

Govett On Galatians

by

Robert Govett

With Memoir of the Author
by Pastor W.J. Dalby, M.A.



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Publishers Comments

As we continue publishing the Govett series, we are delighted to bring to you this monumental work. Mr. Govett's unique writing style was not only applicable to the late 1800's, the era in which he wrote, but his overview of scripture seems to transcend the pages of time, and brings to understanding the meaningfulness of God's Word for today. We humbly thank God for the privilege of placing back in print this excellent commentary, and ask the Lord's blessing upon it.

Conley & Schoettle

Memoir of Robert Govett, M.A.

ROBERT GOVETT was born in 1813 and died in 1901. A Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, he possessed brilliant intellectual gifts, which might have won for him the highest success in various walks of life. He chose to become a Minister of the Gospel, and was for some years a clergyman of the Established Church. He subsequently felt impelled to take up the undenominational position which he occupied for over half a century until his death. It is said that when he preached his last sermon in St. Stephen's Church, Norwich, there was not a dry eye in the congregation, many of whom accompanied him to the place of worship at which he ministered next. This was the Victoria Hall, Norwich, where he laboured for a decade. An old member of the Hall in recalling the services of those years declared that they were Heaven on earth. In 1854 the work of erecting a new place of worship (necessitated by the increasing membership) was commenced. This was Surrey Chapel, Norwich, which was built chiefly at Govett's own expense, he providing £2,500 out of the £3,000 required. It was characteristic of the man to give his all to Christ. At Surrey Chapel he ministered for forty-seven years until his death, and wonderful were the results of his pastorate there. Conversions were very numerous, and the precedent of a definitely teaching ministry was firmly established. His successor, D. M. Panton, B.A., has fully maintained the high standards and traditions thus created.

The teaching of Robert Govett has been preserved in a large number of expositions and tracts. It is marked by five particularly noticeable characteristics.

The first is logic. Few men equal Govett in ordered and sustained argument. He was fearless in pursuing a point to its rational conclusion; and none could put his finger more unerringly on weak spots in current theology. This brings us to a second feature—Govett's entire independence. He subjected the teachings of the Scriptures to a fresh scrutiny, not acquiescing in all the ordinary doctrines of post-Reformation Protestantism. A third characteristic of his teaching is its ordered arrangement—he was in the best sense of the term a systematic theologian. He seems to have been the first to present in a clear view the truth of reward for believers at the judgment seat of Christ and its relation to the Millennial Kingdom. A fourth feature is simplicity of style—he never sought to impress by beautiful phrases, but to employ language direct and plain such as all could understand. Last but most important of all, he ever showed a supreme desire to be faithful to the Scriptures—to reach the meaning of the Spirit and to set it forth. He revealed this not least when he confessed at times that he could not understand a particular passage or verse, and refused to wrest it in order to give a convenient explanation.

Govett's works may be set in various groups according to the themes with which they deal. Some are brief commentaries on different parts of the Bible. The N.T. doctrine of imputed righteousness has probably never been more clearly opened up than in his work on the Epistle to the Romans. Others deal with the order of the Apostolic Church and throw extraordinary light on the gifts of the Spirit which were then manifest. In others again he expounds prophecy, marshalling all that is relevant to a particular series of coming events in a masterly conspectus. None has treated more helpfully of the *παρουσία* of

the Lord Jesus ; and the present writer can personally testify to having had the last book of the Bible made plain to him in Govett's " Apocalypse " as in no other work that he has seen. Govett's " Sermon on the Mount " and his handling of kindred practical subjects are marvellous in their simplicity, power, and faithfulness. In another treatise he defines catholicity, proving that regeneration is the sole term of communion according to Scripture. These brief allusions will reveal the many-sidedness of the teaching—Govett's was indeed a full Gospel.

The writer humbly thanks God for the many directions in which his own eyes have been opened by the works of Robert Govett. May the Divine blessing rest upon the reissue of the present commentary !

W. J. DALBY.

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GALATIANS

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MOSES OR CHRIST?

BEING THE ARGUMENT OF THE GALATIANS.

‘BOTH the Law and the Gospel come from God, and are therefore good. May we not mingle them, so as to obtain something better than either?’ The Epistle to the Galatians furnishes an answer to this interesting and important question. Let us consider it!

After the Gospel of God’s grace had been carried to Gentiles, and had made progress among them through the Apostle Paul’s ministry, a counter-current arose at Jerusalem among the believers there, which sought to compel believing Gentiles to circumcision, and to keeping the law of Moses.

This was resisted by Paul. He was witness of the true grace of God to Gentiles. Accordingly, the Judaizers poured contempt upon his person and authority. He is obliged therefore in this Epistle and in others, to maintain the entire independence of his apostleship. From the line of defence which he here takes up, we can gather the plausible things which they were in the habit of saying against him.

They affirmed, then, against him—‘That he was merely an underling of the apostles, and of the church at Jerusalem: that from them he had derived all his knowledge of the truth, and whatever weight he might possess. That he therefore, was no primary authority concerning the doctrine or discipline of the church. That the original twelve apostles appointed

by Christ, and taught by Him during His life and ministry on earth, were the only persons to be followed in doctrine and practice. That Jerusalem, as the *mother* church, presided over by them, showed by her doctrines and practice what were the views to be held, and the conduct to be followed by Christians. And that *that* church and its apostles had always practised circumcision and the law. Whence it followed, that the churches of the Gentiles should do the same. 'That the apostles at Jerusalem had allowed Paul to go on teaching as he did, only because they were not aware of his proceedings, by virtue of the distance of the Gentile churches from Jerusalem. Else they would have disallowed and stopped him. But that *they* (the Judaizing teachers) were sent and commissioned by the church at Jerusalem to counteract his lawless doctrine and practice.'

'That besides, he was a time-server, utterly inconsistent with himself, changing his doctrines to suit his audience. At Jerusalem you would think him a disciple of Moses, and that he agreed with the apostles, who would soon have silenced him had he taught there what he did among the Gentiles. But since *his* Gentile converts were fond of liberty, he to *them* proclaimed freedom from law.'

How easy it is to run down and misrepresent the ways and character of the best of God's servants! Paul was therefore obliged, in justice to the Gospel of Christ, to refute these falsehoods. This he does in the first two chapters of this Epistle.

From the very first he launches out on this theme, which stirred so deeply his soul. His own position was closely intertwined with the Gospel he taught.

Chap. i, 1; 2. "Paul, apostle, (not from men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead :) And the brethren with me, unto the churches of Galatia : Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

It was not true, that his apostleship arose from, or was communicated by, man, or by any number of men. Neither the doctrines, nor the authority were derived from men. They came directly from Christ, who arrested him on his road to Damascus. They came also from God the Father, after His raising Christ from the dead. Herein is found Paul's independence of the original twelve, and his superiority to them. They knew Jesus Christ in life, they were witnesses to Israel of his death and resurrection. Paul, sent to the Gentiles afar, was a witness of Jesus' resurrection, because he saw Him in the heaven possessed of the visible brightness which belongs to God. Paul then bore the tidings, that believers now are united to the Risen Christ as His members.

With his own salutation he joins that of the brethren who were with him. They were of one mind with him, as to the doctrine he taught. They, with Paul, sent Christian salutations to the churches of Galatia. For Galatia was a Roman province, and in it were many assemblies of believers. Not all Galatia was a church: few were the believers, in comparison with the unbelievers. Even as it is now. The apostle does not mention any of the brethren with him by name; probably lest it should be thought, that he sheltered himself under their authority. The attack was made on himself, and *he* will give the reply.

The name of God now differs much from that given to Moses under law. Then it was—"The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob hath sent me." "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you:" Ex. iii. "*Jehovah thy God* is among you, a mighty God and terrible:" Deut. vii, 21. To Israel *Jehovah* showed himself as God, in the midst of clouds, and tempest, and fire. Now He is discovering Himself to believers as "*God the Father*." Of those who refuse the testimony of Christ, Jesus says—"Ye are of *your*

father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do :” John viii.

From the Father and the Son proceed “*grace and peace.*” With this Paul begins, with this he ends, the Epistle. Grace is its chief theme. It is by grace alone that the church arose. It is by grace alone that it stands. Here is the key-note of his argument against the law. “*For law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ :*” John i, 7. *Peace* comes from *grace*, as the *sword* of destruction came from the Mount of *law* : Ex. xxxii.

Paul is much grieved at the Galatians. He adds no epithet to “churches.” He says not, as is usual, “churches of God.” He does not praise them for anything ; he does not thank God for them, as is usual. He deals very much more gently with the church at Corinth, in spite of its flagrant misdeemeanours, and writes with far more love, than to the Galatian Christians. This tells us, how solemnly God looks at all turning from His grace to His justice. The irregularities of Corinth were bad ; but *this* was a forsaking the foundation of the Gospel.

4. “Jesus Christ our Lord, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father : to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Jesus is our sacrifice for sin, who, as the substitute, bore the penalty of our transgressions. Law had its priests and sacrifices, which were unable to take away sin. But Jesus as the victim surrendered Himself willingly to death, that He might put away our sins. He who will go back from Christ to law, must go back also to the blood of bulls and goats. For if the priesthood be changed, the law is also. And if the law is changed the priesthood also is. This shows, that there can be no compromise between law and grace.

Law supposed Israel to be righteous, and put them to the proof, requiring them to manifest their righteousness. But it was not their righteousness, it was the blood of the passover-lamb, that led them out of slavery and Egypt into freedom. So Christ was sent with the view of rescuing believers from this present evil age. (*αἰών*). To Israel under law it was not shown that man and this age are evil wholly ; and that the true worshipper is to stand aloof from them, and to wait the future complete deliverance which Christ at His return will give. Israel delivered out of Egypt, was established upon earth. That deliverance took place before God had given up ‘the old man’ as incurable. The slaying of the Son of God come in mere grace, is the proof of the world’s inveterate evil. Israel was to enjoy all temporal blessings on earth. *We are called out of earth*, to enjoy in Christ Jesus blessings eternal and spiritual.

Those who refuse the Gospel oft say—‘You have two Gods ; one the God of wrath, and one the God of mercy ; and you make the Son by His sufferings and death to appease the angry Father.’ Not so ! Neither the Scriptures nor we so teach. The Father and the Son are of one mind. The counsel of salvation was the Father’s, the execution was the Son’s. The Gospel is Christ’s work “according to the will of our God and Father.”

To this God be glory for ‘ever and ever.’ Not ‘to ages of ages,’ as some translate ; but “to *the* ages of *the* ages,” the article including all the ages of eternity ; long as shall be the existence of God, the bliss of the saved, and the sufferings of the lost.

THE TRUE GOSPEL, AND THE FALSE.

6. “I marvel that so quickly you are removing from Him who called you in the grace of Christ unto a different Gospel : which is not another ; but there are some who are troubling you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.”

Paul was surprized and displeased at their so soon leaving the grace in which they had been called. God had called them in grace to be His sons in Christ. They were turning from Him and His Anointed. It was to hinder this disastrous movement that Paul now wrote. They were called "in grace." While promises were made to Israel, they were not made to the Gentiles. "Gentiles should glorify God for *His* mercy," which comes through Christ.

Paul's Gospel was the real good news; it was tidings of what God has done for lost sinners in the work of His Son. That which the Jewish teachers were proclaiming was man's merit measured by God's justice. These second tidings were not really good news, (or 'Gospel.') There can be but *one* Gospel for sinners, as there is but one Christ to be proclaimed. The Jewish zealots were doing their best to sow dissension, and to turn upside down the Gospel of Messiah, which Paul had brought. It is good news concerning the Christ, and the work He has achieved.

This Judaizing conduct and this teaching was a great sin on the part of these troublers. And so Paul says.

8. "But though we, or an angel out of heaven, preach unto you any other Gospel than we preached to you, let him be accursed! As we said before, so now again say I, If any preach to you any other Gospel than that which ye have received, let him be accursed."

Law has a curse for all those under it. The Gospel has a curse, for all those who would alloy and change it. It is God's *one* remedy for the lost. How fearful a crime to poison the well of salvation!

Here the apostle meets the accusation, that no dependence could be placed on his teaching; that he altered his 'Gospel' as he called it, with his company. 'Twas false! Here he pronounces himself accursed, or his friends, if they should do so. Nay, even if one of the blest spirits should come out of heaven to change these tidings, a curse would rest on him; the

curse of God. God forbid ought to be added to law, or ought to be taken from it. But it is worse still to pervert the good news of salvation through Christ, the only hope of man. Under this curse lie many preachers of our day. They are teaching, not the good news of the blood of Jesus, shed to take away sin, and to deliver sinners from a justly deserved hell, but that 'God is mercy alone; that He is the Father of all men, that He needs no atonement by blood, and that there is no resurrection either of the Christ, or of any man. The spirit-state is the final state of man, and death is no result of Adam's sin.'

Preacher; you carry either God's Gospel, or Satan's falsehood! Which is it? Do those who drink at your fountain find the water of life, or draughts of death?

The Gospel is not any thing lightly to be meddled with. The sentiment is repeated, because of its solemn importance. God's truth is not an indefinite something, which any may mould at his pleasure. Life or death for ever hang on administering God's medicine to the patient.

Any thing beside the Gospel is really contrary to it. The elders of Israel added their traditions to the Word of God. Jesus accuses them of thereby making void God's truth: Mark vii. The zealots in Galatia were only adding circumcision to baptism, and Moses to Christ. But the addition overthrew the Gospel, and the curse of God smote the preacher. Observe, the Galatian Christians are not called to put out of communion any preacher who taught such error, or any believer who held it. The Lord would judge such an one. For evil conduct morally, believers may be put out of communion. But many things are to be left to Christ and to His day.

10. "For am I *now* making friends with men, or with God? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be the servant (slave) of Christ."

‘What will my opponents say *after this*?’ Will they dare to affirm, that I preach one Gospel in Galatia and another in Jerusalem? If that were true, should I dare to call down this dread imprecation on myself? See then! Their accusation is a lie. Am I trying to make friends with all the world, and to raise a party for myself? Nay! I seek to walk in friendship with God and His Christ. If Paul sacrificed truth to ingratiate himself with men, he would be no servant of Christ. That might have been true of him to some extent while unconverted; but since his call and his apostleship, he had been faithful to the truth. And this truth reared up against him a host of Jewish enemies, who persecuted him from place to place. Here then was no attempt to please men.

PAUL’S GOSPEL NOT OF MAN. PROVED BY
HIS FORMER LIFE.

11—14. “But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye heard of my conduct once in Judaism, that beyond measure I used to persecute the church of God, and used to desolate it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age in my nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”

The apostle now meets the misrepresentation, which asserted his dependence on Jerusalem and the original twelve. The good news he taught is not such as sprang from man, or would be likely to emanate from such a source.

He learned it from the lips of Christ, as truly as the original twelve. He did not derive it from study of books. If any one of the Gospels were then written, it was probably only that of Matthew. Paul knew by direct teaching from Christ all that apostles had heard and seen from the Saviour in the days of His flesh. They could tell him, when they met at Jerusalem,

nothing that he knew not already. Paul has given us a word of our Lord’s, not to be found in any of the Gospels. “It is more blessed to give, than to receive:” Acts xx. Nay, some principles, and some details, apparently not committed to the original twelve, or at any rate, not appearing in their writings, were made known to Paul. To Paul was committed the doctrine of the Christ during the Mystery, and of the church as being the body of Christ: Eph. iii.

The doctrine he taught then was in violent contrast to all his previous education, feelings, and prejudices. He was once a Jew, brimful of Judaism. For it and all the traditions of the elders he fought with all his soul. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, entrenched in the religion of his nation. How came it to pass, then, that he taught Gentiles their freedom from law? Was that in the style of human nature? So strong was his zeal for Judaism, that as its champion he set himself to persecute Christians, and broke up the church at Jerusalem. He was the Balaam of the New Testament, that sought everywhere to curse and to uproot the new assembly of God. He urged war against it more zealously than any other, till he learned to his deep dismay, that he was fighting against God.

He was fully acquainted with the doctrines of Judaism, having been instructed by one of their chief rabbis. His was not the blind fury of an ignorant man, urged on by others to do their will.

This was the man whom God chose to teach *Gentiles*, and to instruct them in their freedom from Moses! Thus the Most High would have all to note His Sovereign and Almighty hand. Most retain to the end some portion of the system in which they have been brought up, as we see in Luther. It was not so with divinely instructed Paul.

Observe, how strongly Paul contrasts the two religions—Judaism and Christianity! The Most High has two people, one of the flesh and of the earth, on

the one hand ; and one of the spirit and of heaven on the other. Paul, seeing the opposition of the two systems, hurled himself against Christ and His people. Moses is intolerant of aught but his religion. There was in Moses' day but one true religion ; all else was idolatry, to be put down by force. That was the spirit of the law. And Paul was the incarnation of that spirit. Moses made but one exception to his denunciations in favour of the prophet to come : Deut. xviii, 15. Saul learned at length, that Jesus the Nazarite was He.

The apostle is now refuting the false statements of his foes, by giving a true sketch of his life, from the time of his conversion to that of the Council at Jerusalem ; after which there was no further need to trace the matter. His conversion was wonderful ; an entire turning round upon his former life. It was due to God's good pleasure, who has all power for good over his creatures. It was God's intent before Saul's birth that it should be so, that he should be singled out from his fellows to do this great work. Then came the time of his call on his way to Damascus. It was a call in grace ; for he was then at the height of his sin, and if dealt with according to his deserts would have been cut off as an enemy.

But the Most High intended to "*reveal His Son in me.*" A singular expression ! Does it mean, that the Son of God was from the first WITHIN Paul, and that the Lord had only to take off the veil, to show the Son of God within him ? No. Christ only dwells in the heart by faith and love, and in Paul there dwelt unbelief and hatred. Does it mean, "reveal him to me ?" That would be the usual phrase, but this goes much deeper. It means, that Jesus Christ *the Son of God was revealed in Paul's person and history.* You can understand how truly it might be said, that Jehovah meant to reveal Himself in Balaam. Jehovah proved Himself a firm friend to Israel against all the wiles of their enemy. He showed His displeasure

at the covetous prophet, by His resistance to his attempts ; and by his cutting off at the last through the sword of Israel. The God of Israel showed *Himself* in that history of Balaam and his proceedings.

And now against this other Balaam, this foe of God's new and better assembly, Jesus Christ showed Himself. He revealed Himself in His wonderful *grace*, in that He spared this murderous foe of His church. He displayed His Almighty longsuffering and power, in that He made him the chief nurse and apostle of His new assembly. He showed His glory of grace in making this murderer a member of Himself. He displayed Himself in changing by His Spirit the spirit of this wolf into His own temper of grace and love. He made him an example and a witness, that the Son of God is *one* with those who believe in Him. We who believe are *in* Christ, and Christ is *in* us.

This was done, not solely for Paul's own sake, but in order to proclaim Christ "among the nations." What a triumph of power and goodness, to make this zealot of Israel and of Moses a proclaimer of the crucified *Christ* to hated and despised *Gentiles* !

Observe, that Paul was the first apostle to proclaim Jesus Christ as *the Son of God*. Peter had announced Him as the Son of David, as God's accredited messenger, and as the servant (*παῖς*, not 'son') of God. But this last superior title of the Saviour was first heralded by Paul.

"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the *Son of God*. But all that heard him were amazed, and said : Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests ?" Acts ix, 20, 21.

This title it was, I believe, which roused Saul to persecute and blaspheme, and to put to death the Christians. They were worshipping and serving 'another *God*.' And Moses demanded (he thought)

that all such, as leading Israel astray from Jehovah, the God of their fathers, should be put to death. But now, when God has opened his eyes, he beholds his sin, and repents, and preaches Christ by that very title which he blasphemed before. See then what is now to be preached! 'The Son of God,' manifested in power and grace. Judaism was the preaching of *Moses* every Sabbath day in the synagogue: Acts xv, 21. But Christianity is the proclaiming Christ as the Son of God.

Immediately his whole current of life was turned, and he betook himself to prepare for his life-work of service. How? We should say to one in like case now—'Put yourself under the instruction of some godly minister. Study the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.' Paul tells us, that he did neither. He "conferred not with flesh and blood." Many regard the phrase as signifying, that he did not take counsel of his own natural tendencies, desires, and reasonings, which would have prevented his embarking in such a hazardous and troubled career. But though that gives a good sense; it is not to the point at which the apostle is now aiming. He wishes to prove, that his apostleship was not due to man, either in the suggestion of it, or in the preparation for it. He did not therefore seek instruction from the uninspired Christians who might be found at Damascus. They were to him only "flesh and blood." He was to be taught by revelation from Christ, by His Spirit; and not by books, and study, and teachers, as he was taught Judaism.

He did *not* "go up to Jerusalem, to learn of those who were apostles before him." This his enemies asserted, and it was generally believed. But it was not true, nor anything like the truth. God's messenger to the nations should not be converted at Jerusalem which had crucified His Son, had refused His Spirit in the person of Stephen, and had slain James with

the sword. Nor should Paul there receive his course of instruction, or begin his mission thence. Paul here assumes that he was an apostle. The apostles were to be found usually at JERUSALEM. When the whole church there was scattered, the twelve alone stayed there: Acts viii, 1. This was their disobedience, though probably it was not seen to be so. Jesus had bidden the eleven to *travel away* and make disciples of *all the nations*: Matt. xxviii, 19.* It would seem, then, that Paul was raised up, because of their failure, to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles. We see in this Epistle and in the Acts, the reason of their non-fulfilment of the command. *The law of Moses hindered them.* How could Jews go to the houses of men of another nation, and eat at their tables? Peter was gently reminded of this disobedience by the vision of the sheet, and the assurance of God's having cleansed what under law was unclean. That might have shown him that he was called to preach Christ to Gentiles. But he never seems to have gone further in preaching the word, after the visit to Cornelius, than to Jews.* He agrees with Paul (Galatians ii,) that *he* will go to the circumcised nation, while Barnabas and Paul go to the uncircumcised. And his last Epistle finds him at Babylon, where there were many Jews. Nor did the other apostles, though convinced that Peter was justified in the going to Gentiles, take the hint and preach to them, as far as we know. But Paul abandoned Moses altogether; not only as the way to justification, but as a rule of life also; and found himself *then* free to go anywhere, and to eat with any Gentile.

He went speedily after his conversion, to Arabia. There he received the direct instructions of Christ. But neither the place, or the time of his sojourn in

* "Disciple all the nations." 'The nations,' is now a phrase including Israel: Luke xxiv, 47; Acts iii, 25, 26.

Arabia is told us, or we should have had pilgrimages thereto. But God is calling us out of earth into heaven; and therefore He does not lay stumbling-blocks of this kind in our path; yea rather, he has graciously taken them away.

"I returned again to Damascus." Luke names Paul's conversion and his tarrying awhile at Damascus. But he says nothing of the journey to Arabia. He tells us only of the result of Paul's preaching after his return. As it regards the duration of his stay he says only, that "many days were fulfilled," which easily answers to the three years of which the apostle speaks.

It was not till three years after Paul's turning to God, that he went up first to Jerusalem; after his life was in peril from the Jews of Damascus through his testimony to Christ. He went up "to make the acquaintance of Keephas."* He had heard much of him, and wished to know him personally. He went not up, in order to be instructed by him either in Christianity, or in some difficulty which he could not himself solve. He stayed at his house, but only for a fortnight. That was too short a time to be indoctrinated in the faith, even if Peter could have devoted his whole time to him. But first, it was some time before the church could believe in the reality of Paul's great change. And secondly, he did not devote himself on that occasion to study, but to preaching and visiting. He testified, that Jesus is the Son of God to the Greek-speaking Jews of Jerusalem. He wished to be employed in the Saviour's service on the very spot where his enmity had been so conspicuous. But God had other thoughts. Christ assured him, that his testimony at Jerusalem would be in vain. He was 'to go far away to the nations:' Acts xxii. In a fortnight, then, he had to flee again for his life.

* This is the better reading: and so in other places of this Epistle.

On this occasion the only other apostle he saw was (Jacob) "James,* *the Lord's brother.*" Why is this note of distinction appended to this name? Because there are three Jacobs among the apostles; (1) Jacob (James) the son of Zebedee was slain by Herod:" Acts xii, 1; (2) Jacob (James) the son of Alphæus† was another. But he was not (3) "the Lord's brother." The four brothers of our Lord were unbelievers, till after His resurrection: John vii, 3—5; Acts i, 14. But after that time, all his four brothers (Jacob, Joses, Simon, Judas) became believers, and apostles: 1 Cor. ix, 5. They were sons of Joseph and Mary, according to the Scriptures, which overthrow the vain fancy of 'the perpetual virginity of Mary;' a dogma designed to elevate above the rest of womankind the mother of our Lord. This has in a fearful manner proved the source of idolatry, and the leading of ten thousands away from the Saviour to one who cannot save. The last Jacob became afterward what is called the 'President (or Bishop) of Jerusalem.' He should be called scripturally "the Apostle," or "Angel" "of Jerusalem." These, then, were the only two apostles who during that fortnight were to be found in Jerusalem.

Now this simple statement of facts was so clear a refutation of the story of Paul's foes, that most would open their eyes in astonishment! Could it be true? Therefore the apostle most solemnly asserts it to be so. And as an inspired man, the Holy Ghost sets His seal to the testimony. Thus were scattered the stories about years of instruction spent by Paul in Jerusalem under the teaching of apostles.

* It is wonderful to see with what unanimity *Ἰακώβος* has been translated "JAMES." It would be interesting to inquire by what steps it has been changed from "*Jacob.*"

† But is not 'Alphæus' the same as 'Cleopas?' No! Let any one look at the Greek ways of expressing Hebrew.

The Acts tell us, that the brethren of Jerusalem led Paul down to Cæsarea, and thence to Tarsus: ix, 30. How did he get to Tarsus, his native place? Some say, by land; some, by sea. It was probably by land, as thus he would first pass through 'Syria' on his way to Tarsus of 'Cilicia,' in the order in which the words occur here.

The next three verses seem designed to answer another objection to Paul's statement. 'Well, if you were not instructed at Jerusalem itself, you were taught in one of the sister churches of Judea.' Not so! Paul was unknown by face to those assemblies. They heard indeed enough about him, and the wondrous work of the Son of God manifested in him. 'The wolf is turned into the shepherd of the sheep! It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!' And they gave *God* thanks for it, as they ought. But if so, how sad was the spirit of these Judaizers, in so maligning, and hindering this instrument of the Lord's power and goodness!

GALATIANS II, 1.

Chap. ii, 1. "Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took with me Titus also. But I went up by way of revelation, and laid before them the Gospel which I preach among the nations, but privately to those of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or were running in vain."

FROM what are these fourteen years reckoned? Probably from Paul's conversion: * i, 15. He employed these years in evangelization quite independent of Jerusalem and its apostles.

What visit was it? Doubtless that of Acts xv; as is generally believed. With the history of the Acts this is in entire accordance. After the peaceful spread of the Gospel at Antioch arose strife, through the descent of certain Jews, who proclaimed the necessity of circumcision in order to salvation. This doctrine Paul and Barnabas resisted. But the opposers refused to listen. We can see from this Epistle what were the grounds on which they did so. 'Moses' law was given of God. Who had repealed it? Paul and Barnabas were no authorities. Paul was a mere dependant of the mother-church at Jerusalem. There they observed circumcision, and kept the whole law. The mother-church and the apostles of Jesus' appointing there were the only persons competent to decide the question.' It was agreed at length, that the question should be taken thither, and a deputation from both sides seems to have gone up. Paul and Barnabas were God's men, but "certain others" went up also.

* (1.) "But *when* it pleased God:" i, 15. *οτε δε*. (2.) *Επειτα*. 'I went up after three years to Jerusalem:' i, 18. (3.) *Επειτα*. 'I went into Syria:' i, 21. (4.) *Επειτα*. 'I went up again to Jerusalem.' So these four points sketch the apostle's history till his visit of Acts xv.

'But Paul here says, that 'he went up by revelation.' No such idea is given us in the Acts.'

How strange is it, that most persons argue, as if *one* reason solely determined all questions! This word gives us another aspect of the case, which was not needful to be noticed in the Acts. Naturally Paul would have refused to go up to Jerusalem, as being a virtual calling in question of his apostolic authority. But the hand of the Lord was in it.* For by this refusal of the Jewish party to submit to Paul, his station and his graces were more drawn out and made evident even at Jerusalem; while the unity of the Spirit of God, which spoke in both parties, was manifested.

'But why did not Paul notice his previous visit to Jerusalem named in Acts xi, 29, 30?'

Because it was a mission for the conveyance of funds to the poor saints at Jerusalem, before the days of famine came. It was also the day of persecution. James was slain, Peter in peril, hardly escaping; the other apostles are not named. They were probably in hiding, and most likely Barnabas and Paul saw not one of them. It was not a season in which such a great question could be entered on. And after Acts xv, Paul and Barnabas were separated, and the scenes here depicted could not have occurred.

Paul took up with him Titus. Probably this was a part of the revelation. It was an excellent way of presenting the result of the conference to all eyes. The zealots could not say, on Paul's return to Antioch, that he had misrepresented the affair, and that apostles had condemned both his doctrine and his practice. 'Tell me, I pray thee, how went the battle?' '*Titus was not circumcised!*' That carried with it the whole matter. That stopped the mouths of the gainsayers.

* In Peter's visit to Cornelius, the evidences and motives were twofold. Beside the vision to Peter, there was the angel sent to Cornelius.

'But if Paul be writing *after* the decision of the Council at Jerusalem in Acts xv, why does he not appeal to that?'

Because it would have made against his argument in the Epistle. He is establishing his independent authority. Would it not have been foolish to appeal to the authority of the apostles and church at Jerusalem? Would not his foes have said—'You see that, after all he is obliged to decide the matter on the authorities which, as we told you, were alone competent to settle the question?' Moreover the letter of the Council was not addressed to Christians in Galatia, but to those of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. And further, the decree of that conference did not really meet the question in Galatia.

To proceed. We find the party which started from Antioch for Jerusalem passing through Phenicia and Samaria, visiting the assemblies of believers which lay in their way, and causing them joy by their tidings of the good work among the Gentiles: Acts xv, 3.

On arriving at Jerusalem, Paul laid before the saints there the Gospel which he preached. The evangelist tells us—"But when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church, and apostles, and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying—That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

'But Paul speaks of a private interview with the men of reputation. That does not accord with this, which evidently supposes a public meeting.' Just so. Therefore there was a *second* and a private meeting between Paul and the rulers, which Luke does not name, because it fell not in with the object of the Holy Ghost. Many persons argue, as if every thing that occurred, every thing known to each of the sacred writers was, or ought to have been, narrated; and in

the order of time. This is manifestly unlike what God has given us. The Holy Spirit by the pen of Luke traces His own line of things, and omits all that tends not to His point.

The first public meeting had shown, that Paul left the converts free from circumcision and the law. That called up the Pharisaic Christians, who insisted on adding the Law to the Gospel. Thus the question was openly raised, and a further public meeting was appointed for the decision of the question. "The apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter." After much disputation Peter gives testimony to God's accepting Gentiles on the ground of faith in Christ alone. This was proved by His anointing them with the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost. And they themselves who kept the law of Moses still owned, that they were saved by grace in Christ, even on the same ground as the Gentile believers.

Barnabas and Paul follow—Barnabas taking the lead, as being well known at Jerusalem, and less unpopular than Paul. They only spoke of what God had wrought among the Gentiles through their means; not meddling with the doctrinal question. James (Jacob) sums up the matter by a quotation from Amos, the point of which was, that God would own *Gentiles as His people*. If so, there was no need to attempt to make Jews of them, by circumcision and observance of Moses. Accordingly, the decree in favour of the liberty of Gentile believers was drawn up and sent.

'But why does Paul say—"lest I had run or should run in vain?" Could the antagonism of men destroy the reality of Paul's work of conversion?'

No! But if his work among the Gentiles were ignored or denied, and Pharisaic Christians were sent to the churches which Paul had founded, to proclaim the need of observing the rites of Moses, most of Paul's labours would have been rendered fruitless.

How great a stumbling-block too among the nations, to hear, that all Christ's assemblies were eaten up with strife!

We may regard the last clause of the second verse from two points of view, both giving a very good sense. 'I laid before them my Gospel (1) *with this intention*, that I might not be running in vain.' Or (2) '*under this apprehension*, lest I might be.'

3. "But not even Titus, who was with me, and was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised."

This comes in upon the former verse to prove that Paul's course was not disallowed, after the critical trial of it at Jerusalem. The Jewish disturbers had no doubt boasted, that—"If the question were only carried to Jerusalem, they would soon see Paul's authority set at nought, and his principles overturned. Once let him appear on that stage, and the necessity of circumcision for the Gentiles would be enforced." In the wisdom of God the appeal was carried thither, and the doctrines of the Judaizers reversed, on their chosen field of battle. The presence of Titus then at Jerusalem, as a believer, a companion of Paul, and uncircumcised, was the key of the whole situation. 'Circumcise him, and our victory is won!' The Judaizing Christians pressed hard on him and Paul and Barnabas. But a threefold cord is not soon broken. They failed. What part was taken by the leading three apostles we are not told. Probably they urged Paul to give in *in this instance, on account of the strength of the current there, and for the sake of peace*. This is like the course which James (Jacob) urges on Paul at his last entry into Jerusalem: Acts xxi, 20. That heavy pressure the three from Antioch resisted. Titus returned to Antioch uncircumcised, and the victory manifestly rested with them. We hear no more of the disturbers. They were defeated

in their boasts, in their depreciation of Paul, and their prophecies of the results at Jerusalem.

"Titus (1) *who was with me* (2) and was a Greek." These were the two essential points of the combat. They were the reasons both of the onset of the Judaizers, and of Paul's determined resistance. Had Titus been a Gentile, unconnected with either Paul or Barnabas, his circumcision, even if carried, would have amounted to very little. It was his association with Paul in faith and labour, which made the instance of such moment. And it was his being a Gentile which completed the significance of his visit to the head-quarters of Judaic Christianity.

'But was not Paul then very inconsistent? While he stood out here, did he not on another occasion himself circumcise *Timothy*?'

He did; and why? "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra; and behold, a certain disciple was there, named *Timotheus*, the son of a certain woman *which was a Jewess*, and believed; *but his father was a Greek*." "*Him Paul would have to go forth with him*, and he took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek:" Acts xvi, 1—3. Here then the key to the difficulty hangs at the door. Paul circumcised Timothy; why? Because he was to aid him in his missionary travels among the *Jews*; and there would have been perpetual strifes with the Jews, leading them away from attention to the Gospel which Paul carried, had he not been circumcised. They were on the outlook to see what Paul would do; and if his companion, under such circumstances, had been uncircumcised, they would have listened neither to Paul nor to Timothy. Here then of his own accord Paul circumcised Timothy. Did either of them esteem it necessary to salvation? Neither. Then it was not encumbered with the difficulties started in Galatia and in Jerusalem. Paul

could circumcise here without prejudice to his usual teaching. He maintained the entire freedom of Gentiles from the law of Moses, and its opening rite. He would have died rather than yield that. But Timothy was neither wholly a Gentile, nor wholly a Jew. He would, therefore, consider him as a Jew, and circumcise him. He was justified in so doing. He became a Jew to the Jews, as far as he could. He circumcised *Timothy*, that the Gospel might have an unfettered entry among the Jews. He refused to circumcise *Titus*; because the Gospel of God's grace to the Gentiles would have been first fettered, and then strangled.

4. "But (I went up)* because of the stealthily introduced false brethren, who came in stealthily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order that they might utterly enslave us; to whom, not even for an hour, did we yield in the subjection (they claimed), in order that the truth of the Gospel might abide with you.

This gives us a second view of the memorable occasion. It presents the human side of Paul's conduct. We have here the result of the agitation produced at Antioch, and are taken back to that scene. The visit to Jerusalem was, humanly considered, the consequence of the trouble produced by these disturbers. They were introduced in an underhand manner. Perhaps they were sent for by some at Antioch, who loved not the liberty they saw. They came on false pretences too, perhaps with forged letters. The professed reason of their visit to the brethren at Antioch, was different from the real one. They were "false brethren." Though they were really Jews and not believers in the Lord Jesus, they assumed the name of Christ; since without it they would have obtained no

* If it be thought that this is not the ellipse, in spite of verses 1 and 2, then supply, 'It was.'

admission to the assemblies of the saints. Both the introducers and the introduced sinned in the matter. Their true motive is given us by the Spirit of God. They came with hostile intent, to destroy the peace and love which they saw. And Scripture declares, that the sower of discord among brethren is an abomination to the Lord. They came, as do spies in time of war, under false pretences, to note the strength and the weakness of the camp, and to point out to foes, how best it might be attacked. They came to see the freedom that reigned among the Christians there, to gather intelligence, and to use the intelligence so won against the freedom. 'We saw them eat pork! Yes! Paul and all the rest! Jews and Gentiles were seated side by side. Paul and Barnabas even carved and helped others to the abomination!' They came then with intent to lay the yoke of the law under which Jerusalem lay burthened, on the necks of the Lord's freemen of Antioch. They wished utterly to enslave the believers of Antioch; making them dependent on Jerusalem and its decrees. This place Rome has since taken, with far less pretensions than Jerusalem. There was gracious liberty there before the disturbers came. These words were true of Antioch alone. The words do not apply to Paul, Barnabas, and Titus, at Jerusalem. There, no doubt, according to Paul's principle, among the Jews they lived as the Jews. Hence too we have the article—"the false brethren"—but too well known at Antioch.

"The liberty which we have in Christ Jesus." "Which we *have*." It were mournful if Paul were compelled to say, 'which we *had*.' Who are meant by the 'we'? All believers: those 'in Christ,' as in i, 4, 23. Jewish Christians might hug the yoke of Moses: but liberty really is the inheritance of those *in Christ*! Our liberty in Christ is freedom from the law, and a righteousness confessed by the law, with

sonship, and an eternal inheritance in glory, when the bondage of corruption shall be finally shaken off.

How have believers their liberty? 'In Christ.' His position they take before God. Is Christ free from Moses? Or is he under the Ten Commandments still? If he is free utterly from the yoke of law, so are those who are in Him. Has Christ earned from Moses a perfect righteousness, which has won the prize of the law? O then, that righteousness of Christ belongs to us also, who are in Christ!

While slaves who hate the freedom of Christ plot against it and bring in strife and bondage, let the Lord's freemen strive for peace and liberty!

These disturbers asserted, that they came possessed of the authority of the apostles and of the mother-church of Jerusalem, to rectify the disorderly state of things which they found: Acts xv, 24. They claimed that Paul and Barnabas should submit to their legislation and the traditions of the elders. They were unscrupulous men who cared not for the truth, if they could but carry their point.

They owned no authority in Paul and Barnabas to settle the question. Here then we are on the ground of Acts xv, 2. Nothing short of the apostles and Church at Jerusalem would avail. "When, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem with the apostles and elders about this question."

To these claims neither Paul nor Barnabas for an instant yielded. They saw through the pretence and bluster and falsehoods. To yield then, 'for the sake of peace,' would have brought bondage on Gentile believers to the end. Both at Jerusalem and at Antioch, these champions for Gospel liberty stood firm. Had they yielded, 'the truth of the Gospel,' its force, its life, its purity, had been taken away.

Truth and freedom go together. "Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free."

Not for an instant did they waver. Timid, short-sighted men might have judged and acted otherwise. 'Yield to the storm for awhile; when these blusterers have gone back whence they came, we will return to our old freedom!' Folly! Could not those same blusterers, and others, return and fasten anew the shaken yoke? Would not their second coming have been heavier and more certain bondage than the last?

In days since then the wisdom of Paul's conduct of firmness has been shewn. Every word of God carries with it two sorts of evidence: the good effects resulting from obedience to it, and the ill effects of disobedience.

Paul would not yield 'for an hour.' Therefore he did not circumcise Titus. That were indeed to have yielded, not for an hour, but all through the cause. Lose then, and the battle is lost for ever. Win then, against all the tempest that had arisen, and the victory for ever is secure. So it has come to pass. We Gentile believers owe our freedom to the firmness of Paul.

But the contrary course of conduct has been tried. In Reformation times, English believers studying their New Testament saw with dismay, how much of Judaism and its fleshly traditions had entered in to mar the truth of Christ. Where was the New Testament authority for the surplice, the copes, the dresses of the bishops, and so on? But Queen Elizabeth and her successors were not minded to let go these 'decencies' of worship. She would compel them, as 'Head of the (National) Church,' to wear them. What were they to do? They complained to the leaders of the Reformation on the Continent; they asked advice under the circumstances. Should they yield to these fopperies, or not? Some advised them to *give way for awhile* to these fooleries, as they were not intolerable, and when better times shone, remove

them. *They yielded.* Did the better days in the distance ever come? Never! Nay, these very men, under pressure from the royal authority, turned round, laid on others the yoke they hated, and persecuted the very Christians who saw the contrariety of these things to the Gospel of Christ. And now all eyes see the plague that has burst out from these rags of human tradition.

The Puritans on the contrary, who refused these decrees, so contrary to the Gospel, in spite of fines, scourgings, the pillory, the branding-iron, the jail, and death, won for us freedom of worship, freedom from oathtaking, and so on.

In this passage is a curious example of the corruption which has entered some manuscript copies of the Scriptures. Some copies omitted the 'not.' Then it reads—"To whom *we gave place* by subjection *for an hour*, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."

'But does not the word—that the truth of the Gospel might *continue* with you'—prove, that the Gospel had reached Galatia before this visit of Paul to Jerusalem? And if so, would not the Epistle be thrown into discord with the Acts? For the first mention of the carrying of the Gospel into Galatia is found: Acts xvi, 6.'

To an English reader the inference may seem justified. But the Greek does not imply a previous entry of the truth into Galatia.

6. "But from those who are in reputation as being somewhat (whatsoever they once were, makes no difference to me, God accepts not the face of man), well, to me, those in reputation added nothing."

This gives us a new aspect of the case. It tells us what was Paul's standing at Jerusalem, when thrown into contact with the chief of the apostles there. It was the policy of the disturbers to cry up 'the mother-

church,' and the greatness of the original apostles of Christ. 'You make much ado about this Paul and his work and his powers! That is only because you never saw the real apostles of Christ's own choosing. Poor little Paul the stammerer! What an insignificant figure he would cut at Jerusalem beside James and Peter, those men of noble stature and presence and eloquence. What is he beside those who heard Christ's words,* saw His wonders, beheld His glory on the Holy Mount, and witnessed His ascent to heaven? What was he, and what the work he wrought beside those on whom the Holy Spirit descended in power? You make much of him here. Let him come to Jerusalem, and he will have to alter his tone, to confess his ignorance, and to seek commission and authority from them!'

This was a style of depreciation to which Paul was everywhere subject. "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." 'He never saw Christ in the flesh, nor heard His words.' Against this, the great apostle of the Gentiles cites the estimate of God. The question was not—What were the *past* privileges of these men of note—but what were they *then*? It was not—'Whose reputation is greatest? whose influence most strongly felt?' The Father judges according to love and conduct without respect of faces; He notes the reality of each one's *work*: 1 Peter i, 17. And Paul laboured more abundantly than they all. He put down with firm hand this boastful style. It was 'glorying after the flesh.' And he had risen with Christ to walk in the Spirit: 2 Cor. v, 16. Great names and noble presences are of no account with God in proving truth. Paul could afford to disregard all that. 'That they are in repute, while I am greatly disparaged and most unpopular, is true. But my authority coming from Christ is fully equal to theirs.'

* The force of *ποτε*. No word is idle in this indignant Epistle.

Perhaps Paul on going up to Jerusalem to face these 'men of reputation,' felt as we say, 'somewhat nervous,' as to the figure he should make when set beside them. But he would soon be at rest. In close contact he was their equal in grace, wisdom, power. When Napoleon heard of the successes of Wellington in India, and of his appointment to the army in Portugal, he slighted the '*Sepoy* general.' He might win victories over those semi-barbarians; he would find it another matter to face French troops, under *his* conduct and generalship. But when the two distant conquerors were brought at length to the same field of war, 'the *Sepoy* general' was more than a match for 'the man of reputation,' as the chief of battle.

Paul went to Jerusalem; saw and heard the chief apostles at Jerusalem, and more than held his ground. So full and gracious had been the Saviour's instruction of this apostle who never saw Him while on earth, that those who had been at His side through all His public ministry, could communicate no new truth to him. He knew all which we have stored for us in the four Gospels, and more still. He has given us a saying of Christ not penned by any one of the four Evangelists; one which carries on its face its own evidence of heavenly truth: Acts xx, 35.

The sentence now before us is a broken one. Many thoughts in Paul's mind were struggling for utterance. Many conflicting sentiments were in his mind. He must show himself independent of these great names; he was not afraid of these boasted 'men of reputation.' Yet neither must he express contempt, or depreciate these the chosen of Christ. Well, he put them to the proof! The boasts of the Judaizers utterly broke down. The three gave him no new commission, authority, or information. They had nothing to add to his Gospel, nothing to take away. He asked nought from them, he received nought.

And we in our day are able to judge how true this

is. If we were compelled to give up the Epistles of James, Peter, and John on the one hand, or Paul's on the other, which must we prefer? Which have been most useful in the past? Which most needed in the present? Paul's Epistles contain truth about the church as God's secret, which is not to be found elsewhere.

7. "But on the contrary, seeing that I am entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision, as Peter with the Gospel of the circumcision: For he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought also for me unto the nations. And after perceiving the grace given unto me, James (Jacob), and Keephas, and John, who are reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we (should go) to the nations, but they unto the circumcision. Only (they would) that we should remember the poor; a thing which I had previously been diligent in."

Instead of having anything to add to Paul, they learned, probably to their surprise, that he was their equal in knowledge, authority, and gifts, and beyond them in labour and success. Without any boasting on Paul's part, Barnabas could enlighten them on this matter. And their own intercourse with Paul would soon give them to perceive where he stood. The Saviour had sent him specially to the uncircumcised, when his desire was to testify at Jerusalem: Acts xxii, 21.

Peter was especially useful to Jews. That was the indication given of his being destined especially for them. It is not any official designation or rite, which is alleged in proof of Peter's or of Paul's apostleship. It is the Lord's work on their behalf, without which their work for Him had been a failure. Here Paul puts himself on an equality with Peter, not with James. The reason most probably is that James was a stationary apostle, but Peter was a missionary apostle. But why, when the question is concerning that apostle's mission

to Jews, is he called—not *Keephas*,* as in the other occurrences in this Epistle, but, *Peter*? I am unable to say.

Was there any difference between Peter's Gospel and Paul's? In the great essentials, No! In subordinate points, Yes! This will be apparent to any one who will compare Peter's sermons in Acts, with those of Paul. Peter calls on the men of Israel to repent as a nation, because until then the Jewish promises set forth in Moses and the prophets would not be fulfilled. Till then Christ would be hidden on high. The Gospel of Paul never so puts the matter. The coming glories do not turn upon whether the nations repent or no. With him the great point is the believer's union with a risen Christ in heaven.

It is observable, that in this paragraph, which describes his contact with the leaders at Jerusalem, he does not call them 'apostles,' nor do they so entitle him. This is, I think, a defect in the decree from Jerusalem. "The *apostles*, and elders, and brethren." "It seemed good unto us, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, *men* that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:" Acts xv, 23, 25, 26.

As the result of the interviews which then took place, the earlier apostles recognized the powerful hand of God in the work of Paul. Thereupon James (Jacob), Keephas, and John, gave right hands of fellowship to himself and Barnabas. Authority then—the authority of 'the Great Three,' was on Paul's side. What a defeat to the Judaizers!

