

NOTES

OF

LECTURES ON GALATIANS.

BY G. J. S.

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NOTES
OF
LECTURES ON GALATIANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIBLE GOD-BREATHED.

IT is an infinite mercy, beloved brethren, to have a knowledge of the fact that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable. The word of God meets—and it is a wonderful trait of that word—all the errors that have been introduced into Christendom. The epistles written during the first century of Christianity upon the earth meet all the difficulties that arise, all the errors and all the additions that have been introduced during these nineteen centuries. Wonderful to think that God should so gift men that they should see with the eye of the Spirit all that was coming upon what was of God, and enable them in this blessed book that we have (not a very large book) to anticipate the full result of what they saw in germ, and to give us what is as divinely applicable to-day to the multiplicity of errors that we meet with on

every hand, and which all spring from certain roots, as then. Perchance the errors at that moment were in more simple form than they are now, but the roots were there and were all exposed for us, so that the truth of God is all that we need in order that our hearts may be kept pure and simple before God.

It is very interesting to notice that, in the epistles, in meeting the various errors, the apostle builds up a complete system of truth. There are also

GRADATIONS IN PAUL'S EPISTLES,

and some of them at least are thus linked together. In Romans, for instance, we get the great truth of righteousness laid down, man having no righteousness, and God revealing His righteousness; thus setting man upon earth as righteous before Him through faith. But while, as a fallen creature, he was alive in sins, he has to learn now that he is dead to sin—dead to the law. Romans takes you thus far. Christ is looked at as dead and risen: "delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." (Chap. iv. 25.) "Raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." (Chap. vi. 4.) "But the blessed Lord Jesus is looked at only once as ascended, and that is at the end of chapter viii.: "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,

who also maketh intercession for us." (Ver. 34.) But the value of His death, and the practical effect of it is applied to us in that we have died by baptism with Him to that in which we once lived.

Then in Colossians we get a step further; we are raised from the dead with Him, and death is here applied in a much more general way. We are said to be dead to the elements of the world—all that which goes to constitute the world, including many things which in our hearts we little believe to be such. However, not to dwell upon that, we are here looked at as raised again from the dead in the power of a new life, so that we are competent to look up into heaven, and be occupied with things that are up there, where Christ sitteth, although we are not yet there ourselves.

In Ephesians we get yet another step; we are raised up together and seated together in Christ in the heavenlies. There the whole thing is complete according to the counsels of God. Ephesians is the book of doctrine and of exhortation to conduct, suitable to the power that has linked us with Christ in that blessed place.

In Philippians we have experience. The apostle shews in himself what it is to practically apply that power in all the details of life here. It is as a man coming out of heaven again to live the heavenly life upon earth—as Caleb

came back from the land to walk through the wilderness in the sense of the blessedness of the pleasant land, and in faith in the ability of God to put them in it.

Now, the Corinthians fell off from the right line of truth to the one hand, and the Galatians fell off to the other; and in both cases the difficulty was "the flesh." The Corinthians were sanctified in Christ Jesus; called saints; yet they gave the rein to the flesh and the mind. They sought to improve Christianity by human wisdom, and at the same time yielded to the grosser passions, and fell into *licentiousness*. Denying the resurrection of the body—some among them held they were not accountable for the deeds done in the body, Christ's death answering for everything.

The Galatians, finding the flesh an incorrigible kind of thing that they could not keep under control, became the victims of Judaising teachers, who came from Jerusalem, and insisted that they must be circumcised after the manner of Moses, or they could not be saved. Finding a difficulty in managing the flesh, they fell into *ritualism*.

HOW IS THE FLESH TO BE TREATED ?

Now certainly the flesh is a difficulty, and we have to face it. What is to be done with the flesh? Surely we are not to give it license. No, God forbid! That was the Corinthian error.

Are we to seek to restrain it by the law? No! This was the Galatian method and is equally an error. Now, to-day men naturally fall into one or other of these errors. Either they say that Christ having died, everything is settled and no notice need be taken of the flesh; or on the other hand they try to bring it into subjection by the law. Both of these notions treat the flesh as a *living* thing, whereas God's principle of action is to hold it as *dead*. This is a most unpalatable form of truth to nature, and no doubt is the reason why it is so little put into practice by Christians generally. How little is the flesh treated as a dead thing. How little is it kept in subjection!

