers to them as well known; for the Isthmian games were performed in their neighbourhood, and doubtless had been seen by many of them, for the Corinthians were presidents of them. The race, or stadium in which they ran, was the space or interval between the place they set out from, and that which they ran unto, and consisted of 125 paces, or 625 feet; it was the space of a furlong, and about the eighth part of a mile: in this they

run all; as many as would, that came around from all parts, striving who should be foremost and get the crown;

but one receives the prize; which was held by the president of the game, or judge of the race, and received by the winner, who was judged to be so by him; and was no other in the Isthmian games, which are most likely to be referred to here, than a crown made of pine tree branches, or leaves, and sometimes of dried parsley (s):

so run that ye may obtain. The apostle accommodates or applies the above account to the Christian's course of life, and exhorts to run in it in like manner as racers do in a race. The "stadium", or "race" plot in the which the believer runs, is this world, or this present life; he is only a runner now and here, for no sooner is the time of his departure come, but his course or race is finished; and, as his forerunner Christ, sits down in full rest from all his labours as at a table, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and on a throne with Christ: the course he runs includes the exercise of every grace, particularly faith, which is expressed not only by going to Christ, walking in him, but by fleeing and running to him; and the discharge of every duty, signified by a running in the way of God's commandments; and, in a word, the whole of a Christian profession, and the holding of it fast, and holding on in it unto the end. The act of "running" is a motion forward, a following on to know the Lord, a going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another, a pressing forward toward the mark for the prize; and requires spiritual strength from Christ, and a daily renewal of it; is to be performed with readiness, swiftness, and cheerfulness, in opposition to a slowness of heart to believe, and a slothfulness and sluggishness in the business and service of Christ. The manner of running, "so", that is, as the Grecians ran in their races; they ran "all", so should all believers run, ministers and churches, churches and the several members thereof, old and young professors; so the church determines for herself, her members, and the daughters of Jerusalem, "we will run after thee", Sol 1:4 and they have this encouragement which the others had not, for only one received the prize with the Grecians, but here all, that run well, obtain: again, they ran and strove to be foremost, who should get to the goal first and receive the prize, so should believers be emulous to outdo each other, to go before one another, in faith and holiness; striving in the strength of Christ, who should do most service for him, and bring most glory to him: moreover, as they ran in the way that was marked out for them, not turning to the right hand or the left, so should believers run in the way of salvation, which is Christ; in the way of holiness, faith, and truth; and in the path of duty and ordinances, which are all clearly pointed out unto them: once more, as they while running kept their eye upon the mark, so should believers, while running the race set before them, be continually looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith: to say no more, as they kept running till they came to the end

of their race, so should the saints; there is no time for stopping or looking back; remember Lot's wife. The end of running is to obtain the prize, the incorruptible crown of eternal life; not that this is to be procured in a way of merit by running; for the best services of the saints have no merit in them, they are previously due to God, nor can they be profitable to him; and besides, are done by the assistance of his own grace and strength; nor is there any proportion between the best works of men, and this crown of glory, life, and righteousness; yea, salvation, or eternal life, is expressly denied to be of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, and is always represented as this crown is, to be a free gift: the meaning of the expression is, that believers are to run on in their Christian race, that they may, and when they are come to the end of it they shall, as he that came foremost in the race did, stretch forth their hand, lay hold on, and receive the crown which the righteous Judge will give them; and is the true import of the word made use of here, and the sense the same with Ti1 6:12. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life", and denotes that the persevering saint shall enjoy the crown.

(s) Schmid. Prolegam. in Isthm. Pindar, p. 5, 6. & Not. in Olymp. p. 312. Paschalius de Coronis, l. 6. c. 27. p. 441.

1 Corinthians 9:25

And every man that striveth for the mastery,... Either in running a race, or in wrestling; for the word here used agrees with both, and both are in the context referred to, nor has the apostle as yet done with his allusion to running in a race;

is temperate in all things; contains himself from venery, abstains from certain sorts of food, which tend to hinder the agility, or weaken the strength of the body; and indulges not himself in sloth and idleness, but exercises himself in various manners, that he may be prepared for running or wrestling: the apostle's view in this, seems to be to strengthen some exhortations he had already given, to abstain from fornication, and the immoderate use of venery; to forbear eating things offered to idols, and not give themselves up to luxury and intemperance; for should they be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, they would be very unfit for their Christian race, or for wrestling with principalities and powers, and the discharging of the business of a Christian profession:

now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; they confine themselves to a certain diet and course of living, and abstain from things otherwise desirable to nature; and this they do for the sake of a fading crown, a crown of leaves, made of the boughs and leaves of olives, laurels, pine, &c. or of parsley, green or dried, as before observed (t):

but we an incorruptible; even eternal life; compared to a crown, for the riches, glory, and lustre of it; and as suitable to the character and dignity of saints, who are kings as well as priests unto God: it is called "incorruptible", because it is so in its own nature; nor can it be corrupted by other things, as crowns even of gold may; nor shall any corrupt person wear it; the corruption of nature must be removed from the saints, yea, that frailty and mortality of human nature, which sometimes goes by the name of corruption, must be taken away, ere they can inherit this crown and kingdom; nor will it ever fade away, as the corruptible crowns of the conquerors in these games did, and that in a very short time; but this will last for ever, and always continue in the same glory and lustre.

(t) Vid. Alex. ab Alex, Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 8.

1 Corinthians 9:26

I therefore so run,.... The apostle animates the Corinthians by his own example, telling them that he ran so as he exhorted them; he ran with cheerfulness and swiftness in the way marked out for him, looking to Jesus; continuing steadfast in the profession of his faith, and discharge of his duty as a Christian, and in preaching the Gospel as a minister; and nothing had he more at heart, than to finish his course with joy:

not as uncertainly; as one that knew not, or was in doubt about the way in which he should run, and so ran in and out, sometimes in the way, sometimes out of it; since it was clearly pointed out to him in the word of God: the allusion is to the white line which was drawn from the place the runners set out at to the goal; so that they did not run uncertainly, nor could they be at a loss to steer their course: nor did the apostle run, for what, as the Syriac version renders it, , “is unknown”: he knew what he ran for, for the incorruptible crown of glory, he knew the nature of it; nor was he uncertain as to the event and issue of his running; he knew that this crown was laid up safe and secure, that it would be given him, and he should wear it; he had no doubt at all about it; and with this certain knowledge both of the way and prize, and full assurance of faith and hope, he ran:

so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. The allusion is here to fighting with the fist, when, before the combat was entered on, the person used to swagger about, and beat about with his fists, striking the air with them, having no adversary before him; only showing what he could do if he had one, or when he should encounter: so did not the apostle, he did not fight with his own shadow, or a man of straw, or beat the empty air; but gave home blows to real adversaries, Satan, the world, and the flesh; the latter of which is particularly mentioned in the next verse.

1 Corinthians 9:27

But I keep under my body,.... The allusion is still to fighters, who, by cuffing and boxing, give their antagonists black and blue eyes, which is the proper signification of the word here used: so it is said (u) of Menedemus, that in questions or scholastic exercises, he was so vehement and pugnacious, that he never departed without , “carrying away black and blue eyes”. This is not to be understood by the apostle of his natural body, and of his keeping it under by immoderate watchings, fastings, and labours, or by whipping and scourging, and lying upon the bare ground, and other such practices; but of the body of sin, the corruption of nature, and of that being laid under some restraints; of the mortifying the deeds of the body through the Spirit, of crucifying the affections with the lusts, of putting off the old man with his deeds, as concerning the former conversation, and of making no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: it seems to be the same with what the Jews call (w), , “a subduing of a man’s evil concupiscence”: who is a strong man? they say (x), , “he that subdues his corruption”, according to Pro 16:32 and again (y).

“the sons of Ulam were mighty and powerful men, , “subduing their corruptions”, as man that draws a bow with wisdom.”

And bring it into subjection; so as not to serve and obey it in the lusts thereof; but to have the ascendant of it, and government over it, that it does not, and cannot reign as it formerly did: the allusion is still to the combatant, who gets and keeps his antagonist under him, and has the command

of him, and throws him on the ground, or drags him about at pleasure:

lest that by any means when I have preached to others; the Gospel of the grace of God, for their souls' profit and advantage, to gain and save them; and have called upon them so to run, that they might receive and enjoy the incorruptible crown:

I myself should be a castaway, or rejected, or disapproved of; that is, by men: the apostle's concern is, lest he should do anything that might bring a reproach on the Gospel; lest some corruption of his nature or other should break out, and thereby his ministry be justly blamed, and be brought under contempt; and so he be rejected and disapproved of by men, and become useless as a preacher: not that he feared he should become a reprobate, as the word is opposed to an elect person; or that he should be a castaway eternally, or be everlastingly damned; for he knew in whom he had believed, and was persuaded of his interest in the love of God, and that he was a chosen vessel of salvation, that could not be eternally lost: though supposing that this is his sense, and these his fears and concern, it follows not as neither that he was, so neither that he could be a lost and damned person: the fears of the saints, their godly jealousies of themselves, and pious care that they be not lost, are not at all inconsistent with the firmness of their election, their security in Christ, and the impossibility of their final and total falling away; but on the contrary are overruled, and made use of by the Spirit of God, for their final perseverance in grace and holiness.

(u) Hesychius de Philosophis, p. 48. (w) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 145. 2, 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 2. (x) Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 1. (y) Targum in 1 Chron. viii. 40.

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, Co1 10:1 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, Co1 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, Co1 10:6 particularly idolatry, of which their making and worshipping the golden calf is an instance, Co1 10:7 also fornication, on account of which three and twenty thousand fell in one day, Co1 10:8 likewise tempting Christ, which brought

upon them destruction by the fiery serpents, Co1 10:9 moreover, murmuring against God, and his servants, for which reason the destroyer was sent among them, and destroyed them, Co1 10:10. All which happened, and are recorded for the use, instruction, and admonition of professors of religion in these last times, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 10:13. And in order to their standing, he particularly dehorts them from idolatry, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 10:23 for we are not to seek our own pleasure, but the welfare of others, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 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, Co1 10:29 or he be reproached for what he had, through good will, and had reason to be thankful for, Co1 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, Co1 10:31 and next to that to be careful not to offend any sort of persons whatever, Co1 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, Co1 10:33.

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co1 10:1

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant,... 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 Num 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 (z), that

“the pillar of cloud, encompassed the camp of Israel, as a wall encompasses a city, nor could the

enemy come at them.”

Hence those allusions to it in Isa 4:5. 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 (a), they had clouds of glory, “that surrounded them”, four at the four winds of the world, that the evil eye might not rule over them, “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 (b) it is said,

“how many were the clouds of glory, “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 “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 (c) 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 (d), 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 (e): Mahomet has it in his Alcoran (f), 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.

(z) Pirke Eliezer, c. 44. (a) Targum in Cant. 2. 6. (b) Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 1, 2. (c) Homil. 5. in Exod. fol. 37. col. 3. E. (d) Pirke Eliezer, c. 42. (e) Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect.

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And were all baptized unto Moses,.... “In or by Moses”; and so the Syriac version renders it, , “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, Exo 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 (g) 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.

(g) Aniversar. Miscellan. p. 30.

1 Corinthians 10:3

And did all eat the same spiritual meat. Meaning the manna; and which the Jews also call (h) , “spiritual food”, as also their sacrifices, (i) , “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, Psa 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.

(h) Yade Mose in Shemot Rabba, fol. 109. 3. (i) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 93. 2.

1 Corinthians 10:4

And did all drink the same spiritual drink,... 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 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 (k). The Jerusalem Targum (l) 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 (m),

“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 (n) on those words, “must we fetch you water out of this rock?” makes this remark:

“for they knew it not, , “for that rock went”, and remained among the rocks.”

And in another place it is said (o),

“that the rock became in the form of a beehive; (elsewhere (p) it is said to be round as a sieve;) and rolled along, , “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 (q) say, that the Shekinah is called , “the holy rock”; and Philo the Jew says (r) of this rock, that the broken rock is , “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.

(k) Jarchi in Numb. xx. 2. (l) In Numb. xxi. 20. (m) In ib. (n) Jarchi in Numb. xx. 10. (o) Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 2. (p) Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. (q) Zohar in Num. fol. 87. 4. & Imre Binah in ib. (r) Lib. Allegor. l. 3. p. 1103.

1 Corinthians 10:5

But with many of them God was not well pleased,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:6

Now these things were our examples,.... 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 (s) "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, Num 11:4 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, “Kibroth Hataavah, the graves of lusts”; the people that lusted being buried there, Num 11:34.

(s) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 4.

1 Corinthians 10:7

Neither be ye idolaters,... 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 Exo 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, Exo 32:18 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 (t) 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 Gen 39:14 but others understand it of the act of idolatry; so two of the Chaldee paraphrases interpret the words in Exodus (u); “they rose up to play”, , 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, Exo 32:28.

(t) Vid. Jarchi in Exod. xxxii. 6. (u) Targum Jon. ben Uzziel & Jerusalem in ib. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 53. fol. 47. 4. & Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 89. 3.

1 Corinthians 10:8

Neither let us commit fornication,... 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, Num 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 Num 25:9 the number said to be “twenty and four thousand”: and so say all the three Targums on the place (w), and both the Talmuds (x) and others

(y); 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 (z) has no reason to charge the apostle with an error.

(w) Targum Onkelos, Jon. ben Uzziel & Jerusalem in Numb, xxv. 9. (x) T. Hieros Sota, fol. 21. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1. (y) Midrash Kohelet, fol. 68. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 127. 3. (z) R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 36. p. 468.

1 Corinthians 10:9

Neither let us tempt Christ,.... 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 Num 21:5 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.

1 Corinthians 10:10

Neither murmur ye,.... 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 Num 14:1, 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, Num 16:1,

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, Heb 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, Sa2 24:15 and as, smote an hundred fourscore and five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians, in one night, Kg2 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 (a) called "the destroyer"; and Samuel, the same with Satan, is called "the angel of death"; to which the allusion is in Heb 2:14 and evil angels are frequently styled, "destroying angels" (b); as distinct from ministering ones, and to which some think the apostle here refers.

(a) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. (b) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 1. Beracot, fol. 51. 1.

1 Corinthians 10:11

Now all these things happened unto them,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:12

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth,... 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 Act 27:22. 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 Pe2 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", "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,

1 Corinthians 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you,... 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, Co2 12:7 yet he gives them grace sufficient to endure and stand up under it, yea, to get the victory of it, to be more than conquerors, and triumph over it.

1 Corinthians 10:14

Wherefore, my dearly beloved,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:15

I speak as to wise men,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:16

The cup of blessing, which we bless,.... 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 , “the cup of blessing” (c).

“Three things (says R. Judah (d)) shorten a man’s days and years; when they give him the book of the law to read, and he does not read, , “the cup of blessing to bless with”, and he does not bless, and when he accustoms himself to government.”

Again, so they comment on Gen 21:8 (e).

“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 , “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 (f),

“what is a beautiful cup? , “the cup of blessing”;

and which, they (g) 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.

(c) T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 11. 3, 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1, 2. & 52. 1. Pesachim, fol. 105. 2. 106. 1. 109. 2. (d) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. (e) Capthor, fol. 47. 1. (f) T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 76. 2. & Erubin, fol. 29. 2. (g) Piske Tosephot in Sabbath, art. 287. & Erubin, art. 46. 157. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 57. 3. & 59. 2, 3. & 65. 1.

1 Corinthians 10:17

For we being many, are one bread and one body,.... 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 (h).

"but how is this mixture or association? it is thus, they mix together, , "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 "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 , "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.

(h) Maimon. Hilch. Erubin, c. 1. sect. 6, 8, 16.

1 Corinthians 10:18

Behold Israel after the flesh,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:19

What say I then?.... 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, “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.

1 Corinthians 10:20

But I say,.... 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 Deu 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.

1 Corinthians 10:21

Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:22

Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:23

All things are lawful for me,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:24

co1 10:24

Let no man seek his own,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:25

Whatsoever is sold in the shambles,.... the word 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 (i). The original of the name is said (k) 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 Aemilius 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 (l) frequently; who say (m),

“Nylwqm, 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 (n), 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.

(i) Vid. Suet. Vita Jul. Caesar, c. 43. & Tiber. Nero, c. 34. (k) Alex. ab Alex Genial Diet. l. 3. c. 23. (l) T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 76. 2. T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 75. 3. (m) T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 95. 1. (n) L. 2. c. 39.

1 Corinthians 10:26

For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,... Which words are taken out of Psa 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.

1 Corinthians 10:27

If any of them that believe not,... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:28

But if any man say unto you,... 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 (o): 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 Co1 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.

(o) T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 32. 2.

1 Corinthians 10:29

Conscience I say, not thine own,... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:30

For if I by grace be a partaker,... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether therefore ye eat or drink,... 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, &c. 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, "let all thy works be done to the glory of God" (p); which one of their commentators (q) 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."

(p) Pirke Abot, c. 2, sect. 12. (q) Bartenora in ib.

1 Corinthians 10:32

Give none offence,.... 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.

1 Corinthians 10:33

Even as I please all men in all things,.... 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 Co1 9:19. 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.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 11

In this chapter the apostle blames both men and women for their indecent appearance in public worship, and admonishes them how they should behave with the reasons of it; and also corrects some abuses and irregularities among them, at, or before, the Lord's supper; which leads him to give a particular account of that ordinance, of the nature, use, and design of it, and some directions about the performance of it, and attendance on it. He begins with an exhortation suitable to what he had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, to follow him, as he followed Christ, Co1 11:1 and praises them for their remembrance of him, and for the keeping the ordinances as they were delivered to them; that is, as many of them, and as far as they did so, Co1 11:2. And in order to make way for what he had on his mind to reprove them for, and admonish them about, he observes, that as God is the head of Christ, and Christ the head of every man, so the man is the head of the woman, Co1 11:3 wherefore for him to appear, and join in public worship, with his head covered, is to dishonour his head, Co1 11:4 as, on the other hand, for a woman to have her head uncovered in divine service, is to dishonour her head, it being all one as if her head was shaved, Co1 11:5 wherefore it is concluded, that if it is a shame for her to be shaved or shorn, she ought to be covered when attending the worship of God, Co1 11:6. The reason why a man should be uncovered at such a time is, because he is the image and glory of God; and the reason why the woman should be covered is, because she is the glory of the man, is made for his glory, and to be in subjection to him, of which the covering is a token, Co1 11:7 and that she is so, is argued from the order of the creation, man being not of the woman, but the woman of the man, Co1 11:8 and from the end of the creation, man being not for the woman, but the woman for the man, Co1 11:9. Another reason why the woman should be covered at the time of public worship is, because of the angels then present, Co1 11:10 but lest on this account the woman should be treated with contempt by the man, the apostle observes, that they are not, and cannot be without one another; and that they are from each other in different senses, and both from the Lord, Co1 11:11, and then proceeds to other arguments, showing that women should not appear uncovered in the house of God: one is taken from the uncomeliness of it, which must be so judged by everyone, Co1 11:13 and another is taken from nature and custom, and the contrary in men, which is disagreeable and shameful; for, if, the dictates of nature, it is shameful in men to wear long hair, it must be comely and decent in women, and what is for their glory, to wear such hair, since it is their covering, Co1 11:14. But if, after all the apostle had said on this subject, there should be any contentious persons disposed to wrangle about it, he observes, that they were not proper persons to be continued in the church, Co1 11:16 and then proceeds to take notice of some ill conduct of many in the Corinthian church, at, or before, the eating of the Lord's supper; partly through schisms and factions, they meeting in parties for that purpose; which he had heard of, and had reason to believe, and could not praise them for; their coming together in such a manner, being for the worse, and not the better, Co1 11:18 and the rather he gave credit to this report, since there were heresies among them, which issue in schisms and divisions, and which must be expected,

that hereby Christ's faithful ones might be distinguished from others, Co1 11:19 when he goes on to show how they abused the ordinance of the supper, not only by meeting together in parties, but by indulging their sensual appetites in eating and drinking, which was the principal end in coming together, and not the Lord's supper, Co1 11:20 for they stayed not one for another, but one took his supper before the other, and so the one was full, and the other hungry, Co1 11:21 the evil of which the apostle exposes by observing the indecency of such a conduct, when they had houses of their own to feast in; the contempt which they cast upon the church of God, and the shame they exposed the poor and hungry unto, all which was far from being praiseworthy, Co1 11:22 upon which he gives a particular account of the Lord's supper, as he had it from Christ himself, the time when, the manner in which it was instituted and celebrated by him, the significance of its several parts, its use, and end, and the continuance of it until the second coming of Christ, Co1 11:23 and then he proceeds to show the evil of an unworthy partaking of this ordinance, how that such are guilty of, and vilify and reproach the body and blood of Christ, Co1 11:27 wherefore previous to a participation of it a man should examine himself as to his repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, Co1 11:28 seeing such that are unworthy communicants bring condemnation on themselves, not having spiritual judgment to discern the Lord's body in the ordinance, Co1 11:29 and so become liable to diseases and death itself, which was the case of several in the Corinthian church, Co1 11:30 whereas, if persons would but examine and judge of themselves before hand, they would not be exposed to such judgments, Co1 11:31 though the people of God, when they are afflicted, should look upon their afflictions, not as punishments, but as chastisements inflicted on them, for this end, that they might not be condemned with the world of the ungodly hereafter, Co1 11:32. Wherefore the apostle's advice is, that when they came to the Lord's table they would not form themselves into factions and parties, and one part of them eat before, and separate from the rest, but that they would tarry till they all come together, and then join as one body and one bread, Co1 11:33 and that if any man was an hungry, he should eat at home, and not have an ante-supper in the house of God, indulging his appetite there to his condemnation, and those that joined with him, Co1 11:34 and the chapter is concluded with an intimation, that besides these irregularities, there were others in this church which the apostle signifies he would correct, when he should be in person with them.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. &c. These words more properly close the preceding chapter, than begin a new one, and refer to the rules therein laid down, and which the apostle would have the Corinthians follow him in, as he did Christ: that as he sought, both in private and public, and more especially in his ministerial service, to do all things to the glory of God, and not for his own popular applause, in which he imitated Christ, who sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; so he would have them do all they did in the name of Christ, and to the glory of God by him: and that as he studied to exercise a conscience void of offence to God and man, in doing which he was a follower of Christ, who was holy in his nature, and harmless and inoffensive in his conversation; so he was desirous that they should likewise be blameless, harmless, and without offence until the day of Christ: and that whereas he endeavoured to please men in all things lawful and indifferent, wherein he copied after Christ, who by his affable and courteous behaviour, and humble deportment, sought to please and gratify all with whom he conversed; so he would have them not to mind high things, but condescend to men of low estates, and become all things to all, that they might gain some as he did: and once more, that as he sought not his own pleasure and advantage, but the salvation of others, in imitation of Christ, who pleased not himself, but took upon him, and bore cheerfully, the reproaches of men, that he might procure good for them; so the apostle suggests, that

it would be right in them not to seek to have their own wills in every thing, but rather to please their neighbour for good to edification.

1 Corinthians 11:2

co1 11:2

Now I praise you, brethren,.... The apostle prefaces what he had to say by way of commendation of them; though some think that this is said in an ironical way, because there are many things both in this chapter, and in the following part of this epistle, delivered in a way of reproof; but whoever considers the change of style in Co1 11:17 will easily see, that this must be spoken seriously here, and is designed to raise the attention to what he was about to say, and to prepare their minds to receive, and take in good part, what he should say by way of rebuke; who could not well be angry when he praised them for what was praiseworthy in them, and reproved them for that which was blamable. The things he commends them for are as follow,

that ye remember me in all things; that is, either that they were mindful of him, though at a distance from them, and had such a veneration for him, and paid such respect to him, and to his judgment, as to write to him to have his sense about any point of doctrine, or case of conscience which had any difficulty in them; or that they bore in memory the doctrines of the Gospel which he had delivered among them; see Co1 15:2 The Arabic version reads, “that ye remember my sayings and deeds”; the doctrines he preached among them, and the examples he set them:

and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you; meaning, among the rest, if not principally, baptism and the Lord’s supper, which he received from Christ, and delivered unto them; see Co1 11:23 and which they, at least many of them, kept and observed in the faith of Christ, from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory, and that as to the form and manner in which they were delivered to them by the apostle, agreeably to the mind of Christ; but was the apostle alive now, would, or could he praise the generality of those that are called Christians on this account? no; neither of these ordinances in common are kept as they were delivered: as to baptism, it is not attended to either as to subject or mode, both are altered, and are different from the original institution; and the Lord’s supper is prostituted to the vilest of men; and, what is “monstrum horrendum”, is made a test and qualification for employment in civil and military offices under the government.

1 Corinthians 11:3

But I would have you to know,.... Though they were mindful of him, and retained in memory many things he had declared among them, and kept the ordinances as delivered to them; yet there were some things in which they were either ignorant, or at least did not so well advert to, and needed to be put in mind of, and better informed about: and as the apostle was very communicative of his knowledge in every point, he fails not to acquaint them with whatsoever might be instructive to their faith, and a direction to their practice:

that the head of every man is Christ; Christ is the head of every individual human nature, as he is the Creator and Preserver of all men, and the donor of all the gifts of nature to them; of the light of nature, of reason, and of all the rational powers and faculties; he is the head of nature to all men, as he is of grace to his own people: and so he is as the Governor of all the nations of the earth, who whether

they will or no are subject to him; and one day every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue confess that he is the Lord of all. Moreover, Christ is the head of every believing man; he is generally said to be the head of the church, and so of every man that is a member of it: he is a common public head, a representative one to all his elect; so he was in election, and in the covenant of grace; so he was in time, in his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to, and entrance into heaven; and so he is now as an advocate and intercessor there: he is the political head of his people, or an head in such sense, as a king is the head of his nation: he is also an economical head, or in such sense an head as an husband is the head of his wife, and as a parent is the head of his family, and as a master is the head of his servants; for all these relations Christ sustains: yea, he is a natural head, or is that to his church, as an human head is to an human body: he is a true and proper head, is of the same nature with his body, is in union to it, communicates life to it, is superior to it, and more excellent than it. He is a perfect head, nothing is wanting in him; he knows all his people, and is sensible of their wants, and does supply them; his eye of love is always on them; his ears are open to their cries; he has a tongue to speak to them, and for them, which he uses; and he smells a sweet savour in them, in their graces and garments, though they are all his own, and perfumed by himself: there are no vicious humours in this head, flowing from thence to the body to its detriment, as from Adam to his posterity, whose head he was; but in Christ is no sin, nothing but grace, righteousness, and holiness, spring from him. There's no deformity nor deficiency in him; all fulness of grace dwells in him to supply the members of his body; he is an one, and only head, and an ever living and everlasting one.

And the head of the woman is the man, The man is first in order in being, was first formed, and the woman out of him, who was made for him, and not he for the woman, and therefore must be head and chief; as he is also with respect to his superior gifts and excellencies, as strength of body, and endowments of mind, whence the woman is called the weaker vessel; likewise with regard to pre-eminence or government, the man is the head; and as Christ is the head of the church, and the church is subject to him, so the husband is the head of the wife, and she is to be subject to him in everything natural, civil, and religious. Moreover, the man is the head of the woman to provide and care for her, to nourish and cherish her, and to protect and defend her against all insults and injuries.

And the head of Christ is God; that is, the Father, not as to his divine nature, for in respect to that they are one: Christ, as God, is equal to his Father, and is possessed of the same divine perfections with him; nor is his Father the head of him, in that sense; but as to his human nature, which he formed, prepared, anointed, upheld, and glorified; and in which nature Christ exercised grace on him, he hoped in him, he believed and trusted in him, and loved him, and yielded obedience to him; he always did the things that pleased him in life; he prayed to him; he was obedient to him, even unto death, and committed his soul or spirit into his hands: and all this he did as to his superior, considered in the human nature, and also in his office capacity as Mediator, who as such was his servant; and whose service he diligently and faithfully performed, and had the character from him of a righteous one; so that God is the head of Christ, as he is man and Mediator, and as such only.

1 Corinthians 11:4

Every man praying or prophesying,.... This is to be understood of praying and prophesying in public, and not in private; and not to be restrained to the person that is the mouth of the congregation to God in prayer, or who preaches to the people in the name of God; but to be applied to every individual person that attends public worship, that joins in prayer with the minister, and hears the word preached by him, which is meant by prophesying; for not foretelling future events is here meant,

but explaining the word of God, the prophecies of the Old Testament, or any part of Scripture, unless singing of psalms should rather be designed, since that is sometimes expressed by prophesying: so in Sa1 10:5 “thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them, and they shall prophesy”. The Targum renders it thus, , “and they shall sing praise”; upon which Kimchi observes, that it is as if it was said, their prophecy shall be “songs” and praises to God, spoken by the Holy Ghost. So in Sa1 19:23 it is said of Saul, that he “went on and prophesied”. The Targum is, he went on, “and praised”. And again, “he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied”. Targum, “and praised”, or sung praise. Once more, in Ch1 25:1 it is said of Asaph, and others, that they “should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals”; which Kimchi explains of Asaph’s singing vocally, and of his sons playing upon musical instruments.

Having his head covered; which, it seems, was the custom of some of them so to do in attendance on public worship: this they either did in imitation of the Heathens (r), who worshipped their deities with their heads covered, excepting Saturn and Hercules, whose solemnities were celebrated with heads unveiled, contrary to the prevailing customs and usages in the worship of others; or rather in imitation of the Jews, who used to veil themselves in public worship, through a spirit of bondage unto fear, under which they were, and do to this day; and with whom it is a rule (s), that

“a man might not stand and pray, neither with his girdle on, , nor with his head uncovered; nor with his feet uncovered.”

Accordingly it is said (t) of Nicodemus ben Gorion,

“that he went into the school grieved, and “veiled himself”, and stood in prayer;”

and a little after that

“that he went into the sanctuary and “veiled” himself, and stood and prayed;”

though the Targum on Jdg 5:2 suggests,

“that the wise men sit in the synagogues, , “with the head uncovered”, to teach the people the words of the law;”

and on Jdg 5:9 has these words,

“Deborah in prophecy said, I am sent to praise the Scribes of Israel, who when they were in tribulation did not cease from expounding the law; and so it was beautiful for them to sit in the synagogues, “with the head uncovered”, and teach the people the words of the law, and bless and confess before the Lord;”

but it seems that a different custom had now prevailed; now from this Gentile or judaizing practice, the apostle would dissuade them by observing, that such an one that uses it, “dishonoureth his head”; meaning either in a figurative, spiritual, and mystical sense, his head Christ, in token of the liberty received from him, and because he is above in heaven, and clear of all sin, the head must be uncovered in public worship; or otherwise the reverse is suggested of him, which is highly to

dishonour him, and is the sense many interpreters give into: rather the reason should be, because Christ, the believer's head, appears for him in heaven, opens a way of access for him, gives him audience and acceptance in his person, and through his blood and righteousness; and therefore should appear with open face and head uncovered, as a token of freedom and boldness; otherwise he dishonours his head as if his blood and sacrifice were not effectual, and his intercession not prevalent: but the natural head, taken in a literal sense, is rather meant; and the sense is, that by covering it, it looks as if he was guilty and ashamed, and in subjection; whereas to appear uncovered expresses freedom, boldness, and superiority, like himself, who is the head of the woman; whereas to be covered, as with a woman's veil or hood, is effeminate, unmanly, and dishonourable.

(r) Macrob Saturnal. l. 3. c. 6. Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 14. & 19. & 22. (s) Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 5. (t) T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:5

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth,... Not that a woman was allowed to pray publicly in the congregation, and much less to preach or explain the word, for these things were not permitted them: see Co1 14:34 but it designs any woman that joins in public worship with the minister in prayer, and attends on the hearing of the word preached, or sings the praises of God with the congregation, as we have seen, the word prophesying signifies,

with her head uncovered. It may seem strange from whom the Corinthian women should take up this custom, since the Jewish women were not allowed to go into the streets, or into any open and public place, unveiled (u). It was a Jewish law, that they should go out no where bare headed (w): yea, it was reckoned scandalous and ignominious to do so. Hence it is said, (x) , "that uncovering of the head is a reproach" to the daughters of Israel: and concerning the adulterous woman, it is represented as said by the priest (y),

"thou hast separated from the way of the daughters of Israel; for the way or custom of the daughters of Israel is , "to have their heads covered"; but thou hast gone "in the ways of the Gentiles", who walk with head bare."

So that their it should seem that these Corinthians followed the examples of the Heathens: but then, though it might be the custom of some nations for women to go abroad bare headed; yet at their solemnities, where and when they were admitted, for they were not everywhere and always, they used to attend with their heads veiled and covered (z). Mr. Mede takes notice indeed of some Heathen priestesses, who used to perform their religious rites and sacrifices with open face, and their hair hanging down, and locks spreading, in imitation of whom these women at Corinth are thought to act. However, whoever behaved in this uncomely manner, whose example soever she followed, the apostle says,

dishonoureth her head; not her husband, who is her head in a figurative sense, and is dishonoured by her not being covered; as if she was not subject to him, or because more beautiful than he, and therefore shows herself; but her natural head, as appears from the reason given:

for that is even all one as if she were shaven; to be without a veil, or some sort of covering on her head, according to the custom of the country, is the same thing as if her head was shaved; and

everyone knows how dishonourable and scandalous it is for a woman to have her head shaved; and if this is the same, then it is dishonourable and scandalous to her to be without covering in public worship. And this shows, that the natural head of the man is meant in the preceding verse, since the natural head of the woman is meant in this.

(u) Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 24. sect. 12. (w) T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 72. 1. (x) R. Sol. Jarchi in Numb. v. 19. (y) Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 193. 2. (z) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 17.

1 Corinthians 11:6

For if the woman be not covered,.... That is, if her head is not covered with some sort of covering, as is the custom of the place where she lives,

let her also be shorn; let her hair be cut short; let her wear it as men do theirs; and let her see how she will look, and how she will like that, and how she will be looked upon, and liked by others; everybody will laugh at her, and she will be ashamed of herself:

but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven: as it is accounted in all civilized nations: the very Heathens (a) speak of it as a thing abominable, and of which there should not be one single dreadful example: then let her be covered; with a veil, or any sort of covering in common use.

(a) Vid. Apul. Metamorph. l. 2. p. 21.

1 Corinthians 11:7

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head,.... The Ethiopic version adds, “whilst he prays”; which is a proper interpretation of the words, though a wrong version; for the apostle’s meaning is not, that a man should not have his head covered at any time, but whilst he is in public worship, praying, prophesying, or singing of psalms: the reason is,

forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God. The apostle speaks of man here as in his first creation, in his state of innocence before his fall; but now he has sinned and defaced this image, and come short of this glory; which lay partly in his body being made after the exemplar of the body of Christ, the idea of which God had in his eternal mind, and according to which he shaped the body of Adam: and partly in his soul, in that righteousness and holiness, wisdom and knowledge, and all other excellent gifts in which it was formed. So the Jews (b) say, the understanding is “the glory of God”. And it chiefly lay in the power and dominion he had over all the creatures, and even over the woman when made; at least this is principally respected here, in which there is such a shine and representation of the glory and majesty, power and dominion of God; and therefore man ought to worship him with his head uncovered, where this image and glory of God is most illustriously displayed: not but that the woman, is the image and glory of God also, and was made as man, after his image and likeness, with respect to internal qualities, as righteousness, holiness, knowledge, &c. and with regard to her power over the other creatures, though in subjection to man; but yet man was first originally and immediately the image and glory of God, the woman only secondarily and mediately through man. The man is more perfectly and conspicuously the image and glory of God, on account of his more extensive dominion and authority:

but the woman is the glory of the man; being made out of him, and for his help and assistance, and to be a crown of honour and glory to him. The apostle speaks the sense, and in the language of the Jews. The words in Isa 44:13. "After the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man", are by the Targum rendered, "after the likeness of a man, after the glory of a woman"; and the note of a famous (c) interpreter of theirs upon the last clause is, "this is the woman", "who is the glory of her husband"; but why is she to be covered for this reason, when the man is to be uncovered? it is to be observed, that it is in the presence and worship of God that the one is to be uncovered, and the other covered; the one being the glory of God, and therefore to be uncovered before him; and the other the glory of man, and therefore to be covered before God; and especially, since being first in the transgression, she who is man's glory has been the means of his shame and disgrace. The Jews seem to make this the reason of the difference; they ask (d),

"why does a man go out with his head uncovered, and a woman with her head covered? it is answered, it is like to one that has committed a sin, and he is ashamed of the children of men, therefore she goes, "with her head covered."

(b) Maimon. in Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect 1. 1. (c) R. Sol. Jarchi in Isa. xlv. 13. (d) Bereshit Rabba, sect. 17. fol. 15. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:8

For the man is not of the woman,... In the present state of things, and according to the ordinary course of generation and propagation of mankind, man is of the woman, though not without the means of man; he is conceived in her, bore by her, and born of her; but the apostle respects the original formation of man, as he was immediately made by God out of the dust of the earth, before the woman was in being, and so not of her:

but the woman of the man; she was made out of his rib, and took both her name and nature from him; God was the author, and man the matter of her being; her original under God, is owing to him; and therefore as he was first in being, he must be superior to her: this serves to prove all that has been as yet said; as that man is the head of the woman, the woman is the glory of man, what he may glory in as being from him; and therefore there should be this difference in their appearance at public worship.

1 Corinthians 11:9

Neither was the man created for the woman,... To be subservient to her; for she was not in being when he was created; and though it is the proper business of man to provide for, take care of, and defend the woman, as the weaker vessel, yet these were not the original ends of his creation; he was made for God, for his service and glory:

but the woman for the man; to be an help meet for him, who was already created; to be a companion and associate of his, both in religious worship and in civil life; and for the procreation and education of children.

1 Corinthians 11:10

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head,.... The generality of interpreters, by power, understand the veil, or covering on the woman's head, as a sign of the man's power over her, and her subjection to him; which Dr. Hammond endeavours to confirm, by observing that the Hebrew word which signifies a woman's veil, or hood, comes from a root which signifies power and dominion; but in that he is mistaken, for the word is derived not from to rule, govern, or exercise power and authority, but from to expand, stretch out, or draw over, as a woman's veil is drawn over her head and face. The Greek word more properly signifies the power she had of putting on and off her covering as she pleased, according as times, places, and persons; made it necessary:

because of the angels; various are the senses given of these words, some taking them in a proper, others in a figurative sense: some in a proper sense of angels, and these either good or bad. Tertullian (e) understands them of evil angels, and that a woman should cover her head in time of worship, lest they should lust after her; though much rather the reason should be, lest they should irritate and provoke lust in others: but it is better to understand them of good angels, who attend the assemblies of the saints, and observe the air and behaviour of the worshippers; wherefore women should cover their heads with respect to them, and not give offence to those pure spirits, by an indecent appearance: it is agreeable to the notions of the Jews, that angels attend public prayers, and at the expounding of the word; they often speak (f) of an angel, "that is appointed over prayers"; hence (g) Tertullian seems to have took his notion of an angel of prayer: and of angels being present at expounding of the Scriptures, take the following story (h);

"it happened to Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai, that he was riding upon an ass, and as he was journeying, R. Eleazar ben Arach was leading an ass after him; he said to him, Rabbi, teach me one chapter in the work of Mercavah (Ezekiel's vision); he replied to him, not so have I taught you, nor in the Mercavah a single man, unless he was a wise man by his own industry; he answered him, Rabbi, give me leave to say one thing before thee, which thou hast taught me; immediately Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai alighted from his ass and "veiled himself", and sat upon a stone under an olive tree; he said to him, Rabbi, why dost thou alight off from the ass? he replied, is it possible that thou shouldst expound in the work of Mercavah, and the Shekinah be with us, , "and the ministering angels join us", and I ride upon an ass?"

And a little after,

"R. Joshua and R. Jose the priest were walking on the road, they said, yea, let us expound in the work of Mercavah; R. Joshua opened and expounded, and that day was the solstice of Tammuz, and the heavens were thickened with clouds, and there appeared the form of a bow in the cloud, "and the ministering angels gathered together", , "and came to hear": as the children of men gather together, and come to see the rejoicings of the bridegroom and bride."

Moreover, this veiling of the woman in public worship because of angels, may be an imitation of the good angels, who when they sung the praises of God, and adored and glorified his perfections, covered their faces and their feet with their wings, Isa 6:1. Many understanding these words in a figurative sense, and in this also they are not agreed; some by angels think young men are meant, who, for their gracefulness and comeliness, are compared to angels; others good men in general, that attend religious worship; others ministers of the word, called angels often in the book of the Revelations; which last seems to be most agreeable of any of these senses; and the women were to cover their heads, that they might not offend either of these, or stir up any impure desires in them; see

Ecc 5:6 but as these words follow the account given of the creation of the woman from the man, and for his sake; this may have no reference to her conduct in public worship, but to the power she had of using her covering, or taking it off, or putting it on, at the time of her espousals to a man; which was sometimes done by proxy, or messengers, whom the Jews call “angels” (i); their canon is,

“a man may espouse (a wife) by himself, “or by his angel”, or messenger; and a woman may be espoused by herself, or by her angel, or messenger:”

wherefore because of these angels, or messengers, that came to espouse her to such, she had power over her head to take off her veil, and show herself, if she thought fit; or to keep it on, as expressing her modesty; or just as she pleased, when she by them was espoused to a man, for whose sake she was made; which sense, after Dr. Lightfoot, many learned men have given into, and seems probable.

(e) De Veland. Virg. c. 7. (f) Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 2. Zohar. in Gen. fol. 97. 2. (g) De Oratione, c. 15. (h) T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. (i) Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:11

Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman,.... This is said, partly to repress the pride and insolence of man, that he might not be too much elated with himself, and his superiority over the woman, and look with any degree of disdain and contempt upon her, and treat her with indifference and neglect; and partly to comfort the woman, that she might not be dejected with the condition and circumstances in which she was, since the one is not without the other; nor can they be so truly comfortable and happy, as not the man without the woman, who was made for an help meet for him,

so neither the woman without the man in the Lord. The phrase “in the Lord” is added, to show that it is the will of God, and according to his ordination and appointment, that the one should not be without the other; or it may design that lawful conjunction and copulation, of one man and one woman together, according to the will of the Lord, which distinguishes it from all other impure mixtures and copulations. The Arabic version reads it, “in the religion of the Lord”; and the sense is, that the one is not without the other in religious worship, and in the enjoyment of religious privileges; that though the woman may not pray publicly and expound the Scriptures, yet she may join in prayer, and hear the word preached, sing the praises of God, and enjoy all ordinances; for in Christ no distinction of sex is regarded, men and women are all one in him, and equally regenerated, justified, and pardoned, and will be glorified together.

1 Corinthians 11:12

For as the woman is of the man,.... Originally; so Eve was of Adam, made out of one of his ribs:

even so is the man also by the woman; now man is born of a woman, he is conceived of one, and brought into the world by one. This is the way in which mankind is propagated, the species preserved, continued, and increased; and therefore there is no reason why the woman should be despised, or the man should be lifted up with himself above her, since they are so dependent upon, and so useful to each other:

but all things of God. The Arabic version reads it, “all creatures are of God”; which is true, but not

the truth of these words, which are to be restrained to the subject of the discourse; as that both the man and the woman are of God; they are made by him, and after his image and likeness; that the man is the glory of God, and the woman the glory of the man; the authority of the man over the woman, and the subjection of the woman to the man, are of God, and according to his constitution and appointment; as also that the woman should be of the man, and for his sake, and that the man should be by the woman, and neither should be without the other: these are not things of human constitution, but are settled by the wise counsel of God, and therefore to be cheerfully submitted to, as the best order of things.

1 Corinthians 11:13

Judge in yourselves,.... The apostle having gone through a variety of reasoning and arguments, showing the superiority of the man to the woman, by which he would prove, that the one should be covered, and the other uncovered, returns to his subject again, and appeals to the common sense and understanding of the Corinthians, and makes them themselves judges of the matter; suggesting that the thing was so clear, and he so certain of what he had advanced being right, that he leaves it with them, not doubting but that they would, upon a little reflection within themselves, join with him in this point:

is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? in you judgment you can never think so, however pleasing and gratifying such a sight may be, to the lust of the flesh, and to the lust of the eye; he does not mention prophesying, only instances in praying; but it is to be understood of one, as of another; and his meaning is, that it is an uncomely thing in a woman to appear in public service with her head uncovered, whether it be in joining in the public prayers, or in singing of psalms, or in hearing the word expounded; and though the apostle does not put the case of the man's praying to God, or prophesying in his name with his head covered, yet his sense is the same of that, as of the woman's.

1 Corinthians 11:14

Doth not even nature itself teach you,.... By nature is either meant, the law and light of nature, reason in man, common sense, or rather custom, which is second nature; and which, in this case, must be restrained to the Greeks and Jews; for though among the Grecians the men cut their hair, and did not suffer it to grow long, as also did the Jews, yet there were many nations (k) who did not, even at that time, observe such a rule or custom; but as the Jews and Greeks were the persons chiefly, if not solely, known to the Corinthians, the apostle signifies, that the usages of these people might direct and inform them in this matter:

that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him; he looks unmanly and womanish, and exposes himself to ridicule and contempt.

(k) Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 18. Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 10. prope finem.

1 Corinthians 11:15

But if a woman have long hair,.... And wears it, without cutting it, as men do:

it is a glory to her; it is comely and beautiful; it is agreeable to her sex, she looks like herself; it becomes and adorns her:

for her hair is given her for a covering; not instead of a covering for her head, or any other part of her body, so that she needs no other: we read indeed of the daughter of Nicodemus ben Gorion, that she was obliged to make use of her hair for a covering in such a sense (l);

“it happened to R. Jochanan ben Zaccai that he rode upon an ass, and went out of Jerusalem, and his disciples went after him; he saw a young woman gathering barley corns out of the dung of the Arabian cattle; when she saw him, , “she covered herself with her hair”, and stood before him:”

but this covering was made use of, not of choice, but by force, through her poverty, she having no other; this was not the custom of the nation, nor was the hair given to women for a covering in this sense, nor used by them as such, unless by Eve before the fall; but is rather an indication that they want another covering for their head, it not being so decent that their long hair should be seen. The Jewish women used to esteem it an immodest thing for their hair to be seen, and therefore they took care, as much as possible, to hide it under another covering;

“one woman, whose name was Kimchith, had seven sons, and they all ministered in the high priesthood; the wise men said unto her, what hast thou done, that thou art so worthy? she replied to them, all my days the beams of my house never saw , “the plaits of my hair” (m);”

that is, they were never seen by any person, even within her house.

(l) T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 66. 2. (m) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:16

But if any man seem to be contentious,... That is, if anyone will not be satisfied with reasons given, for men's praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered, and women's praying and prophesying with their heads covered; but will go on to raise objections, and continue carping and cavilling, showing that they contend not for truth, but victory, can they but obtain it any way; for my part, as if the apostle should say, I shall not think it worth my while to continue the dispute any longer; enough has been said to satisfy any wise and good man, anyone that is serious, thoughtful, and modest; and shall only add,

we have no such custom, nor the churches of God; meaning, either that men should appear covered, and women uncovered in public service, and which should have some weight with all those that have any regard to churches and their examples; or that men should be indulged in a captious and contentious spirit; a man that is always contending for contention sake, and is continually cavilling and carping at everything that is said and done in churches, and is always quarrelling with one person or another, or on account of one thing or another, and is constantly giving uneasiness, is not fit to be a church member; nor ought he to be suffered to continue in the communion of the church, to the disturbance of the peace of it. This puts me in mind of a passage in the Talmud (n).

“The Rabbans teach, that after the departure of R. Meir, R. Judah said to his disciples, do not let the disciples of R. Meir enter here, , “because they are contentious””

(n) T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 49. 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 52. 2.

1 Corinthians 11:17

Now in this that I declare unto you,.... The Syriac version reads, “this is what I command”; which some refer to what he had been discoursing of, adding to his arguments, and the examples of the church, his own orders and command, that men should worship God publicly, uncovered, and women covered; though it seems rather to respect what follows, what the apostle was about to declare unto them; concerning which he says,

I praise you not; as he did in Co1 11:2 that they were mindful of him, remembered his doctrines, and kept the ordinances in the manner he had delivered them to them: and it should seem by this, that the greater part of them were not to be blamed, though some few were, for their irregular and indecent appearance in public worship, men with a covering on their heads, and women without one; but in what he was about to say, he could not praise them at all:

that you come together; to the house of God, to pray unto him, to sing his praises, to hear his word, and attend his ordinances, particularly the Lord’s supper:

not for the better; for edification and instruction, for the quickening and comforting of your souls; that you may grow in grace and knowledge, become more holy, zealous, fruitful, and useful:

but for the worse; to indulge luxury and intemperance, to encourage heresies, schisms, and divisions, and so grow more carnal, scandalous, and useless.

1 Corinthians 11:18

For first of all, when ye come together in the church,.... The place where the church met together to perform divine service, called “one place”. Co1 11:20 and is distinguished from their own “houses”, Co1 11:22 and the first thing he took notice of as worthy of dispraise and reproof, in their religious assemblies, were their animosities and factions:

I hear that there be divisions among you: schisms and parties, either about their ministers, one being for Paul, another for Apollos, and another for Cephas; or in the celebration of the Lord’s supper, and that which went before it, they going into separate bodies, and partook by themselves, and each took his own supper before another, one ate, and another did not. This the apostle had heard from the house of Chloe:

and I partly believe it; meaning, either that this was the practice of a part of the church to do so, though not of them all; or that part of the report that had been made to him was true; though he hoped in that charity which hopeth all things, that it was not quite so bad as was feared or represented, since things are generally heightened and increased by fame; but yet he had it from such good hands, that he could not but believe there was something in it. So the Syriac version renders it, , “and something, something I believe”.

1 Corinthians 11:19

For there must be also heresies among you.... This is a reason why he was ready to believe there might be something of truth in the report he had received of the divisions among them; for if there were heresies, false doctrines, and bad principles, among them, such as were subversive of the fundamentals of Christianity, as the denial of the resurrection of the dead, &c. it was no wonder that there were schisms and factions among them, since heresies generally issue in them. These, the apostle says, “must be”; because God has decreed they shall, whose counsel is immutable, and his purpose unalterable; and since this always was the case, that there were false prophets under the former dispensation, it must be expected that false teachers will arise in the churches now, bringing in damnable heresies; and since Satan is always busy to sow the tares of false doctrine; and human nature, being both weak and wicked, is so susceptible thereof, and so easily imposed upon and deceived, it cannot be thought that it should be otherwise; which, by the goodness and wisdom of God, are overruled to a very good purpose:

that they which are approved: who sincerely believe in Christ, are sound in the faith, and have a well grounded experience of it; who have themselves tried things that differ, and approve of them that are excellent, and have been tried by others, and found to be sincere, upright, and faithful, and are approved of God and good men:

may be made manifest among you; by their steadfastness in the faith, their zealous attachment to it, earnest contention for it, and warm and honest vindication of it; and by the departure of those from them who oppose it, and go on the side of error and heresy; by which means it is known who are the sincere followers of the Lamb, in doctrine, discipline, and conversation, and who not.

1 Corinthians 11:20

When ye come together therefore into one place,... Though does not signify so much the unity of the place, as of the persons meeting together, and their conjunction; so the phrase is used by the Septuagint, in Deu 25:11, yet it supposes a place where the church were wont to assemble for divine worship;

this is not to eat the Lord's supper: their view in coming together was not so much to celebrate the supper of the Lord, as to partake of their own supper, which was either the paschal supper, or something like it; which many of them “judaizing” observed before the Lord's supper, in imitation of Christ, as they pretended, who first ate the passover, and then instituted the supper. Now there being a great deal of good eating and drinking in this ante-supper, many of them came together for no other end but to partake of that, at least this was their chief view, and not the Lord's supper; or when they did meet together on this account, it was in such an irregular and disorderly manner, and they confounded these suppers together, and behaved so ill at them, and ate the Lord's supper so unworthily, that it could not be rightly called eating of it; or when they had eaten their ante-supper in such an indecent way, neither staying for one another, nor keeping within the bounds of temperance and sobriety; at least having indulged their carnal appetites to such a degree, and raised themselves to such a pitch of gaiety and cheerfulness; it was not fit for them to eat the Lord's supper, to go from such a full meal to the table of the Lord. This was called the Lord's supper, because he was the author of it; and he is the subject of it; and for him, the remembrance of him, it is appointed, kept up, and continued. The Syriac version understands it of the Lord's day, and reads it thus, “when therefore ye meet together, not as is fit for”, or becomes, , “the day of our Lord, do ye eat and drink”.

1 Corinthians 11:21

For in eating,.... Not at the Lord's table, but at tables spread for them in the place of divine worship, where everyone brought his own food, under a pretence that others, particularly the poor, should eat with him; but instead of that, he sat down and ate it himself, and would not stay till the rest came, to eat together:

but everyone taketh before other his own supper; that is, without tarrying till all came together, in order to eat a friendly meal with each other, to encourage and increase brotherly love, one would sit down and fill himself before another came; so that some went without, whilst others had too much; and thus the designed end was not answered, and the whole was a piece of confusion and disorder:

and one is hungry, and another drunken; he that came late had nothing to eat, and so was hungry; when he that was first either eat and drank to excess, or at least very plentifully, so that he was very cheerful, and more disposed to carnal mirth, than in a serious and solemn manner to partake of the Lord's supper; and who is thought to be the rich man, who brought his own provisions, and ate them himself when he had done; as the poor may be meant by the hungry, who having no food to bring with them, and none being communicated to them by the rich, were in want, and starving; so that here were many abuses justly chargeable on them. Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that by him that was "drunken" meant the Jew that ate the paschal supper, of which he ate and drank freely; and by him that was "hungry", the Gentile, who was so not out of poverty and necessity, but because he refused and avoided eating of the ante-supper, as savouring of Judaism; and so here was a schism and division among them.