Observe the order of the apostles: James comes first, not Peter. James, as the apostle of Jerusalem, takes precedence, when the question refers to the locality of Jerusalem. He took also the prominent place, because of his relation of brother to the Lord Jesus. To the

* The best manuscripts read 'Cephas' in i, 18; ii, 11, 14.

Christians formerly under the law the flesh has especial weight.* His pre-eminence at Jerusalem is proved by Acts xii, 17; xv, 13; xxi, 18.

And—which is very startling in relation to later views concerning Mary—Mary is not described in the Gospels as the Lord's mother, but "the mother of James."

Who were present at our Lord's death? "Among (the women) were Mary Magdalene (put *first*!) and *Mary the mother of James and Joses* (our Lord's mother), and the mother of Zebedee's children:" Cf. Matt. xiii, 55; John xix, 25. "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene (first again!) and *Mary the mother of James*, and Salome, bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him:" Mark xvi, 1. "It was Mary Magdalene (*first* again!) and Joanna, and *Mary the mother of James*, and other women that were with them that told these things unto the apostles:" Luke xxiv, 10.

Traces of the greatness of James, commonly called 'the Bishop of Jerusalem,' (really 'the apostle,' or 'angel' of Jerusalem) appear still in the New Testament. For the order in which the writings of the Three Great Apostles appear is the same that is here given by Paul. James' Epistle takes precedence of Peter's two Epistles; and John's three Epistles come after those of Peter. Jude also, though another of our Lord's brothers, describes himself only as "*brother of James*."

This order of the Three which puts Peter in the

* The James here is 'the Lord's brother'—a son of Mary, who during our Lord's life was an unbeliever: John vii, 1—8; Psa. lxix, 8. James the original apostle had been slain: Acts xii, 1. James of Jerusalem was not the son of 'Alphæus;' and 'Alphæus' is not the same as 'Cleopas' or 'Clopas.' The one would be in Hebrew אלפי, the other קלפא.

second place was not pleasing to those in the interest of Rome, and therefore patrons of Peter's supremacy. Accordingly three celebrated manuscripts* read "*Peter, James, and John*." Peter's Aramaic name did not please them, and hence Keephas has been changed into Peter, and as 'the prince of the apostles he must take the first place.'

These three were accounted "pillars." It is observable that among the warriors of David, three stood pre-eminent: 2 Samuel xxiii. "The three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem:" 1 Chron. xi, 18. "The three were accounted pillars." Under the old covenant there were two pillars of copper (wrongly translated 'brass'), which were the glory of Hiram, and one of the adornments of the temple of Solomon. They were about thirty-five feet high with their capitals; over them were thrown nets of chequer-work, and wreaths of chain-work, with pomegranates: the admiration of all who saw them (1 Kings vii); but at length broken and carried away to Babylon. Under our Gospel dispensation, the character and locality of the temple of God is altered. It is now a spiritual house of living stones: 1 Peter i, 5. And God is the craftsman of these mightier pillars, adorned with greater gifts by far, abiding also in their usefulness to us.

The Great Three of Jerusalem, as the result of their intercourse, acknowledged the standing and work of Paul and Barnabas, as equal to their own. Paul, it is observable, puts his name before that of Barnabas. There was also an understanding that they should go to the nations, while the Three addressed themselves to the circumcision. Was this agreement warranted

* D. F. G. These are manuscripts which have been greatly trusted, because they are uncials. They ought always to be suspected. They have been more falsified than any others.

by Christ? I think not. "Then *the eleven disciples* went away into Galilee, into the mountain where Jesus had appointed them." "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying—'All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. *Go ye* (travel) therefore, and *disciple all the nations*, immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:'" Matthew xxviii, 16, 19. "Afterward He appeared to the eleven And He said unto them, *Go ye into all the world*, and preach the Gospel in all the creation:" (Greek) Mark xvi, 14, 15. The eleven apostles then, did not fulfil their commission. Instead of going to the whole creation, and evangelizing all the nations, of which Israel is now to be accounted one,* the three agree to preach to Israel alone. What hindered them? The Jewish laws of the table. The clinging to Moses as well as to Christ: as this Epistle shows. Paul alone keeps faithful to his commission "to the nations," addressing Israel first as the 'chief family of the earth.'

The Three requested Paul to remember to seek help for the poor saints of Judæa and Jerusalem. They were poor, as having voluntarily given up their property, and as persecuted and stripped: Hebrews x, 34. On this recommendation Paul observes, that he had already remembered it (Aorist). Here then he alludes to his second visit to Jerusalem (Acts xi, 29, 30), which was undertaken for the very purpose of carrying contributions to the poor saints of Jerusalem. Also after that date he urged their claims on Gentile believers: Rom. xv, 26, 27; 1 Cor. xvi.

* On this ground Peter puts it when preaching in the temple. Israelites are children of God's covenant with Abraham. "In thy seed [which is Christ] shall *all the families of the earth* be blessed." The Gospel, therefore, was first to be preached to Israel: Acts iii, 25, 26.

11. "But when Keephas came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he had been condemned. For before certain came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles: but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision. And the other Jews also dissembled together with him; so that even Barnabas was led away by their hypocrisy."

When did this scene occur? It must have been very soon after the council at Jerusalem: for Barnabas was then present with Paul. But the close of the same chapter of the Acts which describes the council, tells us, also, of the separation of Paul and Barnabas. It has been further suggested, with great probability, that the implied rebuke of Barnabas himself in Paul's address to Peter, loosened the attachment between the two brethren, and made Barnabas the more ready to leave Paul, whose influence was still increasing.

The inconsistency of Peter here shown has seemed so bad, that from early days there have been various attempts to free him from the charge. Some have suggested: (1) It was another Peter; others (2) It was a farce got up between the two apostles, on purpose to impress the Gentile converts the more deeply with the truth of their freedom from Moses. It need hardly be said, that neither of these ideas has any evidence to support it, and is not even plausible.

'But, after Peter's enlightenment, and defence of his conduct at Jerusalem! After, too, his defence of Gentile freedom at the council!'

Yes! But this is the same Peter, that after the strong profession of attachment to Christ, and firm resolve to stand by Him, denied Him that very night with oaths and curses, after being warned by our Lord.

Herein, we see Paul's great superiority of character. He stood fast at Jerusalem, where the current ran so strongly against him and his doctrine. He re-established the truth at Antioch; when, had not he stood firm, the freedom of Gentile believers had been

swept away. Peter, on the other hand, is overcome even at Antioch, where the tide was in favour of the truth.

Paul there withstood him to the face. Others in private condemned him; but durst not openly reprove. Paul alone did so, and in the presence of those who were acting with him. This proves Paul's moral courage; it shows, also, the independence of his standing as an apostle. This incident was most appropriate, to refute the misrepresentation of the Jewish zealots, that he was merely a subordinate of the Jewish apostles.

'But why did he rebuke him in public? Ought he not to have first told his brother of his fault in private, as our Lord says?' Matthew xviii.

That command refers to a personal offence between two brethren. But Peter's conduct was no personal offence against Paul. Peter's misconduct was public, and required a public corrective. Paul felt compelled to rebuke. He assigns the reason. Peter's conduct had been condemned by many of the Church at Antioch. Paul felt with the accusers of Peter, but spoke openly. It is evident that he did not believe in the supremacy of Peter, as the one whose actions and decisions were final for the whole of the apostles, and for the Church at large. Not that this reproof of his conduct at all invalidates Peter's inspiration. Inspiration gives the authority of the Spirit of God to Peter's written words; but it does not assert his inability to offend in conduct.

Was the condemnation of Peter just? Paul sketches for us the circumstances, that we may judge. He calls him by the name our Lord bestowed on him—Cephas, or Keephas. The occasion was just suited to discover the weakness of Peter. He was persuaded, from the testimonies of God, that the Jewish law was not binding on him. Left to himself, he sat down with perfect freedom among Gentile

believers, and partook of whatever dishes they were accustomed to eat. He did so habitually.

But certain Jewish brethren came from James, the apostle of Jerusalem. It is not said, 'came from Jerusalem.' Then we might have believed, that their coming was without any sanction from the authorities there. But when it is said, 'they came from James,' it is implied, that if not actually sent by him, they came with his knowledge and approval: probably, with an actual message and credentials from him. Probably, too, their communication referred to a point not treated in the apostolic decree. The letter from the council stated only, what concessions were to be made by Gentile believers, in order that Jewish Christians might not be cut off from fellowship with them. But, very probably, James was quite unprepared for the further step of Jewish freedom, to eat with Gentiles, which was not at first known at Jerusalem, where all were zealous for the law. It seems probable, therefore, that these persons were sent to enquire whether Jewish Christians there and elsewhere were so 'irregular,' as to sit and partake with Gentiles, of meats unlawful to the Jew? This would offend believers at Jerusalem. And very probably the mission was to enquire into the matter, and to restore things to the same footing as at Jerusalem. In this may appear, how strongly the laws of Moses, and the influence even of believing Christians at Jerusalem, hindered apostles from spreading the truth. They felt not free in spirit to eat with Gentiles. Peter, even when he visits Cornelius, puts his visit upon a wrong footing. He says—"Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a *man that is a Jew* to keep company with, or to come unto one that is of another nation:" Acts x. 28. But he forgot, that now he was "in Christ," and therefore one of the members of the "one new man," no longer walking in the flesh. For in Christ

Jesus "*there is neither Jew nor Greek*, there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

We can see, therefore, that a skilful appeal to his Jewish prejudices, and to his high reputation at Jerusalem, as apostle of the circumcision, would strike him where he was weakest. 'James has heard with much sorrow reports to the effect, that Jewish believers, when away from their own land, under the influence of Paul and his 'peculiar views,' have been partaking of Gentile meats, and at tables of the uncircumcised. He has sent us, therefore, to put a stop to this irregularity. Our enemies at Jerusalem taunt us with the apostacy of Christians from Moses. We count then upon your aid to enable us to set things on a right footing.'

Peter could not withstand the appeal. He knew well how unpopular Paul was at Jerusalem. He feared to bear part of the enmity drawn on Paul by his Gospel freedom. The whole of the narrative seems to suppose, that there were at Antioch *public* tables, at which believers in Christ partook. Peter then, who at first had seated himself at Gentile tables, and eaten without scruple of viands forbidden by Moses, now no longer takes his place among his old friends. The visitors from James set up a table furnished and regulated by Jewish law. Peter at first simply leaves his former place of freedom. He soon sits down with these zealous ones for Moses' law. He wished to produce in their minds the impression, that he had never done anything contrary to that law. He feared to lose his character both with the visitants, and with his friends at Jerusalem and in Judæa. His motive then was, fear of the loss of reputation. He was not in ignorance of the truth: it was the refusal to act according to it.

But if Peter could not bear to be regarded as an apostate from Moses, led away with Paul's irregular

opinions, neither did the other Jews wish to lose *their* character. They too sought to give these strict ones the impression, that they had never broken through the table-laws of Moses. There were spies of the table, quick to notice who dared to eat of meats disallowed by Moses. The party therefore of the strict, kept increasing, till Barnabas himself, who had been Paul's fast friend at Jerusalem and elsewhere, maintaining his own freedom and that of the Gentiles, left his place with them, unable to resist the pressure brought to bear on him.

Their conduct is by the Holy Spirit described as "hypocrisy." They had really broken with Moses' law; and knew themselves free. But they durst not avow that they were free. They stole back to bondage; as if they had been slaves that had never been emancipated. They wished the deputation from James to give a good report of them at Jerusalem. They wished the tidings to go abroad to their friends there, that the report about Jewish Christians partaking with Gentiles of Gentile meats, was not true; or that if some irregularity had taken place, all was now remedied; and that henceforth they would, as Moses required, hold no fellowship in such things with the uncircumcised. But this was to produce a false impression in two directions. (1) On the Jews at home, as though Moses' laws were to be in full force over believers in Christ. (2) On Gentile believers, as if *their* union with Christ, the Son of God, were not enough for fellowship. Thus Peter, of whom the Jadaizers boasted, fell; Paul, whom they despised, stood firm.

14. "But when I saw that they are not walking straightforwardly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Keephas before all, 'If thou, who art a Jew, livest as the nations, and not as do the Jews, why art thou compelling the nations to live as the Jews do?'"

Peter's conduct then, implied, that circumcision gave holiness; a holiness which *faith* did *not* impart: and

that there ought to be still among those who were in Christ the distinction between Jew and Gentile. The laws of Moses were to be observed as well as the commands of Christ. If the Gentiles would have fellowship with their Jewish brethren at table, they must be circumcised and observe the law.*

But if so, the truth of the Gospel was gone. Its clearness from admixture of the world and the flesh was gone. The leaven of the law had entered, and would spoil all. This is what has come to pass since. Christianity has become corrupted by Judaism: the old man and his ways have corrupted the new. The Gospel is the old man put aside, the new man set up.

Moreover, honesty and straightforwardness ought to characterize a Christian. Truth of doctrine, and truth of conduct, must go together. But this was acting falsehood. The appeal, then, must be prompt and public.

It would seem, that the reproof must have taken place in some public hall, at the time of some meal, when many were assembled; and the Jewish and Gentile tables were ranged virtually against each other.

The apostle's appeal is pithy and pointed; the steps of the argument in some points being difficult to trace, owing to its extreme condensation. The apostle begins by breaking through the false impression, which would be produced on the minds of those ignorant of the matter. As though he said—'I would have all to know, that Peter, though now he acts like a Jew, has continually been breaking Moses' laws of the table.

* Peter, quite early in his course, had received a rebuke from on high, for putting Moses on an equality with Christ. "Let us make here three tabernacles, *one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.*" Then came the Father's gentle rebuke, wherein, taking no notice of Moses or Elias, he says—"*This is My beloved Son*"; in Whom I am well pleased; **HEAR HIM.**" And Moses and Elijah depart, while Jesus alone remain: Matthew xvii.

He still holds them not binding on him, whatever his present conduct may seem to imply. He has been living like the nations; he has given up the ordinances of Judaism.' 'How then, Peter, is it, that you are now using all your influence to compel Gentiles to obey laws, which you, by word and deed, own to be no longer binding on Jews themselves?' He had taken part openly with those who would enforce the law of Moses on all believers; and therefore, the Holy Spirit justly holds him responsible for their principles and intentions.

15. "We are Jews (I grant) by nature, and not 'sinners of the nations.' But knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, except by faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of law; for by works of law shall no flesh be justified."

The whole argument turns on Peter's three positions before Moses.

(1.) By birth he was a Jew, and obeyed Moses.
(2.) By faith in Jesus, he became a Christian, and abandoned Moses. (3.) He was now returning to Moses again.

Which, then, of these three antagonist positions did he mean to occupy? Was he still standing on the ground he occupied by birth and education? O then, he was one of the 'holy people' after the flesh. Those outside were poor Gentile idolaters; unclean before Jehovah and His people. Then there was to be no fellowship with them. 'Keep your own customs. Touch not them or theirs:' Lev. xviii, 24, 28; xx, 23; Deut. ix, 4, 5; xviii, 9. Law distinguished man from man; assumed that Gentile flesh was unholy, while Jewish flesh was clean, and able to render to God the obedience of heart and life which He demands.

'This hypothetical and traditional position, Peter, you and I left. We saw we were not, and could not be, justified by our obedience to law. We saw that

man, as man, whether Jew or Gentile, was unable to render to law what it asked.'

The fall, which began ages before Moses, made a *man* incapable of love to God with all his heart. The heart of nature is enmity toward God. "For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:" Rom. viii.

The old judicial separation between the Jew and Gentile, setting the Jew as holy, apart from the Gentile as unclean, was formally set aside by the vision of the sheet presented to Peter: Acts x. But Paul states the matter upon the deeper question.

'But Paul and Peter were both under law, and neither the sense of inability to observe it, nor the feeling of condemnation, could set them free. *How then, could Jews under law, legally get free from law?*'

This is the great question, to which God's salvation in Christ and that alone, gives an answer. But this passage, and specially the middle clauses of verse 16, to which we have now arrived, are but little understood.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, **EXCEPT*** by faith in Jesus Christ, we also believed in Jesus Christ, in order that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of law; for by works of law shall no flesh be justified."

This passage has proved very puzzling to the learned. Does it not carry a contradiction? 'We are justified by works of law.' 'We are not, for the thing is impossible to man.'

The word of God is a lock, that will open with but one key. The righteousness of Christ is the only key that will perfectly fit the wards of this lock.

* *Εαν μη*. That this means 'except' is granted by all scholars. See Matt. v, 20; xviii, 3; Mark i, 27; John xv, 4, etc. So the Vulgate, "Nisi per fidem."

'None but the believer in Jesus is justified by obedience to law.' He then is so justified. God Himself 'pronounces him righteous.' That is the meaning of 'justify' always: Prov. xvii, 15; 1 Kings viii, 32. But God were made guilty of untruth, if as a judge He pronounced any to be righteous who was not so. He who renders not to law its first claim of entire and perfect obedience, cannot be justified by law, or by the judge who pronounces sentence according to law. "*It shall be our righteousness* (says Moses) *if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He commanded us:*" Deut. vi, 25. "*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall even live in them:*" Lev. xviii, 5; Ex. xix, 5, 6.

There must then be a perfect obedience, to meet the law's primary claim; else there is no righteousness, and God Himself cannot pronounce any to be righteous. Nor can any be legally dismissed from law, save he who has rendered it the perfect obedience it demands. He who should be forcibly taken away, or by death and resurrection set beyond the law's dominion, would not be lawfully delivered. Law would have been cheated of its first demand. The man is not righteous who has not a perfect obedience to law to plead.

Is there anywhere, in heaven or earth, such a perfect obedience? There is, *and only one*. It must be *a man's righteousness*, or it could not avail for man condemned by disobedience. It must be *more* than a man's obedience; for the perfect obedience of a mere man, while it would set free himself, would not avail for others. The righteousness then, which meets law's demands is "*the righteousness of God*." These things are found in Christ Jesus alone. Was He perfectly obedient to law? It is granted that He was. But the believer is one with Christ. He is "*justified in the name of the Lord Jesus:*" 1 Cor. vi, 11. Law owns Jesus justified. The believer is

"in Christ." He is justified then in the justification which the law has pronounced on Christ; or as the Scripture states, "in the name," of "Jesus Christ the Righteous," who is also the propitiation for our sins: 1 John ii. Christ's perfect obedience to law belongs to every one who is in Christ, and is justified in His name. God then, and then only, is righteous as the judge, in pronouncing him righteous. As the one act of disobedience on Adam's part constituted all his race sinners, before ever they begin to sin themselves; so the obedience of Christ constitutes righteous in law all those who are in Christ by faith.

'No justification by works, *except by faith in Jesus Christ.*' This statement is necessary to show us how the slave of law can lawfully escape, both from its penalty and its bondage. It is by the payment of the double ransom demanded by law; (1) the furnishing a perfect obedience; (2) the endurance of its curse and death. 'The believer in Christ is justified *out of works of law.*' (εκ.) His robe of righteousness is composed of works of law. His own works? By no means! By them he was lost. Whose works then? No mistake is possible here. There is but one perfect obedience to be found on earth or in heaven. Then that one it must be. That righteousness is found in Christ, and is at once 'the righteousness of *man*,' and 'the righteousness of *God*;' a righteousness wrought under *law*, a righteousness which is ours by *grace*.

Here, then, is the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which so many deny. (1) Without it, there can be no lawful deliverance from law. (2) Without it, God cannot pronounce any son of man righteous, and be truthful in so doing. Observe, it is not said here—'A man is not *set free from law* except by faith,' but—'A man is not *pronounced righteous by works of law* except by faith in Jesus Christ.' The proper source of justification is obedience alone. 'Are you righteous?' says law. 'Prove it by your works!' But faith is

the *means* of justification to us the guilty and unrighteous. The work of another has become ours so as to save us.

The same sentiment in another form is contained in the memorable verse of Philippians iii, 8, 9. "That I may (might) win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness (which springs) out of law, but that which is by means of faith in Christ, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS FROM (OUT OF) GOD ON FAITH."* Here, then, it is proved that 'the righteousness of God' does not mean 'the *justice* of God' which dwells in Himself alone. It is a "righteousness *from* God," devised by the Father, wrought by the Son, applied by the Holy Spirit. It is a righteousness "*upon faith*." It is a robe which by God is put upon faith's shoulders. Did God make for naked and guilty Adam and Eve, coats of skin, clothing them? Gen. iii. That was a type of the blest reality here set forth!

The rest of the verse is occupied in stating, that the righteousness by works of law which justifies is *not a man's own obedience*. 'Even we, Peter, deserted the place given us by law as (theoretically) holy men toward God, to take our position among the sinful sons of men in general. For we saw that "flesh," whether of Jew or Gentile, cannot present to God the perfect works of full obedience of heart, word, and deed, which law requires.'

Law says to the tenant, not only—'You shall not allow a single weed to grow in your garden,' but it forbids also any *seed* of a weed to be there! But the seeds of weeds *are* there, everywhere on the surface, and under the ground. To forbid my having one, is hopelessly to condemn me, seeing I have them, and cannot, if I would, extirpate them!

"Even we (Peter), believed in Christ Jesus, *in*

* Την εκ Θεου δικαιοσυνην επί τη πίστει.

order that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by (our own) works of law."

Paul here states the urgent motive which had compelled himself and Peter to leave the law.

That it refers to their own works of obedience to law is certain. (1) What did they desert? Paul tells us in Phil. iii. His own works of obedience he surrendered, in order to take those of Christ. (2) And here he is referring to Peter's and his own abandonment of all claim on God arising out of obedience to Moses, by their going over to Christ; to find in His works a righteousness which was not in their own. (3) The words which follow establish this. "Because by works of law *no flesh* shall be justified." While, then, the righteousness of God, or the obedience of the Son of God, does justify; the obedience of any mere man ("no flesh") cannot justify.

'Works of law' perfectly rendered, are the *meritorious cause of justification*. "*If a man be righteous (just) and do that which is lawful and right [then follow certain sins to be avoided] . . . hath walked in my statutes, and kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is righteous, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God:*" Ezek. xviii, 5—9, 19, 20. One transgression, however, destroys all righteousness and merits condemnation: xxxiii, 12, 13. Sin is the meritorious cause of damnation. But all are sinners, and deserve damnation. Desert of eternal life is found in Christ alone, and in those one with Him. Peter and Paul then, sensible of this sentence, left Moses *with the view (via)* of presenting to law the perfect righteousness it demands; they did, and were justified.

Law demands a perfect obedience as its ground of justification "*out of works of law.*" That is, works of law were the material for a meritorious righteousness to be provided daily by the Jew, as constituting his righteousness. So we say—"This dress is made *out of* seal's skin."

At length Peter and Paul gave up all hope of justifying themselves by obedience to law. A single sin ruined all their hopes. They saw by God's grace, that they were guilty and condemned. But they needed a righteousness, or else were lost. They saw, that God promised in the prophets a justifying righteousness for the guilty: Isa. xlv, 25; xlvi, 13; li, 5—8; liv, 17; lvi, 1; lxi, 10, 11; Jer. xxiii, 6. They saw this perfect obedience at length fulfilled by Christ, and by God provided to meet their need. Law justifies Jesus Christ as the perfectly obedient, 'the Righteous One:' Acts iii, 14; vii, 52; xxii, 14; 1 Pet. iii, 18; 1 John ii, 1. They therefore deliberately abandoned the attempt to furnish justification for themselves. "For by deeds of law shall no flesh be justified." They, as deliberately accepted the obedience of Christ provided by God, as the righteousness demanded by law: Rom. v, 19.

How was this faith in Christ's righteousness shown? By their breaking off from Moses. By disobeying, not moral commands, but the ceremonial commands of Moses. So Peter sat down with Gentiles, and ate of their dishes.

17. "But if while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners, is then Christ the minister of sin? God forbid."

Paul now argues with Peter upon his return to the law of Moses. 'We believed in Christ, Peter, with a view to our being justified. Condemned by law, we sought the righteousness we had not, in Him. Were you justified? Did you find in Him the righteousness which met your need? or did you not?'

'If you go back to law, you show by your works, that you did *not* find in Christ the righteousness you sought. You are again set upon seeking a righteousness that shall justify you. And you return to law; as

you show, by observing its ceremonies, and declaring them binding on yourself and others.

'But in the hope of finding righteousness in Christ, you deliberately broke some commands of Moses. You put yourself outside his law, and took the ground of the Gentile sinner. In going back to Moses after that, you cast a terrible reflection upon Christ. He led you out from Moses; He encouraged you to seek righteousness in Himself. But this—your present conduct says—is sinful. Then you make Christ in leading you out, a minister of sin! To go back to Moses is to accuse Christ of teaching *sin*.

'Why did you leave your old house? You left it, you said, because it was so damp, and the timbers so full of the dry rot, that you were every moment afraid that the roof would fall on your head and crush you.' You withdrew to a new house, said to be sound and dry. But what if you leave the *new* house, to return to the *old*? That would be emphatically saying—'I hoped to have found health and safety in the new house. But I was mistaken. It is not so good as the *old*!'

At such a thought, Peter, no doubt would be horrified. 'Far be the thought!' Peter durst not say in words, what his conduct implied—either that (1) there was no righteousness to be had in Christ by the believer; (2) that it was not a *perfect* righteousness, but required the addition of law. Christ is the minister of righteousness in our justification, as *Moses is the minister of sin*: 2 Cor. iii, 8, 9. Observe the expression "justified *in* (not 'by') *Christ*." His righteousness is ours as believers, as truly as His death is. Is Christ under law now? In whole or in part? By no means! Neither then are those who are in Him.

"We are *found* sinners." It is a legal word. "All persons *found* trespassing on these premises will be prosecuted according to law."

18. "For if what I threw down that I again build, I constitute myself a transgressor."

'Though Peter, you reject the consequence of making Christ to be a leader into sin, it is a consequence which necessarily flows from your present conduct. For you are now teaching that Moses' law ought to be obeyed. You broke through his ceremonial commands. You are now rebuilding them; you are pressing others to obey them. Contradictory assertions cannot both be true. Opposite lines of conduct under the same circumstances cannot both be right. By which line of conduct are you prepared to stand? (1) By your desertion of Moses for Christ? (2) Or, by your desertion of Christ to return to Moses? If this latter, then you can only return to Moses a *deliberate, self-constituted, self-convicted transgressor of law*! And for such Moses has only the curse and death. No sacrifice, no pardon for the high-handed presumptuous offender: Num. xv, 30—36. "I *constitute* myself a *transgressor*." It is not common sin. It is wilful sin, of known law. And "constitute" is a legal term. See then where you stand. There is no righteousness in Moses! There is none in Christ! You go back to Moses without hope of obtaining a future righteousness of obedience! You are accursed, exposed to law's full wrath, and without shelter in grace!

If it were right to leave Moses, it was ingratitude and dishonour to Christ for Peter to return to Him!

19. "For I through law died to law, that I might live to God."

Here Paul gives by contrast to Peter his own standing. 'Is Christ the minister of sin?' On your principle, Peter, Yes! On mine, No! Then comes the justification of that assertion. For I left law wholly as taught so to do by law itself.

The 'I' is emphatic—"I died."* It should not be, "I am dead." Peter showed he was not dead to it. "I died." 'Tis a past affair. When? When I believed in Christ I cut myself off absolutely from Moses, of set purpose. I have never repented of so doing. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also *have been put to death to law* by the body of the Christ; in order that ye should *belong to another*, to the risen from among the dead, in order that we might bring forth fruit to God:" Rom. vii, 4.

'Through law I died to law.' How was that? (1) *Instructionally*. The law itself taught me, that I could not be justified by it. It bid me leave it, if I wished for justification. It told me of One coming after Moses, to whose every word I was to listen. I have done so. The Prophet foretold called me away from Moses' righteousness to his own. I have, then, the law's leave to leave it, while you are overwhelmed by its sentence and curse. I died to law—(2) *Judicially*. Law demanded my death as a transgressor. I suffered it. I suffered it in Christ my Head and righteousness. I went through the immersion commanded by Christ: Acts ix, 18. That showed my death to Adam and to Moses; my life in resurrection to Christ. I *chose* to suffer a death-in-law with Christ. I gave law all its due, and so cut off all its further claims.

Observe—It is not—'*Law is dead*;' but—'*I died to law*.' Law abides for the guilty and unjustified. But I have come out from it. Thus, and thus only, does God's justification "*establish law*:" Rom. iii, 31. Any scheme which denies the righteousness of Christ as "the righteousness of God," and as the believer's answer to law's demands, fails to establish law; and makes God an unjust Judge in pronouncing

* *Απεθавον*. 'I am dead' is *νεκρος εμι*. This is a mis-translation which has cast darkness over not a few passages.

the guilty to be righteous. For law's chief claim is a perfect obedience.

"I died to law, *that I might live to God*." Paul was set free from Moses' yoke, in order to bear that of Christ: Matt. xi, 28—30. For law can no more *sanc-tify*, than it can *justify*. This is wholly contrary to usual ideas. Most think, that the only way to live to God is to put yourself under the Ten Commandments as 'the rule of life.' But this verse tells us, that *life to God belongs only to those delivered from law*. So only can there be the right obedience, and the true spirit of obedience. The spirit of one under law is that of the slave. He is working under sentence of death, in the hope of *saving himself* from death. But to one in Christ, salvation is already granted, and now in joy and love such an one can seek to glorify God. The holiness of the law is unsuited to the Christian. It is a holiness *in the flesh*, consisting in dress, and meats, and drinks, and cleansings of the body. The true holiness is that of the Spirit.

Here, then, is cut off any plea that might be by modern theologians put into Peter's mouth. 'I am observing, Paul, Moses' laws, *not in order to justification*, but as *my rule of life*.' We answer—Law rules the *old life* of the flesh, but not the *new life* of the believer in Christ.

20. "I have been crucified with Christ, but I live, no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; but the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up in my stead."

The first words of this verse are an explanation of the apostle's death to law. *How* did it take place? And if He died to the flesh and law, what life would He have? By what right could He die to law? A slave has no authority to die to his master, and so escape his service.

'Paul died to law in Christ,' as one of the members of Christ, knit to Him by the work of God. This takes up the other great part of the Saviour's redemption-work. Verse 16 had given us his obedience to law, as the believer's righteousness, and its answer to its claims for a perfect obedience. But that alone would not suffice to redeem. It could not be available for us, until law's condemnation of us was removed. Benefits of law do not attach to those under the ban of law. Jesus, then, endured the law's curse and penalty for those who had broken it. He endured it *in their stead*. The Saviour's crucifixion brought on Him the curse and penalty of law. He suffered on the tree of death, in atonement for the transgression of Adam against the law of Eden, by eating of the forbidden tree. He suffered the curse and death, also, of Moses, for those who had trespassed under the law of Sinai. Jesus' obedience to law is my righteousness; His death is my death to law, and consequent freedom from it. All its claims are settled! The slave is set free from his severe and condemning master.

'But if there be freedom from law, where can there be place for obedience? How can holiness be provided for?' Because the believer is to obey the new master, Christ. "If ye love me, *keep My commandments*." "*Take My yoke upon you* and learn of Me." And there is a time coming, when the Lord of those servants shall come and reckon with them, rendering unto each according to his works: Matthew xvi, 27; xxv.

Why is the verb here in the perfect tense? It is the received opinion that the Greek perfect implies continued action. Was Paul, then, still on the cross? How could he be, if one with a risen Christ? In the previous verse, Paul's death was spoken of in the Aorist, as a thing past, completed an indefinite time ago. The same difficulty attends the parallel place of Romans vi. There the same apostle teaches us,

that the scheme of God in justifying sinners by the completed and perfect work of their substitute, does not encourage sin, as nature suggests. On the contrary, the plan of the Most High is, that he who trusts the finished work of Christ, should die, with his Surety, to sin. How is that shown? By the rite of immersion, which, by the Lord's command, is to follow at once after faith. The death of the believer with Christ is there displayed in emblem. He is plunged under the waters of death. He is *buried with Christ*, because he *died* with Him. He rises again out of the water, in emblem, to show his new life in Christ.

These steps are spoken of in the Aorist, or indefinite past. But the new life points onward to the first resurrection, or the blessed reign of Christ yet to come: verse 5. Then it is said, that our old man *was crucified* (the indefinite past) together with Christ. God's mind in this was to show, that our old man, which is still in fact alive, was to be paralyzed from action in us, and from ruling, even as the man fastened to the cross cannot move, but must die. As to the service of sin, our judicial death to that, has completely broken off its claims. "For he that died (Christ) hath been *justified from sin*." And the believer crucified *with Christ* is, in the eye of law, dead with Him, and so justified from the charge of indwelling and ruling sin; which, against the man of nature, is a true and condemning accusation.

To return to Galatians. Paul, as crucified with Christ, was regarded as judicially dead. But he had, now, a life beyond that which law had taken away. The believer's old life under sin and responsibility to law and its penalty, is gone. I have a new life in Christ. Yea, Christ is in me, the life of this new man. It is no longer the old Saul; 'tis the new Paul.

And the sustainer of that new life is Christ. Paul's

former promptings were those of the flesh. Now it is 'a life of faith.' Faith is the new element* in which the son of God lives. He is become a son of God, as a member of the Son of God. The new object before him is the Son of God,† risen into glory on high. The life-power of the same Son of God is the power of new life. Here, then, Gospel sanctification is closely knit with justification. True sanctification is impossible under law. Law deals with the powers of the flesh and the old life. It is, therefore, incapable of sanctifying; it only stirs, and condemns, the old man. "*The strength of sin is the law!*" Wonderful words! How little regarded, how little accepted, by Christians! But Gospel sanctification treats us as sons, in grace. The Agent in Gospel sanctification is the Holy Ghost, who is also the giver of our new life. Law (or 'the letter') slays, but the Spirit gives life: 2 Cor. iii.

The Saviour, Son of God, was not only slain, but risen. He showed Himself Son of God in resurrection. In His risen glory He is the new object before the renewed soul, an object unknown to law. But our obligations to Him are next touched on. "Who loved me!" Law's mediator, Moses, son of Amram, is not an object presented to us for our love. He had no love for Gentiles. The spirit of law is strict and stern. But the Son of God loved me. He proved it by His self-surrender to law and death *in my stead*. There is a reference here to the truth showed in John xiii. and xviii. There, Jesus' love to His redeemed is declared. It is told us, also, how, when justice came in its night to the garden, Jesus offered Himself as the substitute of His people. "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus the Nazarite." "If you

* *Εν πίστει*. Not 'by faith.'

† A various reading is here found, which will be considered at the close.

take Me, you must let go My disciples.' They did take Him, and the Substitute was slain in their stead. Here, then, was a strong appeal to Peter's heart. Could he deny the obligations he felt to love Jesus? Could he forget Gethsemane? Would he dispute the Saviour's self-surrender to death in his stead? Methinks this must have quelled any attempt at reply. Against the *argument* alone, he might have conjured up some objection or equivocation. But, what, when he saw the love shown in delivering him from the curse and penalty of law?

Here, we behold, that beside God's general love for the *world*, manifested in the death of the Son (John iii.), there is also a special work in the substitution of Christ for God's elect. "Who loved *me*, and gave Himself up for *me*."

20. "I do not despise the grace of God: for if righteousness come by law, then Christ died unnecessarily.

This is said in contrast to Peter's conduct. He was making light of *the grace* of God, in thus turning back to his *justice* and *law*. That justice of God, expressed in law, could but destroy the sinner. Therefore, God in His love, at great cost to Himself and His Son, interposed in grace to deliver the condemned culprit of law. It could be effected only by the life-work and death of the Son of God! Peter was turning back to that law from which it was God's gracious design to deliver. That grace had won Paul's heart. Should he turn to the law which cursed and slew his Deliverer?

Christian, fear law! 'Tis excellent in itself: but applied to the sinner, it calls up the wrath of the infinitely just Judge, and there is no salvation for him, but in an entire rescue from it. Our Gospel is the Gospel of *grace*! *There* is safety for those in Christ. Hold fast grace then! "It is a good thing that the heart be established in grace." "Where-

fore let us, receiving an unshaken kingdom, *hold fast grace*, whereby we may serve God with reverence and godly fear. For, moreover, *our God is a consuming fire*:" Heb. xii, 28, 29; xiii, 9. God has as truly led me out of law, as once he put me under it.

"For if righteousness come by law, Christ died without reason." We should have expected—"If righteousness come by *law*, then *grace* is set aside." Instead of that, the death of Christ Jesus is put. For that death is the height of God's grace.

The death of Christ was unnecessary, and uncalled for, if man, as set under law, can free himself from its pains and penalties. Will you send to Australia for a doctor when I have but a slight cold, of which I can cure myself long before the doctor arrives? What means all this Almighty Agency of Father, Son, and Spirit? It means, that none but the Omnipotent can rescue the guilty from the terrors of justice; and none but He sanctify the rescued, so as to fit him to dwell with God the Holy for ever.

'If *righteousness come by law*, Christ died needlessly.' Righteousness has two senses, or if you will, two aspects. (1) The *judicial* righteousness necessary to set me free from law's charges of acts of disobedience. (2) The *internal* righteousness of a holy disposition, or sanctification. Law did not distinguish these. Obedience to its commands would both produce justification, and would carry on holiness within. On the contrary, if there were disobedience and judicial condemnation, this, while it proved inward unholiness, left it there. The Gospel, while it gives at once a judicial righteousness (or justification), begins and carries on an inward and personal righteousness (or sanctification). *Neither of these come by law*. Christ died to law and rose again beyond its sphere, in order that, after setting me free from penalty, he may sanctify me as a son of God under grace, by His Spirit.

Here, then, is a second sufficient answer to any objection which might be suggested by modern theologians in defence of Peter. 'You are unjust to me, Paul, in this rebuke. You assume that I am observing the laws of Moses with a view to justification. You are mistaken. I am justified by Christ in grace; but law is to be my 'rule of life' for sanctification.' These closing verses tell us, on the contrary, that *holiness* can spring only out of faith and grace, even as justification alone can. Christ has died without necessity, thereby taking me out from under law, if *I ought really to have been left under law*, in order to sanctify. But then again, "righteousness would come by law," a thing which the Holy Spirit denies. "*The strength of sin is the law*."

GALATIANS III.

1. "O foolish Galatians, who fascinated you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been previously presented among you as crucified?"

So strongly is the apostle moved, that he begins at once, after the proof of his apostleship, and the reproof of Peter, to rebuke *their* turning to law. He does not say, 'O beloved brethren:' he speaks to them as if they were only men in the flesh, calling them by the name of their country, and with an epithet of displeasure at their spiritual folly.

"Who *fascinated* you?" How can serpents ever devour birds? They are confined to the earth; the bird can take to his wings. Aye, but to the gazing eye of the serpent, when it pleases, the Lord has given a power which enchains the attention of the bird, and paralyzes its wings. It is arrested, and unable to withdraw itself; on the contrary, it is drawn nearer and nearer, till at length it enters the destroyer's open mouth. If this steady gaze of the serpent, and of the bewildered bird can be interrupted, the trembling victim is set free.

I once inquired of a Christian man in the north of Italy, if he had ever known a case of fascination by a serpent? He said, 'Yes! I have myself twice been fascinated. The first time was when I was a boy eight years of age. I was forbidden to go away from home; but I strolled to a wood near by, and began to look for strawberries. While turning down some leaves, I saw a snake, thick, and of yellow colour, with a crest on its head, about nine inches long. It fixed its eyes on me, and I could not withdraw mine. I was fixed to the spot, and could not move. I

must have stayed so, I think, two hours; till my mother frightened at my long absence came to look for me. By her coming the spell was broken, I could turn my eyes away from the serpent, and was led home. But I was pale and trembling all over.' This just illustrates the passage before us.

It is to this, then, that the apostle alludes. He had spoken to Peter of the death of Christ, as that which made his return to law so evil and foolish. It is to this he appeals in his address to the Galatians. *What* was it that I preached to you when among you, with such force and success? The death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion, as the ground of your salvation. The Son of man was shown you, lifted up on the cross; even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that you might have eternal life. With this wondrous object first presented to you, how could you be drawn aside by the serpent's guile? How could you be led to turn your eye from Christ and His salvation, to *law*? Your directing the eye to Christ's cross would have prevented the fascination. And Paul had first shown them the Saviour crucified. Had that object been kept before them, the serpent's eye would have had no power. What fixed the Saviour on the cursed tree? The law!

Are you turning away from Christ, who delivers from the death merited under the law, *to the law which slew him*? It can only be through a fascination produced by the Old Serpent, the destroyer. Rightly to have beheld that sight as it was *first* shown you,* would have prevented this falling away. The serpent on the pole would have had no attraction to those who had previously seen the Son of God crucified for us on the tree. The law of the tree and the serpent ruined us. Law shows the desert of sin, and its doom

* This is, I believe, the force of the *πρῶ* in *προεργαφῇ*. The classical reader may remember—"Lupi videre priores."

as one day certain to fasten on the Chief Prince of sin, the devil. That was the meaning in part, of the serpent lifted on the tree: Numbers xxi. But the Gospel discovers to us the Son of God bearing, in wondrous grace, the doom of sin, that we, dying ones through the bite of the Old Serpent, might look and live! Look on *that*, and the speech, and the spell of the serpent are broken!

2. "This only would I learn of you, by the works of law received ye the Spirit? Or by the hearing of faith?"

The apostle would willingly rely on this one sufficient argument, in proof of their folly. 'Answer me this one point, and I am content. It can but allow of one answer, and that demonstrates your foolishness. Did you receive the Spirit by law, or by the Gospel?'

What is meant by 'receiving the Spirit'? Most understand it to mean, the secret indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the believer. But the present verse is an *argument* addressed to opponents and enemies, and it must lay hold on something that could not be denied, and that was manifest to the eyes alike of friend and foe. But the indwelling of the Spirit is something not manifest. Its proof is, that the New Testament assures us it is so. But the New Testament was not then written. The Judaizers might either deny that Christians had it, or affirm that it was possessed likewise by the saved of all ages, and the men of law. This, then, would be by no means decisive; would by no means be an answer settling the question.

'How do you know that the Spirit dwells in you?' 'Paul says so.' 'Paul indeed! You may be foolish enough to take his word for it. *We* are not to be so entrapped!' But the Scripture must be decisive, and it is so here. But the words are conclusive, because the meaning of the phrase in the New Testament, and in Paul's writings, is different from that now usually assigned.

2. 'Receiving the Spirit' means the *bestowal of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost*. Now to the proof! Turn to Acts xix, 1—6.

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' And they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any holy spirit.' And he said unto them, 'Unto what, then, were ye baptized?' And they said, 'Unto John's baptism.' Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*"

Here is *Paul* speaking, and he means by 'receiving the Spirit,' the gifts of miracle and inspiration communicated by the laying on of an apostle's hands. The same is the sense in Acts viii, 12—21.

"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them. only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them. and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

For a third example, see Acts x, 44—48.

Now then we have found something which, as Paul says, is decisive. All the disciples of Christ in Galatia had received some supernatural endowment of word or deed, when they had believed and been baptized. Did the law bestow that? Nay, but the Gospel. While all believers in Jesus crucified received some heavenly gift of power, so that there were prophets in every Christian Church, the men of law had no worker of miracle, not one prophet among them. This constituted a visible and decisive difference and superiority on the side of the Gospel. To this Peter and John had appealed against the great men of their nation, as proving that the authority of the God of power was on their side, and against their foes: Acts v, 32. So powerful was it, that they could make no reply, but were cut to the heart, and thought of slaying them.

3. "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

After having experienced the benefits arising from the power of the Holy Ghost, are you turning to man's natural poverty and weakness? For law appeals only to the flesh, and sets man in his natural state to obey God. But the death of Christ, after his finished work, brought down the Holy Spirit to clothe, not apostles alone, but all believers, with *power* from on high. So one might appeal to the captain of a steamer who should shut up his engines in the midst of his voyage, and betake himself to the old sails, as the power which was to bring him safely into port,—'What! after experiencing the steady power of steam, wind or no wind, tide or no tide, do you now turn to the uncertain fitful sail?' Is not advance, and not going back, the law of God? Our dispensation is that of the Holy Spirit. And as the Almighty Spirit is powerful for good beyond weak and sinful flesh, so

great is the folly of leaving the Gospel of power for the law and weakness.

4. "Have ye suffered so many things in vain? If at least it should be in vain."

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The Galatians had experienced it, as well as all others. The Ishmaels of the law had been persecuting the Isaacs of the Gospel. And some, in order to escape the storm, were ready to go over to the persecutors, by means of circumcision. Now the Saviour had promised, that all who suffered for Him should be requited in the coming millennial day: Matthew v, 10—12; 2 Timothy ii, 12. Their endurances then, in the Lord's cause, would one day be recompensed by an exceeding and eternal glory. But it was only on condition of their holding fast by Christ. "If (the righteous) draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." If they forsook Christ for the unbelievers of the circumcision, their sufferings in the past would all be lost. Here was another view of their folly. But the apostle trusted that they would not take the final step. His appeal would, he hoped, prevent so great madness.

5. "He then, that is in addition imparting to you the Spirit, and working miracles among you, is it by works of law, or by the hearing of faith?"

The word 'then' is a resuming of the former question in verse 2, which, for awhile, he had left. There was at that time, while the apostle was at a distance, some one labouring in the Gospel in Galatia, who was, by laying on of hands, communicating afresh supernatural gifts, and working miracles. Most have imagined, that Paul is speaking of *his own* work in the past. But no; the participles are in the present tense. This is an additional proof. Miracle and inspiration, and the bestowal of the supernatural gifts

attended regularly on the work of apostles: 2 Cor. xi, 4. It was no *accident*, attaching solely to *Paul's* ministry of the Gospel. Of the preacher, then, labouring in Galatia, and thus accredited of God, what were the principles? Did he preach circumcision and the law of Moses? Nay, but Christ crucified. They might see then, that there was a vital connection between law and weakness, the Gospel and power.

6. "[By the hearing of *belief*, surely.] Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him unto righteousness."

But one answer could be given to these questions; and these conspicuous and universal facts decide the question. They attended on the preaching of Christ crucified, and on the reception of these glad tidings by faith.

But thus the Galatian Christians had been set upon the same footing of blessing with the great patriarch of old; of whom it was written—"Abraham *believed* God, and it (his believing) was accounted to him unto (the obtaining of) righteousness." The history of Abraham, and of God's dealings with him, is the basis of the argument of this chapter. It was on this field that the battle between Paul and the Jewish agitators was fought. We may gather what their arguments were, from the Old Testament Scriptures, and from the conclusions which the apostle here seeks to establish.

They said, then, to these Christians—"You wish to be sons of Abraham, partakers of his blessings and justification. Then you must tread in his steps. Paul has taught you faith in the Gospel; and *that* is all very well as a *beginning*. But you must go on to *perfection*.* After Abraham believed, God called

* It is to this, I suppose, that Paul has glanced. 'Is going back to the weakness of the flesh after the power of the Spirit of God, the way to *perfection*?'

upon him to be circumcised. So, then, you who believe must add to your faith, circumcision.'

But Abraham obtained righteousness and justification, *not* by his circumcision and works of obedience, but, years before he was circumcised, by *faith*. Faith is not righteousness. Nor is it accepted by God as a substitute for righteousness, of equal value with that. That might very naturally be taken to be the sense by an English reader: "reckoned *for* righteousness." But it really means, that his faith in his promised Heir was accounted to him to his justification. For that Son and Heir of his, even Christ, would work this righteousness, and that righteousness of Christ would make Abraham and his sons righteous before God. God pronounces Abraham and his sons by faith, righteous. How can He do so with truth? 'Because Christ's finished work of righteousness becomes theirs, when by faith they become *one* with the Son of God.' There is only *one* perfect righteousness which can be imputed by God, or accepted by us: so that there can be no mistake, as to whose righteousness is in question. It is the obedience of the second Adam, which God reckons as making righteous all who by faith leave their standing in the first Adam: Romans v, 19; x, 4.