The apostle meets these errors, unsparingly, and judges in a very different way to that in which we should judge naturally. For which should we think was the worse? To let the flesh have license and fall into sin; or, to keep it under by the law as a rule of life? Oh! you say, I know which would produce the best social state of things. If you can keep it under by the law, it will be much better socially than letting it have its own way. Yet the apostle writes in more scathing terms to the Galatians than to the Corinthians. Licentiousness does not subvert Christianity like legality.

The apostle speaks in unmeasured terms. He will allow nothing to be added to the work of

Christ, and that the Galatians were doing. They did not attempt to add to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is of course impossible. No! they accepted the glory of His Person, but they were adding to His work. Not that they would say that His work was not a finished work in itself, but that God having done His part, there remained something for man to do. No! says the apostle. The smallest approach to legality frustrates the grace of God; declares that Christ is dead in vain. (Chap. ii. 21.) "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Chap. v. 4.)

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS.

We may now briefly glance at the subject of the several chapters of the epistle. The introduction is very short indeed. It consists of five verses only; but they are five verses which lay the foundation of everything. They set aside the thought of human authority and of apostolic succession, and give deliverance from this present evil age to which only the law applied: but to which as a rule of life these Galatians were turning. He tells them it is a rule of death, and sees Judaism in germ coming in again and refuses it, laying again the foundations of Christianity as it were. Turning at once to the burden of the epistle, immediately he denounces

with a dreadful anathema, twice repeated, those who preached another gospel, which, however, he will not admit to be another gospel. Then his own history furnishes an illustration of what was working in Galatia under the name of Christianity, and shews that legalism always persecutes grace. As we read later on in chapter iv. "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit." Legalism not only subverts Christianity but it must come out in positive active persecution of the truth. Paul had been a great persecutor, head and shoulders above his brethren in that respect, and he repeats this to shew how thoroughly he was acquainted with the system. Further he speaks of his intercourse with the apostles (Peter especially) and of his own independent ministry. He does not go up for three years to Jerusalem, afterwards he does go up to see Peter. There was no difference between him and Peter at all, everything was going on in perfect fellowship, but he would not admit he was in any wise dependent upon the chief of the apostles or that he ought to hold from Peter.

Then (chap. ii.) fourteen years afterwards he went up again; no doubt this was when he went up as recorded in Acts xv. and settled the whole question which was now raised again by these Jews in Galatia. Afterwards Peter goes to Antioch where he dissembled so grievously, and

Paul withstands him to the face. These three interviews shew the character of the relationship between the two apostles. We then come to the doctrines that are at stake. In the end of this chapter we have Christ as justification, life and object; crucified with Christ; and by faith living His life.

In chapter iii. the promise of the Spirit comes upon the Gentiles by faith; and the relationship of the promises of God with the law is shewn. The law coming in to raise the question of righteousness; but the promises are by the hearing of faith, and when we come to Christ we are delivered from the law. Thus the foundations of Christ and the Spirit are again laid in Galatia.

Then chapter iv. shews that the Spirit proves sonship as well as life, and he argues that the two things, law and grace, bondage and freedom, cannot go on together either in the house or in the heart, but are diametrically opposed—and that persecution is always the result as with Ishmael and Isaac. No, beloved friends, it is impossible. You might just as well try Christ and Belial, as was the case with the Corinthians.

In chapter v. we have: Stand fast in the liberty hoping for the glory. "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," that is the glory. Accepting the persecution, and living and walking in the Spirit, do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

In chapter vi. he sums up. Sow to the Spirit and of the Spirit reap life everlasting, and then finishes by saying, the cross of Christ stands between me and the world. I am crucified to the world and the world to me. Now the world and the flesh, sin and law, go together. Legality is a part of a worldly system, and Paul will have nothing to do either with the legal system or the world to which it belongs. "From henceforth let no man trouble me."

The epistle thus embraces a great range of truth. It speaks of deliverance from sins, and sin; from self, the law and the world. It speaks of justification, of life, liberty and sonship by the Spirit, of righteousness and glory. And it shews that the whole of this cycle of christian doctrine is subverted by the allowance of a single Jewish ordinance.

PAUL'S APOSTOLATE.