1 Corinthians 11:22

What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in?.... This shows that one taking his supper before another, was not in their own houses, before they came to the place of divine worship, but in the house of God; and the apostle suggests, that if they must have their ante-suppers, and were disposed to eat and drink freely, before they partook of the Lord's supper, it was more decent and orderly, and less reflected upon the honour of religion and the ordinances of Christ, to eat and drink in their own houses; in which they were not only more private and retired, but which they had for such purposes; whereas the house of God was not for any such use, nor should they meet together there on such an account; at least, such disorderly, unequal, and intemperate feasts there, were very scandalous and reproachful: and it was contrary to a Jewish canon to eat and drink in the synagogues, which runs thus (o),

"in the synagogues they do not use a light behaviour, nor do they eat and drink in them;"

though they sometimes speak of travellers eating and drinking and lodging in the synagogues (p), yet they interpret these of places adjoining to them:

or despise ye the church of God; that is, expose it to contempt and scorn; meaning either the community, the people of God gathered together in a Gospel church state; or the place where they met for public worship, which the Ethiopic version calls, "the house of God"; which was rendered very contemptible by such disorderly practices;

and shame them that have not; no houses to eat in, or supper to eat, or any of this world's goods, or money to purchase food for themselves; who must be confounded and put to shame, when, coming in expectation of being fed, the provisions were eaten up by the rich before they came, or, however, were not allowed to partake when they did come; this was such a respecting of persons, as was justly culpable in them by the apostle.

(o) T. Hieros. Megilia, fol. 74. 1. & T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 28. 1. (p) Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, & Pesachim, fol. 101. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 29. sect. 8. & Maggid Misna in ib.

1 Corinthians 11:23

For I have received of the Lord,... The apostle observes unto them the rule, use, and end of the Lord's supper; his view in it is, to correct the disorders among them, and to bring them to a strict regard to the rule which had such a divine authority stamped upon it; and to observe to them, that in that supper all equally ate and drank; and that the end of it was not a paschal commemoration, but a remembrance of Christ, and a declaration of his sufferings and death. The divine authority of the Lord's supper is here expressed; it was not only instituted by him as Lord, having all power and authority in and over his churches, to appoint what ordinances he pleases; but the plan and form of administration of it were received from him by the apostle. This was not a device of his, nor an invention of any man's, nor did he receive the account from men, no not from the apostles; but he had it by revelation from Christ, either when he appeared to him at his first conversion, and made him a minister of the Gospel; or when he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard things unspeakable and unutterable:

that which also I delivered unto you; for whatever he received from Christ, whether a doctrine or an ordinance, he faithfully delivered to the churches, from whom he kept back nothing that was profitable, but declared the whole counsel of God unto them: now this he refers the Corinthians to, as a sure rule to go by, and from which they should never swerve; and whatever stands on divine record as received from Christ, and delivered by his apostles, should be the rule of our faith and practice, and such only;

that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed; or delivered; as he was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God the Father, and as he was by himself, who voluntarily gave himself up into the hands of men, justice and death, for our offences; and so the Arabic version reads it here, "in the night in which he delivered up himself"; as he did in the garden to Judas and his company: it was in the night when he came in search of him with officers, and a band of soldiers, and when he betrayed him and delivered him into their hands; and that same night, a little before, our Lord instituted and celebrated the ordinance of the supper with his disciples. The time is mentioned partly with regard to the passover it followed, which was killed in the evening and ate the same night in commemoration of God's sparing the firstborn of Israel, when at midnight he destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt, and so was a night to be observed in all generations; and because this feast was to be a supper, and therefore it is best to observe it in the evening, or decline of the day. The circumstance of Judas's betraying him is mentioned, not only because it was in the night, and a work of darkness; but being in the same night he instituted the supper, shows the knowledge he had of his death by the means of the betrayer, and his great love to his disciples, his church and people, in appointing such an ordinance in remembrance of him, and his death, when he was just about to leave

them:

took bread; from off the table, out of the dish, or from the hands of the master of the house; an emblem of his body, and of his assumption of human nature; of his taking upon him the nature of the seed of Abraham, of that body which his Father prepared for him, in order to its being broken; or that he might in it endure sufferings and death for his people.

1 Corinthians 11:24

And when he had given thanks,.... So Luk 22:19, but Mat 26:26 and Mar 14:22 say “he blessed”; not the bread, but his Father; for to bless and give thanks is one and the same thing with the Jews; so we often read of their blessing for the fruits of the earth, for wine and bread; concerning which they have these rules (r),

“he that blesseth for the wine, before food, frees the wine that is after food; he that blesseth for the dessert before food, frees the dessert after food; , “he that blesseth for the bread”, frees the dessert, for the dessert does not free the bread;”

or excuse from a blessing for that again;

“if they sit at eating, everyone blesses for himself; if they lie (upon couches) , “one blesses for them all”; when wine is brought to them whilst they are eating, everyone blesses for himself: if after food, “one blesses for them all”;”

our Lord conformed to these rules, he blessed and gave thanks for the bread separately, and he afterwards blessed, or gave thanks for the wine; and as he and his disciples lay at table, he blessed and gave thanks for them all; for this is not to be understood of any consecration of the bread by a certain form of words, changing its nature and property, and converting it into the body of Christ; but either of asking a blessing of his Father upon it, that whilst his disciples were caring of it, their faith might be led to him, the bread of life, and to his broken body, and spiritually feed and live on him, and receive spiritual nourishment from him; or else of giving thanks to his Father for what was signified by it, for the true bread he gave unto his people, meaning himself; and for that great love he showed in the gift and mission of him; and for the great work of redemption, and all the benefits of it he had sent him to procure, and which were just on finishing; and for all the might, strength, and assistance, he gave to him as man and Mediator, in completing the business of salvation for his people; which was the joy set before him, and which filled his heart with pleasure and thankfulness; both these senses may be joined together, and may direct us as to the matter of blessing and giving thanks at the supper; for no form of words is pointed out to us; what were the express words our Lord used we know not:

he brake it; as a symbol of his body being wounded, bruised, and broken, through buffetings, scourgings, plating of a crown of thorns, which was put upon his head, and piercing his hands and feet with nails, and his side with a spear; for which reason the right of breaking the bread in this ordinance ought literally and strictly to be observed: Christ himself took the bread and brake it, denoting his willingness to lay down his life, to suffer and die in the room of his people; and this action of breaking the bread was used in order to be distributed, and that everyone might partake, as all the Israelites did at the passover, and not as these Corinthians at their ante-suppers, when one was full and another hungry; but Christ broke the bread, that everyone might have a part, as every

believer may and ought, who may eat of this bread, and drink of the wine, and feed by faith on Christ, and take every blessing procured by him to themselves:

and said, take, eat; that is, to his disciples, to whom he gave the bread, when he had took and given thanks and brake it, bidding them take it; receive it into their hands, as an emblem of their receiving him, and the blessings of his grace in a spiritual sense, by the hand of faith; and eat the bread put into their hands, as a symbol of their eating and living by faith on Christ as crucified, as having loved them, and given himself for them;

this is my body; in opposition to, and distinction from, , “the body of the passover”, as the lamb was called (s); meaning not his mystical body the church, of which he is head, though this is one bread, and one body, Co1 10:17 but his natural body, and that not properly, as if the bread was really changed into it; for the bread in the supper, after the blessing over it, and thanks given for it, retains its same nature, properties, form, and figure, only is set apart for the use of commemorating the broken body of Christ; and therefore this phrase is to be understood in a figurative sense, that it was a sign and seal of his body; it being broken into pieces represented his wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death; just in such sense as the rock is said to be Christ, in Co1 10:4 not that that was really Christ, but was a type and sign of him: which is

broken for you; for though a bone of him was not broken, but inasmuch as his skin and flesh were torn and broken by blows with rods and fists, by whippings and scourgings, by thorns, nails, and spear; and body and soul were torn asunder, or divided from each other by death; and death in Scripture is expressed by “breaking”; see Jer 19:11 his body might be truly said to be broken, and that for his people; not merely to confirm his doctrine, or set an example of patience, or only for their good; but in their room and stead, as their surety and substitute:

this do in remembrance of me; signifying that it was not a passover commemoration, or a remembrance of the Israelites going out of Egypt; which because done in the night, as that was, and following upon the passover, the judaizing Christians among the Corinthians took it to be in remembrance of that; having imbibed that notion which the Jews then had, and still retain, that their deliverance from Egypt will be remembered in the days of the Messiah (t);

“Nyrykzm, “they commemorate” the going out of Egypt in the nights; says R. Eleazer ben Azariah, lo, I am about seventy years of age, and I never was worthy to say, that the going out of Egypt was recited in nights, till Ben Zoma expounded what is said, Deu 16:3 “that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt; all the days of thy life; days of thy life”, mean days; “all the days of thy life”, nights; but the wise men say, “the days of thy life”; mean this world, and “all the days of thy life” include the days of the Messiah:”

now the apostle mentions these words of our Lord, to show that the design of the institution of this ordinance of the supper was not in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt; but it was in remembrance of himself, of what he did and suffered on the behalf of his people: particularly the eating of the bread was intended to bring to remembrance how the body of Christ was wounded, bruised, and broken for them; how he bore their sins in his own body on the tree, and suffered, and made satisfaction for them; and which was spiritual food for their faith when they reflected on it, and could not fail of bringing to their remembrance the love of Christ in all, when this was the case.

(r) Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 5, 6. (s) Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 3. (t) Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 5.

1 Corinthians 11:25

After the same manner also he took the cup,.... That is, off from the table, or out of the hands of the master of the house, and blessed or gave thanks, as he did before when he took the bread; see Mat 26:27, “when he had supped”; the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, “when they had supped”; which give a true sense, though not a literal translation; for both Christ and his disciples had supped, having both eaten the passover supper, and the bread, the principal part in the Lord’s supper, when he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them:

saying, this cup is the New Testament, or covenant,

in my blood; alluding to the old covenant, which was ratified and confirmed by the blood of bulls, and which was called “the blood of the covenant”, Exo 24:8 but the new covenant was established with Christ’s own blood, of which the wine in the cup was a sign and symbol; for neither the cup, nor the wine in it, can be thought to be the covenant or testament itself, by which is meant the covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation; called new, not because newly made, for it was made from everlasting; or lately revealed, for it was made known to our first parents immediately after the fall, and to other saints in succeeding ages, though more clearly exhibited by Christ under the present dispensation; but it is so called in distinction from the old covenant, or former mode of administration of it, under the Mosaic economy; and it is always new, and will be succeeded by no other; and it provides for and promises new things, and which are famous and excellent, and preferable to all others. Now this is said to be “in the blood” of Christ; that is, it is ratified, and all its blessings and promises are confirmed by his blood: hence his blood is called “the blood of the everlasting covenant”, Heb 13:20, pardon and righteousness, peace and reconciliation, and entrance into the holiest of all, all come through this blood, and are secured by the same; and to which the faith of the saints is directed in this ordinance, to observe, receive, and enjoy for themselves:

this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me; of his soul’s being poured out unto death; of his blood being shed for the remission of sins; and of his great love in giving himself an atoning sacrifice to divine justice, and laying such a foundation for solid peace and joy in the hearts of his people.

1 Corinthians 11:26

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,.... Not any bread, or any cup: but what is ate and drank in an ordinance way, and according to the institution and appointment of Christ, and with a view to the end proposed by him; and though there is no set fixed time for the administration of this ordinance, yet this phrase seems to suggest that it should be often: and very plainly signifies, that the bread and wine, after the blessing or thanksgiving, remain such, and are not converted into the real body and blood of Christ; but are only outward elements representing these to faith;

ye do show the Lord’s death till he come; or rather, as it may be rendered in the imperative mood, as an exhortation, direction or command, “show ye the Lord’s death till he come”; since everyone that eats and drinks at the Lord’s table does not show forth his death, which is the great end to be answered by it; for the design of the institution of it is to declare that Christ died for the sins of his people: to represent him as crucified; to set forth the manner of his sufferings and death, by

having his body wounded, bruised, and broken, and his blood shed; to express the blessings and benefits which come by his death, and his people's faith of interest in them; and to show their sense of gratitude, and declare their thankfulness for them; and all this, "till he come"; which shows the continuance of this ordinance, which is to last till Christ's second coming, where the carnal ordinances of the former dispensation were shaken and removed; and also the continuance of Gospel ministers to the end of the world, to administer it, and of churches to whom it is to be administered: this assures of the certainty of Christ's second coming; as it leads back to his coming in the flesh, suffering and dying in our stead, and thereby obtaining redemption for us; it leads forward to expect and believe he will come again, to put us into the full possession of the salvation he is the author of; when there will be no more occasion for this ordinance, nor any other, but all will cease, and God will be all in all. The apostle here refers to a custom used by the Jews in the night of the passover, to show forth the reason of their practice, and that institution to their children; when either (u).

"the son asked the father, or if the son had not understanding (enough to ask), then the father taught him, saying, how different is this night from all other nights? for in all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread, but in this night only unleavened; in all other nights we eat the rest of herbs, but in this night bitter herbs; in all other nights we eat flesh roasted, broiled, and boiled, in this night only roasted; in all other nights we wash once, in this night twice; and as elsewhere (w) it is added, in all other nights we eat sitting or lying, in this night all of us lie; and according to the capacity of the child, the father teaches him,"

particularly he was to inform him what these several things showed forth, or declared (x); as that

"the passover "declared", or "showed forth", that the Lord passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt; the bitter herbs "showed forth", that the Egyptians made the lives of our fathers bitter in Egypt; and the unleavened bread "declared" that they were redeemed; and all these things are called "the declaration", or showing forth:"

and there is a treatise called , "the showing forth of the passover"; in which, besides the things mentioned, and many others, it is observed (y), that it was commanded the Jews "to declare" the going out of Egypt, and that everyone that diligently declares the going out of Egypt, is praiseworthy: now the apostle observes this end of the Lord's supper, to show forth his death, in opposition to the notion of the "judaizing" Christians at Corinth, who thought of nothing else but the showing forth of the passover, and the declaration of that deliverance and redemption wrought for the people of Israel; whereas the true and only intent of it was to show forth the death of Christ, redemption by him, and the greatness of his love expressed therein, and which is to be continued till his second coming; whereas the time was come when it should "be no more said, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt", Jer 16:14.

(u) Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 4. Haggadah Shel. Pesach. p. 5. (w) Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 2. (x) Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora prec. aff. 41. (y) P. 5, 6. Ed. Rittangel. & Seder. Tephillot. Ed. Basil. fol. 243. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:27

Wherefore,... Since this is the plain institution of the Lord's supper, the form and manner of administering of it; and since the bread and wine in it are representations of the body and blood of

Christ, and the design of the whole is to remember Christ, and show forth his death; it follows, that

whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. The bread and cup are called the bread and cup of the Lord; because ate and drank in remembrance of him, being symbols of his body and of his blood, though not they themselves; these may be eaten and drank “unworthily”, when they are eaten and drank by unworthy persons, in an unworthy manner, and to unworthy ends and purposes. The Lord’s supper may be taken unworthily, when it is partook of by unworthy persons. This sense is confirmed by the Syriac version, which renders it, “and is not fit for it”, or is unworthy of it, and so the Ethiopic version; now such are all unregenerate persons, for they have no spiritual life in them, and therefore cannot eat and drink in a spiritual sense; they have no spiritual light, and therefore cannot discern the Lord’s body; they have no spiritual taste and relish, no spiritual hungerings and thirstings, nor any spiritual appetite, and can receive no spiritual nourishment, or have any spiritual communion with Christ: and so are all such persons, who, though they may profess to be penitent ones, and believers in Christ, and to have knowledge of him, and love to him; and yet they have not true repentance, neither do they bring forth fruits meet for it, and so as they are improper subjects of baptism, they are unworthy of the Lord’s table; nor have they faith in Christ, at least only an historical one, and so cannot by faith eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God, nor perform the ordinance in a way well pleasing to God; nor have they any spiritual knowledge of Christ, only what is speculative and notional, and so cannot discern the Lord’s body; nor any real love to him, and therefore very improper persons to feed on a feast of love; nor can they affectionately remember Christ, or do what they do from a principle of love to him, and therefore must be unworthy receivers: as likewise are all such professors, whose lives and conversations are not as become the Gospel of Christ; such crucify Christ afresh, and put him to open shame, and are therefore unfit to show forth his crucifixion and death; they bring a reproach on the Gospel and ordinances of Christ, and cause his name, and ways, and truths to be blasphemed, and grieve the members of the churches of Christ, and therefore ought not to be admitted to the table of the Lord: indeed, no man is in himself worthy of such an ordinance, none but those whom Christ has made so by the implantation of his grace, and the imputation of his righteousness; and whom he, though unworthy in themselves, invites and encourages to come to this ordinance, and to eat and drink abundantly. Moreover, this ordinance may be attended upon in an unworthy manner; as when it is partook of ignorantly, persons not knowing the nature, use, and design of it; or irreverently, as it was by many of the Corinthians, and it is to be feared by many others, who have not that reverence of the majesty of Christ, in whose presence they are, and who is both the author and subject of the ordinance; or without faith, and the exercise of it on Christ, the bread of life, and water of life; or unthankfully, when there is no grateful sense of the love of God in the gift of his Son, nor of the love of Christ, in giving himself an offering and sacrifice for sin; or when this feast is kept with the leaven of malice and wickedness, and with want of brotherly love, bearing an ill will to, or hatred of, any of the members of the church, To all which may be added, that this bread and cup are ate and drank unworthily, when they are partook of to unworthy ends and purposes; as to qualify for any secular employment, and to gain any worldly advantage; or to be seen of men, and to be thought to be devotional and religious persons; or to commemorate anything besides Christ; as the “judaizing” Corinthians did the “paschal” lamb; or to procure eternal life and happiness thereby, fancying that the participation of this ordinance gives a meetness for, and a right to glory: now such unworthy eaters and drinkers are “guilty of the body and blood” of the Lord; not in such sense as Judas, Pontius Pilate, and the people of the Jews were, who were concerned in the crucifixion of his body, and shedding of his blood, the guilt of which lies upon them, and they must answer for another day; nor in such sense as apostates from the faith, who, after they have received the knowledge of the

truth, deny it, and Christ, the Saviour; and so crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame, count the blood of the covenant a common or unholy thing, and tread under foot the Son of God; at least, not every unworthy receiver of the Lord's supper is guilty in this sense; though there might be some among the Corinthians, and is the reason of this awful expression, who looked upon the body and blood of Christ as common things, and made no more account of them than of the body and blood of the passover lamb; but in a lower sense, every unworthy communicant, or that eats and drinks unworthily, may be said to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, inasmuch as he sins against, and treats in an injurious manner, an ordinance which is a symbol and representation of these things; for what reflects dishonour upon that, reflects dishonour on the body and blood of Christ, signified therein.

1 Corinthians 11:28

But let a man examine himself,... Whether he has a true sense of sin, sorrow and repentance for it; otherwise he will see no need of a Saviour, nor will he look to Christ for salvation, or be thankful to him for redemption by him; all which are necessary in a due observance of this ordinance; also, whether he is in the faith, whether he is a partaker of the true grace of faith, which is attended with good works, and shows itself by love to Christ, and to the saints; whereby a man goes out of himself to Christ for spiritual food and strength, peace and comfort, righteousness, life, and salvation; and by which he receives all from Christ, and gives him all the glory: this is absolutely necessary to his right and comfortable partaking of the Lord's supper, since without faith he cannot discern the Lord's body, nor, in a spiritual sense, eat his flesh, and drink his blood, nor attend on the ordinance in a manner acceptable unto God. Let him also examine and try whether he is sound in the doctrine of faith; or let him prove himself to be so, or show that he is one that is approved thereby; to whom the word of faith has come with power, and who has received it in the love of it, and firmly believes it; since an heretic is to be rejected from the communion of the church, and to be debarred the ordinances of it: let him examine himself, whether Christ is in him, whether he is revealed to him, and in him, as God's way of salvation, and the hope of glory; whether he is formed in his soul, his Spirit put, and his grace implanted there; since if Christ is not within, it will be of no avail to partake of the outward symbols of his body and blood. But if a man, upon reflection, under the influence and testimony of the Spirit, can come to a satisfaction in these things, however mean and unworthy he may seem in his own sight, let him come to the table of the Lord, and welcome.

And so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; none should discourage or hinder him; nor should he deprive himself of such a privilege, to which he has an undoubted right. There seems to be an allusion in these words to what the master of the family used at the passover, when he said (z),

“everyone that is hungry, , “let him come and eat”, and everyone that hath need or ought, let him keep the passover.”

(z) Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 4.

1 Corinthians 11:29

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily,... As before explained, Co1 11:27 “eateth and drinketh damnation to himself”; or guilt, or judgment, or condemnation; for by either may the word be rendered; nor is eternal damnation here meant; but with respect to the Lord's own people, who

may through unbelief, the weakness of grace, and strength of corruption, behave unworthily at this supper, temporal chastisement, which is distinguished from condemnation with the world, and is inflicted in order to prevent it, Co1 11:32 and with respect to others it intends temporal punishment, as afflictions and diseases of body, or corporeal death, as it is explained in Co1 11:30. This they may be said to eat and drink, because their unworthy eating and drinking are the cause and means of it. Just as Adam and Eve might be said to eat condemnation to themselves and posterity, because their eating of the forbidden fruit was the cause of it. So the phrase, “does not eat condemnation”, is used in the Persic version of Joh 3:18 for “is not condemned”. And let it be observed, that such an one is said to eat and drink this judgment or condemnation to himself, and not another; he is injurious to nobody but himself: this may serve to make the minds of such easy, who are not so entirely satisfied with some persons who sit down with them at the Lord’s table, when they consider that it is to their own injury, and not to the hurt of others they eat and drink:

not discerning the Lord’s body. This is an instance of their eating and drinking unworthily, and a reason why they eat and drink condemnation to themselves, or contract guilt, or expose themselves either to chastisement or punishment; because they distinguish not the Lord’s supper from an ordinary and common meal, but confound them together, as did many of the Corinthians, who also did not distinguish the body of Christ in it from the body of the paschal lamb; or discern not the body of Christ, and distinguish it from the bread, the sign or symbol of it; or discern not the dignity, excellency, and usefulness of Christ’s body, as broken and offered for us, in which he bore our sins on the tree, and made satisfaction for them; a commemoration of which is made in this ordinance.

1 Corinthians 11:30

For this cause many are weak and sickly,... Because of their unworthy participation of the Lord’s supper, many in the Corinthian church were attended with bodily infirmities and diseases; either by way of fatherly chastisement and correction in such who were truly the Lord’s people, though they had behaved unworthily; or by way of punishment to such who were not, and had sinned very grossly:

and many sleep; that is, die a corporeal death, which is often in Scripture signified by sleep, and frequently used of the saints, and their death, and may intend and include some of them here; for though the Lord might resent so far their unworthy conduct and behaviour at his table, as to remove them out of this world by death, yet their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:31

For if we would judge ourselves,... Examine, try, and prove ourselves as above directed, before we eat and drink; or condemn ourselves, by confessing, acknowledging, and mourning over sin, and by repentance for it; or separate ourselves from the company of profane sinners, come out from among them, and touch not their unclean things; or join with them in their unfruitful works of darkness:

we should not be judged; by the Lord; he would not inflict these diseases, sicknesses, and death.

1 Corinthians 11:32

But when we are judged,... This is said by way of consolation to the saints, that when the hand of the

Lord is upon them, and he is afflicting them, they should consider these things, not as the effects of his vindictive wrath and justice, as proper punishments for their sins, but as fatherly chastisements for their good:

we are chastened of the Lord; as children by a father, in love and kindness, in order to bring to a sense of sin, repentance for it, and acknowledgment of it, and behave the better for the future:

that we should not be condemned with the world; the world of ungodly men, the men of the world, carnal, worldly, and Christless sinners. There is a world, a multitude of them that will be condemned. So far has Christ been from dying for the redemption and salvation of every individual person in the world, that there is a world of men that will be righteously condemned at the last day. Now the present afflictions and chastisements of the saints are laid upon them, and blessed to them for their spiritual good, that they may not be condemned to the second death, to everlasting fire, to endless damnation, or be punished with everlasting destruction along with them.

1 Corinthians 11:33

Wherefore, my brethren,.... Though he had said some very awful and awakening things to bring them to themselves, to reclaim them, and rectify disorders among them; yet he hoped well of them in general, and softens the severe things he had said, by calling them “brethren”; and hereby prepares them to attend to, and receive the more kindly, what he had further to say:

when ye come together to eat; that is, when ye come to the place of public worship at the usual stated time, in order to eat the Lord’s supper, tarry one for another; do not begin to celebrate the ordinance until the church is met together in general, or at least till as many are got together as may be expected will come; for a church is not obliged to tarry for every individual person; nor can it be thought that every member can attend, there being various providences which may detain them: the apostle’s view is to promote unity, Christian respect, and brotherly love in the ordinance; that they would sit down and join together, according to the rule of Christ, without respect to persons, or going into parties, factious, and divisions.

1 Corinthians 11:34

And if any man hunger let him eat at home,.... Whereby the apostle shows his dislike of their antecessors in the place of public worship, at which they behaved in so indecent a manner, neglecting the poor, and too freely indulging themselves; and therefore if anyone was hungry, and could not wait till the Lord’s supper was over, let him eat at home before he come to the place of worship, and satisfy his appetite, that he might with more ease and decency attend the table of the Lord:

that ye come not together unto condemnation or judgment; that is, that you may so behave when ye come together, that you may not bring upon you the judgment of the Lord, either by way of punishment or chastisement; that is to say, bodily diseases or death.

And the rest will I set in order when I come: meaning, not doctrines of faith, but things respecting ecclesiastical order and polity, which were amiss among them.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 12

In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning spiritual gifts, showing the author, nature, use, and excellency of them; compares the church to an human body, and in a beautiful manner sets forth the symmetry and subserviency of the members of it to one another, being set in different places, and having different gifts; and enumerates the several offices and gifts in the church, and yet suggests there is something more excellent than them. He intimates, that spiritual gifts are valuable things, and should be taken notice of; nor would he have the saints ignorant of them, and therefore gives the following account, Co1 12:1 and yet he would not have those that have them be proud of them, and lifted up with them; for which reason he puts them in mind of their former state in Heathenism, to make and keep them humble, Co1 12:2 and points out such who have the Spirit of God, the author of all gifts and grace; not such who call Jesus accursed, but they that call him Lord, Co1 12:3 which Holy Ghost, who is called Spirit, Lord, and God, is the author of the different gifts bestowed upon men, Co1 12:4 the end of bestowing which gifts is the profit of others, Co1 12:7 of which gifts there is an enumeration in nine particulars, Co1 12:8 of each of which the Spirit of God is the worker and giver, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, Co1 12:11 and which are all for the good of the whole community; which is illustrated by the simile of an human body, which as it consists of many members, and is but one, so Christ mystical, or the church, though it consists of divers persons, yet they are all one in Christ, and all their gifts are for the service of each other, Co1 12:12 which unity is proved and confirmed by the saints being baptized by one Spirit into one body, the church, and by drinking of him, or partaking of the same grace, Co1 12:13 and in order to show the usefulness and profit of every spiritual gift, even the meanest, to the churches of Christ, and that none might be despised, he enlarges upon the metaphor of the human body he had compared the church to, and by it illustrates the unity of the church, and the members of it, Co1 12:14 and shows that the inferior members should not envy the superior ones, or be dejected because they have not the same gifts: and conclude from hence, that they are not, or deserve not, to be of the same body, Co1 12:15 seeing it is convenient and absolutely necessary that there should be many members, and these set in different places, and have different gifts and usefulness; and particularly what should make them easy is, that God has placed them according to his will and pleasure, Co1 12:17. And, on the other hand, he shows, that the more noble, and excellent, and useful members, ought not to despise the lower, meaner, and more ignoble ones, partly because of the usefulness and necessity of them, they cannot do without them, Co1 12:21 and partly because of the honour put upon them, Co1 12:23, and all this is so ordered, that there be no schism, but that there should be a mutual care of one member for another, and that they should sympathize with each other, Co1 12:25. This simile the apostle more plainly and particularly accommodates and applies to the church, the body of Christ, and the members of it, and of one another, Co1 12:27 and gives an enumeration of the several officers and offices in the church, set there by God himself; and there are no less than eight of them, some greater than others, most of them proper and peculiar to the primitive church, though some perpetual, and which still continue, Co1 12:28 but in the times in which they were all of them in being and use, every member of the church was not possessed of them, only some, though all had more or less the advantage of them, Co1 12:29. Wherefore, he concludes with an exhortation to the saints to covet the best of those gifts; and yet observes that there was something more excellent than them, and preferable to them, which he was about to show them, Co1 12:31 and hereby he makes an easy transition to the next chapter, in which he recommends charity, and prefers it to gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts,.... Though the word “gifts” is not in the original text, it is rightly

supplied by our translators, as it is in the Arabic version: for the apostle does not mean spiritual graces, nor spiritual words, or doctrines, nor spiritual meats and drinks, nor spiritual men, each of which are mentioned before in this epistle; though the latter is thought by some to be here intended, and that the apostle's view is to show the difference between those that are spiritual, and those that are not; but as spiritual gifts are the subject of the apostle's discourse throughout this chapter, and the two following, they seem very manifestly to be designed here. The apostle having gone through various heads of discourse, which he either of himself, or at the request of others, wrote upon, proceeds to a new subject, that of spiritual gifts, which he seems to have been desired to give his thoughts upon, and advice about; since there were some in this church who were discouraged, because they had not the gifts which some had; and others that had them were elated and puffed up with them, and treated those below them with neglect and contempt; and with a view to both these the apostle writes as follows,

brethren, I would not have you ignorant; neither of the author of these gifts, who is the Spirit of God, who dispenses them according to his sovereign will and pleasure, and not according to the deserts of men, and are not acquired by the industry, or through the merit of any, but are his free grace gifts; nor of the nature of them, for there are differences and diversities of them, some have one, and some another, but no man all; nor of the design and use of them, which is the edification of the whole body; and every gift, though ever so mean, is of service; and therefore as, on the one hand, none ought to be discouraged, so, on the other hand, none should be lifted up with pride, or give way to a boasting spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:2

Ye know that ye were Gentiles,.... That is, by religion; hence the Syriac version renders it “profane” persons, given up to wickedness, bigotry, and superstition; for by nation they were Gentiles still; and which must be understood of one part of this church only; for some of them were Jews, as is clear from many passages in the epistle to this church, and practices referred to. This the apostle observes to humble them, by putting them in mind of what they had been formerly; they were born and brought up in the Heathen religion, when they knew not the true God, much less had any knowledge of Christ, and still less of the Spirit of God; and therefore if they were favoured with any of his gifts, these must be owing to his grace, and not to their deserts, and therefore they ought not to glory: he adds, with the same view,

carried away unto these dumb idols; to idols that were nothing in the world, had no divinity in them, as he had before asserted; to dumb ones, that had mouths, but could not speak, the oracles that were delivered from them, being spoken not by them, but were either satanical delusions, or the jugglings of a priest; to these they were carried by the power of Satan, the influence of their priests, and the orders of their magistrates, to consult them as oracles, to pay their devotions to them, and do them service:

even as ye were led; that is, to these dumb idols; the Syriac adds, , “without any difference”, not being able to distinguish between these and the true God; and to whom they were led as brute beasts were, that were sacrificed unto them, or as blind men are led by the blind, as they were by their blind and ignorant priests; and therefore, if they had now received the Spirit, and his gifts, they ought to ascribe the whole to the free grace of God, and be humble under a sense of their unworthiness.

Wherefore I give you to understand,... Or “I make known unto you”; what I am about to say are certain truths, and to be depended on,

that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; or “anathema”, as did the unconverted Gentiles, who knew nothing of Jesus but by report; which report they had from the Jews, his enemies; and by that report he appeared to them to be a very wicked and detestable person, who was put to death by the means of his own countrymen, was hanged upon a tree, and so to be counted and called accursed: the apostle seems to have reference to the sense these Corinthians had of Jesus, and what they called him before their conversion; whence it appeared that they spoke not by, nor were they possessed of the Spirit of God then, and therefore their having of him now was an instance of pure grace; or else respect is had to the Jews, who not only, whilst Jesus was living, blasphemed him, but continued to call him accursed after his death, whilst they were in their own land; and after the destruction of their city and temple, they continued, as Justin Martyr observes (a) to Trypho the Jew, to “curse” Christ, and them that believed in him; and to this day privately call him by such names as will hardly bear to be mentioned, were it not for the explanation of such a passage: thus they (b) call him “Jesus the perverse”, or he that perverteth the law of God; and “Jesu”, the name they commonly give him, they say is the abbreviation of, “let his name and memory be blotted out”; and which they sometimes explain by “Jesu is a lie, and an abomination: they call him a strange God, and vanity” (c), and often by the name of (d), “one that was hanged”, and so with them accursed; and which seems to be the name the Jews, in the apostle’s time, gave him, and to which he here refers. Now, as in the former verse he may have regard to the Gentiles, so in this to the Jews in this church, who, before conversion, had so called Christ, when it was plain they had not the Spirit of God then, or they could not have so called him; and therefore if they were partakers of him now, they ought to admire divine grace, and not glory in themselves, and over others. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that Jewish exorcists who strolled about, and pretended to do miracles by the Holy Ghost, and yet called Jesus “anathema”, are meant, of whom the Corinthians might assure themselves that they did not speak, nor act, nor were acted by the Spirit of God. The words may be applied to all such as detest and deny the doctrines of Christ, respecting his person and office; as that he is come in the flesh, is the true Messiah, the Son of God, truly and properly God; that his death is a proper sacrifice, and full satisfaction for sin; and that justification is by his imputed righteousness: without any breach of charity it may be said, such persons do in effect call Jesus accursed, nullifying his person, sufferings, and death, as to the dignity and efficacy of them; and cannot be thought to have, and speak by, the Spirit of God, who if they had him, would teach them otherwise. Moreover, as the word “anathema” here used answers to “Cherem”, a form of excommunication among the Jews; it may be truly said that such call Jesus accursed, or “anathema”, who, if I may be allowed the expression, excommunicate him out of their sermons and faith; these crucify him afresh, trample him under foot, count his blood as a common thing, and do malice to his Spirit; and therefore cannot be thought to have him, and speak by him.

And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; or Jehovah; which, with the Jews, was a name ineffable, to which the apostle might have respect. Christ is Lord of all, of angels, good and bad; of men, righteous and wicked; of the chief among men, the kings, princes, and lords of the earth; as he is God by right of nature, and as Creator of them by virtue of that; and because of his providential power and influence in the government of the universe; he is Lord of his church and people, by the Father’s gift of them to him; by his espousal of them to himself; by the purchase of his

blood; and by the conquests of his grace; and as appears by the various relations he stands in to them, as father, husband, head, King, and master. Now, though a man may historically say all this, as the devils may, and hypocritically, as formal professors and foolish virgins do now, and will at the last day; and as all men then will by force, whether they will or not, confess that Jesus is Lord, who have not the Spirit of God; yet no man can call him his Lord, can appropriate him to himself truly and really, as his Lord, Saviour, and Redeemer, as David, Thomas, the Apostle Paul, and others have done; but by the Spirit; since such an appropriation includes spiritual knowledge of Christ, strong affection to him; faith of interest in him, an hearty profession of him, and sincere subjection to him; all which cannot be without the Spirit of God: for he is the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and true love to Christ is a genuine fruit of his; faith in Christ, is entirely of his operation; and a subjection to the righteousness of Christ, and to his ordinances, is through the influence of his grace; and it is owing to his witnessings that any can truly, and in faith, claim their interest in him. Upon the whole, the apostle's sense is, let a man pretend to what he will, if he does not love Jesus Christ, and believe in him, he is destitute of his Spirit; and whoever loves Christ, and believes in him, and can call him his Lord in faith and fear, however mean otherwise his gifts may be, he is a partaker of the Spirit of God.

(a) Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 335. (b) Buxtorf. Abbrev. p. 10. (c) Buxtorf. Abbrev. p. 101, 102, 103. (d) Ib. Lex. Talmud. col. 2596.

1 Corinthians 12:4

Now there are diversities of gifts,... Of spiritual ones, as in Co1 12:1 which spring from the free grace, and good will and pleasure of God, and are not owing to the merits of men; and therefore such who have the largest share of them should not boast of them as acquired by themselves, or be puffed up on account of them; and those who have the smallest measure should be content and thankful; for though the gifts are different, some have greater, and others lesser, none have all, but all have some, yet not alike:

but the same Spirit; is the author and giver of all as he pleases; the lesser gifts, and the smallest degree of them, come from the Spirit of God, as well as the greater. Gifts here seem to be the general name for all that follow; and

administrations and

operations are the two species of them; and of these a particular account is afterwards given.

1 Corinthians 12:5

And there are differences of administrations,... Or ministries; offices in the church, ministered in by different persons, as apostles, prophets, pastors, or teachers and deacons; who were employed in planting and forming of churches, ordaining elders, preaching the word, administering ordinances, and taking care of the poor; for which different gifts were bestowed on them, they not all having the same office.

But the same Lord; meaning either Jesus Christ, whom the believer, by the Holy Ghost, says is Lord; who, as the ascended King of saints, and Lord and head of the church, appoints different offices and

officers in it; and having received, gives gifts unto them, qualifying them for the same; all which comes through the same hand, and not another's; or rather the Lord, the Spirit, who calls men to these several ministrations, separates and fits them for them, and constitutes and installs them into them, and assists them in the discharge of them; since he only, and all along, is spoken of in the context as the efficient of these several things.

1 Corinthians 12:6

And there are diversities of operations, There are some that are ordinary, as the good work of grace, and the several parts of it, the work of faith, the labour of love, and patience of hope, which the Spirit of God begins, carries on, and finishes in all the elect of God, and members of Christ; and there are others which are extraordinary, and are here meant, and hereafter specified.

But it is the same God which worketh all in all. Interpreters in general understand by God here, God the Father; as by the Lord in the preceding verse, the Lord Jesus Christ, as distinct from the Spirit in Co1 12:4 and apprehend that this furnishes out a considerable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, which I will not deny; but I rather think that the Holy Ghost is designed in each verse, by Spirit, Lord, and God; since the various gifts, administrations, and operations, are particularly and peculiarly ascribed to him in the following verses; and the distribution of them is said to be the effect of his sovereign will; and so we have a most illustrious testimony of his proper deity and personality; who is the only true "Jehovah" with the Father and Son, to which the word "Lord" in the New Testament generally answers, and who is the omnipotent God, "which worketh all in all"; all the works of nature throughout the universe, and all the, works of grace in the hearts of all his people, and all the extraordinary operations effected by any of them.

1 Corinthians 12:7

But the manifestation of the Spirit,.... Not that which the Spirit manifests, as the grace and love of God, an interest in Christ, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the things of another world; for he is a spirit of revelation, more or less, in the knowledge of these things; but that which manifests that a man has the Spirit of God; or rather the gifts of the Spirit, as the fruits and graces of the Spirit, the least measure of which, as being able to say that Jesus is Lord, shows that a man has the Spirit of God; or rather the gifts of the Spirit, ordinary or extraordinary, which are such as manifestly declare their author:

is given to every man; not that the special grace of the Spirit is given to every individual man in the world, nor to every member of a visible church, for some are sensual, not having the Spirit; but as the same graces of the Spirit are given to every regenerate man, for all receive the same spirit of faith, so the gifts of the Spirit, more or less, either ordinary or extraordinary, are given to all such persons;

to profit withal; not to make gain of, as Simon Magus intended, could he have been possessed of them; nor to encourage pride or envy, or to form and foment divisions and parties; but for profit and advantage, and that not merely private, or a man's own, but public, the good of the whole community or church, to which the least grace or gift, rightly used, may contribute.

1 Corinthians 12:8

For to one is given by the Spirit,... Now follows a distinct and particular enumeration of the operations of the Spirit, though not all of them, yet as many as the apostle thought necessary; and which are called the manifestation of him, and which most clearly show him to be the author of them to different persons;

the word of wisdom: by which is meant “the manifold wisdom of God”; the wonderful scheme of salvation through the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, in which God has “abounded in all wisdom and prudence”; together with all other deep, mysterious, and sublime doctrines of the Gospel, the knowledge of which were peculiarly given to the apostles in the first place, who have the first office or ministry in the church, by “the spirit of wisdom”; and which they had a faculty, a gift of declaring, opening, and explaining unto others.

To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; meaning either knowledge of future events; or an universal knowledge of the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines contained in them, of the whole mind and will of God therein, which is a distinct thing from saving grace: see Co1 13:2 and is what was given to the prophets, the second office in the church, by him who is the spirit of prophecy, and by whom the prophetic writings were dictated; and therefore he is the best interpreter of them, and who only can lead into the true knowledge thereof.

1 Corinthians 12:9

To another faith by the same Spirit,... Not the grace of faith, which is common to all believers, though given by the same Spirit: but rather the doctrine of faith, and ability to preach it, and boldness and intrepidity of spirit to assert and defend it in the face of all opposition; all which are from the Spirit of God, and are more or less given to pastors and teachers, the third office in the church. Though generally this is understood of a faith of working miracles, as in Co1 13:2 but the working of miracles is mentioned afterwards as distinct, unless it can be thought that this is the general name for miracles, and the rest that follow the particulars of them.

To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; of healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases: this power Christ gave his disciples, when he first sent them out to preach the Gospel, and which he repeated when he renewed and enlarged their commission after his resurrection; and which was exercised with effect, sometimes only by overshadowing the sick with their shadows, as by Peter, Act 5:15 sometimes by, laying hands on them, as the father of Publius, and others, were healed by Paul, Act 28:8 and sometimes by anointing with oil, Jam 5:14. Now these gifts were bestowed in common, by the Spirit, on apostles, prophets, and pastors, or elders of the church, in those early times: the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, “by one Spirit”.

1 Corinthians 12:10

To another the working of miracles,... Or “powers”: mighty deeds, wonderful works, such as are apparently above, and out of the reach of nature, and beyond the compass of human power and skill; such as raising the dead, causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and the like; of which, see some instances in Act 3:6. Though others understand by these the extraordinary powers the apostles had of punishing offenders; of which the striking Ananias and Sapphira dead, by Peter, the smiting Elymas the sorcerer with blindness, by Paul, and the delivering the incestuous person, and Hymenaeus, and Alexander, to Satan, by the same apostle, are instances.

To another prophecy: either foretelling of future events, as was given to Agabus, and the four daughters of Philip, and others, Act 11:27 or a gift of understanding the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of preaching the Gospel, which is in this epistle frequently called “prophesying”, particularly in the two following chapters; and those endowed with it are called prophets, Act 13:1.

To another discerning of spirits; by which gift such that were possessed of it could, in some measure, discern the hearts of men, their thoughts, purposes, and designs, their secret dissimulation and hypocrisy; as Peter, by this gift, discerned the dissimulation and lying of Ananias and Sapphira; and by it they could also tell whether a man that made a profession of religion had the truth of grace in him, or not; so Peter knew hereby that Simon Magus was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, notwithstanding his specious pretences to faith and holiness, whereby he imposed upon Philip the evangelist, who might not have this gift of discerning spirits; by which also they could distinguish the Spirit of God from the lying spirits in men; of which there is an instance, Act 15:17.

To another divers kinds of tongues; whereby such could speak all manner of languages, which they had never learned, understood, and been used to: this Christ promised his disciples, when he sent them into all the world to preach the Gospel, Mar 16:16 and so anticipates an objection they otherwise might have made, how they should be able to preach it to all, so as to be understood, when they were not acquainted with the languages of all nations; an instance of which we have in the apostles on the day of Pentecost, Act 2:4 and which continued many years after with them, and other persons in the churches; see Co1 13:2.

To another the interpretation of tongues; one that had this gift, when a discourse was delivered in an unknown tongue, used to stand up and interpret it to the people, without which it could be of no use to them; and sometimes a person was gifted to speak in an unknown tongue, and yet was not capable of interpreting his discourse truly and distinctly in that the people understood: see Co1 14:13. The rules to be observed in such cases, and by such persons, see in Co1 14:27.

1 Corinthians 12:11

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit,.... Though these gifts, ministrations, and operations, are so different in themselves, and are bestowed upon different persons, yet they are all wrought by one and the same Spirit of God, who is the true Jehovah, and properly God, as these his works declare; for who, but the most high God, could ever communicate such gifts to men?

Dividing to every man severally as he will; giving one man this gift, and another that; imparting such a measure to one, and such a portion to another, just as seems good in his sight. For as his special grace in regeneration is dispensed when and where, and to whom he pleases, signified by the blowing of the wind where it listeth, Joh 3:8 so his gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, are severally distributed, according to his sovereign will and pleasure. This is a clear and full proof of the personality of the Spirit, who is not only distinguished from his gifts, and the distribution of them, which is a personal act described to him; but this is said to be done according to his will, which supposes him an intelligent agent, capable of choosing and willing; and whose will agrees with the Father’s, and with the Son’s.

1 Corinthians 12:12

For as the body is one,.... That is, an human body; for of this the apostle speaks, and takes a simile, and forms a comparison from, showing the union among saints, and their mutual participation of the various gifts of the Spirit; for an human body is but one body, and not more.

And hath many members; as eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c.

And all the members of that one body being many are one body; as numerous as they may be, they all belong to, and make up but one body; performing different offices, for which they are naturally fitted for the good of the whole:

so also to Christ; not personal, but mystical; not the head alone, or the members by themselves, but head and members as constituting one body, the church. The church, in union with Christ, the head, is but one general assembly, and church of the firstborn written in heaven, though consisting of the various persons of God's elect, who are closely united one to another, and their head Christ; and therefore are denominated from him, and called by his name; see Rom 9:3.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit are we all baptized,.... This is to be understood not of water baptism; for the apostle says not in one, and the same water, but “by”, or “in” one Spirit, are we all baptized; the baptism of water, and of the Spirit, are two different things; see Mat 3:11. Besides, all that are baptized in water, are not baptized in or by the Spirit, as the case of Simon Magus, and that of others, show; nor does water baptism incorporate persons into the church of Christ; neither into the invisible church, which is the body of Christ, and here meant; nor into a visible Gospel church state; they being indeed true believers, and baptized, are proper persons to be received into a church; but baptism itself does not put them into it, or make them members of it: persons may be baptized in water, and yet may never be joined to a church. There is indeed an allusion made to water baptism, but it is the grace of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification which is here intended; which grace, both in the Old and in the New Testament, is frequently signified by water, and called a baptism, or a being baptized, because of the plenty, abundance, and superabundance of it, then bestowed; and is expressed by floods and rivers, and a well of living water; and is what qualifies and fits persons for the ordinance of water baptism. Now this is wrought by the Spirit of God, and is owing to his divine power and energy; not to water baptism, which has no regenerating virtue in it; nor to carnal regeneration, or a being born of blood, or of the best of men; nor to the will of any man; nor to the will of the flesh, or the power of man's freewill; but to God, to the Spirit, who is Lord and God, and the only sanctifier of the sons of men; by which spiritual baptism, or by whose grace in regeneration and conversion they are brought into one body: the mystical body of Christ, the universal and invisible church; that is, openly and manifestatively; for otherwise it is the grace of God in election, and in the everlasting covenant, choosing them in Christ, as members in their head, and constituting them such, that puts them among that number; but spiritual baptism, or the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, makes them appear to belong to that body, and makes them meet for, and gives them a right unto, a particular Gospel church, and the privileges of it, which the Spirit of God directs and brings them to. Whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; it matters not of what nation, or of what state and condition of life persons be; if they are regenerated and sanctified, they appear equally to belong to Christ, to be of his body, and have an equal propriety in all immunities and blessings belonging to his people; see Col 3:11

and have been all made to drink into one Spirit; are all partakers of the same graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, &c. and daily receive under his guidance, direction, and influence, out of the same fulness of grace in Christ, from whence they draw and drink this water with joy; and all drink the same spiritual drink, the blood of Christ, whose blood is drink indeed: and there may be in this clause an allusion to the ordinance of the supper, as in the former to the ordinance of baptism. Moreover, all new born babes, as they desire the sincere milk of the word, so they drink of it, and are refreshed with it, and are nourished by the words of faith, and sound doctrine, under the application, of the Spirit; and being trees of righteousness, and the planting of the Lord, the Spirit, they are watered by his grace, under the ministrations of the Gospel; and as they become one body under Christ, the head, so they are made to drink into one Spirit, or to become of one heart and soul with one another, being knit together in love, the bond of perfectness.

1 Corinthians 12:14

For the body is not one member,... Not only one; nor is anyone member the body, though ever so eminent, as the head or eye: thus the church of Christ is not one person only, or does not consist of one sort of persons; as only of Jews, or only of Gentiles, or only of rich and freemen, or only of men of extraordinary gifts and abilities, or greatly eminent for grace and spiritual knowledge:

but many; members, as the Arabic version adds; as eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c. so in the mystical body of Christ, the church, there are many members, some in a higher station, others in a lower; some of greater gifts, grace, and usefulness, others of lesser; some Jews, other Gentiles; some bond, others free; yet all one in Christ the head, and all related to each other.

1 Corinthians 12:15

If the foot shall say,... The lowest member of the body, which is nearest the earth, treads upon it, sustains the whole weight of the body, and performs the more drudging and fatiguing exercises of standing and walking; and may represent one that is in the lowest station in the church, a doorkeeper in the house of God; one that is really the least of saints, as well as thinks himself so; and has the smallest degree of heavenly affection, and knowledge of spiritual light and understanding;

because I am not the hand; the instrument of communication and of action; and may signify such an one, that liberally imparts to the necessities of others, who has it both in his hand and heart, and is ready to communicate; one that is full of good works, of charity towards men, and piety towards God; who does all things, Christ strengthening him, natural, civil, moral, and evangelical; yea, even miracles and mighty deeds are done by his hand:

I am not of the body; have no part in it, am no member of it, do not belong to it:

is it therefore not of the body? or “it is not therefore not of the body”, as the Syriac version renders it; that is, it is not “for this word”, as the Arabic, or so saying, as the Ethiopic, not of the body; it nevertheless belongs to it, and is a member of it, nor can it be otherwise: thus the meanest person in the mystical body, the church, though he should say, that because he is not so handy and useful as another, cannot give so largely, nor do so much as another, therefore he is no proper member of the church; it does not follow that so it is, for Christ, the head of the church, regards such as members;

he admires the “beauty” of his church’s “feet”, and has provided for the covering, ornament, and security of them, being himself clothed with “a garment down to the feet”, which equally covers and adorns that part of the body as the rest; he does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, or despise the day of small things; he regards their prayers, and takes notice and accepts of their meanest services; and they are, and should be considered as members of the body, by the rest and by themselves, the mystical body, the church, though he should say, that because he is not so handy and useful as another, cannot give so largely, nor do so much as another, therefore he is no proper member of the church; it does not follow that so it is, for Christ, the head of the church, regards such as members; he admires the “beauty” of his church’s “feet”, and has provided for the covering, ornament, and security of them, being himself clothed with “a garment down to the feet”, which equally covers and adorns that part of the body as the rest; he does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, or despise the day of small things; he regards their prayers, and takes notice and accepts of their meanest services; and they are, and should be considered as members of the body, by the rest and by themselves.

1 Corinthians 12:16

And if the ear shall say,.... The organ that receives sounds, and can distinguish them, and in which member is placed the sense of hearing; and may design such as are hearers of the word of God, not merely externally, but internally; who hear so as to love, savour, and relish it; so as to understand and believe it, and to act in compliance with it; and distinguish it for themselves, though they may not be able to give a distinct account of it to others, or instruct others in it:

because I am not the eye: the organ of seeing, in which is seated the visive faculty, and which receives light, and uses it for the good of the body, whose superintendent it is; and may be expressive of the ministers of the Gospel, who are that to the church, as eyes are to the body; they are the light of the world, have a clear insight into the doctrines of the Gospel, and communicate their light to others; they are set in the highest place in the church, and as watchmen and overseers there, to instruct; guide, and direct the members of it:

I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? it certainly is; and so such as are only hearers of the Gospel, being affectionate, believing, understanding and fruitful hearers; though they have not such large knowledge and clear light, so as to be capable of overseeing and instructing others, yet are true and useful members of the church, are highly respected by Christ the head, and to be had in esteem by their fellow members, who may be superior to them.

1 Corinthians 12:17

If the whole body were an eye,.... And nothing else,

where were the hearing? there would be no ear, and so no sense of hearing: and if the whole were hearing: or only consisted of a member capable of the sense of hearing,

where were the smelling? there would be no nose, the organ of smelling, and that sense would be wanting: thus if the church only consisted of ministers of the Gospel, of men of eminent light and knowledge, qualified for the preaching of the word to others, there would be no hearers; and on the other hand, if it only consisted of hearers, of such who only could hear the word to their own

advantage, there would be none of a quick understanding, or of a quick smell to discern perverse things, to distinguish truth from error, to discern spirits, and direct the rest of the members to wholesome and savoury food, and preserve them from what would be hurtful and pernicious to them.