'But where is there a hint of this in Abraham's history?'

In the context of the passage cited by the apostle: Gen. xv. Abraham had complained of the want of a son and heir. It seemed as if Eliezer of Damascus must inherit all his property at his death. Not so! God would give him a Son and Heir of his own blood. This is Christ the righteous. And at once the Most High takes him forth of his tent to look at the stars of heaven. So should his plural heavenly posterity be innumerable, fixed in heaven, unchangeable in brightness. Abraham believed the Lord—and his faith was reckoned to him, so that he possessed righteousness. If faith had been righteousness, it would not have

been said, "*reckoned* to him." That word supposes, that God in grace accounted another's obedience as his. We do not say—'A bill was brought me by my butcher, of £20. So I put down twenty sovereigns, and it was *accounted* as paid.' It would *be* the payment: justice must so hold it. But Abraham was not righteous by his works, and God might have condemned him as a sinner. Righteousness then, the righteousness of his Son and Heir, was imputed, or reckoned to Abraham's account by God.

7. "Know ye,* therefore, that the men of faith, they are sons of Abraham."

The Judaizers are alluring you to circumcision, in order that thereby you may become sons of Abraham. *But you are sons already* in the highest sense; sons, not of his flesh, but of his spirit. Abraham is the father of *believers*, by the appointment of God. And the men of his flesh are therefore reckoned as *not* his sons, because they are only unbelievers; and are unlike their father in his chief and saving characteristic. This was a point contested by the Jews in our Lord's day—'How was it He made so light of them? They were Abraham's sons, and the promises were all theirs as the sons of Abraham!' Jesus denies it. If they were Abraham's sons, they would do the works of Abraham. When, in company with the two angels, the Lord paid Abraham a visit at Mamre, he received Him with the greatest kindness and distinction as his Lord; but *they* were in unbelief plotting against His life! They were the children then, in the deeper sense, of the devil; in whose unbelief they partook, and whose works of lying and murder they were performing: John viii.

Those justified by faith, as Abraham was, are

* Perhaps it were better still translated—'Ye perceive therefore.'

Abraham's sons. They are a part of that heavenly seed like the stars, which is presented to Abraham on his believing the testimony about Christ: Gen. xv. Abraham is the father of believers, as he is the first and chief example. So Jabal was "*the father* of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle." And Jubal was "*the father* of all such as handle the harp and organ:" Gen. iv, 20, 21. There is a higher sense, doubtless, in which the word holds good. But this will suffice to justify the assertion now. In the present dispensation, only the sons of Abraham's faith are reckoned his sons.

8. "But the Scripture foreseeing that by faith God is justifying the nations, preached the Gospel previously unto Abraham (when he said)—'In thee shall all the nations be blessed.' So, then, the men of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."

Behold how high an opinion God has of His word! Aye, even of His words in *the Old Testament*! The Scripture is the manifestation of the foreknowledge and wisdom of the God who gave it. Men may despise it, but in so doing, they despise God. Christians may resist it, or corrupt it, or explain it away, or make light of it. But with the Holy Ghost, as with Christ, one passage is enough to settle any question. There is wisdom in the silence, there is wisdom in the tittles of Scripture. No jot or tittle shall pass away without fulfilment. There is wisdom in the order in which His words are given.

Known beforehand by God were His counsels of salvation. And accordingly he let fall, in previous ages, passages or words relating to this Gospel dispensation, in which we find ourselves. God, then, in a chapter of Genesis (Genesis xii.) preceding the one quoted by the apostle (Genesis xv.), had caused to be written words, which established the apostle's argument. God is now justifying the nations by faith.

He intended to do so, ages before it came to pass. He gave Abraham as an example of the means of effecting their justification.

'But,' it may be objected, 'where is anything said in Genesis xv, about *the nations* being his sons?' It is not so said in Genesis xv, but in a previous chapter: Genesis xii, 2, 3. "Thou shalt be a *blessing*." "*And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*" * In Genesis xviii, 18, we have—"All the *nations* of the earth shall be *blessed in him*." Thus Abraham and the nations are to be *together* blest.

Here, then, the Israelite, if he sought for the blessing of Abraham, must seek it on the same footing as the Gentiles. Abraham was blessed by faith before he was by circumcision taken out of the footing of other nations. His circumcision did not land him in blessing. Israel, through constant unbelief, and by their last crime of murdering the Son of God, and refusing in Stephen the Spirit of God, are now no longer—"My people," but only as one of the nations. Their circumcision is become uncircumcision. They must, in order to be blest, make Peter's confession.

"God made choice among us, that *the nations*, by my mouth, should *hear the word of Gospel, and believe*." "God set His seal on them at once, by the Holy Ghost's falling on them, and communicating to them the miraculous gifts, as He did to us at Pentecost." (Here is Paul's argument over again.) Why then were the Jewish agitators seeking to lay the yoke of Moses on them, when God accepted them at once on faith? "But we believe in order to be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus *in the same manner as they*:" Acts xv, 7—11. None, then, are blessed as belonging

* Some suppose a reference to Gen. xxii, 18. But no! There the blessing is attached to "*the Seed*" of Abraham. And the argument about that has not begun yet. The argument here turns on union with *Abraham himself*.

to the circumcised nation, but only through the promise made to the nations in Abraham. "IN *THEE*" they are to be blessed. Before this there was only the fallen unity of Adam. All the nations were one in Adam, the guilty and sentenced. But in Abraham God began a fresh unity. The men of faith out of all nations, justified like Abraham their spiritual father, should thus arrive at blessing. For justification brings present and future blessedness. Of this new unity Paul speaks in Romans xi, 16, 17.

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and *if the root be holy*, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and *with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree*."

As Abraham received all his blessing by gift of God, so do his spiritual sons of this dispensation.

CONTRARY EFFECT OF LAW.

10. "For as many as are of works of law, are under curse: for it is written, 'Cursed is every one who continueth not in all * things that are written in the book of the law to do them.'"

The Judaizers would lead you to law as the ground of blessing. But all the men of law are under a curse. No one was ever said to be blessed by law as the fully obedient one. Here Paul seems to state something quite opposite to Moses. Moses says—"Cursed are those who do not keep the law." Paul says—"Cursed

* The word 'all' is not found in the Hebrew copies of the Old Testament as we have them now. But it is found in six Hebrew MSS.; in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint. The temptation to omit the words was strong. And the Jews, in this, and some other instances, have falsified the text. See Judges xviii, 30: for 'Manasseh' read 'Moses.'

are all *keepers of the law*.' How do we reconcile these statements? Very easily; because there is none of the observers of law who does so perfectly; so that the keen eyes of law shall detect no omission, no transgression. *To set one's self down seriously to keep law, is to put one's self at once under the curse.* How? Because the law demands the love of God with all the heart, soul, and strength, as its first principle of obedience. And none, but the only begotten Son of God, ever had for a moment such perfect love. The heart of every one by nature is at *enmity with God*; for it is not subject to God's law, nor indeed can it be: Rom. viii. Even a believer, then, turning from faith in Christ to keep the law of Moses, at once puts himself under a curse. Thus the Holy Spirit would show us, how totally opposed are the Law and the Gospel! and how far apart they ought to be kept by the believers. Law at one time permitted sacrifices and a priesthood, by which sins of omission and of oversight might be forgiven; but now, those sacrifices and Aaron's priesthood have vanished; that none may suppose there is any shelter in law to those who leave the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ.

You are under sin in Adam, under sin already as the breaker of the dictates of conscience, and your soul is in an evil state before God. 'But I will repent.' What of your past offences? A policeman takes up a known thief. 'Let me go,' says he, 'I mean to lead an honest life henceforward.' 'Glad to hear it, but first you must come before the magistrates, and suffer for your past thefts. After that, you may begin to do better.'

This truth is stated quite generally. It is not—'Every *Jew* who is of the works of the law.' It is 'Every man.' 'No flesh.' The statement was addressed to Gentile believers, who after faith were intending to take law as the rule of life.

Law here is proved to be a great whole. He who should eat an apple off an uncircumcised tree, should shave off his beard, or eat of hare, was as much under the curse of the law as he who stole, or slandered his neighbour: Lev. xix, 23. Obedience was to be (1) *constant*. Cursed was he who should for thirty years obey, and for a day not "continue" in the law. Thus Peter was condemned for his leaving the law awhile. If he were under law, he was under its curse. (2) Obedience to it was to be *universal*. The man was to continue "in *all* things." Paul was condemned by that word—"Thou shalt not *covet*." He had never stolen, but that one feeling against the law was fatal. He was guilty and accursed, as he had never seen himself before.

11. "But that in law none is justified before God is evident: for, '*The righteous by faith shall live.*' But the law is not of faith; but '*He that hath done them shall live in them.*'"

Here the meaning of justification, as being the sentence of a judge in a court of justice, shines out. Our righteousness is to be established, not before our neighbours, but before God.

Paul adds a proof from the prophets. There are but two ways of being justified before God as the Judge of all; either by (1) *works*; or by (2) *faith*. Moses by his word had attached the curse to all under law, as disobedient. But God had advanced in clearness in His sayings under the prophets. By Habbakuk He had said—'That life should be the portion of one justified by *faith*.' Then the way by *works* was closed.

Many take the word 'live' in these two passages as signifying 'enjoy spiritual life.' To me it is plain, that the two Scriptures speak not of the way, but of the end, and of the *reward*, or bliss of eternal life as

testified of. The order of the Greek is that which I have given, not here alone, but in Rom. i, 17, and Heb. x, 38: it is—"The righteous by faith shall live." Eternal bliss was offered to man through observance of law; but it is to be found only among the justified by faith: Matt. xix, 16—20; Luke x, 25—28. Thus 'the blessedness' of the promise to Abraham answers to the 'life' spoken of by Moses and Habbakuk: Ezek. xviii, 19.

The conditional blessing of Moses to be received by the perfectly obedient is proposed in Deut. xxviii, 1. 'It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all His commandments. . . . Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and *blessed* shalt thou be in the field,' etc. But the curse upon the disobedient in but one point occurs as the *last verse of the preceding chapter*. Thus the *curse* interposes to cut off the *blessing*!

Law asks not for faith, but for works. 'Do, and gain life.' Pay to God all His dues, and you shall never die. But there must be no deliverance from the law even then. Life is to be found in the circle of eternal obedience. The man that doeth is to "*live in them*." Never is he to be free; and always the rod of the curse hanging over him. The Gospel is not our giving to God, but receiving from Him the rich provision made in His Son. In law each man is to be dealt with on the footing of his own individual deeds. "*The man that doeth shall live*." But the Gospel of faith is—"The one work of the One man Christ Jesus accepted for all and imputed to all believers." Blessed difference!

13. "Christ bought us out from the curse of the law, having become in our stead a curse, (for it is written—'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.') In order that the blessing of Abraham might come unto the nations in Christ Jesus, in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith."

"Christ bought us out." Who are the 'us'? Most say—"Jews, or Jewish Christians." I think it cannot be. Is Paul addressing *Jewish* Christians here? Nay, but "Galatians;" his aim being to prove that Gentiles were blessed. I grant, that in the second half of the former chapter the "we" speaks of Jewish Christians; for *there* Paul is professedly owning himself a Jew by birth, appealing to Peter and a company of Jews. He is not doing so here. To whom does the last half of verse 14 here refer? "That *we* might receive." * Not '*Jewish* Christians' certainly; for the gifts were possessed by Gentile Christians, and that is the basis of the first part of his argument in this chapter. "That he might deliver *us* from this present evil age." All Christians *there* surely! "That they might bring *us* into bondage:" ii, 4. All Christians are to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made *us* free:" vi. Not Jewish Christians alone, but the Galatians and Paul are on like ground. Does not "Christ made a curse for *us*" include all believers?

What was the redemption-price? His own obedience in our stead—and His endurance of the curse in our room.

'But how could Gentiles who were not under the law of Moses, be under its curse?' There lies the difficulty. There are in fact *two* laws. The Gentiles lay beneath one of them; the Jews beneath both. God gave to Adam and his race one law in Eden. He was not to eat of the tree of knowledge; or he was to suffer death. He and his wife did eat, and were sentenced by God for disobedience. The ground was cursed for man's sake, and death began its ravages. But the penalties of the disobedience fell on

* I am quite aware that 'we' there is not emphatically expressed.

all alike, even as the stolen faculty of conscience appeared in each of Adam's sons.

All men are 'under sin,' as a state resulting from the imputation of Adam's sin, and from the condemnation brought in by conscience—the rule of life—which Adam by his theft introduced into his own soul, and into the souls of all his posterity: Rom. iii. Death came upon all, even on infants, before the law of Moses was given. Death, then, as the penalty of a broken law, proved the imputation of Adam's transgression of law to all his race: v. Moses' law came in long after, but did not disturb the reign of sin and death, or deliver from the curse the people put under it. Yea rather, new transgressions arose, and a new curse was entailed: Rom. v.

'But Paul says the Gentiles were *not* under law.' They were *not* under law, just in the sense in which the Jews *were* under law. The Jew was under law as one set under a *rule of life*, to win by obedience his justification. The Gentile was *not* so under it. The justified is not under law, but under grace: vi, 14, 15. This is his new standing, which prompts the flesh to say—'Then I may sin.' The next chapter of Romans is still more express. The Spirit speaks of *every believer* as first wedded to law, then as dying to law, by faith in Christ slain. He is buried in baptism to this old husband, in order to belong to another, even the risen Christ. "Wherefore my brethren (not 'my Jewish brethren') *ye also were put to death to law by the body of the Christ.*" "Now *we are delivered from the law, having died where we were held.*" And lastly, "Christ is the end of law unto righteousness to *every one that believeth.*" x, 4. How can Christ end law to every believer, if some believers never were under law?

Long after the fall, another law was given to a special people. Their disobedience to *that* drew down a second curse. How, then, could blessing come on

the nations? the blessing promised to Abraham? Only through the removal of *both these curses*. Paul's deliverance from the curse of *Moses*, if it stood alone, would have left him still under the curse of *Adam*. Also, until the law of Moses was fulfilled and its curse endured, the blessing was not free to visit either Jew or Gentile. So Paul to the Colossians says, that Jesus had "forgiven them all trespasses, having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances *which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way*, nailing it to His cross:" Col. ii, 13, 14; Eph. ii, 13—17. Christ became a "curse *in our stead.*"* This is the force of the Greek. He was our substitute, in enduring the curse of law. There was a reference, in the mode of the Saviour's death, to both laws. As sin began in the Garden, so the agony of the Lord Jesus commenced there. As sin began through the tree, so on it, stripped of leaf, and flower, and fruit, Jesus was put to death. As the Most High made thorns and thistles a part of the curse, so were they twined about the brows of the Lamb of God, that took away the sin of the world. And as He bore the curse of *Moses*, He suffered stripes, and was put to death outside the gate of Jerusalem. The price paid by our Lord was His blood violently poured out, and His soul laid down, under the burthen of sin.

It might have seemed, as if the curse of the law of Moses could not visit Jesus, for He obeyed it in full; and the law blessed Him as its obedient doer. But after the blessing won by Him came the curse. The Lord had provided for its falling upon His perfect Son, by attaching a curse to a special *mode of death*—the hanging on a tree. By the Saviour's crucifixion then, the curse came upon Him, and abode on Him as long as He hung on the tree. Then was it that He

* Τπερ ημων καταρα.

complained of the Father's desertion. How could the Just Judge regard with favour one who was "made sin"? In the sacrifices of Moses, two things must meet to procure atonement. (1) *PERFECTION first*, and then (2) *DEATH*, after sin had been laid upon the head of the victim. "For He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

It was necessary that the curse of Eden should be removed, and therefore Christ became the Seed of the woman, and bore the curse of the Garden, His heel being literally bruised in the only mode of death which did so, the heel being in crucifixion driven by the hammer and nail against the cross. Nor would that death avail to remove the curse of Eden, if that of Sinai remained. For blessing could not visit the nations, till the dishonoured law of Moses had received its due. Hence Jesus became a son of Judah, and son of David.

The nations were to be blest in uncircumcision, even as Abraham was uncircumcised when he was justified and blest. It was not necessary, then, to be circumcised in order to attain blessing. The promised blessing on the nations was long hindered by the law, which had come in since the promise to Abraham. The law fenced off the nations from Israel and God, and deliverance from it must be found, ere blessing could visit all alike. And now the Jew himself can be blessed only as one of 'the nations,' all regard to his circumcision being omitted; their standing as of circumcision and under law having only drawn down sin and wrath.

The law, then, having been obeyed by Christ, and its curse endured, all honour was given to it, and it stood no longer in the way of blessing. Law formerly stood in the way of the promised blessing on faith. Law said, 'Blessing is to be won by works.' And not till Christ had fulfilled that, and wrought out His perfect righteousness, was there any righteousness which could be

presented to faith. The conditional covenant of Moses stood in the way of the promise, and Israel, so long as they were reckoned God's people, intercepted the blessing to the nations.

These hinderances removed, the blessing promised through Abraham to "*the nations*" was free to come. It was blessing "in Christ Jesus." It was justification with its seal. Abraham after justification was sealed in his flesh. But when justification in the risen Christ had come, the seal of justification—the proof of God's acceptance—was the supernatural gifts. "*In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*" So the descent of the Holy Ghost was the proof of the work of Christ being accepted by the Father on high.

THE HERITAGE OF ABRAHAM.

We are now coming to the most difficult part of the Epistle. In it the apostle meets the arguments which the Judaizers offered on behalf of the circumcision of Gentile believers,—derived from the history of Abraham. It will, then, lend light to the passage before us, if I state what I gather to be the argument of these errorists. The point of the apostle's reply will be thus more evident and conclusive.

They said, then, we suppose, to the Galatians—'Paul has taught you faith in Christ, and that you are justified thereby, though *uncircumcised* as Abraham was. This is true, and is found, as he says, in Genesis xv. But God made with Abraham another covenant *after* that of faith, in which He required the seal of circumcision to be set on the flesh of Abraham and his seed. The Most High commanded, that the covenant should be kept, by obedience to circumcision. *Thus* was it to be known, that on Abraham's seed the land of promise was bestowed. Abraham was justified first by faith, but *after faith by law and works.*

For the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham is, in principle, that which was given on Sinai. Both the one and the other were sealed with circumcision, the mark in the flesh of their being partakers of the heritage of Abraham. The covenant of circumcision, begun at Mamre, was at Sinai expanded, ratified by the blood of sacrifices, and made binding on the seed of Abraham: Ex. xix, 3-6. If, then, you wish to inherit with Abraham and his seed, you must, *after your faith, be marked with the seal of the covenant, and keep the law.*

'In the enactments of kings, the latest bears sway, in preference to previous ones. How can you suppose, that the covenant at Sinai, given by God himself, and declared to be "everlasting," can ever pass away, or cease to be binding? If, then, you wish for the heritage of Abraham and his seed, you "must needs be circumcised, and keep the law." This is not something *opposed* to the Gospel of Christ, but an addition to it by way of *perfecting* it. Or else, as not obedient to God's later command, and not sealed with the mark of Abraham's seed, you will not, in the day to come, enjoy Abraham's heritage.'

Let us now see the divine answer thereto. As the objection arises out of Abraham's history, so the answer, also, is derived therefrom.

15. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be ratified, none annulleth it, or adds to it new conditions. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken; 'and to his seed.' He saith not, 'and to seeds'—as concerning many, but as concerning one; 'and to thy Seed'—which is Christ."

The object of the ensuing argument then is to prove, by appeal to Abraham's history, that though the covenant of circumcision (Gen. xvii.) and the law of Moses came after the covenant of faith, or 'the promise' (Gen. xv.), yet that neither these, not even the *ratified* covenant of Sinai, interfered with 'the

promise;' and that the promises were made, *not* to Abraham's numerous seed *after him*, but to his 'One Seed' which was *before him*—that is, Jesus Christ.

The apostle now addresses them as 'Brethren.' Though he has sharply rebuked their leaving grace, they are in his heart still. He begins with a principle which he afterwards applies to the special case in hand. It is a point of common honesty even among men, that no agreement, after being signed and sealed, may be altered. If this be true, even among men, who are liable to alter, through change of circumstances, through ignorance, mistake, or positive dishonesty, much more is it true of God, who has none of these sins and ignorances. Here, then, begins the apostle's refutation. In *laws*, the latest enactment carries the day; and additions, or alterations, or abrogations, may at any time take effect. But that is not the case with *covenants* or agreements. And that which is now in question is God's agreement with Abraham. It is not lawful in ratified agreements to set anything aside, or to add to the deed new conditions. The original agreement with Abraham then, if ratified, still abides in force.

To whom, then, was the covenant about Abraham's heritage ratified? Who are the parties agreeing? And what are the terms of the agreement?

They are generally—"(1) ABRAHAM and (2) HIS SEED."

These, in the sixteenth verse, are presented apart from one another; and not as the authorized version gives them. It should be, "to Abraham were the promises spoken; *and to his Seed.*" In so condensed an argument every point must be weighed. And this question of the order of the two parties has its meaning. Paul has spoken in the previous verses, where he is treating of justification, and blessing, and the Holy Spirit, of our oneness with *Abraham alone*. But now that he is to treat of the *heritage* of Abraham,

he is to show the effect of the promise made by God to the *Seed* of Abraham. And he has paved the way to this, by introducing in the fourteenth verse, which just precedes this new argument, the name of Jesus. "In order that unto the nations the blessing of Abraham might come *in Christ Jesus*."

The promises were addressed then—*first to Abraham; then to his seed*. Let us see in Abraham's history the proof of this.

1. God's first promise was to Abraham singly: Gen. xii, 1—3. "I will make of *thee* a great nation, and I will bless *thee* and make thy name great, and *thou* shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless *thee*, and curse him that curseth *thee*; and *in thee* shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Here is no word about his *seed*.

2. Abraham moves to the plain of Moreh. The Lord appears to Abraham, and says—"To *thy seed* will I give this land:" xii, 7. Here first appears the promise to the *seed*, and here Abraham's self is not named.

Who then is the seed? The Judaists would say—'The children of Israel.' Paul says—'No: it is an individual that is spoken of, and that individual is *Christ*.' How is that to be proved?

He quotes from a covenant in which God has named together *Abraham and his seed*. This is shown by his saying—"And to thy seed."

What, then, is the passage to which he refers? At this point many commentators have stumbled, as if the apostle's argument were a mere quibble; seeing that 'seed' in the Hebrew is not used in the plural to denote the posterity of any; and that the word 'seed' in the singular, generally means many descendants. Now this is true. But the objectors have omitted to study on this point the covenants with Abraham, or they would have seen the truth and force of the inspired statement. Let us then look at the covenant cited.

It is that given in Gen. xiii, 14—17. God was well pleased with Abraham's conduct in his interview with Lot. At once thereon He says—"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, *to thee will I give it, AND TO THY SEED* for ever." "And I will make *thy Seed as the dust of the earth*; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for *I will give it to thee*."

In this covenant, then, we have promises *to Abraham and his Seed*, as Paul says; and we have the very words—"And to thy Seed." What, then, is the Seed here spoken of? Is it not Abraham's numerous heirs? Are they not here spoken of as "many"? So many as to be incapable of being numbered? Had we not Paul's inspired comment, we should have thought that but one Seed, and that a numerous one, was spoken of. But his argument shows the mind of God to be more profound in this matter than we should have anticipated. It is true then, that in 'the seed as the dust of the earth' we have Abraham's *plural* seed. But the apostle teaches, that where *the word 'seed' alone occurs*, without additions which prove it to be plural, *there an individual is intended; and that individual is Christ*.

Now, in the passage before us there is such a clause. "To *thee* will I give it, *and to thy Seed*." Here, says the inspired writer, by the word 'Seed,' one person alone is intended by God.

We establish this more firmly, and show the reasonableness of Paul's statement, by bringing into comparison with it, a passage from the covenant of circumcision, on which the Judaizers rested. "I will establish my covenant between Me and thee and *thy Seed after thee in their generations*:" xvii, 7. "I

will give unto thee, and to *thy seed after thee*, the land wherein thou art a stranger."

To which of the two seeds is the land here promised? To the single or to the plural seed? Not to the plural; but to the singular. "The land which thou seest to thee will I give it *and to thy seed*." To the plural seed the land is not promised, but innumerability. Here, the posterity like the dust of earth is named for the first time. But 'the One Seed' is thrice named in the covenants up to Genesis xv, and thrice is the land promised to it: xii, 7; xiv, 15; xv, 18.

The plural seed like the stars are named in Gen. xv, but the land is not promised to them.

Opponents of Paul rested their cause on the land's being promised to the plural circumcised seed of Gen. xvii. That was a promise which depended on their obedience to the covenant. But Israel entering on possession of the land on that footing, have lost it.

Again—"Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou and *thy seed after thee in their generations*." Here the seed referred to is *not* Christ the individual. The plural circumcised seed of Abraham's flesh are the persons intended. Christ is not the "seed" *after* Abraham, but *before him*. "*Before Abraham was born, I am*."

Moreover, Christ is not Abraham's seed of the earth, but the One that came down from heaven. The Saviour thus distinguishes between Himself and Israel: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are (spring) out of this world; I am not out of this world:" John viii.

The argument, then, of the apostle, as soon as we bring into view the history of Abraham, and the covenants with him, becomes quite reasonable. Abraham had a numerous family:—

1. *In fact* (1) Ishmael; (2) Isaac; (3) his sons by Keturah; (4) the sons of the concubines: Genesis xxv.

2. *In prophecy and promise*. He was to have two posterities: (1) one innumerable as the *dust of earth*; (2) the other, innumerable as the *stars of the heaven*.

'Do, then, the promises belong equally to all Abraham's numerous family, of fact and of promise?' No! The terms of the ratified covenant of Genesis xv point to an individual, and that individual is Christ.

Jesus in the mind of God is so pre-eminently 'THE SEED' of Abraham, that in His presence the other numerous seeds are not named, save with some mark of discrimination. Thus Matthew's Gospel begins—"The book of the generation of *Jesus Christ*, Son of David, SON OF ABRAHAM." 'The Seed' then, taken absolutely, is always Christ. So "*the resurrection*" in the New Testament, is the blessed, the select one.

And it may be added, in confirmation, that "seed" occasionally means an individual. Eve called her son's name Seth. "For God, said she, hath appointed me another *seed*, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew:" Genesis iv, 25; also iii, 15.

But let us turn next to the covenant of faith, or '*the ratified promise*,' as the apostle names it, in the verse which follows.

17. "Now this is what I mean, that a covenant previously ratified by God unto Christ, the law, which came into being four hundred and thirty years after, doth not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect."

In this verse the apostle applies the general principle of verse 15. In Abraham's history, there is such a covenant given, and *ratified* by God Himself to *Abraham's individual Seed and Heir*.

In Genesis xii, and xiii, God had given promises. But, now, in Genesis xv, a voluntary promise is *ratified* in due form "*unto Christ*." It is not "*in*

Christ: " * that is a wrong translation. These words are essential to the argument. So that while the words are omitted from some ancient manuscripts of authority, it shows only that they have been altered, as Origen tells us that many were. The transcribers omitted the words because they did not understand their force, or did not believe the argument about 'the Seed' being an individual.

The covenant to which the apostle continually appeals, as his main fortress against the Judaizers, is the covenant which follows next after the one in Genesis xiii. God was well pleased with Abraham's refusal to be made rich by the King of Sodom. Abraham would take his reward for the benefit done to the defeated kings and Lot, from God alone. Accordingly, in Genesis xv, God Himself promises to be Abraham's great reward. But the patriarch was dissatisfied, because as yet no single Son and Heir to his property had arisen; and it seemed probable that his servant Eliezer would enter on Abraham's wealth as his heir. But the Most High interposes. "This shall not be *thine heir*; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be *thine heir*:" verse 4. That an individual is here spoke of none can doubt. This, then, is "the Seed" of Abraham, to whom the land was in this chapter made over by formal covenant of God.

Up to this period God had given promises to Abraham, and enlarged them. But after the ratification, all is fixed.

How then was this covenant ratified? In the most complete and formal manner possible. Abraham was directed to sacrifice certain animals. He did so. He divided the larger animals, and put each half opposite to the other. "And it came to pass, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace,

* Εἰς Χριστόν.

and a burning lamp (torch) passed between those pieces:" 17. "In the same day THE LORD MADE A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, saying—UNTO THY SEED HAVE I GIVEN THIS LAND:" 18. Now, we have before us Abraham's *three* Seeds; (1) One Individual Heir, which is Christ; (2) his plural *fleshy* Seed, as the dust of the earth; and (3) his plural *spiritual* and heavenly Seed, like the stars of the heaven. Unto which of these then was the covenant of faith and of promise ratified? It was confirmed, the Holy Ghost says, *to the Individual Seed, which is Christ*. Answerably hereto, there are, in verse 18 of Genesis xv, where the covenant is expressly named, only the words—"Unto thy Seed have I given this land." Those words, then, intend the One Heir of Abraham, which is Christ. So that, while all the three seeds of Abraham come into view in Genesis xv,* Christ alone is the Seed to whom God directly ratified the inheritance. In Christ there is no failure, and thus the promise was made, through Him sure to the two plural seeds of Abraham, whenever this covenant shall fully take effect: Rom. iv, 13—16.

The passage of the furnace of smoke, and of the torch of fire, through the sacrifices, was the confirmation of the promise in set form.

"I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant, which they made before me when *they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof*. The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs and the priests and all the people of the land *which passed between the parts of the calf*, I will even give them into the hand of their enemies:" Jer. xxxiv, 18—20. Here we see, not

* As any one may see by attentive perusal—(1) Christ, in verse 4; (2) The seed as the stars, verse 5; (3) The seed of his flesh, or Israel, verses 13—16.

only the rite of ratification, which carried a threatening of death to the breakers of the covenant, but the Lord's displeasure against such breakers of agreement! Far from Him, therefore, be such a breach of covenant!

The argument, then, of the apostle, both here and in Romans iv, is founded on the covenant of *unconditional* promise, which is given in Genesis xv. The covenant of circumcision is a *conditional* covenant, in which forfeiture might come in, through man's breach of the conditions: Genesis xvii, 14. That is of the nature of law therefore, "working wrath." And in that wrath Moses, the Mediator of Israel, had wellnigh been cut off, because of his neglect in not circumcising his own son: Ex. iv, 24—20.

'But may not the covenant over Isaac, offered on the altar and raised up, be the one to which the apostle here alludes?'

No! For while the Individual Heir was typified as slain and risen, and the oath of God uttered, ratifying the covenant, it is not the one in the apostle's mind. For (1) in it there is not the specification of the inheritance; (2) an angel appears, as the messenger of Jehovah; (3) and the words cited by Paul—"And to thy seed"—are not found in it.

The covenant of faith and of the Single Heir of Abraham having, then, been established in due form, cannot be set aside, either by the covenant of circumcision which was given to Abraham *after* it, or by the law of Moses, which followed at the distance of four hundred and thirty years after. They cannot be allowed to be either any abrogation of this covenant of promise, or any addition to it. For the Jewish teachers might say—"Circumcision and the law of Moses, which follow after the promise, may be regarded by you as an *addition* to the promise, or as a formal *setting of it aside* by later enactment.

Choose whichever view you will, our argument equally holds good!'

The reasoning of the apostle then is evident. 'You Judaizers rest upon the covenant of circumcision, as given *after* the promise, and *ratified* solemnly by God and by Israel, with the blood of sacrifices, at Sinai.' But my argument reposes on a *previous covenant made by God, and ratified four hundred and thirty years* before yours*. I grant you, that the covenant of circumcision is virtually law, working wrath. But law, coming after the promise, cannot be added to a confirmed covenant, or set it aside.

Now, if the covenant of circumcision be of the nature of law, and the heritage of Abraham depends upon it as a condition, the previous unconditional covenant of faith is set aside.

18. "For if the inheritance be by law, it is no longer by promise: but to Abraham God hath granted it by promise."

By which then did the inheritance come to Abraham? By circumcision (Gen. xvii), or by faith (Gen. xv)? Conditionally? or *unconditionally*? If by *law*, then not by *grace*! But to Abraham the inheritance, as I have shown (Gen. xv), was made over by deed of gift, fourteen years before the covenant of circumcision came in (Gen. xvii).

Merit and grace are mutually destructive. If the inheritance is to be ours by our deserts, it is not of grace. If law set aside the promise, the heritage comes by law. But that is not God's statement or His intent. He will not glorify man and his doings, but Himself, and His Son. By the word 'for' which begins this verse, Paul is justifying his words about law, if that were taken as the principle, for it would

* In the covenant of Genesis xv, "four hundred years" alone are named, from which it appears, that between the first promise and the ratified covenant, thirty years had passed.

annul the previous promise. No article is found either before 'law,' or before 'promise;' for the Sacred Writer is dealing with these two principles as taken in their widest extent.

Man would, of the two, prefer to obtain the heritage by his own effort and merits. If I had a carriage and horses of my own, and a friend were to say, 'You are going to Lowestoft: it is too far for you to walk from Norwich. I will send my carriage for you.' The reply would be immediately—'Thank you, I have a carriage and horses of my own.' And thus the promise would be useless, and despised. So well is this principle of our nature understood, that no one would make such an offer to those, who, as he knew, had an equipage of their own. Now, no word of God can be useless, or arise from ignorance on His part, of man His creature. His promise, then, of the inheritance by way of grace, was a virtual affirmation that man's powers never would suffice to procure the heritage. So, then, that word of promise to Abraham was to abide. Law was not to set aside grace. But grace was to set aside law.

"To Abraham God hath granted the heritage by way of promise." Of this Gen. xiii, 15, and Gen. xv, 7, are witnesses. This grant of God still abides in force, untouched by law which followed it.

THE USE OF MOSES' LAW.

19. "'What then (was the use of) the Law?' It was a distinct (covenant) added for the sake of the transgressions (which followed it), until the Seed should come to whom the promise had been made, arranged by angels in the hand of a mediator. But the Mediator is not (the mediator) of an individual."

There are, then, two agreements with Abraham, of opposite principles, the one being "the promise" (Gen. xv) or unconditional covenant; the other the

covenant of circumcision, which was in essence the law (Gen. xviii).

The Judaizers rested on the covenant of circumcision, or the law, either as setting aside the promise, or as an addition thereto. Paul founds his argument on 'the promise,' which God solemnly confirmed to Abraham. Now the covenant of circumcision was not ratified by God till four hundred and thirty years after 'the promise.' Paul, then, by 'the promise' sets aside the law.

The immediate objection to such reasoning would be—'*What then was the good of the law? if it neither justify nor bless any, nor bestow the heritage of Abraham?*'

The apostle, then, shows the value of the law; though it availed not for the purposes designed by the Judaizers.

1. "It was *added*, for the sake of the transgressions." It was not an addition to the ratified covenant of promise in Gen. xv. But it was a new and wholly distinct covenant, brought in by God; not in any way interfering with the former one.

2. It was given "for the sake of (its) transgressions." God foreknew that it would be broken times without number; sometimes wilfully, sometimes through ignorance, or inadvertence. That was its design—"to cause transgression." "Moreover law entered by the bye, *in order that the transgression* (of Adam) *might multiply*:" Rom. v, 20. "For where no law is, there is no transgression:" iv, 15.

'But can it be said without blasphemy, that God designed to increase sin?' Law did not in itself produce *sin*. *Sin was there*, long before the law of Moses came. It was designed to give a manifest form to the latent sin which dwelt in man. The Lord wished to make evident to man his sinfulness. He is slow to believe it. His eye rests only on detached actions of evil. He does not believe in the deep fountain of sin

which dwells within. Law was designed to prove the sinfulness of sin, by open *transgressions*. A written law given by God's authority was before Israel, and the breaches of this were the greater sin, as ignorance could not be justly pleaded. So, let us suppose, a physician wishes to convince his patient that a deep-seated, insidious, deadly disease lies rooted within his system. The man is unwilling to believe it. He gives him, then, a medicine which brings to the skin in numerous ulcers the evil humours which lurked within. Then the disorder is evident to every eye. The medicine did not *produce* the inward disease, but it was designed to *bring it out to view*. Thus God's law was designed to manifest the sinfulness and enmity which dwell in man's heart, by Israel's open and multiplied breaches of His written law.

The apostle speaks of "*the transgressions*"—"the *well-known* ones." He alludes to the sins of Israel against the Sabbath, at the giving of the manna, and the sin of the calf at Sinai, with the other like offences which showed that Abraham's race were but sinners like the rest of mankind. The covenant there ratified abode not in its integrity more than forty days.

If man in innocence fell before the one law of the Garden, much more would sinful man trespass times innumerable, when tested by more than the six hundred laws of Moses! Law made *that* to be sinful which was not so before it came. To eat swine's flesh, hare, and eel, was not sinful in Egypt; but afterwards to eat of them was transgression, and the authority of God trodden underfoot. These trespasses the Most High *contemplated*, in giving the law, and in affixing the curse to but one offence. Law was designed to cause sin to be recognized: Rom. iii, 20. It was designed also to show, that the evil nature of man is spurred on to desire what is forbidden, *because* it is forbidden.

2. The law was given also—"till the Seed should come, to whom the promise was made." By God's design it was to effect a temporary purpose; to fill up the gap of time, till Christ should come in the fulness of His appointed season. At this word 'temporary,' as applied to their law, the Jews always revolt. The ninth article of the modern Jews' Creed is—"I believe with a perfect faith, that this law [of Moses] will never be changed, and that no other law will ever be given by the Creator."—Allen's *Modern Judaism*, p. 96.

Law abode in force till the coming of Christ, for the Israelites were not the seed to whom the promise was made. Dealt with as a nation, and as individuals, they were transgressors. This showed that another seed, and He the individual, the Messiah, was needed. The righteousness of them that believe must come. To Him the promises of Abraham in general, and the special promise of the heritage, were made.

3. The law was "arranged by angels, in the hand of a Mediator." This is designed to prove, that the covenant of Sinai did not set aside the covenant of promise (Genesis xv). It was a different covenant, made between different parties, on a different principle, and under inferior circumstances. The covenant of Moses was begun by the message of 'the Angel of the Lord,' through Moses, at the bush. Angels were engaged in its arrangement. So says Scripture: Deut. xxxiii, 2; Psalm lxviii, 17; Acts vii, 30, 53; Heb. ii, 2. These angels represented God—as Moses represented, and acted on behalf of—Israel. The Mediator of course is Moses. To his hands the tables containing the covenant were first intrusted; and by him, through displeasure at the people's sin, they were broken. After that, God in His grace arranges a new covenant with Moses alone; and He bears into the camp the second time the tables of the covenant. A mediator was needed, because of Israel's sinfulness and God's terribleness.

"Now the Mediator is not (Mediator) of an individual." Moses acted on behalf, not of Christ, but of Abraham's seed of the flesh. He bore to Israel God's messages; and carried back their replies in acceptance of the covenant. From these circumstances then it is clear, that the *ratified covenant of law at Sinai* is a wholly different one from the *ratified covenant of promise given at Mamre*. At Sinai, the *plural seed* of Abraham's flesh make promises to God, which are not kept. At Mamre, God makes promises to Abraham's Individual Heir, Christ. And this cannot fail: for there is no variableness or shadow of turning in God, or His Son. At Sinai angels appeared on behalf of God, and a Mediator appeared on behalf of the Israelites. At Mamre God himself appears, and *there is no mediator, and no angel*. The two ratified covenants, then, are quite independent one of the other.

To this line of reasoning the reply is immediate, and apparently forcible.

21. "But the God is One: * is (not) then the law against the promises of God?' Far be it! Why, if a law had been given that was able to give life, assuredly righteousness had arisen out of law."

'I allow that your argument concerning the entire independence of the two ratified covenants is sound. But you get rid of one difficulty only to encounter another more formidable. For you must admit that the God of Abraham, and the God of Moses and of Israel, are one and the same. So, then, you make God inconsistent with Himself, and unwise. He were a foolish builder who should first erect a house, and then another on the same spot, so trenching on the first, as to darken its windows and block up its door.

* Three hundred different interpretations of this passage have been given: so great is its difficulty.

Now, the two contradictory ratified agreements both spring from one Author. First, He says—(1) 'The blessing and inheritance shall be by promise and by grace;' and then, (2) 'They shall come through law and works.'

The apostle refuses this consequence absolutely. And we may state his reply in other words, thus—'Your argument would be valid, if you supposed that God designed to justify man and to bestow the inheritance through law; and that some have obtained life through it. But it was not God's design. It has never been realized in fact. Have you forgotten my previous reasoning, that law was given, not to prove man *righteous*, but *guilty*; to give him the knowledge, not of his good works, but of his sins: not to clothe, but to strip him!'

This mournful result was not due to any defect in Moses' law. If law, applied to man, could have produced, or exhibited in him, righteousness; it would have been effected by the law given on Sinai. This thrusts out any idea, that there was some defect in the law of Moses, which could be remedied by a law hereafter to be given; a law which would produce and exhibit the opposite result—righteousness in man. The roots of the failure of the legislation at Sinai lie deep in the nature of God and man. Let a just and holy God demand of man the sinful his dues, under penalty of woe, and death must ever be the issue.

"If a law had been given which could *have given life*."

How are we to understand these words?

There are two senses, either of which suits this place.

1. *To communicate spiritual life*, as the power of obeying the law in order to righteousness. For law finds men spiritually dead, and their works before God, with the fairest appearance of good, are only '*dead works*,' from which they need to be cleansed,

before they can really serve God, and be accepted by Him.

2. *To bestow eternal life* in resurrection, as the *reward* and blessing of obedience. We might call it 'judicial life,' bestowed as the sentence of law on the justified.

These two senses are closely allied. Had man been spiritually alive, he might have won by his works of obedience the prize of law. "For the doers of law shall be justified:" Rom. ii, 13. And to justification belongs eternal life. While, then, law *can* award *death* to the sinner, and its curse, it can bestow nothing else on sinful man. This last is, I believe, the sense here. 'Life' is by law proposed to righteousness as its reward. Law demands righteousness, and if it found in man what it sought, it would justify man, and pronounce him blest. But it finds uprightness, as the next verse says; and can only assign 'to him,' as its sentence, death and the curse. This is the sense of 'life' in the former part of the chapter: verses 11—13. Also in vi, 8; Rom. vi, 21, vii, 10; Luke x, 25—28. And in the Old Testament: Proverbs iv, 4; Isaiah lv, 3; Ezekiel iii, 21.

Law demands, but gives not. The Gospel gives life in both senses: (1) it bestows spiritual life toward God in regeneration; and (2) eternal life in resurrection, as the gift of God through the righteousness of Christ.

'Life' here answers to the 'inheritance' of verse 18, to which this verse, 21, is looking back. 'If eternal life and its heritage come through human righteousness, or obedience to law, then the promise which preceded law is useless; and God's wisdom in giving principles so opposed to one another stands impeached. But if both these opposite principles were working to one aim in the mind of God, if the law were set to prove to proud man the necessity of salvation by the promise, then God's wisdom is shown in the use of *both*.

The normal order would have been (1) *Law* given; (2) *Righteousness* wrought out; (3) *Life* bestowed. This order obtained in the work of Christ. This sense of 'life' is confirmed by such passages as Rom. i, 16—18. 'The Gospel is *salvation*—for it reveals the *righteousness* of God's providing for the believer—for 'the righteous by faith shall *live*;' that is, 'shall have eternal life'—the equivalent of the 'salvation' of verse 16.

The argument of the apostle then, is clear enough. 'Would God, if there were already an open way to glory and eternal life by man's natural powers, have constructed a new road, so expensive to Himself, so undesired by man?' But there is no access to life by the road which suits man's pride. Hence *law* was only devised in order to pave the way for the *promise*, by proving grace to be *necessary* to man's salvation.

This verse assumes, then, that righteousness is necessary to justification by the just God.* If there be no righteousness in, or for, man, then the Judge of holiness cannot pronounce man righteous. And His wrath is revealed against all *unrighteousness*: Rom. i, 17, 18. Obedience is the first demand of law: Ex. xix, 5, 6. Hence the necessity for Christ's obedience to law, in order to undo the dishonour to it wrought by the disobedience of the first Adam: Romans v, 19.

'But, Paul, is not righteousness to come out of law, in the sense of its teaching us the path of *sanctification*? It cannot justify, I see: but, cannot it *sanctify*?'

No! It is "*the strength of sin*:" 1 Cor. xv, 56. Paul died to it, *that he might live to God*: Galatians ii, 19. He must die, and be buried to the old

* The *ovtos* here is argumentative. 'Then indeed your objection had been valid.'

husband, law—that he might belong to Christ, and so *bring forth fruit to God*: Romans vii. Law in its workings on man stirs in him all manner of lusts, which law forbids and condemns.

22. "But the Scripture shut up altogether under sin, in order that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

By the Scripture, here is meant the Old Testament. It pronounces all the sons of Adam to be alike sinners. Before Moses and after Moses the testimony as to both Jew and Gentile is one and the same. It never pronounced any to be righteous as the obedient keeper of God's word. It therefore shut up all *together*, both Jews and Gentiles, as occupying the same moral level before God: as debtors, unable to pay. The Jew thought himself righteous and separate from Gentile sinners, but the Scripture never owned it. The God of justice, in His verdict, made no difference between them and the nations: Rom. iii.

All were under sin before Moses came. "But *sin* is not imputed where there is no *law*." Romans v, 13, 14. There was law, therefore, before Moses; its *penalty of death* visited Jew and Gentile alike; yea, even infants who had never of their own act sinned. The law of Moses, coming after Eden, tried this question—"Can this people, or any individual of Israel, sons of Abraham, the friend of God, raise itself by its obedience out of death and the curse?" And the law continually condemns its own people, as rootedly unrighteous: Deut. ix, 7, 8.

"Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: *from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord*. Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you."

All are shut up together in one prison as "under

sin." Many will admit *acts* of trespass, but Scripture testimony goes much deeper: says of unrenowned *men*, that they are always *in a state of sin*. They never rise out of it into occasional righteousness. The negro is perpetually under blackness. His skin is so permanently. He does not at times make himself white. Sin is the master, under whom all men by nature work. Accordingly the sentence of sin is over all such; and death is their portion.

This verse looks back to verse 19. "The law was added for the sake of its *transgressions*." Only there the references to sin and law are special, and regard Israel's transgressions of the law of Moses. Here the extent is universal. Law which imprisons all as felons, brings death as its penalty; and not *life*, which is its reward to the perfect.

All are "under *sin*"—the twofold consequence of the broken law of Eden. (1) We are 'under sin' *within*, the effect of the power of conscience, which Adam stole for himself, and which is transmitted to all his posterity, to their condemnation. (2) We are 'under sin,' that is, under the state of things in the world *without*. Trouble and death are the effect of the judicial sentence of Eden.

But all being thus on the same spiritual footing, the grace of God opened to all, Jew and Gentile alike, the same way of deliverance. As there is one condemnation for all of Adam's race, so is there one way of justification open to them all. It comes without earning, and against deserving on our part. The task-master's service, the fettering in prison, was designed to make its weary captives ready to embrace with joy the opening afforded by the unlocking of the prison door. Accordingly, the law had its types and promises of a Deliverer, who should one day effect the escape of the guilty and helpless.

God shut up all, "*in order that*" the promise might be given. This was His intention in the matter,

and thus Paul shows that law does not fight against the promise of God. His intent in giving the law of Moses was to prove to proud man that there is no escape from condemnation, save by the grace which gave the promise. Law to man is judge and witness, sent to accuse and to condemn. Law is also a jailor to imprison. But the *promise* to Abraham, which long *preceded* law, was given in order to justify; and it did effect this blest result in Abraham's case, with a notice—that the same effect was designed for all others who would accept it. Those on the other hand who disbelieved this, and who believed that law was given to justify, and that it attained its end in pronouncing them to be righteous, met the Saviour with unbelief and hatred, and slew Him.