Now we may look a little in detail at our first chapter. He states at once he is an apostle. They were saying he was not an apostle because he was not sent by Peter, and in meeting this he meets also what has come in since then—the doctrine of apostolic succession. He boldly and at once begins: "Paul, an apostle." He *was* an apostle, and after an order infinitely higher than the Jewish apostles. "Not of men," he says, "neither by man." His apostleship was not of

man as a source; neither did it come through man as a channel. He did not submit his claims to those who were apostles before him. Now, those who boast of apostolic succession, claim also that they are apostles, and not of men as a source, but of God; but they cannot say "not *by man*," because it is altogether a question of authority with them, and they must derive from man. Paul says I will not derive from man, I have nothing to do with man, I belong to the ascended Man; "but by Jesus Christ, and by God the Father, who raised him from the dead." Peter was called as an apostle by the Lord Jesus Christ when He was here on earth, though doubtless this was ratified afterwards. Paul, after He was raised from the dead, after the work was accomplished.

Hence he was an apostle of another order. He starts from Christ in ascension, with a wholly new line of truth concerning the One who was God's centre there. All now centres in the risen Man, Christ Jesus, and God the Father delights in Him, and calls Saul of Tarsus out to tell this delight to the Gentiles. That blessed Man was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, as we have it in Romans vi. The glory of God as Father demanded that the Man who had accomplished that work should be raised from the dead and seated up there at His own right hand; and hence the apostle starts

with his apostleship as from Jesus Christ raised from the dead. How could he have to do with the world? Christ is above the world; Christ has done with it. What did the world do with Him? It crucified Him. The Jews, the legalists, crucified Him because He did not submit His pretensions to them. That was the very thing they now wanted Paul to do. They challenged the Lord: "By what authority doest thou these things?" It was altogether a question of human authority with them, and of ordinances which go to puff up the flesh, but cannot produce life.

Christianity may indeed be said to have its two ordinances, but not for salvation; and neither of them refers to life, they both refer to death. Baptism refers to my death with Christ; and the Lord's supper refers to His death for me. May we seek to know more what the truth of death is for us; for God! Perhaps those who have gone before us rebuke us in that they did know something more of it practically; well for us if we too seek to learn how, in the power of the life given to us, to wield that mighty sword—the sword of death, against ourselves. Paul saw Christ in the glory raised from the dead. There is the source of his apostleship, and he will submit his pretensions to no man. It was not that he would not give others a better place than himself, for he says: "I am the least of the apostles." But he claims liberty of ministry

upon commission from Christ alone, with the power of the Holy Spirit to make it good, and when it was a question of the truth of God he cares for no man. He glories in that which they laid to his charge, and will by no means admit that it was an error. He does not appeal to miracles, because miracles are not such a proof of true ministry as the word of God wielded in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gentile churches were witness that Paul was sent the minister of God to the uncircumcision.

ALL THE BRETHREN AGAINST THE GALATIANS.

In verse 2 he links all the brethren with himself. It is the only epistle in which he does so. He links Sosthenes with himself in some epistles, Silvanus and Timothy in others, but here all the brethren. Why? Because the Galatians were giving up the truth held by all the brethren who had accepted Paul's gospel, ratified as it was by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem itself some time before. Think of it! If a man adds to Christianity he opposes all those who have accepted the truth. May be he does not do it wilfully, but if he is deceived this is none the less true. It is a solemn thing to admit anything that will put me in opposition to the truth of God. Yet how often is this the case! Those who have known long what it is to walk in the truth have seen again and again

something thrust amongst them which has carried off numbers. Usually when a question of doctrine is raised the masses go with the error. Alas ! How little we hold the truth for ourselves.

GRACE AND PEACE.

“ Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ver. 3.) Streams constantly flowing, constantly needed. How much they needed the grace to deliver them from the perversions that beset them ; and the peace that flowed ever from the throne of God, where Christ had made peace by His blood ! The beloved apostle always wished grace and peace for those whom he addressed. He never could reverse this, but the deeper their failure the more he saw they needed that grace and peace. We may notice here the fuller title of “ Lord ” Jesus Christ. In the first verse he says he is an apostle by Jesus Christ, and now you have the addition of “ Lord ” Jesus Christ, because not only is He the risen Man, source of apostleship, but He is Lord of all those who have learned His grace.

AN EFFICACIOUS SUBSTITUTE.