1 Corinthians 12:18

But now hath God set the members,.... The members of a natural body, as they are all made and fashioned by God in the form they be, so they are each of them set by him in the place they are:

everyone of them in the body as it hath pleased him; according to his sovereign will, without consulting any; and each stands in the best situation and position they could be put, and for the greatest service and usefulness to the whole: so God, and not man, hath set every member in the mystical body, the church, in such a place and part of it, as he himself thought fit; some in a higher, others in a lower station, but all for the good of the body; and therefore each member ought to be content with his place, gift, and usefulness, be they what they will; since it is the wise counsel and sovereign pleasure of God, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, that so it should be.

1 Corinthians 12:19

col 12:19

And if they were all one member,.... As all eye, or all ear, or all hand, or all foot:

where were the body? where would be the body? it would not be a body consisting of such proper and suitable members, as now it is: so if the community of the saints were either all ministers, or all hearers, &c. there would be no body, consisting of different persons, to receive any benefit or usefulness from either; the church of Christ would not be that uniform, useful, and consistent community it is.

1 Corinthians 12:20

But now are they many members,.... Of different make and shape, in different parts and places, and of different use and service:

yet but one body; all are united together, and make up one complete body, and which without each of them would not be perfect: so there are many members in the body of Christ, the church; some are teachers, others are hearers; some give, and others receive; but all make up but one church, of which Christ is the head; nor can anyone of them be spared; was anyone wanting, even the meanest, there would be a deficiency, and the church would not be the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

1 Corinthians 12:21

And the eye cannot say unto the hand,.... Every member of the natural body is useful and necessary. The eye, the seat of the sense of seeing, cannot say to the communicating and working hand,

I have no need of thee: I can do without thee: so the seers and overseers of the church, the ministers of the Gospel, cannot say to the liberal and munificent hands, we have no need of you; for as the one

stand in need of the light, instruction, comfort, advice, and direction of the other, so the other stand in need of communication from them; and as God has made it a duty, that he that is taught in the word should communicate to him that teacheth in all good things; and as it is his ordinance that they which preach the Gospel should live of it; so he has generally ordered it in his providence, that they that teach should need such assistance:

nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. The head, which is the seat of the senses, and is superior to, and has the command and government of all the members of the body, cannot say to the lowest and most distant parts of it, the feet, you are needless and useless; so those that are set in the first place in the church, are over others in the Lord, and have the rule over them, cannot say to those that are under them, and submit unto them, even the lowest and meanest of them, that they are of no use and service to them; they can no more be without them, than the head can be without the feet, or than princes can do without subjects, or magistrates without citizens, or generals without soldiers.

1 Corinthians 12:22

Nay, much more those members of the body,.... The apostle, in a beautiful gradation, proceeds to take notice of such parts of the body as are more weak, dishonourable, and uncomely, showing the necessity and usefulness of them:

which seem to be more feeble; than others, do not consist of a strong bony substance, and are not fenced with sinews, as the belly and its intestines: yet these

are necessary; nor could the body be sustained, nourished, and refreshed, without them; so the more weak and feeble saints, whose hearts and hands are to be strengthened, whose infirmities are to be bore, have their usefulness; and the effectual working in the measure of every part, even of the feeble and tender, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love: and these God has seen fit, as necessary to call by his grace, and place in the body, that his strength may be made perfect in their weakness, and to confound the mighty; and out of the mouths even of babes and sucklings to ordain strength and praise.

1 Corinthians 12:23

And those members of the body,.... As the back parts of it:

which we think to be less honourable; though greatly useful,

upon these we bestow more abundant honour; by clothing them, for a man's garments are his honour and glory; See Gill on Mat 6:29, so the poor members of Christ's church, who are thought to be, though they really are not, the less honourable, have the more abundant honour conferred on them by God and Christ: God has chosen the poor of this world; Christ has sent his Gospel to them; these the Spirit calls and sanctifies, and makes them all glorious within; these Christ has given his churches a particular charge to take care of now, and will own them as his brethren at the great day, before angels and men; as he now greatly honours them with his presence, a large experience of his grace, and the supply of his Spirit:

and our uncomely parts; which distinguish sexes, and are appointed for generation;

have more abundant comeliness; by an external covering and ornament, to preserve decency and modesty. I do not know who should be designed by these, unless backsliding believers, who have been suffered to fall into great sins; these are the uncomely parts of the church, who, when made sensible of their evils, are restored again, and received into the church; and a mantle of love is cast over all their failings; and all possible care taken that their faults may not be exposed to the world, that so the name of God, and ways of Christ, may not be blasphemed and evil spoken of.

1 Corinthians 12:24

For our comely parts have no need,.... As the face, eyes, nose, lips, cheeks, &c. which stand in no need of an external covering, of any outward ornament: so such as are blessed with the bounties of nature and providence, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and are eminent for grace and holiness, and are enabled to walk worthy of their calling, and to have their conversations as become the Gospel of Christ, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, these have no need of such a covering, as the former have, to hide and conceal them from the world:

but God hath tempered the body together; he hath composed it in such a forth, constituted it in such an order, mixed and united all its parts in such a manner, as that they are all beneficial to each other; and such is the harmonious contexture of the whole, that it is a most beautiful structure:

having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked; or, as the Syriac version renders it, “which is the least”; and such is the temperament and constitution of the church, having mixed rich and poor persons, of greater and lesser gifts, together, for mutual good.

1 Corinthians 12:25

That there should be no schism in the body..... No complaint of one member against another, as useless and unnecessary; no murmuring on that account; no tumults and rioting; no rebellion and insurrection of one against another; no dissension, no division. The use Menenius (e) Agrippa made of this simile, applying it to the body politic, as the apostle here does to the spiritual body, for the appeasing of a sedition among the people; is well known, and usually mentioned by interpreters on this place:

but that the members should have the same care one for another; that is, they are so tempered and mixed together, are in such close union with, and have such a dependence on each other, that they are necessarily obliged to take care of each other's good and welfare, because they cannot do one without another; and so God has ordered it in the church, that persons should be so placed in it, and gifts disposed of among them in such a manner, that every man is obliged, not only to look on, and be concerned for his own things, that he takes care of himself, and performs his office, but that he looks every man on the things of others, his good and safety being involved in theirs.

(e) Liv. Hist. l. p. 43.

1 Corinthians 12:26

And whether one member suffer,.... Pain; even the meanest, lowest, and most distant, as the foot or

hand, toe or finger:

all the members suffer with it; are more or less affected therewith, and bear part of the distress; as is easily discerned, by their different forms and motions on such an occasion: so when anyone member of the mystical body is in affliction, whether inward or outward, of body or mind, the rest are, or should be, affected with it, condole, sympathize, help, and assist; and remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, as if they themselves were in bonds, and them that suffer adversity, whether spiritual or temporal, as being in the body, not only in the flesh, but as being part of the body, the church; and therefore should weep with them that weep, and bear a part with them in their sorrows. The Jews have a saying (f), that

“if one brother dies, all the brethren grieve; and if one of a society dies, , “the whole society grieves”;

and also another (g),

“that everyone that afflicts himself, , “with the congregations”, is worthy to see or enjoy the comfort of the congregation or church;”

or one member be honoured; by being set in the highest place, and employed to the greatest usefulness, or by being most richly and beautifully clothed and adorned:

all the members rejoice with it; as sharing in the honour, Or benefit of it: so if one member of the church of Christ is honoured with an high office, with great gifts, with a large measure of grace, spiritual light, knowledge, and experience, with great discoveries of the love of God, with the presence of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, or with the good things of this life, and an heart to make use of them for the interest of religion, the other members rejoice at it; for so it becomes the saints to rejoice with them that rejoice, and be glad, both at the temporal and spiritual prosperity of each other: and upon the whole it is clear, that the meanest have no reason to be discouraged, nor the highest and greatest to be proud and elated.

(f) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 105. 2. & 106. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 13. sect. 12. & Seder Olam Rabba, p. 9. (g) T. Bab. Taanith. fol. 11. 1.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now ye are the body of Christ,... Not his natural body, which his Father prepared for him, in which he bore our sins on the tree, and which was offered up once for all; nor his sacramental body, or the bread in the supper, which is a representation of his body; but his body mystical, the church; not that the Corinthians were the whole of the body, only a part of it, as every single congregational church is of the church universal. This is an accommodation of the simile the apostle had to so much advantage enlarged upon:

and members in particular; or in part: meaning either that they as single members were part of the general body: or that only a part of them were so, there being some among them, as in all particular and visible churches, who had not the true grace of God; and so are neither members of Christ, nor of the general assembly and church of the firstborn: or the sense is, that they were not only members of Christ, and of his body, but were particularly members one of another, in strict union and close

communion, and of mutual use and service to each other.

1 Corinthians 12:28

And God hath set some in the church,.... As before the apostle gives an account of the various different gifts of the Spirit, qualifying men for service in the church of Christ, here he enumerates the several offices and officers:

first apostles; as were the twelve disciples, and Paul the apostle; men that were immediately sent by Christ himself, and had their commission and doctrine directly from him; and a power of working miracles, to confirm the truth of their mission and ministry; they were sent into all the world to preach the Gospel, to plant churches everywhere, and to ordain officers in them; they were not confined to any particular church, but had power and authority in all the churches, to preach the word, administer ordinances, advise, counsel, direct, reprove, and censure:

secondarily, prophets; who either had the gift of foretelling things to come, as Agabus and others; or who had a peculiar gift, by divine revelation, of explaining the prophecies of the sacred writings, and of preaching the Gospel:

thirdly, teachers; the same with pastors, elders, and overseers; the ordinary ministers of the word, who have a gift of expounding the Scriptures; not by extraordinary revelation, but by the ordinary gift of the Spirit, in the use of means, as reading, meditation, and prayer; and whose work is to preach the word, administer ordinances, feed and govern particular churches, over whom they are set: after that miracles; which is to be understood, not of some persons, as distinct from apostles, prophets, and teachers, who also had the power of working miracles; but from persons and officers in the church, the principal of which the apostle had mentioned, he passes to things, which belonged at least to some of them; unless it can be thought that there were in those times private Christians, who were neither apostles nor prophets, nor teachers, and yet had a power of doing miracles:

then gifts of healing; the sick, by anointing them with oil, which was only one species of doing miracles; and which was sometimes performed, not only by apostles, and such like extraordinary persons, but by the common elders and ordinary officers of the church:

helps: meaning either the ministers of the word in common, who are helpers of the faith and joy of the saints, and are means of increasing their knowledge and spiritual experience, and of establishing them in the truth; see Act 18:27 or else such evangelists and ministers of the word as were assistants to the apostles, such as Mark, and Timothy, and Titus; or rather the deacons of churches, whose business it is to take care of tables; the Lord's table, the minister's, and the poor's, and all the secular affairs of the church; and so are helps to the minister, relieve him, and free him from all worldly concerns, that he may the better attend to prayer, and the ministry of the word. These, whether one or the other, are so called, in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were "helps", or assistants to the high priest, in the burning of the red heifer, and in other things (h):

governments; some by these understand the same with pastors and elders, who have the rule and government of the church; others lay elders, a sort of ruling elders in the church, as distinct from pastors. Dr. Lightfoot thinks such are intended, who had the gift of discerning spirits. I rather think with De Dieu, that the word designs counsellors; see the Septuagint in Pro 11:14 and here intends

such as are men of wisdom and prudence, who are very proper persons to be consulted and advised with, by the pastor, elder, or overseer, in matters of moment and importance in the church:

diversities of tongues; such as have the gift of speaking with divers tongues; or of interpreting them, or both. The Vulgate Latin version and some copies add, “interpretations of tongues”.

(h) Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3. & Parah, c. 3. sect. 6.

1 Corinthians 12:29

Are all apostles?.... No some are prophets, as distinct from apostles; and some are teachers, as distinct from them both, and some are neither:

are all prophets? no; some are apostles, above them, and some are teachers, inferior to them; and but very few there were who had that peculiar character and gift:

are all teachers? no; the far greater part of the members of churches are hearers, or persons that are taught in the word; are neither in the office of teaching, nor have they the qualifications for it.

Are all workers of miracles? no; in those early times, when the gift of doing miracles was bestowed, it was not given to all, only to some; and now there are none that are possessed of it.

1 Corinthians 12:30

Have all the gifts of healing?.... No; when these gifts were in being, all had them not. When anointing with oil, in order to heal the sick, was in use, it was only performed by the elders of the church, not by the common members of it, who were to be sent for by the sick on this occasion:

do all speak with tongues? no; it was not true in fact, as they well knew; though this was greatly coveted after, as a following chapter of this epistle shows;

do all interpret? that is, unknown tongues, strange languages; or can they? no. This also was a peculiar gift bestowed on some persons only.

1 Corinthians 12:31

But covet earnestly the best gifts,.... Which may be rendered either indicatively as an assertion, “ye do covet earnestly the best gifts”: of prophesying and teaching, of doing miracles, healing diseases, speaking with, and interpreting, different tongues and languages; but I can, and do show you something that is better, and more excellent than these: or, by way of interrogation, “do ye covet earnestly the best gifts?” do you zealously affect them, fervently desire them, and emulate one another in your endeavours after them? I have something to observe to you which exceeds them all, and which you would do well to follow after, and eagerly pursue; or imperatively, as an exhortation, as it is rendered by our translators: and by the best gifts may be meant, the best of these external gifts before mentioned; and not those of the highest class, and the more extraordinary, but which are the most useful and beneficial to the church, as preaching or prophesying was: the Corinthians seemed most covetous and desirous of speaking with different tongues; but the apostle shows, in Co1 14:1,

by divers reasons, that prophesying was preferable, being more serviceable and useful to the church, and so more eligible and to be desired by them, to which he may have regard here: or else by them are meant the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which are all of them gifts of God's grace; all useful and valuable, and better than all external extraordinary gifts whatever, which a man might have, and be nothing, be lost and damned; whereas he that believes in Christ, has a good hope through grace, and love in his soul to God, Christ, and his people, though he is destitute of the other gifts, shall certainly be saved; wherefore these are the gifts which men should be solicitous for and covet after, and be greatly concerned to know that they have them, and to be content without the other:

and yet show I unto you a more excellent way: if by the best gifts are designed the above graces of the Spirit, then by "the more excellent way", Christ must be meant, the author and object of these graces; who is the way to the covenant, and to a participation of all the blessings of it, as justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life; the way into a Gospel church, and to all the ordinances of the Gospel dispensation, as baptism, and the Lord's supper; for faith in him is the prerequisite, and proper qualification for the enjoyment of each of these: Christ is the way of salvation, and the way to the Father, and to heaven and eternal happiness; and an excellent one he is, the more, yea, the most excellent; he is the only way to each of these; he is the new and living way, a plain and pleasant one; and so a safe and secure one, in which all that walk shall certainly be saved: now this way the apostle showed, declared, pointed out in the ministry of the word; it was his chief and principal business, the sum of his doctrine, to make known Christ, and him crucified, as the way, the truth, and the life; to direct souls to him, and to show them the way of salvation by him: but if by the best gifts are meant the more useful ones of those before mentioned, as prophesying, or preaching, then the more excellent way designs grace, special and internal grace; and that either grace in general, regenerating, sanctifying grace, including all sorts of grace; which is the way of a soul's passing from the death of sin to a life of faith and holiness; and is the way to eternal glory, and which gives a meetness for it, and is inseparably connected with it. This is a more excellent way than gifts; for gifts, be they ever so great, may be lost or taken away, through disuse or misimprovement; but grace always remains, can never be lost, nor will ever be taken away, but will issue in everlasting life: men may have the greatest gifts, and yet not be saved, as Judas and others; but he that has the least degree of faith in Christ, hope in him, and love to him, shall be saved by him with an everlasting salvation: or particularly the grace of charity, or love to the saints, may be intended by the more excellent way; which is the evidence of a man's passing from death and life; the new commandment of Christ, and the fulfilling of the law; without which, a man, though he has never such great gifts, he is nothing as a Christian, nor in the business of salvation; and is the greatest of all the graces of the Spirit; and is of such a nature, that when prophecies, tongues, knowledge, and all external gifts shall fail, and even the internal graces of faith and hope shall cease, the one being changed for vision, and the other swallowed up in enjoyment, this will continue; and the rather this grace may be thought to be meant, since the apostle immediately passes to treat it in the next chapter, and prefers it to all gifts, and even graces.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 13

This chapter is taken up in the commendation of the grace of charity, or love, which is preferred to all gifts whatsoever; is described by its properties and effects, and particularly its duration; on which account it is represented as more excellent than other principal graces. The apostle prefers it to gifts, by which it appears to be the more excellent way, he speaks of in the latter part of the

preceding chapter: he begins with the gift of tongues, which without charity makes a man noisy, but not spiritual, Co1 13:1 he next mentions the gifts of knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel, and of preaching them; and also the gift of working miracles, on the account of which a man thinks himself something, and yet with all these, not having the grace of love, he is nothing, Co1 13:2 to which he adds alms deeds and martyrdom, and observes, that a man may do the one in the most extensive manner, and suffer the other in the most dreadful shape; and yet if love be wanting, from whence, as a principle, all actions and sufferings should flow, these will be of no avail, Co1 13:3 and then the apostle proceeds to describe and commend this grace, by its effects and properties, and that in sixteen particulars; by which it appears to be exceeding useful, and what adorns and recommends the person possessed of it, Co1 13:4 and enlarges upon the last, namely, the duration and perpetuity of it; showing that the gifts of knowledge, speaking with tongues, and preaching, shall fail, but this will not, Co1 13:8 the failure of these gifts he proves from the imperfection of them, which therefore must be removed in a perfect state of things, Co1 13:9 this he illustrates, by comparing the present imperfect state to childhood, and the future one to manhood, which he exemplifies in himself, Co1 13:11 the imperfect knowledge of the one he compares to looking at objects through a glass, and to an enigma, riddle, or dark saying; and the perfect knowledge of the other, to seeing face to face, without any artificial help, Co1 13:12 and he concludes this excellent commendation of charity by observing, that it is not only preferable to gifts, but even to graces, and these the more eminent, and which are abiding graces too, as faith and hope; and yet charity exceeds these, both as to its duration and use, Co1 13:13.

1 Corinthians 13:1

Though I speak with the tongues of men,... That is, of all men, all languages that men anywhere speak, or have been spoken by them. The number of these is by some said (i) to be “seventy five”; but the general opinion of the Jews is, that at the confusion of languages at Babel, they were seventy; for they say (k), that then

“the holy blessed God descended, and “seventy angels” surrounding the throne of his glory, and confounded the languages of seventy people, and every nation of the seventy had their own language and writing, and an angel set over each nation;”

whether this may be the reason, why the tongues of angels are mentioned here with those of men, let it be considered. Mordecai, they say (l), was skilled in all these seventy languages, so that when he heard Bigthan and Teresh, who were Tarsians, talking together in the Tarsian language, he understood them. The same is said (m) of R. Akiba, R. Joshua, and R. Eliezer; yet, they say (n), that this was one of the qualifications of the sanhedrim, or of such that sat in that great council, that they should understand these seventy languages, because they were not to hear causes from the mouth of an interpreter. It is affirmed (o) of Mithridates, king of Pontus and Bithynia, that he had “twenty five” nations under his government, and that he so well understood, and could speak the language of each nation, as to converse with men of any of them, without an interpreter. Apollonius Tyaneus (p) pretended to understand, and speak with the tongues of all men; such a case the apostle supposes here, whether attained to by learning, industry, and close application, or by an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, which latter seems to be what he intends; and the rather he mentions this, and begins with it, because many of the Corinthians were greatly desirous of it; some that had it not, were dejected on that account; wherefore to comfort them, the apostle suggests, that the grace of love which they were possessed of, was abundantly preferable to it; and others that had it were lifted up with it, and used it

either for ostentation or gain, or to make parties, and not to the edification of their brethren; which showed want of love, and so were no better than what the apostle hereafter asserts: what he says here and in the following verses, is in an hypothetical way, supposing such a case, and in his own person, that it might be the better taken, and envy and ill will be removed: he adds,

and of angels; not that angels have tongues in a proper sense, or speak any vocal language, in an audible voice, with articulate sounds; for they are spirits immaterial and incorporeal; though they have an intellectual speech, by which they celebrate the perfections and praises of God, and can discourse with one another, and communicate their minds to each other; see Isa 6:3 and which is what the Jews (q) call,

“”, “the speech of the heart”; and is the speech (they say) , “which the angels speak” in their heart; and is the “pure language”, and more excellent than other tongues; is pleasant discourse, the secret of the holy seraphim--and is , “the talk of angels”; who do the will of their Creator in their hearts, and in their thoughts:”

this is not what the apostle refers to; but rather the speech of angels, when they have assumed human bodies, and have in them spoke with an audible voice, in articulate sounds; of which we have many instances, both in the Old Testament and the New, wherein they have conversed with divers persons, as Hagar, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Manoah and his wife, the Virgin Mary, Zechariah, and others; unless by the tongues of angels should be meant the most eloquent speech, and most excellent of languages; or if there can be thought to be any tongue that exceeds that of men, which, if angels spoke, they would make use of. Just as the face of angels is used, to express the greatest glory and beauty of the face, or countenance, Act 6:15 and angels’ bread is used for the most excellent food, Psa 78:25. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and that not without reason, that the apostle speaks according to the sense and conceptions of the Jews, who attribute speech and language to angels. They tell us (r) that R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was contemporary with the apostle, and lived to the destruction of Jerusalem, among other things, he was well versed in, understood , “the speech of demons”, and “the speech of the ministering angels”: and which they take to be the holy tongue, or the Hebrew language; they observe (s), that

“the children of men (by whom I suppose they mean the Israelites) are in three things like to the ministering angels; they have knowledge as the ministering angels, and they walk in an erect stature as the ministering angels, , “and they speak in the holy tongue, as the ministering angels””

They pretend that the angels do not understand the Syriac language; hence they (t) advise a man,

“never to ask for what he wants in the Syriac language; for (says R. Jochanan) whoever asks for what he wants in the Syriac language, the ministering angels do not join with him, for they do not know the Syriac language;”

and yet, in the same page, they say that Gabriel came and taught one the seventy languages: but let the tongues of angels be what they will, and a man be able to speak with them ever so well,

and have not charity; by which is meant not giving of alms to the poor, for in Co1 13:3 this is supposed in the highest degree it can be performed, and yet a man be destitute of charity; nor a charitable opinion of men as good men, let their principles and practices be what they will; for this

is not true charity, but rather uncharitableness, and acting the most unkind part to their souls, to consider and caress them as such, when destruction and ruin are in all their ways; but the grace of love is here meant, even love to God, and love to Christ, and love to the saints, which is a grace implanted in regeneration by the Spirit of God; and which, if a person is destitute of, as he may, who has never so great a share of learning, or knowledge of the languages, or even the extraordinary gift of speaking with divers tongues; all his learning is but an empty sound, his eloquence, his diversity of speech, is but like the man's nightingale, "vox & praeterea nihil", a voice and nothing else; or as the apostle here says, supposing it was his own case,

I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; or rather, "the loud", or "high sounding cymbal", as in Psa 150:5 which the Septuagint there render by , a phrase of the same signification with this: for not that little tinkling instrument used by the Heathens is here meant; though what is here said of the cymbal agrees with that; which made a tinkling noise when shaken, or struck with anything, or with one against another; and was an hollow vessel of brass, in form of the herb called "navel wort" (u); but rather that musical instrument which bore this name, used in the Jewish worship under the Old Testament; and which, the Jews (w) say, was an instrument that gave a very great sound; and that the sound of it was heard as far as Jericho (x), which was some miles from Jerusalem; they say (y), that the cymbals were two brazen instruments or pieces of brass, which they struck one against another, and so made a sound. The cymbal was also used in the worship of Heathen deities, and the allusion here in both the things mentioned, is either to the tinkling of brass, and the sounding of cymbals in the worship of idols (z); which were mere empty sounds, and of no avail, as is a man's speaking with divers tongues, destitute of the grace of love; or to the confused clamours and noises made upon going to battle, just upon the onset, by drums and cymbals, and , hollow sounding pieces of brass; as appears from Polytenus, Plutarch, Appianus and others (a); to which confused noises the apostle compares the most eloquent speech without love. The Greeks had a play they used at feasts, I will not say the allusion is to it here, but leave it to be thought of, which they call "Cottabisis"; when, the liquor that was left, they cast into cups of brass, and such whose liquor made the greatest sound in the cup, fancied himself to be loved again, by the person he loved (b): sounding brass and tinkling cymbals are inanimate things, things without life, as all such persons are destitute of spiritual life, who are devoid of the grace of love; and though they, by an extraordinary gift, and under a divine impulse, speak with divers tongues, they are but like hollow vessels of brass, and sounding cymbals, which only make a noise when they are stricken, and what they give is a mere empty sound, which is of no profit to themselves; they cannot hear, nor be delighted with it, but are rather hurt, being worn out thereby; nor of no great advantage to others, unless they give a musical sound, and that only delights the ear, but neither feeds nor clothes the body; of such little use and profit are men, speaking with tongues destitute of the grace of love, either to themselves or others.

(i) Eupherus & alii in Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 1. p. 338. (k) Pirke Eliezer, c. 24. (l) Targum in Esther ii. 22. Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 48. 4. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 2. (m) Juchasin, fol. 36. 2. (n) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 1. & Menachot, fol. 65. 1. (o) A. Gellii Noct. Attic. l. 17. c. 17. (p) Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 1. c. 13. (q) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 3. & 13. 4. (r) T. Bab. Succa, fol. 28. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 134. 1. Vid. Zohar in Numb. fol. 92. 1. (s) T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 16. 1. & Sabbat. fol. 12. 2. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 74. fol. 65. 2. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 147. 1. (t) T. Bab. Sota, fol. 33. 1. (u) Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 163. 165. (w) Bartenora in Misn. Shekaelim, c. 5. sect. 1. & Kimchi in Psal. cl. 5. (x) Misn. Tamid. c. 3. sect. 8. (y) Bartenora in Misn. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 5. R. David Kimchi & R. Samuel Laniado in 2 Sam. vi. 5. (z) Vid. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 7. p. 280. Ed. Elmenhorst, & Ovid, Metamorph. l. 3, fab. 7. (a) Vid. Vaa Till. not. in Lydium de re militare, p. 38.

(b) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 10.

1 Corinthians 13:2

And though I have the gift of prophecy,... Either of foretelling future events, as Balaam, who foretold many things concerning the Messiah and the people of Israel, and yet had no true love for either; and Caiaphas, who was high priest the year Christ suffered, and prophesied of his death, and was himself concerned in it, being a bitter enemy to him; or of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, by virtue of an extraordinary gift which some persons had; or of the ordinary preaching of the word, which is sometimes expressed by prophesying, which gift some have had, and yet not the grace of God; see Phi 1:15

and understand all mysteries; either the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the mysterious doctrines of the Gospel; such as the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the incarnation of Christ, the unity of the two natures, human and divine, in him, eternal predestination, the doctrines of regeneration, justification, satisfaction, and the resurrection of the dead; all which a man may have a speculative understanding of, and be without love to God or Christ, or to his people: or else the mystical sense of the types, figures, and shadows of the old law; as the meaning of the passover, brazen serpent, and the rock in the wilderness, the tabernacle, temple, sacrifices, and all things appertaining thereunto. The Jews give us an instance (c) of one who was no lover of Christ, and lived in the times of the apostle; R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, of whom they boast, and who they say was the least of the disciples of Hillel, and yet

“perfectly understood the Scripture, the Misna, the Gemara, the traditions, the allegorical interpretations, the niceties of the law, and the subtleties of the Scribes, the lighter and weightier matters of the law (or the arguments from the greater to the lesser, and “vice versa”), the arguments taken from a parity of reason, the revolution of the sun and moon, rules of interpretation by gematry, parables, &c.”

The apostle proceeds,

and all knowledge; of things natural, as Solomon had; of the heavens, and the stars thereof, of the earth and sea, and all things therein, and appertaining thereunto; of all languages, arts, and sciences; of things divine, as a speculative knowledge of God, and the perfections of his nature, of Christ, his person and offices, of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it:

and though I have all faith; not true, special, saving faith, or that faith in Christ, which has salvation connected with it; for a man cannot have that, and be nothing; such an one shall be certainly saved; and besides, this cannot be without love, and therefore not to be supposed: but all historical faith, an assent to everything that is true, to all that is contained in the Scriptures, whether natural, civil, moral, or evangelical; to all that is contained in the law, or in the Gospel; that faith which believes everything: so the Jews (d) say, what is faith? that in which is found, “all faith”; or rather the faith of miracles is meant, both of believing and doing all sorts of miracles, one of which is mentioned;

so that I could remove mountains; meaning either literally, a power of removing mountains from one place to another, referring to Mat 17:20 so Gregory of Neocaesarea, called “Thaumaturgus”, the wonder worker, from the miracles done by him, is said (e) to remove a mountain, to make more room

for building a church; but whether fact, is a question; or this may be understood figuratively, see Rev 8:8 for doing things very difficult and wonderful, and almost incredible. The Jews used to call their learned and profound doctors, such as could solve difficulties, and do wondrous things, by the name of mountains, or removers of mountains; thus (f).

“they called Rab Joseph, “Sinai”, because he was very expert in the Talmudic doctrines, and Rabbah bar Nachmani, , “a rooter up of mountains”; because he was exceeding acute in subtle disputations.”

Says Rabba (g) to his disciples,

“lo, I am ready to return an answer smartly to everyone that shall ask me, as Ben Azzai, who expounded in the streets of Tiberias; and there was not in his days such a , “rooter up of mountains”, as he.”

Again (h),

“Ula saw Resh Lekish in the school, as if , “he was rooting up the mountains”, and grinding them together; says Rabenu, does not everybody see R. Meir in the school, as if he was “rooting up the mountains of mountains”, and grinding them together?”

They (i) elsewhere dispute which is the most honourable to be called, “Sinai” or a remover of mountains;

“one says “Sinai” is the more excellent name; another says “the rooter up of mountains” is the more excellent; Rab Joseph is Sinai, and Rabbah the remover of mountains;”

the gloss says the former is so called,

“because the Misnic laws and their explications were ordered by him, as if they had been given on Mount Sinai;”

though he was not so acute as Rabbah; and the latter was called the rooter up of mountains, because

“he was sharp and subtle in the law;”

once more on those words relating to Issachar, Gen 49:15 “and bowed his shoulder to bear”, it is observed (k); that

“this intimates that he was wise in wisdom, , “a breaker of the mountains”, a shatterer in pieces of the rocks of dissensions and division various ways; as it is said, Jer 23:29 “is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” So a wise man, by the sharpness of his wit, breaks the mountains of difficulties, and divides them by the words of his mouth: hence they used to call the wise men by the names of Sinai, and a rooter of mountains; because they beat and brake the rocks in pieces, the traditions that are difficult and deep.”

The phrase is also used of removing difficulties in a civil and political sense, as well as in a theological one (l): but let a man be able to do ever such great things, yet if he has not “charity”, love to God, to

Christ and to his people, he is nothing at all; as the apostle says of himself, supposing it was his own case,

I am nothing; not nothing as a man, nor nothing as a gifted man, still he would be a man, and a man of gifts; nor does the apostle say, that his gifts were nothing, that the gift of prophecy was nothing, or the gift of understanding mysteries nothing, or the gift of knowledge nothing, or the gift of doing miracles nothing, for these are all something, and very great things too, and yet a man in whom the grace of love is wanting, is nothing himself with all these; he is nothing in the account of God, of no esteem with him; he is nothing as a believer in Christ, nor nothing as a Christian. This is also a Jewish way of speaking; for they say (m),

“as a bride that is to be adorned with four and twenty ornaments, if she wants anyone of them, , “she is nothing”; so a disciple of a wise man ought to be used to the twenty four books (of the Scripture), and if he is wanting in one of them, , “he is nothing”.”

(c) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 134. 1. & Succa, fol. 28. 1. (d) Zohar in Numb. fol. 60. 1. (e) Gregor. Pap. Dialog. l. 1. c. 7. (f) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1. Shalsheth Hakabala, fol. 25. 2. Juchasin, fol. 95. 2. & 160. 2. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 32. 2. Halichot Olam, p. 23, 207. (g) Gloss. in T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 29. 1. Juchasin, fol. 44. 2. (h) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 1. (i) T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 14. 1. Juchasin, fol. 112. 1. (k) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 39. 3. & 126. 4. (l) Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2. (m) Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 18. 2.

1 Corinthians 13:3

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,.... Of which the Jews give us instances; they say (n), that R. Ishcab stood, , “and distributed all his goods to the poor”; and a little after they say the same of King Monbaz, that he stood and gave away, or dispersed, “all his goods to the poor”; and elsewhere (o) they say of R. Eliezer ben Judah, that the collectors of alms ran away from him, because he would have given them , “all that he had”; and of another, they say (p), that he took all that he had in his house, and went out to divide it among the poor; but of what avail was all this, when what these men did, they did not from a principle of love to God, nor to Christ, nor even to the poor, to whom they gave their substance; but to have honour and applause from men, and have and obtain eternal life hereafter? for they thought by so doing, that they deserved to behold the face of God, enjoy his favour, and be partakers of the happiness of the world to come (q):

and though I give my body to be burned; which may be done by a man that has no principle of grace in him; the very Heathens have done it; as the Indian queens upon the decease and funeral of their husbands; and Calenus, an Indian philosopher, who followed Alexander the great, and erected a funeral pile, and went into it of his own accord; and Peregrinus, another philosopher, did the like in the times of Trajan. The apostle here respects martyrdom, and by a prophetic spirit has respect to future times, when burning men’s bodies for religion would be in use, which then was not; and suggests that there might be some, as according to ecclesiastical history there seems to have been some, who, from a forward and misguided zeal, and to get themselves a name, and leave one behind them, have exposed themselves to the flames, and yet “have not” had “charity”, true love to God, a real affection for Christ, or to his saints: wherefore the apostle hypothetically says, supposing himself to be the person that had done all this, it profiteth me nothing: such things may profit others, but not a man’s self; giving all his goods to the poor may be of advantage to them, and giving his body to

be burned in the cause of religion may be of service to others, to confirm their faith, and encourage them to like sufferings when called to them; but can be of no avail to themselves in the business of salvation; which is not procured by works of righteousness, even the best, and much less by such which proceed from wrong principles, and are directed to wrong ends; the grace of God being wanting, and particularly that of love.

(n) T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2. (o) Juchasin, fol. 51. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 148. 2. (p) Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 174. 4. & Mattanot Cehunah in ib. (q) T. Pesach. fol. 8. 1, 2. Roshhashanah, fol. 4. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1, 2.

1 Corinthians 13:4

Charity suffereth long,.... The apostle, in this and some following verses, enumerates the several properties and characters of the grace of love; and all along represents it as if it was a person, and no doubt designs one who is possessed of it, and in whose heart it is implanted and reigns; such an one is said to “suffer long”, or be “patient”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; not only under afflictions by the hand of God, which such an one considers as arising from love; but under the reproaches and persecutions of men, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, and in imitation of him; such a person is slow to anger when abused, not quick of resentment, nor hasty to revenge when affronted; but exercises forbearance, suffers long, and bears much, and is ready to forgive:

and is kind; liberal, and bountiful, does good to all men, even to enemies, and especially to the household of faith; he is gentle to all men, affable and courteous to his brethren, and not morose, churlish, and ill natured; he is easy and yielding to the tempers and humours of men; accommodates himself to their infirmities, capacities, manners, and circumstances, in everything he can, that is not contrary to the glory of God, the interest of Christ, the honour of religion, his own conscience, and the good of men;

charity envieth not; or he that has the grace of love to God, Christ, and the saints, does not envy the temporal happiness of others, though it is what he has not, or is greater than he enjoys; as Rachel envied her sister, because she had children when she herself had none; as Joseph's brethren envied him because he had a greater share in his father's affections than they had; or as good men may be tempted to envy the prosperity of the wicked, when they themselves are in adversity; but this grace, when in exercise, will not suffer a person to do: nor will such an one envy the superior measures of grace, the more excellent spiritual gifts, or the greater degree of usefulness, and of success in any spiritual undertaking, and so of greater honour and respect, in any of the saints and servants of Christ to themselves, of which Moses and John the Baptist are remarkable instances, Num 11:28,

charity vaunteth not itself, is not ostentatious, a proud boaster; either of what he has, the things of nature, as wisdom, riches, honour, strength, &c. or spiritual gifts; or of what he does, since what such an one does, he does from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, and not to be seen of men, or to gain their esteem and applause: or is not rash, and precipitant; does not run headlong into measures, to promote his own honour and interest, without considering what will be the consequence of things; nor is he rash with his mouth, or hasty with his lips, to utter anything unbecoming before God or men. The Arabic version renders it, “does not speak deceitfully”; or hypocritically, for nothing is more contrary to true genuine love than this; the Syriac version renders it, “is not tumultuous”; noisy and seditious: such an one is not troublesome in a commonwealth, nor

does he go into parties and factions in churches, but is all the reverse:

is not puffed up swelled with pride, and elated with a vain conceit of himself, of his parts and abilities, of his learning, eloquence, wisdom, and knowledge, as the false teachers in this church were; knowledge without grace, unsanctified knowledge, mere notional speculative knowledge, puffeth up; but charity, or the grace of love, does not; that edifies and preserves persons from being puffed up with themselves, or one against another.

1 Corinthians 13:5

Doth not behave itself unseemly,... By using either unbecoming words, or doing indecent actions; for a man unprincipled with this grace will be careful that no filthy and corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth, which may offend pious ears; and that he uses no ridiculous and ludicrous gestures, which may expose himself and grieve the saints; accordingly the Syriac version renders it, “neither does it commit that which is shameful”: such an one will not do a little mean despicable action, in reproaching one, or flattering another, in order to gain a point, to procure some worldly advantage, or an interest in the friendship and affection of another. Some understand it in this sense, that one endued with this grace thinks nothing unseemly and unbecoming him, however mean it may appear, in which he can be serviceable to men, and promote the honour of religion and interest of Christ; though it be by making coats and garments for the poor, as Dorcas did; or by washing the feet of the saints, in imitation of his Lord and master: or “is not ambitious”, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; of honour and applause, and of being in the highest form, but is lowly, meek and humble:

seeketh not her own things: even those which are “lawful”, as the Arabic version renders it; but seeks the things of God, and what will make most for his honour and glory; and the things of Christ, and what relate to the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom; and also the things of other men, the temporal and spiritual welfare of the saints: such look not only on their own things, and are concerned for them, but also upon the things of others, which they likewise care for:

is not easily provoked: to wrath, but gives place to it: such an one is provoked at sin, at immorality and idolatry, as Paul’s spirit was stirred up or provoked, when he saw the superstition of the city of Athens; and is easily provoked to love and good works, which are entirely agreeable to the nature of charity:

thinketh no evil; not but that evil thoughts are in such a man’s heart, for none are without them; though they are hateful, abominable, and grieving to such as are partakers of the grace of God, who long to be delivered from them: but the meaning is, either that one possessed of this grace of love does not think of the evil that is done him by another; he forgives, as God has forgiven him, so as to forget the injury done him, and remembers it no more; and so the Arabic version reads it, “and remembers not evil”; having once forgiven it, he thinks of it no more; or he does not meditate revenge, or devise mischief, and contrive evil against man that has done evil to him, as Esau did against his brother Jacob; so the Ethiopic version, by way of explanation, adds, “neither thinks evil, nor consults evil”; or as the word here used will bear to be rendered, “does not impute evil”; reckon or place it to the account of him that has committed it against him, but freely and fully forgives, as God, when he forgives sin, is said not to impute it; or such an one is not suspicious of evil in others, he does not indulge evil surmises, and groundless jealousies; which to do is very contrary to this grace of love.

1 Corinthians 13:6

Rejoiceth not in iniquity,... Neither in his own, nor in others; but on the contrary is grieved for it; he mourns over his own iniquities, the corruption of his heart, the infirmities of his life, his secret sins, which none know but God and his own soul; he is greatly troubled at the profaneness and immorality of the men of the world, and the sins of professors cut him to the heart: nor does he rejoice in injustice, as the word used here may be rendered, in any unjust action or injury, that may be done to any, yea, even to an enemy; even as Christ, when Peter, in great zeal for him, drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of the high priest's servants, who was more busy than the rest in apprehending Christ, and showed more malignancy than others, was so far from rejoicing at it, that he was displeased with Peter for doing it, and was moved with so much compassion to that man, though his enemy, as to heal him: but rejoiceth in the truth; in the truth of the Gospel, and the success of it; such an one can do nothing against it, but for it, will buy it at any rate, but sell it upon no account whatever; and he rejoices greatly when he sees any walking in it, and agreeably to it; for truth, as it stands opposed to iniquity or unrighteousness, may signify an upright, holy, and righteous conversation, a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, which that teaches, and by which it is adorned; now a gracious soul desires this in itself, and delights to see it in others.

1 Corinthians 13:7

Beareth all things,... The burdens of fellow Christians, and so fulfils the law of Christ, which is the law of love; the infirmities of weak believers, and the reproaches and persecutions of the world: or "covers all things", as it may be rendered, even a multitude of sins, as charity is said to do, Pe1 4:8 not by conniving at them, or suffering them to be upon a brother; but having privately and faithfully reproved for them, and the offender being brought to a sense and acknowledgment of them, he freely forgives them as trespasses against him, covers them with the mantle of love, and industriously hides and conceals them from others;

believeth all things; that are to be believed, all that God says in his word, all his truths, and all his promises; and even sometimes in hope against hope, as Abraham did, relying upon the power, faithfulness, and other perfections of God; though such a man will not believe every spirit, every preacher and teacher, nor any but such as agree with the Scriptures of truth, the standard of faith and practice; nor will he believe every word of man, which is the character of a weak and foolish man; indeed, a man of charity or love is willing to believe all the good things reported of men; he is very credulous of such things, and is unwilling to believe ill reports of persons, or any ill of men; unless it is open and glaring, and is well supported, and there is full evidence of it; he is very incredulous in this respect:

hopes all things; that are to be hoped for; hopes for the accomplishment of all the promises of God; hopes for the enjoyment of him in his house and ordinances; hopes for things that are not seen, that are future, difficult, though possible to be enjoyed: hopes for heaven and eternal happiness, for more grace here and glory hereafter; hopes the best of all men, of all professors of religion, even of wicked men, that they may be better and brought to repentance, and of fallen professors, who declare their repentance, and make their acknowledgments; he hopes well of them, that they are sincere, and all is right and will appear so:

endureth all things; that are disagreeable to the flesh; all afflictions, tribulations, temptations,

persecutions, and death itself, for the elect's sake, for the sake of the Gospel, and especially for the sake of Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13:8

Charity never faileth,.... It may fail as to the exercise of it, as other graces do; it may be left, but not lost; the fervour of it may be remitted and abated; it may wax cold through the prevalence of sin; it may be greatly damped by the growth of error and heresy, which eat as do a canker; and may be much obstructed by an anxious and immoderate care and concern for worldly things; which are very pernicious to all the branches of vital religion and powerful godliness, and particularly love to God, Christ, and the brethren: but this grace never fails as to its principle; it is an immortal and an incorruptible seed; it lives throughout the most violent temptations, as in Peter; and under the greatest desertions and sorest afflictions, still there is an affection for God; Christ is he whom such a soul loves; and the saints are the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight: and it also continues as to its use, and will do so, when faith and hope will loose theirs, even in the other world; for faith will be changed into vision, and hope into enjoyment; but love will be the same, only act in a higher sphere, and to a greater degree, and in a perfect manner:

but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; by which are meant, either the predictions of future events, not that they shall fail in their accomplishment, but they shall be no more, because they will all be accomplished; or else the gifts of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of preaching the doctrines of the Gospel, will be no more, because there will be no need of them in a state of perfection:

whether there be tongues they shall cease; not but that, in the resurrection, that member of the body, the tongue, will be restored as the rest, and be everlastingly employed in celebrating the perfections of God, in singing the hallelujahs of the Lamb, and in joining with angels and other saints in songs of praise to the eternal Three; but the gift of speaking with divers tongues will cease, indeed it has already; nor will there be any use for such an extraordinary gift in the other world; when probably, and as it is thought by some, there will be but one language, and that the Hebrew language; as the whole earth was of one language and speech before the confusion at Babel:

whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; that is, the word of knowledge, peculiarly given by the spirit to some persons only; or that peculiar gift of knowledge of divine things, by which some are qualified to be instructors of others; the present means both of communicating, and of obtaining and increasing knowledge by the preaching and hearing of the word, will be no more used: and besides, imperfect knowledge of every sort will disappear, it will become perfect; that knowledge which is in part will be done away, when perfect knowledge takes place; for so we are taught to explain it by the following words.

1 Corinthians 13:9

For we know in part,.... Not that the Scriptures, the rule and measure of knowledge, and from whence spiritual knowledge is derived, are imperfect; so that there is need of unwritten traditions, and of enthusiastic revelations and inspirations, to inform of things otherwise unknown; for though they were at sundry times, and in divers manners delivered, yet now they contain a complete system of divine truths, to which nothing is to be added, and from which nothing is to be taken away; or that

only a part of the saints know the things of God; for though there is a difference between them, some have more knowledge than others, yet all have some, all are taught of God, and know him, and have that anointing which teacheth all things; wherefore the sense also is not, that only a part of truth, and not the whole, is known; for the Spirit of God leads into all truth; the whole counsel of God is made known in the Scriptures, and by the ministers of the word; though, to this sense the Arabic version inclines, rendering it, “some part of doctrine we know”; and so in Co1 13:12 “some part of knowledge I know”; as also the Syriac version, which renders it , “a little from much we know”; but the true meaning is, that though the rule of knowledge is perfect, and all the saints have knowledge, and every truth of the Gospel is known; yet by those that know most, it is known but imperfectly: the truth itself may be most clearly discerned, as it is revealed in the word; yet the manner of it, how it is, may not be known; and many difficulties may attend it, and objections be raised to it, which are not easily solved; as in the doctrines of the Trinity, predestination, the union of the two natures in Christ, the resurrection of the dead, &c.

and we prophesy in part; the word of prophecy, as it sure, it is also perfect, to which we do well to take heed; and though all do not prophesy, yet all that do, and that prophesy aright, that is, explain the word of God aright, these preach the Gospel fully, declare the whole counsel of God, and keep back nothing profit able to the saints; yet still their prophesying or explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, or the mysteries of the Gospel, is but imperfect at best in the present state of things.

1 Corinthians 13:10

But when that which is perfect is come,.... When perfect knowledge of God, of Christ, and of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven shall take place; which will not in this life, but in that which is to come. So the Jews say (r) that at the resurrection, upon the reunion of the soul and body,

“the children of men shall attain to , “perfect knowledge”;

which is what the apostle refers to here:

and then that which is in part, shall be done away: the imperfection of knowledge shall be removed; the imperfect manner of communicating knowledge, and of receiving and acquiring it, will cease: thus the apostle explains what he means by the cessation and failing of knowledge, and prophecy; not that knowledge itself will be no more, and a state of ignorance and darkness succeed; but imperfect knowledge will vanish away, or rather will be perfected, or be swallowed up in perfect knowledge; the imperfection of it will disappear; and it will be no more taught and received in part; the whole of truth will be clearly known.

(r) Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

1 Corinthians 13:11

When I was a child I spake as a child,.... That cannot speak plain, aims at words rather than expresses them, delivers them in a lisping or stammering manner: hereby the apostle illustrates the then present gift of speaking with divers tongues, which was an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, was peculiar to some persons, and what many were very fond of; and yet this, in its highest degree and exercise, was but like the lisping of a child, in comparison of what will be known and expressed by saints, when

they come to be perfect men in heaven:

I understood as a child; and so does he that understands all mysteries, in comparison of the enlightened and enlarged understandings of glorified saints; the people of God, who are in the highest form and class of understanding, in the present state of things, are but children in understanding; it is in the other world, when they are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that they will in understanding be men:

I thought, or “reasoned”,

as a child; whose thoughts are low and mean, and reasonings very weak; and so are the thoughts and reasonings of such as have all knowledge here below, in comparison of that perfect knowledge, those clear ideas, and strong reasonings of the spirits of just men above:

but when I became a man, I put away childish things; childish talk, childish affections, and childish thoughts and reasonings; so when the saints shall be grown to the full age of Christ, and are become perfect men in him, tongues shall cease, prophecies shall fail, and knowledge vanish away; and in the room thereof, such conversation, understanding, and knowledge take place, as will be entirely suited to the manly state in glory.

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see through a glass,... In this present life, they that are enlightened by the Spirit of God, see God, the perfections and glory of his nature, the riches of his grace and goodness, as displayed in Christ; they behold the glory of Christ, as full of grace and truth, and are filled with love to him; the desires of their souls are after him, and they are changed into the same image by his Spirit; they discern the things of the Spirit of God; the veil being removed from them, they behold wondrous things, out of the law of God and Gospel of Christ, even such things as are unseen unto, and unknown by the natural man: but then it is all “through a glass”; not of the creatures; for though the invisible things of God may in some sort be seen and understood by the things that are made; and God, as the God of nature, may be seen in the works of creation and providence, yet not as the God of grace; it is only in his Son, and through the glass of the Gospel, he is to be beheld in this light: and so it is through the glass of the word and ordinances, that the glory of the person of Christ, of his offices, fulness of grace and righteousness, is only to be seen; in these he is evidently set forth to the eye of faith, as the surety, Saviour, and Redeemer of his people, and through these the knowledge of divine truths is communicated: and through all these but

darkly: “in an enigma”, or “riddle”, or “dark saying”, as the word here used may be rendered; that is, in this present state, in comparison of the future one; for though the sight of things under the Gospel dispensation is clear, and with open face, in comparison of the legal one, yet even this is very obscure, and attended with great darkness and imperfection, when compared with the beatific vision in heaven, which will have no manner of interruption and obscurity in it:

but then face to face: there will be no intervening mediums of vision; not the glass of the word and ordinances; there will be no need of them, God and Christ will be seen as they are; the judgments of God, his providential dispensations, will be all made manifest, and will be legible without the help of a glass; the doctrines of grace and truth will lie open and clear, free of all dark speeches, obscure

hints, or enigmatical expressions: and as there will be nothing to intervene by way of assistance, there being no need of any, there will be nothing to intercept the sight; the objects will be nigh, even face to face; the view will be full and clear, the sight will be perfect, as well as the converse with the objects will be familiar; and which, without the least obstruction, will always so continue: there seems to be here a double reference, partly to what the Lord says of Moses, in Num 12:8 “with him will I speak, mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches”; and partly to what the Jews say of him, with a view to the same passage:

“all the prophets (say they (s)) looked through a glass, which did not give light; (or, as they sometimes say, which was spotted, and was not clear;) Moses our master looked , “through a glass that gave light”;

or, as elsewhere, was bright and clear, and without any spot. Again, they say (t),

“all the prophets prophesied by the means of an angel; hence they saw what they saw , “by way of parable and riddle”, or dark saying; Moses our master did not prophesy by the means of an angel; as it is said, “with him will I speak mouth to mouth”; and it is said, “the Lord spake to Moses, face to face”; and it is also said, “the similitude of the Lord shall he behold”; as if it was said, that there should be no parable; but he should see the thing clearly without a parable; of which likewise the law testifies, saying, “apparently, and not in dark speeches”; for he did not prophesy “by way of riddle”; (in an enigmatical way, darkly;) but apparently, for he saw the matter clearly.”

The two glasses, clear and not clear, the Cabalistic doctors call “tiphereth” and “malchuth” (u).

““Tiphereth” (they say) is a clear and well polished glass, by which Moses prophesied and had visions, “and saw all things most exactly”, in a very singular manner; “malchuth” is the glass that is not clear; so that he that prophesies by that, prophesies “by riddle”, and parable.”

Now the apostle suggests, that as there was such a difference between Moses and the rest of the prophets, the one saw clearly, the other through a glass darkly; a like, yea, a much greater difference there is between the clearest views saints have of divine things now, and those they shall be blessed with hereafter, and which he exemplifies in himself:

now I know in part; though not a whit behind the chief of the apostles; though his knowledge in the mystery of Christ was such, as had not been given to any in ages and generations past; and though he had been caught up into the third heaven and had heard words not lawful to be uttered, yet owns his knowledge in the present state to be but imperfect; which may be instructive to such, who are apt to entertain an high opinion of themselves, and dream of perfection in this life:

but then shall I know, even as I am known; in the other world and state, he signifies that he should know God, Christ, angels, and glorified saints, and all truths in a perfect manner, even as he was known of God and Christ perfectly, allowing for the difference between the Creator and the creature; his sense is, that he should have as full and complete a knowledge of persons and things as he was capable of; it would be like, though not equal to, the knowledge which God had of him; and which would be attended with the strongest love and affection to the objects known, even as he was known and loved of God.

(s) T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 147. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 30. 2. & 98. 3. & 103. 3. & in Exod. x. 3. & xi. 3. & xiv. 4. & 34, 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 46. 4. & 170. 2. Shaare ora, fol. 26. 2. (t) Maimon. Jesode Hatora, c. 7. sect. 6. (u) Lex. Cabal. p. 139. R. Moses in Sepher Hashem in ib.