To me it seems, that here is a reference to the command concerning the manslayer. Once within the city of refuge, the sword of his pursuer was sheathed. But he was virtually still in prison, and might not come forth of the city save on the one condition which was set before him as his hope: Num. xxxv, 25—28.

Now that condition has been realized. Jesus the Great High Priest, anointed with the Spirit without measure at His baptism, has died. And now, therefore, we need no longer be shut up under sin and law. The news of the death of the High Priest has reached us, and we go forth free. We had no hand in procuring the freedom, but the blessing is freely ours. The promised Seed of Abraham has come, and has brought us righteousness and eternal life. Now we are *abidingly under righteousness*, as before we were *abidingly under sin*. Now favour dwells upon us, for our righteousness in Christ, untouched by our sinfulness, abides ever. So long as Jesus sits accepted in heaven at the right hand of God, we are righteous, and welcome to draw near to our God.

The promise was and is "for them that *believe*." This, as being a state of man's *spirit*, throws down all

the distinctions between Jew and Gentile, for they are but differences of the *flesh*. If the tidings of the death of the anointed High Priest, and the opening of the prison are not believed, the inmates of the prison will abide there still.

Mrs. Stowe mentions the case of a slave in the Southern States of America dwelling in one of the out-of-the-way country places, who, long after the decree of freedom, was still occupying the place, and fulfilling the drudgery of, the slave. Indistinct rumours of the attainment of freedom by the blacks had reached her, but no clear testimony on which she felt able to act. As soon as the tidings were clearly told her, and assured, at once she left her position, never more to return. How necessary, then, is it that a clear witness to the deliverance from sin and death in Christ Jesus, as the result of His work, and of God's acceptance of it, should be borne to believers, that they may take their free position!

For be it well observed, that the Gospel *does not demolish the old prison of law*. It takes not down one of its stones. Not one of its bolts, and bars, and locks, is rusted thereby. "Do we, then, make void law through faith? God forbid; YEA, WE ESTABLISH LAW:" Rom. iii, 31. The Gospel brings out of its walls those who credit the tidings of God. But for the inmates of law the prison frowns grim and black as ever. The men of law are still bound to its tread-wheel in its hard and hopeless round. Nay, if a believer after trusting in Jesus would go back to his cell and the task of self-righteousness, he may. Hence the Scripture gives solemn warning against such folly and unbelief.

See how carefully the Holy Ghost puts it. "The promise by *belief* is to be given to them that *believe*." Is not the second notice of faith in this same verse needless? No! The Judaizers owned the need of faith, but taught the need of circumcision also. The

Holy Spirit, then, guards this door of peace and grace. *Faith alone is the thing here needed.* In virtue of faith alone—not obedience to law—the eternal heritage is ours.

23. "But before faith came, we were guarded under law, shut up together unto the faith which was about to be revealed."

Faith may be considered in reference to its object—the tidings and the person in whom we are to believe, even Christ Jesus. And not only He must come, but the testimony about Him must be sent by God and reach to us. And faith is then fully come, when God's witnessing about Christ, addressed to our ears, enters into our heart.

Before then, the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins through Christ at Pentecost, law held all alike as prisoners. They were imprisoned with a sentinel set over them to prevent escape. Here Paul says that all alike were shut up together under *law*, as truly as all under sin. The two are closely linked together. The law of *Eden* preceded the law of *Moses*. And the law of *Moses* delivered not its disciples. Its conditional offer of life ended only in death: Rom. vii, 10. Here he uses the expression 'we,' "we were guarded, *together* shut up." Thus he identifies his own former position as a Jew with that of the Gentile believers.

Law produces only slavery under custody, and sentence of death. It might have seemed at first, as if the giving of the law on Sinai would have rescued one people at least from the general condition of sin, under which all lay. Shall not Israel now by its obedience free itself from the dismal consequences of Adam's disobedience? and so life replace, in their case, the death which lies on all others? But no! The reign of *law* is the reign of *sin* and *death*; as it was before.

Wonderful was it, that they who had known by experience the freedom of the Gospel should voluntarily go back to prison, and its chains, after God had been at such expense in setting free from the cells the insolvent debtors of *Moses*!

The Gospel promised was the one hope of the prisoners of law. Suppose a missionary and some savages wrecked on a desolate island. The savages think they can escape therefrom by boats or rafts of their own making. He assures them they cannot. Too distant is the land at which they hope to arrive, too stormy the climate and sea around, too encumbered with rocks and sandbanks. But they do not believe. They try. Their rafts and boats of bark are knocked to pieces one after another, and some are drowned. Now they are eager to listen to his promise of a steamer that will visit them, and carry them away from their straits and starvation. So *Elijah* gives the prophets of *Baal* the first opportunity to call down fire. They attempt it and fail, and the multitude are listless and without hope. *Then* steps *Elijah* forward.

"Unto the faith about to be *revealed*." This refers therefore to the outward object of faith, Christ Jesus. He must die, and rise again, and ascend. And the *meaning* of these His acts and sufferings must be taught by God the Spirit, before the deliverance reaches us. Without the Spirit's descent and testimony the work would have been done, but no results would have followed, because the meaning of God in these His wonderful works would not have been perceived. At length the One Heir of Abraham came and wrought the deliverance; and now the tidings go abroad through the Spirit's power, and wherever they are accepted, life and liberty follow.

24. "Wherefore the law became our schoolmaster for Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

To whom was the law an instructor? Most say—'To us Jews,' or 'To Jewish Christians.' Is then Paul addressing Jewish Christians? No; but Gentile believers. It is not in evidence, that any one of the Galatian converts was a Jew by birth.

'But if you expound it of Gentile Christians, how was Moses' law an instructor to *them*?'

The law and the prophets had been translated into the chief Gentile language about three hundred years before the date of Paul's Epistle, and it penetrated no doubt often through the Jewish synagogues into the hearts and homes of Gentiles. Moreover Gentile Christians mainly arose, in the first instance, out of the 'devout' of the heathen, who had been led out of idolatry to worship the true God with the Jews: Acts ii, 10; x, 2, 7; xiii, 38—43; John iv, 25—38; Acts viii. Accordingly, Paul in his sermon at Antioch of Pisidia addresses himself to 'the fearers of God' among his audience, and assures them, that while Moses could not justify them, Christ could. This stirred the whole city, and many believed. Moses discovered to them God and themselves; showed them their sinfulness, and prepared them to welcome Christ.

But while I have retained the word 'schoolmaster,' many say, that the sense of the original term is rather that of 'the slave who accompanied boys to and from school, and kept them out of mischief.' Now while this might be the sense of the term in Greece and Rome, I doubt if it were so in Galatia. At all events, in the only other place in the New Testament where the word occurs, it is rightly translated, 'instructor:' 1 Cor. iv, 15. And that sense suits best in this place. 'The boys' guardian in his walks to and fro,' does not suit this passage, for twice the apostle has spoken of men under law as "*shut up together*." If shut up under custody how could they go out? Law was a jailor. Law was an instructor. His teachings were quite elementary. He taught the terribleness of the God of justice, and

the sinfulness of all men, the impossibility of righteousness by law, and the hope of a Deliverer to come.

But the schoolmaster with his rod keeps his pupils in school and allows them not to stray, but keeps them to their task, however irksome.

All this was preparing men "*for Christ*." Just as Jochebed nursed the child for Pharaoh's daughter, so law became a teacher to lead to Christ. Moses "*became*" an instructor for this end. While originally it seemed, as if he were teaching men how to justify themselves by obedience, yet as the issue of his instructions rightly received he took away all such hope, and led his true pupils to look out for Messiah's coming. And so the first call of God after the cessation of prophecy in Israel was—"Repent!" 'You are all sinners, whom law can only condemn. Messiah is coming and His kingdom of glory. You cannot be accepted through law. Be immersed, confess your sins! Be buried to Moses, that you may be ready for Christ:' Matt. iii.

The instructions, then, of Law were first—negative. 'You must be righteous, or be lost. You cannot be accepted by your works.' Then positive. 'But Messiah and His righteousness long promised are near. He can and will cover you with the robe of His righteousness:' Isa. lxi. Those, then, who credited this were justified in "the Lord our Righteousness," justified by faith in His finished work. This was God's intent in the matter. The law instructed "*for Christ, in order that we might be justified by faith*." Moreover, in those who accepted Christ this end was actually attained in fact. Thus the apostle fully proves his doctrine, that the law did not contradict God's promise. On the contrary, it paved the way for it. It made ready a people for the Lord Jesus.

25. "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

It might be rendered—"After that *the* faith is come"—and then it would signify after the work of Christ had been wrought, and was testified of as designed to be accepted; in short, the religion of Christ. If we regard it as the inward sentiment, this verse takes up and completes the matter. Faith is then fully come, both the outward testimony and the inward reception.

All who so accept God's tidings have left Moses.

According to the mind of God, Moses and Christ are not joint instructors of the same college. On the contrary, those who have learned the lessons of Moses' preparatory school, leave him to go over to Christ. Reason itself teaches the lesson here laid down, that it is foolish to continue at a school when we have learned whatever the master had to teach us. And we have learned Moses' lessons when we have gone to Christ to be justified by Him. Moses then is left. "We are no longer under the schoolmaster." But this is not true on the ordinary views. 'For Moses and his Ten Commandments' say most 'are still to be our "rule of life" as Christians.' Had this been the truth, the Holy Ghost both here and in many other passages must have qualified His words. 'We are *partly* under the schoolmaster, *partly* under Christ. Moses is never wholly to be left: for 'the moral law,' that is, the Ten Commandments, are always binding on those who are in Christ.' But there is no distinction in the New Testament of the parts of Moses' law. We are either wholly under law, or wholly under grace. He who breaks but one law of Moses, moral, ceremonial, or judicial, earns the curse. If you are under the Decalogue, you are under the covenant of works given at Sinai. This is the very core of it. All parts of Moses' law are "the letter that killeth." All alike were written by Moses, read to the people, and accepted by them.

The design of Moses' law then is preparatory, and temporary. He is a jailor, till the debts of the

sinner are paid. He is an instructor in first principles, till you have come to Christ for salvation as a gift, having given up all hopes of righteousness from law and yourself. But when his elementary lessons have been learnt, you are not to go back to him. You are above him! The Prophet like to Moses is now your teacher. To His words you are now to listen, even if they repeat, as they do, those of Moses. Moses and Elijah appear on the Mount; but God has now no word, even to Jews, about obeying Moses. "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON: HEAR HIM!"

26. "For ye are all sons of God in Christ Jesus through faith."

Moses is teacher of the 'sons of *Adam*,' and of the 'sons of *Abraham*' after the *flesh*. He deals with men as children of the birth of nature. But he is not the recognized instructor of those born a second time by the Spirit of God. Such are sons of God: and by that new birth they have entered on a new sphere! Law does not beget men anew: the Spirit of God does. Paul had shown before, that believers are 'sons of Abraham' (iii, 7), sons of his faith. But now he has introduced the further truth, that we are 'sons of *God*.' We become 'sons of God' in Christ the Son of God. That is more than is said of Abraham himself. By faith we become united to the Son of God risen from the dead. For Christ is both Son of *Abraham* and Son of *God*. As one with Him we partake His standing. The Spirit's regeneration is the work on *God's* side; faith in Jesus Christ is the aspect on *our* side. Is *Christ* under Moses and his law? Is it *His* 'rule of life'? If *not*, neither are we under Moses, nor are we to take it as *our* 'rule of life.' Moses is the ruler of the *life* of the *flesh*. "But we are *not in the flesh*, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in us:" Rom. viii, 8, 9. We cannot be both sons of men in *Adam*

under the curse of law, working to attain freedom and blessing through our works; and also sons of God under grace, free from law and under blessing through faith, as being in Christ.

Ye are sons of God "through faith"—before baptism is named. It is not—'Ye were christened—and made to be sons of God by baptism.' *Faith* is to come first, and then baptism. Faith makes us 'sons of God' in deep invisible reality. But baptism (immersion) makes us so visibly. We, then, of set choice, die and are buried to Adam and to Moses; and rise to Christ. This is God's order all through the New Testament. This was God's order with regard to Abraham our father. He was first justified by faith: Gen. xv. *Then* he received the seal of God, *token of the justification which he possessed*: Rom. iv, 11.

'But, if so, is not baptism now a *sealing* ordinance, where it comes after faith?'

No. It leaves behind it no visible permanent mark, as did circumcision. It is a '*sign*,' but not a '*seal*.' The immersion of the flesh is the *sign* of our death and burial to Adam. But the *seal* of justification, in God's New Testament scheme, was the communication of the miraculous gifts by the laying on of an apostle's hands. These we *ought* to have, but have *not*: Eph. i, 13; iv, 30; 2 Cor. i, 22; John vi, 27.

'But if *circumcision* was the *seal of the righteousness of faith*, it must be of the nature of *grace* and the *Gospel*, and not of the law.'

Not so! "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be *circumcised* Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is *being circumcised*, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are *being justified by the law*, ye are fallen from grace:" Gals. v, 2—5.

'How, then, can both these statements be true?'

Because *circumcision* was *one thing to Abraham* the *man of faith*, justified before God, and *another thing to his sons of the flesh destitute of faith*, and seeking justification in vain under law. Abraham was *circumcised after faith*; they were *circumcised before faith*; and most of them remained in unbelief from the cradle to the grave; vainly trusting, that they were God's people, because they were *circumcised*: even as now multitudes of the unregenerate trust in the sprinkling which they received in unbelief, and perish in their sins.

This is confirmed by the inspired history of Abraham: iv, 22. Sarah and Hagar represent two covenants. They stood to *Abraham alone* in the capacity of *wives*; to *all others* they were *mothers*. Abraham, as the father of all believers, occupies then a peculiar place in God's counsels.

But to return. Faith is to go first, baptism is to follow. This is shown very forcibly in the Epistle to the Romans. Paul treats first of the sins and sinfulness of man; then of the work of Christ, and our acceptance of it by faith, and afterwards of baptism. Five chapters precede his naming of baptism. "*Being justified by faith* we have peace with God"—precedes, by a chapter, his mention of baptism. And how does it come in there? He starts the objection which is common to nature, that if God accepts us believers as righteous, not by our own work, but by that of another, we had better go on to sin, that we may magnify His grace. To this the Holy Spirit replies—that God's scheme of justification by the work of Christ leaves no such opening to sin. He calls on *all who are justified by faith in Christ at once to be immersed (or baptized), with Christ*. What is the meaning of that rite? It is that they die and are buried *with Christ unto sin*. For Christ so died unto sin, and was buried. Moreover, in this rite of God's appointing there is, after the burial under water, a rising again out of the

water. And by that the Most High signifies, that *the justified by faith* are to walk with the risen Christ in newness of life, "dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord." Here then it is clear, that baptism in God's mind belongs *only to the justified by faith*. But infants have no faith. Therefore baptism belongs not to infants. Both the objection of nature and the reply of God apply only to the *justified in Christ*. The answer of the apostle, derived from immersion, has no force save as applied to those *justified in Christ by faith*. But infants are not so justified. Neither then are they to be baptized.

What is the proof that the men of faith are '*in Christ*'? The verse which follows gives it.

27. "For as many as were immersed into Christ put on Christ."

The apostle in these words takes up the spiritual significance of the rite which by God's command follows on faith, and is properly its first manifestation. The Lord calls on all who believe in Christ's death and resurrection, and are thus justified in Him, to be immersed. The waters represent death. Believers are plunged into them, as signifying that they undergo death and burial with Christ. Christ's death is their death. He died to sin, and they die with Him. They are buried to Adam, and to Moses. They emerge from the waters. This is, in emblem, a new life, a new life with Christ. But one coming out of the water finds his soaked and dripping garments unsuitable and unhealthy. New and dry garments are already provided for him, and then at once he puts off the former garments and puts on the new. That then is God's emblematic teaching concerning the Christian's way of life. He puts off *Adam and Moses wholly*. He *wholly puts on Christ*, not in justification only, but in sanctification also. Law has its own mode and rule of life. Christ has *His*. The baptized has put off

law to put on Christ and grace. Slaves have one kind of dress; sons another.

Now this is true, only where faith precedes. It is utterly false and deadly when baptism is applied where there is no faith. There is, in that case, the sign of a new birth in the emersion out of water, and of death to the flesh, while in reality there is the flesh of Adam alone. Infants are not one with Christ by faith; nor could even immersion (if it were substituted for sprinkling) effect it. It is only a subversion of God's meaning, and wholly deceit.

"As many as *were immersed*." The act had already taken place. The apostle is addressing those belonging to the church of Christ. You "put on Christ." It is not, 'You *professed* that you did put on Christ.' Nor is it, 'You vowed and *promised* by your sureties, that you would hereafter put off Adam and put on Christ. See, then, that you observe your *baptismal vows*.' The professions, vows, and promises of an *unbeliever* belong to the *flesh*, and to *law*. They were solemnly made at Sinai, and as quickly broken. God has done with the flesh. It is dead before Him. In God's scheme the invisible regeneration of the Holy Spirit comes first, and then comes the visible birth out of the womb of the water. Then all is true and in keeping.

Observe here the difference between a church of pædobaptists and an apostolic church. In a pædobaptist assembly which consists of 'believers and their children,' *all* are *baptized* (sprinkled), but *some* are *not sons of God*. But in an apostolic church, '*all* are *sons of God*, those *some* may not have been *baptized*' (immersed). Paul, be it observed, does not say that all were immersed, but "*as many as were immersed*." And that this is not accidental, is proved by the like passage in Romans. "How shall *we that died* to sin live any longer therein?" "*So many of us as were immersed* into Jesus Christ:" Rom. vi, 2, 3.

28. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male or female, for all ye are one (man) in Christ Jesus."

That is, as the system of the flesh and of law is opposed to the system of the Spirit and of grace, the wisdom of God has so arranged all, that the characteristic differences of the two shall appear to the eye in the opening rite, which admits visibly to each.

To the law, which has to do with the flesh, belongs the initial rite of circumcision. This in its usual case, was to be impressed at a certain time, which was to be reckoned from natural birth. It brought out, at its first ordination in Abraham's day, all the differences of the flesh. Let us look at the covenant of circumcision. "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every *male* among you shall be circumcised (*Hebrew*). And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is *eight days old* shall be circumcised among you, every *male* in your generations, he that is born in the house, or *bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed*. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my *covenant shall be in your flesh* for an everlasting covenant:" Gen. xvii, 10—13.

Here we find the distinction (1) of Jew and foreigner, (2) of slave and freeman, (3) of male and female. Circumcision distinguished (1) one race from another; (2) one civil standing from another; and (3) one sex from another.

It was designed to signalize Abraham's many sons after the flesh, till the One Seed should come. It was a covenant in the flesh, and on the flesh the seal was set. It cast a slur upon the female, for through her the transgression began; on her, therefore, the

sign of the covenant should not be set. It was intended to individualize each before God, to be dealt with according to his works.

Now, these distinctions of the flesh, noticed in Abraham's day, were transferred bodily to the law of Moses. Circumcision, as our Lord notices, did not begin with Moses, but was of the fathers: John vii, 22. That showed, that the law of Moses was of the same quality as the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham. And these distinctions of Israelite and foreigner, of slave and freeman, of male and female, reappear all through the law of Moses. The Israelite might not eat of any ~~ox~~ that had died of itself; but he might sell it to a foreigner. The price of a slain slave differed from that of a freeman. The rite of the 'bitter water that causeth the curse' applied to a woman, and not to a man.

But the opening rite of the Christian faith is in designed contrast to this. *There is but one ceremony of initiation for all believers*. Man and woman, slave and freeman, Jew and Gentile, all undergo the same rite when they believe; and that rite is a *death and burial of the flesh*. All the distinctions which law made, are swallowed up in the common grave which God has provided. For "the flesh profiteth nothing." Baptism is not a new trial of the flesh under fresh vows and promises. It is buried as dead. There is in it a visible death and burial to Adam and to Moses; to substitute instead a new birth to God. The *many* in *Adam* and in *Moses*, are now in Christ become *One*. This is the very design of our Lord. He died, "that He might *gather together in One the children of God* that were scattered abroad:" John xi, 52. The new *birth* out of water produces a new *man*.

"For ye are all one (man) in Christ Jesus."

"For He is our peace, Who hath made *both* (Jew and Gentile) *one*, and hath broken down the middle

wall of partition between us : having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN :” Eph. ii, 14, 15.

So Christ the One “Seed” of Abraham is, in one view, a body made up of many ; in Him the sins and responsibilities of all believers are put away, and they stand clothed in His merits and obedience to law, whereby they are delivered from law and have eternal life by faith. There is but One who is justified before God, and I am justified “*in His name.*” “Justified IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS :” 1 Cor. vi, 11. From this it appears, how wrong it must be to attempt to introduce into Christian baptism the principles of circumcision, which are those of the *flesh and law* ; not of *faith and grace*.

29. “But if (ye are) Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs by way of promise.”

Christ is the One Seed of Abraham to whom all the promises belong. You are “*in Him.*” “For as the body is *one*, and hath *many* members, and *all the members of that one body being many are one*, so also is the Christ.” “Now, *ye are the body of Christ*, and members in particular :” 1 Cor. xii, 12, 27. You, by faith, and of set choice, in baptism put on Christ. What He is before God you are. Before God He is the One Seed of Abraham, to whom the inheritance was ratified. He is the Heir, and you inherit under Him : Matt. xxi, 38 ; Heb. i, 2. You inherit already by faith, and not by law, and its initial rite, circumcision. That seal impressed on your flesh would put you only on the level of the *stranger* and the *slave in the house of Abraham* ! It would undo grace and promise, to set you before God on the footing of your deserts : Rom. iv, 13, 14.

The sons of Abraham’s flesh will indeed one day have the heritage of the flesh. But the inheritance of

Isaac and of Ishmael are, by God’s decree, to be kept apart. And we are heirs (according to hope) of eternal life, and the angels wait on us who are “the called of the eternal inheritance :” Heb. i, 14 ; Tit. iii, 7 ; Heb. ix, 15.

Thus the apostle’s conclusion is legitimately worked out. To you believers belongs the inheritance of promise, ratified to Christ, the single Heir and Seed of Abraham, at Mamre. Law never interfered with that promise ; it was another covenant made on another principle with another of Abraham’s seeds. But you are in the One Heir of Abraham, and so already are inheritors as in him. Baptism exhibited you as one in Christ with all Abraham’s sons by faith.

GALATIANS IV.

"But, I say, that the heir, as long as he is an infant differeth nothing from a slave, though he be lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the time previously appointed by the father."

'We are heirs by way of promise. Come, then, let us enter on our heritage at once!' Here interposes the limitation, "*But*, I say." He who reveals to us our expectations, nay our present standing of heirship, bids us wait! We are still minors, still under age; it is not yet our Father's appointed time. We have left the preparatory school of our infancy; but we are still under guardians and stewards. The young heir needs instruction, and must gain experience. He must learn to obey, before he exercises rule and can manage his own affairs. He has much to learn, even after Moses has given him his preliminary instruction. The doctrine of Christ has still to be taught him. This Epistle is a proof how much he needs teaching; how apt he is to run heedlessly into what would be destructive of his person and his heritage.

We then are sons under age; we are under control in our persons, and our estate is not in our hands.

Great is our heritage. Christ, by His union with us and ours with Him, has made us sons, and we are kings and priests. But He and the Holy Spirit need to watch over, and keep us and our heritage. Christ is "Lord of all." He has not only as "Son of man" recovered Adam's ruined kingdom, but He is to be set over all the works of God's hands: Psa. viii. But the time for His coming is not yet arrived. Until He takes the kingdom, we are not

to rule. Solomon was David's son, and by oath heir to David's throne; but he knew that he must tarry his father's time. One of his brothers thought he would not wait, and took upon himself to reign; but it ended in rebuke and destruction.

We are to wait God's set time. Though sons, we are not yet manifested. Our enemies are abroad, and we are called to fight them. They have seized on our heritage, and till they are cast out, we shall not enter on our city and its mansions. Again, these bodies of humiliation and of death are unfit to dwell in God's city and His Presence of glory. The king's sons must wait for their royal robes: Rom. viii, 21—23. The first coming of Christ led us out from prison and death; we must wait till His second coming, for our entry on the inheritance.

3. "So also we, when we were infants, had been enslaved under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, made out of a woman, made under law, in order that He might buy out those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Here is the application of the previous principle to past times. Who are the "*we*" spoken of here? Many say, "Jewish Christians." But no! There are no Jewish Christians named in this address to the Galatians. Paul is identifying himself with the Galatians, as they and he both were Christians. The world's age of infancy is past. The Gospel has revealed so much of God and His counsels, that even those Jews or Gentiles who refuse to believe the Gospel are so enlightened thereby, as to be dealing with questions about God and man far more profound than were thought of or discussed before our Lord came.

What are "the elements of the world" under which, before Christ came, both Jew and Gentile were enslaved? Let Paul tell us: Acts xvii, 27. They are the objects of nature furnished by this visible and

tangible world. They were designed to teach men about God. These elements of earth were used by God for the instruction of Israel. By altars, and priests, and sacrifices, by blood, and fire, and oil, and so on, he was teaching Israel first truths about Himself and about themselves. Some of these teachings were known to Noah, and through him transmitted to his sons, though soon lost: Rom. i, 19—21.

The world's instruction before Moses, and under Moses, flowed from the same source, the things of earth; though much more clear and precise under law than under the earlier dispensation.

This elementary instruction was suited to the world's infancy. But it was stiff, and precise, and stern. "Disobey, and perish!" The infant was also the slave.

Nor might any free himself from this bondage. He must not play truant, but continue at this strict and severe school till the time foreappointed by the Father.

At the suited time this ceased. God prepared the minds of Jew and Gentile by teaching through Moses and the prophets to see something of the guilt and weakness of man as a sinner, and his need of a Saviour. Man is slow to learn of God, and four thousand years passed away ere God judged it the fitting time to send Christ.

Christ existed previously in His Presence from eternity, His own Son, His only-begotten Son, who was in His bosom, with whom He took sweet counsel, and who perfectly agreed with His plans for man. Him He sent forth out of the heaven into earth. He was then "made out of a woman." Some have denied the real manhood of Christ. This tells us, that He was man framed out of the substance of Mary. He did not 'pass through her as water through a pipe,' to use the expression of some errorists, both of old and modern times. He had not, as some talk, 'a heavenly

manhood.' His body was flesh and blood, susceptible of fatigue, pain, and death, as ours.

By the expression "*made out of a woman*" the Holy Spirit is pointing at Jesus, as being the Person who fulfilled God's word in Eden, about 'the Seed of the woman' bruising the serpent's head. He does not say—"Born of the Jewess," or even "born of the Virgin." That would have shown its aspect toward Israel, and pointed at the promises made to the house of David: Isa. vii. But this Epistle deals especially with Abraham and his hopes.

Our Lord, then, is One Person made up of two natures, God and man.

As man He took of Mary, body, soul, and spirit: Rom. i; ix, 3—5.

He was "made under law." Not merely under the law of Moses, but of the garden also. He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh:" not in any especial beauty of form, nor gigantic in stature or strength. He took His place on earth as Son of Adam. As Son of Abraham and of David He was circumcised. And as circumcised He became debtor to do the whole law of Moses.

He was at once God's wisdom, righteousness, and grace. He took this place on purpose to redeem men. For Paul is now meeting the solemn question, by us incapable of being answered—"How can subjects of God, set under law, and breakers of law, be lawfully delivered from it?" James Thompson is a young man to whom you, in your kindness, wish to give a house and land. Well, what is to hinder? The house and land are yours to give. Aye, but he is in prison, under sentence of five years' penal servitude, for burglary. He cannot then enjoy your gifts till he has got quit of the just gripe of law. The same barrier stood in the way of any of mankind becoming sons of God.

God's plan of deliverance, then, was that His Son should pay law its price, and deliver us. But while a

debt of the poor is easily met by the rich, the Saviour had to set free those under penalty for *crime*. He had then an awful work before Him. He took the place and penalty of the culprit. Law had been dishonoured by man's disobedience. Jesus, then, must honour it by His obedience in every point. This is law's first demand, and it was complied with. But the culprit was not free even so. He has to endure the penalty of his breach of law. For the law was just and good. Therefore Jesus must die. The Seed of the woman must conquer the serpent, and that through the bruising of His own heel.

Christ must be possessed both of the manhood and the Godhead to deliver us. He must become our kinsman in order to buy us out from slavery. Without becoming man He could not legally free us from law.

He alone was *able* to do it, able to withstand temptation, and to endure death victoriously. He alone was *free* to undertake such a cause, and to execute it. The angels are already servants, subject to God and under obedience, each for himself. They have no freedom to devote themselves for others. Nor could the obedience and death of one of them be of such value as to set free millions of men.

Christ found all men, Jews and Gentiles, to be slaves and culprits "under law." He paid the debt. He freed the debtors. He won by His righteousness the law's prize—eternal life. His obedience has made righteous those constituted disobedient and sinners by Adam's disobedience: Rom. v, 19. Thus giving up His soul and pouring out His blood, He paid the price of our redemption. This availed to deliver from law—whether the broken one of Eden, or that of Moses. Both laws must be met, or none is free. In resurrection Christ takes another standing than of old.

The deliverance out from law being effected, there was still another step to be taken. Take Thompson out of prison with the law's leave; and while he

is become free, he does not become *your son*.. That is a step of grace beyond law, though law may own it. But when law's claims are adjusted, you are free to move onward in your kindness to him.

From how much of law are we delivered? Most would say—"From the judicial and ceremonial parts of Moses', but not from the moral law." Where do you get your authority, friend, to sever the law of Moses into parts? Where do you find any part of it called 'the moral law'? The Ten Commandments are *not* 'the moral law,' or else you and all Christians are breaking it every week; for you do not 'keep the Sabbath.' *Your* holy day is one on which God was *working*, not the one on which He was *resting*. This passage tells us we are "bought out from under law." So long as we are *under law as a principle*, dealt with as God's *subjects*, for life or death, *according to our deserts*, we cannot be sons. You see it is stated here clearly. The taking out from law is necessary, ere we can become *sons*. All under law, whether in less or greater measure, are *slaves*: slaves under curse. Law must relax its grasp *altogether*, or we are not free.

That barrier removed, we may have the adoption of sons. He who is "the Seed of the woman," is also "the Son of God." He in His grace stooped to our place and standing, to lead us out of law with law's consent, that we might take *His* place. We are sons to God, possessed of the very sonship that Christ Himself holds.

6. "But because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So, therefore, thou art no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir also of God through Christ."

The mission of the *Son* came first, delivering God's saved of the Gospel from under law. It was in consequence of Christ's completed work that the *Holy Ghost* came down. It was in answer to the

Son's petition. It was because of justification brought in through the Son's work, that the Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost.

The Spirit of God begets sons of God. The Son of God takes the saved into union with Himself, and we become sons in the Son of God.

As creatures, we are *made* by God; as sons, begotten of God. Christ, by nature Son of God, became Son of man, that we, by nature sons of men, might become sons of God. Wonderful exchange!

Paul used the same expression concerning the coming of the Spirit that he had used concerning the coming of the Son: The deductions from it are the same. 'The Holy Ghost is a Person, and not merely an 'influence.' He existed on high ere He came down and wrought on earth. He is an Eternal Person—eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. He is called 'the Spirit of God' and 'the Spirit of the Father,' as well as 'the Spirit of the Son.' To blaspheme Him is to perish. As soon as He descended, He taught the glories and the work of the Son, and called believers to be buried to Moses, that they might listen to Christ, as the Prophet who was to supersede Moses.

He is here called 'the Spirit of God's Son.' This is wisely adjusted to the passage before us. The Son and the Spirit of God together make believers sons. But a man may have a legal position, and yet be unsuited in spirit and understanding to that position. Here is a king's son; but he is little above an idiot. He cares only for dogs, and horses, and grooms. He dislikes books, he can barely read. Is he fit to reign? But the Holy Spirit is sent down to give to those whom Christ has made sons, an intelligence and affections suited to their new rank. The same Spirit that came on Christ at His baptism, came on the church at Pentecost.

Then the Holy Spirit showed Himself in power

and gift, and on the conclusions thence to be deduced Paul has insisted. But now he speaks of his internal operations, enjoyed by us, no less than believers of those days. "*His Spirit in your hearts.*" He teaches us to call God—'Father.' This is something different from law. It is a title morally unsuited to the mouth of a slave. The Rabbis say, that 'Father' was a word forbidden a slave to use in speaking to his master.

Jesus was the first freely to use this name of God, and to teach disciples so to regard Him. Under law its sons do not call on God in prayer by that title. Look at the prayer of Moses: Psa. xc. There Israel is sinful, yea, all are *under sin and death*, and the wrath of God. Look at the prayers of Nehemiah and Daniel; God is there "the great and terrible God." They are in distress; and find no better device toward peace with God, than to renew the old covenant. So with Daniel God is the "dreadful God:" Dan. ix, 4. They have no righteousness, only sins. The curse is on them: ix, 11. God is righteous in His judgments: would He but turn from His fury, and forgive? Sinai is Israel's characteristic place, as under Jehovah, the God of law. And the essence of that is *distance and fear!*

The spirit of sonship, then, is the internal proof to the believer, of his being a son of God. A new spirit of peace with God, nearness and love has sprung up. It is the result of the reality of Christ's work, and his removal of us from the bondage and curse of law.

"Abba, Father." Here is the same sentiment repeated in two languages. One is in the sacred tongue; one in a Gentile language. It seems natural to infer, that this is given us as an illustration of the sonship with God being open alike to Jew and Gentile. It is the cry of the *heart* now that God regards. The cry of the *lip* without the heart is only the call of the hypocrite.

They who have the Son's *heart* may conclude they have the Son's *standing and inheritance*.

'But should a Christian be confident of his being a child of God? Ought he not ever to be under doubts about his acceptance, and fears about coming short? Is it not presumption and fanaticism to be so satisfied in the matter?'

Note the foundation on which the Spirit builds.

"Because *ye are sons*, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*." Paul had no doubt. The Christians of that day seem to have had the forgiveness of sins, and to have known it.

'O, but Paul was so good a man, so great an apostle, that he may well have been confident!'

This shows, that it is a lurking spirit of self-righteousness which puts on these airs of false humility—"If I were but more rich in good feelings, or good deeds, I could come with confidence."

Is our greater or less goodness our ground for going to God? Or is it not altogether the work of *another*, a work which does not shift and move, as I do? True it is, that the doubts of many Christians arise from their disorderly conduct. They are self-condemned, and are content to go on so, rather than to break away from the world and its evil.

With greater knowledge comes greater liberty. Under law, it is slaves learning the alphabet. Under the Gospel, it is sons of God training to be priests and kings. As the redemption of Israel was national, so was the sonship. Now, it is real and individual, as that of the Son of God is; founded on nature renewed after the image of the Son of God.

There is considerable difficulty in ascertaining what is the true reading of the last clause. Some read—"An heir through God." Others—"An heir of God through Christ." To sons belongs the inheritance of the father at his death. Our Father who gives

us the heritage dies not. Nor is our inheritance to pass away at death. It is to be ours in resurrection.

8. "But then indeed, when ye knew not God, ye were slaves to those who by nature are no gods. 9. But now, after that ye have known God, but still more, are known by God, how is it that ye are turning again to the weak and poor elements, to which again afresh ye wish to be slaves?"

In the previous verses the apostle had considered the case of Israel and the Gentiles under law, as far as they agreed. Now he sets forth the inferiority of the position of the heathen in regard to their religion. Israel worshipped Him Who is the true God, the Creator and Preserver of all. They knew Him too, in His holiness, power, justice, and redemption, as far as they could be revealed under law. But the Gentiles were worshippers of many gods, instead of one; they worshipped demons, unpossessed of divine power and holiness and knowledge; created beings, not the Creator.

As the result of this difference of view, while in verse three he says—"We were enslaved under the elements"—for it was true of both Jews and Gentiles alike—he now says—"Ye were slaves." This adoration and service to demons was the inferiority of the heathen.

The coming of Christ and their faith in Him had altered all this. Now they knew God in a way which law could not teach Israel. The incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God, have given us to know God. All His attributes in full harmony centre in Christ and His work. Now He has *sons*, and to these He can open His heart, since the barriers imposed by righteousness are removed.

Better still—"Ye are known by God." Law shut out Gentiles from God. The only entrance to Jehovah was by circumcision and fellowship with Israel under

law. But believers in the Son of God now are recognised as occupying the place of sons and heirs of God. Being sons in Christ the Son, we occupy through grace His place before God as our Father. This is not true of any but believers in Christ. "*I never knew you*;" depart from me, ye workers of iniquity," is Christ's word to some. And again—"The foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal—The Lord knoweth them that are His:" 2 Tim. ii, 19. It were one thing to know Queen Victoria as one of the servants of Windsor Palace might know her; and another thing to have a seat at her table given us, and to have her addressing us by name.

By what means could the Galatians justify their then conduct? After God Himself was known, and that as their Father, were they turning to the creatures of His hand for riches and strength? This is man's strange folly and ingratitude. Yet it is quite natural to him. Paul has to call off the Colossian Christians from like leanings. Some were following after philosophy and human teachings about God, which were only a return to the elements of nature, setting Christ aside.

Some were insisting on the differences of clean and unclean meats, were turning to the observance of days and worship of angels.

Now, all these defections he overwhelms in the same way.—'How, if you died and were buried with Christ by faith and baptism to the elements of the world, rising with Him into the sphere of things heavenly—are you now acting as if you were alive in the world, subject to fleshly commands of men?' Col. ii, 8—23.

Could such things supply the place of God in Christ? They were "weak," unable to justify, or to sanctify. They were "poor" ('beggarly' is too strong a word). Christ, on the other hand, is our

Strong Deliverer and our Great Riches, in Whom we possess the eternal heritage and its glory.

Our great instructors now are not *men*, but the Son and Spirit of God; and they teach us, not about the objects of nature, but about the Father, and the Son, and the things of heaven. They were sent expressly from heaven, that that new region and its treasures, unknown to law, might be made known to us.

Conduct then, which was excusable before, as the result of ignorance, must now be condemned as folly. It is ingratitude also to God, who has been at such expense in freeing us from the yoke and service of law and the flesh.

The Galatians were turning again to these creatures of earth, and their A B C of truth. They were under these instructions once when heathens. They were a second time of their own will going to learn of them.

'But, Paul, many of them are Moses' commands.'

It matters not; now that Christ—who was the substance and life of the ritual of Moses—is removed, service to these worldly things is in principle heathenism over again. And if the Holy Spirit can so condemn Christians for turning to *God's* own ordinances of old, how much more does He now for their taking up the ordinances of men, whether councils, or canons, or 'churches,' so called? To leave Christ for ceremonies and observances not given by Him is a return to heathenism, and leads on surely to idolatry. It were pitiable to see Masters of Arts taking their seat in the dame-school again, and conning over, on the infants' form, their picture-alphabet anew!

The result of this turning back to elements of the world could be only once more what it was at first—slavery. The human priest and his heavy yoke come in again. The spirit of sons of God is gone. Christ put out of His place as Sun of Righteousness, the shadows of night fall around. Pitiable were it to see

the liberated criminal adopted as a son, and located in a handsome estate, go back to the jail, and ask the turnkey once more to put on his fetters, and to allow him to occupy again the condemned cell !

The holiness of law and that of the Gospel are of two different kinds. The holiness of law is the holiness of the flesh—God being known as the God of earth. Take an example or two.

“Ye shall be holy men unto me ; neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field ; ye shall cast it to the dogs :” Ex. xxii, 31 ; Lev. xxii, 8.

“Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat ; for they are an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. *For I am the Lord your God : ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy ; for I am holy : neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth :*” Lev. xi, 42—44.

The service of God, then, consisted only in “meats, and drinks, and divers baptisms—ordinances of the flesh imposed on them till the time of reformation :” Heb. ix, 10.

See now in the church-canons enacted by men professedly Christians, how all this legislation in the things of the world and the flesh has come back again !

“If any *bishop or priest* contrary to the commandment of the Lord relating to *sacrifice*, offer any thing else at the altar, or (instead of wine) any made liquor, or birds, or animals, or pulse, beyond what is commanded, let him be deposed [from his priestly station]. Except new ears of corn, or grapes, at the proper season, let it not be allowed to offer any thing at the altar, except oil for the lamp, and incense at the time of the *holy oblation* !”—Canon III.

“All other autumnal fruit must be sent to the house, as first-fruit to the bishop, and to the presbyters (priests), but must not be *presented at the altar*. But it is manifest, that the bishop and the presbyters divide with the deacons and the other *clergy*.”—Canon IV.

Here the things which the Gospel has set aside, priests, and altar, first-fruits, etc., have entered again, by human ordinance.

This return to law and its sphere is the result now of human *will*. “Ye *wish* to be enslaved again.” Once God commanded these things, and then it was right to obey. But now God has left that sphere, and forbids it. To return into it is the perverse will of man, and such will worship is refused by God.

10. “Ye are observing days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have laboured in vain with regard to you.”

The apostle gives us here a specimen of the adding of the laws of Moses to the religion of Jesus Christ.

It was showing itself, then, in the less gross form of the observance of seasons. They were keeping “days,” as the sabbath, and the new moons : “months,” or the first, and the seventh month, so signalized under the law. “Seasons,” as the Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles. “Years,” as the seventh year, and the jubilee. These were times marked out by the greater and lesser lights which God made for this earth, at creation ; appointing them “for signs, and for seasons, for days, and for years.”

But speedily, in spite of this rebuke of the Holy Ghost this evil returned, and saints’ days and festivals, Lent and Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas were set up. Those laws which falsely and impudently call themselves ‘Apostolic Ordinances,’ occupy themselves much with the festivals. They began with the observance of the day of the Lord’s death and resurrection. But if so they must be keeping fasts and festival seasons at the same time with Israel, and the Jews were hated. The Christians of Asia Minor celebrated the feast at a different time from those of Rome. Victor, Bishop of Rome, excommunicated the Asiatic Christians because of this ; and an Apostolical Constitution says :—

"If any bishop, or priest, or deacon shall celebrate the holy day of the Passover when the Jews do, and before the vernal equinox, let him be deposed (from the priesthood)."—Canon VII.

"If any bishop, priest, deacon, reader, or singer doth not fast on the holy fortieth day of the Passover, or on the fourth day (of the week), or the preparation day (Friday), let him be deposed! except he be hindered by bodily weakness. But if he be a layman, let him be suspended from communion."—Canon LXIX.

How thoroughly heathen in spirit these festivals were is shown by passages of the fathers. Augustine in particular tells us how these feasts obtained an entrance. After the persecutions of the Roman emperors ceased, multitudes of unconverted heathens wished to become Christians on their own terms; and as they were accustomed to hold feasts even unto drunkenness in honour of their *idols*, and were not willing to give up these pleasures, the leaders of the church thought it best to give way for a time, and celebrate in the name of the martyrs other feast-days with wine, drinking in honour of them. 'Was not that better than their getting drunk in honour of idols?'—*Letter 29*: Cited in Darby's Works, vol. v, p. 289.

But some may object—'You put *the Sabbath* among those days which were faultily observed. Are not all Christians bound to observe *the Sabbath*, as a part of *the moral law*?'

What then says the Holy Spirit on the point? "Let none therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of feast, or *new moon*, or *Sabbath*; which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ:" Col. ii, 16. Here the Sabbath is classed with other Jewish festival days, as a something which Christians were *not* to observe, and which were set aside by Christ. The fact is, the Decalogue is not 'the Moral Law,' nor can the Sabbath be severed from

the rest of the law. In the commentary on the Ten Commandments which follows at once upon them, the Sabbath is joined with the other feasts of the law, with Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, and with the rest of the seventh year: Ex. xx—xxiii.

How could Paul rebuke them for observing "days" indiscriminately, 'if the Sabbath day were binding on Christians, and that as a part of the moral law'?

'But does not this idea dispense with our observing the Lord's Day also?' The Lord's Day is not enacted as binding on Christians by law. It is a privilege pointed out to us by Christ's meeting His disciples after His resurrection, then, and by hints in the Acts and the Epistles. It is the best day for meeting together, and on it we obtain important spiritual benefits. On it the disciples were accustomed to meet together to break bread. Nor ought any Christian, through a sense of his own liberty, to act so as to stumble others, by labour on that day.

Herein, then, you have a proof that Paul's teaching was not of man, nor by man. Man loves festal seasons, and now in these latter days the desire for them, and the zeal in celebrating them is coming on anew, in spite of the warning of the Spirit, in spite of New Testaments found on every hand. How much worse to devote days to worship dead men and women? St. Lawrence, St. Bennett, St. Vitus, and so on! How much worse the return to priesthood and holy places on earth, to incense, dresses, worship of the elements, and other wickednesses?

Paul was ashamed of his pupils at a lower stage of this defection from truth. These things were Judaism, not Christianity! So alien from its first principles were they, so hostile to its spirit, that he cannot comprehend how they should have understood his teaching. *He had proclaimed deliverance from these ceremonies as from a yoke of slavery!*

He was afraid of them. He stood in amaze at their blindness, ignorance, and ingratitude! What had all his teachings and labours effected, if so soon, and so heavily they could stumble!

'But if they were believers, how could Paul be afraid of their being lost? Would not that prove, that the doctrine of 'the perseverance of the saints,' is a human fiction, and not Scripture?'

He is not afraid of their being eternally lost. In Colossians, where he is reproofing the same errors, he warns them of the loss of *reward* thereby: Col. iii, 18. And in Galatians he warns believers against their losing "*the kingdom of God*," or the millennial day: verses 20, 21.

If Paul had lived in our day, what would he have said? Now that the evil has reached such a pitch, and is going onward still, in spite of the testimony of the Holy Ghost?

The priest, the sacrifice, holy dresses, holy water, holy places, incense, and other paraphernalia of Moses' are restored. It is Judaism, not Christianity. It is worse than Judaism. It virtually denies the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, and its blessed effects in producing peace with God. These ceremonies of law, and their adoption as the rule of life, bespeak the law to be taken as the *way to justification* before God. In most cases, it tells of a soul given up to the world, and seeking to lay upon a human priest's shoulders its spiritual affairs. Where there is an awakened conscience, and a sense of sin within and around, it leads to the convent, and its round of will-worship; to the vain attempts to pacify God by its religiousness, its fastings, and scourgings. God is to such, the just and terrible Law-giver; and, therefore, he who would be saved, must save himself by his good deeds.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL APPEALS.

12. "Become ye as I am, for I am as ye are; brethren, I beseech you: ye injured me in nought. Ye know that because of sickness of the flesh I preached to you the Gospel the first time. And your temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor loathed, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus."

The portion which follows is not argumentative, but consists of a variety of appeals. It is often obscure; and to us seems susceptible of several meanings. This arises out of its dealing with circumstances unknown to us, though well-known to those addressed.

Let us not overlook the force of that little word, "brethren." It never comes in as a mere form. It is given by dictation of the Spirit of God. And we may reap instruction from it. Many Christians are ready to deny the Christianity of those who, while true believers on the points necessary for reception by God, yet differ from them on some subordinate point. Paul owned these weak ones as still "brethren."

Paul appeals to them, that they should occupy in regard to law and its ceremonies, the position which he did. He, the great Jewish zealot for law, had entirely abandoned them. He was not under law at all, and had put off its trappings. If the Jewish devotee had left those dry husks, should Gentiles take them up? Though he had rebuked them severely, he spoke not in the bitterness of an enemy, or as one who had been wronged. Though, as apostle he might command them, yet for love's sake he rather besought them.