Now this Christ “ gave himself for our sins.” (Ver. 4.) The law could find none to do this ; only God could. It could give a rule of life for man in the flesh if he could keep it ; it could tell

the man of this world what his duty to God was — what his duty to his fellow man was. It could go further than that, it could detect the existence of lust, and so Paul says, "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died." But if the law could point out sin, how did it deal with it? It condemned it. The law can only judge and condemn. On the other hand Christ gave *Himself* for our sins. The law never provided an efficacious substitute; though in the sacrifices which accompanied it, it shadowed one but Christ came in love as a substitute. Christ did not condemn the sinner, but He took the sins of the sinner upon Himself and put them all away, rendering God just while the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Hence the apostle says, God's righteousness is witnessed by the law and the prophets. The new testimony of God is by no means against the old, only the two things cannot go on together. The one was to shew that man was a sinner, the other to put away his sins. The one to make him a good citizen of this world, the other to deliver him out of this world. They did not attack the Person of Christ in Galatia, nor do those who now add ordinances to Christianity. In Colossians the Person of the Lord is more at stake, in the will worship and worship of angels, and hence the glory of His Person is brought out there. In Galatians it is not the Person but the

work, and that not directly but by adding something to it as though it were incomplete. Hence the apostle shews the wonderful completeness of the work.

CHRIST FOR OUR SINS.

Christ "gave himself for our sins," then they are all gone. That is the first step in Christianity. Now, dear reader, may we not ask, Are your sins all gone? If they are not, how do you propose to get rid of them? It is no use talking about the law, for the law can provide no substitute, it can but condemn. Sins you have and your sins are your own more really than anything else that belongs to you, and sins must be punished, either in the person of him whose they are, or else some substitute must be provided. The law can provide no substitute, but God has provided a substitute in the Person of His own beloved Son, and He gave Himself. Wonderful thought! He gave Himself for our sins. And if He gave Himself for our sins our sins are all gone and gone for ever. The judgment has been borne by the Christ of God Himself and is never to be borne again. Quite true, I still have sin, the flesh, in me and I have to do with it; but God has His own way of dealing with that, let us be careful not to add anything to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

TO DELIVER US FROM THIS EVIL AGE.

That is, from the course of the world. The world is under the power of the devil, and hence is an evil world. He led the whole world to crucify Christ on the cross, and has become the prince of this world (John xii. 31; xiv. 30); or as Ephesians vi. 12 speaks of him and his, "The rulers of the darkness of this world . . . wicked spirits in the heavenlies!" Now the law could not touch a man in his sins except to condemn him; Christ saves him from his sins, as also from the world and its prince. What an infinite difference. Why attach law to grace? Why give up this blessed Christ?

Christ gave Himself for our sins "that he might deliver us from this present evil world." Christianity is not a shifting of God's centre from Jerusalem to Rome—from one earthly centre to another. Paul probably wrote this from Rome. He does not argue that you must not go back to Jerusalem in order to go on to Rome, but he says we are delivered from this present evil world altogether. Christ is not at Jerusalem nor at Rome, but raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God. Christianity thus introduces us into heaven. It is a heavenly thing—heavenly in its source, heavenly in its nature, heavenly in its power. Christianity is an altogether heavenly thing, and the law is

an altogether worldly thing. Now Christ's death was not simply to deliver us from our sins in order to give us relief. A soul may say, Well, now that I have the forgiveness of my sins, and am thus relieved, I can be a better citizen of this world. That is to pervert the object for which Christ died; He did not give you relief from the burden of sins that you might go on with the world that crucified Him. He not only delivered you from your sins but also from the world, and all that goes to make up the world. Worldly customs and ordinances are a denial of the perfection of the blessed work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE WILL OF GOD OUR FATHER.

This is all "according to the will of God and our Father." (Ver. 4.) The will of God here applies to both parts of the sentence; it was according to the will of God our Father that Christ gave Himself for our sins; and it is equally according to the will of God our Father that we should be delivered from this present evil age. Are you, dear readers, delivered from it? Not if you answer at all to the law in that legal heart of yours, nor on the other hand if you give the rein to the lusts are you delivered from it. This is licentiousness; that, legality; and both are of the world.

"To him be glory throughout the ages of

ages. Amen." (Ver. 5.) It is not for human glory in this present evil age! There is a glory in a worldly religion which human nature can understand and enter into and appreciate. There are religious pageants suited to this present evil age, and which appeal to the human heart. A great deal of the religion of to-day takes up that sort of thing, but it is only for this age, and this is an evil age, and is under the power of the evil one, the devil, who is at the bottom of all that the apostle is meeting here, even though he used Peter as an instrument. What a solemn thing! Paul now calls upon them to deliver themselves practically from it and give Him glory, to whom it is due throughout the ages of ages. In Ephesians iii. 21 we have, "Unto him be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end." In our epistle he is not speaking about the church, but it is the work of Christ, the gospel, that he is defending. Paul was a minister of the gospel and of the church, but it is the gospel that is before him here, and the great circle of christian truth which stands or falls with it. This shall bring glory to God; while that shews it will be in the church for ever.