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three,.... Which are the principal graces of the Spirit of God: faith is to be understood, not of a faith of miracles, for that does not abide; nor of an historical one, or mere assent to truth; persons may have this faith, and believe but for a while; but of that faith, which is peculiar to God's elect; is a fruit and effect of electing grace, and for that reason abides; is the gift of God, and one of those which are without repentance; is the work of God, and the operation of his Spirit, and therefore will be performed with power; it is the grace by which a soul sees Christ, goes unto him, lays hold on him, receives him, relies on him, and lives upon him: "hope" is also a gift of God's grace, implanted in regeneration; has God and Christ, and not any worldly thing, or outward performance, for its object, ground, and foundation, to build upon; it is of things unseen, future, difficult, yet possible to be enjoyed; it is supported by the love of God, is encouraged by promises, and is sure, being fixed on Christ and his righteousness; it is that grace by which saints wait for things promised, and rejoice in the believing views of glory and happiness: charity designs love to God, Christ, and the saints, as has been explained, and a large account is given of it in this chapter: these are the three chief and leading graces in God's people, and they abide and continue with them; they may fail sometimes, as to their lively exercise, but never as to their being and principle; faith may droop and hang its wing, hope may not be lively, and love may wax cold, but neither of them can be lost; Christ prays that faith fail not, hope on him is an anchor sure and steadfast, and nothing can separate from the love of Christ; as not from the love of Christ to his people, so not from theirs to him: these graces abide now, during the present life: he that has true faith in Christ, shall die in it; and he that has a good hope through grace, shall have it in his death; and love will outlive death, and be in its height and glory in the other world: for which reason it is added,

but the greatest of these is charity; and is said to be so, not that it is on every account the greatest; faith in many things exceeds that, as what is ascribed to it in Scripture shows; but because of the peculiar properties and effects of it before mentioned, it including faith and hope, as in Co1 13:7 and besides many other things, and because, without this, faith and hope are nothing: and besides, its usefulness is more extensive than either of the other two; a man's faith is only for himself; a just man lives by his own faith, and not another's; one man's faith will be of no service to another, and the same is true of hope; but by love saints serve one another, both in things temporal and spiritual, and chiefly it is said to be the greatest, because most durable; in the other world, faith will be changed for vision, and hope for enjoyment, but love will abide, and be in its full perfection and constant exercise, to all eternity. The Jews (w) say much the same of humility the apostle does here of charity;

"wisdom, fear, humility, they are alike, "but humility is greater than them all"

(w) Piske Toseph. in T. Bab. Yebamot, art. 196.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 14

In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the use of spiritual gifts, and prefers prophesying, or preaching, to every other gift; and directs to the order and manner of using it, and also points at the persons who should exercise it; and whereas there was much confusion and disorder in this church, in the management of the affairs of it, the chapter is concluded with a general exhortation to do everything in a decent and orderly manner. The apostle begins with an exhortation to follow after charity, which he had commended in the preceding chapter, and had preferred to gifts, and yet he would not have gifts slighted, but represents them as desirable; particularly prophesying or preaching, which he prefers above all, Co1 14:1 and especially above the gift of tongues, and for which he gives his reasons; he that speaks with tongues, speaks to God and not to men; at least not to their understanding, though he may by his gift deliver the most excellent truths, Co1 14:2 whereas he that preaches speaks to men, to their edification, exhortation, and comfort, Co1 14:3 the one edifies himself, and the other the church, Co1 14:4 wherefore since he had a sincere affection for this church, though he could wish they all had the gift of speaking with tongues, yet he rather desired they might have the gift of preaching, because that was most for edification, Co1 14:5 and exemplifies this in himself, that should he come to them speaking with divers tongues, this would be of no use to them, unless he came revealing, making known, and preaching the doctrines of the Gospel to them, Co1 14:6 and illustrates this by a simile taken from musical instruments, in which unless there is a distinction of sounds, the music will not be understood, and there can be nothing grateful and pleasant: and such is speaking with divers tongues, without an interpretation, Co1 14:7 and particularly by a simile taken from the trumpet, as used in war; which if it gives a sound that is unknown, it will be no direction to prepare for the battle, Co1 14:8 which similes are accommodated to the case in hand; showing that words easy to be understood by the hearer should be made use of by the speaker, or speaking is in vain, Co1 14:9 each word in every language indeed has its signification, some idea or another annexed to it; but if this is not understood by the hearer as well as the speaker, they become barbarians to one another, Co1 14:10 wherefore such as were eagerly desirous of spiritual gifts, should covet those that were most for edification; and if speaking with tongues were what they were most set upon, they should pray for the gift of interpretation also, Co1 14:12 because, for instance, if prayer is made in an unknown tongue, the extraordinary gift indeed may be exercised, but not to the understanding, and so not to the profit of others, Co1 14:14 hence the apostle determines for himself, that though he should make use of his spiritual gifts, both in praying and singing, it should be in such a manner as to be understood by others, as well as himself, Co1 14:15 and it was right for everyone to do so likewise, otherwise persons not knowing what is prayed for, or thanks given for, would be so far from being able to join in the exercise, that they could not so much as say Amen at the conclusion of it, Co1 14:16 and though thanks might be returned for a mercy received in ever so agreeable a manner, yet it could be no ways edifying to a man that did not understand the language in which it was expressed, Co1 14:17 not that the apostle said all this, because he had not such a gift himself, for he had it to a greater degree than any in this church had arrived to, Co1 14:18 yet after all it was more eligible to him to speak live words in a public manner, so as to be understood, than ten thousand in a language the people were ignorant of, Co1 14:19 wherefore he exhorts the Corinthians not to act the childish part, to covet speaking with tongues, but rather the more manly one, to prophesy, or preach, to the understanding of others, Co1 14:20 moreover, the apostle deters them from seeking to speak with divers tongues, by citing a passage out of Isa 28:11 by which it appears, that speaking with divers tongues and strange languages was sometimes threatened as a punishment, and not given as a blessing, Co1 14:21 besides, speaking with tongues was a sign of unbelief, and used for the conviction of unbelievers; whereas prophesying, or preaching, was a sign of faith, and was for the profit of believers, and therefore the most desirable, Co1 14:22 to which he adds another reason, dissuading from the use of speaking with divers tongues

in public, where they are not understood, taken from the opinion that ignorant and unbelieving persons coming into their assemblies would entertain of them, as though they were madmen, Co1 14:23 whereas should they preach in a language understood, on the contrary it might be of use for the conviction of such persons, who having the secrets of their hearts laid open to them, will fall down and worship God, whose word they hear; and when they depart, report that the divine presence is with such a people, Co1 14:24 hence the apostle proceeds to direct to the proper and orderly manner of using gifts; that whereas there were different ones among them, one had one gift, and another had another, they might all be used, provided they were used in such a manner as to tend to edification, Co1 14:26 so for instance, if speaking in an unknown tongue was used, it should be only by two or three at most, one after another; and there should be an interpreter to make known the meaning of what was said to the people, Co1 14:27 but if there were none that had the gift of interpreting, then it was most advisable for the speaker to be silent in public, and only in private speak to God and himself, Co1 14:28 and then as for those that had the gift of prophesying, or preaching, these should exercise their gift two or three at a time, one after another, and the rest should sit and judge what they delivered, whether agreeable to the word of God or not, Co1 14:29 and should anything be more clearly revealed to one that sat and heard, the speaker should be silent, and give way to him, that he might have the opportunity of declaring it to the edification of the church, Co1 14:30 for all that had the gift of preaching might use it one after another, by turns, for general instruction and comfort, Co1 14:31 seeing spiritual gifts are subject to and at the dispose of those that are possessed of them: or the doctrines preached by the one are subject to the examination and judgment of the other, Co1 14:32 for God, the donor of all gifts, is the author of order and peace, and not of confusion in all the churches, Co1 14:33 and whereas the apostle had suggested, that all might prophecy, or preach, that is, that had gifts qualifying for it, he would be understood only of men, and not women, who were not permitted to speak in the church in a way of preaching; no, not even to ask questions there about what they heard, but if they wanted to be informed of any thing they did not rightly understand, they were to ask their husbands at home; this the apostle argues, partly from the law, which commands them to be in obedience to men, and partly from the indecency of such a practice, Co1 14:34 and seeing as it should seem such a practice did obtain in the church at Corinth, the apostle warmly reproves them for it, it being what was not to be observed in other churches, by intimating to them, that the Gospel neither came out from them, nor did it come to them only, Co1 14:36 and whoever had a gift of preaching, or a spiritual understanding of things, must allow, that what the apostle said were not the commandments of men, but of God, Co1 14:37 but as for ignorant persons, who were affectedly and wilfully such, they must so remain, there was no help for it, Co1 14:38 upon which the apostle repeats his exhortation he set out with, to desire in the first place the gift of prophesying, or preaching, though he would not have speaking with tongues forbidden, provided the above rules were attended to, Co1 14:39 and concludes with a general exhortation to do all the above things, and everything relating to the doctrine and discipline of the church, in a becoming and orderly manner, Co1 14:40.

1 Corinthians 14:1

Follow after charity,.... The apostle having so highly commended charity, or love, in the preceding chapter, presses here to an eager pursuit after it; that is, to an exercise of it, and after those things which make for it, and will serve to maintain and increase it: and everything he has said in praise of it before serves as an argument, or reason, to follow hard after it, with an eagerness used in hunting, and with such violence as persecutors express in pursuing and laying hold on those they seek after, to which there is an allusion in the word here used:

and desire spiritual gifts: for though he had given charity the preference to them, he did not mean that they should despise and neglect them, or treat them with indifference, and be unconcerned about them; but, on the other hand, that they should be very zealous for them, ambitious of them, and earnestly covet them; since being rightly used and kept in their proper place, they were greatly beneficial and profitable to the churches of Christ, and the glory of God:

but rather that ye may prophesy: of all the gifts of the Spirit, the apostle prefers prophesying, and recommends this to the Corinthians, as what they should be chiefly desirous of, and more desirous of than of speaking with tongues, which many among them were so very fond of: by which he means, not so much the gift of foretelling future events, though there was such a gift bestowed on some persons in those times, and, in certain cases, was very profitable to the churches; but a gift of preaching the word, or explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of praying and singing of psalms, all which, as appears from some following parts of this chapter, were included in it; and that not in an ordinary, but in an extraordinary way; a person possessed of this gift could at once, without the use of means, or help of study, preach the word, and open the more difficult parts of Scripture; he had an extraordinary gift of prayer, which he could make use of when he pleased, and at once compose and deliver out a psalm, or hymn, in the public congregation.

1 Corinthians 14:2

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue,... Or with tongues, as some copies and the Ethiopic version read: Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that the Hebrew tongue, which was become a dead language, and understood but by few, is here meant, and that not without reason; seeing the public prayers, preaching, and singing of psalms among the Jews, were in this languages (x); in imitation of whom, such ministers, who had the gift of speaking this language, read the Scriptures, preached, prayed, and sung psalms in it, which were no ways to the edification of the people, who understood it not; upon which account the apostle recommends prophesying, praying, and singing, in a language that was understood: otherwise he

speaketh not unto men; to the understanding, profit, and edification of men: but unto God: to his praise and glory, and he only knowing, who knows all languages, and every word in the tongue what is said; excepting himself, unless there should be any present capable of interpreting:

for no man understandeth him: or “heareth him”: that is, hears him, so as to understand him; he may hear a sound, but he cannot tell the meaning of it, and so it is of no use and advantage to him:

howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries; though under the influence and by the extraordinary gift of the Spirit he has, and to his own Spirit and understanding, and with great affection and devotion within himself, he speaks of the deep things of God, and the mysteries of his grace, the most glorious truths of the Gospel, yet the meaning of his voice and words not being known, he is a barbarian to them that hear him; and though what he delivers are truths of the greatest importance, they are a mere jargon to others, being unintelligible.

(x) Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1. & in Yoma, fol. 20. 2.

1 Corinthians 14:3

But he that prophesieth,.... Preaches, prays, or sings, in a language understood by the common people:

speaketh unto men to edification; to the building of them up in Christ, and on their most holy faith, so that they grow up as an holy temple to the Lord: and exhortation; to the more vigorous exercise of grace, and the more cheerful and fervent discharge of duty:

and comfort; of distressed minds, either through the temptations of Satan, or divine desertions, or inward corruptions, or outward afflictions; for all which ends and purposes the Scriptures are written, and gifts are bestowed on men to explain them; and which ends are answered when God gives a blessing to the word; but can never be expected, if delivered in a language not understood. This bears hard upon the Papists performing any part of divine worship in a language unintelligible to the common people.

1 Corinthians 14:4

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue,.... Be it the Hebrew language, or any other; some copies, and the Ethiopic version, read, “with tongues”:

edifieth himself; his heart may be warmed, his affections raised, his devotion kept up, and he be in a very spiritual and comfortable frame, knowing and understanding what he himself says:

but he that prophesieth, edifieth the church: which is the great end of the Gospel ministry, which is for the edifying the body of the church: wherefore that which tends to the edification of more, even the whole church, must be preferable to that, which at most can only edify one, and that the speaker himself.

1 Corinthians 14:5

I would that ye all spake with tongues,.... This the apostle says, to prevent being misunderstood; for his view was not to bring the gift of tongues into contempt, or to represent it as at all times, and on all occasions, useless and insignificant; nor would he be thought to envy them this gift, or beat them off of desiring it; for, for his own part, he could wish they all had it, was it the will of God; though he must needs say, that prophesying was most desirable by him, as being most profitable;

but rather that ye prophesied; he wished them all prophets, as Moses did all the Lord’s people; he was not against their speaking with tongues, but this was the most eligible, for which he gives this reason:

for greater is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues; that is, he is more useful and profitable to men, and so consequently more honourable, in higher esteem, and more valued, and in greater dignity, being in a more serviceable post and office, and which is more beneficial and advantageous to mankind:

except he interpret; what he said; and then he might stand upon an equal foot, and be equally useful with him that prophesieth; but this everyone could not do that spake with tongues; for speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, were two distinct gifts; see Co1 12:10 and though a man

that had the gift of tongues might understand what he himself said to his own edification, yet not be able to interpret it to the understanding and edification of others; and if he could not do this, his speaking was to no purpose: hence the apostle advises such an one to pray that he might interpret, have the gift of interpretation also, in Co1 14:13.

That the church may receive edifying: which otherwise cannot be thought it should, or be expected, and then an opportunity and ordinance would be wholly lost.

1 Corinthians 14:6

Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues,.... The apostle exemplifies this matter in himself, and supposes it his own case, that should he who was the apostle of the Gentiles, and to be received by them as such, when he came to them, come with this gift of tongues, which he was capable of, as much, or more than any, see Co1 14:18 and only make use of that,

what shall I profit you? of what use would my ministry be to you? what instruction, comfort, and edification, could you receive by it?

except I shall speak to you, either by revelation; by the revelation of Jesus Christ, whereby he received the Gospel he preached; or by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and the mysteries of his grace, by which they were made known unto him at first, or by a fresh immediate revelation from heaven:

or by knowledge; the word of knowledge, one of the peculiar gifts of the Spirit, Co1 12:8.

Or by prophesying; the gift of prophecy, another of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, mentioned in the same chapter, Co1 12:10 and already explained:

or by doctrine? the same with the word of wisdom, another gift of the same Spirit, in Co1 12:8. The apostle intimates, that by the use and exercise of these gifts, he might be profitable to them, to lead them into a clearer view of the doctrines of the Gospel, and for the further improvement of their knowledge in the Scriptures of truth, which could never be done by bare speaking with tongues, and with tongues they understood not.

1 Corinthians 14:7

And even things without life giving sound,.... He instances in things inanimate, that have neither reason, sense, nor life, in musical instruments, and these of various sorts:

whether pipe or harp; wind music, or hand music; either that which is blown with the breath, or pressed or stricken with the hand:

except they give a distinction in the sounds; or “tunes”, so as one may be discerned from another; as that this is such a musical note, and that is another:

how shall it be known what is piped or harped? what tune is played; such an use of instruments would be a mere jargon, and not music, and so yield no pleasure to the ear, or mind; and just the like

must speaking in an unknown tongue be, to one that understands it not.

1 Corinthians 14:8

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound,... That is not plain and manifest, so as that it cannot be known on what account it is given:

who shall prepare himself to the battle? the allusion is to the custom of many nations, Jews and others, who, when about to engage in war, made use of musical instruments, particularly the trumpet, to gather the soldiers together, prepare them for the battle, give them notice of it, and animate them to it (y); the sound of the trumpet was the alarm of war; see Jer 4:5. And particularly the allusion may be to the two silver trumpets, ordered by God to Moses for the Jews, which were to be made of a whole piece, and to be used for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps, and to blow an alarm with when they went to war against the enemy, Num 10:1 and were a lively emblem of the Gospel, whose use is to gather souls to Christ, to direct saints in their journeying, and to prepare and animate them for battle, with their spiritual enemies; and of which use it is, when it gives a certain and even sound, as it does when clearly and rightly blown; and that is, the sound of love, grace, and mercy, to the sons of men, through a bleeding Saviour; salvation alone by a crucified Jesus, peace and pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; when it is blown aright, it blows a blast on all the goodness of man, it magnifies the grace of God, exalts the person of Christ, debases the creature, shows its impurity, imperfection, and inability; and expresses the nature, use, and necessity of efficacious grace; and puts believers on doing good works for necessary uses, but not for life, righteousness, and salvation; and so its sound is equal, even, and certain: and when it is so, it is a means of gathering souls to Christ, the standard bearer and ensign of the people; and of engaging them to enlist themselves as volunteers in his service; and of animating them to fight under his banner the battles of the Lord of hosts: but if this trumpet gives an uncertain sound, as it does when grace and works are blended together in the business of salvation; and faith or works put in the room of, or joined with the righteousness of Christ in justification; when particular election and general redemption, or the salvability of all men, are put together; the covenant of grace represented as conditional, and preparations for grace, and offers of grace, and days of grace talked of, that may be past and lost; then who can prepare himself for the battle? persons must be thrown into, and left in the utmost uncertainty and confusion: when this is the case, they know not what side to take on, but halt between two opinions; they know not what that faith is they are to fight and earnestly contend for; they are not able to discern an enemy from a friend; they have no heart to fight and endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ; nor can they promise themselves, or be assured of victory, which the certain sound of the Gospel gives them.

(y) Vid Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 2. p. 178.

1 Corinthians 14:9

So likewise you, unless ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood,... This is an accommodation of the foregoing similes to the case in hand: for as unless there is a distinction of notes and tunes, it cannot be music, nor it cannot be known what is piped or harped; and unless the trumpet gives a certain sound, none can know when to prepare himself for the battle; so unless in the public ministry and service a language is spoken, and words made use of, which are understood without difficulty:

how shall it be known what is spoken? the subject matter of the discourse, prayer, or psalm, will be all lost, and therefore cannot be for edification, exhortation, or comfort:

for ye shall speak into the air; into which such words are resolved, and the use and benefit of them, as to others, cease with the breath, by which they are delivered: any part of divine service performed in such a way is all in vain, and to no purpose; it is all lost labour, it is beating the air, and talking to the wind. This condemns the practice of the Papists, performing divine service in a language not understood by the common people; and exposes the folly of those, who are fond of a florid style, of bombast words, great swelling words of vanity in their public discourses: this is only speaking into the air, with regard to the vulgar, whose edification should be consulted: and as the end of the Gospel ministry is public usefulness and edification, plainness of speech, words easy to be understood, should be used; such as are apt and fit to convey the true idea of things to people in common; these are the acceptable words, which the wise preacher, who is desirous of doing good to the souls of men, will seek out, and studiously make use of.

1 Corinthians 14:10

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices,.... “tongues”, or “languages”, as the Syriac version renders it; that is, as many as there are nations in the world; there may be seventy of them, as the Jews say there were at the confusion of languages at Babel; there may be more or less:

and none of them is without signification: every language, and every word in a language, has a meaning in it, an idea annexed to it, which it conveys to him that understands it, and that cannot be done without a voice ordinarily speaking.

1 Corinthians 14:11

Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice,.... The force and power of a language, the signification of it, the ideas its words convey, but only hear the sound of it:

I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me: like one of those rude and uncultivated people that inhabit deserts and wild places, who can neither understand the language of others, nor be understood by others; and indeed may be meant of any sort of people, that do not understand one another's language: the word “bar”, and “bara”, in the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic languages, not only signifies a field, a wood, or desert place, but also without, or any thing extraneous; and being doubled, signifies one that lives without, in another land; a stranger, and that speaks a strange language; so all other nations of the world were barbarians to the Hebrews, and particularly the Egyptians; see the Targum on Psa 114:1 and so were all other nations to the Greeks, see Rom 1:14 and also to the Romans: and the sense is, that where the signification of a language and the sense of words are not known, the speaker is like a man that lives in a strange country to him that hears him; and the hearer is like to one that lives in a strange country to him that speaks, since they cannot understand one another. The word sometimes is used for men, , (z), “that can neither speak nor hear”, men dumb and deaf; and when words cannot be understood, the case is all one as with such persons.

(z) Scholia in Aristoph. in Avibus, p. 550.

1 Corinthians 14:12

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts,.... Gr. “of spirits”; that is, “of the gifts of the Spirit”, as the Syriac version renders it; and we rightly, “spiritual gifts”; the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, for which the apostle does not blame them; these being what he had before exhorted them to covet earnestly, and zealously affect and desire: but then he further advises,

seek that ye may excel, to the edifying of the church: above all, be desirous of such gifts, and of excelling in them, and abounding in the exercise of them, which may be most profitable and edifying to the members of the church; and what these were, and in what manner to be used, he had before signified: the Alexandrian copy reads, seek that ye may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:13

Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue,.... The Hebrew, or any other, the gift of speaking with which is bestowed upon him:

pray that he may interpret; that he may have also the gift of interpretation of tongues; for as has been before hinted, these two gifts were distinct; and a man might have the one, and not the other; a man might speak in an unknown tongue, so as to understand himself, what he said, and be edified, and yet not be capable of translating it at once into the common language of the people; and if he could not do this, he would not excel in his gift to the edification of the church; whereas if he could interpret he would, and therefore, above all things, he should pray to the Father of lights, the giver of every good and perfect gift, that he might be furnished with this also.

1 Corinthians 14:14

For if I pray in an unknown tongue,.... In the Hebrew tongue, which the greatest part of the Jewish doctors insisted (a) upon should be only used in prayer; which notion might be borrowed from them, and now greatly prevailed in the church at Corinth; and the custom was used by such as had the gift of speaking that language, even though the body and bulk of the people understood it not:

my spirit prayeth; I pray with my breath vocally; or else with affection and devotion, understanding what I say myself, and so am edified; or rather with the gift of the Spirit bestowed on me:

but my understanding is unfruitful; that is, what I say with understanding to myself is unprofitable to others, not being understood by them.

(a) Vid. Trigland. de Sect. Kar. c. 10. p. 172, 173.

1 Corinthians 14:15

What is it then?.... A Talmudic way of speaking, and answers to often used when a difficulty arises in any case, then the question is, “what is it then?” what is to be done? what is most prudent, advisable, and eligible? what is proper to be determined and resolved on in such a case? the same with “what then is to be said?” used by Philo the Jew (b): as here, shall I not pray with the Spirit at all, because

my understanding, or that which I understand, is of no use to others, being not understood by them? shall I entirely neglect, lay aside, and make no use of the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, bestowed upon me on this account? no:

I will pray with the Spirit; meaning not with the human breath, or spirit only, vocally, with an articulate voice, and distinct sounds, so as to be understood; nor with his own spirit, or in a spiritual way, with a spirit of devotion and fervency, with his whole heart and soul engaged in such service, though this is necessary to it; nor with the common and ordinary assistance of the Spirit of God, though without this prayer cannot be performed aright, with faith and fervency, freedom and boldness; but with the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, so as to pray in an extraordinary manner, with divers tongues, in an unknown language; this, as the apostle was capable of, he determined to use at proper times, and on proper occasions: but then he also resolves,

and I will pray with the understanding also; not merely so as to understand himself, or with an understanding enlightened by the Spirit of God; with a spiritual experimental understanding of things, so as to know the object of prayer, the way of access to him, the need of the Spirit's influence, his own wants and necessities, and that he shall have the petitions he asks in faith, according to the will of God, all which is very requisite in prayer; but so as to be understood by others: his sense is, that though on some occasions he might choose to make use of his extraordinary gift, yet he would also pray in a language, in which he might be understood by the people; that so they might be able to join with him, and receive some fruit and advantage thereby; and that their souls might be refreshed, as well as his:

I will sing with the Spirit; meaning also not with the spirit, or breath, singing vocally only; nor with his own Spirit, with his heart engaged in the work, with grace in it, in the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love, with much spiritual light, knowledge, experience, and judgment, which are very necessary to the due discharge of this duty; nor merely with the ordinary aid of the Spirit of God, which yet is greatly needful to excite attention, assist meditation, enlighten the understanding, raise the affections, strengthen faith, and make a comfortable application of what is sung; but as before, with the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, by which the apostle was capable of delivering out a psalm, or hymn, extempore, and that in an unknown tongue: but then he also determines,

I will sing with the understanding also; not to his own understanding, or by or with the understanding of what is sung, though that is absolutely needful; but to the understanding of others, and in a language also which may be understood by others, and in which they could join with him in that service: perhaps the apostle may have some respect to the title of some of David's psalms, "Maschil", which signifies "causing to understand".

(b) Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 48.

1 Corinthians 14:16

Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit,... Which must be understood of giving thanks to God, not in a private way, in the family and at meals, but in a public manner before the whole congregation, for mercies temporal and spiritual, especially the latter; and that not with the breath, or voice only; nor with the affections of the heart, with the soul, and all that is within it, though that is what should be; nor with the common assistance of the Spirit, and under the influence of his grace, which excites to

true gratitude; but with the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, pronouncing the blessing, or expressing the thanksgiving with divers tongues, or in an unknown language: when this part of divine service, which by the way is distinct from singing, is performed in this manner,

how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned; “idiot”. The word “idiot”, is often used by the Jewish writers, and signifies a plebeian, one of the common people; and is sometimes indeed distinguished from a wise man, or a learned man; but frequently signifies a private person, whether learned or unlearned, that is not in so high a post as others; hence we read (c) , “of private judges”, which were not of the great sanhedrim, and of private men, as distinguished from kings (d);

“there are three kings, and four “private men”, (the Jews say,) that have no part in the world to come; the three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; the four private persons are Balsam, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Gehazi:”

here a private man is distinguished from the public minister that blesses, or gives thanks in the name of the people; and not to be understood of a single person, whose place and office it was to say “Amen”, at the minister’s giving of thanks, and who stood in some particular place for that purpose; but of the whole body of the people, who, in distinction from the minister, were in the condition of private men, and all joined, as will be seen hereafter, in saying “Amen”; now the apostle’s question is, that if thou who art a public minister, givest blessing and praise, or returnest thanks to God in an unknown tongue, how shall the common people, or anyone that is in a private capacity,

say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? It was usual to say “Amen” at blessing, or giving of thanks privately at meals, by those that were present, concerning which are the following rules (e);

“he that breaks the bread, might not break it until the “Amen” was finished out of the mouth of those that answered; Rab Chasdai says out of the mouth of the major part of those that answer:”

and elsewhere (f) it is said,

“they answer “Amen” after an Israelite has blessed, but they do not answer “Amen” after a Cuthite (a Samaritan, or any Gentile, or Christian) hath blessed, unless the whole blessing is heard:”

but of this kind of blessing the apostle speaks not, but of blessing in public: upon which all the people, and not a single person only, as with one united voice, said Amen; see Ch1 16:36 to this practice the apostle refers; concerning which the rule (g) is;

“that the congregation may not answer “Amen”, until the blessing is finished out of the mouth of the priests; and the priests may not begin the other blessing, until the “Amen” is finished out of the mouth of the congregation.”

There were different sorts of “Amen”, or rather different pronunciations of it; of which the Jews say (h),

“they may not answer with a fatherless “Amen”; nor with a sudden or violent “Amen”; (pronounced quick and in haste;) nor with an “Amen” cut off, or asunder (the last letter of it not pronounced): says

Ben Azzai, whoever answers with a fatherless “Amen”, his children shall be fatherless; with a quick “Amen”, his days will be short; with an “Amen” cut off, his days shall be cut off; and whoever prolongs “Amen”, his days and years shall be prolonged.”

Now, , “a fatherless Amen”, was when a person answered, and he did not know what he answered (i) to; and such an “Amen”, in the case here, must a private man answer with, at the giving of thanks in an unknown tongue; and to answer “Amen” to what was said in a language not understood, was not allowed of; so the woman suspected of adultery was to be sworn and examined by the priest in a language she understood; and was to say “Amen, Amen”, to what was said, in a language known to her (k); for if she did not understand it, how could she say “Amen?” which is the apostle’s reasoning here: but was this an affair of such importance, to be instanced in and argued upon in this manner? with the Jews it was, who say (l),

“that greater is he that answers “Amen”, than he that blesses:”

and indeed they bestow very extravagant encomiums on those who say it in a proper manner;

“there is nothing greater (they say (m)) in the sight of the blessed God, than the “Amen” the Israelite answers with; says R. Joden, whoever answers “Amen” in this world, is worthy to answer “Amen” in the world to come;”

again (n),

“says R. Joshua ben Levi, whoever answers “Amen”, his name shall be great and blessed for ever and ever; says R. Simeon ben Lakish, whoever answers “Amen” with all his strength, the gates of paradise will be opened for him, according to Isa 26:2.”

Moreover, it was a practice of the primitive Christians at the Lord’s supper, at the close of it, to say with a loud voice “Amen”; the account Justin Martyr gives of it is this (o); that

“when the minister had finished the prayers, and the thanksgiving, all the people present, with a joyful acclamation, said “Amen”; which word, he observes, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies “so be it”:”

and this custom might obtain in the Corinthian church at this time, to which the apostle is thought by some learned men to refer.

(c) Misn. Yebamot, c. 12. sect. 1. (d) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 1. (e) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 47. 1. (f) Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 8. (g) T. Bab. Sota, fol. 39. 2. (h) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 47. 1. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 27. (i) T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 12. 3. Succa, fol. 54. 1. & Megilla, fol. 72. 1. (k) Maimon. Hilch. Sota, c. 3. sect. 7. (l) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 53. 2. & Nazir, fol. 66. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 2. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxvii. 15. (m) Debarim Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 242. 2. (n) T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 119. 2. Shaare Zion, fol. 99. 2. 100. 2. 101. 1. (o) Apolog. 2. p. 97.

1 Corinthians 14:17

For thou verily givest thanks well,... In very proper words, and pertinent expressions, with great affection and devotion, suitable to the service;

but the other is not edified; the rest of the people, who do not understand the language in which thanks are given; “thy friend”, as the Syriac version reads it; or thy next neighbour, he that stands by thee, receives no manner of profit by it, because he does not understand what is said.

1 Corinthians 14:18

I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all. This the apostle says, to observe to them that he did not despise speaking with tongues: nor did he endeavour to beat them off, and dissuade them from desiring them, or envied their having them, because he was destitute of them himself; for he had this gift in a very eminent manner, and oftentimes made use of it, and was frequently under a necessity of so doing; he could speak with more tongues than any of those that had them, and spoke them oftener than they did; having occasion for them through his travelling into different countries, and preaching the Gospel to people of divers languages; and this he mentions also not in a boasting manner, but in great humility, giving thanks to God, and acknowledging him to be the author of this gift.

1 Corinthians 14:19

Yet in the church I had rather speak five words,.... Referring not to the five books of Moses, as Jerom suggests, and much less, as the Papists say, to the five words, “for this is my body”; by the muttering of which they suppose the bread in the Lord’s supper to be transubstantiated into the body of Christ; but meaning a very few words, which he chose to speak in the church before the congregation, when and where saints were met together for public worship, for their edification and comfort, and the glory of God; for though at other times, and to other people, he might think fit to make use of his gift in speaking with divers tongues, yet at such a time and place he thought it much more eligible to say ever so few words

with understanding: so as to be understood by others, as well as himself:

that by my voice I might teach others also; the doctrines of the Gospel, the mysteries of grace, the duty of men towards God and men, and one another:

than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue; than to deliver ever so long an oration in a language not understood by them, which could be of no use unto them; for though they might hear his voice, the sound of his words, yet thereby he could not teach and instruct them to their profit, unless they understood the language which he spoke; and therefore five words understood were more likely to be of use than ten thousand spoken in a strange language.

1 Corinthians 14:20

Brethren, be not children in understanding,.... There are some things in children in which it is reproachful for believers to be like them; as nonproficiency in knowledge, want of capacity to receive, bear, and digest strong meat; levity, fickleness, and inconstancy, unskilfulness in the word, deficiency of knowledge, want of understanding, not of things natural, but spiritual and evangelical; which is the more aggravated, since their understandings were opened and enlightened; an understanding was given them; the Spirit of God, as a spirit of understanding, was bestowed on them; they had

the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, and the man of God perfect; and also the ministers of the Gospel to explain divine truths to them; and many had been a long time in the school of Christ, and might have been teachers of others; and yet; after all, were children in understanding, and needed to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. The apostle here has chiefly reference to the gift of speaking with tongues, these Corinthians were so desirous of; which when they had it, was only to talk like children; and for them to prefer it to other gifts, which were more useful and beneficial, discovered their judgment to be but the judgment of children; and if they desired this, and made use of it for ostentation, it showed a childish vanity, from which the apostle here dissuades:

howbeit in malice be ye children: in other things it is commendable to imitate children, and be like them; as in innocence and harmlessness of conversation; to be meek, modest, and humble, free from pride and vain glory; to be without guile and hypocrisy, without rancour and bitterness, envying and malice, but tender hearted, and ready to forgive. This the apostle recommends:

but in understanding be men; or “perfect”, of ripe and full age, who have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil, “a man”, says Aben Ezra (p), in our language, signifies , “one full of knowledge”, as in Exo 10:11. It is not perfection of justification that is here meant, for babes in Christ are as perfect in this sense as grown men; nor a perfection of sanctification, for there is no such thing as this in any in this life; there is a perfection of sanctification in Christ, and of parts in everyone that is a new creature; and as that denotes sincerity and uprightness, it is in all that have known the grace of God in truth; but then these are each of them as true of new born babes, young converts, as of older Christians, and strong men: but of knowledge and understanding in divine things; which though it is imperfect in the best, yet in some it is in greater perfection than in others; who may, in a comparative sense, be said to be perfect, or men of full age, who are arrived to a considerable ripeness and maturity of spiritual knowledge; and this is what believers should be pressing after, and desirous of, and make use of all proper methods, such as reading, hearing, and praying, to attain unto.

(p) Comment. in Psal. xxxvii. 23.

1 Corinthians 14:21

In the law it is written,... In Isa 28:11 for the word law is not be confined to the five books of Moses, but includes all the writings of the Old Testament; and this entirely agrees with the sense of the Jews. Says R. Azarias (q).

“is it not to be found with our wise men, of blessed memory, in many places, that the word “law”, comprehends the prophets, and the holy writings?”

And he gives an instance out of the Talmud, and which indeed is very pertinent to the purpose, and is rightly produced, and will support the apostle in calling the prophecy of Isaiah the law, since it is so called in the following passage (r). R. Chijah bar Aba says, that

“R. Jochanan said, from whence is the resurrection of the dead to be proved, , “out of the law?” from what is said in Isa 52:8 “thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing”. It is not said “they sing”, but “they shall sing”: from hence the resurrection of the dead is to be proved out of the law.”

And out of the same book the apostle cites the following words;

with men of other tongues, and other lips, will I speak unto this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord: the words, “men of”, are a supplement of our translators, and which does not seem very necessary: nor is any made in other versions. The words, as they are in our translation of the prophet, are read thus, “with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people”. Some difference there is between the two passages, which are of no great moment; the words “lips” and “tongue” are inverted by the apostle; nor was it at all material to observe the strict order of them in the citation: and he has also rendered “stammering lips” by “other tongues”, and that very rightly; for the word used by Isaiah, does not signify stammering, but derision or mocking; so persons that are spoken to in a language they understand not, look upon themselves to be mocked and derided: and the apostle is to be justified by the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders the words, , “with change of speech”: that is, with another and different language. Moreover, it is to be observed, that the prophet delivers the passage in the third person, and the apostle cites it in the first: the reason of this is, because he adds these words to it, “saith the Lord”: partly for the sake of the authority of the words, and partly to engage the attention of the Corinthians to them; and certain it is, that Isaiah’s meaning is, that the Lord would speak in such a manner to the Jews: the other phrase, “for all that will they not hear me”, are taken out of Isa 28:12. Some think that this prophecy refers to God’s speaking, by the apostles on the day of Pentecost, with divers tongues, to the Jews; when, though there were three thousand converted at that time, yet these were but comparatively few; the body of the people remained incredulous, and hearkened not to the apostles, though their ministry was attended with such signs and wonders: but rather the sense seems to be this, that whereas the Lord had spoken in the plainest manner to the people of the Jews, by the prophets, as he would afterwards by the apostles, and had repeated his words so often, that even a child might be thought to be capable of receiving them; yet such was their stupidity and obstinacy, that they slighted and disregarded them; wherefore he threatens them he would take another method with them, and speak to them in his providences, by people of different and strange languages, as by the Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians, in the seventy years’ captivity, and by the Romans, and other nations since, among whom they now are; and yet all this has had no effect upon them to listen to the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. Hence the Corinthians had no reason to be so desirous of speaking with divers tongues, since these have been threatened and used by God in a way of punishment to a people, and not a blessing.

(q) Meor. Enayim, c. 7. fol. 47. I. (r) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

1 Corinthians 14:22

Wherefore tongues are for a sign,... Of wrath and punishment inflicted on a rebellious and unbelieving people, and not of grace and kindness, as prophesying, or speaking to them by the prophets, was; and so this is an inference from what is said in the preceding verse, and shows, that there was no reason why believers should be so very desirous of them. But if these words refer to all that is said before on this subject, the word “sign” may be taken for a miracle; and so a new argument is formed against an over fondness for divers tongues, and the use of them in public worship, showing the preferableness of prophecy to them; for speaking with divers tongues was used in a miraculous way,

not to them that believe; who have no need of miracles to raise their attention to what is said, and that

it may gain credit with them, or to confirm their faith in it:

but to them that believe not; to prepare them to listen to what might be suggested to them, when they see the persons speaking were endued with miraculous powers, and to engage their assent to it, and belief of it; and so with such persons, and for such purposes, was the gift of speaking with divers tongues used by the apostles, Act 2:4 but inasmuch as the Corinthian church consisted of believers, there was no need of such a sign or miracle among them; wherefore, if they desired such gifts, and to make use of them, they should choose to do it, not in the church, but among unbelievers:

but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not; that is, not for them only; for prophesying or explaining the prophetic writings, or preaching the word, may be, and often is, the means of converting unbelievers; yet this is not the only use, nor does it serve for, or administer comfort to unbelievers as such; but is profitable to, and serves

for them which believe: it is for their edification, exhortation, and comfort, Co1 14:4 it is the means of building them up on their most holy faith; of quickening and stirring them up to the exercise of grace, and performance of duty; of comforting them under various distresses, inward and outward; and of establishing, strengthening, and settling them, and therefore much more eligible to be used in a church of Christ, than speaking with tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:23

If therefore the whole church,.... The whole congregation of believers incorporated together in a Gospel church state, consisting of its officers and private members; the church at Corinth is particularly designed:

be come together in one place; to worship God, to pray unto him, sing his praise, preach and hear the word, as were usually done. Hence may be observed the custom of the primitive churches to meet together, in some certain place, for divine worship; nor did the members of them in common forsake the assembling of themselves together on that account, though it was the evil practice of some of them; the whole church, all the members of it, met together: and it may be seen from hence, that the church, and the place where it met, are two different things:

and all speak with tongues; divers tongues, languages not understood; meaning, not that all that came together spoke with tongues; but that as many as did speak, should they speak with such, and without an interpreter.

And there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers; either private Christians, who, though they have learned Christ, and understand the doctrines of the Gospel, yet are ignorant of languages; or rather the same persons with unbelievers, Heathens that have no knowledge of Christ, nor faith in him, and who also understood no other language but the Greek: if any such persons should come into the place where the church was met together, and should hear him or them that spoke, speak in a language they understood not, and which they were very well assured was equally unknown to the whole congregation, and so could be of no service to them:

will they not say ye are mad? act like men in a frenzy, that have not the use of their reason; since speaking in a strange language to a congregation that know not one word of what is said, is speaking

to the air, and to no profit at all to them that hear; and who but a madman would do this? The apostle here argues from the scandal and contempt that would be poured upon them by such a practice; and the rather he mentions this, because it seems as if their governing view was the glory and applause of men, in which, he suggests, they would be sadly disappointed.

1 Corinthians 14:24

But if all prophecy,.... That is, all that speak publicly in the church, not together, but in their order, one after another, as is hereafter directed:

and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned; an unbeliever that has only the knowledge of his mother tongue, in which prophesying or preaching is used:

he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; of all the prophets or preachers; they all reprove him, and detect his secret, as the Arabic version renders the words; and to the same purport the Ethiopic. This must be understood of such persons whom the Spirit of God, under, and by the ministry of the word, powerfully works upon; whose hearts he opens to receive the word, and to whom he effectually applies it; whom he convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment, shows the evil of their hearts and ways, reproves their errors, convicts them of their mistakes, and informs their judgments, and condemns all their principles and practices which are not agreeably to the word of God.

1 Corinthians 14:25

And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest,.... Not to the prophets, or preachers, or to the rest of the congregation, but to himself; the word preached being in the hands, and trader the influence, direction, and application of the Spirit of God, a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; showing the plague and naughtiness of it, discovering the lusts that are in it, detecting the errors of the mind, and filling the conscience with a sense of guilt, and a consciousness of deserved punishment; so that the person looks upon himself as particularly spoken to, and as if the person speaking had knowledge of all that was within him, and adapted his discourse on purpose to him, and delivered it for his sake alone; concluding, that there is, and must be, something more than human in it:

and so falling down on his face: either publicly before the whole congregation; or when retired, as one ashamed of his sins and errors, and not able to look either God, or good men, in the face; and being in an adoration posture; or however, being truly humbled before God under a sense of his iniquities,

he will worship God; pray unto him, and earnestly entreat he would be merciful to him a sinner, and blot out all his transgressions, and forgive him all his sins; and will ever after acknowledge him to be the true God, embrace his Gospel, submit to his ordinances, and attend his service:

and report: or “declare”, freely and openly to the church, to all men, to the world, and to his company from whence he came, and to whom he belonged,

that God is in you of a truth: that the Spirit of God, who is truly God, and searches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and the deep things of men, and makes them manifest, is in the prophets and preachers, otherwise they would never be able to make manifest the secrets of the heart as they do;

and that the presence of God is in the church, and the power of God goes along with the ministration of the word: hereby, now many valuable ends are answered, a sinner is converted, God is worshipped and glorified, credit is brought to religion, the church of Christ is spoken well of, and prophets or preachers are honoured; wherefore prophesying, seeing it is both for the edification of believers, and conversion of sinners, ought to be desired, and made use of before speaking with tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:26

How is it then, brethren?.... Or “what is it brethren?” The Arabic renders it, “what is the sense of my words?” The meaning of what he had said, the drift of his whole discourse; or rather the sense is, what is to be done in the case he was about to propose?

when ye come together; as a church into one place, to worship God;

everyone of you hath a psalm; not that everyone had this, or any other gift here mentioned, but that there were some among them that had one or other of these several gifts: some of them had a gift of composing and singing a psalm extempore; they delighted in psalmody, and were forward to promote it, and fond of spending the time wholly in it.

Hath a doctrine; others of them had a gift of deducing doctrines out of the word of God, which is profitable for that purpose, in an extraordinary manner, without study, and were capable of teaching them, and instructing men in them in a very edifying way:

hath a tongue others had the gift of speaking with divers tongues; or had knowledge and skill in the Hebrew tongue, could not only pray and sing in that language, and read the sacred text, but could deliver a sermon in it.

Hath a revelation; others had a peculiar insight into the types and figures of the Mosaic dispensation, a clear view of the prophetic writings, and a large discovery of the mysteries of the Gospel, by the Spirit, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Hath an interpretation; others had a gift of interpreting languages, particularly the Hebrew language, when anything was delivered therein by another. Now the apostle answers to the question, what is to be done in such a case, where there is such a variety of gifts, and everyone is desirous of exercising his peculiar gift?

let all things be done to edifying; intimating, that each of these things might be done; every gift might be made use of: he that had a psalm might sing it; and he that had a doctrine might deliver it; he that had a tongue might speak with it; and he that had a revelation might declare it; and he that had an interpretation might make use of it; provided that care was taken that each was done in such a manner, as might be for the edifying of the church that was met together; otherwise, if it was only for ostentation sake to make a show of their gifts and talents, and to nourish their own pride and vanity, no good end would be answered; it had better be let alone: but if edification could be promoted, each gift might be employed; for which the apostle gives the following directions.

1 Corinthians 14:27

If any man speak in an unknown tongue,.... He begins with the gift of tongues, with speaking in an unknown tongue, as the Hebrew language, because this they were desirous of: and the rule for this he would have observed is,

let it be by two, or at most by three, and that by course. The Arabic version reads it, “let him speak to two, or at most three, and separately”; as if it respected the number of persons he was to speak to at a time, and that in a separate and private manner: but the apostle’s sense is, that two such persons as had the gift of speaking in an unknown tongue, or three at most, should be only employed at one opportunity, lest too much time should be taken up this way, and prevent a more useful and edifying exercise; and that these should speak not together, which would be a mere jargon and confusion, and make them look like madmen, and render them entirely useless indeed; but in course, one after another, that so an interpreter might be able to take their sense, and render what they said, and express it in a language the people understood: for it follows,

let one interpret what the two or three had said. This practice seems to be borrowed from the Jews, who had such an officer in the synagogue as a “Methurgeman”, or “an interpreter”. The rise of which office, and the rules to be observed in the performance of it, are as follow, delivered by Maimonides (s):

“from the times of Ezra it has been customary that an interpreter should interpret to the people what the reader reads in the law, so that they may understand the nature of things; and the reader reads one verse only, and is silent until the interpreter has interpreted it; then he returns and reads a second verse: a reader may not raise his voice above the interpreter, nor the interpreter raise his voice above the reader. The interpreter may not interpret until the verse is finished out of the mouth of the reader, and the reader may not read a verse until the interpretation is finished out of the mouth of the interpreter; and the interpreter might not lean neither upon a pillar, nor a beam, but must stand in trembling, and in fear; and he may not interpret by writing, but by mouth: and the reader may not help the interpreter; and they may not say the interpretation written in the law; and a little one may interpret by the means of a grown person, but it is no honour to a grown person to interpret by the means of a little one; and two may not interpret as one, but one reads , “and one interprets” (t).”

An interpreter might not interpret according to his own sense, nor according to the form of the words, or its literal sense; nor might he add of his own, but was obliged to go according to the Targum of Onkelos (u), which they say was the same that was delivered on Mount Sinai. The place they stood in was just before the reader; for so it is said (w),

“the interpreters stand before the wise man on the sabbath days, and hear from his mouth, and cause the multitude to hear.”

And elsewhere it is said (x),

“the interpreter stands before the wise man, the preacher, and the wise man (or doctor) whispers to him in the Hebrew language, and he interprets to the multitude in a language they hear,”

or understand. And sometimes these sat at his side, and only reported what the doctor whispered privately. So

“it is said (y), that when the son of R. Judah bar Ilai died, he went into the house of Midrash, or the school, and R. Chaniah ben Akabia went in and sat by his side, and he whispered to him, and he to the interpreter, and the interpreter caused the multitude to hear.”

And they never put any man into this office until he was fifty years of age (z). Several of the Jewish Rabbins were interpreters, as R. Chananiah before mentioned, and R. Chutzphit, and others (a).

(s) Hilchot Tephilla, c. 12 sect. 10. ll. (t) Vid. T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 27. 1. & Megilla, fol. 21. 2. (u) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 49. 1. & Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 8. sect. 4. (w) T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 50. 2. Gloss. in ib. (x) Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2. (y) T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 21. 1. (z) Juchasin, fol. 44. 2. (a) Ib. fol. 42. 1. & 44. 1, 2.

1 Corinthians 14:28

But if there be no interpreter,... None that has the gift of interpretation of divers tongues, and he that speaks with them has not that, which was sometimes the case:

let him keep silence in the church; let him not make use of his gift publicly before the whole congregation, since without an interpreter it will be entirely useless:

and let him speak to himself, and to God; he may make use of his gift to his own edification, and to the glory of God, by speaking with a low voice, or in his heart, which he himself may be conscious of, and God the searcher of hearts, and that knows all languages, fully understands; and so may be edified himself, and God may be glorified by him; whereas, if he was to use it openly and publicly, it would not only be unprofitable, but an hinderance to others: or he might retire to his own house, and there exercise it by himself, and in the presence of God, when it might be of some use and advantage to himself, but would be highly improper to bring it into the church, or public congregation; for instead of assisting, it would but dampen their devotion, and therefore it was very reasonable he should be silent there.

1 Corinthians 14:29

Let the prophets speak, two or three,... The apostle having finished the rules for speaking with an unknown tongue, proceeds to lay down some for the gift of prophesying; and observes, that where there are a number of prophets, as very likely there were in the church at Corinth, two or three of them might prophesy, or explain the prophecies of the Old Testament, or preach the Gospel at one opportunity or meeting: he does not use that restrictive clause, “at most”, as before, because if there was any necessity or occasion for it, more might be employed, so that care was taken not to burden the people, and send them away loathing; and this they were to do, as before, in course, one after another, otherwise it would be all confusion, nor could they be heard to edification. Though some have thought that they might speak together at one and the same time, in different parts of the church:

and let the other judge: the other prophets that sit and hear, and all such as have a spirit of discerning, whether what the prophets say comes from their own spirits, or from a lying spirit, from the spirit of antichrist, or whether from the Spirit of God; and even the body of the people, private members of the church, and hearers, might judge of the doctrine for themselves, according to the word of God,

the standard of faith and practice; and were not to believe every spirit, but try them, whether they were of God, and their doctrines by his word, whether they were true or false; for the spiritual man is in a measure capable of judging all things of a spiritual kind, through that spiritual experience he has of the word of God, and divine things, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 14:30

If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by,.... To another prophet that sits, and hears, and tries, and judges what he hears; if he has a clearer revelation made to him of what the other is speaking of, and has a more distinct knowledge of it, and is capable of removing any difficulty that attends it, and of expressing it more plainly, and of proving it more largely, and of setting it in an easier light to the understandings of men:

let the first hold his peace; be that was speaking, upon such an intimation being made to him, let him stop, and give way to him that has the revelation, that the church may receive the benefit of it: hence it may be observed, that the custom of the primitive churches was to hear the word sitting, and the prophet or preacher stood, or sat, as he thought fit; See Gill on Mat 5:1, and that sometimes a revelation was made, and light conveyed to these prophets in a very sudden and extraordinary manner, when it was proper that it should be at once communicated for the good of the whole society: but this is to be understood only of those prophets or preachers, not of the common people; for it must not be thought that any that rose up, and pretended to a revelation, might be indulged to deliver it, and the speaker give way to him, which might be attended with much confusion, and many bad consequences; but only such who were known to have gifts, and who at certain times had peculiar revelations made unto them.

1 Corinthians 14:31

For ye may all prophesy one by one,.... Not every member of the church, but everyone that had the gift of prophecy; so that they were not confined to two or three prophets at a meeting, but as many as would, or as had anything to deliver, and as time would allow; only care must be taken that confusion be avoided, and order preserved by exercising in turns one after another. This was agreeably to the custom of the Jewish synagogue, in which more might read and speak, though but one at a time; for

“it is forbidden to read in the book of the law, except one only, that all may hearken, and be silent, that so they may hear the words from his mouth, as if they had heard them that very moment from Mount Sinai.”

So here,

that all may learn; more of the doctrine of Christ, and of the mind and will of God, and attain to a greater knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel, and in the duties of religion, even prophets and teachers as well as private members and common hearers; for there are none who know ever so much, but are capable of being further taught and instructed, and that sometimes by such whose gifts are interior to them:

and all may be comforted; or exhorted, or receive exhortation. The word used signifies both; and prophecy is useful both for exhortation and comfort, and that both to preachers and people.

1 Corinthians 14:32

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Meaning either that the doctrines which the prophets deliver, the explanations they give of passages of Scriptures, the revelations they declare, are subject to the examination, judgment, and censure of other prophets; who have a right to try and judge them, either according to a more clear revelation they may have, or rather according to the sure word of prophecy, the Scriptures of truth; and indeed they are subject to the trial and judgment of the whole church, and therefore ought not to be stiff in their own sentiments, and obstinately persist in them, but cheerfully and readily submit them to be examined, and approved or disapproved by others; and particularly when one that sits by signifies he has something revealed to him, which will better explain, or give further light into what the speaker is upon, he ought to submit and give way to him; and thereby truth may be made manifest and established, instruction, edification, and comfort promoted, and peace and order preserved: or else the sense is, that the spiritual gifts of the prophets, and the inspirations and instincts by which they are acted, and the affections which are excited in them, are subject to themselves, so that they can use, or not use those gifts; though they have the word of the Lord they can forbear speaking, as Jeremy did, for a while, and as the case of Jonah shows; or they can refrain themselves and be silent, and wait till they have proper opportunity of speaking, being not like the prophets of false gods, who are acted by an evil spirit, and observe no order or decorum, but with a sort of fury and madness deliver involuntarily what is suggested to them: but such is not the case of true prophets that are influenced and directed by the Spirit of God, who will give way to one another; one will be silent while the other speaks, and by turns prophesy one after another; and where there is not such a subjection, it is a sign that the Spirit of God is not in them, for the reason that follows.