Paul reminds them of the circumstances of his first preaching to them. It had been in consequence of illness. It would seem then, that but for that he would have gone elsewhere. But God by a vehement

bridle detained him, and greatly blessed his work there. 'But how could he preach if he were so ill?' That depends on the kind of illness from which he was suffering. Some kinds prevent thought, but not motion. Some lay a bar on travelling, but not on speaking. What it was we know not. But it was of a kind which, without the grace of God, would have kept the Galatians aloof from him, or disgusted them. The Lord by it put them to the test. (The true reading is—'Your temptation which was in my flesh He despised not, nor loathed.') Paul alludes most probably to the thorn in the flesh, the angel of Satan sent to buffet him, lest he should be exalted : 2 Cor. xii.

This trial of them would have stumbled many. But they received the apostle and his message with joy. This is one of the peculiarities of the Gospel. God does not make His messengers great in the world's eyes, but affixes something of weakness, illiterateness, or poverty, and disability to their flesh. The glory is not to be man's. God is now lowering the flesh that the spirit may be raised. He often blunts the sword He uses in order that the excellence of the power may be all His own. This stumbles the men of the world and the men of law. They glory in the flesh. And under the law God oft exalted the flesh. Behold its strength in Samson, and in David's heroes. See its beauty in Moses, and David, and Absalom. Jesus, however, the Son of God, has altered that. He came with no beauty to worldly eyes. His countenance was marred. He could say—"Blessed is he who is not stumbled at Me." And so, in its measure, it was true of Paul. The illness seemed to Paul so serious a hindrance to his work, that thrice he besought Christ that the cup might pass away. It did not, but he learned its meaning, and was instructed to make it known to us, that we might have the key to God's mind about it. Thus is it oft in this dispensation.

Observe how God is pleased to test His people by the messengers and ministers He sends them. They are not perfect, far from it. Are *they* perfect to whom they are sent? Very far from it! The hearers (in turn) show their imperfection by the reception given to God's messengers. They are more ready to find fault, and to murmur, than to be thankful or affectionate. They take the good, as if it were their due; and the trials resulting from the messengers sent, as if they deserved something much better, and had a right to be indignant when they get not all they wish! Such would have seen plenty to find fault with in Paul. And if Peter did not pronounce his words with the true Jerusalem accent, but with the broad Galilean, they would have turned away in disgust from such an illiterate preacher.

Christian! do, you imitate the Galatians in their first reception of the truth! Receive the truth with thanksgiving, and what you can find of God in God's messengers. You shall have perfect ones when you are perfect. God is trying you by their defects. Do you bear them aright? Or do their faults only draw out greater faults in you? Look beyond the second causes. *God is there!* Christ has no better messengers for you than those you have. You shall have better when you deserve them, when you have learned and practised all they have taught.

How beautiful was the spirit of these converts toward Paul at first! God designs that especial love should spring up between the man who has led to Christ, and the souls born to God. But how oft this state of things wanes and gives place to the opposite! How party-spirit breaks this down, makes even good to be misrepresented, and evil to be exaggerated.

The Galatian Christians then under this trial behaved nobly. They fed with joy on the Lamb, though the dish on which it was served was earthenware chipped and cracked. They welcomed the

treasure brought, though the tray on which it was borne was but rough wood. They received Paul as an angel of God. Angels are beyond such weakness and humiliation of body. They received him as if he had been an angel, and found that he bore a message greater than those committed of yore to angels. They received him, as though Jesus Christ Himself had come in his person. This was right. Contempt of ministry sent by Christ is an offence against God. Reception of it with gladness and thanksgiving and kindness toward the messenger is acceptable with God. Thus Abraham welcomed the Lord and His two angels. Thus sons of Abraham by faith will accept the Lord's ambassadors. And Jesus said—"He that receiveth *you*, receiveth *Me*, and he that receiveth *Me* receiveth Him that sent *Me*:" Luke x, 16. And he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward.

This weakness of the flesh was a temptation, be assured, to Paul also. That other side of the matter you see in 2 Cor. xii. Thus one move of God's affects many persons, and effects many purposes.

15. "Where * then is the blessedness you (spake of)? For I bear you witness, that had it been possible ye would have plucked out your eyes, and have given them to me. Have I then become your enemy by speaking the truth?"

Great was their joy in the wondrous news in spite of this serious drawback, which to most would have insured its refusal. Great was their congratulation of themselves and of their country, that they had lived to hear such news of joy. Great was their gratitude to the bearer of Christ's message. They were so full of love and zeal, they thought they could never do enough to the apostle. The bearer of bad news

* Many manuscripts read—"Of *what kind* then was your blessedness?" Then Paul would imply, that if the blessedness were genuine, it ought to abide.

is often treated as almost a foe. The bearer of such rich truth and glad tidings should then be received with joy and gratitude. They did so accept the message and its bearer. They were ready to help him by any sacrifice. Even their eyes—the chief member of value—they would, had Paul needed it, and it had been possible, have plucked out to serve him. And from this expression some have inferred, that probably Paul suffered from some affection of the eyes. This idea has been confirmed by our version—"Your *own* eyes." But there is no such emphasis here, and no word answering to 'own.' Some have thought, that probably the vision of glory at his conversion might have left behind it, after the cure of the blindness was effected by Ananias, some permanent disease. But generally the cures of the New Testament seem to have been complete; and that blindness produced by Christ's glory could not have been called an 'angel of Satan.'

'You counted yourselves so happy in this new-found treasure. You blessed God for it. Were you right? Were the blessings enjoyed very great? Did light, joy, love, and power, flow forth? What have become of these? Has anything arisen to prove these to be a delusion? If not, why are you so altered now?' You see, Paul rests nothing on his *ordination*. It is not—"I am a minister in the true apostolic succession." He expressly refuses this for himself. He never puts it as the ground for the reception of others.

Observe how Paul praises where he can, the Galatian Christians, though they were tainted with error touching fundamentals. Many would refuse to say a word of commendation to such, and would let them know, that they did not own them to be Christ's, nor would allow them to sit at the Lord's table.

It would seem from the next verse, that things were greatly altered at his second visit. The Judaizers, or their teachings and their whispers against the apostle,

had begun to prevail. Paul saw the coming in of false doctrine and evil practice. It was needful to change his tone, and to speak in warning and rebuke. It was the other side of the truth; the needed testimony, when truth is obliged to rear its head and speak accusively against error. His altered tone proceeded from his care for them, his desire to keep them from what he knew to be pernicious. His duty to Christ required him to sound the alarm. But many seem unable to distinguish between a gracious warning against false doctrine, and hatred of the teachers and holders of it. Many hold him to be an enemy, who stands between them and their object. But Paul exposes the mistake by a verse. He spoke the truth, and was their friend. Enemies speak lies to injure. Paul spoke the truth in love. Ought we to be offended with the truth? Let us take arms against error! But the truth must be our friend, or woe to us!

The truth displeases oft. It makes enemies of those who refuse it. It oft alienates true Christians from one another. It should not be so. God's truth runs counter to the evil that still exists in the Christian. This is oft the reason of its rejection. The Christian and the minister of Christ must be prepared for changes of feeling, and for trial in the church, as well as from the world. Some seem to think and speak, as if all trial in a church were due to unconverted persons being too hastily introduced into it. *Scripture never puts it on this issue.*

Many were the troubles of churches, as the Epistles of Christ and His apostles show; but they trace them never to this source. They do not recommend the keeping the receivers of the first principle of the faith outside the assembly of believers, till they have been tried. The church is the place of babes, as well as of grown men.

Servant of Christ! Speak the truth! Speak it in love! It may cause you trouble awhile. But you

will retain a good conscience. You gain both now and hereafter, by bearing aright the trials of the way. You are responsible to Christ; and if He approve, the disapproval of your brethren arising from their ignorance or misconception must not turn you out of the way. Our path lies through evil report and good report.

17. "They court you not well, yea, they would exclude you, that ye might court them. But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you."

He here turns to consider the conduct of his opposers, who however are not named. It is remarkable that throughout this Epistle no name of the Judaizers at Antioch and Jerusalem, or in the churches of Galatia is mentioned. Much less does Paul call on the churches of God to put out the holders and teachers of such fundamentally false doctrine. If excommunication of believers for doctrine fundamentally evil be right, it would, it *must* have appeared here.

Great was the zeal of these teachers. But as zeal generally is faulty, this zeal was not honourable. It sprang not from good motives; it was not directed to right ends. They were bent on making a party for themselves; and that is inconsistent with true views of the ministry of the Gospel, and the design of God in the calling of the church. The evil of their conduct appeared in their policy of exclusion.* Sectarianism is contrary to the mind of Christ. But many create and foster it, that they may be the centre of the attention of their disciples. Such is the spirit of contradiction in human nature, that many prefer to go where the entry is difficult. To some what is open to

* Some manuscripts read "they would exclude *us*." This is a far easier reading, and so proceeded probably from correction. This rendering, I think, though it alters a little the sense of *ζηλωται*, gives the best meaning to the passage.

all Christ's flock wears no charm. Be it not so with us! Unity of God's sons is Christ's mind.

The connection of the next verse is obscure. "It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing."

Does it refer to the Galatians? or to Paul's opposers?

1. If it refers to the *Jewish teachers* the sense will be—'This zeal of theirs was very great while I was with you; for they feared my influence, and sought by such courtship of you to draw you away from me. It has taken another form now I am away, and their policy is one of exclusion. But if the motive and end of their earnestness and affection were good, it would be the same at all times, and not only while I am present.'

The Galatians, then, might see by this token the proof of the reality of the apostle's warnings against the Judaizers.

2. Or does it refer to *the Galatians*? Then it will signify—'O Galatians, how can you defend such fickleness of mind? While I am with you, you are all ardour and zeal. When I am away, it is all gone. But it ought not so to be. The cause is good. The motives to zeal in it are always the same. Your zeal then ought to be as lasting as the good news.' The stress lies on the word "always," and its force is brought out by the contrast, that in point of fact, it was in operation only when an especial and temporary stimulus was given in the presence of the apostle with them.

Is not this the case with many now? Their zeal and energy in attending meetings, and serving Christ and His servants, goes by impulse. It needs some especial preacher, and some revival services to awaken it. For a time it is in full flame. But when the preacher is no longer there their zeal goes out. It rests not on the constant truths taught, but on the mode of presenting them.

The Scripture meets, with the wisdom of God, all

the difficulties which arise on the Christian's path. There were Christians then who pursued the policy of exclusiveness. They would shut out believer from believer, the circumcised from the uncircumcised. Strong was their zeal. Great their activity. But it was not to form Christ in the believers, but to form a sect. This may be done by the truth, as well as by error. But this seeking to form a party among believers is sectarianism. Our Lord's desire is the union of all that believe. It is a work of the flesh, displeasing to God, to seek to make a sect. The zeal of proselyting from Christ to a party is hateful to God. Are not such persons afraid of the coming day and Christ's judgment seat?

'We can't own you as Christ's.' 'Are we not believers in Him? renewed in the spirit of our minds?' 'Yes, but you don't hold *our* views.' Will Christ in that day own such exclusionists? "With the same measure ye measure it shall be measured to you again."

Party zeal at its height fences in the Lord's table by human barriers, and seeks by evil speaking to make out all other bodies to be worthless and unchristian, except their own. This is sectarianism in its complete development. "He followeth not with *us*." 'Forbid him.' "Forbid him *not*," is Christ's word.

Zeal in a good cause is good. Many are wrought on by earnestness. The want of it is discouraging to the young inquirer. 'The Christians I know are so *cold*. Surely, if they believed these truths their whole souls would be on fire! I like, for my part, to see earnestness!' And so if error is clad with zeal, it makes its way. 'They are so zealous,' is to many a proof they are right.

19. "My little children, with whom I travail again, until Christ be formed in you, I could have wished to be present with you at the present time, and to change my tone, for I am in doubt about you."

Severe as were the apostle's words, they were the severity of love, fearful for the mischief resulting to them from the path they were treading. Now his affection bursts forth.

"My little children." What standing had these Jewish teachers with the Galatian believers compared with his own? It was by his means they were won to Christ. Many instructors they might have, but he was their spiritual father. "My little children." A word of affection, occurring in this form only once in Paul's writings.

Paul had with much earnest pleading, and after-care, won them to Christ at his first visit. They then found spiritual life, as opposed to the spiritual death of ignorance and heathenism in which they first lay. But now their turning away from Christ to Moses awoke in him anew anxiety and sorrow. Conversion is not enough—the quickening into life is not all. He sought the formation in them of the Christian character. This is a daily process; to last till Christ comes.

And they were turning away from Christ to Moses; from the grace of God to his justice. Now such turning to Moses could not form the likeness of Christ. It is only Christ's Spirit that can form our spirits into the likeness of the Son of God. He who would be formed into the likeness of Christ must take Christ's principles, promises, commands, as his rule of life. "If ye abide in *Me*, and *My words* abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Moses' style of holiness is of a kind not accepted by God now. His words were given to produce holiness of the flesh. His sphere was this present life, and this present world. His treasure was below. The Christian's is not to be. His principle was justice; ours is mercy. *Moses* then cannot form *Christ* in the believer. *Moses* cannot sanctify in the

New Testament sense: Rom. vi, 17. God's metal is to be poured into the new mould, and to take *its* shape, not the old. If one be on the wrong road, the farther he travels the more distant is he from the true goal.

Here, then, we are brought face to face with the Holy Spirit's doctrine concerning Christian sanctification. It is *not*, that the Decalogue, the core of Moses' law, is the mould into which the Christian is to be poured. It is *not*, that we are to seek to grow up into Moses and the Ten Commandments. It is a solemn warning, that Christ and Moses are to be kept apart.

There is a great and daily work of sanctification to go on in the hearts and lives of those spiritually alive—a work of increasing in the knowledge of Christ, and His ways, and His words. There is the putting *off* of the old Adam, there is the putting *on* of the new man. We have to seek the mind of Christ, the affections of Christ. This is the end toward which the Christian minister is to look: at this he is to aim for himself, and for those he has led to Christ. He is not to preach himself, but Christ. Are we growing in this? In knowledge of Christ? And in resemblance to Him? There may be much knowledge, and no practical growth; the spirit hard, the words slanderous, the leanings towards party. The Holy Spirit forms the character of the sons of God into the likeness of Christ by Christ's dwelling in our hearts; by the acceptance of His principles, and obedience to His commands.

There is need of one tone to be uttered to the sincere inquirer after truth, who is staggered by some plausible statement of error; and another style to the bold and unblushing maintainer of destructive error. Actual knowledge of the state of parties and individuals is necessary to wise meeting of the respective cases.

And as it was the personal influence of the Judaizers on the spot, it seemed desirable that this

force should be met and overborne by the personal influence of Paul and his helpers.

Paul could have wished to be personally with them. A letter might do something; but what might not be effected by his personal presence? His living Christ before them? Yet out of this impossibility of accomplishing his desire God has made good to flow to us. Had the apostle set them right by his presence, and by the effect of his clearer perception of the state of things, and the state of persons, at his visit, we had not had this 'valuable Epistle in our hands. There seems to be here a hint of his being called elsewhere to his apostolic labours: a distant intimation of his not returning to Galatia. For other parts of the world lay in the midnight depths of heathenism; and his apostleship was a roving commission, not the settled work of a pastor.

"And to change my tone." His tone was that of severity. But severity was not natural to him, not that in which he found delight. It was needful then. But he would rather take the tone of tenderness. He was obliged to condemn; but how gladly would he have praised! His tone was of sorrow: how gladly would he have exchanged it for one of joy! It seems to point to the change of tone which a view of the varying circumstances and feelings of parties then present, drew forth in him.

While consistent conduct confirms our persuasion of the reality of the work of grace, inconsistencies lead us to question whether the party be a believer at all. Let us endeavour so to live, that there shall be no doubt of our faith in, and obedience to, Christ!

"I stand in doubt of you." He could not understand their spiritual position. Were they men of grace, or men of law? Were they truly turned to Christ, or were they only disciples of Moses? Were they men of flesh, not of the Spirit? Sons of Hagar, not sons of Sarah? These things ought not to be. Let

it not be so with us! Let all know that we accept Christ in all! His offices, obey all His commands, and look for all His hopes: hopes of His coming and kingdom!

THE ALLEGORY.

We have now arrived at a point in the Epistle which greatly tests the commentator and his readers. Many who believe in the inspiration of Scripture stagger here. They cannot find any *argument* in this allegorical treatment of Scripture. They wish to make it merely illustration, or accommodation. They apologize for it, as on Paul's part a result of his rabbinical education. They regard it as applied to the Judaizers solely as an argument *ad hominem*, that is, one which was forcible to *them*, because the first principles of it were admitted by them; while to men in general, who hold not their errors, the argument is good for nothing.

Those who do not believe in the Spirit's inspiration of Scripture are here outspoken enough. It is 'foolish,' and 'preposterous.' 'What did Moses intend in Genesis, but to give us a plain life of Abraham? How could *he* know any thing about the mixing of the law and the Gospel? What could there be of such design as Paul supposes in Moses' mind; and consequently what proof could be derivable from the mere narrative?'

Here then the want of faith in the critic is apparent enough. 'What did *Moses* know? What could *he* design in the matter?' *Whose* book is it? '*Moses* knew nought of this.' Did not *God*? "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, or *the power of God*." Scripture itself warns you, that '*the foolishness of God is wiser than man*, and the weakness of God is stronger than man.' Nay, this Epistle asserts expressly the truth, that God's book is so constructed by His wisdom, as to convey His mind about the future, in

the history of Abraham, ages before it came to pass. "*The Scripture* (that is, the God who gave it) *foreseeing* that God is justifying the nations through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying—In thee shall 'all the nations be blessed.' So then they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

To the man who wants faith, the events of Abraham's life were 'accidental.' That he should have two wives, of different conditions, in the order given, and that each should have but one husband, but one son, and no other child, is to such 'accidental,' and to build an argument thereon, 'preposterous.'

'*Accident* indeed!' There is much that is accidental to us, but nothing accidental to God. The *events* of Abraham's life were pre-arranged by God. The *history* of those facts was given by *Himself* through the pen of Moses. That Abraham, up to the marriage of Isaac should have two wives, but two, and just one son by each, was a part of His counsel, and is told us for *our* profit under the Gospel. Away with such low and unbelieving ideas of the power of God! Paul's view of the Scripture is alone worthy of the Most High.

As well affirm, that the form of the ox or of the elephant is '*accidental*!' Are those forms something pre-arranged of God? Much more this book, which is to us of more value than all the oxen of earth, and all the stars of the sky!

The passage, then, before us is really a serious argument on the apostle's part. He was writing, not to those who would receive all his words as given of God, but to those who were disposed to think the Judaizers right, ready to demand proof, and to scrutinize the proofs he gave. *Illustration* will not force the unwilling to leave their position.

The Jewish zealots drew their weapons seriously from Scripture in this case, from the inspired history

of Abraham's life, and Paul was obliged as seriously to prove that their conclusions did not hold good, from the Scripture.

They taught that circumcision ought to be added to faith—'For did not Abraham receive the covenant and seal of circumcision *after* he believed?' Did not Scripture say so? If, then, the Gentiles wished to be regarded by God as of Abraham's family, and heirs of his portion in the day to come, they ought to add to their faith circumcision.

The passage before us, then, is *real argument*, founded on what God did, what God said, and what God designs to flow out of the fact and the history as a warning and guide to us. "Do ye not *hear the law*?" The very form of the passage shows it is argument. Seven times in the course of twelve verses we have—'for,' and 'so then'—and 'therefore!' Wherever Paul's statements were liable to be questioned, the apostle steps in with proofs from Scripture. And the conclusion is at length formally drawn, a practical conclusion of the utmost moment, not to the Galatians alone, but to all believers. Upon this argument, the inspired apostle founds his most stern and solemn warnings: verses 1—6. On it we are to found our duty as Christians. Hold fast then true views of God's book! It is not—'What did *Moses* think? or what did *David* intend?' It is far deeper than men and even believers suppose. It is *God's* mind that moves David's pen. "No prophecy of Scripture (and here is prophecy) is of any private interpretation, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "Yea let God be true and every man a liar!"

21. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under law,* do ye not hear the law?"

* No article.

"Tell me." The apostle addresses them as if they were before him, and could reply.

"Ye that desire to be under law."

This denotes, that it was not God's intent that His sons should be under law. It was their leaning towards it, against His mind. To most Christians this seems strange. 'Why, we *must* be under the law! We can't escape it! We should *sin* if we attempted to do so. We don't mean, that we are under the ceremonial or judicial law, but must not all be under *the moral law* (that is, the Ten Commandments)?'

Now is it not clear—that it was impossible Paul could have spoken of the law without distinguishing it into parts, if he had held (as Christians now do) that part of Moses' law, viz., the Ten Commandments, are 'the Moral Law,' and universally binding on all men, believers or unbelievers? Does he ever so distinguish? Never! He always treats the law as a whole. He always says, we are not under it, but under another principle. We are *delivered* from it; *dead* to it. To have said, as Christians now do—'We are under *this* portion of Moses' law, but not under *that*,'—would have *been ruinous to his argument throughout the Epistle. If you doubt it, try!*

"Do ye not hear the law?" Your chosen authority, the Old Testament Scriptures, and specially that part of them which gives the life of Abraham, is against you. Will you not listen then, to it? and obey its teachings? 'The Scripture must decide'—was a principle agreed on by both. The Judaizers applied it seriously on their side; so does the Holy Ghost by Paul.

"The Law." The five books of Moses, nay the whole of the Old Testament are so called.

'You think to become sons and heirs of Abraham by circumcision. You cannot so attain either the one or the other. Take up circumcision and you will lose the sonship, and the inheritance which you now have

by faith in Christ. If you are under the law, you are not in Christ. Is Christ under law?'

22. "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the slavewoman, and one by the freewoman. But the one by the slavewoman was begotten according to the flesh; but the one by the freewoman was by the promise."

In Abraham's history spiritually considered, and by God's design, the Gospel and the Law both met. Sarah was the freewoman to whom he was first lawfully married. She answers to the Promise which long preceded Law. So God before creation promised eternal life: Tit. i, 2.

After the faith of Sarah failed, Abraham took Hagar the slave as his concubine, by Sarah's counsel. So law came after the unconditional promise; as Scripture says—"The law came in by the bye" (*παρεισηλθεν*): Rom. v, 20.

Each of these women had a son, and only one. Moreover, the argument turns on the order in which they were respectively born. And their birth was upon different principles. The slavewoman's son was born in the ordinary course of nature. The freewoman's son was not born till sixteen years after, when the power of the flesh was gone, and only the power of God fulfilling His promise could effect the result. Sarah's son was promised by God; Hagar's was not: Gen. xvii, 16, 17; xviii, 10.

That the argument might be the more striking, each had but one child, and that child a son. Paul treats first of the points of resemblance, then of the difference in these two sons of the same father.

24. "Which things are to be allegorized: for these (women) are two covenants; one from Mount Sinai, begetting into bondage, and that is Hagar. For the (word) Hagar* is Sinai, a mount in Arabia, but answereth to Jerusalem which now is, for she is in slavery together with her children."

* Some MSS. omit the word 'Hagar,' because they could not interpret it.

An allegory is that figure where one thing is directly stated, and a deeper meaning lies under the surface. The discovery of an allegory in Scripture is therefore only genuine, when God has already designed that the history should be so spiritually applied. Allegorizing not according to the mind of God is foolish and sinful. Origen and Jerome with others carried this forcing of Scripture to a wicked extent, so as to make men think that the Word of God meant anything it could be wrested to mean. But in this case we have the mind of God. Abraham's history is all through typical. The facts really took place as Moses wrote. But they are so described, as to give guidance and instruction in the Gospel to us.

This genuine application of the history and types of the Old Testament is designed of God. It is what Paul calls the 'solid food'* of the Word of God.

Thus he assures us, that the history of Melchizedec was given designedly to foretell the glory of the Son of God. Thus the history of Israel in Egypt and the wilderness is typical of the church now, of its follies, its sins, and the judgments of God thereon: 1 Cor. x; Heb. iii, iv. So the history of Eve's formation, and of her relation to Adam, types that of the church in relation to Christ: Eph. v.

These women are two covenants,† Sarah answers to Grace, or the Promise which came first. Hagar to the Law. As the condition of the sons takes its rise from the standing of the mothers, so our place before God is according to the covenant under which each is found. Abraham's two wives and two sons, then, were designed to teach us concerning Grace and Law.

Sarah's want of faith in the promise of God brought

* Not 'strong meat:' Heb. v, 12—14; but 'solid food,' as opposed to 'milk.'

† 'Are.' Here it clearly signifies—'represent.' So, 'This is my body.'

in Hagar, just as Israel's accepting of the law at Sinai led them out of God's dealings in grace, to be dealt with according to their deservings.

Hagar answers to the Law. Law was given at Mount Sinai, outside the land of promise. Its ruling principle was fear, and that by God's design. The Law was words uttered out of the fire, amidst darkness, storm, and earthquake.

The covenant is taken at two points: (1) at its beginning, when its principles were given; and (2) at its height, when its sons were settled in the inheritance promised.

All who attach themselves to that covenant of man's vain promises, and of God's threats and vengeance, are slaves. The slave mother's sons are slaves.

A proof that Hagar means the law is by the Spirit of God taken from this—that the word 'Hagar' in Arabic means Mount Sinai. 'Hagar' in Arabic means 'Rock,' and the Arabians called the chief mountain of the Peninsula 'the Rock.'

Paul probably had heard Sinai so called, when he went into Arabia to learn the Gospel from the lips of Christ.

But Hagar is also the name of Abraham's slave, and Ishmael's mother. Was this 'merely accidental'? On man's part, yes! on God's, no!

Under Moses and his law, Sinai is "the Mount of God." But now the counsels of God in Christ have progressed vastly, and Sinai is now only a "mount in Arabia." The old temple is now only Israel's house, and the outer court; the *true* temple is in *heaven*.

After the Law was given at Sinai, Jehovah led His people into their inheritance, and gave it them conditionally, or under law. And then He chose the city of Jerusalem to be the centre of the land and of the law. There dwelt the kings and priests who were to rule and guide the people. Thus Jerusalem is the perfect outcome or fruit of Sinai's covenant.

As the tabernacle and its priesthood were the centre of the covenanted people at the foot of Sinai, so Jerusalem and its temple were the centre of the same covenanted people when set in their land of inheritance.

Observe, the covenant given as a whole from Mount Sinai begets to bondage. *And the Ten Commandments were the essence of that covenant.* For thus saith the Scripture: "He wrote upon the (two) tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments." Ex. xxxiv, 28.

Forget not "the day that thou stoodest before the Lord in Horeb, when the Lord said to me—'Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And ye came near, and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. . . . And he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.'" Deut. iv, 10—13. "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image, the likeness of anything which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee (second commandment). For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."

Again, "*The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.* The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even with us who are all of us alive here this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire . . . saying"—and then follow the Ten Commandments: Deut. v.

To take one passage more. "When I was gone up into the Mount to receive *the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with*

you. The Lord gave me *the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant.*" Deut. ix, 9, 11, 15. If this covenant beget to slavery, how can it be that the chief part of the covenant begets to freedom?

And as Hagar answers to the Mount whence the law came, she answers also to the city of the Law, in the land of Israel's inheritance and in the day of Israel's kingdom. But Paul gives a further proof. "*For she (Jerusalem) is in bondage together with her children.*" She was in spiritual bondage of unbelief rejecting Christ under the law, the slayer of the prophets and of the Son of God; and she was in civil bondage under Rome. She therefore occupies the station of Hagar—the slave.

26. "But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother." *

The apostle does not, in Sarah's case, carry out the parallel with Hagar. Shall we try it?—"*The other covenant is from Mount*"—What one shall we name? Some have said "Mount Zion." But no! That was not, like Sinai, the mount whence the new covenant came. If we will seek out a parallel mount, it must be the one in Galilee, from which Jesus delivered 'the Sermon on the Mount.' But no name is given by the evangelist or the apostle to it. So here we are checked again. But we may continue the other points.—"*The other covenant begetteth into liberty, which is Sarah, which answers to Jerusalem above, the city of God that is to come, for she is free, together with her children.*"

The earthly Jerusalem is under the slavery of Rome and of law. The heavenly Jerusalem is free from both.

She is then a city, in contrast with the earthly, and the now existing, Jerusalem. God's better city is

* ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ seems not to be genuine.

above, and has yet to appear. It is a real city, the outcome and abode of the men of the new covenant, as old Jerusalem was of the old covenant. Jerusalem was the city which God chose, when Israel was at rest in the inheritance of the law and the kingdom of David. So, then, the Jerusalem above is the centre of the better country, the heavenly, the settled and eternal abode of God's saved ones. It is the city of the twelve foundations, for which Abraham looked: Heb. xi, 10, 16.

Moreover, the better covenant existed long before its mount. Four thousand years passed after the promise ere Jesus appeared and taught there. The law came first, and held out its principles to view in the nation of Israel two thousand years before the principles of promise and grace.

Jerusalem above is not the church. That is not a city in heaven, a city yet to come. The members of the church are the sons of Jerusalem. "*Which is our mother.*" The promise which God made to Abraham is free. The children of the promise are free, like their mother. Believers alone shall dwell in that heavenly city; the evil are to be cast out: Rev. xxi, 27.

It seems to me, that in these few words Paul is indirectly refuting the Judaizers and their representatives in our day—Rome and the Ritualists.

1. The Judaizers no doubt took advantage of the name of Jerusalem to insist, that God had made it 'the *mother-church*.' To it therefore all churches, which were only her children, ought to submit themselves, as it is written—"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and *forsake not the law of thy mother*:" Rom. i, 8; vi, 20. 'Listen to her then! Her words are laws. Her apostles are the father whom you are to obey!'

To this the Saviour answers—"Call none on earth your *father*.' And Paul adds—"The *mother* of God's freemen is no city on earth, but His city on high.'

2. Here is the Scripture reply also to the Romanizer—"Hear the church! Listen to your mother the church! Rome is the *mother* and mistress of all churches!'

Nay! A city of *earth* is the mother only of the *slaves of law*! Our city is in heaven; as our Father also is. We as yet have not seen either the one or the other; but we shall!

27. "For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for many more are the children of the desolate woman, than of her that hath the husband."

In this verse the proof is given, that the heavenly Jerusalem answers to Sarah, and is our mother. For Sarah was long barren, and hence the promise of God to Abraham was a long while without any who belonged to it, and it seemed forgotten; while Hagar, or the law received at Sinai a whole people as her children, and Jehovah became her affianced husband.

The reference of this verse by the apostle, then, is primarily to Abraham and his two wives. Sarah is the barren, and for awhile deserted; while Abraham turned to Hagar, and she bore him a son with the usual travail of a mother. Of this she was proud; but Sarah is bid by God to rejoice, because her progeny should be more numerous than that of her rival. And Sarah, the freewoman and "princess," should be elevated above her slave.

According to the flesh the deserted and sterile woman would be sad. So it was with Rachel, so with Hannah. But the promise of God steps in to alter the matter; and His word will prevail, and joy will be the portion of the barren, while she and her sons shall evermore dwell with the Lord.

Jerusalem below had her numerous progeny in the apostle's day. They clung to the law, and were its slaves. They were proud of their superiority to the

men of the promise, who rest on the grace of God in Christ.

But the Jerusalem above shall rejoice over her. The heavenly inheritance and its city are barren as yet. She has no inhabitant. There is no natural process at work by which that city of God on high shall be furnished with children. But God's purpose is that she shall have a more numerous progeny than Jerusalem below. Her sons, risen from the dead, shall at length enter with joy within the arms of their mother. The birth of her sons shall not be with the sorrows of nature; but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shall rise beyond death by a new and immortal birth. A multitude whom none can number shall enter at her gates, and dwell with God in the mansions prepared by Christ. Then she shall be the joyous mother in resurrection. She shall be the abode of joy; sin, sickness, travail, and death shall cease for her. If the millennial joy of Jerusalem and her children shall be great, and her children many, far greater shall be *her* joy and her family. She is the true city and centre of the promise. Jerusalem below shall be burned up. But Jerusalem the heavenly shall abide for evermore.

28. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac (was), are the children of promise."

We are the children promised by God to Abraham in the covenant of faith (Gen. xv), when He showed him the stars as the type of his seed. Isaac was the child of promise, when hopes of the flesh had failed. God gave him his name before he was born: Gen. xvii, 19. Isaac offered up in sacrifice by his father, is the type of the Christ, the true Son and Heir of Abraham. Answerably hereto, Isaiah liii gives us the death of the Son of God previous to His millennial triumph. Then follows Isaiah liv, from which the apostle has cited the passage concerning the two wives.

We inherit in Christ the true Isaac ('Rejoicing,' or 'Laughter'). All the promises and possessions centre in Him. We accept the promise of the Gospel, and the Son of God, whom the Father has made Heir of all. We have given up the flesh and its hopes. The world now is to us the wilderness, but we trust that the promise will introduce us soon and for ever into God's land and city: Heb. xii, 22.

Here the "we," it is clear, does not mean *Jewish* believers, but *all that are in Christ*.

29. "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so it is now."

This refers us back to the history of Abraham: Gen. xxi, 6—14. Isaac was born and weaned, and Abraham in joy made a great feast. Sarah's joy overflows. She expects great sympathy in all who should hear of so wonderful an event. "God hath made me to laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me." This refers to her son's name—'Laughter!' God gave it with a view to the joy that should come. "*Rejoice thou barren!*"

But there were in the household two who were displeased. Hagar and her son felt that they had lost their pre-eminence. Ishmael showed his displeasure by mocking* the son of promise. It was even so in the thing signified. In due season, the Son of the Virgin is born, and His disciples are weaned from the milk of the law. A severance takes place between the men of the flesh, who are confident that they can justify themselves by their works, and the men born of the Spirit, who feel their need of a Saviour.

The men of law and of the flesh persecuted Jesus our Lord. They persecuted Peter and Paul, and the saints generally. Jerusalem, the centre of the law, led

* Some have denied that the word means ridicule and mockery. But it does. See Gen. xix, 14; xxxix, 14.

the way in all this persecution. The Saviour had foretold it. And the displeasure of the Jews at Jerusalem was fiercest when Paul announced to them, that because they would not receive the promise, it should be sent to Gentiles: Acts xxii, 21—24; xiii, 44—48.

Paul could speak with feeling concerning the persecution of the Jews. And doubtless there were mockery and insult, as well as blows and prisons. Thus then the Spirit of God comforts the persecuted for Christ. It is because you are not of the world, but of God's elect, that you are thus troubled. It is because you are members of the Christ, that the seed of the Serpent thus trouble you. The word of God must needs be fulfilled. Be of good cheer! Your country and city are on high. Yours are the mansions of the New Jerusalem, which shall abide when the old city passes away in fire. Great is your reward in heaven, and in the coming kingdom of God. For so persecuted they the prophets, and Christ Jesus the Lord of the prophets and King of kings!

30. "But what saith the Scripture? Cast out the slave-woman and her son: for the son of the slave-woman shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman."

"What saith the Scripture?" Here is the *practical result*, to which Paul's opponents were called to listen and obey. "Do ye not hear the law?" Here is *God's* decision given by the Old Testament Scripture. It is to decide all our spiritual movements. The Old Testament, *viewed and expounded aright*, teaches the truth and conduct befitting the men of the Gospel. God's history spiritually taken is divinely prophetic. The Word of God gives the Lord's counsels, from which at our peril we turn aside. Who can doubt the seriousness of the apostle's argument here? It was his own guide; and he urges on us to be guided by it also. Let us encourage ourselves and

one another to implicit faith in God's Word! "Let God be true, and every man a liar!"

"CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON."

This refers us back to the inspired history of Abraham's wives and sons. Sarah was justly indignant at the insolence of the slave-woman's son, and bade Abraham dismiss both the mother and son in the words of the text.

Abraham was very unwilling so to do. Hagar was his wife, and Ishmael his son. But God decided the matter. He was to hearken to the word of Sarah his wife. In this she was right. It had been by her means that this Hagar had had the place of inferior wife given her. Sarah had hoped that she should be built up by her, and that Hagar's son should be reckoned as hers. But she finds that this humanly devised scheme of the flesh and of unbelief had been productive of nothing but division, strife, and sorrow. The proud slave-woman and her sneering son would never allow of peace in the house. They must depart. Thus Sarah is compelled to teach us the great lesson of the evil of the attempt to mingle the two covenants, and to embrace in one household of faith the men of the flesh with the men of the Spirit. In how many ways does experience prove the truth of this! Here is a chapel, where most of those in communion are very poor, and their faith is very small. But there is a rich man, an unbeliever, who attends the place, and helps greatly to pay the expenses, and to give them respectability. They allow him to rule; and the issue is, that the Lord's work is marred, and strife ensues, with various marks of Christ's displeasure. It is just Abraham's taking Hagar and Ishmael into the house, *contrary to the command here given*. What must they do? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son!"

The meaning, then, to us of this decree is—"There is to be no mingling of the two covenants, or of those which belong to them."

And there is a threefold application of the word; just as in the history, Sarah, God, and Abraham decide and act in the matter.

1. *Sarah's* sentence is—"Cast out the slavewoman and her son." The promise given by God's grace is to stand apart from the law of God's justice. Paul by his doctrine in this Epistle, and specially in the verses which follow, enforces this command. The flesh is not to enter the house of faith.

Then infant baptism has no place in the church of God. That scheme introduces the infant of the flesh into the place of the child of the Spirit—the *babe in Christ*. It is a putting Ishmael side by side with Isaac, instead of casting out Ishmael. It is a bringing in of the flesh into the home of the Spirit. Strange then (is it not?), that Christian men should read such a passage, and yet, as in the words of the Westminster Confession, assert, "The visible church . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, *together with their children*:" Art. xxxv. "Nevertheless what *saith the Scripture*?" "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' That is, *They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God*: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed:" Rom. ix, 7, 8.

Give not then to the infant of fallen Adam's likeness, the baptismal sign of death to Adam and life in Christ: for so applied it is *false*! And in so doing there is guilt. It is running counter to God's decree here given. It is introducing the flesh and the law into the house of grace and the Spirit, instead of casting them out. Is Hagar to teach Sarah, and to rule in Abraham's house? "*Cast out the bondwoman and her son!*"

2. *God* affirmed the decision of Sarah. And He by His providence wrought in the matter. Because of Israel's persecution of the Son of God, He executed

against them the decree—"Cast out the bondwoman and her son." He drove the Jews from their land. "He sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city." Yes! As Jerusalem was the centre of the persecution, on her His chief vengeance fell; and He took away her priests, her temple, sacrifices, and feasts, and burnt her walls and palaces. The sons of the law have never been able to return to their land.

3. Lastly, *Abraham* is made to execute the command. As the man of faith he must obey God, and he sends away Hagar and Ishmael from his home. The church is to consist of the men of faith, the born of the Spirit alone.

But there is a further aspect of the matter; a reason for the command assigned. "*For the son of the slave-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.*"

The two women are the two covenants founded on the opposite principles of works and gift, flesh and spirit, heaven and earth. The sons are the persons who accept and live by the principles of these covenants. They are far asunder in spirit now. They will be widely apart in heritage hereafter. The future separation will be made by God's hand. He calls on His obedient ones to hold them apart now. Their present severance is to be a witness of the eternal separation to come, and thus to act as a warning. The Judaizing teachers, by leading the Galatians to mingle the two covenants, and to add circumcision to baptism, as the way to possess the house and heritage of Abraham, were really instructing them how to *lose both*!

For there shall be two heritages, the earth, and the heaven; the homes of the men of the flesh, and the city and abodes of the risen. There shall be in the millennial day Jerusalem *below*—the foot of Jacob's ladder; and Jerusalem *above*,—the summit of it.

But the two heritages shall be widely apart. And the Jerusalem of earth shall be burned up; while the Jerusalem above shall abide for ever. This the Saviour taught.

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" John viii, 31—36.

Thus, then, the warning is given to children of God by faith, lest they in their ignorance or perverseness turn away from Christ to Moses. The disastrous issue of such choice is here depicted for them. The Galatian Christians might become circumcised in order to escape the persecution of the men of law. But, in so doing, they would voluntarily take part with the persecutor, be identified with him in God's sight, be exposed to the decree of casting out, and be shut out of the heritage of the men of faith and grace.

Let us now a moment glance at the light which this typical history throws upon Paul's previous argument about the covenants with Abraham. The Judaizers affirmed the unchangeableness of the law. They would add law and circumcision to Christ and His Gospel of grace. How does this look, in the light of the inspired history? That tells us, that Abraham was first legally married to Sarah the freewoman. Sarah answers to the promise and covenant of grace. The marriage with her then could not be set aside by any after-concubinage with Hagar. But Hagar the slave signifies the law of bondage. Thus, then, neither did the law's covenant set aside the promise. If the

heritage is to belong to Hagar and her son, Sarah and Isaac are not to enjoy it. But the promise of the inheritance and of the true sonship was made by God to Sarah and Isaac. Then they belong not to Hagar and Ishmael.

What then was the good of Abraham's taking Hagar? To show to us in a picture the weakness of the flesh, even in Abraham the man of faith, and the vain attempts of men by their own schemes to fulfil the promises of God. Also to fill up the gap till Isaac was born and weaned. Then came the crisis, and the designed separation between the two seeds of Abraham:—the seed of earth, and the seed of heaven—the seed as the *sand*, and the seed as the *stars*. The standing of Hagar and her son ceased, as soon as Isaac was born. So, with the coming of Christ the standing of the law and its children *virtually* passed away. They *really* passed away, when the weaning came, and the covenant of grace fully showed itself.

The temporary character of the law and its sons is clearly shown to us by the ejection of Hagar and Ishmael from the house, as soon as they refused to bow to Isaac and Sarah as their superiors. The two women could not jointly rule the family and house of Abraham. Which is ejected? Hagar, or the Law! Does not this prove to us, that the Ten Commandments are no part of Christ's system? Say otherwise, and you affirm that Hagar is part of Sarah, and that Hagar's word is in part to rule Isaac and Sarah! No! Sarah is the princess and the mistress, and the other is the slave driven out of the house finally, when the son of the covenant of grace is come. Grace, not law, is the abiding principle of the sons of God!

The strife at Antioch, through the introduction of the law of Moses as an addition to faith in Christ, was in effect Hagar and Ishmael entering the home of

Sarah and Isaac. And the strife could only cease, by the execution of the decree of grace and freedom.

What was Peter's conduct at Antioch in principle, but Isaac leaving Sarah's side, to own Hagar as his mother, and by God scourged back to his proper position?

31. "So then, brethren, we are not children of the slave-woman, but of the free. V. 1. Stand fast then in the liberty wherewith Christ made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of slavery."

GALATIANS V.

This is, then, the general conclusion from the appeal to the law. 'You see how Moses himself was inspired to teach us, that law can never give present spiritual freedom, or the eternal heritage in the coming day to its sons. Christians are led out from law, that they may stand in grace. They are led out from Adam, that they may stand in Christ. Present freedom is yours who believe. You are sons of Sarah, yours is the eternal city of God, the mansions of life and bliss in the heavenly city of rest. Christ has given you liberty; has bought it at the sore price of His deep humiliation, the sufferings of His life, the endurance of the cross and of death under the cross, that He might redeem you from the constant slavery, the abiding curse, the coming and eternal penalty of law! Be not then drawn away from this blessed position given you by God in grace! The form of seduction then was, that Judaizing teachers sought to lead believers to *circumcision* and the observance of all Moses' rites, in addition to faith in Christ and His words.

The form of seduction in our day is to add the essence of the Mosaic covenant, calling it 'the Moral Law;' and the *principles* of circumcision—or Infant Baptism, and national religion, together with fasts and feasts, etc., on the authority of 'Mother-Church.'

Of this beware! If to add to faith in Christ *God's* commands by Moses were bad, to add *man's* commands is worse. It is a return to slavery and the flesh. It is a refusal of the Father's word—"MY BELOVED SON—HEAR HIM!" Hold fast the freedom

Christ has given! 'Tis liberty toward God—a conscience at rest from the accusations of the law. The debtor is a slave; but your debts are paid! You are free! He who is vainly toiling through his own powers to justify himself by his obedience, with a heart at enmity against God; and to sanctify himself by the strivings of the flesh, in which “dwelleth no good thing,” is a slave. But you are justified perfectly already by the work of Another. You are being sanctified by Him, the Almighty One, who has caused you to be born again. Then attempt not to add to the perfection which is in Christ; or you will be like the dog in the fable that carried across a bridge a piece of flesh in his mouth, and seeing it imaged in the water below snapped at the shadow, and lost the substance.

“Be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage!” This alludes to the ropes whereby the heavy wooden beam (the yoke) which binds the ox to the plough is fastened to the creature’s horns, and thus it is harnessed to its task. You have once learned what the slavery of the flesh is, and how vain are its attempts to deliver itself from the wrath and curse of God. Then be content with grace and the riches of Christ! You can only lose your inestimable blessings now, and your eternal heritage hereafter, by attempting to add to the work of the Son of God.

Are you persecuted for Christ’s sake? Be comforted! It is the proof that you are the son of the freewoman. Do not attempt to escape this trial by the devices of the flesh. This persecution carries with it the consolings of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Thus did the prophets of old suffer. Thus suffered Peter and Paul, and thus the Son of God Himself. “Through many troubles we must enter the kingdom of God.” Earth is against us; but heaven is for us. This trouble of the wicked is soon coming to an end. We are moving on to our mother’s arms, and in the inheritance of the better country, the City of Life, the city of

the living God, we shall have all tears wiped away by our God. Courage, Christians! The son of the free-woman shall soon enter on his heavenly abode, and the Old Serpent and his seed will never be able to get within the gates of pearl. Outside are the persecutors in the lake of fire!

2. “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”

The passage before us is Paul’s carrying out of the decree—‘Cast out slavemother and son.’ Solemn and stern warning against the natural tendencies of men!

‘Moses law came from God. The Gospel of Christ came from God too. If both be good, let us hold and keep *both*!’

The answer is—That they are opposite in principles, and opposite in consequences. Take one, and you give up the other. Here are two vessels side by side in the docks, about to sail; but the head of the one vessel points to east, the head of the other, west. Will you say—‘If to be in one vessel is good, to be in two at the same time is better still!’ When each began to move, where would he be, who thought to have one foot in each?

Law sets up fallen man’s powers, in spite of his acts of sin, and his indwelling sin, in the vain attempt to face the justice of the God of Holiness. It is perdition! The Gospel grafts believing and renewed man in Christ, and thus he has justification, sanctification, and salvation.

‘I Paul’—He sets himself here (1) *historically*, and (2) *officially* against the Judaizers. ‘I Paul,’ the former zealot for law and its traditions; ‘I Paul,’ now an apostle of God and Christ, which these Judaizers are not, whom they calumniate as preaching circumcision. ‘I Paul’ sternly denounce it as hostile to Christ!

‘If ye be circumcised.’ This rite is the banner of Moses, and of law. It was a mark in the *flesh*, and

it was an obligation by the power of the flesh* to observe the law, as the way to salvation. How, then, can the defenders of infant baptism on the ground of circumcision say, that circumcision is *the old sign of justification by faith*; and baptism is the new sign of the same covenant?

'But does not Paul say, that Abraham "received the sign of circumcision (as) *a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had*"? Rom. iv, 11.'

He does. But this is because Abraham and his circumcised posterity stand on opposite ground in this matter. Abraham was justified by *faith before circumcision*. And God in giving Abraham circumcision did not take him off the previous ground of *justification by faith whereon he stood*. He commanded the rite, and Abraham as the man of *faith*, obeyed.

But all Abraham's *posterity* were to be circumcised *before they had faith*, at eight days old. And to them circumcision was a token of being bound to keep the whole law *as the way to justification*.