ANATHEMA!

Immediately after this introduction he denounces with a dreadful Anathema those who were attempting to introduce another gospel.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." (Vers. 6, 7.) God has no other gospel. He has shewn His approval of the work of His Son in that He has raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand. There is but one good news for lost man. "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." God having also said, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." God is infinitely satisfied with the work of His Son. Are you? Do you ask, How do you know that He is satisfied? Where is Christ? I reply. Paul says He raised Him from the dead, and there He is at the right hand of God. Why is He there? Because God is satisfied with His work: everything accomplished, nothing to be added to it; to do so is but to trouble the saints and to pervert the gospel of Christ. No other gospel; if there were, Christ could not be where He is. We might have traced the love of Christ up to death and Christ in the grave on our behalf, but that would not have proved the efficacy of His work. But the resurrection has proved it, and He who died is now at the right hand of God, and God has no other gospel.

Hence, "though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be Anathema." (Ver. 8.) And this he repeats in the next verse. "If any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be Anathema." (Ver. 9.) Now, repetition in scripture indicates that a thing is sure; as Joseph says of the king's dream, "And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." (Gen. xli. 32.) The apostle meant that there should be no mistake about it. "Though we," the apostles. They were trying to trace up this other gospel to Peter. Very well, he says, it does not matter who it is. It may be "an angel from heaven;" but the devil can simulate an angel of light, as he says to the Corinthians, "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the "ministers of righteousness." (2 Cor. xi. 15.) It is not the gospel we have preached; nor is it the gospel you have received. It is not another Jesus they preach, nor have you received another Spirit; there is no other, therefore do not listen to them. God will have nothing to say to it; have you nothing to say to it? Let him be Anathema! In only one other place does he use this against others. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema

Maran-atha"—the Lord is at hand. (1 Cor. xvi. 22.)

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Ver. 10.) The sense here is: "Do I seek to *satisfy* men or God?" He was not trying to satisfy man, nor to please man. He was not an apostle of or by man. He was seeking to satisfy God, and could allow nothing that traversed the truth of God. "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

PAUL'S GOSPEL AND MINISTRY BY REVELATION.

For not only was Paul a called apostle of the risen Christ, but he also claims that he received his gospel by revelation of Jesus Christ. (Vers. 11, 12.) This is the source both of his authority and of the truth he preached. Paul's gospel was the gospel of the glory. There are various phases of the gospel. John may present to us the gospel of the humiliation; the blessed Son of God come down as Man to walk amongst men, to deliver them out of the awful condition in which they were. Peter may take up that blessed Man and trace His way on earth through the accomplishment of His work up to heaven; but Paul begins with Him in heaven. His gospel is the gospel of the glory of the Man Christ Jesus. God sets him apart from his birth and calls him

by His grace. Christ makes him an apostle, which God the Father ratifies, and then Christ gives him his gospel distinctly by revelation. How completely equipped is he! But there is yet another thing he claims revelation for in this epistle, namely, that he was guided by revelation in going up to Jerusalem. (Chap. ii. 2.) Here is a man distinctly set for Christ on earth; called by Christ; the gospel revealed to him by Christ; sent directly from Christ; and his movements regulated by Christ.

Paul now therefore insists that there is nothing to be added to his gospel; it was complete. Moreover, he claims the same distinctive revelation for other parts of his ministry; as the coming of the Lord, prefacing this truth with the old prophetic formula: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 15.)

Further he claims to have received the truth of the church by revelation. (Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 3; Col. i. 25, 26.)

And in 1 Corinthians xi. 23, the Lord's Supper, "For I have received of the Lord;" so that all the parts of Paul's wonderfully complete ministry were received by revelation.

LIBERTY OF MINISTRY.

In all this Paul is claiming liberty of ministry apart from human ratification, and of this we can avail ourselves and be thankful. We may

not boast of revelation as Paul did, nor of guidance by revelation; but one may be sent of the Lord and led of the Spirit; though one who *boasts* much to-day about being led by the Spirit should be careful. For although the Spirit's guidance is as real a thing to-day as ever, yet if one boasts in it, it indicates occupation with the Spirit's work in the man, always a dangerous thing. A man may say, "But I have the Spirit in me." That is quite true, God forbid that we should deny it. It is a thing to be insisted upon. But then you have the flesh also in you, and if you do not make due allowance for that you will do things in the flesh and say you have done them in the Spirit, and that is a dreadful thing. It is a humbling thing to hear a man *boast* of being led by the Spirit; for without doubt the man who is led of the Spirit is the man who speaks least about it. Would God we were all more led of the Spirit, we should better know how to keep the flesh in abeyance, but the fact must speak for itself. Do you not think that in a world where everything is done from fleshly motives, that if a man does anything actuated by the Spirit of God, it will make itself felt? Undoubtedly it will. God grant that it may be made manifest that the Spirit has been at work in leading us! but to boast of it is of the flesh.