1 Corinthians 14:33

For God is not the author of confusion,... Or disorder, or “tumult”, as the Syriac renders it; wherefore he does not inspire and excite his prophets to deliver themselves in a disorderly and tumultuous manner, so as to break in one upon another; but when one speaks, the other is silent, or when one has anything revealed to him, and he signifies it in a proper manner, the other stops and gives way to him, and when he has done another succeeds, and so the rest in order, till the whole opportunity is filled up in an orderly and edifying manner; and whatever is contrary to, or breaks in upon such a method, God is not the author of: for he is the author

of peace, harmony, unity, and concord among his prophets and teachers, and so of order, for the former cannot be without the latter; where there is no order in the ministry, there can be no peace among the ministers, nor comfort in the churches; but God is the God of peace, he calls for, requires, disposes, and approves of peace and order among all his people:

as in all churches of the saints. The Vulgate Latin reads, “as I teach in all”, &c. and so read some copies, and may refer to all that is said before; and the sense be, that all the rules he had prescribed concerning speaking with tongues, and prophesying, were not new ones, but such as he had directed to be observed in all churches he was concerned with, and which consisted of holy and good men; or God is the author, not of confusion, but of peace in all the churches; he orders and disposes peace among them, and they attend to it: peace and order, and not confusion and tumult, prevail in all churches that deserve to be called churches of the saints, and therefore were in this to be imitated by

the church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 14:34

Let your women keep silence in the churches,.... This is a restriction of, and an exception to one of the above rules, that all might prophesy; in which he would be understood of men only, and not of women; and is directed against a practice which seems to have prevailed in this church at Corinth, allowing women to preach and teach in it; and this being a disorderly practice, and what was not used in other churches, the apostle forbids and condemns, and not without reason:

for it is not permitted unto them to speak; that is, in public assemblies, in the church of God, they might not speak with tongues, nor prophesy, or preach, or teach the word. All speaking is not prohibited; they might speak their experiences to the church, or give an account of the work of God upon their souls; they might speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; or speak as an evidence in any case at a church meeting; but not in such sort, as carried in it direction, instruction, government, and authority. It was not allowed by God that they should speak in any authoritative manner in the church; nor was it suffered in the churches of Christ; nor was it admitted of in the Jewish synagogue; there, we are told (b), the men came to teach, and the women “to hear”: and one of their canons runs thus (c);

“a woman may not read (that is, in the law), “in the congregation”, or church, because of the honour of the congregation;”

for they thought it a dishonourable thing to a public assembly for a woman to read, though they even allowed a child to do it that was capable of it.

But they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. In Gen 3:16, “thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”. By this the apostle would signify, that the reason why women are not to speak in the church, or to preach and teach publicly, or be concerned in the ministerial function, is, because this is an act of power, and authority; of rule and government, and so contrary to that subjection which God in his law requires of women unto men. The extraordinary instances of Deborah, Huldah, and Anna, must not be drawn into a rule or example in such cases.

(b) T. Hieros Chagiga, fol. 75. 4. & T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 3. 1. (c) Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 17. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 23. 1.

1 Corinthians 14:35

And if they will learn anything,.... If they are desirous of learning anything in relation to doctrine, duty, or discipline, and of improving their knowledge of divine things, which is very commendable in them; if any difficulty arises in their minds whilst hearing the word, which they want to have removed, or any question to ask for information sake,

let them ask their husbands at home; privately, when retired from the public assembly; for though men might ask one another concerning this, and the other point, in the church, as was usual in the synagogue worship, to which this church at Corinth in many things conformed; yet women were not allowed this freedom, and even in things which belonged to women to do; as for instance, making the

cake of the first of their dough, which was to be an heave offering to the Lord, the men were to teach the women at home how, and when to separate it from the rest (d). So the apostle directs women, when they wanted to be informed about any point, to apply to their husbands at their own houses, if they were such as were capable of instructing them; if not, they might apply to other men that were Christian men, and men of knowledge, especially to the prophets, pastors, and teachers of the church, at their habitations:

for it is a shame for women to speak in the church; it is a shame to themselves, as being contrary to the natural modesty and bashfulness of the sex, and a shame to the church, to the non-members of it, and especially to the elders, and more experienced part of it, to be taught and directed by a woman; it is a disgrace to herself and sex, as betraying uncommon pride and vanity, and an unnatural boldness and confidence; and a disgrace to the church to be under such a ministry and conduct.

(d) Bartenora in Misn. Challa, c. 3. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 14:36

What? came the word of God out from you?... That you must give laws to other churches, and introduce new customs and practices never known or used before? No; the word of the Lord came out of Zion, and the law or doctrine of the Lord, the word of the Gospel, the doctrine of the grace of God, came out of Jerusalem. The apostles that first preached it were Jews, and they preached it first in their own land, and planted churches there, before it came to the Gentiles; and therefore the apostle suggests it would be right to consider what was the practice of the churches in Judea, the first Gospel churches, concerning women's speaking in the church, and to conform thereunto; when they would be able to observe, that these first churches from whence the word of God came to them, disallowed of any such practice, but in this point agreed with the old synagogue:

or came it unto you only? no, it came to many other nations, and people, and towns, and cities besides them; and many churches were formed among the Gentiles, who had no such custom, did not permit their women to speak in the church; and therefore why should they be singular and different from all others? other churches had the word of God, had gifts, and prophesying as well as they, and yet had introduced no such custom; and therefore it became them to pay a deference to the judgment and practice of others, especially since these were under, and acted according to the direction of the apostle, which they ought to have been subject to.

1 Corinthians 14:37

If any man think himself to be a prophet,... Or "seems to be a prophet", and is really one; for the apostle does not so much design to strike at the pride, vanity, and appearances of false prophets, as to observe, that those that are really prophets, have the gift of prophesy, either of foretelling future events, or a peculiar gift of preaching the Gospel, and explaining the Scriptures, will allow what he had said to be right:

or spiritual; not merely one that has the Spirit of God, is regenerated and sanctified by him, in opposition to a natural and carnal man; or one that has a larger knowledge of spiritual things, in distinction from a babe in Christ; but one that is endued with spiritual gifts, with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, with a discerning of spirits; as there were such among them no doubt, as well as

prophets, and who were distinct from them, having the word of wisdom and knowledge:

let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord; if he is a true prophet, and really a spiritual man, he will clearly see, and therefore ought to own, that the rules here prescribed concerning speaking with tongues and prophesying, and concerning the intolerableness, unlawfulness, and indecency of women's speaking in public assemblies, are perfectly agreeable to the commands of Christ, and are to be esteemed as such, being delivered under the influence and direction of his Spirit; and which the prophet and spiritual man must discern and allow, if they have the Spirit of God; for whatever was commanded by the apostles under divine inspiration, was all one as if immediately commanded by Christ himself.

1 Corinthians 14:38

But if any man be ignorant,... Of "these" words, as the Arabic version adds, and does not know and own them to be the commandments of Christ; though he may profess himself to be a prophet, or a spiritual man, he is a very ignorant one, and has not the Spirit of God he pretends to: and if he will not be convinced, but goes on to doubt, and call in question the truth of these things, and obstinately persist in his ignorance,

let him be ignorant: let him be treated and despised as an ignorant man; and let his ignorance be no hinderance to any in receiving these rules and directions as the commandments of Christ; for no regard is to be had, or pity shown, to a man of affected ignorance, and wilful obstinacy; such a man is not to be known and owned, but shunned and rejected.

1 Corinthians 14:39

Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy,... The apostle now draws to a conclusion, and reassumes the exhortation he gave in the beginning of the chapter, pressing the members of this church to desire the gift of prophecy, that being the most eligible and preferable to others, particularly to speaking with tongues, since it was the most useful and edifying, as he abundantly proves:

and forbid not to speak with tongues; such as have that gift, and are desirous of exercising it, provided they observe the rules prescribed, and have an interpreter; this he adds to promote love, and prevent dissension and discord.

1 Corinthians 14:40

Let all things be done decently and in order. Which may refer not only to what is said in this chapter, but in the foregoing part of the epistle; go not to law before the unbelievers; let not a believing yokefellow depart from an unbelieving one; let not him that has knowledge sit in an idol's temple, and eat meat there; let not a man pray with his head covered, and a woman with hers uncovered; come not to the house of God to eat and drink intemperately, thereby reflecting dishonour and scandal on the ordinance of the Lord's supper; let not any speak in an unknown tongue in the church, without an interpreter, as if he was a madman, nor suffer women to teach in public; all which are very unbecoming, and contrary to the rules of decency: do not encourage animosities, factions, and parties; despise not the faithful ministers of the word, but honour and obey them in the Lord; neglect not the discipline of the church, lay on censures, and pass the sentence of excommunication

on such as deserve them; keep the ordinances as they have been delivered, particularly that of the Lord's supper; observe the rules prescribed for prophesying and speaking with tongues, and so all these things will be done according to the order of the Gospel: and the words may be considered as a general rule for the decent and orderly management of all things relating to the worship of God, and discipline of his house; that in all things a good decorum, and strict order, be observed, that nothing be done contrary to the rules of decency, and the laws and commandments of Christ.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 15

The apostle, in this chapter, recommends the Gospel, and gives a summary of it, proves the resurrection of Christ, and by various arguments establishes the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and answers objections made unto it. He also sets forth the glory there will be upon the bodies of risen saints, and the change that will be made on living ones; and concludes with an exhortation to perseverance in faith and holiness. As his chief view is the doctrine of the resurrection, he introduces this by recommending the Gospel in general, or by observing that this is a principal doctrine which should be remembered and retained, because it was the Gospel which he had preached, and they had received, and had hitherto persevered in, Co1 15:1 and besides was essential to salvation, and the means of it, by which they would be saved, if they retained it, except their faith in it was in vain, as it would be should they drop it, Co1 15:2. And moreover, the apostle had received it by divine revelation, and had faithfully delivered it to them, and therefore it became them to hold it fast; the sum of which were the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, agreeably to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, Co1 15:3 and then he reckons up the eyewitnesses of the latter, as first Peter, then the twelve disciples, then five hundred brethren at one time; next James, and all the apostles; and last of all himself, Co1 15:5 of whom he speaks in a very diminishing style, describing himself as an abortive, affirming himself to be the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be in that office, or bear that name, giving this as a reason for it, because he had been a persecutor of the church of Christ, Co1 15:9 wherefore he ascribes the dignity he was raised to entirely to the free grace of God; and yet he magnifies his office, and observes, that the gifts of grace bestowed upon him were not in vain, and that he was a more abundant labourer than the rest of the apostles, and had more success; but then he freely declares that all he had, and all he did, were by the grace of God, Co1 15:10. But however, not to insist upon the difference between him and other apostles; he observes, that the subject matter of their ministry was the same, namely, a suffering and risen Saviour, and who was also the object of the faith of the believing Corinthians, Co1 15:11 wherefore the apostle proceeds to blame some among them for denying the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, seeing it was a principal part of the ministry of the Gospel, that Christ was risen from the dead, Co1 15:12 whereas that would not be true, if there is no resurrection of the dead, Co1 15:13 but that Christ is risen, is not only evident from the testimonies of eyewitnesses before produced, but from the absurdities that follow upon a denial of it, as that the preaching of the Gospel was a vain thing, and faith in it also, Co1 15:14 yea, the apostles would be no other than false witnesses of God, testifying that he raised up Christ, when he is not risen, if the dead rise not, Co1 15:15 which argument is repeated, Co1 15:16 and other absurdities following such an hypothesis are added; as besides what was before mentioned, that faith becomes hereby a vain thing, such as have believed in him must be in an unregenerate state, and both under the power and guilt of sin, Co1 15:17 nay, not only so, but such who are dead in Christ, or for his sake are lost and perished, Co1 15:18 and even those of the saints who are alive must be the most unhappy and miserable of all mortals, Co1 15:19. But inasmuch as it is a certain point that Christ is risen, it is as clear a case that the saints will rise, which is argued from Christ being the firstfruits of

those that are fallen asleep in him, which secures their resurrection to them, Co1 15:20 and from his being their covenant head, as Adam was to his posterity; so that as all his offspring died in him, all the saints will be quickened by Christ, death coming by the one, and the resurrection by the other, Co1 15:21. And whereas it might be objected, if this is the case, why did not the saints, who were dead before the resurrection of Christ, rise from the dead when he did, or quickly after? To which it is answered, there is an order observed agreeable to the firstfruits and lump: Christ, the firstfruits, is first, and then they that believe in him, Co1 15:23 and this will not be until the second coming of Christ, and the end of all things, when all the elect of God shall be gathered in; and then they will be raised and presented to the Father complete in soul and body, and all rule and authority among men will cease, Co1 15:24. But in the mean while Christ must reign until all enemies are subject to him, and the last of all that will be destroyed by him is death; which is another argument proving the resurrection of the dead; for if death is destroyed, the dead must rise, and never die more, Co1 15:25 That all things will be put under the feet of Christ, every enemy, and so death, is proved from a testimony out of Psa 8:6. But to prevent a cavil, and secure the honour of God the Father, he is excepted from being subject to him, Co1 15:27 so far is he from being so, that the Son shall be subject to him, and appear to be so as Mediator, by giving up the account of things to him; the end of which is, that God, Father, Son, and Spirit, may be all in all, Co1 15:28. The resurrection of the dead is further argued from the sufferings of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, for the sake of him and his Gospel, and particularly this doctrine of it, which are first figuratively expressed under the notion of a baptism, Co1 15:29 and then more literally and clearly signified by being in jeopardy, and exposed to danger of life continually, Co1 15:30 and which is exemplified in the case of the apostle himself, who was liable to death daily, Co1 15:31 of which he gives a particular instance in his fighting with beasts at Ephesus. Moreover, another absurdity would follow upon this, should this doctrine not be true; and that is, that a loose and licentious life, such an one as the Epicureans live, would be encouraged hereby, Co1 15:32 from which the apostle dissuades; partly from the pernicious effect of it, which he shows by a passage cited out of one of the Heathens, Co1 15:33 and partly from its being contrary to a righteous conversation, and from the stupidity, sinfulness, and ignorance, which such a course of life, upon such principles, declares, Co1 15:34. And then the apostle proceeds to answer questions, and remove objections relating to the resurrection of the dead; which questions and objections are put, Co1 15:35 which suppose the thing to be impossible and absurd, and to which answers are returned, first by observing, that grain which is sown in the earth first dies before it is quickened, and that it does not rise up bare grain as it was sown, but in a different form and shape, with additional circumstances greatly to its advantage; and has a body given by the power, and according to the pleasure of God, and suitable to the nature of the seed; by which is suggested, that in like manner the body first dies, and then is raised; and though the same body, yet it is raised in a different form with different qualities, by the power, and according to the will of God; and therefore seeing there are every year such innumerable instances in nature, of dead and putrefied grain being revived, it need not be thought incredible, impracticable, and absurd, that God should raise the dead, Co1 15:36 and that the body, though the same shall rise different from what it was when laid in the grave, is illustrated by the difference of flesh in men, beasts, fishes, and birds; which, though all of it flesh, differs from each other; and so will the flesh of the body, in the resurrection, differ from the flesh it is now clothed with, Co1 15:39. And the same is further illustrated by the difference there is in the heavenly and earthly bodies, in the sun, and moon, and stars, and in one star from another; all which have respect to the same, showing not any difference there will be in risen bodies among themselves, but in risen bodies from what they now are, Co1 15:40 as appears by the accommodation of these similes to the resurrection of the dead; and which differences are clearly expressed, the present bodies being corrupt, dishonourable, weak, and natural, the risen ones being incorruptible, glorious,

powerful, and spiritual, Co1 15:42. And that the risen bodies will be spiritual, the apostle proves, by comparing Adam and Christ together; the one had a natural body, the other had a spiritual body after his resurrection, Co1 15:45 the order of which is given, the natural body of Adam was before the spiritual body of Christ, Co1 15:46. Their original is also taken notice of, the one being of the earth, the other from heaven, Co1 15:47 and so accordingly the offspring of the one, and of the other, are different; the offspring of the first Adam are earthly like him, and have a natural body, as he had; the offspring of the second Adam are heavenly, as he was, and will have a body like to his; for as they bear the image of the first man, from whom they naturally descend, by having a natural body like to his, so they must bear the image of the second man, the Lord from heaven, by having a spiritual body fashioned like to his glorious body, Co1 15:48. And there is an absolute necessity for this, seeing bodies, in their present state, and case, as natural, mortal, and sinful, cannot be admitted into the possession of the kingdom and glory of the Lord, Co1 15:50 but inasmuch as all will not die, and so be raised again, but some will be alive at the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, a difficulty arises how the living saints will come by spiritual bodies, in order to inherit the kingdom of God, without which they cannot inherit it: this difficulty the apostle removes, by making known a secret never divulged before, that at the same time the dead will be raised, which will be at the sounding of a trumpet; in a moment, at once the living saints will be changed, and become immortal and incorruptible, as the raised ones, Co1 15:51 for so it must be that these corruptible and mortal bodies be clothed with incorruption and immortality, either by the resurrection of them, or a change upon them, when either way they will become spiritual, Co1 15:53. And hereby some prophecies in Isaiah and Hosea will have their accomplishment, Co1 15:54 on the mention of which, some things in them are explained, as that sin is the sting of death, and the law is the strength of sin, which regard the prophecy in Hosea, Co1 15:56 and the victory obtained over death, which is mentioned in the prophecy of Isaiah, is ascribed to God, who gives it through Christ, to whom thanks are returned for it, Co1 15:57. And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation steadfastly to abide by the cause of Christ, and in his service; to which the saints are encouraged from this consideration, that they will find their account in it, Co1 15:58.

1 Corinthians 15:1

Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel,... The apostle here passes on, and proceeds to a new subject, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which some in this church denied; and which he undertakes to prove, establish, and defend; and in order to lead on to it, observes, that what he was about to declare, make known, or put them in mind of, was no other than the Gospel he had formerly preached to them, they had received, professed to stand in, and were saved by, unless their faith was in vain. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead he calls “the Gospel”, that being a most important doctrine, and a fundamental article of it. The resurrection of Christ from the dead made a considerable part in the ministry of the apostles, to the grief of the Sadducees among the Jews, to the scorn of the Gentile philosophers, and to the faith, hope, and comfort of Christians: this is the sum and substance of the word of faith, or doctrine of the Gospel, upon which the whole depends; see Rom 10:8 and the resurrection of the saints is connected with it, and assured by it. This indeed is the Gospel, good news, glad tidings that the bodies of the saints shall be raised again, and made like to the glorious body of Christ; and being reunited to their souls, shall live with him to all eternity; and were this out of the Gospel, it would not be Gospel, or good news; it would be an idle story, faith would be a vain thing, and hoping and believing Christians of all the most miserable. Moreover, says the apostle, the Gospel I declare, is

which I preached unto you; meaning, when he first came among them, and which had been so very useful to them for conversion and consolation; and therefore if he himself, or an angel from heaven, was to preach any other doctrine, it was to be rejected; and hence, much less should the false teachers be regarded: yea, adds he, it is the doctrine

which also you have received; when first enlightened and converted, with all gladness and joyfulness, with all readiness and cheerfulness, in the love of it, and by a full assent to it; and therefore having had such an experience of it, should not now depart from it: nay, he further says,

and wherein ye stand; as he hoped they did, at least it was what they ought to have done, and doubtless was the case of the majority of them, and whose example it became the rest to follow.

1 Corinthians 15:2

By which also ye are saved,.... It was the means of their salvation, and had been made the power of God unto salvation to them. Salvation is inseparably connected with true faith in Christ as a Saviour, and with a hearty belief of his resurrection from the dead, which is the earnest and pledge of the resurrection of the saints; and because of the certainty of it in the promise of God, through the obedience and death of Christ, and in the faith and hope of believers, which are sure and certain things, they are said to be saved already. To which the apostle puts in the following provisos and exceptions; the one is,

if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you; or rather, “if ye hold fast, or retain”; that is, by faith, the doctrine preached to you, and received by you, particularly the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; for the salvation that is connected with it does not depend upon the strength of the memory, but upon the truth and steadfastness of faith: it is the man that perseveres in the faith and doctrine of Christ that shall be saved; and everyone that has truly believed in Christ, and cordially embraced his Gospel, shall hold on, and out to the end; though the faith of nominal believers may be overthrown by such men, as Hymenaeus and Philetus, who asserted, that the resurrection was past already; but so shall not the faith of real believers, because the foundation on which they are built stands sure, and the Lord has perfect knowledge of them, and will keep and save them. The other exception is,

unless ye have believed in vain: not that true faith can be in vain; for that is the faith of God's elect, the gift of his grace, the operation of his Spirit; Christ is the author and finisher of it, and will never suffer it to fail; it will certainly issue in everlasting salvation: but then as the word may be heard in vain, as it is by such who are compared to the wayside, and to the thorny and rocky ground; and as the Gospel of the grace of God may be received in vain; so a mere historical faith may be in vain; this a man may have, and not the grace of God, and so be nothing; with this he may believe for a while, and then drop it: and since each of these might possibly be the case of some in this church, the apostle puts in these exceptions, in order to awaken the attention of them all to this important doctrine he was reminding them of.

1 Corinthians 15:3

For I delivered unto you first of all,.... Not only in the first place as to order; but among the chief and principal things, as the words will bear to be rendered, this was insisted on in his ministry; this was one he after relates, even a crucified Christ, or the doctrine of his dying for the sins of his people; and

which he mentions to lead on to his resurrection; which he meant to improve, and does improve, in a very strong manner, in favour of the resurrection of the saints. This doctrine of a crucified Saviour, which he at first determined only to make known among them, and did make known, was what he fully and faithfully delivered to them, as he had received it:

that which also I received; not from men, but from Christ; for from him he had the doctrines of the Gospel, as well as the ordinances of it; and he delivered nothing to be believed and practised, but what he had received, and which ought to be the practice and conduct of every Gospel minister; whatever they have received they should deliver, and nothing else: and especially the following important doctrine,

how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that is, of the Old Testament, the writings of Moses, and the prophets, according to Scripture promises, Scripture types, and Scripture prophecies; particularly Gen 3:15 Dan 9:24 which declare that his heel was to be bruised, that he should be brought to the dust of death, should pour out his soul unto death, and be stricken and cut off in a judicial way, and that for sins; not his own, but for the sins of his people, in order to atone for them, procure the pardon of them, take them away, make an end of them, and abolish them; all which he has done, as the Gospel declares, and the apostle affirms; and thereby was accomplished what Moses and the prophets did say should come to pass. Every promise, type, and prophecy recorded in the law, in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning his sufferings and death, had their fulfilment in him; nothing was more clearly prefigured and foretold, and nothing more punctually and fully answered.

1 Corinthians 15:4

And that he was buried,... That is, according to the Scriptures; for as he died and rose again according to the Scriptures, he was buried according to them; which speak of his being in hell, in “sheol”, in the grave, and of his making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, Psa 16:10 and which had their accomplishment through Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, who begged the body of Jesus, wrapped in linen, and laid it in his own new tomb. And besides these Scripture prophecies of his burial, Jonah’s being three days and three nights in the whale’s belly was a type of it, and according to which our Lord himself foretold it, Mat 12:40. Now since this was prophesied of, and typified, and had its actual accomplishment, it was very proper for the apostle to take notice of it, both to confirm the certainty of Christ’s death, and the truth of his resurrection, which his death and burial are mentioned, in order to lead on to, and next follows:

and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: that he should rise again from the dead was very plainly hinted or expressed in several prophecies which speak of the rising of his dead body, of its not being left in the grave so long as to see corruption; and which therefore could not be in it more than three days; and of his lifting up his head after he had drank of the brook by the way; of his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, which suppose his resurrection, Isa 26:19. And that he should rise again the third day, is not only suggested in Hos 6:2 but was prefigured by the deliverance of Isaac on the third day after Abraham had given him up for dead, from whence he received him, in a figure of Christ’s resurrection; and by Jonah’s deliverance out of the whale’s belly, after he had been in it three days. The Jews take a particular notice of the third day as remarkable for many things they observe (e), as

“of the third day Abraham lift up his eyes, Gen 22:4 of the third day of the tribes, Gen 42:18 of the third day of the spies, Jos 2:16 of the third day of the giving of the law, Exo 19:16 of the third day of Jonah, Jon 1:17 of the third day of them that came out of the captivity, Ezr 8:15 of the third day of the resurrection of the dead, as it is written, Hos 6:2 “after two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.””

From which passage, it is clear, that they understood the prophecy in Hosea of the resurrection of the dead; and it is observable, that among the remarkable third days they take notice of, are the two instances of Isaac’s and Jonah’s deliverances, which were Scripture types of Christ’s resurrection. From which observations they establish this as a maxim (f), that

“God does not leave the righteous in distress more than three days.”

That Christ did rise again from the dead, in pursuance of those prophecies and types, the apostle afterwards proves by an induction of particular instances of persons who were eyewitnesses of it.

(e) Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56. fol. 49. 3. (f) Mattanot Cehunah in ib.

1 Corinthians 15:5

And that he was seen of Cephas,.... Or Simon Peter; for Cephas was a name given him by Christ, Joh 1:42. This was not another Cephas, one of the seventy disciples, as Clemens suggests (g), but the Apostle Peter himself, to whom it is certain the Lord appeared. Not that he was the first person by whom Christ was seen after his resurrection, for he first appeared to Mary Magdalene, Mar 16:9 but the testimony of the women the apostle omits, and it seems as if Peter was the first of the men that saw Christ when risen, see Luk 24:34. Whether he was one of the disciples that went to Emmaus, to whom Christ joined himself, and entered into discourse with, is not certain; it should rather seem, that the appearance here referred to was when he was alone;

then of the twelve; though there were then but eleven of them, Judas being gone from them, and having destroyed himself; and at the first appearance of Christ to them, there were but ten present, Thomas being absent; and yet because their original number, when first chosen and called, were twelve, they still went by the same name; see Joh 20:24. The appearance or appearances here referred to are those in Joh 20:19. The Vulgate Latin reads the “eleven”; and so the Claromontane exemplar.

(g) Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.

1 Corinthians 15:6

After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once,.... Not at, or near Jerusalem, for the number of the disciples that were together there, made but about an hundred and twenty, Act 1:15 but in Galilee, where Christ, in the days of his flesh, had most chiefly conversed, most frequently preached and wrought his miracles, and where the number of his disciples and followers were very large: here he promised his disciples to go before them, and show himself to them after his resurrection, as he accordingly did, Mat 26:32. And this being signified by the apostles to the brethren there, it is no wonder that there was such a number of them gathered on that occasion:

of whom the greater part remain unto this present; and so might be personally applied unto for the truth of this, was it necessary; it being but about five or six and twenty years ago at the writing of this epistle:

and some were fallen asleep; were dead, as it might be reasonably thought there were among so many, and in such a length of time; though doubtless these had surviving friends, relations, and acquaintance, to whom they had communicated this important case, and who were ready to attest what they had heard them in the most solemn manner declare.

1 Corinthians 15:7

After that he was seen of James,.... Not James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, though he was seen by him with other disciples, Joh 20:19 who was now dead when the apostle wrote this, having been killed by Herod many years ago, Act 12:2 and so not quite so proper a witness to be mentioned; but James the son of Alphaeus, and brother of our Lord, a man of great fame and credit with the Jews, and still living, and therefore a proper and pertinent evidence. This appearance was made unto him when alone; and though the Scripture elsewhere makes no mention of it, there is no room to doubt it, since the apostle here affirms it. As for the account of the appearance of Christ to this James, immediately, after his resurrection, recorded by Jerom as he found it in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, it seems to be fabulous. His account is this (h);

“the Gospel written according to the Hebrews, which was lately translated by me into the Greek and Latin tongues, and which Origen often uses, relates, after the resurrection of the Saviour, that when the Lord had given the linen cloth to the priest’s servant, he went to James, and appeared to him: for James had sworn that he would not taste any bread from the time he had drank the cup of the Lord, until he saw him rising from the dead. Again, a little after, bring me, says the Lord, the table and the bread; and it is immediately added, he took the bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to James the just, and said unto him, my brother, eat thy bread, for the son of man is risen from the dead.”

Then of all the apostles; at the Mount of Olives, when he led them out of Jerusalem, as far as Bethany, blessed them, and was parted from them, and ascended to heaven out of their sight, Luk 24:50 so that this was the last appearance of him on earth after his resurrection.

(h) Catalog. Script. Eccles. sect. 3. fol. 90. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:8

And last of all he was seen of me also,.... Either when the apostle was caught up into the third heaven; or when he was in a trance in the temple at Jerusalem; or rather at the time of his conversion, when he not only heard the voice of Christ, but saw him in the human nature; for he expressly says, that he appeared unto him, and he calls it the heavenly vision, Act 26:16. This was a sight of Christ in heaven, not on earth, such an one as Stephen had, and was a corporeal one; otherwise it would have been impertinent to have mentioned it, with the rest of the ocular testimonies of Christ’s resurrection. Not that this was the last time that Christ was seen, or to be seen, for he was seen after this by the Apostle John in a visionary way, and will be corporeally seen by all the saints at the last day; but Paul was the last of the apostles and brethren before named, and he had his vision of Christ after them all; and perhaps it might be a more clear, full, and distinct one than any of the rest, as the last things are

sometimes the most excellent. The apostle adds, as of

one born out of due time: or “as an abortive”; not that he was really one, but like one: several learned interpreters think the apostle refers to a proverbial way of speaking among the common people at Rome, who used to call such supernumerary senators in the times of Augustus Caesar, who got into the senate house by favour or bribery, “abortives” (i), they being generally very unworthy persons; and therefore calls himself by this name, as being in his own opinion a supernumerary apostle, and very unworthy of that office: though others rather think that he refers to a “posthumous” birth, to one that is born after the death of his father; because that the rest of the apostles were all chosen, and called, and sent forth, whilst Christ, their everlasting Father, was living on earth, but he not till after his death, resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven: but it seems best to understand him of an abortion, a miscarriage, or birth before its time; and may respect either the manner of his conversion, which was done both suddenly, immediately, and at once, by a sudden light from heaven, when he little thought of it, and had no expectation of it, which is commonly the case of abortions; and also powerfully and irresistibly, being effected by mighty and efficacious grace, as births before the full time are often occasioned by blows or outward force, and are violent extrusions of the foetus; or else the state and condition in which he was when Christ was first seen by him: as to his bodily state, as soon as ever he saw the light about him, and the object by it, he was struck blind, and continued so some days, like an hidden untimely birth, and like an infant that never saw light, Job 3:16. And as to his spiritual estate, his soul was like an unshapen foetus, Christ being not yet formed in him, his image stamped on him, and his grace implanted in him; yea, it may be applied to the present apprehensions he had of himself, and which he expresses without a figure in the next verse, though in a beautiful manner, with a view to what he here says, when he observes that he was “the least of the apostles, and not meet to be called” one; as an abortive, or one born before its time, is imperfect in one respect or another, is not come to its proper size and shape, and scarcely is to be reckoned in the class and number of men.

(i) Vid. Sueton. in Vita August. c. 35.

1 Corinthians 15:9

For I am the least of the apostles,.... Referring not to the littleness of his stature, but to the figure before used, and as expressing not the opinion of others concerning him, but the true and real sense he had of himself, for which he himself gives the strongest reason that can be given; and by “apostles” he means not only the twelve, but all other ministers of the Gospel that were sent forth by Christ to preach it: nor need this be wondered at, when he says, that he was less than the least of all saints, Eph 3:8 though when his person and doctrines were traduced by false teachers, and attempts were made to disgrace his ministry, and render it useless, in vindication of himself, and without vanity, he does not stick to assert, that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles, Co2 11:5 and yet here adds,

that am not meet to be called an apostle; not only to be one, but to bear the name of one. No man was meet or fit for such an office of himself; none of the apostles were any more than himself; but his meaning is, that though he was chosen, and called, and qualified by the gifts and grace of God for this office, yet he was unworthy to be called by the name of an apostle of Christ, for the reason following,

because I persecuted the church of God: he not only consented to the death of Stephen, the first

martyr, and held the clothes of them that stoned him; but he made havoc of the church, haling men and women to prison, and continued to breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord; and had letters of commission from the high priest in his pocket, to seize any of this way at Damascus, and bring them bound to Jerusalem, when Christ met him in the way, and was seen by him: according to his own account, he shut up many of the saints in prison, gave his voice against them when they were put to death, punished them oft in every synagogue, compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceeding mad against them, persecuted them to strange cities; see Act 7:1. This he mentions both for his own abasement and humiliation, and to magnify the grace of God, to which he ascribes all he was, had, and did, as in the next verse.

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am,... As he was what he was by the grace of God in a private capacity, upon a level with other Christians, being a chosen vessel of salvation, not by works, nor on account of faith, or any holiness of his, but by grace; being regenerated, called, sanctified, justified, pardoned, and adopted by it; being a believer in Christ through faith, as a gift of God's grace, and having a good hope of eternal glory the same way; so he was what he was, as a minister of the Gospel, as an apostle, as in that high office purely by the grace of God: he was not made one by men, nor by his education, learning, and industry, nor through any merits of his own, but by the free favour and sovereign will of God, bestowing on him gifts and grace, by which he was qualified for apostleship, and to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ:

and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain; by "grace", in the former clause, is meant the good will and free favour of God, from whence all the blessings of goodness arise; here the gifts of grace, particularly such as qualify for the ministry. For what qualifies men for the preaching of the Gospel is not human learning, nor natural parts, nor internal grace, neither separately nor altogether: but peculiar gifts, which lie in an understanding of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and in an aptitude to explain and teach them to the edification of others: and these gifts are not of nature, nor acquired by art and industry, but are of grace; are gifts freely bestowed by God, and are not in vain, at least should not be; they are not to be wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth; they are not to be neglected, but to be stirred up and improved by prayer, meditation, reading, constant study, and frequent use, as they were by the apostle; and by a divine blessing were not without their use, to the good of souls, and the glory of God. Hence as what he was, so what he had, was by the grace of God, and likewise what he did, as follows:

but I laboured more abundantly than they all; meaning, not the false apostles, who were loiterers, and not labourers, but the true apostles of Christ; not than them all put together, but than anyone of them singly considered; he laboured in the Lord's vineyard, in the word and doctrine, preaching in season and out of season; he travelled over a greater part of the world, preached oftener, and wrote more than any of the rest; was the instrument of converting more souls, and he planted more churches, endured more hardships and sufferings than any of the other apostles;

Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me; he attributes all to the grace of God, and nothing to himself; it was the grace of God that made him an apostle of Christ, and preacher of the Gospel; it was that which being bestowed on him qualified him for it; it was that which enabled him to labour and toil, to do and suffer all he did, and which gave success to all his ministrations. He is exceedingly careful to magnify the free favour of God, and the gifts of his grace; and means not the grace that was

in him, but the grace that was without him, though with him.

1 Corinthians 15:11

Therefore whether it were I or they,... By whom Christ was seen first or last, we were all eyewitnesses of him; or whether I am the least, and others the chief of the apostles; or whether I have laboured more abundantly than they all, this matters not:

so we preach; we agree in our ministry to preach Christ, and him only, and with one heart and mouth assert, that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day:

and so ye believed; these several truths relating to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Thus the apostle, after he had made a digression upon his own character, as one of the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, returns to the subject he set out upon in the beginning of the chapter, in order to lead on to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which he proves by the resurrection of Christ, in the following verses. One of Stephen's copies read, "so we believed"; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read; see Co2 4:13.

1 Corinthians 15:12

Now if Christ be preached that he arose from the dead,... As he was by the Apostle Paul, when at Corinth, and by all the rest of the apostles elsewhere.

How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? Who these were is not certain, whether Hymenaeus and Philetus, whose notion this was, were come hither, or any of their disciples; or whether they were some of the followers of Simon Magus and Cerinthus, who denied the resurrection; or rather, whether they were not Jews, and of the sect of the Sadducees, who though they believed in Christ, retained their old principle, that there is no resurrection of the dead, cannot be affirmed: however, it is certain that they were such as were then at Corinth, and went under the Christian name; and it is highly probable were members of the church there; and who not only held this notion privately, but broached it publicly, saying, declaring, affirming, and that openly, before the whole church, what were their opinions and sentiments: it was indeed but some of them, not all that were chargeable with this bad principle, which the apostle asks how, and with what face they could assert, then it had been preached, and so fully proved to them, that Christ was risen from the dead; and if so, then it is out of question that there is a resurrection of the dead; for their notion, as it is here expressed, was not only that there would be no resurrection of the dead, but that there was none, nor had been any: though the apostle's view is also to prove the future resurrection of the dead, and which is done by proving the resurrection of Christ, for his resurrection involves that of his people; for not only the saints rose in, and with Christ, as their head representatively, and which is the sense of the prophecy in Hos 6:2 but because he is their head, and they are members of him, therefore as sure as he the head is risen, so sure shall the members rise likewise; nor will Christ's resurrection, in a sense, be perfect, until all the members of his body are risen: for though the resurrection of Christ, personally considered, is perfect, yet not as mystically considered; nor will it till all the saints are raised, of whose resurrection Christ's is the exemplar and the pledge: their bodies will be raised and fashioned like unto Christ's, and by virtue of union to him, and as sure as he is risen, for he is the firstfruits of them that slept. Besides, as he became incarnate, obeyed, suffered, not for himself, but for his people, so he rose again on their account, and that they dying might rise also; which if they should

not, one end at least of Christ's resurrection would not be answered: add to this, that the same power that raised Christ from the dead, can raise others, even all the saints; so that if it is allowed that Christ is raised, it need not be thought incredible that all the dead shall be raised; and particularly when it is observed, that Christ is the efficient, procuring, and meritorious cause of the resurrection from the dead, as well as the pattern and earnest of it.

1 Corinthians 15:13

But if there be no resurrection of the dead,... If there is no such thing as a resurrection of any, if the thing is not possible, if it never has been, is, or will be true in fact:

then is Christ not risen. The apostle argues from a general, to a particular; from the general resurrection of the dead, to the particular resurrection of Christ; and from a negation of the one, to a negation of the other; for what does not agree with the whole, does not agree with the part; and what is true of the whole, is true of the part; but if the resurrection of Christ is not true, many are the absurdities that must follow upon it, and which the apostle next enumerates.

1 Corinthians 15:14

And if Christ be not risen,... If this is a truth, and must be taken as granted, as it must be, if there is no resurrection at all:

then is our preaching vain; false, empty, delusory, unprofitable, and useless; not only that part of it which more especially concerns the resurrection of Christ, but even the whole of it; preaching Christ as the Son of God, which was the subject of the apostle's ministry, and which he set out with, is to no purpose, if he is not risen; for one considerable proof of his sonship depends upon his resurrection, which is the declaration of it; for who can believe him to be the Son of God, if he is detained under the power of the grave? one reason why he could not be held of death, and the pains and cords of it, any longer than was necessary, and was his pleasure, was because he was the Son of God, as well as surety of his people, who had paid the whole debt: so the preaching of his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, is of no use and avail, if he has not abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, first in himself, and then for his people:

and your faith is also vain; either the grace of faith, by which they believed on Christ, or the doctrine of faith; or since this is repeated, Co1 15:17 the one may be meant here, and the other there. The doctrine of faith they had given their assent to, not only respecting the resurrection of Christ, but any other truth relating to his person and office, must be vain and empty, and without any foundation; even that faith which is one, uniform, harmonious, and consistent, which was once delivered to the saints; which they are to stand fast in, to strive, contend, and fight for, and not part with at any rate, upon any account whatever; and yet this, and the preaching and belief of it, are useless and insignificant things, if Christ is not risen; such wretched absurdities must follow upon the denial of that truth.

1 Corinthians 15:15

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God,... The apostles were chosen to be witnesses of the resurrection of Christ; he appeared to them, and was seen by them for this purpose; and they were

sent into all the world, to bear their testimony to this truth, which they accordingly did: now if Christ is not risen, they have bore a false testimony; and what greater scandal, or a more odious character can be fixed upon a man, than to be a false witness? but God forbid that such an imputation should be fastened upon the holy apostles of Christ, who cannot be thought to have any sinister end in publishing such a falsehood; who were sure on account of declaring it, and abiding by it, to meet with nothing but hatred, reproach, persecution, poverty, and death; but this is not all, nor the worst; for if they are false witnesses, they are false witnesses of God; they are of his suborning; he selected them as witnesses; he must put this lie into their mouths, and send them into the world under his authority to publish it; than which to say nothing can be thought of more blasphemous and execrable; and yet this must follow, upon a denial of the resurrection of Christ:

because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be the dead rise not; it may be read, “we have testified against God”, as the Vulgate Latin does; for as it must be bringing a false testimony from God, so it must be bearing a false testimony against him, to say that he raised Christ from the dead, when he is not risen; which must be the case, if there is no resurrection of the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:16

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. This is a repetition of the argument in Co1 15:13 made partly to show the importance of it, and partly to observe other absurdities, following upon the conclusion of it.

1 Corinthians 15:17

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain,.... As before in Co1 15:14 not only the doctrine of faith, but the grace of faith in Christ; even that faith, which is the faith of God's elect; the pure gift of his grace, and the operation of his power; which Christ is the object, author, and finisher of; and which he prays for, that it may not fail; and to which salvation is so often promised in the sacred Scriptures; and yet is vain, than which nothing can be more absurd: it follows,

ye are yet in your sins: in a state of nature and unregeneracy, under the power and dominion of sin, being neither regenerated nor sanctified; for regeneration is owing to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and is a branch of the power, virtue, and efficacy of it: but if Christ is not risen, there never was, is, or will be any such thing as regeneration and sanctification; things, if ever wrought by the Spirit, are done by him in virtue, and in imitation of the resurrection, as well as the death of Christ: moreover, if Christ is not risen, his people are under the guilt of their sins; there is no expiation nor remission of them, nor justification from them; for though he was delivered as a sacrifice to atone for their offences, and his blood was shed to obtain the forgiveness of their sins, yet he must be raised again for their justification, and be exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, as to give repentance, so remission of sins, or they will never enjoy these blessings; for notwithstanding his sufferings and death, if he lies under the power of the grave, they must remain under the power and guilt of sin, and be liable to everlasting punishment for it.

1 Corinthians 15:18

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ,.... That is, who are dead, and have died in Christ:

death is often represented by a sleep, and that more than once in this chapter; and doubtless with a view to the resurrection, which will be an awaking out of it, since it will not be perpetual: some understand this of such only who were fallen asleep, or died martyrs for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; as Stephen, James the brother of John, and others; but rather it designs all such as die in Christ, in union with him, whether in the lively exercise of faith, or not; of whom it must be said, if Christ is not risen, that they

are perished: soul and body; for if there is no reason to believe the resurrection of the dead, there is no reason to believe the immortality of the soul, or a future state, but rather that the soul perishes with the body, and that there is no existence after death: though should it be insisted on that the soul survives, and shall live without the body to all eternity, it must be in a state of misery, if Christ is not risen, because it must be in its sins; and neither sanctified nor justified, and consequently cannot be glorified, so that the whole may be said to be perished; the body perishes in the grave, the soul in hell; but God forbid that this should be said of those, who have either died for Christ, or in him: can it be that any that are in Christ, that are united to him, one body and spirit with him, should ever perish? or those that are asleep in him be lost? no, those that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him at the last day, who shall be for ever with him, and for ever happy.

1 Corinthians 15:19

If in this life only we have hope in Christ,... The object of a believer's hope is not any creature, man, or angel; nor any creature enjoyment, as gold and silver; nor any creature righteousness, moral, legal, and civil; nor any external privilege, or profession of religion; but Christ alone as a surety, Saviour, and Redeemer; his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness: and what they hope for in him are, all grace, and the supplies of it; the forgiveness of their sins, the justification of their persons, eternal life and salvation; grace here, and glory hereafter; for all which they have great reason and encouragement to hope in him; but if their hope in him was only in this life, or whilst this life lasts; if they had not hope in death, that they should live again, and after death for the resurrection of their bodies; or if they hoped in Christ only for the things of this life, or as the Arabic version renders it, "if we from Christ, and by him, expect happiness in this world only"; if our hope in him is bounded with this life, and confined to the things of it, and does not reach to the things of another life, the things of eternity, the invisible glories of another world, to be enjoyed in soul and body;

we are of all men the most miserable; which may have respect not only to the apostles, though eminently true of them, who had little of the comforts of this life, being continually exposed to hardships and persecution for the sake of Christ; were set forth as a spectacle to angels and men; were accounted the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; and suffered many indignities, and great reproach and affliction, and that for asserting the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; but is also true of all others that hope in Christ, and believe in him; for these not only deny themselves the pleasures, honours, and profits of this world, but are exposed continually to the hatred, reproach, and persecution of it; they are chastised by God as other men are, that they may not be condemned with the world, and yet they must be condemned, if Christ is not risen; they are harassed and distressed by Satan, who follows them with his temptations and suggestions, which are so many fiery darts, which give them great pain and uneasiness, when others are unmolested by him; they groan under a body of sin they carry about with them, and desire and long to be unclothed, that they might be clothed upon with glory and immortality; and yet these very desires and earnest longings after a blessed eternity do but add to their misery, if there is no foundation for them, and they will at last be frustrated: these are

the sad conclusions, and wretched absurdities that must follow, upon the denial of the resurrection of the dead, and of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:20

But now is Christ risen from the dead,.... As was before proved by ocular testimonies, and before preached and asserted; and now reassumed and concluded, from the glaring contradictions, and dreadful absurdities that follow the denial of it:

and became the firstfruits of them that slept; who were already fallen asleep; respecting chiefly the saints that died before the resurrection of Christ; and if Christ was the firstfruit of them, there is no difficulty of conceiving how he is the firstfruits of those that die since. The allusion is to the firstfruits of the earth, which were offered to the Lord: and especially to the sheaf of the firstfruits, which was waved by the priest before him, Deu 26:2 and to which Christ, in his resurrection from the dead, is here compared. The firstfruits were what first sprung out of the earth, were soonest ripe, and were first reaped and gathered in, and then offered unto the Lord; so Christ first rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, and presented himself to God; as the representative of his people; for though there were others that were raised before him, as the widow of Sarepta's son by Elijah, the Shunammite's son by Elisha, and the man that touched the prophet's bones when put into his grave, and Jairus's daughter, the widow of Naam's son, and Lazarus by Christ; yet as these did not rise by their own power, so only to a mortal life: but Christ, as he raised himself by his own power, so he rose again to an immortal life, and was the first that ever did so; he was the first to whom God showed, and who first trod this path of life. The firstfruits were the best, what was then ripest, and so most valuable; Christ is the first, and rose the first in dignity, as well as in time; he rose as the head of the body, as the firstborn, the beginning, that in all things he might have, and appear to have, as he ought to have, the pre-eminence. The firstfruits sanctified the rest of the harvest, represented the whole, gave right to the ingathering of it, and ensured it; Christ by lying in the grave, and rising out of it, sanctified it for his people, and in his resurrection represented them; they rose with him, and in him; and their resurrection is secured by his; because he lives, they shall live also. The firstfruits were only such, and all this to the fruits of the earth, that were of the same kind with them, not to tares and chaff, to briers and thorns; so Christ, in rising from the dead, is only the firstfruits of the saints; of such as are the fruits of his death and of his grace, who have the fruits of his Spirit in them, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness by him; just as he is the firstborn from the dead, with respect to the many brethren, whom he stands in the relation of a firstborn: once more, as the allusion is particularly to the sheaf of the firstfruits, it is to be observed, that that was waved before the Lord, the morrow after the sabbath, Lev 23:11 which, as the Jews (f) interpret, was the morrow after the first good day, or festival of the passover; the passover was on the fourteenth day of the month; the festival, or Chagiga, on the fifteenth, and which, in the year that Christ suffered, was a sabbath day also; and the morrow after that, the sheaf of the firstfruits was waved; now Christ suffered on the passover, rested in the grave on the seventh day sabbath, and on the morrow after that, rose from the dead, the very day that the first fruits were offered to the Lord: so that the allusion and phrase are very appropriately used by the apostle.

(f) Targum & Jarchi in Lev. xxiii. 11.

1 Corinthians 15:21

For since by man came death,... The first man, by sin, was the cause of death; of its coming into the world, and upon all men, by which corporeal death is here meant; though the first man also by sin brought a moral death, or a death in sin on all his posterity; and rendered them liable to an eternal death, which is the just wages of sin; but since the apostle is treating of the resurrection of the body, a bodily death seems only intended:

by man came also the resurrection of the dead; so God, in his great goodness and infinite wisdom has thought fit, and he has so ordered it, that it should be, that as the first man was the cause of, and brought death into the world, the second man should be the cause of the resurrection of life. Christ is the meritorious and procuring cause of the resurrection of his people; he by dying has abolished death; and by rising from the dead has opened the graves of the saints, and procured their resurrection for them, obtained for them a right unto it, and made way for it: and he is the pattern and exemplar, according to which they will be raised; their vile bodies will be fashioned, and made like to his glorious body; and whereas both in life and in death they bear the image of the first and earthly man, in the resurrection they will bear the image of the second and heavenly one: he also will be the efficient cause of the resurrection; all the dead will be raised by his power, and at the hearing of his voice; though the saints only will be raised by him, in virtue of their union to him, and interest in him, being members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

1 Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die,... The apostle here shows who he meant in the former verse, by the one man the cause of death, and by the other the author of the resurrection of the dead, and that he intended Adam and Christ; all men were in Adam seminally, as the common parent of human nature, in such sense as Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchizedek met him, and in him paid tithes unto him; and they were all in him representatively, he being the federal head of all his posterity, and so a type and figure of Christ that was to come; and being in him, they all sinned in him, and so died in him, the sentence of death passed on them in him; they became subject to a corporeal death, which has ever since reigned over mankind, even over infants, such who have not sinned after the similitude of his transgression; this was the doctrine of the Jewish church; See Gill on Rom 5:12, to which may be added one testimony more; says (g) one of their writers,

“by the means of the first Adam , “death was inflicted by way of punishment on all”.”

even so in Christ shall all be made alive: not made spiritually alive, for Christ quickens whom he will; not all in this sense, some die in their sins; nor are all entitled to an eternal life; for though Christ has a power to give it, yet only to those whom the Father has given to him; it is true indeed, that all that are in Christ, chosen in him and united to him, are made alive by him, and have the gift of eternal life through him; but the apostle is not speaking of such a life, but of a corporeal one: to be quickened or made alive, is with the Jews, and other eastern nations, a phrase of the same signification with being raised from the dead, and as the context here shows; and not to be understood of the resurrection of all men, for though there will be a resurrection of the just and unjust, yet the one will be the resurrection of life, and the other the resurrection of damnation; now it is of the former the apostle here speaks, and expresses by being made alive: and the sense is, that as all that were in Adam, all that belonged to him, all his natural seed and posterity, all to whom he was a federal head, died in him, became mortal, and subject to death through him; so all that are in Christ, that belong to him, who are his spiritual seed and offspring, to whom he is a covenant head, and representative, shall be raised

to an immortal life by him; or as all the elect of God died in Adam, so shall they all be quickened, or raised to life in and by Christ.

(g) Baal Hatturim in Dent. iii. 26.

1 Corinthians 15:23

But every man in his own order,... Not of time, as if the saints that lived in the first age of the world should rise first, and then those of the next, and so on to the end of the world; nor of dignity, as that martyrs should rise first in the order of martyrs, and preachers of the word in the order of preachers, and private Christians in the order and rank of private Christians; or of age, as the elder first, and then the younger; or of state and condition, as married persons in the order of married persons, and virgins in the order of virgins; these are all foreign from the sense of the words; the order regarded is that of head and members, the firstfruits and the harvest. There seems to be an allusion to the ranging and marshalling of the Israelites, everyone by his "own standard"; which both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render, "by or according to his own order": and so the Septuagint, the word here used; and the sense is, that every man shall be raised from the dead, according to the head under which he is ranged and marshalled. Christ the head is risen first; next all those that are under him, as an head, will rise from the dead; the dead in Christ will rise first; and then a thousand years after that, those who are only in their natural head, by whom death came to them, and have lived and died in a natural estate, will rise last; but as the apostle is only upon the resurrection of the saints, he carries the account and observes the order no further than as it concerns Christ and his people:

Christ the firstfruits; he rose first in order of time, dignity, causality and influence; See Gill on Co1 15:20.

afterwards they that are Christ's; not immediately after; for now almost two thousand years are elapsed since the resurrection of Christ, and yet the saints are not raised; and how many more years are to run out before that, is not to be known; but as there was an interval between the firstfruits, and the ingathering of the harvest; so there is a considerable space of time between the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruits, and the resurrection of his people, which will be the harvest; and that will be at the end of the world, according to Mat 13:39 the persons who shall rise first and next after Christ, are they that are his; who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and were given to him by his Father as his spouse, his children, his sheep, his portion, and his jewels; who were purchased and redeemed by his blood, are called by his grace and regenerated by his Spirit, and who give up themselves to him, and are possessed by him: and the interest that Christ has in them here expressed, carries in it a strong argument of their resurrection; which may be concluded from their election in Christ, which can never be made void; from the gift of their whole persons to Christ by his Father, with this declaration of his will, that he should lose nothing of them, but raise it up at the last day; from his redemption of their bodies as well as their souls; from the union of both unto him; and from the sanctification of both, and his Spirit dwelling in their mortal bodies as well as in their souls: the time when they will be raised by Christ is,

at his coming; at his second and personal coming at the last day; then the dead in Christ will rise first, and immediately; and he will judge the quick and dead, those that will be found alive, and those that will be then raised from the dead: when this will be no man knows; yet nothing is more certain, than that Christ will come a second time; and his coming will be speedy and sudden; it will be glorious

and illustrious, and to the joy and salvation of his people; since their bodies will then be raised and reunited to their souls, when they, soul and body, shall be for ever with the Lord. The Vulgate Latin reads the words thus, “they that are Christ’s, who have believed in his coming”; both in his first and second coming; but there is nothing in the Greek text to encourage and support such a version and sense.