"Christ shall profit you nothing." Christ is to the believer profitable both to justification, sanctification, and salvation. He "is made of God unto us, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." He profits the debtors of the law, in that by His atoning blood He covers their sins, and washes them from guilt; and by His righteousness, as by a robe, He covers their nakedness.

Christ profits us, by doing for us all those things which are needful to our salvation. In order to be saved, we must be pronounced righteous by God. In order to righteousness, the law must be kept. As we cannot keep the law unto righteousness, Christ has done it for us. And His obedience and death together make up our righteousness. He who turns from

* Baptism, on the contrary, is a burial of the flesh as dead, and profiting nothing.

Christ to profit himself has to do that which Christ had already done on his behalf. That is, he has perfectly to obey the law. This righteousness was once his while he was a believer, and is lost to him by his unbelief. *That is, the obedience of Christ to law, both in its command and its penalty is our righteousness.*

Of Christ's paying the believer's debts and making him one with himself an example was given in Peter's case, when he, by Christ's command, took out of the fish's mouth the coin, which just met the demand made on them both. "That take, and give unto them *for Me and thee*:" Matt. xviii, 26, 27. And as a contrast, note, that He calls on unbelieving tempting Israel, to *pay their own debts*. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's:" xxi, 21.

When we believe in Christ, His work of obedience is ours; His atoning work is ours. We are thus *justified by law*; for Christ paid its dues, and law dismisses us, as having paid all its dues, laden with its reward, eternal life. We are *justified also by grace*; for the price is not paid by us, but by another in our stead, which is something beyond law. We are justified by a *human righteousness*; for nothing but the righteousness required of man can be the answer to the law's demand on us. We are justified by *the righteousness of God*; for the righteousness in which we stand is of the Father's devising, and of the Son's working.

Now that which Christ has done for the Christian, that which is our profit, and our complete acceptance and salvation before God, the Gentile believer who undergoes circumcision, gives up!

Hence, then, it is clear that the righteousness of Christ profits us. His life-obedience is ours, no less than His death. For law demands obedience as its first claim. If Christ's life-obedience cannot be

reckoned as ours, neither can His death. Christ's righteousness was His obedience to law. *That* He did, not as needing it for Himself, but as it was necessary, jointly with His death, to our deliverance from law. Did He die in our stead? He also obeyed in our stead (Rom. v, 19), and that obedience profits us. That is, it is imputed to us as our righteousness before God. Thus only are we free from the law's curse, its penalty, and its *yoke*.

But why is the verb in the future? "*Shall* profit." Because it looks onward to the day of judgment, of visible justification or condemnation.

3. "But I testify to every man that is getting himself circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."

Here we have the designed and natural significance of circumcision. It was God's sign of a man's putting himself under the law of Moses. As kissing the New Testament is the sign of taking an oath, and the ring the token of the marriage contract, so was and is circumcision the token of subjection to the covenant of Sinai. This denunciation, then, refers not to a Jew already circumcised as the result of his Jewish birth, but to the Gentile believer's coming forward to take the token of Sinai of his own free choice.

He would thus engage to do for himself the whole law, and to suffer its pains and penalties, if he failed in one point. After the apostle's warning he could only be circumcised in unbelief, ignoring the perfect work and sufferings of Christ. *He promises to do what Christ has done.* He promises to do what no man ever has, or will do, so as to draw down God's acceptance.

His obedience is to be his righteousness: Deut. vi, 25. Righteousness is right conduct toward both God and man, as measured by the law. Such a contract were like one of the antediluvians attempting to build

another ark for himself, after Noah's was complete. It would be his destruction.

It is "the *whole* law" which is to be obeyed. Obedience is the first claim of law. Its penalty and curse are for the disobedient. Men may think to divide the law, may suppose that its different parts have different intents and different durations of authority. But Scripture knows only of one aim and end, and effect of the whole law. It is to be taken in its entirety. Take up any part of it as binding and it demands of you the whole, or you are cursed. Nay, if you begin to attempt to keep it, you are already cursed. Why did you not begin before? Take up its sign, and you are bound to the whole. Say—"The Ten Commandments are binding on me," and the whole law is. You ought then to be *circumcised*, if you are not. You never kept, Christian, and you never mean to keep, the *Sabbath* of the Ten Commandments. That is Saturday. You light a fire on that day. 'Tis forbidden. An Israelite was stoned for trying to gather sticks to make a fire on that day; Ex. xxxv, 3; Num. xv, 32—36. You yourself are to put to death any one who breaks the Sabbath: Ex. xxxv, 2.

The circumcised is a debtor. He voluntarily puts on the intolerable yoke, from which God at such cost in Jesus Christ delivered those who believe. He has not to believe in a work *done for him*, but to *do it himself*. He is bound to pay, he binds himself to pay ten thousand talents, while yet he is a bankrupt! And God's debtor, unable to pay, is a slave and accursed.

The principle of this verse applied also to our Lord Jesus Christ. He was circumcised, and so made himself a debtor to do the whole law: Luke ii, 21. He was put under law, and obeyed it perfectly for us. He suffered its penalty in death and the curse for us, and so passed out from under its dominion; and in

and with Him so pass out those who are mystically one with Him. He alone was by nature *free* from the duty of obedience. He alone as Son of God could offer an obedience and a death sufficient to ransom millions unnumbered. This work Christ must achieve for us, or never could we legally get free from law.

A sum of obedience and of suffering equal to the law's demands must be rendered by our substitute, or God cannot with truth say, 'That we are righteous.' And if we are not righteous, He cannot as the Just Judge justify us, that is, pronounce us righteous in the eye of the law.

Thus, then, the believer becomes free from the debt of law, by the work of Christ the Son of man, and Son of God. But he who, after faith in Christ, should take up the law of Moses, is bound himself to furnish a perfect obedience as his righteousness before God, and to suffer the wrath of God as an offender. He casts off that work of Christ wrought for him in the way of obedience, which made him free. Believers are justified "*in the name of Jesus Christ*:" 1 Cor. vi, 11. *He*, though circumcised, is to be justified in His own name.

4. "You have done with the Christ, you who are being justified by law ; ye have fallen from grace."

'The Christ' here is the Mystic Person, made up of the Risen Head, and the members below. Christ and Moses, grace and law, mutually exclude one another. Belong to *law*, you have no part in *Christ*. Belong to *Christ*, you have no part in *law*. For Christ is no longer under law. He was once under it, and honoured it both by His obedience and His death. He has passed beyond it in resurrection, and we in Him. Christ is righteous in law, and we as in Him are righteous also. Baptism and circumcision are the opposite banners of Christ and of Moses. *The past*

tense is significant. Belong to law, and at once you are cut off from the Christ.

"Whoever of you are *being justified in law*."

The present tense denotes the incompleteness of the matter. The circumcised is *seeking* righteousness by law. You have the like phrase in ii, 17. "*We are seeking to be justified in Christ*," says Paul, when rebuking Peter's error. We who believe are already justified in law, and dismissed by law, possessed of the prize it offers: Matt. xix, 16, 17; Luke x, 25. "*Being justified*." This marks the matter as incomplete. 'We have been sinners, Lord. We *will* be righteous.' But the sinner's promise is vain. "In law." Law is rigorous. The man of law appeals (1) to his own powers, performances, and deservings; as meritorious and perfect. He sets himself before (2) the God of infinite justice, who cannot look on iniquity, and who forbids the very movements of evil in thought. If Jehovah was terrible to Israel, when only promising to obey, what will He be, when rendering to sinners the just due of their sins?

Faith puts the believer *in* Christ. He is a son of God, in God the Son. He is righteous *in law* and righteous *by grace* likewise. Those who form the body of the mystic Christ are in Him the Head, and enjoy the results of His atonement for sin; and His obedience to law is theirs. As branches in the vine they have life and sap, leaf and fruit. The Gentile circumcised after baptism was a branch refusing to abide in the vine, withering, and destined to the fire. The union effected by faith is cut off by unbelief. Unbelief refuses Christ's work accepted by God, to offer its own instead.

"Ye are fallen from grace." It is only by grace that the sinner can stand before God. And there is grace now only to those in Christ. In Him is the full favour of God's countenance. Out of Him there are only justice and wrath. The penalty and curse of law

belong to such, and they are never-ending. Against unbelief and pride so awful, the Holy Ghost warns us in Heb. xii, 28, 29.

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

Such a choice were like Israel's proposal to turn back to Egypt. It required a new leader, and under him they would have to seek bread and water in the desert in vain, and a defence and guide amidst perils sure to overwhelm them.

Is it not evident at a glance here, that the Christian cannot be at the same time under *Moses*, and under *Christ* also? But if the Ten Commandments be *binding on him, he is formally under the covenant of Sinai*. They were the words of the covenant of God to be done by all the obedient to law.

The law itself forbade the mingling of the opposite principles of law and grace. The Jew might not sow his field with mingled seed. He might not wear a garment, partly of linen, partly of woollen: Deut. xxii, 10; Lev. xix, 19.

"Ye have fallen from grace." It is possible for a believer to put himself under law. It is certain that many who have professed themselves believers in Christ, have turned away from Him to heathenism or Mahometanism. The Emperor Julian, after professing Christianity, renounced it for heathenism. He was bathed in a bath of blood to undo the bath of baptism. And some to save their lives, or to obtain rank and wealth have turned Mahometans.

How great an affront was that to the Father, Son, and Spirit! This is the crime which the Holy Spirit denounces with such terrible energy in Heb. x, 26—31. The promise to obey law is denial of God's testimony about man, as sinful to the core; and about Himself, as the terrible avenger of sin. But the renouncing of

Christ and the Holy Spirit of grace is more awful still, and eternity alone will declare its fearful recompence. Circumcision, then, instead of being something which is to instruct us in our duty as Christians in the matter of baptism, is a something to be fled from. *It is opposed to grace and Christ, it binds to law and justice.*

The standing of the man who sets himself under law and the man that stands in Christ mutually illustrate one another. The debts of the believer are paid by Christ, and he is free. The obedience of Christ to law has paid the law's demands of righteousness, and that obedience is imputed to the believer. He is in Christ, and he occupies before God the place of Christ. Now Christ was once a debtor under law, and freed Himself from it by His obedience and death. The believer, then, is righteous in Christ's righteousness, or in His obedience to law. It is 'imputed to him,' that is, it is reckoned as his. He is righteous in Christ, and is by God pronounced righteous. He who turns to Moses after Christ refuses this standing, and therefore *has to obey the law himself*. What Christ has done for the believer he has to do for himself. And that which he has to do for himself is to obey the whole law. It is clear, then, that Christ's obedience under law is imputed to those in Him. What is lost by him who turns after faith to law for salvation, shows us what is ours who abide in Christ. The one loses the righteousness of faith. We *have* it. We have it, however, not in ourselves. Then another's righteousness is reckoned to us. And there is only one righteousness which can be so reckoned.

5. "For ~~we~~ by the Spirit (which comes) of faith are expecting the hope of righteousness."

That is the order of the Greek, and it gives a far better sense than the Established Version.

Who are the "we"? Not Jewish Christians, but Christians in general. Those who are "in Christ Jesus." Paul is contrasting the blessed place of those in Christ with those wilfully setting themselves under law. That is just what the apostle did in the second chapter. He rebukes first the wrong position taken by Peter, then he states his own. "*I* through law died to law."

Law deals with the powers of fallen *flesh*. The flesh stands engaged of itself to produce righteousness. But believers possessed of righteousness in the Lord their Righteousness have the indwelling Spirit of *grace* as their power of obedience. The Spirit was sent on the basis of Christ's work of atonement and obedience. To us it comes by faith. The Holy Ghost can dwell in those in Christ, as justified now, and certain to be sanctified finally hereafter.

What is the meaning of—"Are expecting the hope of righteousness"?

Hope has two senses—(1) the inward feeling; (2) the outward object, or thing hoped for. It is the second sense which is the meaning here; as is proved by the added word "*we are expecting*." That would be absurd, if spoken of an inward feeling. The feeling of hope is within us already, or we do not hope. We, then, are expecting something as a blessed object without us about to come by God's promise.

What, then, is 'the hope of righteousness'? Does it mean we are 'hoping to have righteousness'? By no means. "*In the Lord have I righteousness*."

The man of law is hoping vainly for a righteousness to spring out of his works. We having already a perfect righteousness are not hoping for *it*, but hoping for its *blest results*. For the Scripture is full of the blessings which shall encircle the righteous: *Psa. xxxvii, xxix, xxxix; lviii, 11; xcvi, 11; Isa. xxxii, 16, 17; Rom. viii, 21—24*.

For these we wait, specially for "the adoption, the

redemption of our body," the eternal life promised us. Our inheritance which belongs to us as righteous* has yet to come, and for that we wait. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

6. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love."

To man in the flesh, in Adam and under law, circumcision may be of some profit. With Moses uncircumcision is uncleanness and unrighteousness. And hence it is a reproach cast by those under law upon Gentiles outside the pale of Israel. "This uncircumcised Philistine!" says David. Circumcision in the days of law was cleanness and righteousness. But that now is all done away. It is no longer the old man, whether as belonging to Adam or to Abraham. He is under unrighteousness, and uncleanness, and the curse. Righteousness now attaches to the new man, the Christ. We in the immersion commanded to believers are buried to the flesh, whether in Adam or Moses; in order to belong to another Head and another sphere in resurrection. Our standing is no longer of the flesh, and hence the state of the flesh is not regarded. The differences of the flesh are all buried in one common grave, in the immersion received by believers. As justified in the Spirit, the differences of the flesh come not into view. The uncircumcised is as much justified as the circumcised. They are both born of one Spirit, both covered with the same righteousness; both looking on to the same object of hope.

Thus the apostle is justifying his use of the words "the spirit out of faith," which he had used in the former verse. These are the two pillars of Chris-

* Thus too "the bath (or washing) of regeneration" does not mean the washing which regenerates, but 'the bath which belongs to those regenerated.' Tit. iii.

tianity: (1) Christ, and (2) the Spirit; received by faith on our part, in opposition to Moses and the flesh.

But beside the negative statement there is a positive one.

That which does profit now is "*faith working by love.*"

These words are of the deepest importance. The faith which puts us in Christ and *justifies*, is the faith which also *sanctifies*. Both justification and sanctification are found in Christ, and faith after justifying us begins to produce works acceptable to God. Law brings forth works of the flesh, of the flesh which is at enmity with God, and the mother of dead works refused by the Most High.

These words give us then the life of holiness which follows after justification. Works spring from it, not of law, but under grace, prompted by the Spirit of God, and accepted by the Most High, to be one day rewarded in glory. The life of the justified in Christ is to be a working life, maintained by the Spirit. It looks not for present reward, as the law does; but for present acceptance by God, and reward in another day, dependent on God's promise. It works "*by love.*" The flesh is selfish; the men of it are "hateful and hating one another," and at enmity with God. This new principle of love is implanted by the Holy Ghost, and according to its strength it operates. Thus the three graces, *faith, hope, and love*, are wedded. In verse five, faith and *hope* are seen in union. Here faith and *love*. Thus out of grace spring sanctification, and works such as law cannot produce.

7. "Ye were running well, who hindered you from obeying the truth?"

The Galatians, taught the Gospel truly by Paul, were once moving onward in obedience to Christ. Brought out of Egypt by the blood of the Lamb, led through the Red Sea of baptism, they were daily moving onward

to the promise, the hope of God's kingdom and glory. Being justified by the complete work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, as their new light and power, was leading them on to glory. They were made freemen of God in Christ, and were running to the goal for the prize set before them. But this false doctrine was a hindrance. It was like some one running across the course, and so stopping the racers. It was the false spies over again, turning Israel away from Moses and from God's hope, to go back again into Egypt.

While trusting in Christ alone, Christians could serve God and grow in knowledge and in grace, moving onwards to the hope set before them in the Gospel, if by any means they might attain to the first resurrection of the righteous, and the thousand years of Christ's kingdom. But the return to Moses threw them back on the old object of the law. 'Seek to win acceptance with God by obedience to the law!'

'The Saviour is on the other side of the lake, and He has bid us meet Him there. Now we are all embarked in His own boat; bend to your oars then, and we shall soon get to the other side!' The disciples advance smoothly and well. But one of the crew suggests, 'I don't feel sure that this boat is safe; some say it is *not*. Let us, before we commit ourselves entirely to it, put on some extra planking. For, mark you! the water is so deep, that if we once founder, there is no escaping with life!' If they listen to this interloper, they must stop their oars, turn back, pull the boat ashore, turn it upside down, and begin their process for making it safe. Thus their object is quite changed, and their course of proceeding too. Before, they were on the water, pulling to meet the Saviour. Now they are ashore, seeking by tinkering the boat to make it safe!

Those justified by the Christ of God are called to obey Christ in activity. Our fears about our own acceptance removed by the perfect work of Christ for

us, we become servants of God. It is no longer the flesh aiming at becoming righteous by its obedience, but it is the regenerate man seeking the glory which is to come when Christ appears. His eye is, like Paul's, set on the crown of glory held out by the Saviour.

8. "The persuasion cometh not from him who is calling you."

The word 'persuasion' may have either an active or a passive signification. It may mean (1) the active efforts of the Judaists to talk them over, or it may signify (2) the end of such efforts; the belief resulting, that these deceivers were right. It is the latter sense which seems to me the best. For the Galatians, half-persuaded, might say—"But, Paul, we have listened to their arguments, which came after your teaching; and we are *persuaded* that they are right." The apostle then in his authority of inspiration asserts, that such a conclusion in their minds was never wrought by God. There is an infatuation, whereby a man will hold error at any cost. If this persuasion came not from God, whence did it come? From the enemy! From him who by his subtlety deceived Eve: 1 Cor. xi.

They were by it being led away from the direction in which God was calling them. He was "inviting them to His own kingdom and glory;" and to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the risen. These were leading them back to flesh, and earth, and law: 1 Thess. ii, 12.

How clear then it was, that the call of God to His justified ones ought to overpower the persuasion of the enemy! The law makes no such call: for none of its children are justified. They have to extricate themselves from the curse on the *unrighteous*: not to seek the prize proposed to the justified.

9. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

By leaven is meant a false principle. It always intends something evil. This doctrine of the Christian's

being obliged to accept part of the law of Moses, in order to his perfection, was a master-principle, which once accepted, by degrees would change all the Gospel into all the law. A false principle once received advances in two directions. (1) The *understanding* of the man is pushed on, in order to his consistency. 'If this teetotalism be a right principle, and I have been justified in pledging myself against alcohol—then ought I to take wine that has alcohol in it at the Lord's Supper? I will not: 'tis evil! What then must I think of Christ, who commanded wine? Ah, but that *couldn't have been alcoholic wine!* But if Jesus took only *unfermented* wine, why didn't he distinguish, as we teetotalers are obliged to do?' Thus the reasoner advances to the legitimate results of his principle. (2) But the *heart* leads onward, as well as the understanding. The new principle becomes a new master, who leads us servants to despise the old service, and to hold to the new. The great 'Catholic' movement in the 'Church of England' (so called), how did it begin? By some writers stirring up clergymen and churchmen to a more strict observance of the rubrics of the prayer-book, to the keeping of feasts and fasts, and saints' days, as things commanded by the Church. Then, 'Was it right to wear a black gown in the pulpit? Ought not the *priest* to wear his own white habit, the surplice, there?' Great was the stir and strife upon the point. Some thought, 'What folly to make so much ado about a trifle!' So some, no doubt, reprov'd Paul's vehement resistance to circumcision. But the Puseyites knew that a great principle on their side would be gained, if the innovation were carried. It was in principle a turning out of the Gospel, and a bringing in of the law. It was asserting the *priesthood* of certain *ordained* men, whether converted or unconverted. These were to draw near to God on behalf of 'the laity.' The priest was peculiarly holy before Him. But the supposed holiness being that of

the flesh alone, the truth of *Gospel* holiness was thrust aside. With 'the priest' came the sacrifice; bread of the Lord's Supper became the Lord Jesus, and the table 'the holy altar.' Thus, step by step, men went on from High-Churchism to Puseyism; from Puseyism to Ritualism; and at Ritualism they cannot stop, but must go on to Rome. The terminus of the line is there!

Thus then the Spirit's wisdom appears in making Paul thus early, and thus solemnly, stay the progress of this turning from Christ to law. Was circumcision a trifle, or was it not? Nay! it was of the utmost moment. It involved all the difference between Gospel and law, between salvation and perdition. Some might think little of the first pimple that appeared in the leper, 'What a trifle!' Nay! it was a spot which told that the whole mass of the blood was corrupted, and that a deadly disorder had fixed its gripe on the man. It altered at once his whole life. He must leave his home, and rend his dress, and dwell apart among those unclean and diseased like himself. If the law enter at any point, either as ceremony, as observance of times, meats, or rule of life, its power will go on increasing, till all be leavened by law.

10. "I trust with regard to you in the Lord, that ye will be no otherwise minded; but he that troubleth you shall bear the judgment, whoever he may be."

There is a stress in the original on 'I.' Others then, Paul's associates in the salutation to the Galatians, were desponding. But Paul's hope rested, not on the circumstances, not on the gravity and solemnity of his letter, not on the power of the argument, or his hold still on the affection of the Galatians; but on the Lord! They were taken out from Adam to belong to Christ. The Spirit of God was their teacher. The Saviour who had begun the good work in them would carry it on. So that, though he was away at a distance, and these

teachers of error on the spot, he anticipated success. What the result was, we know not: but to us at least the apostle's words are blessed.

"Ye will be no otherwise minded" than I have now taught you. 'You will agree with me on this foundation-question. You will see the difference between the light of God, and the darkness imported by Satan. You will refuse this 'other Gospel,' when the difference between its tinsel and God's gold is shown you. "You will agree with me." I am aware of the power over your minds and sentiments possessed by these teachers. But on the representations of the Spirit of God through me, you will change your views.' Here is ground for hope and encouragement, in using effort to restore to the truth a child of God who has fallen from it. Your hope is ill-founded, if it rests on appearances, or excellencies in him. But well-founded if it rest in God, as the consequence of his being in Christ. Thus Paul, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, tempers the severity of his words: Heb. vi, 9.

From them he turns to those who were leading them astray. "But he that troubleth you shall bear the judgment; whosoever he may be."

It seems probable from these words, that there was one prominent person, of whose name the seducers made use to shelter themselves. Shall we conjecture that it might be James, the apostle of Jerusalem? Then here Paul shows, that the peril lay not on his own side, but on the side of him whose influence or efforts were disturbing the churches. It seems to me that here the apostle is refuting an objection. 'James preaches circumcision, and you yourself do so sometimes.' To the first point then he answers, that greatness of station, or ability, or repute, will be no defence against judgment. On the contrary, it puts a man under greater responsibility. "To whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

It is remarkable, that, while the apostle expects the

restoration of the Galatians, he says no word about the repentance of the teacher of the error. Teaching a truth or an error greatly fastens it on the mind. And if the *heart* sympathizes, seldom is the thing taught abandoned. Here we are instructed in the responsibility of Christian teachers with regard to their doctrine. The day is coming, in which Christ will call all teachers to His bar, and will decide whether they are worthy of reward or of punishment for the doctrines they have taught. It is a solemn thing even now to teach erroneous doctrines. But the full consequences will appear only in the coming day. "The troubler shall bear the judgment," not "*his*." The sentence of Christ will be against any erroneous Christian teacher: not unto eternal woe, but as affecting him in the day of reward according to works.

'But I thought that the Christian was *never to come into judgment*, and I have been pointed to John v, 24 as the proof. "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and *shall not come into judgment*, but is passed from death to life."

Then tell your friends, *that the passage says not so*: that in the original *the verb is in the present tense*. "He *doth* not come into judgment." Christ is speaking of the change of position toward God which is taken at once by every believer. 'He *has* life, he *does* not come into judgment, he *has* passed from death to life.'

It is, then, a solemn thing to trouble by false doctrine an assembly of believers. If true doctrine brings troubles, go on, Christian teacher! to proclaim it. Better a stir than indifference to the truth. But be very sure that what you teach is the truth. For otherwise punishment will fall upon him who knowingly sows discord among brethren: he is an abomination to the Lord: Prov. vi, 19. The false teacher in that day is compared to a man whose house, built of dry combustible materials, is wrapt in flames by a fire-ball from heaven.

"He himself shall be saved; *but so as through fire*." Some have made the offender look calmly, or even joyfully, on the burning of his house; for they put him on the *outside* of it! But Scripture puts each *within the house he has built*, when his work is to abide the trial. He shall, if his house be set on fire, at last escape, but like one forcing his way *through a burning house*. "*So as through fire*." (Greek.)

Observe, that the apostle does not bid the Galatian churches put any one, either of the false teachers, or of the receivers of their doctrine, out of communion. This is a testing case. For here is a *foundation-doctrine* in question.

'But does not the apostle wish it done, in verse 12?'

No! We will come to that presently.

There will be judgment and sentence on error; but (1) not by man; and (2) not in this day. Vainly and unscripturally do any deny that believers shall be judged. "*The Lord shall judge His people*:" Heb. x, 30, 31; Luke xii, 4, 5; Heb. xiii, 4; James ii, 12, 13; iii, 1; v, 9; 1 John iv, 17; 2 Tim. iv, 8; Rev. ii, 23; Rom. ii, 5—16; Jude 15.

The apostle speaks of it as a thing quite understood and accepted by the believers to whom he wrote. "He shall bear *the* (well-known) *judgment*." The day of such decision is coming. And heavy will the sentence be to '*bear*.' "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done by means of the body, according to the things He did, whether *it (the award) be good or evil*:" 2 Cor. v, 10.

What will the judgment be? Paul has stated it already. '*Cast out the bondwoman's son*.' And in the present chapter the apostle tells us that, "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies," are works of the flesh, and that Christians guilty thereof shall have no part in the coming kingdom of God: 20, 21. Now, as they enjoy

eternal life by the free gift of God on their election, this sentence can only refer to the exclusion from the kingdom of the thousand years. The reference here to the Old Testament is, I believe, to the time of Joshua. Achan (Achor) takes of the Babylonish and forbidden spoil, and by his means Israel is defeated. After he is judged before Israel by Joshua, and has confessed his sin, Joshua alluding to his name, Achor * ('Troubler') says—"Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day." "And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones:" Joshua vii.

Mind, this judgment was passed on one of the covenanted people of God!

'Oh, but Israel were unconverted.'

Whatever they were, Paul assures us that the old people of God are types of the new people, both in their offences, and in the visitation of God upon them: 1 Cor. x; Heb. iii, iv.

So also the type of the Passover teaches us. The eater of leaven during the days of unleavened bread, even though he should be sheltered under the lamb's blood, should be cut off from the congregation: Ex. xii.

Some Christians think they could keep out of all trouble from the church of God, if only it were allowed them to take special care, that none but true believers were admitted. The Spirit of God does not own this wisdom. Here both the admonisher and the admonished were "in Christ." And never has Paul to say to the Corinthian or other believers, 'I see I was too hasty in admitting many of you; your sad sins prove you never were in Christ.'

* It should be 'Achor' and not 'Achan,' as proved by Joshua vii, 26; Isa. lxx, 10; Hos. ii, 15; and especially 1 Chron. ii, 7.

11. "But I, brethren, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Then were the stumbling-block of the cross removed."

He turns to consider the falsehood which touched himself. The opponents sought to destroy Paul's influence by describing him as a time-server, and dishonest. 'He varies his doctrine to suit his hearers. This has been hinted several times, and now he aims at it another destructive blow.'

He was not himself offending in such sort, as to fear the coming day of trial for doctrine. He once did hold and teach, when he was the zealot for Moses, that circumcision was the necessary path to salvation. Then he was at peace with men. His own countrymen applauded, admired him. Now on the contrary, since he preached faith alone in Christ, the men of law were his deadly foes. If he would but have consented to require circumcision of his converts, the Jews would leave him at peace, as they did these Judaists. His refutation then of the slander rested on evident, well-known facts.

"Then is the scandal of the cross ceased."

The doctrine of salvation which he actually preached was one which pushed aside with stern hand all place for circumcision. To Paul the Gospel was "the cross of the Christ." Not solely Messiah's coming, or even His death, but His death by the cross, and so under *the curse* of the law. That told of the wickedness of man, both Jew and Gentile, in slaying by the worst of deaths, the best Benefactor of men. That told of law's inability to enlighten or save. Here is the wickedness of Israel. God's covenanted people were in this chief crime the chief of offenders. Their rulers and learned men condemned the Righteous One, procured false witness against Him, and by clamour prevailed over Pilate, who wished to deliver Jesus. That was the rejection of the Son of God, the hope of Israel. They had called down on themselves and their

sons vengeance for His blood. The men of law, then, are not righteous, but murderers. They can only be saved, like poor sinners of the Gentiles. So, then, the apostle had to say—'Which will you choose as your hope of salvation? Law, or Gospel? Moses, or Christ?' There is no mixing of the two. Law can only condemn you. You can only be saved through the blood of the hated Nazarene. This stirred all the Jews' ire. That all their learned men should be deceived, that they should have acted so contrary to righteousness, and the commands of the law, and cut off the hope of Israel the man of law could not bear to hear. That now, he, with all his God-given rites and ceremonies, was no nearer to God and salvation than the Gentile idolater, was galling indeed! That he must give up all hope in himself and his Moses, to rest on One crucified through weakness, condemned by the learned rabbis and priests, chafed him to the quick, and that he was to worship, as Son of God, One whom his nation loathed! This ploughed up the walls of the city of human goodness, and sowed salt upon them. It was a stumblingblock on which multitudes unnumbered of Israel have fallen, and perished!

That God was so terrible, that even His Son could not be spared from death and the curse, if there were to be salvation for any, this was another element of displeasure.

But the cross was an offence to the Gentile also. It called up a look of scorn on the faces of the wise men of the Gentiles. They were seeking for wisdom; and lo, God sent them the simple story of a Jew put to death on the infamous wooden gibbet, as the one way of salvation. Were they all, even their wisest and best, under guilt, and unable to deliver themselves from God's coming judgment and sentence of hell? But this, though frowned on and hated, is the power of God to salvation. Mind—you who preach and teach—*this and this alone* is the Gospel, by the folly

of which any are to be saved! Weakness and folly though it be in man's eye, it is God's wisdom and power to save.

Observe again, 'Christian, expect to be slandered!' It is part of your calling. You are no better than your Master. And He was 'a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of sinners, a breaker of the Sabbath, a Samaritan, destroyer of the temple, and one possessed of a devil.' If all men speak well of you, be afraid! You will not pass muster in the day of judgment. It was only for *false* prophets that Israel had always a word of praise. "If they have called the Master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more them of His household." 'Through evil report and good report' lies the way to the kingdom of God.

12. "I would that they who are turning you upside down would cut themselves off."

From the established version of the passage, it might seem to an English reader, as if Paul desired that God would cut them off by judgment. Or, if it referred to the Galatians, that he was giving the hint to his partizans to put them out of communion, while he got rid of the direct responsibility of commanding them so to do, fearing the strife it would occasion throughout all the churches, and the probable rending of them into two hostile camps. But this were unworthy of the honesty and inspiration of the apostle. He feared not to command the putting out of the incestuous Corinthian. He would not have feared it here, had it been part of his duty. "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

But the verb is not in the passive voice, but in the middle; as I have rendered it. "I would they would cut themselves off." They urge circumcision. Would that they would carry their cutting onward to cutting themselves off! This may be taken, either physically

or ecclesiastically.* Commentators are divided thereon.

For these men were subverting souls with their words: Acts xv, 24. Before, it seemed as if there were but one agent; here we learn there were more than one. Before, the opponent was described as a troubler; now the word is more severe. These Judaists were turning the Galatian Christians upside down. They were undoing all Paul's work; turning out his foundation-stones; putting darkness for light, husks for bread, the lash and the prison for the liberty of the freeman, and Moses for Christ. God's scheme of blessing was wholly counteracted. The effect of the teaching on the souls of the receivers was melancholy: and it bred only disputes, strifes, jealousies, evil surmisings, and quarrels, in the churches.

13. "For YE were called to liberty, brethren; only (use) not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love slave for one another."

That word "for" denotes, that the apostle is justifying his strong speech against the Judaizers. He knew well, that there were those who would accuse him of sin in the matter.—'O Paul, you are so severe! Why do you so break through all charity? May not these great and good men be in the right after all? At any rate, you ought to hope the best!'—Paul is wise and right. His indignation is like that of Moses against any who should have attempted to lead Israel back into Egypt. God's people had been called by Christ to sonship and liberty, and lo these perverse ones are leading them back to bondage again! Against them, therefore, Paul is strong and bold in testimony. But he does not lift up his hand to smite. God is the Judge: vengeance belongs to Him! Now is not the time. The warned may yet listen and escape!

* *Αποκοπῆς*. Better for the church that they should be self-mutilated, than that God's sons should be enslaved to law.

But while the apostle was so firm and so bold on behalf of the Christian's freedom from law, there was a great danger on the other side. From the path of God's tracing you may turn either to the right or to the left.

These strong assertions of the Christian's liberty from law and the apostle's depreciation of its standing, its incompleteness, its childishness, and its sad effects, might overbalance the truth in their minds. France, casting off the rule of her kings as oppressive, rushed on into overturning all law, slew her king and queen, murdered whom she would, and then threw overboard God and His Christ!

While therefore the apostle warns against law and slavery, he now warns against licentiousness. The Christian is not under the law of Moses; but he is under the commands of Christ. "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under law, as under law (being not myself under law*) that I might gain them who are under law. To them that are without law as without law (being not without law to God, but under law† to Christ), that I might gain those without law:" 1 Cor. ix, 20, 21.

He would remind them then, that the Christian is made up of two principles opposed to one another, *flesh* and *spirit*. Now the flesh is evil. The flesh is fallen, and is not amended by conversion.

While then slavery to law is bad, *license to the flesh is bad also*. If the flesh rule, sin comes in, and "he that committeth sin is the *slave of sin*." There is freedom then really for the Christian only in keeping the flesh under. In it dwells no good thing. In it

* These words are genuine. They are given by all the critical editors. Their omission shows how much the text of the New Testament has been affected by the prepossessions of the transcribers and their teachers.

† Not "under the law."

dwells every evil thing. The Christian may keep it down by the Spirit, so that it shall not appear in word or deed. That is as much as he can do. He cannot prevent its movements in his thoughts. Hence the Christian, while in the body, is never perfect: he cannot be perfect in God's sight, though he may be blameless in man's.

"But by love slave for one another." Love is the new principle wrought in the heart of renewed man by the Holy Ghost. That is the principle which is to rule. This was commanded by the law; but is found only under the Gospel. Love is the very sentiment which God feels towards His people; it is the abiding principle of his soul toward them. This principle would prevent mischief in the church of Christ, and build up good. This is the true spirit of service. Love is *God's recommended slavery*! The freemen of Christ are to be bent on doing good to the sons of God. Lovers willingly seek to please those whom they love. But to do what others please is the lot of the slave. Only, the slave is compelled. The Christian rejoices in the work. Against this holy service for others, nature revolts; pride rises up. 'Do you think I am going to be at *your* beck and call?' But when love rules the soul it will spend and be spent, serve and slave for the good of the people of God.

See, then, believer! The Spirit of God first settles principles before it begins to teach practice. It does not say, as many blind ones do—"Don't tell *me* what a man *believes*: what does he *do*?" is my question.

"For modes of *faith* let angry bigots fight,
His can't be wrong whose *life* is in the right,"

is a high-handed attempt to denounce this truth. Not every fruit that is round and rosy is an apple. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Practice is only right,

when it springs from the truth of God. The tree of nature is condemned by God, whatever the colour of its fruit.

Lay down your lines, engineer, straight and carefully, before you begin to run trains! But if your lines are crooked, the heavier the train, and the greater the speed, the more direful the crash.

Distinguish between liberty, and the use of it. Liberty is God's inalienable gift to us. *That* is to be retained. But we are not so to use our liberty, as to grieve and stumble others. Paul could eat any thing; for before God he was free. But if the assertion of that freedom would wound or injure a Christian brother, he would eat no flesh all his life.

Our freedom is not freedom to sin, but to holiness. We are delivered from law, because law keeps its prisoners under *sin* and cannot sanctify.

14 "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in that;—'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

The entire round of our duty to others is summed up in the command to love. That principle fully possessed, men would not injure their fellows as they now do, in the various ways forbidden by the law. "The end of the commandment is *love*, out of a pure heart:" Rom. xiii, 8—10.

'Possess this principle, and you will serve and benefit your brethren.' For this is the aim of the law to keep out what is evil in the dealings of man with man, and to substitute what is good.

'Are we then under the law still?' Far from it! How should it be, after all the apostle's denials and reasonings? He quotes this great principle and aim of the law, in order to show that what law demands and calls for in vain, the Gospel gives power to those who are under grace to perform. Both Law and Gospel aim at love to God and man. But law does not effect its intent, because of the evil of the flesh. Law

belongs to the old man, and the old man is under law. But the Gospel is, 'Christ for us believers is the end of law.' Answerably whereto, it commands those who accept it to bury under the waters of death the flesh, or the old man. In immersion also is seen the rising of the new man, in which the believer is to walk. The believer then is no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

We may illustrate the matter thus. The object of medicine is to cure the patient 'safely, quickly, and pleasantly.' There are two opposite systems of medicine aiming at this as their end. But you would at once understand one who said—'The old system of medicine aims at this desirable mode of cure, but it is only the *new* method that can or does effect it!'

15. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take care lest ye be consumed one by another."

This false doctrine had stirred up strife and bitterness. The men of law in their defence of their views had exhibited the evil of the flesh.

There was a desire to oppress and tread down the opposite party. But this was not the character of the sheep of Christ, but of the wolves of the world. If they hurt and destroyed by word and deed, that would not end in the triumph of their party, but in the destruction of both. The church is built up by love, it is pulled down by hatred. Strifes among brethren, carried on in the flesh, prevent edification in a man's own soul, yea, produce much mischief within. Moreover, they prevent the world's acceptance of the truth, and weak brethren stumble, and turn away. By contentions of the flesh, churches have dwindled by degrees to nought, or been violently broken up.

There is a probable reference here to the strifes between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, which ended in their mutual destruction: Judges ix.

16. "This I say then, 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'"

The apostle sums up the matter by a command easily understood. Give liberty, not to the flesh, whose works are evil; but to the *Holy Spirit*. It is not by being under law that you will overcome the lusts of the flesh, but by being of the new man, led by the Holy Ghost. The flesh seeks with all its might the things of this world; the spirit, or the new man, seeks after the glory of the world to come.

This shows us that perfection now is impossible; it never has been, and never will be found in this world, and during this dispensation. For the Christian is made up of flesh and spirit, and the movements of the flesh are evil. There may be blamelessness of word and action, and abundance of good deeds before men; but none can prevent the rising of evil thoughts. But many think that if evil thoughts are resisted, and never come into visible presentation before men, there is no evil in them. That is quite a mistake. Even the Old Testament wise man, with his far less light, could say—"The *thought* of foolishness is *sin*." And if we can discern evil in our thoughts, how much more can God?

17. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, but the spirit against the flesh: but these are contrary one to the other, in order that ye should not do the things which ye would wish."

The flesh and the spirit are both in the Christian. And these two are essentially opposed one to another; and so long as the believer lives the fight goes on. Paul confesses it was true of himself, here and in the Romans.

Is there any believer bold enough to say, that in *him* there never is any rising of the flesh even in thought? that he never offends in word? He who can rule his tongue is a perfect man.

What is meant here by "the spirit"? Some take it to refer (1) to the Holy Ghost; some (2) to the new nature produced by the Holy Spirit. The two senses run into one another: the reader can choose.

This opposition of the two principles is designed of God. Each principle prevents the full triumph of the other. The Spirit hinders the outbreaks of the flesh. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and prevents the full and entire rule of the Spirit. The Christian is accepted before God, in spite of this strife and swaying of the two opposing principles. For Christ died for indwelling sin, as well as to obtain the pardon of sin manifested in action. If any think and assert their perfection, it is only because they have lowered God's standard to the level of their own attainments. But all such coin is debased.

In the flesh dwelleth no good thing. Christians still carry about with them the flesh. How then can perfection in this life be possible? Answerably thereto, while we are said to overcome the *devil* and the *world* (1 John ii, 13, 14; v, 45; John xvi, 33), *we are never said to overcome the flesh*. But the Lord shall give us "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

"Ye should not do the things that ye would wish."

To which of the two moving principles does the apostle refer? It would appear that he is applying the word to the evil deeds of the flesh, which he has to rebuke in the Galatian Christians. They had given license to the flesh, and its desires were strengthened. How should they keep them under? By the spirit. That would war against the desires of the flesh within, and prevent them bursting into act.

This opposition of the two struggling principles is the reason why the Christian does not advance as he would. Put two friends into a boat, and let them ply their oars *together*, and how the skiff shoots along across the lake! But put two enemies into another

skiff, and an oar into the hands of each, and the strength of each counterworks the other. While they pull in opposite directions the boat remains almost at a stand, or only turns round and round.

18. "But if led by the Spirit, ye are not under law."

Which of these principles would *finally* prevail the apostle does not say; for he is now exhorting them to cultivate one, and depress the other. The Christian ought to be led by the Spirit. The Holy Ghost is put within him on purpose to rule. And if so, he is not under law as a principle. He is under grace, and the Spirit of grace leads him into sonship, and that Spirit is impossible to one under law. Hence one under the law is not one fully led by the Spirit of God.

19. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, such as these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strifes, emulation, wraths, cabals, divisions, parties, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and things like these: concerning which I tell you beforehand, as I also told you before, that they who do such things shall not have any part in the kingdom of God."

If any should inquire—How can I tell what is a work of the flesh? and what of the Spirit? I answer, They are so opposed that they are easily distinguished. They are familiar to all, being found in all the world wherever man dwells.

The sins enumerated—Paul does not profess to name them all—are divisible into four classes. (1) Those of impurity; (2) of impiety; (3) of malignity; and (4) of intemperance. Some of these are sins of word, and of the mind, dwelling in its motives against those it dislikes. One of these has been ejected from the creed of most Christians, so I will say a few words upon it. The Holy Spirit puts side by side 'idolatry and witchcraft.' It is fashionable now to ridicule the idea of witchcraft. But as men can bow down to idols, and thereby serve evil spirits with worship, so

they can pray to those evil spirits, as truly as the Christian can to the True God. And as the Most High answers the prayers of believers, so can and do evil spirits aid those who worship them, and call them to their succour by spells and incantations. The Word of God speaks of this, not as utter imposture, but as of a reality. It has given us the examples of the witch of Endor, of Manasseh, and Jezebel.

Where the Gospel enters and flourishes, and idolatry is scarcely seen, there witchcraft hides its head. But with idolatry and spiritism, witchcraft will flourish again, and be openly known and cultivated. So that the Spirit of God enumerating the sins which will draw down the full wrath of God, tells us of the "sorceries" of the last days as well as of the murders, fornications, and thefts: Rev. ix, 20, 21.

Against many of these things, as things hateful to God, and contrary to true love to men, the law of Moses lifted up its prohibitions and threats. The Holy Spirit too, by Paul, here warns us also. He had testified against them at his former visit, he now repeats the warning.

But what is the threatening uttered now under the Gospel to offenders in such sort? 'They shall have no part in the kingdom of God.'

To whom is the penalty threatened? To the men of faith and of the Church, or to the unconverted men of the world? It is easy to see. The Holy Spirit is addressing the assemblies of believers in Galatians i, 2. On whom will it take effect? On offending believers. But this strikes most Christians with surprise and displeasure! 'What! believers guilty of murder and adultery? They are no believers who so offend.'

I reply, 'You have seized on two of the blackest in the list whereon to found your protest. But look at it again! Do you know no believers guilty of 'hatred, variance, emulations, strife, wrath, cabals, factions, and envy?' If you admit that these do exist among

believers (nay, and are alas! too common), may it not be fairly supposed possible, that of the whole list believers may be guilty. All are works of the same flesh. Are there no converted persons worshipping the Virgin Mary, and the bread and wine of the Supper?

Modern theology is very summary upon this point, but it is not supported by Scripture. It assumes, 'All believers as men converted to God are, in morals and life, what they should be; or else they are not Christians at all.'

Now while they *ought* to come up to the high standard of Gospel morality, I nowhere find the Scripture taking such a stand as this. Does Paul say so here? Does he say, that persons once converted to God can never fall into these sins of the flesh? This was the place to say it, if it were true. Does the apostle announce such a principle in his Epistles to the Corinthians?

On that field the weeds of the flesh were growing luxuriantly, and the apostle sternly rebukes them. But how? Is it by calling in question the possession of faith by these offenders? Does he anywhere say? 'I see I admitted some of you into the church too easily. Your conduct is such, that I must have been deceived in you; you never could have been converted.' This is what many do say, and would have said then.

Nay! The apostle takes the opposite line. He begins by *building them up in the assurance that they were God's*: 1 Cor. i, 2, 3. And then he proceeds to exhort them to the conduct suited to their calling. He owns them Christians, but he distinguishes Christians into fleshly, "*carnal*" and "*spiritual*." They were believers in whom the flesh was active: 1 Cor. iii, 1. And the same thing holds now.

But what is the penalty on those who should refuse to listen and to repent at Corinth? The same that the Spirit gives here, the loss of 'the kingdom of God:' 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10.

What is then 'the kingdom of God'?

With most it signifies 'salvation,' or 'eternal blessedness.' And then the apostle will say, that believers so guilty will be damned! But as that is contrary to the passages which speak of Christ's sheep as certainly to be saved, it throws people back into supposing, that these threats can only be directed against *unbelievers*. Hence most Christians do not take the words as applying to themselves. Others, knowing they are believers, are emboldened to despise these threats, as not applying to any but the world of the non-elect.

But there are two things set before the believer; "the *gift* of God, which is eternal life" (Rom. vi, 21), and "the *prize* of our calling:" Phil. iii. Eternal life is God's assured blessing to all believers. But our obtaining the prize of our calling turns upon our conduct after faith.

God will manifest His displeasure with offending sons of His, even though he finally admit them to His bliss. He has appointed a day of a thousand years' duration, in which each shall be dealt with according to his works.

The kingdoms of *men* are about to be superseded by the kingdom of Him who is *God and Christ*. The reign of the millennium is the reward of the Most High bestowed upon His Son's perfection of work and of suffering. He will wield the kingdom over all things till He has put down all resistance, and all power but His own. To be with Christ and reign with Him in that day of the first resurrection, the 'resurrection of the righteous,' is the hope set before us. It is the seventh great day of creation, in which God will rest from His redemption-work, as on the seventh day of the first week He rested from His works of creation. He looked over what He had made, and behold it was very good. He looked, and enjoyed the works of His hands. Then in the coming great day of the seventh thousand year, He will look over His greater work,

and in it find delight. Then they who have wrought and suffered with God and Christ in this work of redemption will receive from the Son and the Father the proofs of His good pleasure, in their enjoying a share in the kingdom of the Christ.

But what will happen to those of His redeemed who have resisted His commands, have been unprofitable to Christ, have wrought the works of the flesh, and taken their pleasures with the world? In such, as disobedient children, the Lord cannot have pleasure; He will show therefore His displeasure by shutting them out of the kingdom of glory. During the day when the believers' works are recompensed, *they* must be shut out of glory and joy, while others rejoice and reign: Matt. vii, 21; xviii, 13; xix, 23. They shall be saved at last; but sore will be the woe through which they pass, in losing so great a boon: 1 Cor. iii, 15.

What says the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. vi, 1—11?