SOME EVENTS IN HIS OWN HISTORY.

He now turns in a very interesting way to some events in his own history, as bearing on our subject. "Ye have heard of my conversation [mode of life] in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." (Vers. 13, 14.) As though he would say: I know whence all this persecution springs. It proceeds from the legality of the human heart. Legality must persecute grace. He that is after the flesh persecutes him that is after the Spirit. It is an astonishing thing that as soon as a man falls into legality he begins to persecute others. Paul had done this. He could boast in his own attainments and persecute those who were not on that ground. If I make a legal standard of christian doctrine, I become legal in conscience, and do but raise the law infinitely higher; and if one insists upon it for others, he will fall into persecution. On the other hand I must do as my Lord tells me, I am not my own master. That is right enough; and ordinarily what is right for one may be right for another, and if I follow what is right my action may condemn another; but if I lay down laws

for others, and especially in the case of one servant with another, while the thing may be right, the wrong is in pressing it upon others. Let us seek by all means to help each other; but to lay down a rigid law and to say to a fellow servant "You ought to do this," and to withhold fellowship if it is not done, seems to me to be going altogether beyond Christianity and to savour of persecution. Matters of doctrine and morality must of course be insisted upon.

SET APART AND CALLED.

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." (Vers. 15, 16.) How blessed to see, also, how the apostle acknowledges the Lord's hand over all his past life. Set apart for service from birth; in due time called by grace and God's Son revealed in him. So it is ever with God's servants. God said in effect to Jeremiah: Do not you think I have made a mistake, Jeremiah. Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and I know exactly what you are. I want you to go for Me, and I will make you like a brazen wall and a defenced city against them; do not fear their faces. God is able to make the feeblest instrument just what He wants him to be. Happy for us when we too have a sense of this in our souls.

GOD'S SON REVEALED IN HIM.

But not only does the apostle say, He "called me by his grace," but also, when it pleased Him to "reveal his Son in me." Notice, it is not here "reveal his Son to me," but "*in me.*" And in this we have a graphic summary of the whole of the result of that wonderful conversion of Saul of Tarsus. On his way to Damascus, in order to persecute the church, with authority, and with an armed band to carry out that authority, and with all the vindictiveness of his legal heart against the grace of God, a light shone from heaven above the brightness of the sun upon the whole of them. The light shone *upon* them all; but it shone *into* only one heart—into the heart of Saul of Tarsus. It is not therefore a change produced by an appeal to Paul's mental powers, which were very great, giving him an external proof that must satisfy him merely; but in order that he might preach God's Son among the Gentiles, it was necessary that that Son should be revealed *in* him.

Now this was not the work of a moment. The light shone in, and Paul's feelings underwent a revulsion such as I suppose he had never known before, and very few of us have experienced anything like it. Would God we knew more about it. All the energy of Paul's being; his will, his intelligence, his physical

powers, armed and backed as he was by human authority and power, were running full tilt against the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler. It was hard for him to kick against the pricks. He saw in that light the darkness of his heart, the blackness of his nature. He discovered that he was fighting against the very Son of God. The Jesus, whose name he had anathematised, was none other than the Son of the living God. And he has shone in grace into my heart. He has not trampled me under foot like a worm, and crushed me out of existence, as He might justly have done. One word: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And away went Saul, to Damascus indeed, but with a very different object now; and for three days he was blind, and did neither eat nor drink.

Christ thus wrote death upon all that Saul was as a man, and then, when God had emptied the vessel, *He* could take it up and use it. But during these three days of darkness, what do you think went on in his heart? God was revealing His Son in him. There was to be a great internal change. It was an objective presentation of truth and power that arrested Saul, but there was to be a change of heart and being—the communication in the power of the Spirit of a new being entirely—and then, after that, "straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." And further

he went into Arabia, and was learning for three years what that Son was as revealed in himself, that He might preach Him among the Gentiles. Then he began to preach, and what a preaching it was! If our preaching were more the outcome of the Son revealed in us, with what living power should we write the words of the living God—as it were in words of spiritual fire—upon poor, human hearts, so that He might speak through us to the revelation of Himself in the hearers. God grant that this may be the case with us; it is surely what is necessary. Christianity is an internal change, it is something that goes on inside. It is not merely a change of habits, it is Christ formed in us. The Son revealed in us.