1 Corinthians 15:24

Then cometh the end,... Or “after that the end”, the end of all things; either at the close of the thousand years, when the wicked dead will be raised last, and the final state of all men will openly take place; the end of the righteous will be peace and everlasting joy, and an uninterrupted communion with Christ, and enjoyment of life eternal, of the ultimate glory, and consummate happiness in soul and body; and the end of the wicked will be destruction and death, everlasting punishment in hell, where will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore: or at the beginning of the thousand years; immediately upon Christ’s second and personal coming, will be the end of the world; the heavens shall pass away, the elements shall melt, and the earth and all its works be burnt up; though these shall not be annihilated or destroyed, as to their being and substance, but only as to their present form and qualities; they shall be renewed, out of them shall arise new heavens, and a new earth, whereon righteous persons, and only righteous persons, will dwell, even all the righteous that will be raised at Christ’s coming, or shall then be bound alive, where they shall reign with him during the thousand years; and then there wilt be an end of preaching the Gospel, and of administering ordinances, there being no more elect souls to be gathered in; nor will saints stand in need of edification and comfort from such means; then will also be the end, the accomplishment of all the purposes, promises, and prophecies of God, relating to the state and condition of his church and people in all the periods of time, and to their complete glory and happiness; the number of God’s elect in regeneration, sanctification, and glorification will now be complete, the saints will be all perfected, and the church be as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband; and their salvation in soul and body consummate, there wilt be nothing wanting; then that which is perfect will be come, their bodies being raised and reunited to their souls, and both with the Lord: so the word “end” denotes the accomplishment, completion, and perfection of things; see Luk 22:37. Moreover, there will now be an end of all sin and sorrow of the saints; of all troubles and afflictions, inward or outward, and of death itself; and also of the kingdom of Christ, in its present form and manner of administration: the kingdom or church of Christ will not consist then of nominal and real Christians, of foolish and wise virgins, hypocrites and saints, but only of the latter; nor will it be governed by such laws and ordinances as now; nor will these be in the hands of such officers, as pastors and teachers, as at present, who are appointed to explain, enforce, and execute them: and this end of all things at the coming of Christ, will be

when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; not the kingdom of nature, which he has as the Son of God, as God equal with the Father, in right of nature, and upon the foot of creation, all being made by him; and which kingdom reaches to all creatures, angels, and men; this he did not receive from his Father, nor is he in it subordinate to him, but rules and works conjunctly with him in it; nor is he accountable to him in the administration of it; nor will he ever deliver it up to him: nor the kingdom of glory, which was prepared for the saints from the foundation of the world, is freely given to them by their Father, which they are called unto, and have a meetness for it, and a right unto it; this Christ has in his hands for them, and will not deliver it up to his Father, but introduce the heirs of it into it, quickly upon his coming; but the mediatorial kingdom is here meant, the kingdom

of saints, over which Christ is appointed and set as King; even the whole church and general assembly of the firstborn, written in heaven. These were all given to Christ, put into his hands, and made his care and charge by his Father; and he undertook to preserve, protect, and save them; and had, as Mediator, all power in heaven and in earth, and everything subservient to support his kingdom and interest as such, given him; and he has been from the beginning of the world ruling in the midst of his enemies, subduing the people under him, and causing his people in the day of his power to be willing to serve him; writing his laws in their hearts, putting his Spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments; saving them out of the hands of their enemies, protecting and keeping them in safety, and providing every good thing for them; and continually delivering one or another of them from the power of darkness, and translating them into his own kingdom; and now having completed the number of them, in whose hearts he has reigned by his Spirit and grace, he will deliver them up to the Father from whom he received them; even everyone of them; all the children he gave unto him, and all of them; their bodies as well as their souls being now raised from the dead, as it was his Father's declared will they should be, when he gave them to him; and they will be delivered up and presented by him to his Father, perfectly holy, entirely faultless, and without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and now this does not suppose that he will then cease to reign over his church and people; for, as the Father is the everlasting King, and reigned in and over the church, whilst this kingdom was in the hands of Christ, so Christ will continue to reign over it, when he shall have delivered it to the Father; he will no more cease to reign then, than the Father does, during the present administration of the government of the church; Christ will then be so far from ceasing to reign, that he will reign more visibly and gloriously than ever, though in a different manner to what he does now; now he rules over his people in the midst of his enemies, but then he will rule in the midst of his saints; now he reigns in their hearts by his Spirit, and through the use of the word and ordinances, but then he will reign in person among them, displaying the glory of his majesty, without the use of such means, signs, and symbols. Nor does this imply any inferiority in Christ, as God, to the Father; since this is to be understood of him as Mediator, who as such is the Father's servant, and a righteous and faithful one he is, who will give a good account of the persons committed to his care and government, and of his administration; and in which sense it will be allowed the Father is greater than he; but this no way militates against his proper deity, and equality with the Father. The Ethiopic version, contrary to all copies and other versions, reads, "when God the Father shall have delivered up his own kingdom". The Jews (h) speak of

"ten kings that have ruled, from one end of the world to another; the first King is the holy and blessed God, the second Nimrod, the third Joseph, the fourth Solomon, the fifth Ahab, the sixth Nebuchadnezzar, the seventh Cyrus, the eighth Alexander the Macedonian, the ninth will be the King Messiah, according to Dan 2:35 and of the tenth King they say, "then shall the kingdom return to its author"; or to him that was the first King, and he shall be the last; as is said, Isa 44:6."

and this will be,

when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; which since it is expressed in such universal terms, may very well be thought to reach to, and include all sort of rule, authority, and power whatever; when this time and state of things take place, all civil rule, authority, and power, will cease; even that which is now of God, and to which we are to be subject for the Lord's sake, and for conscience sake; and which is now encouraged and supported by Christ, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice; this will be pulled down and utterly destroyed by him, the stone cast out of the mountain without hands; when the kingdom and the greatness of it will be given to him and to

his saints; when the kings and princes of the earth will be no more, have no more rule and authority among men, but be upon a level with the meanest peasants, and shall be brought to the tribunal of Christ, and be judged by him: then also will all ecclesiastical rule, authority, and power be laid aside; there will be no more apostles, prophets, evangelists, nor bishops, elders, pastors, and teachers; who are now set over the churches in the Lord, to rule them according to the laws of Christ, by ministering the word faithfully, and administering the ordinances truly; and to whom when they rule well, subjection and honour are due; but all this will be no more, when the end comes, and the kingdom is delivered to the Father: nor will there be any more domestic, or family rule and government, as of the husband over the wife, the parent over the child, or the master over the servant; all will be upon an equal foot: nor any angelical authority and power, which angels may now exercise under God, over kingdoms, provinces, states, or particular persons: and especially all diabolical rule, authority, and power will be abolished, which Satan has usurped, or has been given him by men, as the god of this world; he, the prince of the world, was cast out through Christ's death, and by the preaching of the Gospel in the Gentile world; his principalities and powers were then spoiled and triumphed over; though he has still retained some sort and show of government, but then there will not be the least appearance of any; during the thousand years he will be cast into and shut up in the bottomless pit, and not suffered to go out and deceive the nations any more; and at the end thereof, though he will make one and his last onset, on the city of the saints, it will be fruitless, and he and all his shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and there lie in torment for ever and ever: not the persons of these several powers shall be destroyed, but they shall be divested of the power and authority which they now have, either by right or usurpation.

(h) Pirke Eliezer, c. 11.

1 Corinthians 15:25

For he must reign,.... That is, Christ must reign; he is set as King over God's holy hill of Zion; he is King of saints; he is made and declared to be both Lord and Christ; he is exalted at the right hand of God as a Prince, where he sits and rules and reigns; and his sitting at God's right hand is here explained by his reigning, for reference is had to Psa 110:1 he must reign because it is the unalterable will, and unchangeable decree and purpose of God, that he should reign; and because he has promised it, and prophesied of it; and because the state and condition of his people require it, who otherwise could not be saved, nor dwell safely: and so he must and will,

till he hath put all enemies under his feet; and made them his footstool; meaning either all the elect of God, who in a state of nature are enemies in their minds, by wicked works, to himself and to his Father; whom he conquers by his grace, subdues their rebellious wills, of enemies makes them friends, brings them to his feet, and to a subjection to his sceptre, to his Gospel and ordinances; and he must reign till he has brought every elect soul into such an obedience to himself: or rather antichrist and his followers, and all wicked and ungodly men, with Satan and his angels; who will be destroyed with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and will be cast down by him into hell, and there be ever objects of his wrath and vengeance: and till all this is done he must reign; not that he shall cease to reign afterwards, but that he shall reign notwithstanding these enemies of his and his people, who would not have him to reign over them; and will reign until they are subdued or destroyed; and when they are entirely vanquished and overcome, who can doubt of his reigning then? or what, or who will there be to hinder it? The Alexandrian copy, and others, read, "his enemies"; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

1 Corinthians 15:26

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Not eternal death; for though that is abolished by Christ with respect to his own people, who shall never be hurt by it, and over whom it shall have no power; yet the wicked will always be subject to it, and under the dominion of it: but a corporeal one is here meant; which is an enemy, the fruit, effect, and wages of sin; the penalty and curse of the law; is contrary to human nature, and destructive of the work of God's hands: it is, indeed, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, become the friend of his people; it is disarmed of its sting, and ceases to be a penal evil; it is the saints' passage to glory, what frees them from the troubles of this world, and is their way to the joys of another; but yet in itself is formidable to nature, and disagreeable to it: and it is the last enemy; it is so both in its rise and duration; it appeared as an enemy last; Satan was the first enemy of mankind, who attacked, tempted, and ruined the first parents of human nature, and all their posterity in them; and by this means, sin, the next enemy, came into the world of men; and, last of all, death, with its numerous train of calamities, either going before, attending, or following of it: and as it was the last enemy that came into the world, it is the last that will go out of it; for when the saints are rid of Satan, and clear of sin, they will remain in the grave under the power of a corporeal death till the resurrection, and then that will be "destroyed": for the saints will be raised to an immortal life, never to die more, and to an enjoyment of everlasting life, in the utmost glory and happiness; and though the wicked when they rise, they will rise to damnation, to shame and contempt, yet their worm will never die, nor their fire be quenched; they will always live, though in torment, there will be no more corporeal death, neither among the righteous nor the wicked; it will be utterly abolished: and thus the apostle, though he seems to digress from his subject awhile, by relating the several things which will either immediately or quickly follow the second coming of Christ; yet at the same time has it in view, and proves the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which must needs be, or death cannot be said to be destroyed, and by degrees returns to his subject again.

1 Corinthians 15:27

For he hath put all things under his feet,... This is a reason proving that all enemies, and death itself, shall be put under the feet of Christ, and is taken out of Psa 8:6 which is spoken of one that is styled man, and the son of man; and is to be understood not of Adam in a state of innocence; for the word there used signifies a frail mortal man, which he then was not, nor could he be called the son of man; and though the earth was subdued and subject to him, and he had dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every living thing that moveth on the earth, yet all creatures were not subject to him in this large sense, in which it is here and elsewhere explained by the apostle; and much less of man in his fallen state, who instead of having all things under his feet, is become like the beasts that perish; many of them: are unsubdued to him, and he is even in fear of them, and he himself is subject to corruption and vanity: but of the man Christ Jesus, who took and bore all the sinless infirmities of human nature; is often called the son of man; of whom God was mindful, and whom lie visited in his state of humiliation, at the time of his death, resurrection, and exaltation; who was made through sufferings of death a little lower, or a little while lower than the angels, but now crowned with glory and honour; in whose days God ordained strength and praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, to the confusion of his enemies; and has put all things under his feet, which may elude all things animate and inanimate, the whole creation and universe of things, the world and its fulness, the earth and all that is therein, the beasts of the forest, and the cattle of a thousand

hills; he is heir of the world, and has a right to it, and to dispose of it, not merely as the Creator, but as Mediator; it is put in subjection to him to make use of, and what is in it to subserve his mediatorial kingdom and his glory; when his ends are answered by it, the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up, and a new earth arise out of it, in which Christ and his people will dwell: the air and all that is therein are under him; the fowls of it are at his dispose; he it was that rained feathered fowls as the sand of the sea, about the camp of the Israelites in the wilderness, and commanded the ravens to feed Elijah in distress; and who holds the winds in his fist, lets them loose, calls them in, and commands them at pleasure; as he also does the sea, and the boisterous waves of it, and has dominion over the fishes in it; one of those supplied him with money, to pay his tribute; and multitudes of them, more than once, were gathered together, and taken up by his order and direction; and at the last day, the sea at his command will give up the dead that are in it; yea, this may extend to all rational creatures, angels and men, friends or foes: good angels, principalities and powers, are subject to him, as appears by their attendance on him: at his incarnation, ascension, and second coming; by their ministration to him in the wilderness, and in the garden; by their employment under him, for the good of the heirs of salvation; by their dependence on him, as their Creator and head, and by their adoration of him as their Lord and God. Evil angels, the devils, are also put under his feet, as is evident from his overcoming Satan, and baffling all his temptations; by his dispossessing the devils out of the bodies of men, and giving his disciples also power over them; by his spoiling them at death, and triumphing over them in his ascension; by delivering his people out of their hands, and power, in conversion; and by his binding of Satan during the thousand years, and by casting him and his angels into everlasting fire prepared for them. Elect men are made subject to him, by the power of his grace upon them; and yet their subjection to him, to his Gospel ordinances, and the sceptre of his kingdom; is voluntary and from their hearts; it proceeds from a principle of love to him; and is universal, being a regard unto, and a compliance with all his precepts; and evil men are also under his dominion and control; he rules them with a rod of iron; he disappoints their counsels, restrains their wrath, overrules their evil designs and actions against his people for good; and will one day gather them all before him, pass the righteous sentence on them, and send them into everlasting punishment. Moreover, this may reach to everything that is for the glory of Christ as Mediator, and for the good of his church, and to every enemy of his or theirs, as the world, sin, Satan, and the last enemy, death; to prove the subjection of all which to Christ, this testimony is produced: and respects Christ as Mediator, and the Father's delivering all things into his hands, and giving him all power in heaven and in earth, and rule over all creatures and things;

but when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him; that is, when David, or the Holy Spirit by him, said the above words, in Psa 8:6 nothing is more clear and evident, than that God the Father, who made all things subject to Christ as Mediator, is himself not subjected to him; since his power as such must be greater than his: this exception is made to secure the government, power, and honour of the Father; for though he has made his firstborn higher than the kings of the earth, yet not higher than himself; and though he has set him his King over his holy hill of Zion, yet not over himself; and though it is his will that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father, yet not above him, or more than he; nor has he quitted the government, either in the world or in the church, by subjecting all things to Christ: and this exception is also made to confirm the universal power and empire of Christ, for an exception to a general rule does but the more establish it; and since the Father is only excepted, it is a clear case, that he has left nothing that is not put under him; see Heb 2:8 but it must be observed, that though the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, yet he is equally excepted; since he is the one God with the Father, and was jointly concerned in the mission, unction, and installation of Christ, as Mediator; nor can he be

reckoned among the all things put in subjection to Christ, for they regard only creatures, and many of these enemies, with neither of which the Spirit of God can be numbered; and though the gifts and graces of the Spirit are put into Christ's hands, and are at his dispose, yet the person of the Spirit can never be thought to be put under his feet.

1 Corinthians 15:28

And when all things shall be subdued unto him,.... For all things as yet are not put under him in fact; though in right God the Father has given to him an authoritative power over all things, and a right to dispose of them at his pleasure; but all things are not actually and in their full extent subject to him, yet they will be when the last enemy is destroyed: and

then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him; which must be interpreted and understood with great care and caution; not in the Sabellian sense, of refunding of the characters of the Son, and so of the Father unto God; when they suppose these characters, which they imagine to be merely nominal, bare names, will be no more, and God shall be all; but as the Father will always remain a father, so the Son will remain a son; for, as the Son of the Highest, he will reign over his people for ever, and he the Son, as a priest, is consecrated for ever, more: nor in the Eutychian sense, of the change of the human nature into the divine, in which they fancy it will be swallowed up, and God will be all; but Christ will always continue as a man; he went up to heaven as such, and he will return as a man, and be visible to all in the human nature, and in that be the object of the wonderful vision of the saints to all eternity: nor in the Arian sense, according to the divine nature, as if he was inferior to the Father, when he is equal with him, has all the perfections he has, and the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; it is much better and safer to understand it as it commonly is of him, as man; though in this sense, he was always subject to his Father, ever since he was incarnate, whereas this seems to respect something peculiar at this time. Others therefore think, that the church, the mystical body of Christ, is here meant, which in all its members, and these both in soul and body, will be presented and delivered up to God; but the words are spoken of him under whom all things are put, which is not true of the church; and though that is sometimes called Christ, yet never the Son; and besides, the church has been always subject to God, though indeed, it will not be in all its members, and in every respect subject until this time: it is best, therefore to understand it of the Son's giving up the account of his mediatorial kingdom and concerns to his Father; when it will appear that he has in the whole of his conduct and administration been subject to him; that he has in all things acted in his name, done all by his power, and to his honour and glory; and now having accomplished all he undertook and was intrusted with, gives in his account, delivers up his charge, and resigns his office; all which will be plain proofs of his subjection: when I say he will resign or lay aside his office as Mediator, my meaning is not that he will cease to be God-man and Mediator; but that he will cease to administer that office as under God, in the manner he now does: he will be the prophet of the church, but he will not teach by his Spirit, and word, and ordinances as now, but will himself be the immediate light of the saints, he will be a priest for ever, the virtue of his sacrifice and intercession will always remain, but he will not plead and intercede as he now does; he will also reign for ever over and among his saints, but his kingdom will not be a vicarious one, or administered as it now is; nor be only in his hands as Mediator, but with God, Father, Son, and Spirit:

that God may be all in all; for by God is not meant the Father personally, but God essentially considered, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one true and living God; to whom all the saints will have immediate access, in whose presence they will be, and with whom they shall have uninterrupted

fellowship, without the use of such mediums as they now enjoy; all the three divine Persons will have equal power and government in and over all the saints; they will sit upon one and the same throne; there will be no more acting by a delegated power, or a derived authority: God will be all things to all his saints, immediately without the use of means; he will be that to their bodies as meat and clothes are, without the use of them; and all light, glory, and happiness to their souls, without the use of ordinances, or any means; he will then be all perfection and bliss, to all the elect, and in them all, which he now is not; some are dead in trespasses and sins, and under the power of Satan; the number of them in conversion is not yet completed; and, of those that are called many are in a state of imperfection, and have flesh as well as spirit in them; and of those who are fallen asleep in Christ, though their separate spirits are happy with him, yet their bodies lie in the grave, and under the power of corruption and death; but then all being called by grace, and all being raised, and glorified in soul and body, God will be all in all: this phrase expresses both the perfect government of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, over the saints to all eternity, and their perfect happiness in soul and body, the glory of all which will be ascribed to God; and it will be then seen that all that the Father has done in election, in the council and covenant of peace, were all to the glory of his grace; and that all that the Son has done in the salvation of his people, is all to the glory of the divine perfections: and that all that the Spirit of God has wrought in the saints, and all that they have done under his grace and influence, are all to the praise and glory of God, which will in the most perfect manner be given to the eternal Three in One. The Jews have some expressions somewhat like this, as when they say (i) of God,

“things future, and things that are past, are together with thee; what is from everlasting and to everlasting, or from the beginning of the world to the end of it, these are “all” of them in thee, and thou art “in” them “all””

So “all”, is with the Cabalistic doctors (k), the name of the Lord. And he is so called because all things are in him; “Jovis omnia plena”.

(i) R. Judah in Shir Hajichud, fol. 341. 1. apud Seder Tephillot, Ed Basil. (k) Lex. Cabalist. p. 474, 475, 652. Shaare Orah, fol. 6. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:29

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead,... The apostle here returns to his subject, and makes use of new arguments to prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and reasons for it from the baptism of some persons; but what is his sense, is not easy to be understood, or what rite and custom, or thing, or action he refers to; which must, be either Jewish baptism, or Christian baptism literally taken, or baptism in a figurative and metaphorical sense. Some think that he refers to some one or other of the divers baptisms of the Jews; see Heb 9:10 and particularly to the purification of such who had touched a dead body, which was done both by the ashes of the red heifer burnt, and by bathing himself in water; and which, the Jews say (l), intimated, “the resurrection of the dead”: wherefore such a rite was needless, if there is no resurrection; to strengthen this sense, a passage in Ecclesiasticus 34:25 is produced, “he that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?” but the phrase there used is different; it is not said, he that baptizeth or washeth himself for the dead, but from the dead, to cleanse himself from pollution received by the touch of a dead body: it is also observed, that the Jews, as well as other nations, have used various rites and ceremonies about their dead, and among the rest, the washing of dead

bodies before interment; see Act 9:37 and this by some is thought to be what is here referred to; and the reasoning is, if there is no resurrection of the dead, why all this care of a dead body? why this washing of it? it may as well be put into the earth as it is, since it will rise no more; but how this can be called a baptism for the dead, I see not: rather therefore Christian baptism, or the ordinance of water baptism is here respected; and with regard to this, interpreters go different ways: some think the apostle has in view a custom of some, who when their friends died without baptism, used to be baptized in their room; this is said to be practised by the Marcionites in Tertullian's time, and by the Corinthians in the times of the Apostle John; but it does not appear to have been in use in the times of the Apostle Paul; and besides, if it had been, as it was a vain and superstitious one, he would never have mentioned it without a censure, and much less have argued from it; nor would his argument be of any weight, since it might be retorted, that whereas such persons were mistaken in using such a practice, they might be also in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead: others are of opinion that such persons are intended, called Clinics, who deferred their baptism till they came upon their death beds, and then had it administered to them; but as this practice was not in being in the apostle's time, and was far from being a laudable one; and though the persons to whom it was administered were upon the point of death, and nearer the dead than the living, and were as good as dead, and might be intended by them, for their advantage, when dead and not living; yet it must be a great force and strain on words and things, to reckon this a being baptized for the dead: others would have the words rendered, "over the dead"; and suppose that reference is had to the Christians that had their "baptisteries" in their places of burial, and by being baptized here, testified their faith and hope of the resurrection of the dead; but this was rather a being baptized among the dead, than over them, or for them; and moreover it is not certain, that they did make use of such places to baptize in; to which may be added, that the primitive Christians had not so early burying grounds of their own: others would have the meaning to be, that they were baptized for their dead works, their sins, to wash them away; but this baptism does not of itself, and no otherwise than by leading the faith of persons to the blood of Christ, which alone cleanses from sin, original and actual; nor is this appropriate to the apostle's argument. Others imagine, that he intends such as were baptized, and added to the church, and so filled up the places of them that were dead; but the reason from hence proving the resurrection of the dead is not very obvious: those seem to be nearer the truth of the matter, who suppose that the apostle has respect to the original practice of making a confession of faith before baptism, and among the rest of the articles of it, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, upon the belief of which being baptized, they might be said to be baptized for the dead; that is, for, or upon, or in the faith and profession of the resurrection of the dead, and therefore must either hold this doctrine, or renounce their baptism administered upon it; to which may be added another sense of the words, which is, that baptism performed by immersion, as it was universally in those early times, was a lively emblem and representation of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and also both of the spiritual and corporeal resurrection of the saints. Now if there is no resurrection, why is such a symbol used? it is useless and insignificant; I see nothing of moment to be objected to these two last senses, which may be easily put together, but this; that the apostle seems to point out something that was done or endured by some Christians only; whereas baptism, upon a profession of faith in Christ, and the resurrection from the dead, and performed by immersion, as an emblem of it, was common to all; and therefore he would rather have said, what shall we do, or we all do, who are baptized for the dead? I am therefore rather inclined to think that baptism is used here in a figurative and metaphorical sense, for afflictions, sufferings, and martyrdom, as in Mat 20:22 and it was for the belief, profession, and preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, both of Christ and of the saints, that the apostles and followers of Christ endured so much as they did; the first instance of persecution after our Lord's ascension was on this account. The Apostles Peter and John, were laid

hold on and put in prison for preaching this doctrine; the reproach and insult the Apostle Paul met with at Athens were by reason of it; and it was for this that he was called in question and accused of the Jews; nor was there anyone doctrine of Christianity more hateful and contemptible among the Heathens than this was. Now the apostle's argument stands thus, what is, or will become of those persons who have been as it were baptized or overwhelmed in afflictions and sufferings, who have endured so many and such great injuries and indignities, and have even lost their lives for asserting this doctrine,

if the dead rise not at all? how sadly mistaken must such have been!

why are they then baptized for the dead? how imprudently have they acted! and what a weak and foolish part do they also act, who continue to follow them! in what a silly manner do they expose themselves to danger, and throw away their lives, if this doctrine is not true! which sense is confirmed by what follows: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "for them", and so the Vulgate Latin version; and the Ethiopic in both clauses reads, "why do they baptize?"

(l) R. Bechai & Zohar apud Lightfoot in loc.

1 Corinthians 15:30

And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? Not only they that have suffered martyrdom for the faith of Christ, and for this article of it, have acted very injudiciously and indiscreetly; but we, also, who are on the spot, whether ministers or private Christians, must be highly blameworthy, who continually expose ourselves to dangers, and are for Christ's sake killed all the day long, are every moment liable to innumerable injuries, tortures and death; who in his senses would act such a part, if there is no resurrection of the dead? such, as they must be of all men the most miserable, so of all men the most stupid.

1 Corinthians 15:31

I protest by your rejoicing,.... Some copies read, "our rejoicing"; and so the Ethiopic version, which seems most natural and easy; since it follows,

which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord; who in him could rejoice and glory in afflictions and sufferings, which he endured as a preacher of the Gospel for his sake; and which being certain and evident, and what might be depended upon, he makes a protestation by it, saying,

I die daily; which is to be understood, not in a spiritual sense of dying unto sin; he was dead unto sin, as to its damning power, through the death of Christ, and as to its governing power, through the Spirit and grace of Christ, but still it was living and dwelling in him; but in a corporeal sense: he instances in himself in particular, who was one that was in jeopardy or danger of his life every hour; he always bore in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and was continually delivered to death for Jesus' sake; death was always working in him, he expected it every day, and was ready for it; he did not count his life dear unto himself, but was very willing to lay it down for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; which he would never have done, if he had not good reason to believe the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus,.... This is one of the particulars of the jeopardy and danger of life he had been in: some understand this in a figurative sense, and think that by “beasts” are meant Satan, the roaring lion, and his principalities and powers; or men of savage dispositions, persecuting principles, and cruel practices; as Herod is called a fox, by Christ, and Nero a lion, by the apostle; and suppose his fighting with them at Ephesus designs his disputations with the hardened and unbelieving Jews, his concern with exorcists, the seven sons of Sceva, and the troubles he met with through Demetrius the silversmith, and others of the same craft; the reason of such an interpretation is, because Luke makes no mention of anything of this kind, that befell the apostle in his history of the Acts of the Apostles: but to this it may be replied, that Luke does not relate everything that befell him and the rest; and his omission of this is no sufficient argument against it; besides, a literal sense not to be departed from, unless there is a necessity for it; and especially when it is suitable to the context, and to the thread and reasoning of the discourse, as it is certainly here; the literal sense best agrees with the apostle’s argument. There were two sorts of usages among the Romans in their theatres; sometimes they cast men naked to the wild beasts, to be devoured by them, as wicked servants, deadly enemies, and the vilest of men (m); and so the Syriac version renders the words here, “if as among men, , “I am cast to the beasts”: and seems to represent it as a supposed case, and not as matter of fact, in which the difficulty about Luke’s omission is removed, and the argument in a literal sense is just and strong: sometimes they put men armed into the theatre to fight with beasts (n), and if they could conquer them and save themselves it was well, if not, they fell a prey to them; it is this last custom that is here referred to: and if regard is had to what befell thee apostle at Ephesus, when Demetrius and his craftsmen made the uproar mentioned in Act 19:21 this could not be in reality, but only in the purpose and design of men; and certain it is, that though he was not then had to the theatre, yet Demetrius and his men intended to have hurried him there, as they did Gaius and Aristarchus his companions; and he himself was desirous of going thither, had he not been prevented by the disciples, and by the Asiarchs his friends, who had the command of the theatre where these practices were used; and then the sense is this, if after the manner of men, or in the intention and design of men, and as much as in them lay, “I have fought with beasts at Ephesus”; though if this epistle was written, as it is said to be, before that commotion by Demetrius, no respect can be had to that; but rather to something in fact before, at the same place, when the apostle did actually fight with beasts, and was wonderfully and providentially preserved; and may he what he refers to, in Co2 1:8 when he despaired of life, had the sentence of death in himself, and yet was delivered; and then his sense is, if “after the manner of brutish men”, the Romans, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus”: which I was obliged to do, or deny the Gospel preached;

what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? instead of its being a glorious action, it was a fool hardy one; and if he had died in it, what profit could he have had by it, if he rose not again; or if there is no resurrection of the dead? instead of incurring such dangers, and running such risks, it would be more eligible to sit down and say with the Epicureans,

let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die; which words seem to be taken out of Isa 22:13 and are used in favour of the doctrine of the resurrection, showing that the denial of it opens a door to all manner of licentiousness; and are not spoken as allowing or approving of such a conduct; nor as his own words, but as representing a libertine, and pointing out what such an one would say, and might justly infer from such a tenet, that there is no resurrection of the dead.

(m) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5. Tertul. Apolog. c. 40. & de Spectaculis, c. 19. (n) Tertul. de Spectaculis, c. 21. & 23. Cicero in Vatinius Orat. 32.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Be not deceived,.... By such as deny the doctrine of the resurrection, and by their reasonings about it; or by such libertines who go into the denial of it, and argue from thence in favour of their licentious course of life:

evil communications corrupt good manners. This is a sentence taken out of Menander, an Heathen poet, showing how dangerous is the conversation of evil men, and what an influence bad principles communicated and imbibed, have on the lives and practices of men. This the apostle cites not out of ostentation, or to show his reading, learning, and acquaintance with such sort of writers; but partly to observe, that this was a truth obvious by the light of nature, and partly because such a testimony might be more regarded by the Corinthians, who might be fond of such authors, and what was said by them; just as when he was at Athens among the philosophers there, he cites a passage out of Aratus, Act 17:28 as he does another out of Epimenides concerning the Cretians, Tit 1:12.

1 Corinthians 15:34

Awake to righteousness, and sin not,.... The apostle represents the Corinthians as inebriated with bad principles and notions, and as fallen asleep, and as greatly remiss, and declined in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and therefore calls upon them to awake out of sleep, to watch and be sober, and attend to “righteousness”; to the justice of God, which requires the resurrection of the dead, and makes it necessary that men may receive the things done in the body, whether good or evil; for as it is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that sin against him, and trouble his people; so it is but just, that those bodies which Christ has purchased with his blood, who have served him, and suffered for his sake, should be raised again, that, together with their souls, they may enjoy the happiness provided for them; and to the righteousness of Christ, to look unto it, lay hold on it, exercise faith upon it, desiring to be found in it living and dying; and to works of righteousness, to a holy life and conversation, a living soberly, righteously and godly; and not spend their time, and give up themselves to vain speculations and notions; which were so far from being edifying, that they were very detrimental to themselves and others. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “awake, ye righteous”: for righteous persons, good men, the wise as well as foolish virgins, sometimes fall asleep, and need awaking out of it; which is done by one providence or another, or by the ministry of the word, and whenever to purpose, by the powerful and efficacious grace of God: the words may be rendered, “awake righteously”; or as the Syriac version reads, “awake your hearts righteously”; and as the Arabic, “with a due awaking”; that is, as it becomes you, and as it is just, right, and proper you should: “and sin not”; not that they could be, or that it could be thought they might be without sin in them, or without sin being done by them; but that they ought not to live a sinful course of life, which the denial of the resurrection led unto, or indulged in; or not sin by denying that doctrine, and giving themselves up to a vicious life in consequence of it:

for some have not the knowledge of God; are like the Gentiles that are without God, and know him not; they know not, or, at least, do not own the truth of God in his word, declaring and testifying the doctrine of the resurrection; they err in that point, not knowing the Scriptures, the sense of them, and this truth contained in them; nor the power of God in raising the dead, nor the justice of God, which

makes it necessary that the dead should be raised:

I speak this to your shame; that there should be such ignorant persons in their community; that there were any of such bad principles as to deny the resurrection of the dead, and of such dissolute lives as to give up themselves to sensual lusts and pleasures: that such were continued in the church, kept company with, indulged and caressed; and that there was so great a corruption in doctrine, discipline, and conversation, among them.

1 Corinthians 15:35

But some man will say,.... Or “some one of you”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; for there were some among them members of this church, that denied the resurrection of the dead, Co1 15:12 a weak believer indeed may be designed, one of the babes in Christ in this church, that could not digest such strong meat, but had some doubt and difficulties in his mind about this point, though he did not absolutely deny it: but by the manner in which the objections and queries are put, and the sharpness in which the apostle answers them, it looks rather that an infidel as to this doctrine is intended, one of those Epicureans, who said, Co1 15:32 “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”; or some Heathen philosopher, a mere natural man, that rejected this doctrine because not agreeable to his carnal reason, and laughed at it as monstrous and ridiculous:

how are the dead raised up? This query is put, not as though the person merely hesitated, and was in some suspense about this matter, or with a desire to be informed; but as denying the thing, and as objecting to it as a thing impossible, and impracticable; suggesting it could not be, it was a thing incredible that those dead bodies which have been laid in the earth for so many hundred, and some, thousands of years, and have been long ago reduced to dust, and this dust has undergone a thousand forms; that such whose bodies have been burnt to ashes, or destroyed by wild beasts, and digested by them, should ever be raised again. Such a doctrine must be past all belief:

and with what body do they come? out of their graves, as you say, and appear on the earth at the last day: will they come forth with the same bodies, or with other? with earthly or heavenly ones? mortal or immortal? with bodies different from one another, and from what they now are?

1 Corinthians 15:36

Thou fool,.... Not transgressing the law of Christ, which makes him that calls his brother a fool in danger of hell fire; for the apostle said not this in anger, and from a malevolent disposition, as that rule supposes, but out of zeal for truth, and to reprove the stupidity and folly of such a bold objector; in opposing the veracity and power of God, in setting up his reason above divine revelation, and in not attending even to natural philosophy itself; in which professing to be wise he might be justly called a fool, and therefore sends him to the husbandman to learn of him how to answer his own queries:

that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and which is more especially true of a grain of wheat: our Lord observes the same; see Gill on Joh 12:24, and designs by the simile his own death, and resurrection, and the fruit following thereon. This seed being cast into the earth corrupts, rots, and dies, and then is quickened, and rises up in stalk, blade, and ear. Which shows that the dissolution and corruption of the body by death is so far from being an objection to its resurrection,

that it is necessary to it, even as the dying and putrifying of the seed, or grain of wheat, is necessary to its quickening and rising up again; and that if God is able to quicken a seed or grain that is rotten and entirely dead, and cause it to rise up in verdure and with much fruit, as he does every year in millions of instances, why should it be thought incredible that God should quicken dead bodies, when the one is as much an instance of his power as the other? The Claromontane exemplar reads, “except it die first”; and so the Vulgate Latin version.

1 Corinthians 15:37

And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be,.... The sower, for instance, does not take a stalk of wheat in its blade, and ear, and full corn in the ear, encompassed with the husk, and sow it in the earth, which is the body or form in which it appears when it rises up again, and is come to its full growth:

but bare grain (or naked grain) it may chance of wheat, or some other grain; wheat, or any other grain, is cast into the earth naked, beat out of the husk; and that selfsame grain rises up again, clothed with additional verdure, beauty, and fruitfulness; and so the body which comes out of its mother’s womb naked, and returns naked again, Job 1:21 to which the apostle seems to allude, will rise again the same body, though with additional glories and excellencies; so that if it should be asked, how is it possible that a dead body can be raised up again? the possibility of it may be seen, in the quickening and raising up of a grain of wheat, that first rots and dies; and if it be inquired with what body the dead will be raised, it may in some measure be observed in this instance, that though it will be the same body, yet with different and excelling qualities: this simile seems to have been much in use among the Jews, to illustrate this doctrine, and we have some traces of it still in their writings (o):

“Cleopatra the queen asked R. Meir, saying, I know that the dead shall live, for it is written, “they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth”, Psa 72:16 but when they rise, shall they rise naked, or shall they rise in their clothes? to which he replied, much more than wheat: for as wheat is buried, “naked”, it comes forth, (or springs up,) with many clothings; and how much more the righteous, who are buried in their clothes?”

and again (p),

“says R. Eliezer, all the dead shall stand in the resurrection of the dead, and shall rise with their garments on; from whence do you learn this? from the seed of the earth, especially from wheat; for as wheat is buried “naked”, and comes forth with many clothings, much more the righteous, who are buried in their clothes.”

(o) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol, 90. 2. (p) Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

1 Corinthians 15:38

But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him,.... It is not the husbandman, nor the sun, nor the rain, that give the grain of wheat, or any other, its verdure and beauty, the form in which it springs up, its stalk, blade, and ear, but God by his own power, and of his sovereign will and pleasure; and he does not create this new form, but gives it; and does not barely give it, but gives the body to it: to the selfsame grain, and not another: so the resurrection of the dead is God’s work; it is an instance of his

power, and of his sovereign will; and is to his people a branch of that eternal life, which is his pure gift through Jesus Christ; all that glory in which the body will arise springs from his free grace, and is bestowed upon the selfsame body, which was carried about here, and laid in the grave: and to every

seed its own body; which is suitable and natural to it, according to its kind; see Gen 1:11 as cummin to cummin, anise to anise, wheat to wheat, barley to barley, and not on the contrary; showing, that it is the same body that is raised that dies, though it is in a more glorious, and with more excellent qualities; which is manifest from express passages of Scripture; see Job 19:26 from the signification of the word resurrection, which is a raising up of that which is fallen and if the same body that falls by death is not raised, but another is given, it will not be a resurrection, but a creation: and also from the figurative phrases by which it is expressed, as here by the quickening of seed cast into the earth, and elsewhere by awaking out of sleep; now as it is the same seed that is sown that springs up again, and the same body that sleeps that awaked out of it, so it is the same body that is interred in the earth, and falls asleep by death, that will be quickened and awaked at the resurrection: and it is clear from the places from whence the dead will be raised, the repositories of them, as death and hell, or the grave, and the sea; for none but the same bodies that are laid in the grave, or cast into the sea, can be said to come forth out of them, or be delivered up; by them: and from the subject of the resurrection, the bodies of men, their vile and mortal bodies, which can be no other than their present ones; and from the end of the resurrection, which is that some may come to life, and others to damnation; and from the justice of God, which requires that the same bodies Christ has purchased, find who have served and suffered for him, should be glorified; and the same that have done evil against him, and abused themselves and his people, be punished: this might be argued from the translations of Enoch and Elijah in their bodies to heaven, in which they were on earth; and from the resurrection of the bodies of the saints at Christ's resurrection, and the change that will be on the bodies of living saints at the coming of Christ; for it is not reasonable to suppose, that some of the saints shall have their own bodies, and others none at all, or not the same they lived in here: this may be further confirmed, from the resurrection of Christ's body, which was the same he had before; it was not changed into a spirit, but consisted of flesh and bones, as it had done; and had on it the very print of the nails, and spear in his hands, feet, and side; and to this the bodies of the saints are to be fashioned: add to all this, if it is not a resurrection of the same body, but new ones are created, to which the soul will be united, it will not be a resurrection, but a transmigration of souls into other bodies; but as every seed has its own body, so will every soul have its own body, though greatly different as to its qualities, and much improved for the better, as in seed sown: and this is the sense of the ancient Jews (q),

“says R. Chijah, , “that that selfsame body that was shall rise”, is clear from what is written, thy dead men shall live, Isa 26:19 and it is not written, shall be created; from whence it is evident that they shall not be created, but shall be quickened:”

and again (r),

“in the time to come, the holy blessed God will quicken the dead, and raise them “out of their own dust”, that they may not be a building of dust, as they were at first, when they were created out of dust itself, a thing which is not stable, according to Gen 2:7 and at that time they shall be raised out of the dust, out of that building, and shall stand in a stable building, that they may have stability, or duration.”

So on those words, “I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal”, Deu 32:39 they observe (s), that

“as wounding and healing are “in one”, (and the same body,) so death and life are “in one and” the same.”

(q) Zohar in Exod. fol. 12. 3. (r) Midrash Hannealam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 81. 1. (s) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:39

All flesh is not the same flesh,.... Or “equal”, as the Syriac version renders it; though all flesh is flesh, as to the nature and substance of it; agrees in its original, being by generation; and is supported by food, and is alike frail and mortal; all flesh is grass, rises out of it, or is maintained by it, or withers like that, yet not of equal worth, value, and excellency: “but” there is “one” kind “of flesh of men”; which is superior to, and more excellent than any other; being animated by a rational soul, and is set in the first place; so we read of , “the flesh of man”, for mankind, Job 12:10 see Exo 30:32.

Another flesh of beasts; as sheep and oxen, and other beasts of the field;

another of fishes: which may be observed against the Papists, who distinguish between flesh and fish, as if there was no flesh of fishes; and on their fast days prohibit flesh, but allow the eating of fish; thus flesh is attributed to fishes, as here, in Lev 11:11 upon which text Aben Ezra observes, lo, fish is called flesh; but as our doctors say, according to the custom of those times; and so it is by the Jews, who say (t),

“all flesh is forbidden to boil in milk, , “except the flesh of fishes”, and locusts; and it is forbidden to set it on a table along with cheese, except “the flesh of fishes”, and locusts:”

and another of birds; the fowls of the air. This is another similitude, illustrating the resurrection of the dead; and is not designed to point out the difference between the raised bodies of the righteous, and the wicked; as if the former were signified by the flesh of men, and the other by the flesh of beasts, fishes, and birds; nor among the wicked themselves, with whom there will be degrees of punishment; nor among the saints, as if the flesh of one should differ from that of another. The intent of this simile is only to show, that the resurrection of the dead will be in real flesh, in their own flesh, in the selfsame flesh, as to substance, with which they were clothed when on earth; but that it will, as to its qualities, be different from it, as one sort of flesh is now from another; and that if God can, as he does, make different sorts of flesh, and yet all for kind are flesh, there is no difficulty in conceiving, that God is able to raise the dead in their own flesh, and yet different from what it now is; being free from all weakness, frailty, corruption, and mortality.

(t) Misn. Cholin, c. 8. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:40

There are also celestial bodies,.... Or bodies in the heavens, as the sun, moon, and stars:

and bodies terrestrial; or bodies on earth, animate and inanimate, men, beasts, trees, minerals, &c.

But the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another: though both sorts are bodies, yet their qualities differ, and there is a greater glory in the one than in the other. This is another similitude, serving to help our ideas of this doctrine of the resurrection of the body; that though it is the same in substance, yet different in qualities; and does not design any difference between the bodies of good men and bad men, elect and reprobate; as if the one were intended by the celestial bodies, and the other by the terrestrial; and much less degrees of glory in the saints themselves, who, imagine them in as low a form as can be, can never be compared to terrestrial ones; but it shows the difference there will be between the raised bodies and the present ones; which will be as great as that which now is between celestial and terrestrial bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:41

There is one glory of the sun,.... Which is the greater light, the fountain of light, and whose glory exceeds that of the other heavenly bodies:

and another glory of the moon; which is the lesser light, and receives its light from the sun, and consequently its glory is inferior:

and another glory of the stars; which though very bright and sparkling, and are innumerable, have a lesser glory, at least to our appearance, than the sun and moon: the Jews have a notion (u), that

“all the stars and the orbs are endued with a soul, and with knowledge, and understanding; and that they live, and stand, and know him that said, and the world was; and everyone of them, “according to his greatness”, , “and according to his dignity”, praise and glorify their Creator, as the angels; and as they know God, so they know themselves, and the angels that are above them; for the knowledge of the stars and the orbs is lesser than the knowledge of angels, and greater than the knowledge of men:”

for one star differeth from another star in glory; all which is to be understood, not as if the glory of the sun meant the glory of Christ, the sun of righteousness, who excels in glory, even in his human nature; and the glory of the moon, the glory of the church, who receives her's from Christ; and the glory of the stars; the glory of particular saints; and as if there will be, in the resurrection state, degrees of glory among them: for what peculiar glory can be thought to be upon the body of one, that is not upon another, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father? and admitting there was any truth in this, it is not the truth of this text; the only design of which, as the above, is to show, that as not only celestial and terrestrial bodies differ from each other, but even heavenly ones, so at the resurrection, the bodies of the saints then will differ in glory from their present ones; though these are now the members of Christ, are presented to God an holy sacrifice, and are washed with pure water.

(u) Maimon. Iesode Hatorah, c. 3. sect. 11.

1 Corinthians 15:42

So also is the resurrection of the dead,.... This will be the case and condition of risen bodies, they will be as different from what they now are, though they will be the same in substance, as a stalk of wheat in its blade and ear, and full corn in the ear, is from the naked grain, when cast into the earth; or as the flesh of men is from the flesh of beasts, fishes, and birds; or as celestial bodies from terrestrial

ones; or as the glory of the sun differs from the glory of the moon and stars; or as one star differs from another star in glory; that this is the apostle's sense is clear from the induction of particulars following, by which he explains in clear terms what he before signified by similitudes:

it is sown in corruption; it should be observed, that the word sown, in this and the following verses, does not merely relate to the interment of the body, but also to its generation; and includes its state, condition, and character, during life; as well as points out what it is at death, and its sepulture in the earth: it is from first to last a corruptible body; it is born frail and mortal, and liable to corruption and death; it is corrupted with sin, and so a vile body; there is a world of iniquity in one of its members, the tongue, and what then must there be in all its parts? but besides this moral corruption, in which it is during the present state, it is liable to a natural one; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, it may be covered with wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores; a right arm may be dried up and withered away, and a leg may corrupt and mortify, and so any other part; the whole is supported by corruptible things, by meat that perisheth; and which if it did not corrupt and perish, would not be nourishing; and as meats are for the belly, and the belly for meats, in a short time God will destroy both it and them; the whole frame and texture of the body will be dissolved by death, and be brought to worms, corruption, and dust; and in this case will lie in the grave till the resurrection morn:

it is raised in incorruption: the very same body that was sown, generated, lived, and died, shall be raised again, but different from what it was; it will be incorruptible; its parts will be no more subject to corruption; it will not be supported by corruptible things; it will be immortal, and never die more, and will be clear of all its moral corruption; it will no more be a vile body, but fashioned like to the holy and glorious body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:43

It is sown in dishonour,.... Its original is dishonourable, it comes, as the Jews often say (w), , “from a filthy drop”; its generated brought forth in a manner we are ashamed of; it is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; it is unclean, and born of the flesh: and when born, is in such a condition, as is to the loathing of it; some of its members are less honourable; and so uncomely as always to need a covering; it is subject to various blemishes, defects, and imperfections, and few bodies are without one or another; and liable to many injuries and affronts, as the body of our Lord himself was, who gave his back to the smiters, his cheek to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting; and in death, it is nauseous, filthy, and very dishonourable, so that the nearest relation and friend cannot take pleasure in it, but desires to bury it out of sight; and amidst the greatest funereal pomp and splendour, it is laid in the grave in dishonour, to be the companion of corruption and worms: but in the resurrection,

it is raised in glory; in perfect beauty and comeliness, without the least blemish, defect, or imperfection; nor will there be any part of it that will occasion shame; it will be metamorphosed, and fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; it will shine as the sun, and be as the brightness of the firmament: and so the Jews understand the passage in Dan 12:3 they say (x) that

“God will beautify the bodies of the righteous in time to come, as the body of the first man when he entered into the garden of Eden; and that the soul, whilst it is in its dignity, is sustained by the superior light, and is clothed with it; and when it enters into the body in time to come, it enters with the light; and then will the body shine as the brightness of the firmament, according to Dan 12:3.”

It is sown in weakness; it comes into the world in great weakness; what is weaker than the body of a new born babe? it cannot move, nor help itself in any respect; and how weak and defenceless is the body of man, when adult; as he is subject to various diseases and disorders, which weaken his strength in the way, and is surrounded with natural infirmities, arising from hunger, thirst, nakedness, labour, &c. so he is not armed, as many other creatures are, for defence and offence; nor can he resist and overcome many things which do him hurt, much less can he resist death, or retain his spirit then; and through weakness at last dies, and is devoid of all strength, and as such is laid in the grave, where there is no work that he can do: but

it is raised in power; it is raised by the power of God, and with great power in itself; being able to subsist without food, and of moving itself from place to place, with great agility; and capable of the highest services before God and the Lamb, without weariness; nor will it be ever more liable to weakness or death; death shall have no more power over it; nor shall it be encompassed or attended with any infirmity whatever.

(w) Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 1. (x) Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:44

It is sown a natural body,.... Or an animal one, being generated as animals are, and supported with food as they be, and die at last as they do: see Ecc 3:19.

It is raised a spiritual body; not as to substance, but as to its quality; it will not be changed into a spirit; our Lord's risen body, to which ours will be conformed, was not a spirit, but, as before, consisted of flesh and bones: but the body will then be subject to the spirit and soul of man; it will be employed in spiritual service, for which it will be abundantly fitted and assisted by the Spirit of God; and it will be delighted with spiritual objects; it will be like the angels, those excellent spirits; it will live as spirits do, without natural helps and means, as meat, drink, clothes, sleep, and, as they, will never die:

there is a natural; or "animal body", such as the first man's was, and those are that descend from him by ordinary generation; and

there is a spiritual body; such as the body of Christ now is, and as will be the bodies of the risen saints; the phrase is Jewish, , "the spiritual body" (y) and the flesh of the righteous, being , "spiritual flesh" (z), are to be met with in their writings.

(y) Nishmath Chayim. fol. 37. 1. (z) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 4.

1 Corinthians 15:45

And so it is written,.... In Gen 2:7

the first man Adam was made a living soul: in the Hebrew text it is, man, or Adam, became, or was made a living soul; that is, as the apostle says, "the first man Adam": he calls him, as the Jews (a) frequently do, , "the first man"; he was the first man that was made, and the first parent of mankind,

and the head and representative of all his posterity, and so the first in time, causality and dignity; whose name was Adam, so called by God in the day he was created, because he was formed , “from the ground, or earth”; when God breathed life into the earthly mass, or lump; and being animated with a rational soul, it became an animal body, or a living creature; and so the apostle proves, from the first man that was upon earth, that there is a natural, or animal body; a body animated by a soul, and which was supported by eating and drinking, by sleep and rest; and was capable of dying, and should die, in case of sin; and which was the state of it in its first creation, whilst in innocence, and before the fall; and this is all he meant to prove by this Scripture; for what follows is not mentioned as therein written, or elsewhere, but as the apostle’s own assertion:

the last Adam was made a quickening spirit: by “the last Adam” is meant Jesus Christ, called Adam, because he is really and truly a man, a partaker of the same flesh and blood as the rest of mankind; and because he is the antitype of the first man Adam, who was a figure of him that was to come; and therefore called Adam, for the same reason as he is called David and Solomon: he is said to be “the last”, in distinction from the first Adam, with respect to him he stood, last upon the earth, as in Job 19:25 to which passage some think the apostle here alludes; and because he appeared in the last days in the end of the world, and is the last that shall rise up as a common head and representative of the whole, or any part of mankind: now he is made “a quickening spirit”; which some understand of the Holy Spirit, which filled the human nature of Christ, raised him from the dead, and will quicken our mortal bodies at the last day; others of the divine nature of Christ, to which his flesh, or human nature, was united; and which gave life, rigour, and virtue, to all his actions and sufferings, as man; and by which he was quickened, when put to death in the flesh, and by which he will quicken others another day: though rather I think it is to be understood of his spiritual body, of his body, not as it was made of the virgin, for that was a natural, or an animal one; it was conceived and bred, and born as animal bodies are; it grew and increased, and was nourished with meat and drink, and sleep and rest; and was subject to infirmities, and to death itself, as our bodies be; but it is to be understood of it as raised from the dead, when it was made a spiritual body, for which reason it is called a “spirit”: not that it was changed into a spirit, for it still remained flesh and blood; but because it was no more supported in an animal way; nor subject to those weaknesses that animal bodies are, but lives as spirits, or angels do; and a quickening one, not only because it has life itself, but because by virtue of the saints’ union to it, as it subsists in the divine person of the Son of God, their bodies will be quickened at the last day, and made like unto it, spiritual bodies; also because he lives in his body as a spiritual one, they shall live in theirs as spiritual ones: and so the apostle shows, that there is a spiritual, as well as an animal body; that as the first man’s body, even before the fall, was an animal or natural one; the last Adam’s body upon his resurrection is a spiritual and life giving one, as the Syriac version renders it; so the Cabalistic writers (b) speak of

“Adam; who is the holy and supreme, who rules over all, and gives spirit and life to all.”