He rebukes believers for going to law with one another. Better lose the thing in question than do so, or have strife about it. He then says, that some of those in the Church were wronging their brethren! Are there no believers now who are defrauders? whose word in business-matters cannot be taken? To such believers, He goes on to say, there shall be no portion in the millennial kingdom of God. He states it with surprise, as if He wondered, that they should not know this as one of the first principles of the Gospel. They might fancy, that being justified by Christ and elect sons of God, no such penalty could touch them. Easily might they so deceive themselves; but God's counsel would hold good in that day, whether they believed it or no. The parties to whom He so addresses himself he owns as *justified*, baptized, and partially sanctified by the Spirit.

Christians come out from Moses' law, to be under *Christ's commands*. But every command must have its penalty; or it is no command, but only a piece of

advice. Suppose then any believer to say, 'If I break Christ's commands, what is the penalty?' It is not eternal damnation; but it is exclusion from the day of millennial joy; from "the *reward* of the inheritance."

This, Christian, is what you are called on to seek. "Seek first *the kingdom of God* (as the end) and His righteousness" (or obedience to the precepts of Christ, as the means).

The possession of the flesh gives us an entrance on the kingdoms of men. But we need the new birth out of water, and of the Spirit, that we may have part in the kingdom of God; and the new man is required to enter on the new and better kingdom.

God by His Son will decide who shall be "accounted worthy" to attain that kingdom and the resurrection from among the dead. Let us pursue it! Its possession shall make amends for all the trials of the conflict. And its loss, though now it may be little thought of, will then be felt most deeply. 'A thousand years of glory lost! My brethren in the hall of light and joy: Myself in the darkness outside!' May it not be our sad lot!

22. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, long-suffering, kindness, beneficence, fidelity, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

It is not without meaning, that Paul describes the results of the old nature as "works," while he designates the effects of the Holy Spirit in the renewed man as "fruit." He bids the believer look back on the past of his life while he was under sin, and asks, "What *fruit* had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death:" Rom. vi, 21. And Paul contrasts "the *unfruitful* works of darkness," with the fruits of the Spirit: Eph. v, 11, 12. He does not call them here 'fruits,' but "fruit," as though they were all of one class, borne by one tree. The flesh is a weed, which has no good

fruit to God's eye and taste; but the renewed man is the branch in the vine.

The first and chief of these is 'love,' in its various goings forth to God and man. This, which is not natural to the fallen, who are of the contrary class, "hateful and hating one another," is wrought by the Spirit of God in those who yield themselves to His influence. The list of fruits here is not such as to strike the world; and (which is remarkable) they are not outward actions which are specified, but abiding tempers, the root of all good actions acceptable to God.

"Joy." We are called to rejoice, not in saving ourselves, but in a Saviour-God. Joy is filled to the full by fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Spirit: 1 John i. How different is this to the world's idea, that religion is a melancholy thing! Is it a melancholy thing to have the forgiveness of sins, peace with God, the assurance that whatever befalls us is ordered for our good, and that we have an inheritance of glory on high, that shall abide for evermore? If my reader has never found this joy, let him seek it in a pardoning *Saviour-God*! The joy of the flesh and of the world doth not abide; and in many cases it is open sin.

'Peace' as opposed to, the strifes of nature.

"Longsuffering" is love patiently enduring contact with the world of unbelief and the roughnesses of believers. Herein the code of Christ differs from the law. That meted out to the offender his just due, and at once.

"Kindness." That is the general tendency to do good in various ways.

"Goodness" is beneficence, the bestowing of our goods on those who need.

"Faithfulness." This word refers not, I believe, here to the faith which saves; but it designates trustiness toward men. It is with the aspect of graces menward that the apostle is now engaged. Men, in

general, are not to be trusted. In the latter days, too, the Holy Spirit teaches that men will be 'traitors;' that is, that they will be unfaithful to their trust. If it is a secret, they will tell it. If money, they will embezzle it. They will gain intelligence only to give it to those who will turn it against the party, appearing all the while, like Judas, to be perfectly friendly.

Beware of this wickedness, Christian! The Spirit of God produces the opposite conduct.

"Meekness." That is a patient bearing of injury and insult. Herein the New Testament form of holiness, or the conduct suited to one justified by grace, differs by the whole heaven from the law. That enjoined the rendering to each his deserts; deserts of evil as well as of good.

"Temperance," or self-control, as opposed to the opposite outbreaks of nature. Self-indulgence is not one of the fruits of the Spirit. The flesh is to be ruled by the spirit; not the spirit by the flesh.

"Against such there is no law."

Law has nothing to say against feelings such as these, and the conduct which springs from them. They are a higher rate of holiness than that of law.

The apostle has now presented the characteristic differences of the flesh and of the spirit as shown in action. Of the flesh and its works he has said, that its deeds are contrary to law, condemned by it. Christ also has laid down the 'law' (vi, 2), that the doers of such things shall not enter His coming millennial kingdom of glory. But while the law condemns the flesh and its works, it can but approve the spirit and its works. While the doers of the one will be cut off, the doers of the other will be admitted into it. This is indeed not here directly said.

"Against such there is no law," is a carrying out of Paul's previous testimony, that the believer, as led by the Spirit, is not under law. The law is a loaded cannon, fired at those who stray from the true

way: but it cannot hit those who keep to the King's highway. The law was made, *not for the righteous*, but to restrain, to deter by penalties; to convict the flesh with its works of evil. Against the Spirit and its works of good, it has no condemnation. Go on boldly then, you who are walking after the Spirit. You are every day moving nearer to the kingdom of glory which Christ calls on you to seek.

24. "But they who are Christ's crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

The Christian does not belong in part to Moses, in part to Christ. He is not to be educated to holiness in part by the Decalogue, in part by the Sermon on the Mount. While both Moses and Christ agree in the evil of many things, the ground of abstaining is different under each. *Law* is educating the man of *flesh* for an *earthly inheritance*, and giving him a view of *the conduct suited thereto*. But the words and Spirit of Christ are educating the renewed soul for *another and a different heritage*; that of *heaven* and of *faith*.

"They who are Christ's crucified the flesh." The tense is the indefinite past. The 'have' should be dropped. It does not mean that all Christians *do* crucify the flesh. It would not be true. The majority *do not*, but live by it in most things, as the world does. But it describes the position given by God to every believer, as soon as he was by the Spirit united to Christ. Christ was crucified. "Our old man was crucified with him, in order that the body of sin should be paralysed, that henceforth we should not serve sin:" Rom. vi, 6. God beholds in Christ crucified the old man of all believers put under death. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and (as a sacrifice) for sin *condemned* sin in the flesh (indwelling sin); in order that the righteousness of the

law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit :” Rom. viii, 4.

The flesh is regarded by God as incapable of being mended, and so is judicially slain. He shows it still further, in that the next step after faith is to be, of your own choice, immersed into Christ. That is a visible death and burial to Adam, a visible resurrection to Christ. In the immersion which Christ commands you took voluntarily your leave of the flesh, and hence of Moses and of law, which are the rulers of the flesh. You then in emblem arose to walk in a new life, after a new rule. Here then you are called to come up to the standing which God has given you in Christ. Suppose Her Majesty were to appoint any one her secretary, on the duties of which he was not to enter at once. Then it would be a good ground to stir up such an one to perfect himself in his penmanship. ‘Now you are the Queen’s secretary, mind you improve in writing so as not to disgrace your calling.’

Christian ! you are not under law, for you are not a man of the flesh, which the law was given to control and bind.

The flesh is incurable. This is God’s verdict after four thousand years’ experience and proof. It is to be wholly dead and buried, with its active and passive principles alike.

25. “If we are alive in the spirit, in the spirit let us also walk.”

God does not design His people to be inactive. He has implanted in them a new principle of life. He desires to see that principle in visible activity. If we be Christ’s, our soul has been made alive in Him. If the Holy Spirit have not renewed us, and is not dwelling in us, we are not Christ’s at all. As then we have this new life, it is to be manifested in our outward conduct. Baptism is not only burial to the flesh, it exhibits a new life and walk in the Spirit. Parallel

to this runs the apostle’s testimony to his own new principle and walk of life.

“For I through the law died to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live : yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God : for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain :” Gal. ii, 19—21.

Out of inward life is to spring outward conduct. If ours be the new life of the Spirit, let it be seen ! Many are alive in the spirit, who are walking according to the flesh. They are carnal, not spiritual Christians : 1 Cor. iii, 1. Many Christians are like those who have been some time under water. They are carried, because they cannot walk. Are they alive ? Yes ! though cold, blanched, and motionless, there is still the fluttering pulse of life. The Christian should not be in the state of ‘suspended animation,’ in which it is questionable whether he is alive to God, or dead. O Christian, if you have steam in your engine, move the lever that it may run along the rails that God has laid down ! If led by the Spirit, do not the works of the flesh, but of God !

26. “Let us not become vainglorious, challenging each other, envying each other.”

Paul puts the exhortation as one applying to himself, together with other Christians. The flesh in him was what it is in us. He would therefore guard himself against the danger, as well as others.

“Let us not *become*” (not ‘be’ !).

This has reference doubtless to the state of things in the churches of Galatia. They were becoming ‘vainglorious.’ Our characters are never at a standstill. We are all moving onward in one direction or another. According to our continual acts our characters are forming. While the particles of the body

are in constant change, they are yet producing and fixing flesh and bone in each. And so according as we are moved by right principles or by wrong, in right acts or wrong, our character is *setting*, such as it will appear at last. With every throw of the dice, the gamester's face is *setting* in one class of expression. With every act of theft the features are fixing for evil; the countenance is growing more forbidding with every fresh glass of the drunkard. With every act of kindness done, and every prayer lifted to Christ, the features of the improving saint are growing more beautiful. But the effect on the countenance and its expression is only a visible mark of the inward fixing of the character, which is the man. Let us be careful, then, to see that we are becoming better.

"Vainglorious." God has so made man, that he desires approval, or glory from others. That is not a feeling evil in itself. It has indeed fallen with the fall of man. And men seek glory in a way that does them mischief both for time and for eternity. They seek for glory from their fallen fellows, and in this present world. They must seek it then in ways which men approve. Some seek it by the display of great ability in literature, or music, or painting; some as the statesman, some as travellers. They devote their lives to win glory thus, and this affects their whole character. But it is false glory. Multitudes of such pursuers of glory gain not what they seek. Those who gain the glory they have sought find that it does not satisfy; much less does it fit them to dwell with God!

But we may seek true glory; the pursuit will do us good; and we cannot help finding it hereafter if we pursue it aright. Seek the honour that comes from God, and that looks for His approval. Strive for the crowns that Christ is coming to bring to His approved ones, and you cannot be too ambitious. Our Lord Himself points us out how to win the glory to come: Luke xiv; Rom. ii, 7—10. And Paul, at the close of

his steadily spiritual life, could say with the certainty of inspiration, that the prize he had sought was his, to be adjudged him in the coming day by the Righteous Judge: 2 Tim. iv. Be covetous then, Christian, of the true glory. No act of grace passes unnoticed or forgotten by our Great Captain; and His rewarding will be glory abiding, and glory indeed!

The desire of false glory then led out the Galatian Christians to challenge one another. The strong threw down his gauntlet and dared any to take it up; that all might admire his courage, and his force in the strife and the victory. The weak, conscious of not possessing any such powers, envied the strong. So Goliath of Gath strode forth vaingloriously confident in his stature and strength, and challenged any of Saul's slaves to step out of the ranks and fight him; and thus the feeble ones of both hosts envied the giant his prowess and might. But David, looking to Jehovah, in the strength of faith, proves his conqueror; and has won a lasting glory on the pages of God. Let not the example be lost on us!

GALATIANS VI.

1. "Brethren, if a man be even surprised in any transgression,* ye the spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

There was probably some notice transmitted to Paul of a case which called forth this decision. Some one had been "surprised in a *transgression*." This is a much graver word than 'fault.' It is the word which describes the sin of our first parents: a manifest breach of some known command. Jesus supposes there would be such exceptional cases everywhere among assemblies of believers, not to be kept out by any care in the admission of those only who were believers. The proofs of this evil were clear. What was to be done?

There are two opposite faults into which a church may fall in such a case. They may (1) take no notice of it; (2) be too severe in it. The fallen one was to be "restored."

The church is an assembly of brethren; of those renewed by grace; of those born again to God, in whom the Spirit of God dwells; on whom He works. While then such an one may fall into sin through carelessness and prayerlessness, yet he is not to be regarded as incurable, and beyond restoration. The discipline of the church is corrective. It is designed to bring the brother back to his place. In the war of believers with the devil, this soldier being caught without his coat of mail, has his arm broken by a club. He is a warrior of the cross. We are to seek to bring his arm

* Παραπτώμα.

and himself back to its true position and strength. How is that to be done?

There must be first on his side a sense and confession of his guilt. It is vain to leave the broken arm to get well as it can, and not to own that it is broken. *That* is of first necessity both to him, to the world, and to the church; lest a little leaven leaven the whole lump. The conduct of grace suited to such a case demands this first. Paul desires the Corinthian church to forgive, and to re-admit into communion the excluded offender. Why? When he was in so deep sorrow, that there was fear, lest he should die in it: 2 Cor. ii, 5—11. And so as regarded the other offences in that church, the apostle made the mode of treatment to depend on their state, either of impenitence, or of sorrow: 1 Cor. iv, 21. "What will ye? Shall I come to you with a rod? or in the spirit of meekness?" 2 Cor. x, 6; xii, 19—21.

He is to be not dealt with as an enemy, but admonished as a brother.

By whom?

Not all are fit to undertake the office of restoration.

An offence in a Christian brother is a trial of those who have not so offended. It is hard to handle evil in another without becoming defiled with it ourselves. (1) There is to be no palliating of the wickedness. (2) There is to be no haughty offhand severity. Many destitute of love when a sad case of like quality has occurred, visit it with bitter taunts, and judicial hardness.

The parties then who are to restore such an one are 'the spiritually minded.' Here the distinction between the fleshly Christian and the spiritual re-appears. And the spiritual are to prove their spirituality by their humility and grace in meeting the matter. "Ye are *puffed up*," says Paul, "and have not *rather mourned*, that he who hath done this thing might be taken away from you." The Spirit of God therefore insists on the temper in which the spiritually minded are to engage

in so sad an office. "In the spirit of meekness." So will the offender be most likely to be won back again, if he see the sorrow he has caused to others his brethren. But another reason of more force is assigned by the apostle. "Considering *thyself*, lest thou also be tempted." They who are to lift up a brother out of the pit into which he has fallen, must take heed to their own footing. For the pit on whose edge they stand is dug in crumbling soil, and they too may fall in. It is not, 'We can never offend; we are astonished that you can have been so weak and so wicked.' Many by their proud, self-confident, arrogant spirit, have been led all unexpectedly into a like fall. What if Satan accuse you before God, and ask permission to tempt you? The more proud and severe you are, the more easily can he trip you up.

It is a right deed to restore the fallen. But it needs also a right spirit in those who would restore. We carry gunpowder with us; and the devil's match will explode it, unless we keep it wet. Nay, high-mindedness breaking out in fierce and bitter speeches, or taunts over the fallen, is already sin in the sight of God. If God permit you to be tempted, and if you think there is no danger, you are near to an overthrow. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall:" Prov. xvi, 18. Our spirit is to be one of grace. How did our Lord deal with Peter? How severely He might have taunted him, with his reiterated professions and promises made in self-confidence, and with the depth of his fall in spite of three warnings of the Saviour.—'What say you now, Peter? Who is right? You or I? What of your loving me so, that you would go to prison and to death for my sake? Could you not face the servant-maid of the palace? Are not your curses uttered against yourself, if ever you knew any thing of Me, still lading your shoulders? still staining your conscience? Can I ever trust you again? Can I admit you again into my flock?'

That is not (how far from it!) the Saviour's tone. He restores Peter in gentleness. He leads him to see his vain-glorious self-confidence, that he might never more trust in himself. The Lord gives us a like spirit!

For ours is not the spirit of the law of Moses. That was based on righteousness. There were some offences in an Israelite that might be met with corrective punishment, and a limit was even under law set against too great severity.

"If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee:" Deut. xxv, 1—3.

Compare the 'thousand lashes' which have been often adjudged by military officers calling themselves Christians, but really men of the world.

Any heavy transgressor against the Mosaic law, as soon as the proof was clear, was given over to immediate destruction. The Sabbath breaker, or the blasphemer, guilty of but one offence, is to be stoned: Num. xv. "Thine eye shall not pity" is the five times repeated word. They were executioners of justice, and the penalties sentenced by God were in no sort to be mitigated. The effect on others was that to be regarded. "All Israel shall hear and fear and no more do so wickedly." The well-being of the offender was not then to be regarded. He was to be smitten according to his iniquity. "He that despiseth Moses' law dieth *without mercy* under two or three witnesses." Nor did the law raise the question of the moral and spiritual standing of those who were to execute the penalty. It assumed, that they were righteous; and that while the sharp edge of justice

had cut down this transgressor, it could not touch *them*. Hence the novelty, wisdom, force, and success of our Lord's bringing out this point. "Let him that is without sin among you first cast the stone at her." It scattered his foes. And the Saviour was able, while condemning the sin of the adulteress, to abstain from executing the sentence of the law, while it gave her an opportunity to repent.

2. "Bear ye one another's burthens, and so fulfil the law of the Christ."

The burthens here spoken of are of various kinds, whether within or without us; sufferings, weaknesses, trials, persecutions. Here is a brother laid on a bed of sickness; there is a widow without food or firing. Here is a family cast down by the wickedness of a son. There is a wife persecuted by her ungodly husband. There is the father of a family sent away from his place because he refuses to sin. All these things are hard to bear. All these can be alleviated by appropriate conduct on the part of the saints, by prayer, by counsel, by comfort, by gifts. We are not, we ought not to be, units, self-sufficient, neither needing, nor lending, aid to others. In the Church of Christ, we are every one members one of another. As then the head stoops, and the eyes turn down, and the leg is lifted, and the hand adjusted with care to draw out a thorn from the foot, so is it to be with the Church of Christ.

The trouble of one should be met by the sympathy of all. This would be the manifestation of love to Christ. Love to one another is the Saviour's great command: John xiii, 34; xv, 12. He is to us the great Lawgiver. His authority has superseded for us the law of Moses. He did not come to re-enact the law of Sinai, in part, or in whole. Law is a yoke; an intolerable yoke, by the confession of those for ages under it, and brought up to bear it: Acts xv. While

then some were foolishly and wrongly seeking to fasten this heavy burthen on their neck, the Spirit warns and prohibits. You have burthens to bear, Christian, but it is the weights that oppress your brethren, that you may comfort and strengthen the army of Christ. You were brought out from the yoke of Moses, that you might be at leisure from vain efforts at self-justification, after being justified by the righteousness of Christ, to aid your fellow-believers. This is "the law of the Christ." Obey him, and thereby show your love.

Thus wrought and suffered Paul. "Who is weak? and I am not weak? Who is offended? And I burn not?" Onesimus has run away from his master, having robbed him. But Onesimus has become a child of God. How can he face his wronged master? How return to his post of duty, after such trespasses? Paul bears the burthen both of Philemon and of Onesimus. Philemon's robbery shall be made good by Paul. He would smoothe the way for Onesimus' return by words of grace concerning his changed state, and Paul's own interest in him as his son in the faith.

While we are not under the law of Moses in any part or particle, we are under the Saviour's commands; we are "under law to Christ" (not '*the law*') (*Greek*). 1 Cor. ix, 21.

"Let each mind his own affairs."

3. "For if any thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

What is the connexion here, which is supposed by the word 'For'? It is difficult to say.

It is opposed to the self-confident self-sufficiency which is natural to us. 'I need no one's aid, I shall give none to others.'

To this style of high thought concerning ourselves we are all by nature prone. Let us not think more highly of ourselves than we ought; but think soberly, as God hath dealt to each the measure not of ability,

but of faith. Better be too lowly in our thoughts of ourselves than too high. If others think too meanly of us, the Lord knows how to raise us, and will do so in the day to come. But whatever our abilities of nature, whatever our attainments, they are all of grace. They are Christ's gifts, and without Him we can do nothing." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." How greatly we are displeased at others deceiving us! Let us not then deceive *ourselves*! Let us not find and hold excuses for ourselves, which we should refuse if offered by others. "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

4. "But let each try his own work, and then he shall have the ground of boasting with regard to himself alone, and not with regard to the other."

This seems to be directed against the same fault which the apostle has to correct also at Corinth. Many were comparing Paul with Apollos, or with Peter, and taking sides about their respective values. "Look at Peter! You are always talking about this Paul! Who is he, beside that apostle whom Jesus so honoured?" Then stands up the partisan on the other side. "Peter indeed! Who is he, beside this great missionary of the Risen Christ's sending? the great worker, the great sufferer, the great hope of the Gentiles? Peter has hardly stirred from Jerusalem, while Paul has traversed Asia and Europe!" Thus they were "puffed up for one against another." It is from this foolish and useless partizanship that the Holy Ghost seeks to recall them. "Come, you are servants, to whom, to every one of whom the Master has entrusted some work. You will not fulfil *that*, by estimates and discussions about the work of others. That is mere idleness. Look to and fulfil what *you* have to do. Seek to have right views about your own

work, and to fulfil that as the Master would have you, and you will not be idly judging things on which you have not data sufficient to decide. While we are not justified by faithfulness in our own sphere of labour, yet it is a joyful thing to have the testimony of a good conscience, that we have sought to accomplish in all honesty what Christ has given us to do. While the unprofitable servant shall be cast outside, it will be matter of joy if we can present to Christ the two talents or the five, which we have gained by trading.

5. "For each shall bear his own burthen."

'Now is not Paul perpetually contradicting himself?' Before, only two verses apart, his cry was, '*Bear one another's burthens*;' and here he says, 'Every one shall bear his own!'

Just such are the shallow objections of unbelievers, which catch the thoughtless and unwary. I suggest them, to put my readers on their guard. In the former verse, the apostle is calling us to aid our brethren *now* in the various difficulties of our march to glory. Now is the time for such efforts; and they are blest both to the giver and to the receiver. They are the *work* to which Christ calls us.

But a different day altogether is at hand! Soon our opportunities for such service will be over. Soon the Lord will come and will reckon with His servants about their work. The inquiry will be individual. It will not suffice for me, that Paul nobly wrought, and that I took his side.

To me the Lord has committed work to be done. To me He has given abilities. To me He granted opportunities. This is the burthen I shall have to bear. How have I acquitted myself? will be the great question then. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Let us seek then to look forward to that day! How will our work be

regarded by *Christ*? It is not what our fellows may say, or think of us. But what will *He* say? Will it be "Wicked, and slothful servant!" or, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Weighty question! May we wisely weigh it now, and so act, that approval shall be ours in that great day! "He that troubleth you shall bear the judgment whoever he be." Look to your own furrow, ploughman, that you may steer straight!

While believers will not be judged for life or death, they will be judged with regard to their work. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

To give in our account is the burthen. It will be a sad day to him who does nothing for Christ, and to him still more, who is acting against Christ's commands and the interests of His Gospel. Do not then be misled by those who, in dislike of all restraint, speak of the Christian as if he were to be dealt with in the coming day in grace alone: who decry all such warnings as 'legal,' and 'bondage, unsuited to the child of God.' But the *child* of God is also the *servant* of God, and of that service he must render an account. That is the burthen to be borne, and great the rejoicing, if the Master approve his work.

6. "But let the taught in the word share with the teacher in all good things."

The little word, 'but,' omitted in the Established Version, has its use. The Spirit of God foresaw the abuse that might be made of the sentiment of the former verse. 'Each is to bear *his own* burthen.' 'Then you, teacher of the Gospel, are to maintain yourself! Carry *your own* burthen! I am not going to bear it.'

This instructs us, then, that the taught in the Gospel (it is a word to believers) are to maintain the teachers. Not all know the Scriptures. Not all are able to preach

the Gospel or teach even what they know. 'Here a want, there a supply,' is God's plan for the body of Christ—the Church. Believers are to go on to know the mind of God. Great are the difficulties in the Scriptures. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I except some one should teach me?" What is to be taught? "The word of God."

There is then according to the mind of the Lord to be an exchange. The teacher opens his spiritual treasures, and presents to the hearers the truths and knowledge of God. It is not much then to expect a share in worldly benefits in return.

Christ has appointed, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. "For the labourer is worthy of his reward." 'Those who need a lamp give it oil.' How much shall be given is left open now. It was more exactly defined under the law. It is left to the liberality of each to decide how much. The covetous will give little or nothing. The liberal will give liberally.

Let none enter the ministry as imagining it to be the way to honour now or wealth. If he does he will be sorely disappointed. He must look for reward in another day, and not from believers themselves.

7. "Be not deceived. God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The Spirit of God foresaw that many believers would shift off this duty from themselves.

1. There is a *great opening* now for evading all payment or gift in the matter. No watch is kept. No demand of so much is made. Hence the covetous heart says, 'I shall give nothing. Who will be the wiser?' This is to mock God.

2. Then there are plenty of *excuses*. 'I am a poor man, and have a large family.' 'I am not poor exactly,' another can say: 'but I need what I have for myself. A person of my means must live like others

of the same rank in society.' That is to speak like the world. That principle would consume all your income; even were God to give you three times as much as you now have. 'I need what I have *for myself*,' is the general word.

Here then is the *danger*. Believers will rest upon their privileges; will presume upon the grace of God now shown. They will not believe that any threat can touch *them*, whatever their known shortcomings or their misdoings. 'Am not I a child of God? Elect? A member of Christ? Threats then can't be for *me*! God is too good! These warnings are meant for the *wicked*. It is quite right and fit, that *they* should be treated according to their works.' Into this state of things the Holy Spirit descends with the strong word before us, "*Be not deceived!*" You may easily parry this command. Your heart is by nature inclined so to do. The majority are on your side. But "God is not mocked."

1. He is not *ignorant* of what you do. You cannot escape his eye.

2. He is not *careless* of what you do. He has given orders and means to have them obeyed. While then you give nothing, and think it wise, you will one day find out your mistake. Any attempt to deceive or mock *man* may succeed. Poor Isaac, through his blindness, gave the blessing to the son he did not intend to have it. But God was not deceived though the plan was 'successful' as man calls it. All his life after Jacob had to feel the sad issues of that evil deed.

3. Any attempt to deceive God and disobey Him, will *recoil on the one who attempts it*. He means, in the coming day, to show His displeasure towards the disobedient and the covetous. He is gracious; wonderfully so to His elect. But He is the Righteous Governor also; and the coming day is the one in which He means to prove it to all the universe. He regards not *faces*. He will bring every work into judgment, whether good

or bad. All will be uncovered in the day to come. God loves realities: and all shams will at last be stripped bare.

Here is a man who has taken his seat in the train. But he has no ticket. Well, but see! he moves on the journey just as well as the others. Now is he not clever, to get the ride and yet to keep the price? Wait! wait till the train has stopped. It has arrived in London. 'All tickets ready!' The collector comes, and receives the tickets of the others. 'Where is yours?' He has none to show. He is seized on as a culprit by justice, and must suffer its penalty. What is become of his cleverness now? Much worse will it be with him who attempts to cheat *God*. He is only cheating *himself*. Tickets are not examined now. But they *will* be. The train will stop at last. And then will come the fulfilment of the principle of the verse before us.

"WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP."

There shall, in the coming day, be a rendering to each believer or unbeliever according to his works. The award to each will be (1) impartial, and (2) strict. It will take effect on each as naturally, and as certainly as harvest comes after sowing. Every one is sowing now, and *must* sow, whether he likes it or not. Every one *must* reap at last as he has sown, whether he is pleased with his crop or no.

You know how impartial in this matter God as the Governor is now. The crop is always such as the seed. Sow thistles, and their thorns and chaff will be found at last. Sow wheat, and its golden ears will appear at last. But suppose an *emperor* to sow nettles; would not God, in consideration of the greatness of his crown and dignity, give him a field of barley? You would laugh at any who would say so.

But here is a man who is very poor. He has sown nettles in his little garden patch. Will not

God have pity upon so poor, ragged, hungry a man? Wont he in compassion give him a harvest of wheat? Not He! He regards not faces. Let the wicked man sow wheat, and wheat he shall reap. Let the elect man sow darnel, and darnel shall be his crop. It is so in nature. Not one of us doubts *that*. But Paul, or the Holy Spirit by him, asserts, that just as certain, just as impartial will God's award be in the day to come. Sow sparingly, and you shall reap sparingly. Sow bounteously, and bounteously shall you reap.

Now if nature in this time is so strict and impartial, so much more will the Most High be in the day that is to manifest His righteous judgment.

Sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind. The beginning of the award is seen here. The payment of interest on the principal begins here: but the full payment is to be in the day to come, "the day of judgment" (or justice).

8. "For he that soweth unto his own flesh out of the flesh shall reap corruption: but he that soweth unto the Spirit out of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting."

'There are two kinds of *seeds*,' says the former verse. 'There are two *fields*, with two different kinds of *soil*,' says this. And believers are sowing in one or other of these fields. But mark the accuracy of Scripture. It says, 'He who sows unto *his own* flesh.' For else those disposed to evade this lesson of bounty would refuse to bestow food, clothing, shelter, or money, on the poor. For in *thus* aiding their bodies, would he not be 'sowing to the *flesh*'? And that is here forbidden.

What the apostle then is dissuading the Christian from, is unnecessary expenditure on ourselves. How many believers use their money almost wholly for themselves, in purchase of the things of this life, on dress, jewels, music, the garden, the table, the equipage, etc.

God is asking for money for His service, and for the poor, specially of the church. But most prefer to spend it for things which will not profit them in a day to come. How many Christians live almost like the world herein! Hence they have nothing to give for others. This expenditure then is 'sowing to the flesh.'

What will be the resulting crop, when they appear before Christ? "*Corruption*." That is the fruit of the field in which have they sown. But what is the sense of this?

There are two replies.

1. "'Corruption'—because the flesh is a prey to corruption, and with it all fleshly desires and practices come to nothing."

But that cannot be the sense. For it makes *both* the sowers to be on a level. It says—'Death and the grave end all the affairs, and expenditure, and enjoyments of this life.' But the same result also awaits the most diligent sower in the field of the spirit.

2. The other sense is given by Barnes. "If the punishment [of sensuality] does not follow in this life, it will be sure to overtake the *sensualist* in the world to come. There he shall reap *ruin final and everlasting*."

There are two or three flaws which set this comment aside. (1) Paul is not speaking of *unbelievers*! but of believers. (2) He is not rebuking acts openly sinful, as drunkenness or debauchery; but of an expenditure approved by decent men of the world. (3.) He is describing then not the perdition of the lost, but the unwelcome harvest of the offending disciple.

The meaning of the passage is to be seen by comparing it with a former one. In the previous chapter he had warned us—'That the issue of the works of the flesh would be, that the doers should not have part in the coming kingdom of God: 'v, 19—21. What shall become of such in that day of recompense? If they do not enter the kingdom, where will they be?

And the answer is—'Among the dead!' their souls in Hadees, their bodies in corruption; while the sowers to the spirit are reaping the commencement of eternal life in the kingdom of the Christ, and reigning with Him, during the thousand years; *they* will be excluded.

The same truth is seen in Rom. viii. "Therefore, brethren [because the flesh is under sentence of death] we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh. For if ye *live after the flesh*, ye *are about to die*; but if through the Spirit ye put to death the works of the flesh, ye shall live:" 12, 13. Now here it is certain, that there is a threatening of another death than that which befalls alike those living after the flesh, and those living after the Spirit. And the life promised to the living after the Spirit is one not to be enjoyed by those living after the flesh. It is a future one. "Ye are about to live." It is a life of reward adjudged by Christ at His coming. It is then the special life of the first resurrection. "They *lived* and reigned with Christ a thousand years. *But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished*:" Rev. xx, 4, 5. So says our Lord, "They who are *accounted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead*, neither marry nor are given in marriage. For neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being [that is, 'because they are'] sons of the resurrection:" Luke xx, 35, 36; John v, 28, 29; Rom. v, 17. "Furthermore, we had fathers of our flesh who used to correct us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of our spirits? and *we shall live*:" Heb. xii, 9. This does not mean we shall be spiritually alive. For those to whom the apostle was writing were already spiritually alive.

The other result is then given. "But he that soweth to the spirit shall out of the spirit reap life everlasting."

That is, he who lives according to the new nature, the Christian calling—shall reap life, as the other reaps death. "The spirit is life, because of righteousness."

'But it is not said, 'shall reap *millennial* life,' but '*eternal* life.'

It is true. But it is also true, that for those who obtain part in the glory of the first resurrection, eternal life has already begun. It was then, I suppose, designed of God to comfort us by showing, that the reward once begun, shall never end: lest we should begin to think, that the life of the thousand years was *all* our hope. Certain it is, that the eternity of life and bliss is several times spoken in this connection where we might expect the millennial life to be named of. God "will render to each according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and incorruptibility [the first resurrection], *eternal life*:" Rom. ii, 5—7.

So Paul sought that God's elect should obtain "the *salvation* which is in Christ Jesus together with *eternal glory*:" 2 Tim. ii, 10. Here the salvation of Christ is seen to be distinct from the glory, and the glory is eternal. Still more striking is the incident in Matt. xix. Jesus promises the twelve, in consideration of their surrender of all at His call, a kingdom with Himself in the millennial day, when Israel shall be restored. And then He goes on to enlarge the sphere of promise to any others of His followers who shall have abandoned anything for Him. "They shall receive in this age a hundredfold, and in the coming age *eternal life*:" Luke xviii, 29, 30.

The crops gathered out of this field, blessed of God, last for ever. Wheat has been known to last some three thousand years. But this corn of a better soil and quality, shall abide for ever.

9. "But let us not grow weary of doing good: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

It is not enough to *begin* zealously a life after the spirit. There must be the "patient continuance in well-doing." There must be "diligence to the end, in order to the full assurance of hope:" Heb. vi. Here many fail. In pursuit of the kingdom they grow weary. 'They have no root in themselves,' and in time of temptation fall away. Some of the racers get out of breath, and sit down before the goal is reached. Such will not win the prize of the race. "Look to yourselves," says John, "that we lose not the things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward : " 2 John 8.

The exhortation is very necessary. For the battle to which we are called is never-ending here. The onsets of the enemy are sometimes peculiarly fierce and trying. Many are the Christian's discouragements in doing good. In some cases he is deceived. Some of whom he hoped better things, prove ungrateful and treacherous. Beside the discouragements without, he has trials within. He feels like Israel in the desert, as though the promised land would never be arrived at. Why this long delay?

Hence the word of exhortation. 'Do not weary of sowing the good seed.' For the time of harvest *will* come. The season of it is in God's hands. He is Master of the seasons of the natural year. And the farmer is content to wait nine or ten months between the sowing of his fields and their reaping. Well then may we who trust to reap a better harvest, wait God's appointed time! His season will be the best. This life prolonged is a benefit to us. It is an opportunity of scattering more seed. "The harvest is the end of this (evil) age." And it shall have an end.

"We shall reap, *if* we faint not." Some promises to believers are unconditional. Some are conditional. He who leaves off his labour cannot expect his reward. Demas, who began the pursuit of the kingdom, at length turned to love this present evil age, and so

forsook Paul, who ran the race to the end, and is sure of the crown : 2 Tim. iv, 10. Great is God's grace in our unconditional election to eternal life. But that is not all, as some would make it. God is not only the gracious Benefactor of the undeserving, He is also the righteous Judge of His people, and the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him : Heb. xi.

10. "So then as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all ; but especially to those of the household of faith."

While Paul begins his epistle with strong denunciations of works, considered as works of law designed to procure justification for the sinner, the close of his epistle sets very strongly in favour of the works of the Spirit wrought by one already justified by faith and renewed by the Holy Ghost. The Most High can receive them with pleasure from His children.

Such being the motives presented to us, let us work! Let us do good! Various are the ways of doing good, just as the needs of man, of the body, and of the spirit are diverse. To call sinners to the faith is good. To build up saints is good also. Abundant room is there for going about as Christ did, to do good. It may not be great things that are given unto your hands. The gathering of sticks for the fire to warm some poor, wet, shivering, wretched passengers and mariners was seemingly a small affair. But God was well pleased therewith, and has caused it to be written for our learning : Acts xxviii.

God's commands then and our own interests point the same way. There is an opportunity now to each to do something for Christ. The time is brief. The night is coming, wherein none can work. The Lord is coming, and then sowing ends, and reaping is begun. This season of sowing occurs but once in eternity. Let us use it then! Wide is the field! God has sent His Son to the world. We may do good to the ungodly. But there is another division of mankind.

Out of the world of unbelief God has chosen a household—the men of faith; and these, as the family to which we by God's grace belong, have the strongest claim. "But especially unto the household of faith."

Then, Christian, look to your expenditure of time, and money, and abilities. Will Christ be pleased with them? is the great question. Are you living for time present, or for the day to come? Do you really believe in Christ's reward to good works? or do you look on money given as so much *lost*; and yourself *cheated* in giving? Are you growing more liberal, or more covetous? Is your purse's opening to give, increasing? or closing up? Have you money ready to be sown? How will your field look in the day of Christ's coming? With whom will it be best in the day to come? With those whose jewel-box glitters with gold, sapphires, rubies, diamonds? or with those who, sensible that this is not the suited and commanded adornment of the Christian, send on their property before them on high, committing it to Christ's hands, to be received, when the adorners of the failing flesh shall meet only corruption? Do you not feel assured, that you, by your conduct here, are deciding your position and dignity for the day of the kingdom, and for the eternity which lies beyond it?

God is glorified in two ways. (1) By the present and future blessings and rewards attached to those who obey his words. (2) But also, by the ill effects, present and future, resulting to those who prefer their own way, and hearken not to promise or warning. The Lord give us grace to be found amongst the first class! How many in that day will be found in Esau's position? He sold his birthright for a trifle, and the proceeds of it were gone in an hour. Years passed by, and he forgot all about the sale, and was looking for the blessing, only to find it beyond his reach. Vain were his tears of sorrow, vain his piercing cry of amazement, dismay, and despair! Though it was a father that was

dealing with a favourite son, the loss was irreparable: the father was firm.

Is my reader a worldly man, living to the world and the flesh? Let him not imagine that all will somehow come right at last. The future life is to this as the crop to the seed. He who sows sins will reap judgments. Those sentenced in the world's last day, will reap as they have sown. The refuser of mercy will only find his desert in the fires and the scourges of justice for evermore!

11. "See in what large letters I have written to you with my own hand."

This part of the epistle is what we should call a postscript. The letter was finished, when the size of the writing struck the apostle. He lets them know, that, unlike his epistles generally, it was all written with his own hand. Ordinarily, he got some one to write for him, as we see, Rom. xvi, 22. "I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord." After a forged letter, professing to come from Paul, had been palmed on the Thessalonian church, Paul added to each letter his signature at the close to authenticate it: 2 Theas. iii, 17.

"The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write."

As one says, "Would that we could look on that epistle just as it came from the apostle's hand!" What became of it? It is not known. It would be likely to be used up by many readers fingering it, and many scribes copying it, in its progress among the churches of Galatia and elsewhere. Or it was perhaps seized upon by the Romans in their enmity, or by the Mahometans, when the whole of Galatia was conquered by them.

Why did he write it in large letters? I do not know. But he wrote it with his own hand, to testify his affection for them. Perhaps one reason why he would

not employ a secretary on the occasion was, that, as it was full of blame, he would let none see what he wrote, but the parties to whom it was directly addressed.

12. "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, these are compelling you to be circumcised only lest they should be persecuted for the cross of the Christ."

God is now refusing the flesh in its various forms. After its trial in previous ages it is now under the ban of the Lord. God regards now the beauty of the spirit, and seeks reality before Himself. "We are the circumcision who worship God in spirit, and put no confidence in the flesh."

The last day will show, as Haldane says, that many practices and many doctrines are upheld, not because found in the New Testament, and sanctioned by Christ, but because they are of the world, and are adopted by the flesh and maintained, because else there must be loss of income, reputation, and friendship. These were insincere men, who would not bear the reproach of Christ; and so sought to take up a middle position between Christ and Moses, or as the proverb says, 'would hold with the hare, and run with the hounds.'

Paul shows the hollowness of the motives of these Judaizing teachers. They were using all means to press circumcision on the Galatians. What was their reason? That they might escape persecution from the embittered Jews. They went over to the side of the men of circumcision. They identified themselves with Hagar, and became her sons, that they might escape the persecution which befalls the men of the spirit from the hatred of the men of the flesh. The motive here was disallowed by God, and the result was disastrous to the faith.

Circumcision and the cross of Christ are moral opposites. They are really so before God; they are felt to be so by man. The cross of Messiah overturns all which the Jew by nature values. It declares that

there is no salvation by man's goodness and obedience under law; and therefore, that in the matter of salvation the Jew is no better off than the Gentile. This mortified his pride. And to hear that his nation were so blinded as not to know Messiah when he came, but that *all*, learned and ignorant alike, joined to condemn and to put Him to death, this exasperated him. To hear that one cursed by the law is the Son of God, through whom alone as the sacrifice, any son of man can be saved, stung him to the quick. He persecuted, therefore, to the death wherever he could.

13. "For neither do they who have been circumcised keep the law; but wish that you should be circumcised, in order that they may boast in your flesh."*

The apostle proves by their conduct in the matter, that his charge is true. The movers on the side of circumcision were not honest though unenlightened men, who really believed that the way of salvation was through the law of Moses alone, and in consequence observed it all. Toward such Paul would have been

* There are two readings here. (1) "They who are *getting* themselves circumcised;" (2) and "they who *have been* circumcised." Which is the true? The latter evidently. The former class were halting, near to circumcision but not yet circumcised. They were not then the parties that would exert pressure on others. It was "those who had been circumcised," either at birth, or some time before the apostle wrote. Those who were already in the net were the only ones likely to press others into it.

The present indicative and participle are right enough in the other occurrence, v, 2, 3: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you *get yourselves circumcised*, Christ *shall* profit you nought. But I testify again to every man that *is getting himself circumcised*, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Here it is seen, that the περιτεμνομενοι were those on the point of accepting the rite, who might be deterred, by a view of its consequences. To these, therefore, the apostle speaks in a different strain from that which he uses toward those already circumcised.

more respectful. For circumcision really was an engagement before God to observe all the law. But these would own, that they did not look to circumcision and the law to save them, while yet they used every effort to get Gentiles circumcised. They were seeking to approve themselves to men; not perceiving that they were really putting believers under the justice of the Most High and the curse of God, making slaves of God's children redeemed through Christ. They wished to boast to the persecutors, how many of the Gentiles they had led over to Moses. 'See how zealous we are for the law!'

And the Jews were satisfied to abstain from persecuting those who to appearance had come over to their views. How often this is the case! Where religion is a thing of the flesh the great anxiety is for the outward show, and neglect of the inward reality.

But the Lord accepts not this mixture of Gospel and law, of Christ and Moses. It is either man's works, challenging the Just God to find any flaw in them to condemn; or it is a guilty sinner resting on the mercy of God, who has provided a Saviour in His Son. Christians! seek not by compromise with the world to escape its persecution! Let your hearts be established in grace, looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life.

14. "But far be it from me to boast, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world."

The true Christian has a boast, but not one in the flesh and the world. His boast is, that the Son of God, Creator and Lord of all, came down from above to seek the lost and to win their love. It is the boast that the Lord of life stooped to death for me; the Righteous One became accursed in my stead. Here is matter of boast indeed! Here is not grace alone, but salvation. God would keep Christians apart from the

world by the cross of the Christ. The world crucified the Son of God, and would do so again were He on earth. Then stand aloof from this evil world!

To the world the cross of Christ is a stumbling-block. For the Christian it sets a gulf between himself and the world. The reception by Paul of Christ the Crucified as his Saviour changed all his pursuits, all his estimate of things around. The world was to him a malefactor, black, in the deepest guilt, under sentence, and on the gibbet. He no longer loved it, or sought its honours, or pleasures, or wealth.

The receiving into the heart and the preaching this cross, at once destroyed all Paul's former credit with the world. Previously to that he was in a fair way of promotion; a man of ability, study, knowledge, zeal, a leader of his party, and trusted by them. But to join the assembly of the Crucified was at once to become a fool and a madman, a dangerous person, a criminal worthy of the most cruel death. The separation between Paul and the world was complete; and it was designed by God.

The Most High severed between Israel and the nations, by the position of the land which He gave them, by His strict commands against idolatry, the peculiarity of the laws of their table, and their circumcision.

They were to be unlike the nations, and hence they were set apart from others. It was only in separation from idolaters that they would be likely to hate and flee idolatry. Hence Jehovah kept the two apart.

But the cross of the Christ is a more powerful means still of separating the Christian from the world, whether Jewish or Gentile. This is God's purpose, as Paul said at the opening of the Epistle: i, 4. Now he discovers to us the means employed, the cross.*

* *Δι' ου.* I translate—'by which'—the cross: as the margin also gives it.

Israel could boast in the *throne* of Messiah the Son of David, and own Him Lord of the nations and of Israel; but to hear that Jesus the Crucified, who lay in weakness under the curse, was Messiah, the Lord of Israel, and worthy of worship, was the loathing of their soul. 'This *Christ* of theirs superior to *Moses* indeed!'

The cross which separates between the true Christian and the world, is not the carved ivory, or jet, or gold worn on the bosom. That may be, and oft is, worn without, and the true cross of Christ refused within. It was wise in Hezekiah to break up Moses' serpent of brass, as soon as it drew Israel away from Jehovah the Redeemer.

Why was the world crucified to Paul? Because the cross of the Christ, of whom he is a living member, has taken him out of the flesh, and of the world, which is the sphere in which the flesh lives, and moves, and rejoices.

What a contrast! Paul preached the cross, and boasted in it, while these hid it and feared the world's hatred of it. But Paul advanced the Gospel everywhere: these checked and hindered it.

15. "For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."

In Moses the state of the flesh, as Jewish or Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, was of the deepest moment. Moses took up fallen human nature in its best specimen, the family of Abraham, the friend of God. Motives of the strongest kind were brought to bear upon it, to see if by cultivation and promises, by threats and commandments, it could be made to bring forth fruit to God. But the old man proved itself utterly corrupt. It would not love and obey God, let Him do what He might on its behalf. The crucifixion of the Son of God, by Jew and Gentile, is the last and most conclusive proof. No after-attempts of men will

succeed in effecting what the work of Christ could not.

There is no improving the evil tree. Root, leaf, blossom, fruit, sap, all are evil.

God, therefore, has brought in "the *new man*"—a new creation. Christ is the second Adam; the first Adam is under sin, death, the curse. He who would be saved, he who would please God, must come out from the old. He must belong to the new. The passage from the one to the other is according to God's plan strongly marked. The Lord has set in the baptism (or immersion) which He commands to the believer, the death and burial of the old man, and the resurrection of the new. The Pharisee of the Jews, the philosopher of the Gentiles, are, till renewed, both at an equal distance from God. Both, in order to be able to please God must die to Adam, that they may be renewed in Christ the risen Man.

As there is a new creation of the soul, so it enters into a new world, as *begotten again* by the Spirit of God; and then comes the new *birth* out of water, marking the new *life* begun, which is to go on increasing for ever. The old attitude of the law in this matter was, 'There is evil in man: take it away. Let the good be shown and flourish!' Hence circumcision or the removal of a portion of the flesh, was its characteristic rite. But God's characteristic rite of the Gospel is the flesh's *death and burial* in immersion.

Outside of Christ are the flesh, and the world in its old division of Jew and Gentile, with their characteristic marks. But the significance of those things has changed with Christ's resurrection, the Spirit's descent, and the new creation.

16. "And as many as shall walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Christ is the head of the new creation. There is life spiritual alone in Him. An adieu to the old Adam and devotion to the new, is the only accepted standing

now. "Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye *must* be born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." The commands of Christ, the example of Christ, are the new rule.