HIS FIRST INTERVIEW WITH PETER.

“Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me.” (Vers. 16, 17.) How could he? Was it not of God that he was not converted in Jerusalem? No doubt God had used the very energy of his being to carry him beyond Jerusalem, and when, outside of Jerusalem, the great earthly centre of God’s work, Paul was converted. He did not go to Jerusalem till three years afterwards: then he goes for a little while, the space of fifteen days, and abides with Peter, on terms of the most

perfect equality. There was nothing between these two beloved men in this their first interview, either of emulation or assumption of superiority; they were together as fellow-servants. But he sees none of the other apostles, save James, the Lord's brother, and he was absolutely unknown by face to the churches in Judæa, "they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed, and they glorified God in me." (Vers. 23, 24.) A very different result from what was happening then in Galatia. So that he was, in his ministry, altogether distinct from Jerusalem, and from that which went before. They laid this at his door as a shame, and refused his apostleship, but he claims it as his glory, and wants to link the beloved disciples brought to God by his ministry not with Jerusalem, but with the blessed Christ in glory, with whom the saints in Jerusalem were equally linked.

We have a claim here, as we have seen, by the apostle, for liberty of ministry upon commission from Christ alone; for which we, though not apostles, may be thankful in days of assumption of apostolic succession, happy and content to go quietly on with work God gives one to do, in the power of the Holy Spirit, who makes all good.

We see in Paul's history, as given here, how

suited he was for what God had called him to, and the work he then performed. He thought at one time that he was not suited for carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, but that, on the contrary, he was the man to go to the Jews. And so he said, as it were, to the Lord: The Jews know how I persecuted the church, and if you will only let me go to them, see what a testimony it will be. But the Lord says, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Now he has fallen into God's thought about it all. It is a happy thing to have God's thoughts as to our service, so that when we get into the service we are able to say: He is wiser than I was, He has put me in the right place, and here I am to serve Him as He wills. May the Lord grant that we may learn the truth in this epistle to the Galatians. Let it not be said, "It is a low character of truth," for all truth is related. Let us see to it that we hold on to the foundation, for if it be destroyed what shall the righteous do!

Let it be noted that if we make the christian ordinances to be that whereby we may obtain life, we are in a more serious condition than if we were circumcised. Ordinances *for* salvation are subversive of Christianity. On the other hand we are certainly not lawless, but under law to Christ; not under *the* law, but we owe allegiance to Christ. Christ is our Head, our

Lord, our Ruler: He is supreme; His wish should be paramount; His word all-absorbing to us. Christ Himself has annulled the law entirely by dying beneath its curse, and putting us in resurrection where the law cannot apply to us. To return to it in any way is to give up Christ.

The Lord give us to learn more of what Christ is. How serious to think of giving Him up—giving up the Son; what a loss! Who would give up the Christ of God for a legal enactment? The Lord give us allegiance of heart to Himself. He desires our love; He wants us to be loyal to Him. Do we not also wish to be true to Him? Surely every heart that has trusted the cross of Christ does wish to be true to Him. May He answer the desire, for His own name's sake.

CHAPTER II.

WE have seen that there were three interviews between the apostles Peter and Paul, which seem to be recorded here to shew, that, while Paul does not admit the necessity of holding his apostolate from Peter, yet there was no feeling of any kind between them, but that they were on terms of the most perfect amity and equality.

The first interview is given in chapter i. 18, where it is recorded that Paul abode with Peter for fifteen days; this, however, did not occur until he had been for three years "a called apostle;" and they lived together on this occasion on thoroughly friendly terms. It would appear that he had specially sought out Peter then, as he saw none others of the apostles save James the Lord's brother—the same James who wrote the epistle bearing his name, and who was of note among them of the circumcision. Now these two apostles were the very ones that the Judaisers would cite against Paul, who therefore deems it a necessary thing to add here, "Now the things that I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." (Chap. i. 20.) They might challenge his veracity, but he spake to them the truth before God. Then coming into the regions

of Syria and Cilicia, he was unknown by face, even to the churches of Judæa, but they had heard only that "he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed;" and this caused them to rejoice, glorifying God in him—a very different state of things to that which now obtained amongst these Galatians.