(a) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 38. 2. & 100. 1. & alibi passim. & , Cabala denud. par. 4. p. 195, &c. Vid. 2 Esdras iii. 21. (b) Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 4.

1 Corinthians 15:46

Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual,... As the apostle before proves the distinction of a natural and spiritual body, and gives instances of both in the two principal men in the world, the first and the last; and points out the difference between them, the one being animated, and having life

given unto it, the other animating, and giving life to others; proceeds to observe the order of these, how that one was before the other; the spiritual body, though the more perfect and most excellent, yet was not first in being:

but that which is natural; Adam's animal body was before Christ's spiritual body:

and afterwards that which is spiritual; yea, even Christ's animal, or natural body, was before his spiritual one; his body taken from the virgin, and formed in her womb, and in which he lived here on earth, was an animal body, as before observed; and upon his resurrection, it commenced a spiritual one; being the same in substance as the former, only different in qualities; and just so it is, and will be, with the bodies of the saints'; which is the apostle's design and view, in observing this order; the natural body is first, and then the spiritual; it is first a natural body, as generated and nourished, as weak and dying, and it is afterwards a spiritual one, when raised from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:47

The first man is of the earth, earthy,... He was formed out of the earth, Gen 2:7 and the word there used signifies red earth. Josephus (c) observes, that the first man was called Adam, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies red, because he was made out of red earth; for such, adds he, is the true and virgin earth: Pausanias (d) makes mention of a clay, which is not the colour of earth, but like the sand of brooks and rivers; and gives a smell very near to that of the skin, or body of men; and which is said to be the remains of that clay, out of which all mankind was made: but be that as it will, Adam was certainly made out of the earth, and had his habitation and abode assigned him in the garden of Eden, and was made to cultivate and till it; his lordship and dominion, at most and best, only extended to the terraqueous globe, and the creatures in it; and having sinned, he was not only thrust out of the garden to till the ground out of which he was taken, but doomed to return to the dust from whence he came; and whose sin and fall had such an influence on him and his posterity, as to make their souls sensual and earthly, to mind, affect, and cleave unto earthly things:

the second man is the Lord from heaven; as Adam was the first man, Christ is the second man; and these two are spoken of, as if they were the only two men in the world; because as the former was the head and representative of all his natural posterity, so the latter is the head and representative of all his spiritual offspring: and he is "the Lord from heaven"; in distinction from the first man, who was of the earth, and whose lordship reached only to the earth; whereas Christ is Lord of all, not only Lord of lords below, but Lord of angels and saints above; the whole family in heaven and in earth is named of him; and he has all power in heaven and in earth, and a name above every name in this world, and that to come, and is indeed higher than the heavens: this is not to be understood of his human nature, or of his human body, as if that came down from heaven, and passed through the virgin, as some heretics of old said, as water through a pipe; for though it was conceived and formed in a miraculous manner, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost from on high, yet was formed out of the matter and substance of the virgin, and so was of the earth; and was indeed an earthly body, supported by earthly means, and at last returned to the earth, and was interred in it: but it is to be understood either of Christ as a divine person, as the Son of God, as Lord of all, coming down from heaven at his incarnation; not by local motion, or change of place, but by assumption of the human nature into union with him, the Lord from heaven; or rather of him as he shall descend from heaven, as the Lord and Judge of all at the last day, when he will come in his glorious, spiritual, and heavenly body; and raise the righteous dead, and fashion their bodies like his own; when what follows will have its full

accomplishment. The Cabalistic doctors among the Jews often speak (e) of , “the superior man”, and , “the inferior man”; and in their Cabalistic table (f), in the sixth “sephirah”, or number, they place the man from above, the heavenly Adam; and, in one of their writings (g), have these remarkable words,

“anynt Mdaw hale Mda Nam, “who is the supreme man and the second man”, but of whom it is said, Pro 30:4 “what is his name, and what is his son’s name?” what is his name? this is the supreme man; what is his son’s name? this is the inferior man; and both of them are intimated in that Scripture, Exo 3:13 “and they shall say unto me, what is his name? what shall I say?””

Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; leave out the word “Lord”, and add the word “heavenly”, reading the clause thus, “the second man from heaven, heavenly”.

(c) Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 2. (d) Phocica, sive l. 10. p. 615. (e) Raziel, fol. 26. 1. & 31. 1. & 33. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. (f) In Cabala Denudata, par. 2. p. 9. (g) Zohar in Gen. fol. 39. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:48

As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy,.... As was Adam’s body, so are the bodies of those that descend from him; they are houses of clay, earthly houses of this tabernacle, which rise out of the earth, are maintained by the things of it, and return to it again:

and as is the heavenly, such are, or will be

they also that are heavenly; as is the glorious and spiritual body of Christ, the Lord from heaven, as that now is in heaven, and will be when he descends from thence; so will be the bodies of them that are heavenly, that are heaven born souls now, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversation is in heaven; and who, in the resurrection morn, will have heavenly, spiritual, and glorious bodies, like unto Christ’s: so Philo (h) the Jew on those words, “and man became a living soul”, has this note;

“there are two kinds of men, for the one is “the heavenly man”, and the other is “earthy”; the heavenly man is he, who is made after the image of God, incorruptible, and wholly devoid of earthy substance; the earthy is made of seminal matter, which is called the ground.”

(h) Leg. Allegor. l. 1. p. 46.

1 Corinthians 15:49

And as we have borne the image of the earthy,.... Which regards not so much the sinful image of the first man upon the soul, or the depravity of the powers and faculties of it, as his image of frailty and mortality on the body, having like him a body subject to infirmities and death:

we shall also bear the image of the heavenly; which likewise regards not so much the spiritual image of Christ stamped on the soul in regeneration, when Christ is formed in the heart, and the new man is created after his likeness, and which more and more appears, through every transforming view of him, and will be complete in glory, as the image and likeness of Christ upon the bodies of the saints in the resurrection, when they shall be fashioned like unto his: some copies, as the Alexandrian

and others, read the words as an exhortation, let us bear the image, &c. as if the words were an improvement of the apostle's reasoning on this subject, engaging saints to be more concerned for, and seeking after a greater likeness to Christ in righteousness and true holiness; but the other reading and sense are best.

1 Corinthians 15:50

Now this I say, brethren,.... Upon the whole, I assert this, and observe it to you, out of a truly Christian respect for you, as brethren in the Lord, that

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: this shows the necessity there is of a difference between the body that now is, and that which shall be, which the apostle has so largely insisted on, and so clearly proved and explained, in the preceding verses; because the body, as it now is, is not capable of possessing the heavenly glory; was it to be introduced into heaven, in the condition it is now, it would break in pieces, and crumble into dust; it would not be able to bear the glory of that state and place: by flesh and blood is meant, not human nature as to the substance of it, or as consisting of flesh and blood, for that can and does inherit the kingdom of God; witness the human nature, or body of Christ, the bodies of the saints that rose after his resurrection, and those of Enoch and Elijah, who were translated body and soul to heaven; so that this passage makes nothing for those that deny the resurrection of the same body, and plead for a new and an aerial one: but the human nature, or body, so and so qualified, is here meant; either as corrupted with sin, for without holiness and righteousness no man shall see the Lord, or enter into and possess the kingdom of heaven; or flesh and blood, or an human body, as it is now supported in this animal life, with meat and drink, &c. and as it is frail and mortal, and subject to death, in which sense the phrase is used in Scripture; see Mat 16:17 and often by the Jews; so Abraham is represented by them as saying (i),

"I am , "flesh and blood", tomorrow I shall depart out of the world, or die:"

it would be endless to give the many instances that might be produced of this use of the phrase with them, and in which sense it is to be taken here: and the meaning is, that saints in their frail mortal bodies, such as they now are, are not capable of enjoying the heavenly glory; which is called "the kingdom", because of its riches, glory, grandeur, and magnificence; and the kingdom "of God", because it is of his preparing and giving; and what he calls his people to, and makes them meet for, and in which they will reign with him for evermore: heirs of it they may be, and are now whilst in this frail and mortal state; but inherit, possess, and enjoy it, they cannot, as not without holiness of soul, so not without immortality of body; and therefore it is necessary that the body should rise different in qualities from, though the same in substance with, the present body; that it should rise incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual; that it may be fitted for, and be able to bear the exceeding weight of glory in the other world:

neither doth corruption inherit incorruption: by corruption is not so much meant sin, or the corruption of nature, or man as corrupted by sin, though it is true of such an one, that he does not, and cannot inherit incorruption; the incorruptible crown, the crown of glory that fadeth not away, the incorruptible inheritance, reserved in the heavens, those riches which moth and rust corrupt not; but the body, as it is generated in corruption, is supported by corruptible things, and is subject to corruption and worms; in such a situation it is unfit for, and incapable of inheriting eternal glory; it must be different from what it is; it must put on immortality, and be clothed with incorruption: the

word inherit in both clauses shows, that the heavenly glory is an inheritance, and belongs to children only; is their heavenly Father's bequest unto them; is not bought or acquired by anything of theirs; and is what they enter into and upon, in virtue and consequence of the death of the testator, Christ.

(i) Bemibdar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 3.

1 Corinthians 15:51

Behold, I show you a mystery,.... Or a secret, which could never have been discovered by reason, or the light of nature, and what is of pure revelation; and which perhaps the apostle became acquainted with, when he was caught up into the third heaven; and is what is never made mention of by any prophet, or apostle, but himself: he prefaces the account of it in this manner, partly to show the great respect he had for these Corinthians, that he treated them as his bosom friends, to whom he communicated his secrets; and partly to excite their curiosity and attention:

we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; some copies read, "we shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed", and so the Vulgate Latin version; according to which the sense is, all will rise again, both just and unjust, but all will not be changed into a state of glory; but the apostle is only speaking of the saints, of whom it is true, not only that they shall rise again, but shall be changed from corruption to incorruption; wherefore this cannot be a true reading: others read the words thus, "we shall all die, but we shall not all be changed"; and so the Ethiopic version and the Alexandrian copy seem to have read; which is just the reverse of the text, and arises from a wrong sense of Heb 9:27 where it is not said, it is "appointed unto all men", but "unto men once to die"; from which rule there has been some exceptions, as the instances of Enoch and Elijah show; and there will be more at the time of Christ's coming, for all will not sleep in their graves, or die, for death is meant by sleeping; they will not die as men ordinarily do, and continue under the power of death, but they will be changed at once from corruption to incorruption, from dishonour to glory, from weakness to power, from being natural to be spiritual bodies; this change all the saints will undergo, whether dead or alive, at Christ's coming; the dead by a resurrection from the dead, and the living by a secret and sudden power, which will at once render their bodies, without separating them from their souls, immortal and glorious: and this reading and sense are confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic versions.

1 Corinthians 15:52

In a moment,.... Or point of time, which is very short indeed; what a moment is, according to the Jewish doctors, See Gill on Mat 4:8.

In the twinkling of an eye; these two the Jews not only put together as here, but make one to be as the other; so they say (k), , "a moment is as the twinkling of an eye". This phrase, as the twinkling of an eye, is frequently used in Jewish writings (l), to signify how speedily and suddenly anything is done, and which is the design of it here; and the apostle's meaning is, that the change upon the bodies of living saints will be so quick, that it will be done in a trice, before a man can shut his eyes and open them again; so that it will be as it were imperceptible, and without the least sensation of pain; this may also be referred to the resurrection, which will be quick, and done at once; though it seems rather, and chiefly, to respect the change of the living; what follows, indeed, favours the other sense also; for all will be quick and sudden, the coming of Christ, the raising of the dead, and the change of the living:

at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound; or “by the last trumpet”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, by means of it, through the sounding of that:

and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; free from all frailty, mortality, and corruption, when the trumpet shall sound:

and at the same time also,

we shall be changed; the saints that will be found alive; the apostle speaks in the first person, because of the uncertainty of Christ's coming, and of the blowing of the last trumpet, he not knowing but it might be in his time; what this last trumpet will be, is not easy to say; it can hardly be thought to be a material one: the Jews (m) have a notion, that a trumpet will be blown at the time of the resurrection of the dead, as at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; which will quicken the dead, as they say it then did; and that this will be blown by Michael the archangel (n): it seems very likely to be the same with the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, Th1 4:16 all which may be no other than the voice of Christ; at the hearing of which, the dead will rise; but whether this will be an articulate one, as at the raising of Lazarus, or is only expressive of his power, which will then be put forth, is not material, nor a point to be determined: and what if by all this should be meant some violent claps of thunder, as at Mount Sinai, which will shake the whole earth; and when almighty power will be put forth to raise the dead: since such are by the Jews (o) called the voices of the son of David, and are expected by them, a little before his coming? This is called the “last” trumpet, not so much with respect to those that go before, much less to the seven trumpets in the Revelations, of which as yet there was no revelation made, but because there will be none after it; see:

“And the trumpet shall give a sound, which when every man heareth, they shall be suddenly afraid.” (2 Esdras 6:23)

(i) Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 3. (k) T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 4. Eeha Rabbati, fol. 54. 4. (l) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 2. 2. Sabbath, fol. 34. 2. Zohar in Gen, fol. 38. 4. & 39. 1. & 65. 4. Caphtor, fol. 75. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 77. fol. 67. 4. (m) Targum. Jon. in Exod. xx. 18. & Kettoreth Hassammim in ib. Abarbinel. Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 11. 4. (n) Abkath Rochel, p. 138. (o) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Vid. Megilla, fol. 17. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:53

For this corruptible must put on incorruption,.... The apostle returns to what he had before asserted, concerning the necessity of an alteration in the qualities of bodies, in order to the enjoyment of the heavenly state; showing, that the selfsame body the saints now have, for he seems to point with his finger to his own, and which are incorruptible ones, shall and must be clothed with incorruption:

and this mortal must put on immortality; the body that now is mortal, must become immortal; it must put off its rags of mortality, and be clothed with the shining robes of immortality; and which must be done, either by first dying, and then rising from the dead; or by undergoing alive a quick and sudden change, which will at once remove all corruption and mortality; see:

“He answered and said unto me, These be they that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the

immortal, and have confessed the name of God: now are they crowned, and receive palms.” (2 Esdras 2:45)

1 Corinthians 15:54

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption,... As at the coming of Christ, both the bodies of living saints, and of dead ones being raised, will: and this

mortal shall have put on immortality; which will be the case, in the resurrection morn:

then shall be brought to pass that saying that is written; then that passage will have its full accomplishment, which stands in Isa 25:8 where it is read,

he will swallow up death in victory, or “for ever”. That is, the Messiah shall by his death, and resurrection from the dead, obtain such an entire victory over death, not only for himself, but for all his people, that in the resurrection morn, when they will be all raised from the dead, death will be so swallowed up, that it will be no more: the Jews acknowledge that this prophecy belongs to the times of the Messiah; so they say (p), that

“the Messiah shall descend from Pharez, and in his day the holy blessed God will cause death to be swallowed up, as it is said, Isa 25:8 “he shall swallow up death in victory”.”

and again (q),

“when the King Messiah comes, the holy blessed God will raise up those that sleep in the dust, as it is written, he shall swallow up death in victory.”

they also say (r), that this passage refers to future time, and to the world to come. The prophet expresses it actively, it being a prediction of what was to be done by the Messiah; the apostle cites it passively, as being accomplished by him after the resurrection, and considered as a part of the song sung by the risen saints; to which is added,

(p) Shemot Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 131. 4. (q) Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 1. (r) Zohar in, Exod. fol. 108. 1, 2, 4. Misn. Moed Katon. c. 3. sect. 9. Zohar iu Lev. fol. 46. 3. Yade Mose in Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:55

O death, where is thy sting?.... These words, with the following clause, are taken out of Hos 13:14 and that they belong to the times of the Messiah, the ancient Jews acknowledge; and the Chaldee paraphrase interprets them of the Logos, or Word of God, rendering them thus,

“my Word shall be among them to kill, and my Word to destroy;”

wherefore the apostle is not to be charged with a misapplication of them, nor with a perversion of them, as he is by the Jew (s): in the prophet they are thus read, “O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction”; between which, and the apostle’s citation of them, there is some

difference; the word which we render in both clauses, “I will be”, the apostle translates “where”, and that very rightly, and so it should be rendered there; and so it is by the Septuagint interpreters, who render the whole as he, with a little variation, “where is thy revenge, O death? where is thy sting, O grave?” and so the Arabic version of Hosea still nearer the apostle, “where is now thy victory, O death?” or “where is thy sting, O grave?” and even the Chaldee paraphrase on Hos 13:14 renders the same word “where”; for instead of, “I will be thy king”, the Targum reads, , “where is thy king?” and Aben Ezra, a Jewish writer of great note, on Hos 13:14 observes, that there are some that say the word is to be inverted as if it was “where”, and he adds, and it is right; a like observation he makes on those words in Co1 15:14 and that that is the true sense of the word in both verses, is attested by Ebn Jannahius Tanchuma (t); so that the apostle is thus far to be justified, in his citation of this passage: it is further to be observed, that instead of “thy plagues”, he reads, “thy sting”; and I doubt not, but that among the many things which signifies, as it must be owned it does signify the plague, or pestilence, see Psa 90:6 and which perhaps is so called, from the venomous nature of it, and the poisonous sting that is in it, so likewise a sting, though there is no instance of it; certain it is, that bees are called and as Cocceius (u) observes, from their sting; and so in the Chaldee and Arabic languages, a bee, or a wasp, is called and it is to such sort of creatures, that the allusion is here made; who having lost their stings, can do no hurt; and which will be the case of death in the resurrection morn, when risen saints will insult over it in this triumphant manner; having nothing more to fear from it, any more than a man has to be afraid of any animal whatever, that has lost its sting: and in the following clause,

O grave, where is thy victory? instead of “destruction”, as it must be allowed the word signifies, see Psa 90:6 the apostle reads victory; but then there is no difference in the sense; for the grave gets its victory over its thousands, and ten thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousands, and millions of millions, by the destruction of them, which now it glories in, and boasts of; but in the resurrection morn, when its destruction will be at an end, the triumphant saints may reasonably ask, where is its boasted victory, since it can destroy no longer.

(s) R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 87. p. 463. (t) Apud Pocock. Not. Miscellan. ad Port. Mosis, p. 69, 70. (u) Lex. Heb. in rad.

1 Corinthians 15:56

The sting of death is sin,... Death has a sting, and which was originally in it, and that is sin; sin is the cause of death, it is what has given rise and being to it; it entered into the world by it, and is supported in its empire through it; it gives it its resistless power, which reaches to all sorts of persons, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free; it gives it all its bitterness, agonies, and miseries; and it is by that it does all the hurt and mischief it does; and it may fitly be compared to a sting, for its poisonous and venomous nature:

and the strength of sin is the law; not that the law of God is sinful, or encourages sin: it forbids it under the severest penalty; but was there no law there would be no sin, nor imputation of it; sin is a transgression of the law: moreover, the strength of sin, its evil nature, and all the dreadful aggravations of it, and sad consequences upon it, are discovered and made known by the law; and also the strength of it is drawn out by it, through the corruption of human nature; which is irritated and provoked the more to sin, through the law’s prohibition of it; and this is not the fault of the law, but is owing to the vitiosity of nature; which the more it is forbidden anything, the more desirous it is of it; to which may be added, that sin is the more exceeding sinful, being committed against a known

law, and that of the great lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; whose legislative power and authority are slighted and trampled upon by it, which makes the transgression the more heinous; it is the law which binds sin upon a man's conscience, accuses him of it, pronounces him guilty, curses, condemns, and adjudges him to death for it.

1 Corinthians 15:57

But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory,.... Over sin the sting of death, over the law the strength of sin, and over death and the grave; and which will be the ground and foundation of the above triumphant song in the resurrection morn, as it is now at this present time of praise and thankfulness to God: and it is all

through our Lord Jesus; he has got the victory over sin; he has put it away by the sacrifice of himself; he has finished and made an end of it; for though it reigns over his people before conversion, and dwells in them after it, yet in consequence of his atonement for it, it loses its governing power through the Spirit and grace of God in regeneration, and entirely its damning power over them, and in the resurrection morn will not be so much as in being in them; the view of which now fills them with joy, thanksgiving, and triumph. Christ has obtained a victory over the law; he has stopped its mouth, and answered all its demands; he has been made under, and subject to it; he has obeyed its precepts, and bore its penalty, and has delivered his from the curse and condemnation of it, so that they have nothing to fear from it; it is dead to them, and they to that: he has also abolished death by dying and rising again, so as that it shall have no more dominion over him; and he has abolished it as a penal evil to his saints; and though they die, they shall not always remain under the power of death, they shall live again, and with him for ever: he has conquered the grave by rising out of it himself, and living for evermore, having the keys of the grave in his hands; and will at the last day oblige it to give up its dead, when his victory over this, with respect to his people, will be abundantly manifest: now this victory, in all its branches, is given by God to believers; they are made to share in all the victories of Christ their head, and are more than conquerors through him; but this is not by merit, but by gift, the gift of God the Father, who gives his Son, and all things with him that are his; and this gift is a distinguishing one; it is given to us, and not to others; and which therefore calls aloud for praise and thankfulness. The title of the "ninth" psalm may be rendered, "to the conqueror over death", or "that is the author of victory over death, even to the Son, a psalm of David", Psa 9:1.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore my beloved brethren,.... This is the conclusion of the whole, and contains the use the apostle makes of the above doctrine, addressing the saints at Corinth in the most tender and affectionate manner; owning the spiritual relation they stood in to him, and expressing the great love he had for them, which filled him with a concern for them, that they might be both sound in principle, and right in practice, and continue so:

be ye steadfast, unmoveable; in all the doctrines of the Gospel, and particularly in this of the resurrection of the dead, which he had been labouring throughout the whole chapter:

always abounding in the work of the Lord; going on in it, being more and more in the practice of it; either in the work of the ministry, which some of them were in, to which the Lord had called them, and for which he had fitted and qualified them, and in which his glory was greatly concerned,

and therefore called his work; or any other work, even all good works, which the Lord commands, requires, calls his people to, and strengthens them to perform: which when they do they may be said to abound, and to be fruitful in every good work: and for their encouragement it is added,

forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord; the labour of such who were in the ministry was not in vain, but was by the Lord made useful for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, who would be their joy, and crown of rejoicing another day; and which must be no small encouragement to labour; and labour in any kind of good work has here its usefulness: it is profitable unto men, and though not meritorious of eternal life, yet the good works of the saints will follow them; Christ will not forget their work and labour of love which they have shown to his name and people, but will take notice of them as fruits of his own grace, and bestow his rewards upon them, though not in a way of debt, but of grace; which the doctrine of the resurrection assures of, and encourages to hope for; and so must he a friend to the practice of good works, as the contrary doctrine must be an obstruction to them.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 16

This chapter concludes the epistle, with some directions to the Corinthians concerning a collection for the poor saints; with some intimations of himself, Timothy, and Apollos coming to them, and giving them a visit; with exhortations to watchfulness, constancy, courage, and charity; with recommendations of some persons to them mentioned by name; with divers salutations of them by himself and others; and with his good wishes for them. He urges them to make a collection for the poor saints, from the example of the churches of Galatia, according to his order, Co1 16:1. He points out the time when he would have it made, on the first day of the week; and the persons that should contribute to it, every member of the church; and the act of distribution, by laying up in store; and the manner, measure, and rule of doing it, according as they were blessed in Providence with temporal things; and the end of it, that there might be no collections to make when the apostle should come among them, Co1 16:2 and this, when made, and being ready at his coming, he proposes to send to Jerusalem, by persons approved of and recommended by them, Co1 16:3 and that he would also go along with them, should it be thought fit and proper, Co1 16:4. He signifies his resolution of coming and paying them a visit, when he should pass through Macedonia, Co1 16:5 when he had some thoughts of tarrying with them for a while, at least throughout the winter season, Co1 16:6 in all which he submits to the will of God, Co1 16:7. The reason why he could not come as yet was, because he had determined to stay at Ephesus till Pentecost, where he now was, Co1 16:8 and what prevailed upon him to stay there was, because there was an opportunity of preaching the Gospel with a prospect of success; and there were many enemies to hinder it all they could, and therefore the apostle's presence seemed necessary, Co1 16:9. He intimates, that Timothy would come to them shortly, and exhorts them to take care of him, and carry it respectfully to him; giving this as a reason, because he was engaged in the same work of the Lord he himself was, Co1 16:10. He enjoins them, that whilst he should continue with them they would not despise him on account of his youth; and when he should depart from them, to conduct him in peace to him who was in expectation of him, along with other brethren, Co1 16:11 and then he excuses Apollos not coming to them at present; and observes, that it was not for want of entreaty in him, but for want of will in Apollos, who notwithstanding would come when a convenient time should offer, Co1 16:12. Next follow several exhortations to be upon their watch and guard, to be steadfast in the doctrine, grace, and profession of faith, and to behave themselves like men of a truly Christian spirit and courage,

and to do everything in their church state in the exercise of the grace of love, Co1 16:13 and then he recommends unto them the family of Stephanas, and exhorts them to have them in respect and reverence, and be subject to such, and particularly that family; partly because they were the firstfruits of his ministry, in those parts; and partly because they had given up themselves to the ministry of the saints, Co1 16:15 as also because the coming of Stephanas to him, together with two other persons, named Fortunatus and Achaicus, had made him glad; supplied what was lacking in them; had refreshed his spirit and theirs; and therefore should be took notice of, and respectfully used, Co1 16:17. And then follow various salutations, first of the churches of Asia in general, then of Aquila and Priscilla, and the church in their house, Co1 16:19. Next of all the brethren at Ephesus, or that were with the apostle, Co1 16:20 and last of all of the apostle himself, Co1 16:21. And the chapter is closed with several wishes of different sorts, and which respect different persons; those that love not Christ, and live and die so, he wishes they may be accursed at the coming of the Lord, as they will be; and which is mentioned to deter professors of religion from everything that looked like want of love to Christ, whom they professed, Co1 16:22 as for others, even as many as loved Christ, and which he hoped of them all, he wishes the grace of Christ might be with them, Co1 16:23 and gives his love to them all, without any distinction; and which is to be understood not of a natural, but spiritual affection, it being in Christ, and for his sake, Co1 16:24.

1 Corinthians 16:1

Now concerning the collection for the saints,.... Not at Corinth, but at Jerusalem, as appears from Co1 16:3 for the poor saints there, who were reduced to poverty, either through the spoiling of their goods by their persecuting countrymen; or through the selling of their possessions, and putting their substance into one common stock, which was now exhausted, partly by their living upon it, and partly by the expending of it for the enlargement of the interest of Christ, and the spread of his Gospel among the Gentiles; so that it was but fit and reasonable that they should assist them in their necessitous circumstances: wherefore the apostle, after he had gone through the various subjects he thought fit to write upon, relating both to doctrine and practice, proceeds to give some orders, directions, and instructions, concerning this matter.

As I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. The churches of Galatia were those he wrote an epistle to, which bears their name, and in which he takes notice of the request of the apostles at Jerusalem to him, that he would remember the poor as he travelled through the Gentile countries, and which, no doubt, he mentions, as a hint unto them to collect for them. Gal 2:10 though the order he here speaks of was doubtless given them when he passed through the region of Galatia, Act 16:6. This he observes by way of example to the church at Corinth, and to show them, that what he ordered them was no other than what he enjoined other churches, and which they were ready to come into, as these in Galatia, and also in Macedonia; and designs this as a spur unto them, that if the Galatians, who were a more rude and uncultivated people, being now called by grace, were ready to such a good work, they who were a more polite people, and used to civility, humanity, and tenderness, would not be backward to it.

1 Corinthians 16:2

Upon the first day of the week,.... In an ancient copy of Beza's, and in some others, it is added, "the Lord's day". Upon some one first day of the week, or more, if there was a necessity for it, until the collection was finished; though the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "every first day": but this is

not the apostle's intention, that a collection should be made every first day, but only on some one day, or as long as it was necessary: for at the close of the verse he gives this reason for it, "that there be no gatherings when I come": whereas, if this collection was to have been every first day, and to have been always continued, it must have been when he was present, as well as when absent; but this was only designed for a certain time, and on a certain account: the reason of his fixing upon the first day of the week was, because on this day the disciples of Christ, and the primitive churches, met together for divine worship, to hear the word, and observe the ordinances of Christ; see Joh 20:19 and was a very fit reason for such a work, when their hearts were warmed with the presence of God and Christ, with the grace of the Spirit, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and their affections were knit to one another, and to all the saints: and so we find from the accounts of Justin Martyr (w), and of Tertullian (x), that it was usual for the primitive churches in the age following that of the apostles, after the worship of God was over, to collect money for widows and orphans, and for saints in distress, such as were banished into distant parts, or condemned to the mines; and this practice was very agreeable to the customs of the apostle's countrymen, the Jews, from whence he might take this, who used to collect for, and distribute to the poor on their sabbath (y).

"The alms dish was every day, but the alms chest from evening of the sabbath to the evening of the sabbath,"

It was collected and distributed then, as their commentators say (z).

Let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. The persons who are to contribute are everyone, of every sex, age, state, and condition, male and female, young and old, servants and masters, the meaner as well as the richer sort; the poor widow threw in her mite into the treasury as well as the rich men: the act of communication or distribution is signified by laying by him in store; for this is not to be understood of separating a part of his substance from the rest, and laying it up "in his own house", as the Syriac version renders it, or the putting it in his pocket in order to give it; though both these acts may be necessary, as preparatory to the work: but it intends the very act itself: for communicating to the poor is laying up in store a good foundation for the time to come; it is a laying up treasure in heaven, and riches there, which will never corrupt: the manner in which this is to be done, and the measure of it, "as God hath prospered him"; according to the success he has in his worldly business, and the increase of his worldly substance, and which is the way to have it enlarged. The Jews have a saying (a),

"if a man observes his provisions to be straitened, let him do alms of them, how much more if they are large."

The Vulgate Latin version renders, it, "laying up what pleases him well"; and the Arabic version, "what through liberality he pleases, and shall be convenient for him"; for this ought to be a freewill offering, as a matter of bounty and generosity, and not of covetousness, or of force and necessity, but as a man, of himself has purposed in his own heart, and which he does with cheerfulness and freedom.

That there be no gatherings when I come; who had other work, and greater service to do among them; besides, he was desirous of having this collection over and ready when he came, that he might directly send it away to Jerusalem, knowing the pressing necessities of the saints there.

(w) Apolog. 2. p. 98, 99. (x) Apolog. c. 39. (y) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 2. Maimon, Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 9. sect. 6. (z) Maimon. R. Samson & Bartenora in Misn. Peah, c. 8. sect. 7. (a) T. Bab. Gittim, fol. 7. 1.

1 Corinthians 16:3

And when I come,.... To Corinth, as he intended very quickly:

whomsoever you shall approve by your letters; that is, such persons as this church should approve, and choose, and fix upon as proper persons to go with their collection; which approbation and choice they would signify by letters to the church, and principal men of it in Jerusalem, giving them a character as men of probity and faithfulness:

them will I send. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions join the phrase, “by letters”, to this clause; according to which reading the sense is, such as the church should choose for this service, the apostle would send with letters of commendation from him, to the elders and church at Jerusalem, recommending them as brethren in the Lord, and to be had in respect, and treated in a Christian manner by them; to which their being messengers from such a church, and having letters from so great an apostle; besides, the business they should come about would entitle them to, which was

to bring your liberality, or “grace”,

unto Jerusalem; meaning the money collected for the poor saints there; which he calls grace, because it was owing to the goodness of God, that they were in a capacity to contribute to others, and to the grace of God that they had a heart to do it; and because it was in a free and gracious manner, and in the exercise of grace, of faith in Christ, and love to the saints, that they did it, and with a view to the glory of the grace of God, of which this was a fruit and evidence.

1 Corinthians 16:4

And if it be meet that I go also,.... If it should be convenient for me to go, or it should be thought proper and expedient that I should go; or, as the Syriac version renders it, “if this work should be worthy that I should go”; and the Arabic version, “if the thing should be worthy to go with me”; that is, their beneficence; if so large a collection should be made, that it will be worthy of an apostle to go along with it, hereby artfully pressing them to a good collection:

they shall go with me; that is, those brethren whom the church shall approve and send; for he would not go alone, nor propose it, to remove all suspicion of converting any money to his own use.

1 Corinthians 16:5

col 16:5

Now I will come unto you,.... Which he again assures them of, as being his real intention and design; though some had given out that he would not come to them any more, and hoped they should never see him any more; see Col 4:18.

When I shall pass through Macedonia; hereby fixing the time when he intended to visit them after he

had gone through that country, and had received their collections for the saints at Jerusalem, which the churches there so generously made, and pressed him to the ministering of, of which he speaks in his next epistle.

For I do pass through Macedonia; not that he was then passing through Macedonia, or was in it, and so at Philippi, from whence this epistle is said to be written, as the subscription at the end of it expresses, for he was now at Ephesus; see Co1 16:8 and from thence was this epistle written; he was not in Macedonia till some time after, see Co2 2:12 but the sense is, that he should take his tour through Macedonia; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “for I shall pass through Macedonia”; and so coming into Greece, he intended to come to Corinth, and stay some time with them.

1 Corinthians 16:6

And it may be that I will abide,.... He could not be certain what calls in Providence he might have to some other places, where his presence would be necessary:

yea, and winter with you; stay all winter with them, for the space of three months, as we read he did in Greece, Act 20:1.

That ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go; both by accompanying him in person themselves, in token of honour and respect, and by providing things necessary for his journey; see Act 15:3.

1 Corinthians 16:7

For I will not see you now by the way,.... Just to look upon them, and be gone, be like a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night:

but I trust to tarry a while with you; the whole winter season:

if the Lord permit; submitting all to the will of God, at whose sovereign disposal he always was, and at whose beck and command he desired to be, and to do nothing, or be any where, but what was agreeable to the will of God.

1 Corinthians 16:8

But I will tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost. The feast of weeks, or of harvest, which was fifty days from the passover; See Gill on Act 2:1 which though abrogated at the death of Christ, was observed by the Jews, and is mentioned by the apostle, not as a festival that the Christians were obliged to regard, or did regard, but as pointing out the time he intended to stay at Ephesus: and we elsewhere read, that he was greatly desirous of being at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, Act 20:16 not to keep it, but because there would then be abundance of people from all parts there, to whom he should have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:9

For a great door,.... Meaning an opportunity of ministering the word at Ephesus, a very populous city,

and where he might have hope great good would be done. Some think that by this fair opportunity, or hopeful prospect, he means the populousness of the city; others, the conversion of some great men in it, which had made way for the introduction of Gospel there: but it seems rather to intend the desire that there appeared in many persons here to have the Gospel preached unto them; they flocked unto it; their hearts were opened to attend to it, and great numbers believed; and the apostle found a door of utterance in himself, and a door of entrance in them, which were reasons with him to tarry here.

And effectual is opened to me; not by him, but to him: this door was opened by him who has the key of David, that opens, and no man shuts; and the door of faith being opened by him, it was effectual to the quickening of sinners dead in trespasses and sins, to the enlightening of blind eyes, unstopping of deaf ears, and softening hard hearts; to the turning of souls from the power of Satan to God, to the quickening, comforting, and establishing of saints, and indeed to salvation to all that believe; which is the case when the word comes, not in word only, but in power; then it works effectually in them that believe; and since there was an opportunity of preaching the Gospel with such good effect, the apostle was desirous of making use of it:

and there are many adversaries; as there always are where the Gospel is preached, and especially with success, when sinners are converted, and saints are edified and comforted. The adversary Satan roars, and the posse of devils under him are employed one way or another to obstruct the Gospel if possible; false teachers are raised up to oppose it, and profane men are instigated by him to persecute the preachers and professors of it: so it was at Ephesus, the Jews disputed against it, and spoke evil of it; Demetrius the silversmith, and those of his craft, rose up in a tumultuous manner, crying, great is Diana of the Ephesians, stirring up the people against the apostle, and his companions; all which he had some foreviews of, and found to be true by experience, as may be seen in Act 19:21 and which, though to another man would have been a reason to have departed, was a reason with him to stay; to bear his testimony to the Gospel, to appear in the defence of it, against the disputers of this world, and to strengthen and establish the minds of weak believers in it, who might have been in some danger through so many adversaries; wherefore he saw and judged that his presence was necessary, and that it was proper for him to stay the time he mentions.

1 Corinthians 16:10

Now if Timotheus come,.... The apostle had sent him already, as appears from Col 4:17 and he was now gone from him; but whether he might not be prevented by unforeseen incidents in his journey, he could not say; and therefore speaks cautiously of his coming; from whence it is evident, that this epistle was not sent by Timothy, as the subscription to it suggests.

See that he may be with you without fear; should he come to them, the apostle desires they would take care of him, that he might be safe and secure from enemies of every sort, of which there were many at Corinth; who, as they were of a malignant disposition to him, would use a disciple of his ill: and these were not only, or so much, infidels and profane sinners, but false teachers, and the factions under them, and especially they of the circumcision.

For he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do; which is a reason why they should be careful of him, that nobody molest him, and put him into fear; since though he was not in so high an office as the apostle, yet he was called to the same work of the ministry, was engaged in the same service of Christ, and was zealous in promoting the same common cause, interest, and kingdom of the

Redeemer, and faithfully preached the same Gospel as the apostle did; and therefore would doubtless meet with the same enemies, and be in the same danger.

1 Corinthians 16:11

Let no man therefore despise him,... On account of his youth; see Ti1 4:12, or neglect to take care of him, which would be to despise him, since he was employed in such an honourable work, equally as the apostle himself: hence it is manifest, that as the lives of Gospel ministers ought to be defended and secured by those to whom they minister, their persons ought to be treated with esteem and respect.

But conduct him forth in peace; when he takes his leave, wish him all happiness and prosperity, accompany him some part of the way in his journey, and provide things necessary for him; all which used to be done to such who laboured in the word and doctrine, and were counted worthy of double honour; and such an one Timothy was judged by the apostle to be:

that he may come unto me; at Ephesus, where he now was, in peace and safety, and relate to him the state and condition of the church; their steadfastness in the faith, their care of him, and the respect they had shown him; all which would be grateful to the apostle:

for I look for him with the brethren; that is, either the brethren that were with the apostle were in earnest expectation of him, together with himself; and so the Ethiopic version reads, “for our brethren with me have expected him”; or else that he looked for him along with the brethren, that either went with him, or should come with him from Corinth, being sent by the church.

1 Corinthians 16:12

As touching our brother Apollos,... Who was a senior man to Timothy, an eloquent preacher, one who had been at Corinth, and was well known to the saints there, and greatly approved by many of them; wherefore the apostle excuses it, that he should send the one, and not the other, and shows that it was no fault of his: for, says he,

I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren; who seem to be Timotheus and Erastus, see Act 19:22. He greatly importuned him to go along with them, knowing how acceptable he would be among them, and hoping he might be of great use to them in composing their differences, and rectifying their disorders.

But his will was not at all to come at this time; or “it was not the will”; that is, of God, as some supply it, for him to come now; or he had no mind himself, nor could he be persuaded; he had reasons to himself why he judged it not proper to come at present: however, for their encouragement it is added,

but he will come when he shall have convenient time; he is not averse to coming, but some things at present hinder him; when he has a suitable opportunity he will make use of it.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Watch ye,... The apostle in the mean while, before he closes his epistle, thinks fit to give some proper

and pertinent exhortations, which might be of general use to this church; and first exhorts them to watchfulness, not for the coming of Apollos, and a convenient season for that; but over themselves, over their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, actions, and their whole conversations; and over one another, that they go not into bad principles, and evil practices; and also against sin in general, every appearance, and the first motions of it, and particularly unbelief; and against Satan, and his temptations, who is an indefatigable enemy, and whose wiles, devices, and stratagems are many and cunning; and against the world, its charms and snares; and likewise against false teachers, who lie in wait to deceive, and therefore to be guarded against; many of which were among these Corinthians, and made this exhortation very necessary. It became them likewise to watch daily at wisdom's gates, to wait constantly upon God in the word and ordinances, and especially to watch unto prayer, and in it, and after it; to all which it is necessary that they should be awake, and not asleep, to which the wise as well as foolish virgins are subject; that they should be sober, and not be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life; and that they be in their proper station, on their watchtower, keeping a good lookout, and being ready armed, to attack an enemy when descried. Many are the reasons why the saints should be upon their watch and guard; as because they have many eyes upon them; the eyes of the omniscient God are upon them, who sees and takes notice of all their actions; the eyes of angels are upon them, and even in their solemn assemblies; the eyes of saints are upon them, though watching for their good; and the eyes of evil men for their halting; and the eyes of devils are upon them, waiting an opportunity to do them hurt and mischief, if possible. Moreover, unwatchfulness exposes to many evils, temptations, and snares; to which may be added, as an inducement to watchfulness, the uncertainty of Christ's coming either at death, or to judgment.

Stand fast in the faith: which is proper to those that are watchful; for men asleep cannot well stand. This exhortation may respect either standing in the grace of faith, in opposition to doubting and unbelief, and design a continuance in the exercise of it, notwithstanding all the corruptions of nature, and the various sins and infirmities of life, the frequent temptations of Satan, and the many afflictions and trials in the world, which may occasion diffidence and distrust; for standing in this grace, and in such a constant exercise of it, greatly glorifies God, is what is wellpleasing in his sight; and in this way saints have communion with God, peace and comfort in their souls, and much spiritual joy and pleasure: it is the grace by which they stand, and therefore should stand in it, and by which they overcome the world. Or else it may intend standing in the doctrine of faith, in opposition to a departure from it, or a giving up any part of it, or wavering about it; it becomes saints to be steadfast in it, and abide by it, whoever is against it; let them be ever so many, or ever so wise and learned, and whatever may be said against it, as that it is a novel one, a licentious one, and a set of irrational principles, and whatever is the opposition that is made against it, though bonds and afflictions, reproach and persecution in every shape attend it, yet none of these things should move them from it. Perhaps that particular doctrine of faith, the resurrection of the dead, may be greatly regarded. Moreover, standing in the profession of faith, both of the grace and doctrine of faith, may be intended; for as this is to be made, it is to be held fast, and stood fast in, without wavering, by all true believers, who have great encouragement so to do from the person and grace of Christ, and from the love and faithfulness of God, and the many gracious promises he has made. Wherefore,

quit yourselves like men, be strong; a like phrase is often used by the Septuagint interpreters, as in Deu 31:6, from whence the apostle seems to have taken it. It answers to the Hebrew word in Isa 46:8.

Quit you like men; like men of wisdom and understanding; be not like children for non-proficiency, instability, and weakness; see Co1 14:20; act the part of men; believe not every spirit; be not carried

and tossed about with every wind of doctrine; search the Scriptures, and try every doctrine by them; and having found what is truth abide by it, and be proficient in it, instructing and establishing yourselves and others. In which sense the Jews use this phrase, saying (b),

“in a place where there are no men, , “study to be a man”, or to show thyself a man;”

which one of their commentators (c) explains thus;

“use and accustom thyself to obtain excellent things, and afterwards when there are no wise men to teach, then do thou teach thyself.”

And another (d) after this manner;

“”in the place where there is no man” to sit at the head and teach doctrines,”

do thou. Or play the man, as in Sa2 10:12; act like men of valour and courage, stand fast, keep your ground, and contend earnestly for the faith; be valiant for the truth on earth; fight the good fight of faith: it is a good cause believers are engaged in; they have a good Captain and Commander at the head of them; they are provided with good weapons, may be sure of victory, and of having the crown of righteousness, life, and glory: wherefore

be strong; that is, for the faith: so the Targumist on Jer 9:3 renders the phrase, “they are not valiant for the truth, , they are not strong for the faith: be strong”; not in themselves, but in the Lord, and in the power of his might; in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; believe in him, look to him for strength as well as righteousness; trust in his power, whose arm is not shortened; depend on his grace, which is always sufficient; take heart, be of good courage, and fear no enemy; see Jos 1:6, which seems to be particularly referred to here.

(b) Misn. Pirke Abot, c. sect. 5. Vid. T. Bab Beracot, fol. 63. 1. (c) Maimon. in Misn. ib. (d) Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, fol. 63. 1.

1 Corinthians 16:14

Let all your things be done with charity. Signifying, that the whole of their obedience to Christ, their observation of, and subjection to all his ordinances and commands, should spring from, and be done in love to him; and that the whole of their conduct and behaviour towards one another ought to be with charity, which bears all things, and covers a multitude of sins; and that all their church affairs, their business at church meetings, should be transacted, not with strife and vain glory, but in peace, and with mutual affection, with a concern for the good of each other, and of the whole body, and for the glory of God; for without charity or love, and the exercise of this grace, it signifies little what men either have or do; and such an exhortation was the more necessary to this church, since it was so full of factions, contentions, and divisions.

1 Corinthians 16:15

I beseech you, brethren,... Entreat or exhort you as brethren in the Lord; this entreaty or exhortation is to submission to fellow helpers and labourers of the ministry, more particularly expressed in

the following verse, after the apostle has given a character of the household of Stephanas, who are principally intended, and which contains reasons and arguments why they should be submitted to; and which account stands in the following parenthesis,

ye know the house of Stephanas; a person of note at Corinth, whom the apostle had baptized, together with his family, Co1 1:16. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, add, “and of Fortunatus and Achaicus”, persons mentioned along with Stephanas, in Co1 1:17;

that it is the firstfruits of Achaia: this family was one of the first in the regions of Achaia, of which Corinth was the metropolis, that believed in Christ; these were some of the first instances of conversion, and who received the firstfruits of the Spirit in these parts, and by the grace of God had been enabled to persevere hitherto, and were worthy of respect: the same he says of Epaphroditus, in Rom 16:5;

and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints; that is, either to minister to the wants of poor saints, whether out of their own substance, or the churches’ stock, being deacons, or to minister to the saints by preaching the Gospel; which good work they desired, willingly gave up themselves to, and cheerfully engaged in, and took the oversight and care of the flock, not by constraint, but willingly; not that they thrust themselves into an office, or came into it in an irregular way, but being called into it in an orderly manner by the church, and invested with it, they applied to the execution of it with great heartiness, diligence, and zeal, and so were very deserving of due respect, as next mentioned.

1 Corinthians 16:16

That ye submit yourselves to such,.... To persons of such a character, and in such an office; if in ministering to poor saints, by assisting them, and by putting into their hands; and putting it in their power to discharge their work fully, in which they were so heartily concerned; and if in the work of the ministry of the word, by attending their ministrations, receiving the truths delivered by them with faith and love, so far as they appeared to be agreeable to the word of God; hearkening to their admonitions, counsels and advice, regarding their censures and reproofs by the authority of the church, and in their name, and by subjection to the laws of Christ’s house, as put in execution by them, see Heb 13:17,

and to everyone that helpeth with us; in any form, whether by relieving the poor, or by preaching the Gospel:

and laboureth; in the Lord’s vineyard, in the word and doctrine, for the good of souls, and the glory of Christ: for such are worthy of double honour, and ought to be valued and esteemed for their works’ sake, and submitted to in everything that is according to the rules of the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:17

I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus,.... Who very probably were those of the household of Chloe, mentioned in Co1 1:11, who came either of their own accord, or were sent as messengers from the church at Corinth to the apostle; who was glad to see them, one of them being baptized by him, and perhaps all of them converted under his ministry: however, they

were believers in Christ, if not ministers of the Gospel, which seems very probable.

For that which was lacking on your part they have supplied; which is not to be understood of their supplying him with money, in which the Corinthians had been deficient; for as he had never taken anything of them, he was determined he never would; see Co2 11:7; but either of their presence which supplied the want of theirs, the apostle had been for some time greatly desirous of; or whereas they had been greatly wanting in sending him an account of the state of the church, and how things stood with them, these brethren greatly supplied that defect, by giving him a very particular account of their church affairs.

1 Corinthians 16:18

For they have refreshed my spirit,.... By their coming and presence; the very sight of them gave him joy and pleasure, and more so their Christian discourse and conversation, and especially the account they brought of this church; for though there were many things in it which were very disagreeable, and were the occasion of this epistle, yet there were others related, which were exceedingly pleasing to the apostle, and revived his spirit, which had been greatly depressed by what he might have heard of them from another quarter, and through fear that it was worse with them than it really was; for by these brethren he understood, that there were many in the church that had great grace, and large gifts bestowed on them, so that they came behind none in these things; and were steadfast in the faith of the Gospel, and with rigour opposed the false teachers; and in all things sought the welfare of the church, and the interest of Christ; and this was good news to the apostle, and which exhilarated his spirit: and he adds,

and yours; his spirit and theirs, in divine things, being the same; they were of one heart and soul; they had the same love, and were of one accord, and of one mind; so that what was grateful to the one, was so to the other: or his sense is, that when these brethren should return, and acquaint the church how the spirit of the apostle was revived, and refreshed with the narrative they gave him of the affairs of the church, their spirits would be also refreshed too. Dr. Hammond thinks that this phrase is taken out of the Greek translation of Zac 6:8, "have quieted my spirit", which the Septuagint interpret by , "they stilled", or "caused my wrath to cease"; and in the same way Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi explain the words; but the apostle's phrase is nearer to the original itself of that text, , "they have stilled", or "caused my spirit to rest"; and is the very same phrase the Syriac version uses here; and which the Chaldee paraphrase renders thus, , "they have done my will"; that which was agreeable and well pleasing to God; and so these brethren by their coming and company, and news they brought, did that which was grateful and satisfactory to the apostle: and the phrase of the spirit of man having rest from another, is often used in the Rabbinical writings, for having satisfaction in them, and approving of them; so they say, (e),

"wnmyh hxwn twyrbh xwrv, that everyone "from whom the spirit of men have rest", the Spirit of God has rest; and everyone from whom the spirit of man has no rest, the Spirit of God has no rest:"

and which their commentators (f) explain thus,

"whoever is beloved below, it is manifest that he is beloved above:"

therefore acknowledge ye them that are such; as these men; know them, have an affection for them,

show respect to them, highly esteem of them for their works' sake; see Th1 5:12.

(e) Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 10. (f) Jarchi & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 10.

1 Corinthians 16:19

The churches of Asia salute you,.... The Syriac version renders it, "all" the churches. This shows, that this epistle was not written from Philippi, as the subscription to it attests, for then he would rather have said; the churches of Macedonia salute you, but at Ephesus, where he now was; see Co1 16:8; and this is the more confirmed, by the following salutation of Aquila and Priscilla, who it is plain from Act 18:18, were with the apostle at Ephesus:

Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord; Aquila was a Jew of Pontus, and Priscilla was his wife, who came from Italy, all Jews being obliged to depart from Rome, by the order of Claudius Caesar. These came to Corinth, where they met with the apostle; and being of the same occupation, stayed and wrought with him; and when he went from thence to Ephesus, accompanied him thither; see Act 18:3; wherefore having personal knowledge of the members of this church, through their stay with the apostle there, for the space of a year and a half, send their Christian salutations to them, with great affection and respect:

with the church that is in their house: their family consisting of believers, and being kept in such good decorum, and employed daily in singing, praying, expounding, and conferring together about divine things, looked like a little church; and it may be that at certain times the principal members of the church at Ephesus met in their house for religious worship, and to consider and debate about the affairs of the church; and very likely as they were of the same occupation with the apostle, he himself dwelt here; and which might be the more an occasion of the church assembling here at times; and the Vulgate Latin version adds, "with whom also I lodge".

1 Corinthians 16:20

co1 16:20

All the brethren greet you,.... Either the brethren, the members of the church at Ephesus; or the apostle's brethren in the ministry, that were along with him, as Sosthenes and others; or the brethren that were come to him from Corinth, namely Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus:

greet ye one another with an holy kiss; See Gill on Rom 16:16.

1 Corinthians 16:21

The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. The apostle had an "amanuensis", that wrote the epistle for him; but to prevent counterfeits, and that the church to whom he wrote might be assured of the genuineness of the epistle, that it was truly his own, he wrote with his own hand his common salutation; see Th2 3:17, and which is not in the following words, but what is expressed in Co1 16:23.