Moses and his laws were for the flesh, its taming, its cultivation, its improvement. But Moses is left now, by those that are in Christ. Moses was engaged with the old creation, and the old man; but new hopes, new principles, new commands, are to guide the new man. He is called out from the flesh to the Spirit; from earth to heaven.

There are other rules beside that of Christ—"the rule of St. Benedict," 'of St. Francis,' of 'the monks of La Trappe,' but they bring no peace to the soul, or mercy from God: they are the vain traditions of unbelief, founded by men who knew not Christ, nor a religion based on the forgiveness of sins in grace. If the God-given rule of Moses be now rejected, how much more the will-worship of men!

Now the Christian heart is to beat with affection towards all that are truly Christ's. And go not back again into Egypt, Christian! "The world passeth away and the fashion thereof; but he that doeth the will of the Lord abideth for ever."

Behold the fruits of the new standing which is given by the righteousness of Christ and the spirit of Christ! "*Peace* be upon them and *mercy*!" How contrasted this with Israel and law! There, at Sinai, when they were to take on them the yoke of law, God came down in the terrors of His greatness as the Just God. It was not '*peace* on them,' but fear, and dismay. They were warned, that the fire that blazed to the midst of heaven might in a moment at any act of transgression burst forth on them, and cut them off. And Moses in forty days has to send on them the *sword* of war from God in all its afflicting severity. How different the "*Peace* be unto you" of our Risen Lord! How

different the throne of grace, to which we may draw near boldly, to find '*mercy* and *grace* to help in time of need!'

"And upon the Israel of God." These words, simple as they sound, offer considerable difficulty.

It is manifest that the '*Israel of God*' stands in contrast with the '*Israel of man*.' '*Israel after the flesh*' is cast off by God, as long as this dispensation lasts. They are lost sheep, enemies of the Gospel for our sakes. They will indeed be restored to the favour of God. But that mercy for Israel will be a dispensation to come. We may say then there are two ways of taking this phrase.

1. If we take the words as in our translation—"And upon the Israel of God,"—then another body, distinct from those '*in Christ*' is supposed; and the words will refer to the renewed men of Israel, whom God will restore to Himself and to their land in millennial days. These will no longer trust the flesh, or their circumcision, but will walk obediently with God, as renewed in grace by His Spirit. Upon such there will be peace and mercy. To this the reading "*shall walk*," which, I think, is the true one, lends help. And the Psalms speak of the day when, on the new generation of Israel there shall be peace: Psa. cxxv, 5.

"As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity, but *peace shall be upon Israel*." To the fearer of Jehovah it is promised,—"*The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel:*" cxxviii, 5, 6. See also Isa. liv, 7, 8. "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment: but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer." "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed: but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the

covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy upon thee:" 10. And again—"Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and *the mercy to Abraham*, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the day of old:" Mic. vii, 20.

2. Others translate it "Even upon the Israel of God." For they conceive that only one body—the Church of Christ, is spoken of as the true Israel, which has taken the place of the old. Against this, it should be observed, that it is doubtful if this signification of the Greek word be in these circumstances admissible.

It is an expedient to be adopted only if a good sense can in no other way be given. But there is no need here.

17. "In future let none give me trouble: for I bear in my body the marks of [the Lord] Jesus."

The apostle has more than once in this Epistle alluded to the false accusations of his enemies. They declared that he was insincere, and a time-server; that now he preached circumcision, and now freedom from it, according as it suited his audience for the time being. Here is his parting blow at the charge, which thoroughly, in a single sentence, demolishes it. The Jewish teachers bore in the flesh the mark of Moses. But Paul—there is stress upon the "I"—carried everywhere with him the proofs of his sincerity. His body was scarred with marks of the wounds inflicted on him as the servant of Jesus. (There is doubt about the genuineness of words "the Lord" in this verse). How did he gain these scars? Not because he preached circumcision. Had he done so he had been let alone. They were then visible proofs of his sincere devotion to the Lord Jesus. He suffered with, and like, his Master.

The reference here is to the brands burnt by masters into the flesh of their slaves, to prove to whom they belonged. The servants of Moses were never marked as Paul was. His were the wounds inflicted on the

new man by the old. The Judaizers escaped these scars. And Paul could have avoided them, and would, had he been insincere as they.

18. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen!"

Thus grace begins the Epistle, and grace ends it: i, 3, 6. The law is justice; the Gospel is grace. For sinful man to turn from grace to justice, is madness, entailing destruction. That any should do so roused Paul's astonishment, anger, dismay. What ingratitude toward God, to disregard the incarnation and sufferings of the Son, as the way to peace and glory!

Grace comes to us through Christ alone. Moses can draw out of the flesh only sin, the curse, and death. But the grace which is in Christ leads the renewed out to righteousness, blessing, and eternal life and glory. These rest on the spirit of the renewed man. It is a gracious wish of the apostle. After the just severities to which their turning from grace to justice had led him, he does not cease to own them as the Lord's. His last word is "brethren." It is put out of its usual place on purpose to make it more emphatic, and more observed. He owned them as his brothers in the spirit. He had good hope of their restoration to the truth.

But this Epistle probably cost the apostle more of trial than any other. There are no thanks to God for them at the beginning: no salutations to any at the end!

[NOTE.]

IS THE CHRISTIAN UNDER THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

Many have heard the following story; which is probably true. A gentleman called on Rowland Hill, who declared to him, that he considered the Christian not to be under the Ten Commandments. R. Hill rang the bell. The servant came. 'John, show that man out of the house; see that he does not steal any one of the hats or coats in the passage; and mind you count the spoons after he is gone!'

This gives in a concise and smart form the views of many Christians. 'The Ten Commandments are THE MORAL LAW. They are universally binding on all the sons of men. He then who says we are not under them, does away with all morality, and opens the floodgates to all iniquity.'

The New Testament on the other hand affirms, that we are not under Moses; and yet the morality of the Christ is far higher and stricter than that of Sinai: Matt. v—vii.

I will then set forth proofs:—

- I. That while some of the Ten are moral, the Ten Commandments are not really the Moral Law.
- II. That as given on Sinai they are not universally binding on men.
- III. That they are the covenant of Mount Sinai, and so knit by God to the rest of the Law, that there is no severing them.
- IV. That they are not designed for the believer in Christ, and can neither justify nor sanctify him.

Let us then consider points I. and II.

'The Decalogue is not the Moral Law, and some parts of it are not universally binding on men.'

Let us look, then, at the Ten Commandments! There are two editions of them; one in Ex. xx (which was broken), one in Deut. v, which contains the renewed covenant.

1. To whom were they given? *To the twelve tribes of Israel alone*, after God's proposal, that they should be His people, if they observed them: Ex. xix, 3—6. That proposal was accepted by Israel. They, and they alone, are God's people of the earth.

2. The preamble to the Decalogue asserts something which is not true of any other people than Israel: xx, 2. "I am the Lord thy God, *which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*" This is not true of Englishmen. They were not brought out of Egypt, neither were they enslaved there. Nor is Jehovah the God of the nation of England. This first point is so strongly felt, that the Church of England, which asserts these laws to be binding on Englishmen, leaves out that part of the preamble. In the Communion Service you have—"God spake these words, and said; 'I am the Lord thy God: Thou shalt have none other gods but me.'" Jehovah, then, has so far begun the statement of these laws as to exclude all other nations than Israel.

'But have not we been brought out of spiritual Egypt?'

- (1) Even that is not true of all Englishmen.
- (2) If you make those words spiritual, you must go through the *whole law* with that as your principle of interpretation, and then the whole law is changed; and it forbids spiritual murder, spiritual adultery, and theft.
- (3) But it is to be taken literally. It is called 'the letter,' in opposition to the Gospel which is 'the spirit': 2 Cor. iii.

II. The Second Commandment forbids the making of any graven image, or any likeness of any natural object. It forbids, therefore, drawing, painting, sculpture. 'Oh, but it was only given against making any such object with a view to worship it!' Nay, that is not said: the two things are distinct. First comes the prohibition to *make*, then to *worship*. There could be no worship of an idol, if no idol were made. If then you suppose that Christians and men in general may draw, engrave, and be sculptors, you confess that part of this is not a moral command. It is a special command addressed to the people of Israel alone by Jehovah their God.

III. The Third Commandment forbids irreverent use of the name of Jehovah the God of Israel. This is partly moral; but Moses commands the reverent use of *oaths*. *Jesus forbids them wholly*: Deut. vi, 13; x, 20; Ex. xxii, 11; Matt. v, 33, 34.

IV. What says the Fourth Commandment? '*Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.*' On this many insist. 'See! this shows that the Sabbath was observed from Eden. Israelites are only told to "*remember*" it. It was, therefore, something known to them previously.' Now it is true, (1) that God rested the seventh day from all His works. But it is not true, that God told Adam about His rest, much less that He commanded Adam to rest then. And unless God had ordered it, it would only have been a piece of will-worship, and therefore displeasing to Him, to have observed it. (2) The law of the Sabbath was indeed given before Sinai, but it was only after the nation had entered the desert. Its first enactment was upon the giving of the manna: Ex. xvi.

I claim then, that the Sabbath is binding upon Israel alone, a token of the covenant of Sinai made with that nation, and with that nation only: Ex. xxxi, 13—17. It is therefore not a moral command; by which I understand, that it does not approve itself as

binding on the conscience, as soon as stated—that every man ought to devote the seventh day of the week to the Creator; because of the six days of creation and the seventh of God's resting, after His works of the six days were over.

Here the difference between the two editions of the Decalogue comes in with great force. The Church of England has fastened on the *first* copy of the Ten Commandments: Ex. xx. But that was broken, and never came into the camp of Israel. The edition given to Moses as the mediator, after the breaking of the first tables, puts the observance of the Sabbath on a footing which manifestly is true of Israel only. Jehovah designed the seventh day as a rest to Israelites and their beasts, in memory of their slavery in Egypt, and their deliverance thence: Deut. v, 14, 15. This, then, is not an universal but a special ceremonial command; and if you wish to observe it, you must do so in all its special enactments. (1) *You must stone every sabbath-breaker*: Ex. xxxi, 14, 15; xxxv, 2; Num. xv, 35. (2) *You must light no fire on the sabbath-day in your house*: Ex. xxxv, 3.

Is this the Gospel? No, 'tis opposed to it! Moses bids those who are seeking to justify themselves by their works, to keep the Saturday in memorial of the Creator, as a day of *rest in the old creation*. But Christians who are already justified by the work of another, keep the Sunday (or Lord's day) in memorial of Christ's work finished in resurrection. *Their rest is in another (or the heavenly) world; not in this, which is under sin and death.*

If the Christian is *bound* to observe the law's Sabbath (or Saturday), how is it that among the things declared by the council at Jerusalem to be necessary, we do not read of the Ten Commandments, and especially of the Sabbath? Acts xv.

Moreover, if this commandment binds the Christian, "*the whole law*," 'judicial, ceremonial, and moral,' is

binding also. For in the explanation and enforcement of the Ten Commandments which God gave to Moses, the *seventh year* is to be observed, as well as the *seventh day*, and the feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles: Ex. xxi, 4; xxii, 10—17. And so at the renewal of the covenant with Moses: Ex. xxxiv, 21—24.

V. The Fifth Commandment is a moral one. It is not 're-enacted,' however, as many say. The command to obey parents is indeed given in the New Testament, but it is *issued to a different body, and is set on other ground*. Let us look at the place: Eph. vi, 1, 2, 3. "Children obey your parents *in the Lord*: for this is just. 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' which is the first commandment with promise; 'that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.'" Here then, through the apostle, a command of *Christ* is given to *believing children*, to obey "*in the Lord*," which alters altogether the ground of obedience. It is not the obedience *in the flesh*, whether as sons of Adam, or as sons of the flesh of Abraham—as the Fifth Commandment of Moses supposed.

'But why did the apostle quote the commandment, if it were not to show that it is binding still on Christians?'

He tells you why. He cites Moses' law, as a testimony of what is "*just*."* For the law is founded on and displays the principle of justice. Nor has the Lord given believers any land on earth, as the law promises.

'Why then does the apostle quote the promise?'

Because the millennial day and its life of a thousand years will be the reward of believing children who please God by obeying this commandment of Christ.

VI. What of the Sixth Commandment? What of the seventh, eighth, and ninth? The same moral offences

* ΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ.

forbidden in those commandments are *forbidden by Christ and His apostles*. But they are not a re-enactment of the law, or of those special commandments to Israel. The prohibitions are addressed to *another body*; and the *penalties* are different. They are addressed to Christians; who are neither Jew nor Gentile, but called out from both. And awful are the Lord Jesus Christ's threatenings to those disciples who disobey them: Matt. v.

III. *The Ten Commandments are the Covenant of the Law, and they are so knit to the rest of the Law, that none can sever them.*

In vain do any bid us remark the place of superiority given to the Ten Commandments, in that they alone were spoken by God to the whole nation, and written by Jehovah on the tables of stone, and then enclosed in the ark which was laid up before Him in the Holiest of all.

These points should overwhelm with confusion those who attempt to sever them from the rest of the law. For they are declared to be *Jehovah's covenant with Israel*. They are the *core of the covenant*: the body of the tree out of which the branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit spring. God says so.

Look at Ex. xxxiv, 27, 28.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a *covenant* with thee and *with Israel*. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables *the words of the covenant, the ten commandments*."

Look again at Deut. ix, 9, 11, 15, where Moses is enforcing the covenant on Israel:—

"When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water."

Here Moses calls the two tables on which the Decalogue was written, "*the tables of the covenant.*" The ark in which they were placed was "*the ark of the covenant.*" Also, and if possible stronger still: Deut. iv, 13.

"*And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone.*"

Now these Ten Commandments are united with many others as their consequences, both at the first giving of the law, and at the renewal of the covenant with Moses as mediator.

He then who is under the Ten Commandments is under law, and the whole law. God will not allow of any addition to it or of any diminution of it: Deut. iv, 2; xii, 32. And He pronounces accursed, as Paul observes, any one who shall break any point or particle thereof.

These Ten Commandments were borne by Moses with shining face to Israel? When? After they were spared through grace. And what does the Holy Spirit say of them? That they are *the old covenant, the ministry of condemnation and death*, the entire opposite to that Gospel of grace and righteousness, which Paul bore to Christians: 2 Cor. iii. 'Ten,' is in Scripture the imperfect number; as twelve is the perfect and the abiding one. The Lord Jesus, never, in speaking of the law or its force, stops at the Ten Commandments. In Matt. xv, rebuking the elders for making void the law of God by their traditions, he cites, not the fifth commandment alone, but its *penalty* of death, which is a part of the law; and is found, not in Ex. xx, but in Ex. xxi, 17; and Lev. xx, 9.

In His reply to the rich young man, Jesus not only cites the Decalogue, as if that contained all the moral part of the law, He quotes from Leviticus one of the moral commands of the law: Matt. xix, 18, 19;

Deut. vi, 5; Lev. xix, 18. That is—*You cannot sever the Ten Commandments, whether found in Ex. xx, or Deut. v, from the rest of the law.*

If the Ten Commandments are binding on believers in Christ, they are binding on the *risen Christ also*. For those who by faith are in Christ, and one with Him, occupy the same position before God with Christ Himself. Of the wholly new standing thus given to the believer in Christ, baptism (or immersion) is a witness. It is a death and burial to the flesh; whether as of Adam, or of Abraham. Now the sphere and power of the law extends only over a man while he is alive. It is cut short by death. God therefore has appointed *death*,—and a *burial*, as the visible proof of death,—in His first rite of visible entrance into the faith of Christ.

The believer is dead and buried, by God's design, to Moses; and is risen, to belong to Christ. Now death is an absolute thing. Death to Moses cuts off all liability to every part and point of Moses' law: and the new life, shown in emblem by the rising out of the water, is a life of obedience to Christ wholly. It is a breaking all the ties of the believer with the old husband, and the taking up of Christ entirely as the new: Rom. vii.

IV. *The Decalogue is not meant for the believer in Christ, and can neither justify, nor sanctify him.*

That the law cannot justify any that is under it, is so often repeated in the New Testament, that most believers own *that*; but they think, that a part of the law is to be "*our rule of life.*"

But the scriptures of the New Testament assert solemnly, that the law (Paul never divides it, as Christians do) is *not* made for a righteous man, but for transgressors of every kind: 1 Tim. i, 9, 10.

"Knowing this, that the law is *not* made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."

The law is indeed good for its own purpose of condemnation and death; but *he* uses it unlawfully who would attempt to make it sanctify the Christian. If you take it as your 'rule of life,' you must do so in every point, down to your dress, and circumcision, and the meats of your table; and where circumcision places you, this Epistle to the Galatians teaches clearly enough.

Law, instead of killing sin, as some would state it, kills the *man* who is under law: Rom. vii, 10, 11. "The commandment which was ordained unto life, *I found to be unto death*. For *sin*, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Not *law* slew *sin* in *me*, but *sin* by *law* slew *me*. Law, acting on those under it, instead of sanctifying, stirs up the corruption of man's nature; instead of destroying sin, it is *the strength of sin*. "THE STRENGTH OF SIN IS THE LAW:" 1 Cor. xv, 56.

How is the Christian then to be sanctified? By faith, which is the opposite principle to the law. The word of the Gospel, says Peter, once received "purifies the heart by faith:" Acts xv, 7—9. And our Lord Jesus Christ, giving his commission to the apostle of the Gentiles, says, that he sent him to turn them "from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are *sanctified by faith that is in me*:" Acts xxvi, 18. "And the law is *not* of faith; but the man which doeth those things shall live in them." The law deals with "the flesh" and the world! The Gospel alone renews the man's nature, sets him in Christ, works in

him by the Holy Spirit, and enables him to please God. Those in the flesh, and under law, cannot please Him. We can only serve God when we are in Christ, and we cannot with God's leave, be both in Christ, and under Moses!

Those under Moses are not in Christ: those in Christ are not under Moses. The extreme opposition between them has been once and again stated; especially in Gal. v.

The half-and-half system therefore of most Christians makes void both the Gospel and the law. They believe in *Christ* for *justification*: they go to *Moses* for *sanctification*, which is to pour disgrace on the Son of God; and all their lives they are under a sense of condemnation. They have not loved God with all their heart, or their neighbour as themselves. Then says law, 'You are cursed!' 'No!' they reply feebly, 'we are blessed (or we hope so): for we trust we are in Christ.' Thus, then, the faith of the Gospel steps in to stay the just penalty of law. But the command is not *law*, unless it demand and inflict the penalty on the transgressor of it. Thus, then, as the Holy Spirit says,—'they make law void through grace.' Did Paul do so? "*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish law*:" Rom. iii, 31. How does he establish law? By bringing the Christian *wholly out from under it, after paying all its dues*; then it is free to launch all its awful threats and curses against those who are under it. "*As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*; for it is written: Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them."

But it will be remarked, that this statement is negative only. What is the positive rule, that is to be our guide? First, let me observe that the expression 'The moral law,' which is no expression of Scripture, but a human phrase, carries along with it a fallacy of

much mischief. It supposes that there must be one set of laws given by God for man as man, abiding unchanged from age to age. Now Scripture has no such view. The duties of men toward God and their fellows change in many respects with the revelation which God gives of Himself, and with the distinction among men which He sets up. The basis-principle of God's laws with Israel is justice; the foundation-principle of Christ's commands to that new body—his disciples—is mercy.

Let me in a few words show, that what is prohibited as morally evil in the Ten Commandments, is forbidden also by our Lord.

1. *God the Father, Son, and Spirit* (a name unknown to law), having rescued us out of the perdition of the lost, claim our worship and love as the true God: 1 Cor. viii, 4, 6; Phil. iii, 3; Heb. ix, 14; xii, 28.

2. The Second Commandment is partly ceremonial. There is no prohibition to the Christian against drawing and painting. Against idolatry there are several commands. Christians are warned against it in 1 Cor. x, 1—14, lest God should be displeased with, and shut them out of the millennial kingdom, as He shut His redeemed Israel out of the land: Eph. v, 5; Gal. v, 19—21; 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10. In the law of Moses, the penalty was the being stoned by the hands of man. Idolatry is forbidden in Col. iii, 5, to Christians, because they are sons of God in Christ, buried and risen with Him, and therefore are to put to death the members of earth, and to live to things heavenly. Also because the wrath of God is coming on the doers of such things. See too 1 John v, 21.

Here, then, we observe, on how different footing the same matter is placed, in reference to the new people of God, as compared with its statement and enforcement on the ancient people.

3. The Third Commandment is partly moral; the Christian therefore is to fear God: Luke xii, 4;

Matt. x, 28; 1 Pet. ii, 17. But even here there is a marked difference. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, *and shalt swear by His name:*" Deut. vi, 13; x, 20. Now to the Christian, all swearing, how reverent soever, is forbidden, *because it takes him off the ground of grace on which he is set*, to put him on the footing of his deserts, and *because he is of himself powerless for good*: Matt. v, 33—37.

4. The Fourth Commandment is ceremonial. There is no precept accordingly, answering thereto in Christ's system.

5. The Fifth Commandment is moral; and believing children are to obey their parents "in the Lord." They will be blessed, if obedient, in the first resurrection from among the dead: Eph. vi, 1—3.

6. The Sixth Commandment is moral. Our Lord is here very much stricter than Moses, and far more awful in his threats: Matt. v, 21—26.

7. The Seventh and Eighth Commandments are moral. In regard to them, our Lord, in his commands to his new people, is more severe than Moses, both in the prohibition and the penalty: Matt. v, 27—32.

8. The same is true of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments: Matt. v, 21—26, 29.

The usual statements then about the Ten Commandments, and their re-enactment are untrue; and they trample on the clear demarcation which God ever makes between his people of the Old Testament, under Moses, on the one hand; and his people of the New Testament, in Christ, on the other.

Let me now show how the usual doctrines concerning the law, dividing it into different parts and uses, would have destroyed the apostle's argument in this Epistle throughout.

Let us consider the matter (1) in relation to the ZEALOTS, (2) his rebuke of PETER, and (3) his argument with the GALATIANS.

Let us suppose then, that the apostle holds the views

of our day concerning the Christian's position as it regards the law. He believes (suppose) that while Christians are not under the judicial or ceremonial law, they are under 'the Moral Law.' The Moral Law is the Ten Commandments. They are to be to the Christian, not the path of justification, for he is justified already; but the Rule of Life.

And now how would his argument with the Judaizing teachers stand? They could and would have said—

There is one fallacy, Paul, which runs through the whole of this Epistle. You treat everywhere the Law of Moses *as a whole*. You never distinguish it into its *parts*, as (1) Judicial, (2) Ceremonial, and (3) Moral. Do *you* not know—what every Christian child among us is taught—that while the two former parts of the law are not binding on believers in Christ, the third and chief part is? Know you not, that, even if we grant that it is not the rule for justification—the Ten Commandments are, and must be the Christian's '*rule of life*'? How can you so sharply, and under anathema, distinguish your Gospel from ours? You hold a *part of law* binding as well as we. Now, why are you not candid enough to admit this? See you not, how if this truth is introduced into your statements, it makes void your whole argument? You are convicted everywhere of overstatement disgraceful to an ordinary controversial writer, and much more to one professing to be inspired?

'You say Paul, "I through law *died to law*, that I might live to God:" Gals. ii, 19.

'Now while that might be true of the ceremonial and judicial law, *you ought not to die to the moral law, or the Decalogue*. Do you mean that you are not bound to keep the *Sabbath*? And if that is binding on Christians, how do you draw the line between the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law?'

'You say, 'you died to law, *that you might live to God!*' Know you not, that the Decalogue is '*the rule*

of life' toward God for the Christian, as well as the Jew?'

'You say, "If *righteousness come by law*, then *Christ died in vain*:" ii, 20. Now even if we grant that law is not the way to righteousness in the sense of justification, yet the Decalogue is the way of *sanctification*, as you must own, in your turn. You ought then to have distinguished here. For as the words stand, we can contradict them. "Righteousness (that is holiness or *sanctification*) *does come by the law*."'

'How Paul could have replied, I see not. He is convicted of overstatement, and of overstatement which would have overturned his whole argument. A part of the law is binding. Then, as Moses says, and as you admit, the *whole* is.'

'You own, that life is given now, though not by law. Well then, on your own showing, righteousness—in the sense of sanctification—comes by law. For you say, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if a law had been given *that was able to give life, verily righteousness would have been by the law*:" iii, 21.'

This theory then must have altered the whole character of the argument between Paul, and the Zealots for the law. Then the question must have been—'Under *how much* of the law does the Christian lie?' And, 'If it be granted, that he is bound by the Ten Commandments, by what principles will you show that the *whole* of the law does not bind him?' This is a difficult question and would need a very different style of reasoning.

'If the law of circumcision be not directly binding on each Christian, yet ought not its principles to guide us, in admitting the infants of believers?'

Again, "Ye heard of my conduct formerly in *Judaism*, how that beyond measure I persecuted the *Church of God* and desolated it, and I advanced in *Judaism* above many my equals in years in my own nation:" i, 13.

On which their criticism would bear very reasonably to this effect—'You speak here, Paul, as if Judaism and Christianity were *two rival and opposite systems*, which had no friendly alliance and dovetailing one with the other: as if no part of the one were incorporated with the other. You speak as if Judaism were the ancient ship Argo, of the earliest type, and Christianity the modern screw-steamer. But do you not know, that this modern screw-steamer is obliged to be built upon the keel and ribs of that old ship, under penalty of being dealt with as a piratical vessel?'

Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts xv, is quite decisive of the whole question. The Judaizers at Antioch demand the observance of circumcision: and circumcision, says Paul, carries with it the whole law. The affair is to be decided by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem: ver. 2. The deputation, consisting no doubt of representatives of both sides, arrives at Jerusalem: ver. 4. They declare in a public meeting God's work among the Gentiles. But believing Pharisees arise, who demand that the whole law of Moses be observed by them: ver. 5. A new meeting is called of the apostles and elders to consider this question: ver. 6.

Peter rises, and says that God had accepted the Gentiles already as His people by faith, the proof being that they were endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Why then would they put the yoke of Moses around their necks? Is not your hope of salvation, Jewish believer, by grace alone? ver. 7—10.

James sums up, and declares in consideration of the synagogues in every city, and the reading and expounding of Moses there, that Gentiles should be required to abstain from certain defilements, which otherwise would occasion an outcry on the part of unbelieving Jews, and would shut up the hearts of even believing Jews from fellowship with Gentile Christians.

How strange, that neither Peter, nor Paul, and

Barnabas (ver. 12), nor James once refers to the Decalogue, as binding on Christians?

But the assembly sends a joint letter. Shall we find the exception mentioned there? "We have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, *subverting your souls*, saying, 'Ye must be circumcised and keep the law,' to whom we gave no such commandment." "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us to lay upon you no greater burthen than these *necessary things*: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from things strangled, and from fornication:" ver. 24, 28, 29. Here there is no escape. Neither Pharisees, nor Jewish apostles, nor Paul and Barnabas, say a word about *the Decalogue being binding*! Nor do they send them a copy of the Ten Commandments; as they ought, if the usual ideas were true. But even if they forgot, *the Holy Ghost could not*. And He requires, in concession to Jewish feelings, not the observance of the Sabbath of the Decalogue, but of those *necessary things only*. Here Paul and Barnabas must have stepped forward, had modern doctrine been true. 'Of course we teach everywhere the Ten Commandments!' And had they said so, the Judaizers with one voice might have said, 'We want no more! put them under the Ten Commandments, and they have taken up the Covenant of Sinai, and must keep the whole law!'

But in truth the sanctification of the law is sanctification of the *flesh*, and is wholly different from the sanctification of the Gospel, which *buries the flesh as dead*. The sanctification of the law was the holiness of the *slave*, and is wholly unfitted to hallow the *free son* of God.

II. REBUKE OF PETER.

Let us see how these supposed principles about the Decalogue would affect Paul's rebuke of Peter.

To Paul's rebuke in Galatians ii, it is evident Peter could reply—'You are unjust to me Paul! You speak as if I must be seeking to *justify* myself by the observance of the law. You speak as if I could not take up a *part* of the law without being bound by the *whole*. Now this is unreasonable and unfair. *For you yourself own*, that the Christian is bound by the Ten Commandments. They are to be his 'rule of life:' he is by observance of them to be sanctified.'

'Now I am not attempting to be justified by the law, but only seeking to be *sanctified* by observing the law as my 'rule of life.' If even the Gentiles are to obey the *Sabbath*, why should not Jews born observe the laws of the *Mosaic meats*? Moses' 'rule of life' descends into other particulars than the observance of the Sabbath.'

'Is Moses' 'rule of life' to be found only in the Decalogue? By no means! He demands, as you know, observance of the laws about *meats*, as *part of the way to be holy*. You may not eat pork, rabbit, or eel. "For I am the Lord your God: Ye shall therefore *sanctify yourselves and be holy; for I am holy*; neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth:" Lev. xi, 44, 45. "Ye shall be *holy men* unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs:" Ex. xxii, 31. Similar commands are given: Deut. xiv.'

'Moses as you know touches my dress. It is a part of his 'rule of life' for holiness. I must wear a ribband and fringe of blue, "That ye may remember and do *all* my commandments, and *be holy unto your God*:" Num. xv, 37—41.'

'In short, the law's rule of life for those that would be holy brings in *the whole law*: holy times, holy places, holy trees, holy perfumes, and so on. And if the law's holy times are to be observed, men must be *circumcised*. The Passover cannot be observed without

circumcision: Ex. xii, 44, 48.' (What Paul says about holy seasons now, we have seen. They are inconsistent with Christianity. That is, Judaism and Christianity are two opposite systems.)

'You own, Paul, the Ten Commandments to be binding on all Christians. *But they are the essence of the covenant of Sinai*. If they be binding, how do you stave off the obligation to take up circumcision as the sign of the covenant, and so all the rest of the law?'

'If the central and chief moral portion of the covenant is obligatory, how can I with a good conscience refuse the other parts? I am to observe the seventh day (Saturday) on which Jehovah rested: am I not then to *stone the sabbath-breaker*? Am I not forbid to *kindle a fire* on that day? Thus then the *judicial* and the *ceremonial* laws bind me throughout. If I am to *rest* in the old creation, and in the flesh, then I am to *rejoice* in them also: and the commands to observe the old festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles come in.'

What would Paul's answer be to Peter's reply? as we gather from his words here.

'Law does not distinguish between justification and sanctification. It is the 'rule of life' with a view to both. You cannot go to it for one, without being held fast by it in the other. Go back to Moses' law as binding on you in any one point, and you go back a wilful self-confessed transgressor of law. And that brings 'death and the curse!' That is, modern ideas that any part of the Mosaic law is binding, are false! God's argument cannot stand, if the *obligation of any part of His law*, with a view to any use of it whatever, rests on the Christian.

III. TO THE GALATIANS.

Again the principles of modern days, if held by Paul, must have changed the whole spirit of the Epistle.

Instead of his being astonished at their leaving Christ for Moses as unaccountable, and the result of strong fascination, he must as a candid man, have begun with apology. 'I wonder not, friends and brethren, that after learning that the Decalogue is binding on you, you have not perceived clearly, *how much* of the law is to be enforced on you.' And then he must have distinguished, *if he could*, between the parts obsolete, and those in force on Christians. Is that the character of the Epistle? It is CHRIST or MOSES. ALL the Law or NONE! That is, he did not hold modern ideas about our sanctification by a part of the law.

"Received ye the Spirit by *the works of law*, or by the hearing of faith?" "He that is imparting to you the Spirit, is it by *the works of law* or by the hearing of faith?"

'Why do you again so sharply distinguish, Paul? We keep a part of the works of the law. For we observe the *Sabbath*, as you taught us, and *that* is a part of the law. We are not indeed observing it with a view to justify. But we are keeping it as necessary to sanctification.'

"The just by faith shall live! And the *law* is not of *faith*. But the man that doeth them shall live in them."

'Pardon us Paul, if we do not understand your trenchant distinction between 'faith' and 'law'! For have you not taught us, that a part of the law is necessary to the sanctification of the men of faith? Part of the law is surely our rule; as truly as the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

'You overstate the matter again fearfully in iii, 10, in saying, that "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." That as it stands, without any restriction, is not true. For all Christians are bound to keep the Sabbath; and they are not cursed, but blessed.'

'When the law curses those who do not obey every point of it, either that passage is wrongly alleged against those who keep *a part of law for sanctification*; or *the whole law must be observed by Christians as well as Jews*.'

We come next to a testing passage.

'*What was the use of the law?*' inquires the apostle. And now what is the reply? Is it, that it was 'designed in its fulness to justify and sanctify Israel; and after the coming of our Lord, to be in part a rule of life to the Christian?' Let us hear!

"*Wherefore then serveth the law?* It was added (1) *for the sake of the transgressions (of it)*; (2) *till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made*:" iii, 19.

It was designed, that is, not to justify, but to convict man of his sinfulness, of his inability to be saved thus, and so to prepare men's hearts for the coming of the Saviour. Its use then was to *cease* with the coming of our Lord. Then it is no 'rule of life' to the believer in Christ. Some verses which follow more distinctly still express this.

"Wherefore the law became our schoolmaster up to Christ that we might be justified by faith. *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*:" 24, 25.

'But, Paul, is not the Decalogue to instruct us in our way of life? Can anybody please God who is determined no longer to be in Moses' school?'

Here is the answer of the Holy Spirit, if you are willing to receive it. If you will, Christian, put yourself still in Moses' school to learn sanctification, it is your own doing against God's leave. The sufficient reason of leaving him follows in the next verse. "*For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*." Moses cannot make sons of God. He cannot graft into Christ. That is by faith. By faith Moses' *slaves* become "*sons of God*." For the men of faith are no

longer 'in Adam,' or 'in Moses,' but "in Christ;" and as Christ is not, in whole or in part, in Moses, but has died to him and his curse; so neither are *they* "in Moses."

Nay, *moreover*, God has devised a rite to signalize to the individual himself, to the world, and to the Church of God, the believer's passage out of Adam and Moses into Christ. "For as many of you as *were immersed into Christ put on Christ*." Immersion is emblematic death to Moses, emblematic resurrection-life to Christ. Christ, then, and His words are the rule of life to those new born to God and risen. The risen life is one quite beyond Moses' sphere, for he is occupied with a man only till death.

Accordingly, Moses' rite of circumcision takes up the chief varieties of the flesh, and emphasises their distinction. Immersion, as God's ordinance of the New Testament, *buries them all in one common grave of the waters*. "There is neither (1) Jew nor Greek, (2) there is neither slave nor freeman, (3) there is neither male nor female; for ye all are one in Christ Jesus:" 28. Law's principle is to set *each individual singly* before God on his own merits; the Gospel *puts the saved together as one in Jesus Christ*.

Again—what was the intent of Christ's coming?

"But when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made out of a woman, made under law, in order that He might buy out those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption of sons:" iv, 4, 5.

'Here again Paul, you overstate the matter. Christians, if you will, are bought out from law *as the way to justification*; but the Decalogue is the Christian's 'Rule of Life,' and he is therefore bound to observe the SABBATH. The whole law is binding consequently, for *the whole law is Moses' way to sanctification*.'

'Did our Lord accomplish the purposes for which the Father sent Him. Certainly! Then all believers are

bought out from under law. That is, they are under no part of its yoke. Law is slavery! They are free! Then no part of law's yoke is upon them. Those on whom law's yoke lies, whether for justification or for sanctification, are *slaves, not sons*. They are under the *curse*, not the *blessing*. God, therefore, by Christ redeemed entirely out from law His believing people, with a view to making them His free sons. And His free sons they are, as is proved by their cries to God as their Father in heaven; cries taught by the Holy Spirit: ver. 6.

Once more—

"How turn ye again to the weak and poor elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? *Ye are observing days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain:*" iv, 9, 10.

'How can you, Paul, speak so severely against the observance of days? Must not all Christians keep the Sabbath? Is not that a part of 'the moral law'? And, if it be right to observe the seventh *day*, why not the seventh *month*, and the seventh *year*?'

To Paul, then, the observance of the Sabbath was no part of Christianity; that is, to him the Ten Commandments were no part of the Gospel. In another Epistle, he classes the Sabbath with the new moons and festivals of the law: Col. ii, 16. It is a first principle then of faith in Christ, that there is to be no mixture of Moses and Christ.

What says Paul's appeal to Genesis, as giving God's inspired history of Abraham? Abraham had two sons, as he had two wives. Hagar answers to the law; Sarah to grace. The promise to Abraham came before law. Even so Abraham was married to Sarah, before he took Hagar as his concubine; but Hagar bore him a son first. That is, the law had its nation of the flesh visible, and put under God's treatment before Christ

came, and before the promises by Christ had any believers in them.

Hagar, then, is the covenant of Moses given at Sinai. Her sons are slaves like herself. Sarah is *our* mother. The son of the flesh persecuted the son of promise. What was the sentence of God thereupon? "*Cast out the bond-woman and her son* ; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman."

'Here Paul, your admission that Christians are to observe the two tables of the covenant of Sinai makes void the whole argument ; and shows how fanciful such an accommodation of the history is.'

What says the Word of God, then? Clearly, that as Hagar and Ishmael were quite distinct from Sarah and Isaac, so the two covenants are wholly apart one from another. Is Isaac to be sent to Hagar to be suckled, and fed? That would be conduct somewhat answering to the proposal to make the Decalogue a rule of spiritual life to the Christian. But no! By God's sentence, the old covenant of the flesh, and its children, are to be cast out from the house of faith ; for indeed, the heritages of the two mothers, and of the two children, are to be evermore different. The law's children and the children of the Gospel are not to inherit together in the day to come. Is it not certain, that if the Decalogue is to be part of the Christian's rule of life, the exception ought to have appeared here? And that exception would cut the sinews of the whole argument.

What means Paul's latest appeal about the law?

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of slavery. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. But I testify again to every man who is getting himself circumcised, *that he is a debtor to do the whole law* : " v, 1—3.

'But, Paul, is not the Christian under the Ten

Commandments? Are they part of the yoke of slavery? Why do you not distinguish the law into its *parts*, and its various *uses*, as differently binding on God's two people?' It can only be because no such distinction was allowed by God, or known to Paul ; *that is, the Christian is in no part or point under law, whether for justification or sanctification*. Paul does not divide the law : but, as circumcision binds to do "the whole law," so baptism attaches visibly the believer wholly to Christ. '*Circumcision and the whole law ; or baptism and the whole Gospel* ;' that is the only choice accepted by God! The two covenants are of opposite principles, and are not to be mingled. There is no room then for putting believers in Christ under the Decalogue.

Let us confirm the apostle's view of Jerusalem, by the history of the Acts. The Lord had dealt very graciously with Jerusalem—though it had put Him to death—in sending down the Spirit first on the disciples in that city. There began the witness to Jesus by word and miracle. But the city and nation refuse the new testimony of the Holy Ghost. They slay the man inspired by the Spirit. The church, God's gracious witness, is then broken up. *All are scattered abroad except the apostles* : viii, 1. They were the persons specially commissioned to travel with the Gospel to the nations : Matt. xxviii, 16—20. The providence of God however, if *they* will abide there, drives out others, who take up their work ; proclaiming the Gospel at first to none but Jews. But an evangelist preaches the witness of Jesus to Samaria with great results. The Lord then calls out two apostles to communicate the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands. After preaching in some villages of Samaria, the two apostles *return to Jerusalem* : viii, 25. Philip, who has left Jerusalem, is sent then to bring in the eunuch, not at Jerusalem, but after he has left it. God passes by the apostles at Jerusalem. Philip, after this service is fulfilled, is by

the Holy Ghost carried, not to Jerusalem, but to a town of the Philistines, which is under the ban of Israel's prophets (Jer. xxv, 20; Am. i, 8), and is called in the Old Testament, Ashdod: Acts viii, 40.

Saul is converted, not in Jerusalem, not even in the land of Palestine; but in Syria. Peter is next called out by the Holy Ghost to preach to the Gentile Cornelius in that semi-heathen place, Cæsarea. But he is slow to move. He needs a vision to show him that Moses' legislation about meats and association with the nations is no longer in force. This was to remind him, that he and his fellow-apostles had, through observance of Moses, forgotten the command to leave Jerusalem and preach to the nations. He needs also the Spirit's application of the vision: but at length he goes. He is convinced that the Lord has sent him. The Spirit turns the Gentiles who hear him to faith, and at once the Holy Ghost is poured upon them in His gifts of miracle. He cannot therefore doubt, that the inferior baptism of water is to be bestowed on the converts.

But he *returns to Jerusalem*: xi, 1. There he is assaulted by "the men of *circumcision*," as a breaker of Moses' law. He lays before them the evidence that convinced him it was his duty so to do. They are silenced. But none of them see, that the Lord is anew pointing out to them that law is binding no longer, and that their duty is to follow out the commission given, and to go to the nations.

Indeed, this incident shows us, that neither the believers of Jerusalem, nor Peter, perceived their real place. His accusers are "they of the circumcision." But this had been set aside by Christ and His Spirit. "*Circumcision is nothing (now) nor uncircumcision; but keeping the commandments of God:*" 1 Cor. vii, 17; Gal. vi, 15; Col. iii, 12. And Peter proves to us, that he retained in part his standing as of the law when he went to Cornelius. "Ye know how that it is an *unlawful* thing for a *man that is a Jew*, to keep company

with, or come unto one of another nation:" Acts x, 28. But this was to forget that he was now "*in Christ*" the Risen. "For as many of you as were immersed into Christ put on *Christ*. *There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus:*" Gal. iii, 28; Col. iii, 11; Phil. iii, 3.

After this last trial of the original apostles, when they still will retain their place and standing in the flesh, the Most High calls out another witness, who shall take up the work which they have omitted. And *he* can do it; for he leaves Moses and law altogether. Some meanwhile preach Christ to Gentiles. Many are converted, specially at Antioch. *There* God gives* to disciples, far away from Jerusalem, the *divine* name of Christians: xi, 26.

The Church at Jerusalem sends Barnabas to Antioch, who certifies them of the work being of the Lord. Barnabas calls out Paul to co-operate with him at Antioch. Jerusalem, meanwhile is the scene of famine, and of the imprisonment and slaying of apostles; Peter hardly escaping. From Antioch, Barnabas and Paul are sent on the first missionary journey to the nations. The first check in it comes from Mark of *Jerusalem*, who likes not the work and *returns to Jerusalem*: xiii, 13. *Contention on this point afterward divides Paul and Barnabas*: xv, 37—39. After their first missionary tour, Barnabas and Paul returned, not to Jerusalem, but to Antioch: xiv, 26. There the word of the Lord takes deep root.

But now, from Judea comes a far stronger check than before. Men of the circumcision require disciples to be circumcised, as necessary to salvation; Paul and Barnabas resisting, but in vain. The matter must be decided at Jerusalem. Thither the two apostles go up, and their story of God's work among the Gentiles is

Force of the Greek *χρηματιζω*.

well received. But there the necessity of law and its rites for Christians is urged anew: Acts xv. However, through the Lord's mercy, the freedom of the Gentiles is admitted, and declared by the *apostles* and elders at *Jerusalem*. The Jewish believers there, will, in spite of the word to Peter, hold fast the law.

And now see the ill-effects of this leaning as observable in Paul, the freest and boldest of the apostles. When in peril of life at Damascus, he flees to Jerusalem. They are afraid there to own him a disciple, but are at length convinced. He wishes to stay in that city, and there exercise his ministry. The Lord Jesus forbids it: it was vain. "*Depart*, for I will send thee to the nations afar:" xxii, 18—21. He is obliged to flee.

Later a wide door of service, and an *entreaty to stay there* is given him at Ephesus: xviii, 20. But he refuses; he prefers instead to *keep a festival at Jerusalem*: ver. 21. He finds, however, no sphere of action in the unbelieving city, and goes down to Antioch. Again Paul comes to the coast near Ephesus; but he will not visit it, "for he hastened, if it were possible, to be at *Jerusalem the day of Pentecost*:" xx, 16. He pursues his purpose, but is warned by the Holy Ghost *not to go up to Jerusalem*: xxi, 4. At Cæsarea he is warned, that if he went on he would be made prisoner. But his was a courageous soul: he fears not peril for Christ's sake. He arrives at Jerusalem; and is there invited, since he is among believers "*all zealous for the law*," to act as if he were as zealous for the law as they.

This was a false position: and never does the apostle appear to so little advantage as on this occasion. The plan avails not. He is made prisoner; hardly escaping with life. For years his zealous and fruitful missionary journeys are stopped. Borne to Rome, and seeking to introduce Christ to the Jews, he finds them there also blinded. The glad news therefore is to be carried to the nations, and they will hear it.

Thus then we see how it was that *the eleven apostles*, to whom our Lord gave the command to travel with His testimony to the nations, did not so: Matt. xxviii, 16—20. It was because they held to Moses and his laws of the table (Psa. lxi, 22). Law hampered even Paul. We are not then to assume, as some do, that the commissions of our Lord given in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, were not intended to be fulfilled by the apostles, but refer to a future period.

Nor, I suppose, were the apostles, Peter, James, and John, justified in assigning to Paul and Barnabas the mission to Gentiles; while *they* would confine *their* missionary efforts to Jews: Gal. ii, 9.

Let us summarize, in conclusion, what Scripture testifies concerning *law as a principle, and the law of Moses in particular*. We are not under law, but under the opposite principle, *grace*: Rom. vi, 14, 15; 1 Cor. ix, 20. It was *not* designed for the *righteous*, but for the *ungodly*: 1 Tim. i, 9.

'But we were born under law, the broken law of Eden. Many of us voluntarily put ourselves under it at the Confirmation of the Church of England. How then can we lawfully get free from it?'

Law holds a man during life: its force ceases at death. God then has provided a *death-in-law* which He calls believers in Christ to choose, and in pursuance thereof to be *buried*, in proof of their union with Christ risen. Thus we died to law, were loosed from it, delivered from it, are free from it: Rom. vii, 2, 4, 6; Gal. ii, 19. Christ ends law in righteousness for all believers in Him: x, 45. Christ's commands are now our law: Gal. vi, 2.

Law can neither justify a man, nor sanctify him: Rom. iii, 30; vii, 8; 1 Cor. xv, 56. It works wrath to the sinner: Rom. iii, 20; iv, 15. It curses him. It rests on the old priesthood of Aaron, and the sacrifices of bulls and goats: Heb. vii, 12. If they be done away, the law is also. As an instructor it was designed

to teach, only till Christ came, and faith in Him. Faith both justifies and sanctifies. Those led by the Spirit are *not* under law: Gal. v, 18. The morality of the Gospel turns on a different principle from that of law.

Observe, then, that God has two people, quite different one from the other. The one has an earthly calling; the other a heavenly. The one is born of the flesh of Abraham, the other born again by the Spirit of God. Their education is also different. One is brought up under law and its principle of justice; the other under grace, and these are to exhibit mercy in their lives. Their destiny too is widely apart; one is to enjoy earth, the other the heaven. Their standing before God is different. The one people are slaves; the other free sons of God. They have different priesthood, and sacrifices, and sanctuary. They have a different principle of holiness, and different rites. The attempt to mingle these two things is evil.

The Saviour taught it while on earth. He was invited to do as did the Pharisees and the Baptist—to add to the rites of law: Matt. ix, 10—17. He refused. He would not patch the old garment of Moses with a piece of new cloth. His doctrine was new wine; altogether distinct from the old wine of Moses. To put it into the old skins of the law would ruin both wine and bottles. The old skins suited the old wine. He would put his new doctrine into new rites suited to it. He has done so in His wisdom; and in consequence Israel and the Church abide to this day separate. Moreover in the day to come the old people and the new will each, in different departments of the kingdom of God, show forth His glory.

Let us, then, obey and value every word of Christ our Lord! "*One* is your Master, the Christ, and all ye are brethren."