

idea is certainly expressed elsewhere by him (Eph. 6:12). Demonology then and now is a subject clearly involved in the heathen festivals. To sit at such a feast, to be sprinkled with holy water, to obey prescriptions of sacred silence, to take part in the joy of the hymns and dances which filled the interval between the sacrifices and the banquet, and to be drawn into the feast which crowned the festivities was to be involved as a worshipper of the heathen deity! It is a table of demons!

Conclusion This is clear. The line is drawn between right and fact. One cannot morally, without self-contradiction and drawing down upon oneself the judgment of God, take part at the same time in two worships so opposite to one another. The "cup of demons" was a fact! In those solemn feasts, known by the Corinthians the first cup was offered to Jupiter, the second to Jupiter and the Nymphs, and the third to Jupiter Soter. To participate in these three cups which circulated amongst the guests was an act of idolatry. Materially, it was possible to act this way, but not without criminal moral inconsistency.

Apparently some did not see this dichotomy of action (v. 22). By their involvement, they actually provoked in the heart of God that more terrible fire than the fire of wrath called jealousy (cf. Deut. 32:21). Such unfaithfulness could not but bring upon itself the fury of a holy God. Some thought to escape this, but in so doing claimed an ironic position--more omnipotence than God! How mercilessly Paul concludes his argument (v. 22). As sensible and prudent men, they should be able to see the absurdity of it all and the dreadful peril in such double-dealing (Deut. 32:6, 28). Amen.

BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"Three Tables"

1 Corinthians 10:15-22

Introduction

1. A genuine relationship with the Lord will involve a forfeiture of rights. All will be done for Christ and the Gospel. This is an issue of the Gospel and is related to sanctification or pneumatology and not salvation or soteriology.

2. When one gives up his rights, he does so as an intelligent person who considers things in the calm (so literally for "wise", v. 15. This word is different from the term used of the Corinthians themselves, 3:18). It is not an intellectually unsound move to sacrifice for Christ's sake!

3. Specifically, Paul wants the Corinthians to utilize their minds to understand the utter incompatibility for believers to consort with demons. He demonstrates this by showing the vital connection between the worshipper and his worship. In the process, three tables are mentioned:-

1. THE TABLE OF THE LORD. vv. 16, 17.

a. The Blood. v. 16. The cup is mentioned first here, not to show the precise way the Table is celebrated, but to allow a comparison between the bread and the eating of meat offered to idols. The phrase "cup of blessing" signifies the cup over which blessing was given. It was probably the third cup of the Passover meal over which a specific blessing was pronounced for all of God's benefits in nature and toward Israel (cf. Matt 26:26f.; 1 Cor. 11:23f.). "We bless" is not meaningless tautology, but a statement of praise to God for the cup. It avers: "May this cup be blessed to us!"

An affirmative answer is expected from the two rhetorical questions introduced with "is it not. . . ." "Communion" is the key-word for the whole passage. It connotes two items: 1) the ground of communion and 2) the association

established amongst celebrants. It points to fellowship of persons with persons in one and the same object. It is the original Greek for the common term so loosely thrown around in modernistic circles: koinonia.

- b. The Bread. v. 16. The blessing of the bread is not declared, but surely was done. The prominent item here is its "breaking" and this allows for the distribution of the one loaf to the many. It only appears as broken bread. The plural of the verb "we break" may refer to a leader in behalf of others or of each participant breaking off a piece of the bread being passed from one to another.

Throughout the section, the stress is on the phrase "of Christ." Through the cup and the Loaf believers have communion with Christ. The two elements—and it is necessary to receive both—speak of the total redemptive work of Christ in His death. The title "Christ" makes all of His sufferings officially related to the O.T. "Messiah." He came as the genuine satisfaction unto God (Rom. 3:25). It is a forceful way of saying that a believer cannot and must not have communion with anything which is foreign to Him. To do so would be to presuppose a burdened conscience.

c. The Body. v. 17. The initial word of the verse is better rendered "seeing" which allows for the translation "seeing that there is one bread, we, the many, are one body." The bread shows there is one body and also the kindred idea of a common nourishment sustaining an identical life. Eating from the common loaf attests and seals the union of the participants with our Lord and one another.

Those who attended the idol feast violated the fellowship claimed at the Table of the Lord. The persons with intelligent minds (v. 15) would see the sprawling incompatibility immediately!

2. THE TABLE OF ISRAEL v. 18.

The chief point to this verse is that it prepares the way for what follows. It is added to

give force to Paul's argument against idol tables. It is a transition from the Church (vv. 16, 17) to the heathen (vv. 19-21). To suggest that "Israel after the flesh" does away with dispensational theology is shallow thinking. Israel is Israel--full stop! Most of the confusion rises from a failure to understand a few texts in the Word (cf. Rom. 2:28; 9:8; Gal. 3:7; 6:16).

Peace offerings are probably in mind here (Deut. 12; Lev. 7:11) The Israelite who participated in the sacrifices united himself to the altar of God. The use of "altar" is to emphasize the communion through the specific act of worship or sacrifice. The altar was the "table" at which the Lord met with Israel as He does now at the Table of the Lord. It was a common altar and they mutually pledged themselves to its service. The word "partakers" is the same as "communion" (v. 16).

3. THE TABLE OF DEMONS. vv. 19, 20.

The whole drive of Paul is to break up the contemptible idea that one could sit at the Table of the Lord and the heathen tables or feasts. He pursues this thought in two ways:-

- a. Direct questions. The two questions which Paul raises are in relation to a veto which some in Corinth might seek to raise against his arguments. Earlier he had made his position clear as to the non-being of idols (cf. 8:4ff.). He has not changed! Mark his two questions to which an emphatic "no" is required in both instances:
1) Is the idol anything? The "anything" here signifies anything "real." 2) Is meat offered to idols anything? The "anything" here signifies "anything exceptional" in the sense of having power to exercise a particular influence.
- b. Specific affirmations. Although Jupiter, Apollo, and Venus are not real beings, Satan is! Behind all these mythological phantasmagoria, there are real malignant powers--demons! Hence, idolatrous worshippers address worship to diabolical powers and not to God! The word "demon" is only found here and 1 Tim. 4:1 in Paul's writings, but the