1 Corinthians 16:22

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,.... The Vulgate Latin, and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions,

read “our Lord”. The apostle here does not so much mean profane and unregenerate sinners, who are destitute of love to Christ, from ignorance of him; nor such who, from the same principle, might persecute him in his members, for such are to be even prayed for, and wished well unto; and oftentimes such are called by grace, and become true and sincere lovers of Christ; and the apostle himself was an instance of it: some think the Jews are intended, who were the mortal enemies of Christ; hated his name and person, his Gospel and interest, and maliciously persecuted the same; they called Jesus accursed, and therefore deserved an anathema to be pronounced on them; it was prophesied of them, that their name should be left for a curse; and it was threatened to them, in case of non-repentance, upon the coming of John the Baptist, in the spirit of Elijah, that the Lord would come and smite their land with a curse; which had its accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem; see Isa 65:15; others think the Gnostics are intended, one of whose tenets was, that it was lawful not to confess Christ in a time of persecution, in order to save themselves; and such might be truly said not to love our Lord Jesus, and on whom such an anathema as after mentioned might rightly be denounced: though it should seem rather, that some persons in this church, or that infested it, are referred to as the false teachers, and those who sided with them, who made factions and divisions in the church of Christ; allowed themselves in the commission of fornication and incest, and such like impurities; had no regard to the peace of the consciences of weak brethren, but laid stumblingblocks in their way; behaved in a very irreverent manner at the Lord’s table, and gave in to very pernicious errors and heresies, particularly denying the resurrection of the dead; and by their many bad principles and practices plainly showed that they did not in deed and in truth love our Lord Jesus: wherefore of every such an one the apostle says,

let him be anathema. The word anathema, answers to the Hebrew and is rendered by it here in the Syriac version; and signifies anything separated and devoted to holy uses; and so it is used by the Septuagint, in Lev 27:28, and in the New Testament, Luk 21:5, and which, if alienated to any other purposes, entailed a curse on persons; hence it is often translated “accursed”, as Rom 9:3 Co1 12:3, and here it signifies, that such persons that love not the Lord Jesus, should be rejected by the saints, and separated from their communion; and so the Arabic version renders it, “let him be separated”; that is, from the church; let him be cast out of it, and cut off from it; as, so living and dying without love to Christ, he will be accursed by him at the last day, and will have that awful sentence denounced on him, “go ye cursed”. The apostle adds another word, about which there is some difficulty,

maranatha; some make this to be the same with “anathema”; the one being the Syriac, the other the Greek word, as “Abba, Father”; and think that “maranatha” is put for “maharamatha”; others think that it is the same with “maharonatha”, which signifies “from wrath to come”; and being joined with the other word, intends an anathematizing or devoting persons to wrath to come: others take it to be the last, and worse sort of excommunication among the Jews; and observe, that the first sort was called “Niddui”, which was a separation from company and conversation, to which reference may be had in Luk 6:22; the second sort was called Cherem, to which “anathema” answers, and was a separation, attended with curses and imprecations; and a third sort was called “Shammatha”, and is thought to answer to “maranatha”, giving the etymology of it, as if it was, , “the name”, i.e. “God cometh”, as “maranatha” read as two words, signify “our Lord cometh”: but this is not the etymology the Jews give of “Shammatha” (g); they ask,

“what is “Shammatha?” says Rab, , “there is death”; and Samuel says, , “desolations shall be”;

but of the other etymology there is no mention made among them; nor is ever the word “maranatha”

used by them for excommunication; the sense of which certainly is, “our Lord cometh”; and the Ethiopic version, joining it with the former word, renders the whole thus, “let him be anathema in the coming of our Lord”, which seems to be pretty much the sense of the apostle: it is best to consider this word, or rather these two words, “maran atha”, “our Lord cometh”, as added by the apostle, to put persons in mind of the coming of Christ; either at the destruction of Jerusalem, to take vengeance on the Jews, who did not love, but hated him, and maliciously persecuted him, and his; or of the second coming of Christ to judgment, when all the wicked of the earth shall be accursed by him, and all such that love him not will be bid to depart from him.

(g) T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 17. 1.

1 Corinthians 16:23

co1 16:23

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. This is the apostle’s salutation in all his epistles, and is a token of the truth and genuineness of them; See Gill on Rom 16:20; and is a wish for a supply of all grace from Christ, and an increase of it in the saints; that they may have the communications of it to them, to quicken, invigorate, and draw forth into exercise the grace they have received, and to enable and assist them in the discharge of every duty.

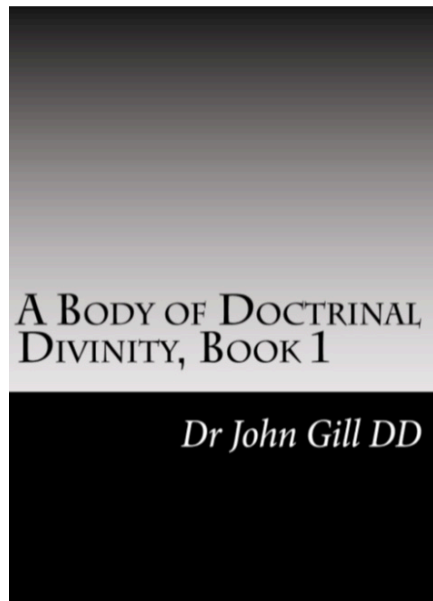
1 Corinthians 16:24

My love be with you all,... Meaning either that he desired that he might be loved by them, as they were by him, and might always have a place in their hearts and affections, as they had in his; or that his love, which extended to all of them without exception, to rich and poor, greater or lesser believers, might be always acceptable to them; and which he now commended to them, and saluted them with, from his very heart: and that it might not be thought to be a carnal affection, or on account of any outward things, he adds,

in Christ Jesus; he loved them for Christ’s sake, because they were his, had his grace bestowed on them, his image stamped upon them, and his Spirit put within them; and concludes as usual, with an

Amen; both by way of request, and for the sake of confirmation; desiring that so it might be, and believing that so it would be. The following subscription is added, not by the apostle, but by some other hand since. “The first” epistle “to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus”; but, as has been already observed, this epistle was not written from Philippi, but from Ephesus, where the apostle now was, as appears from Co1 16:8; nor was it sent by Timotheus, for he was sent out before the writing of this epistle, see Co1 4:17, and the apostle puts an if upon his coming to them, in Co1 16:10, which he would scarcely have done, if he had sent this letter by him; though very probably it was sent by the other three, who came from Corinth, at their return thither.

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY BOOK 1



A System of Practical Truths

Authored by Dr John Gill DD,

THIS IS BOOK 1

Treating The Subjects:

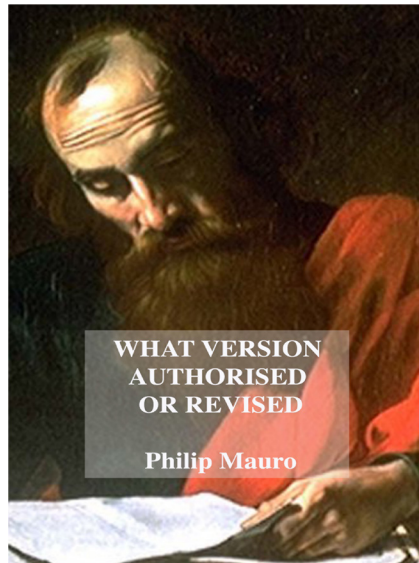
Of God, His Works, Names, Nature, Perfections And Persons. And Contains:

Chapters

- 1 Of The Being Of God
- 2 Of The Holy Scriptures
- 3 Of The Names Of God
- 4 Of The Nature Of God
- 5 Of The Attributes Of God In General, And Of His Immutability In Particular.
- 6 Of The Infinity Of God,
- 7 Of The Life Of God.
- 8 Of The Omnipotence Of God.
- 9 Of The Omniscience Of God.
- 10 Of The Wisdom Of God.
- 11 Of The Will Of God And The Sovereignty Of It
- 12 Of The Love Of God
- 13 Of The Grace Of God.
- 14 Of The Mercy Of God.
- 15 Of The Long suffering Of God.
- 16 Of The Goodness Of God.
- 17 Of The Anger And Wrath Of God.
- 18 Of The Hatred Of God.
- 19 Of The Joy Of God.
- 20 Of The Holiness Of God.
- 21 Of The Justice Or Righteousness Of God.
- 22 Of The Veracity Of God.
- 23 Of The Faithfulness Of God

- 24 Of The Sufficiency And Perfection Of God.
- 25 Of The Blessedness Of God.
- 26 Of The Unity Of God.
- 27 Of A Plurality In The Godhead, Or, A Trinity Of Persons In The Unity Of The Divine Essence.
- 28 Of The Personal Relations; Or, Relative Properties, Which Distinguish The Three Divine Persons In The Deity.
- 29 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Father.
- 30 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Son.
- 31 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Holy Spirit.

WHAT VERSION AUTHORIZED OR REVISED

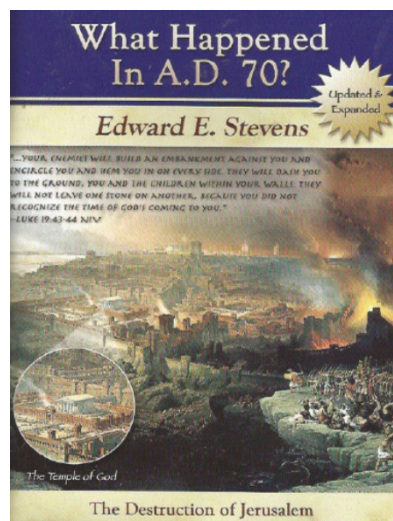


Philp Mauro

The book discusses the issues relating to the reliability of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the failings of the so-called Revised Versions. It reminds the reader the Greek printed text, produced by Erasmus in 1516, was derived from a broad set of 8 extant Greek manuscripts available to him in his day and in constant use by Christians to that day and not Latin bibles. Since 1861 there has arisen those who claim the Authorised Version is not accurate and Wescott and Hort produced a new compiled Greek Printed text manuscript, derived from, and based upon, two 4th C handwritten extant manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus, written in Greek and Codex Vaticanus, written in Latin. They claimed that since these manuscripts were the oldest extant manuscripts in the world (400 years after the original writing of the new testament scriptures) they were far superior and more reliable than the text underlying the Authorised version of the bible. And since 1945 all Bible translations are based upon the New Greek manuscript text of Wescott and Hort published in 1861. This is an eclectic text and not the Received Text used by the translator of the Authorised Version of the Bible and known by Christians, throughout the Christian age, as the Word of God. It has been republished by Particular Baptist to educate serious minded people about the subject of Bible translations and support the Authorised version of the Bible. Philip Mauro was a lawyer in America, who practiced before the Supreme Court. He prepared briefs NOTES for the Scopes Trial WHICH was an American legal case in July 1925 THAT had made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school.[1] The trial publicized the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion,[4] against Fundamentalists, who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest

and a trial on whether “modern science” should be taught in schools. Mauro was ALSO passenger on the British ocean liner RMS Carpathia when it rescued the passengers of the Titanic in April 1912. It is hoped that this book will rescue any that are sinking in the sea of the natural Modern man’s opinion as to the reliability of the Authorised Version the bible.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70



Ed. Stevens

Ever since the booklet, What Happened In AD 70? was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yossippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell’s view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, First Century Events in Chronological Order. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4).

Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul's other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the end-time prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the end-time events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of "tribulation" upon the church and the "days of vengeance" upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

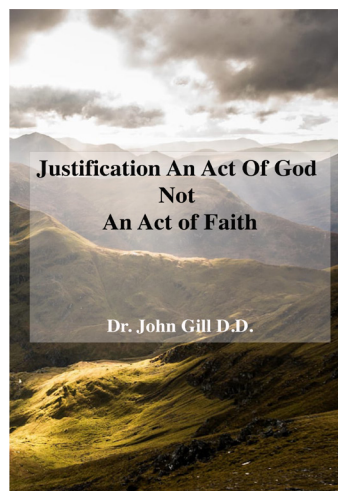
Edward E. Stevens
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

<https://www.preterist.org/>

Bradford, Pennsylvania

April 17, 2010

JUSTIFICATION AN ACT OF GOD-NOT AN ACT OF FAITH



Alternatively Eternal Justification an Antidote To Fullerism

Paperback – November 21, 2020

By Dr. John Gill, D.D.

A powerful and precise defense of the biblical doctrine of justification—rooted not in man's faith, but in the sovereign act of God.

In this concise yet profound theological treatise, eminent 18th-century Baptist theologian Dr. John Gill,

D.D. offers a vigorous exposition of justification by grace, arguing that justification is not conditioned upon the act of believing, but is rather a divine and eternal act of God.

Rejecting the popular notion that faith is the cause of justification, Gill boldly asserts that faith is the means by which the justified soul apprehends what has already been accomplished by God. To locate justification in the believer's act of faith, Gill warns, is to shift the foundation of salvation from God's sovereign grace to human response—a subtle but dangerous departure from the Gospel.

Gill writes with pastoral clarity and scholarly precision, drawing from Scripture and sound doctrine to affirm:

Justification is an eternal decree of God, grounded in the righteousness of Christ and imputed to the elect before they believe.

Faith is not the cause, but the evidence and instrument of justification.

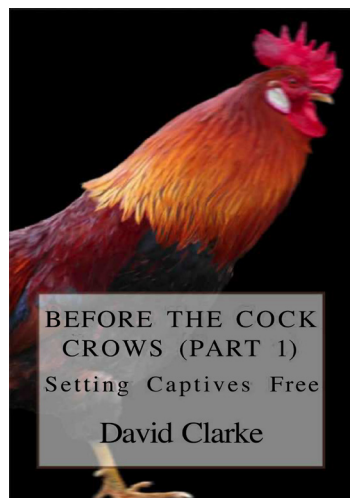
The righteousness of Christ alone is the meritorious basis of the believer's standing before God.

God is both just and the justifier of the ungodly—not because of anything in man, but because of His own grace and purpose.

With rich theological insight and unwavering commitment to the doctrines of grace, Dr. Gill confronts the errors of conditional justification and defends the Reformed view of salvation with biblical authority. This book is an indispensable resource for students of theology, pastors, and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the doctrine of justification—a doctrine Martin Luther once called “the article by which the church stands or falls.”

Let God be true, and every man a liar—salvation is of the Lord.

BEFORE THE COCK CROWS



The Daily Diary of Trojan Horse International

By David Clarke

From Crime to Christ – A Mission Behind the Walls of One of Asia's Most Notorious Prisons

In The Daily Diary of Trojan Horse International, David Clarke D.D., Director of Trojan Horse International Christian Ministries, provides a gripping first-hand account of an extraordinary gospel mission carried out within the walls of New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa City—the largest and most notorious penitentiary in the Philippines, home to over 23,000 inmates, including death row prisoners and some of Asia's most feared criminals.

Between October 2002 and July 2003, Clarke faced intense opposition from within the prison itself. Yet

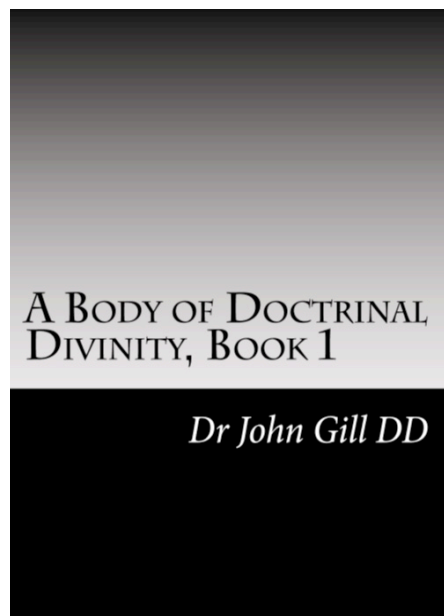
what many saw as resistance from men, he recognised as spiritual opposition—proof, in his view, of the mission’s divine purpose. Echoing Newton’s third law, Clarke reflects that every spiritual advance is met with equal and opposite force, confirming the high stakes of this unique ministry.

The mission began in 2001 as a personal effort to support his brother, Michael John Clarke, who had been imprisoned in the Philippines—wrongly, according to David. In 2000, Michael experienced a dramatic conversion and was baptised inside the prison using a 45-gallon oil drum. His transformation, much like David’s own earlier conversion from a life of crime in the UK, is a testimony to the power of God’s grace at work in the darkest of places.

This diary captures more than just daily events; it documents spiritual warfare, prison politics, and moments of miraculous breakthrough. It also proclaims an unchanging gospel truth: “Salvation is of the Lord.”

Part missionary journal, part testimony of radical transformation, *Before the Cock Crows* is an inspiring account of how God’s Spirit can move powerfully behind prison walls. For readers interested in missionary work, prison ministry, spiritual warfare, or stories of redemption, this is a compelling and unforgettable narrative of grace and purpose.

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY



A System of Practical Truths

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke Cert.Ed

THE FULL SET OF DR. JOHN GILL’S BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY IS IN SEVEN BOOKS. Available form our Office in the uk or Amazon.co.uk or Amazon.com Or Isuu.com

BOOK I

Of God, His Works, Names, Nature, Perfections And Persons.

BOOK II

Of The Acts And Works Of God

BOOK III

Of The External Works Of God

BOOK IV

Of The Acts Of The Grace Of God Towards And Upon His Elect In Time.

BOOK V

Of The Grace Of Christ In His States

Of Humiliation And Exaltation, And In The Offices Exercised By Him In Them.

BOOK VI

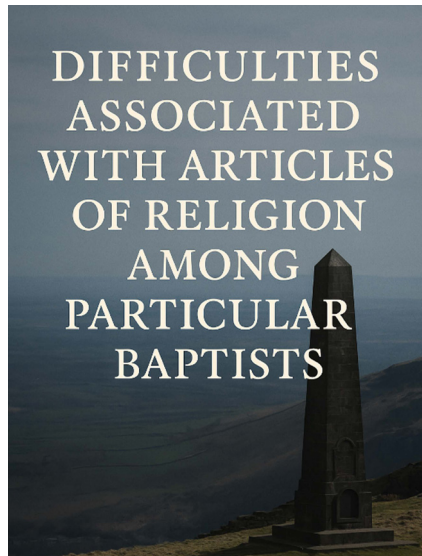
Of The Blessings Of Grace, And The Doctrines Of It.

BOOK VII

Of The Final State Of Man

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Among Particular Baptists



Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831, of which he is the sole surviving member, the First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

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The Development of Articles Of Religion

Act of Toleration 14 Additions That Are Wrong

2 London Baptist Confession 1689

Notes on The London Baptists Confession 1689

3 Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of Religion,
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[TROJAN WARRIORS](#)



Setting Captives Free

Authored by Mr David Clarke CertEd, Authored by Mr Michael J Clarke

A moving story of redemption, grace, and the power of testimony—Trojan Warriors is a call to hope, even in the darkest places. Trojan Warriors is the remarkable true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who grew up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. Both became involved in crime during the 1960s and, in 1967, were sentenced to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a firearm without a licence.

Though their paths to reformation came 25 years apart, both brothers ultimately turned from lives of crime—each in extraordinary ways. David, the younger of the two, experienced a dramatic conversion in 1970 following a terrifying LSD experience. He went on to educate himself, pursued higher education, and became a Baptist minister. He later taught electronics for over 20 years in colleges of Higher and Further Education.

Michael, however, continued his flamboyant lifestyle, which led to his arrest and a 16-year prison sentence in the Philippines in 1996. He sadly died of tuberculosis in New Bilibid Prison in 2005.

Upon seeing his brother's arrest reported on ITN television news, David was compelled to tell their story. After learning that Michael, too, had turned from crime to Christ during his sentence, David published their journey in the book *Converted on LSD Trip* and launched a mission to the Philippines to support his brother's reformation.

This book, *Trojan Warriors*, tells the story of that mission—how the brothers worked together in New Bilibid Prison, supporting fellow inmates who had also found faith in Christ and turned their lives around. Many of these men were formerly notorious criminals who, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, were trained to become preachers and ministers to others behind bars.

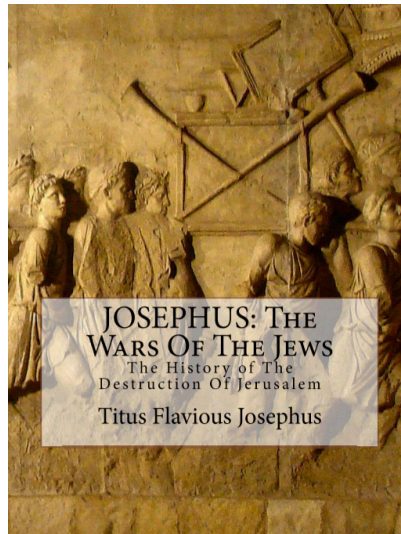
Included in this volume are 66 powerful testimonies of these transformed lives—men whom David and Michael called the “Trojan Warriors.” Twenty-two of them were on Death Row, awaiting execution by lethal injection, yet had come to faith in Christ and committed their lives to sharing the gospel.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

— Revelation 12:11 (KJV)

A moving story of redemption, grace, and the power of testimony—Trojan Warriors is a call to hope, even in the darkest places.

JOSEPHUS: THE WARS OF THE JEWS



The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem

Authored by Titus Flavius Josephus, Designed by Translated by William Winston

ISBN-13: 978-1985029132

ISBN-10: 1985029138

BISAC: Religion / Christianity / History / General

Josephus was an eye witness to those events that he records in this book, 'The Wars of The Jews', or 'The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem'.

He records historic events that took place during and after the times of the New Testament scriptures. The book of Revelation was a prophecy, given to Jesus Christ, and published by the Apostle John, about those things that were shortly to come to pass in his day.

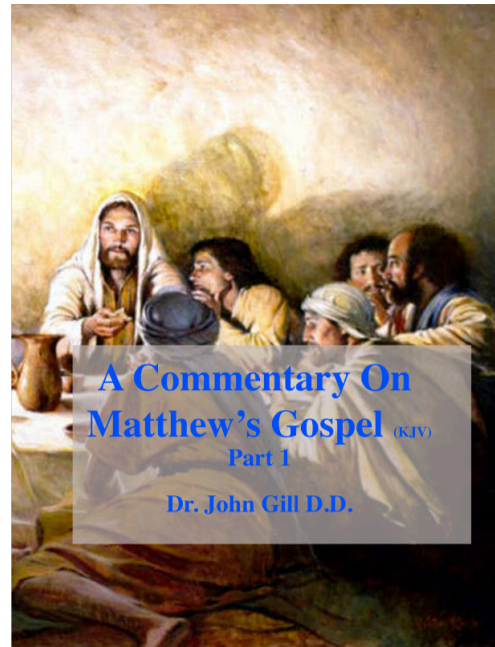
From the internal evidence of the book Revelation was written before the Neuronic persecution, of 66 A.D. and before the fall off Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, in 70. A.D. This is because the book records that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing at the time the book was written and not around 95 A.D. as Eusebius mistakenly says.

The historic events that Josephus records are remarkable as they give evidence to the fulfillment of Prophecy given by the Lord Jesus in his Olivet prophecy. In fact the book of Revelation was a prophecy of those events that were shortly to come to pass when Jesus spoke to John who wrote the Revelation. Jesus had informed his Apostles about future events and they lived in expectation of there fulfillment in their day.

Josephus gives the historic evidence of the fulfillment of those prophecies and that confirms scripture fulfillment.

We recommend the James Stuart Russell's book, 'The Parousia' as a very good introduction to this subject and advertised at the back of this book in our Further Publications.

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



By John Gill

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38). It was written before Mark's (AD 38-44) and Luke's Gospel (AD-61).

Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans. There are two strong traditions that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

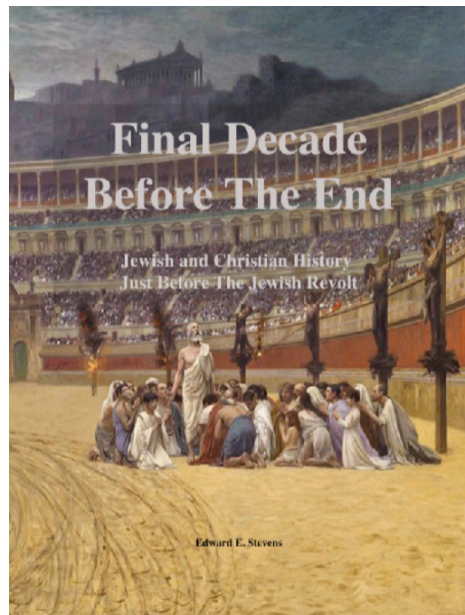
Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16. And PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.

THE FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Ed. Stevens

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to "teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul's other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the

pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the endtime prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the endtime events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens

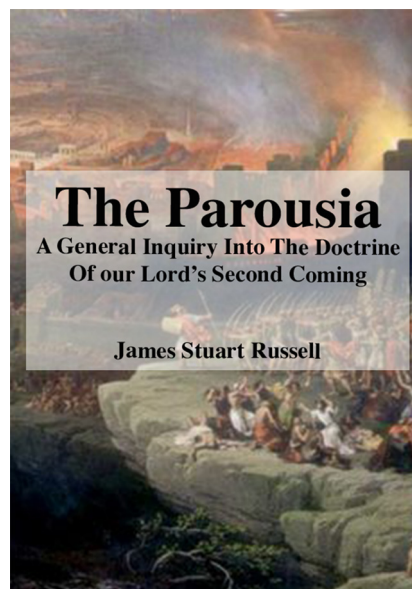
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

<https://www.preterist.org>

Bradford, Pennsylvania

April 17, 2010

THE PAROUSIA



The Second Coming Of Christ

Authored by James Stuart Russell, Preface by Mr David Clarke, Preface by Dr Don K Preston DD

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research

in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ’s coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell’s work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these “skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

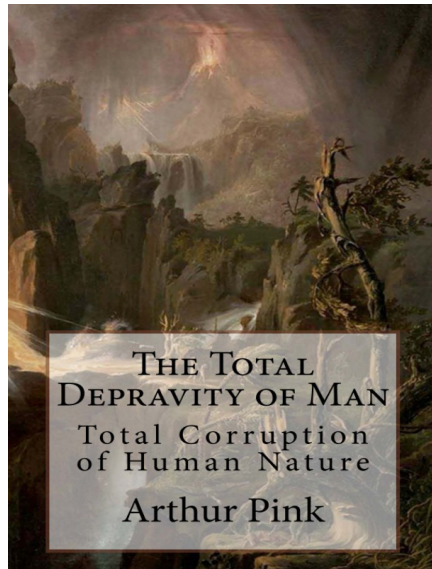
This is where Russell’s work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

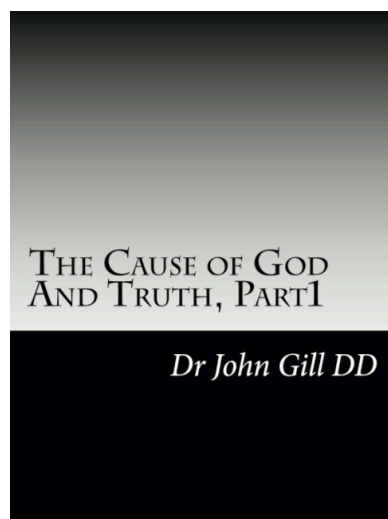
Russell’s work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell’s main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN



This republication of A.W. Pink's work, *The Total Depravity of Man*, is intended to introduce Christians, of this generation, to those truths that seem to have been lost among Evangelical Christians. It is believed that a right understanding of man's fall in Adam will lead the believer to see the necessity salvation by the a sovereign choice, by God, of men to salvation and the reality of particular redemption. These doctrines are known as the doctrines of grace some times referred to as Calvinism. These truth are held by Particular Baptists to this day as can be read in the First London Baptist Confession of faith, of 1644. These truths have met with opposition from various quarters resulting in controversy not only from Arminian's but also among Calvinists. It is intended that his book will help the believer come to a biblical understanding of the total depravity and inability for man to save him self and that mans salvation depended entirely upon the grace and mercy of God alone. That the gospel of Christ declares this truth very clearly and is the antidote to all false religion.

THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH



Authored by Dr John Gill DD.

THERE ARE FOUR BOOKS

Book 1 – Part 1

This volume addresses the Scripture passages cited by Dr. Whitby in support of a universal scheme of salvation.

Book 2 – Part 2

This section treats the subjects of reprobation, redemption, efficacious grace, the corruption of human nature, and the perseverance of the saints.

Book 3 – Part 3

Here, the focus is on the doctrines of grace, including reprobation, election and redemption, efficacious grace, the freedom of the will, perseverance of the saints, the providence of God, and the state and condition of the heathen.

Book 4 – Part 4

This final part examines the doctrines of grace in relation to the teachings of the early church fathers.

The following works were undertaken and begun around the year 1733 or 1734, during which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was being reprinted. At that time, it was widely regarded as a masterpiece on the subject in the English language and was thought to be unanswerable. It was often quoted by opponents of Calvinism, and many would ask: "Why do you not answer Dr. Whitby?"

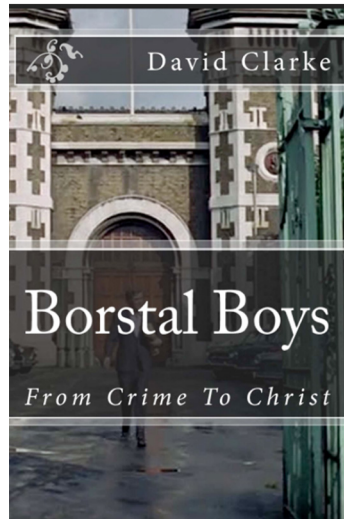
Prompted by this challenge, I resolved to read Whitby's work again and soon felt compelled to write a response. It seemed both appropriate and timely to engage in such a task.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published. It examined the various Scripture passages used by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of a universal scheme of salvation and against the Calvinistic view. Their arguments and objections were answered, and the passages were interpreted in a just and proper light. Much of the content in this and the subsequent parts in defence of the particular (Calvinistic) scheme was drawn from sermons delivered during a Wednesday evening lecture series.

The Second Part was published in 1736. It addressed numerous passages of Scripture supporting special and distinguishing grace, defending them from the objections raised by Arminians, particularly Dr. Whitby. Responses were made to their answers and challenges, further establishing the foundation of the doctrines of grace.

BORSTAL BOYS

Alternatively From Crime To Christ



Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert. Ed.

Borstal Boys is a special edition of David Clarke's original autobiography *Converted on LSD Trip*, rewritten with prison inmates in mind. It tells the gripping true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who grew up in Aylesbury during the 1960s and became deeply involved in the Mod subculture—and in a life of crime.

Michael's criminal path led him first to Oxford Detention Centre, known for its "short sharp shock" treatment, and then to Rochester Borstal. During his time inside, his younger brother David inherited Michael's prized Lambretta scooter and enjoyed a short-lived reputation among the Aylesbury Mods thanks to Michael's notoriety.

In 1966, shortly after Michael's release, the two brothers teamed up again—but were soon arrested and sentenced: Michael to Maidstone Prison, and David to Dover Borstal, after being convicted of malicious wounding and possession of a firearm.

After leaving Borstal in 1968, David entered a three-year period of undetected crime—until a life-changing LSD experience in 1970 led him to cry out to God. In a dramatic conversion, he turned from crime overnight, became a Christian, and began a journey that saw him self-educate, enter Higher Education, and later serve as a Baptist minister and college lecturer in electronics for over 20 years.

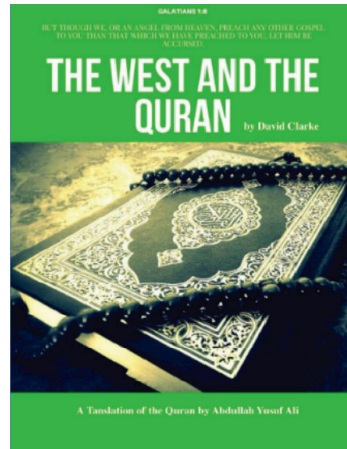
Meanwhile, Michael remained entrenched in crime. His lifestyle eventually led to his arrest in the Philippines in 1995, where he was sentenced to 16 years in New Bilibid Prison. Moved by his brother's imprisonment, David published his story in *Converted on LSD Trip*, and later witnessed Michael's own conversion in 1999.

Together, they went on to support the reformation of other prisoners, including those on death row. Their work is chronicled in their joint book *Trojan Warriors*, which features 66 testimonies of transformed lives inside the Philippines' most notorious prison—including 22 former death row inmates.

Borstal Boys brings together the good, the bad, and the redemptive. It has been specially produced for prison audiences, with 250 copies already distributed to over 20 prisons across the UK at the request of prison chaplains. The story of the Clarke brothers—from crime to Christ—is now being adapted into a punk rock opera, *Borstal Boy*, set to be performed in prisons in the near future.

A compelling story of broken lives restored, and a testimony of hope for those behind bars.

THE WEST AND THE QURAN



A Translation of The Quran By David Clarke

In recent decades, the rise of Islamic extremism and terrorism has caused increasing concern across Europe, Great Britain, and the United States. As mass migration continues from various Muslim-majority regions into the West, many are asking vital questions: What are the roots of Islam? What does the Qur'an actually teach? And how should we respond to these challenges?

This publication seeks to explore these questions through a historical, theological, and cultural lens. Drawing on documented observations from prominent Western figures—such as William Gladstone and Winston Churchill—this work examines how the teachings of Muhammad and the Qur'an have shaped societies, informed ideologies, and impacted the world both past and present.

Winston Churchill, in particular, wrote candidly about his early encounters with Islamic culture during his military service in British India and Sudan. His warnings—penned over a century ago—resonate prophetically today, as he critiqued not individual Muslims but the system of belief that, in his view, hindered societal progress and suppressed freedoms, especially those of women.

This book also highlights key objections to practices and principles rooted in Islamic doctrine, including:

The meaning of Islam as submission, not peace

The limitations placed on women under Shari'ah law

The cultural implications of Halal practices

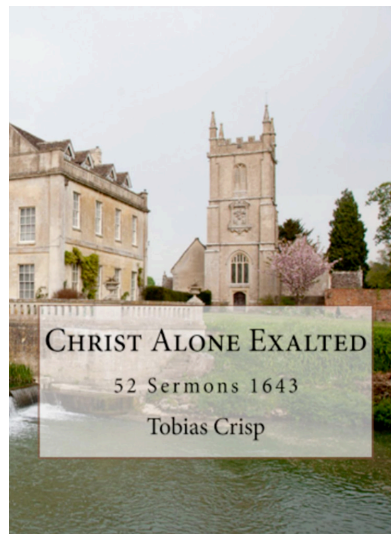
The human rights concerns of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The strategy of Jihad—not just through violence, but through political, legal, and educational means.

The author argues that many Western leaders appear unprepared or unwilling to confront the ideological roots of these issues. By presenting historical context, firsthand quotations, and critical observations, this book aims to equip readers with a better understanding of Islam's influence—particularly as it pertains to Western freedoms, values, and national security.

This publication is offered as a contribution to ongoing public dialogue, with the prayer that God would grant us all wisdom and discernment in addressing the complex and growing challenges related to the rise and spread of Islam.

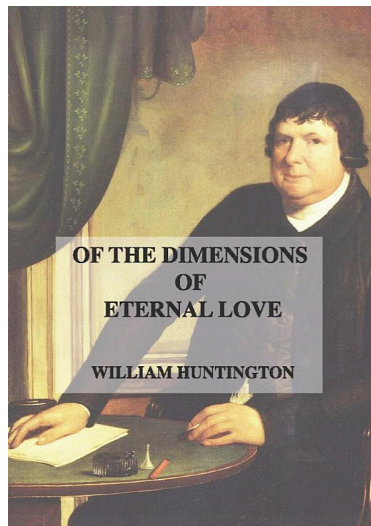
CHRIST ALONE EXALTED



In 3 volumes

Tobias Crisp was preacher of the gospel in England. He was born in 1600 and died in 1643 at which time these 13 sermons were first published. Within 3 years further sermons were published in further volumes this is the first. He lived at the time when The First London Baptist Confession of Faith 1644 was being prepared for publishing and it is clear from these sermons he taught Calvinistic truths. He preached the doctrines of grace and was charged with being an Antinomian and provoked opposition from various quarters. Dr John Gill in defence of Crisp republished these sermons along with his own notes showing that Tobias Crisp taught clearly the truths of the lord Jesus Christ

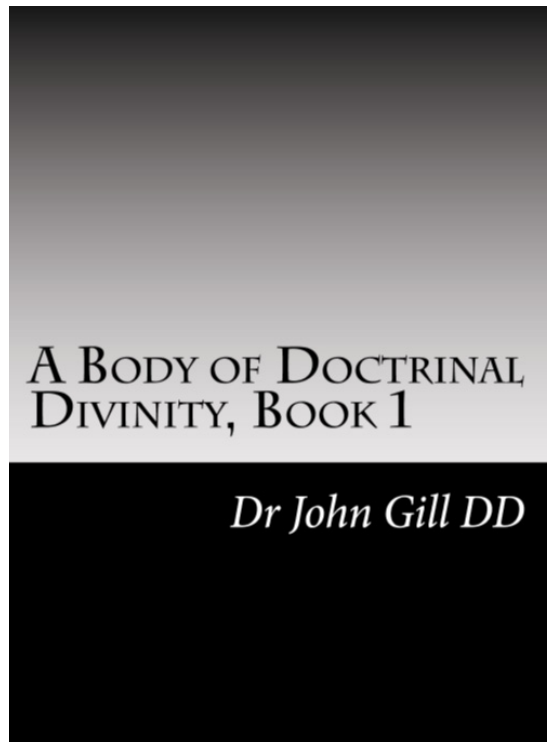
OF THE DIMENSIONS OF ETERNAL LOVE OF GOD



by William Huntington (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

William Huntington treats the subject of the eternal, and everlasting love of God which is displayed in the salvation of the elect. He demonstrates that the elect were chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son and set apart by the Spirit, when called to believe. He shows that this love is peculiar to the elect and not upon all of Adam's fallen world.

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY



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Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

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BOOK II

Of The Acts And Works Of God

BOOK III

Of The External Works Of God

BOOK IV

Of The Acts Of The Grace Of God Towards And Upon His Elect In Time.

BOOK V

Of The Grace Of Christ In His States

Of Humiliation And Exaltation, And In The Offices Exercised By Jim In Them.

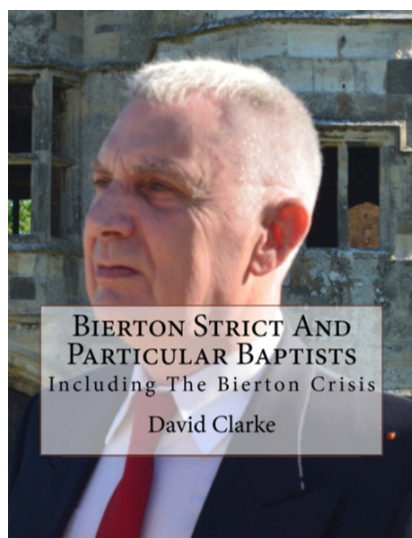
BOOK VI

Of The Blessings Of Grace, And The Doctrines Of It.

BOOK VII

Of The Final State Of Man

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS 2ND EDITION



This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs and were both sent to prison for and malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license . They were however both converted from crime to Christ and turned their lives around. This story tells of David's conversion to Christianity in 1970 and that of Michael's conversion, 1999 some 30 years later. It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970. It tells how he became a Christian over night and how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. David tells of the events that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and finding in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984, written to help others. David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion in 1970 and continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up

doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996. David tells how Michael too was converted to Christianity through reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. David then tells of his mission to the Philippines, to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines. David tells how he felt compelled to write this story in his book, "Converted On LSD Trip". once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence. This story is told in their joint book, "Trojan Warriors", that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row. David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but sadly Michael died in New Bilibid Prison of tuberculosis, in 2005 before their vision of bringing help to many was realized.

Paperback: 356 pages

2 edition (16 Feb. 2015)

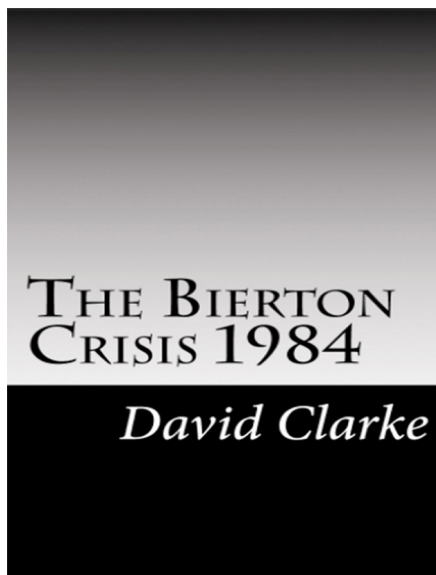
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Product Dimensions: 13.3 x 2.1 x 20.3 cm

www.Amazon.co.uk

THE BIERTON CRISIS



The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982.

The Bierton Church was formed in 1832 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members

maintained.

This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006.

These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader.

His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

List Price: \$11.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

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256 pages

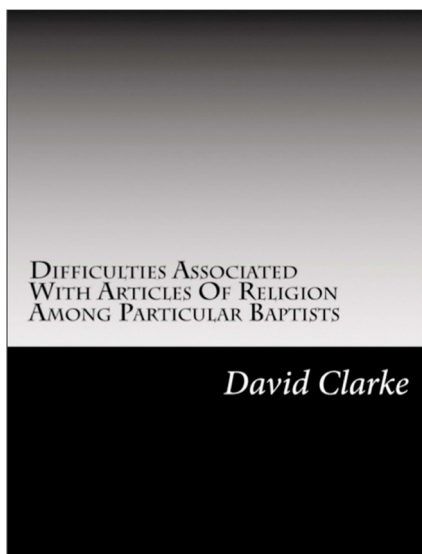
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ISBN-10: 1508465959

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Apologetics

Difficulties Associated With Articles Of Religion

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION AMONG PARTICULAR BAPTISTS



Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot

possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831, of which he is the sole surviving member, the First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

ISBN-13: 978-1532953446

BISAC: Religion / Christianity / Baptist

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A Difficulty Over Articles Of Religion

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Difficulties Over Articles of Religion

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Added Articles

My comments Article 32

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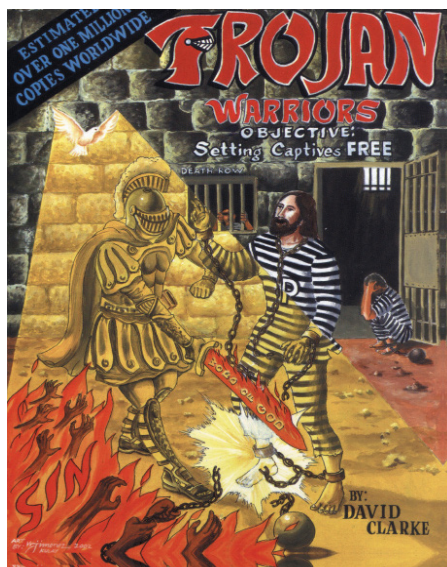
Serious Doctrinal Errors Held

Recommendation for Serious Minded

5 Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan 2016

6 Appendix 60 Gospel Standard 31 Articles

TROJAN WARRIORS



Setting Captives Free

Authored by Mr David Clarke CertEd, Authored by Mr Michael J Clarke

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446 pages

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BISAC: Religion / Christian Life / General

Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license, in 1967.

They both turned from their lives of crimes in remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation.

David the younger brother became a Christian, after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005.

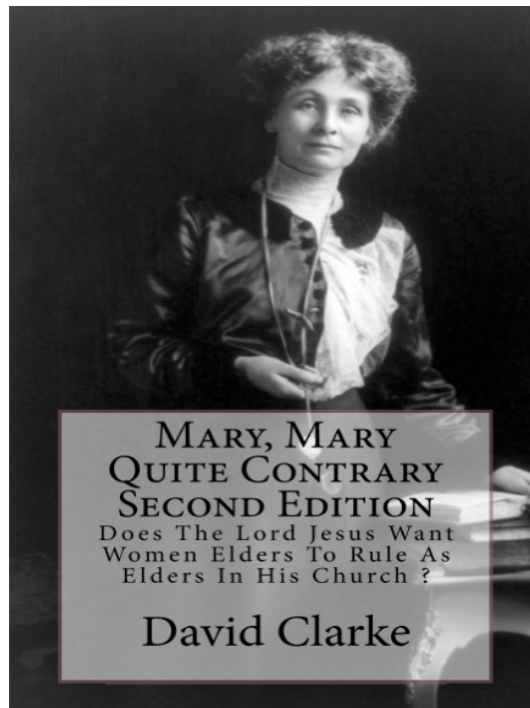
When David heard the news of his brothers arrest on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to wrote their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission.

They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ .

This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid Prison. They are the, "Trojan Warriors", who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection.

Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Mary, Mary Quite Contrary



Second Edition: Does The Lord Jesus Want Women To Rule As Elders In His Church ? ?

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E

ISBN-13: 978-1514206812

ISBN-10: 1514206811

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

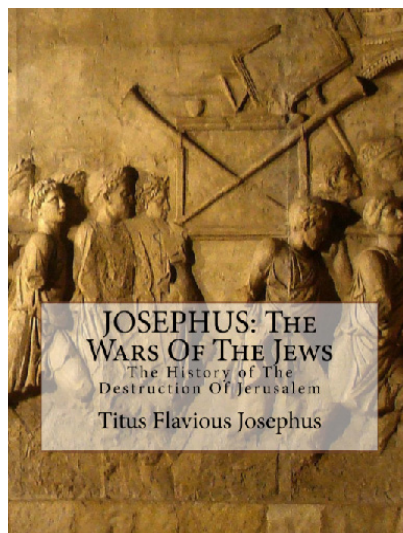
The Suffragettes

Emmeline Pankhurst 1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she. In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong.

This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should

follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

JOSEPHUS: THE WARS OF THE JEWS



The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem

Authored by Titus Flavius Josephus, Designed by Translated by William Winston

ISBN-13: 978-1985029132 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

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BISAC: Religion / Christianity / History / General

Josephus was an eye witness to those events that he records in this book, 'The Wars of The Jews', or 'The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem'.

He records historic events that took place during and after the times of the New Testament scriptures. The book of Revelation was a prophecy, given to Jesus Christ, and published by the Apostle John, about those things that were shortly to come to pass in his day.

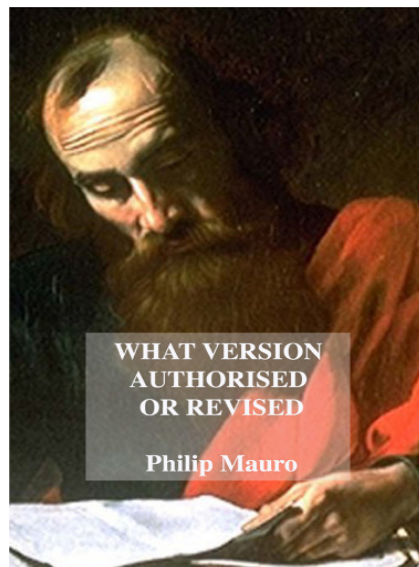
From the internal evidence of the book Revelation was written before the Neuronic persecution, of 66 A.D. and before the fall off Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, in 70. A.D. This is because the book records that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing at the time the book was written and not around 95 A.D. as Eusebius mistakenly says.

The historic events that Josephus records are remarkable as they give evidence to the fulfillment of Prophecy given by the Lord Jesus in his Olivet prophecy. In fact the book of Revelation was a prophecy of those events that were shortly to come to pass when Jesus spoke to John who wrote the Revelation. Jesus had informed his Apostles about future events and they lived in expectation of there fulfillment in their day.

Josephus gives the historic evidence of the fulfillment of those prophecies and that confirms scripture fulfillment.

We recommend the James Stuart Russell's book, 'The Parousia' as a very good introduction to this subject and advertised at the back of this book in our Further Publications.

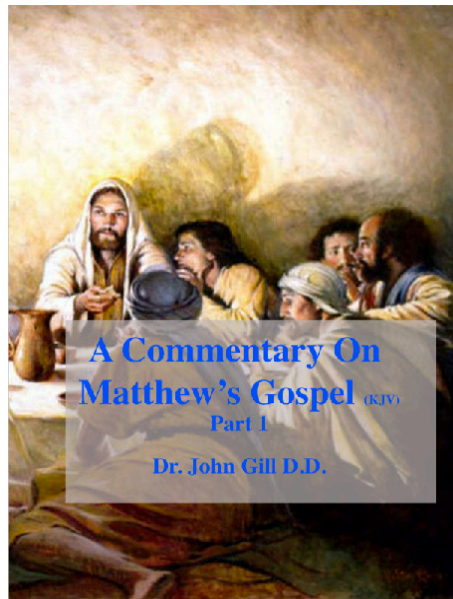
WHAT VERSION AUTHORISED OR REVISED



Philip Mauro

The book discusses the issues relating to the reliability of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the failings of the so-called Revised Versions. It reminds the reader the Greek printed text, produced by Erasmus in 1516, was derived from a broad set of 8 extant Greek manuscripts available to him in his day and in constant use by Christians to that day and not Latin bibles. Since 1861 there has arisen those who claim the Authorised Version is not accurate and Wescott and Hort produced a new compiled Greek Printed text manuscript, derived from, and based upon, two 4th C handwritten extant manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus, written in Greek and Codex Vaticanus, written in Latin. They claimed that since these manuscripts were the oldest extant manuscripts in the world (400 years after the original writing of the new testament scriptures) they were far superior and more reliable than the text underlying the Authorised version of the bible. And since 1945 all Bible translations are based upon the New Greek manuscript text of Wescott and Hort published in 1861. This is an eclectic text and not the Received Text used by the translator of the Authorised Version of the Bible and known by Christians, throughout the Christian age, as the Word of God. It has been republished by Borton Particular Baptist to educate serious minded people about the subject of Bible translations and support the Authorised version of the Bible. Philip Mauro was a lawyer in America, who practiced before the Supreme Court. He prepared briefs NOTES for the Scopes Trial WHICH was an American legal case in July 1925 THAT had made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school.[1] The trial publicized the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion,[4] against Fundamentalists, who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest and a trial on whether "modern science" should be taught in schools. Mauro was ALSO passenger on the British ocean liner RMS Carpathia when it rescued the passengers of the Titanic in April 1912. It is hoped that this book will rescue any that are sinking in the sea of the natural Modern man's opinion as to the reliability of the Authorised Version the bible.

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



By John Gill

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38). It was written before Mark's (AD 38-44) and Luke's Gospel (AD-61).

Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans. There are two strong traditions that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

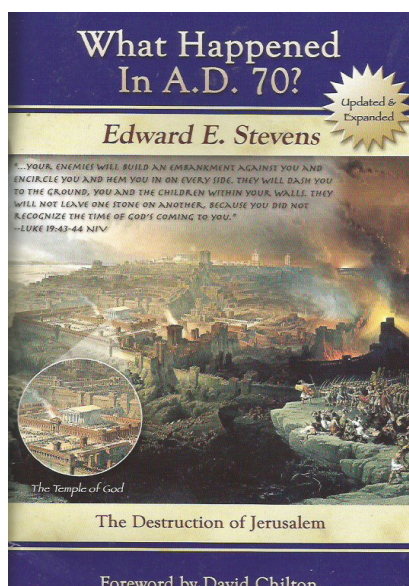
Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16. And PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70



Ed. Stevens

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a consistent view which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more conservative on most other issues than traditional views. And there is no compromise of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written {audience relevance). Two thousand years from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of "American English" to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the "donkeys and elephants" (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are "hard to understand" (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical and cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them. It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end

times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christs and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed futurist interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

Edward E. Stevens

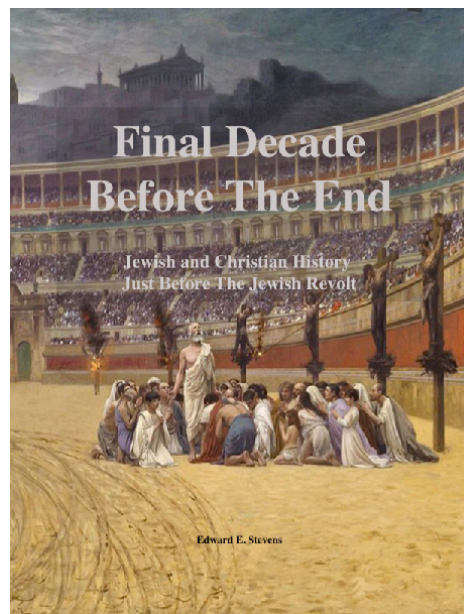
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

<https://www.preterist.org>

Bradford, Pennsylvania

April 17,2010

THE FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Ed. Stevens

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

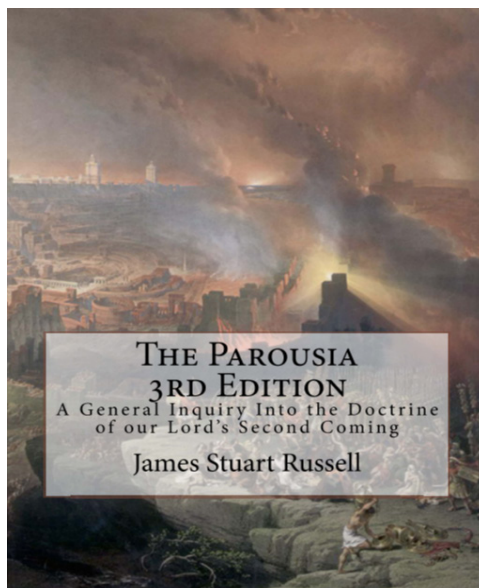
Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to "teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul's other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the endtime prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the endtime events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of "tribulation" upon the church and the "days of vengeance" upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION
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Bradford, Pennsylvania
April 17,2010

THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION



The Second Coming Of Christ

Authored by James Stuart Russell, Preface by Mr David Clarke, Preface by Dr Don K Preston DD

BISAC: Religion / Theology

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ’s coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell’s work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these “skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

This is where Russell’s work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the

groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell’s work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell’s main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

University, married and moved to Bierton where he became a Baptist minister at the Bierton Particular Baptist church.

He continued his work as a lecturer teaching electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Further and Higher Education.

This book tells of those significant events in his life and Christian work he was engaged in, not only in Aylesbury and Bierton but also in the Philippines that has now extended to Pakistan.

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