THE SECOND INTERVIEW BETWEEN PAUL AND PETER.

The second interview is recorded in chapter ii. with some detail; and it proves the perfect equality of Paul with the chief of the apostles, which was recognised by them all. This interview is of importance on other grounds also; the pillars of the Jewish church added nothing to him in conference, but simply confirmed the position he had contended for before. It did not take place for fourteen years after the first, as he says, "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also." (Ver. 1.) This is the same interview as that recorded in Acts xv. when the conference of all the apostles, and elders, and brethren in Jerusalem, had settled the very question for the Gentiles at Antioch, that was now again troubling the churches in Galatia. Certain men had come down from Judæa, and taught the brethren, "Except ye be

circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This, Paul and Barnabas refused, and had no small dissension and disputation with them, until, at last, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. In Acts we find that these brethren had already withstood this attempt to Judaize, and had the Lord's mind about the whole question; as also that others than themselves went up to Jerusalem, but in our verse Paul says he "took Titus with him," and this was evidently done intelligently, with a view to withstanding in Jerusalem itself the tendency to legalism.

PAUL, HAVING THE LORD'S MIND, IS LED BY
REVELATION TO SUBMIT HIS JUDGMENT TO
OTHERS.

It appears also in Acts xv. that they went up as the delegates of the church at Antioch; but in verse 2 of our chapter an additional feature of the case comes out; "I went up by revelation." Both are true. Paul leaves himself as it were to be the servant of the brethren; but at the same time the Lord graciously reveals to him that he is to go, so that His servant may have the blessed consciousness of His approval in it; and this he has without speaking or

boasting of it, until the time comes when it is necessary to do so, in order to maintain the truth of the gospel. This revelation was necessary also in order to induce Paul, who already had the Lord's mind about the matter, to submit to have the question settled at Jerusalem. For why should it not be settled at Antioch? Was not the Holy Spirit there in the assembly? Was not the apostle himself there? Why then go up to Jerusalem? But He who cared for His people had ordered it so; and in His love for His apostle gives him a revelation that thus it should be; as on another occasion He had given Peter a revelation that he should go with the gospel to the Gentiles. (Acts x.) It was best that this question should be settled once for all in the very centre of Judaism and by those most filled with Jewish prejudices, otherwise there would have existed two rival churches from the very beginning.

HE OBEYS THE LORD.

Whereupon Paul is not disobedient, but at once holds himself ready to go; only he determines to take Titus with him, a Gentile, that he may shew that he himself is free from all Jewish prejudices; nor does he allow him to be compelled to be circumcised, the very question that was at issue, a circumstance that shews that pressure was brought to bear upon them to have

this done, but that the apostle entirely refuses it. This is all the more remarkable, because he did, as is noticed in the very next chapter, in the Acts (xvi. 3) circumcise Timothy because of the Jews which were in that quarter. Possibly he did this in Christian liberty, becoming as a Jew to the Jews, but here where this question of circumcision was at issue, he absolutely refuses it, that the truth of the gospel might continue with the Gentiles. It should be noticed that verse 3 is a parenthesis, and that verses 2 and 4 should read together.

Going up then by revelation he says, "I communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain; and that of false brethren unawares brought in." (Vers. 2, 4.) He recognises the chief amongst them, owning their reputation, and seeks them out individually first, shewing them the character of the gospel he preached, and by which God had wrought such marvellous effects among the Gentiles—so many churches having been planted by it; and this the Jews themselves had to admit; the same Spirit having wrought in him as in them, which was the only proof they could require. Now if circumcision and the law were being brought in and allowed, it would entirely destroy what had been done, and make Paul's work to

be in vain. This commended itself to those among them who had the mind of God, who required nothing but the proof of the Spirit's effectual work, which was not wanting in abundance in Paul's case. It was only "false brethren unawares brought in" who desired it otherwise, and they "came in surreptitiously to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." Legal spirits do not like to see others enjoy a liberty they are strangers to themselves, but would very willingly bind all up with the bonds that professedly hold themselves; though there be a consciousness within that they are not after all held by them. But how precious is freedom to the apostle; and how precious should it be to us who have known it! How jealously, beloved brethren, should we guard it from the encroachments of all who would circumscribe it in any way!

HE WILL NOT SURRENDER THE TRUTH.

To this the apostle gave way by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with the Gentiles. (Ver. 5.) It was the truth and liberty he maintained. The gospel could not live amid the restrictions of Judaism, and he maintains the liberty of the gospel even in Jerusalem; but at the same time he learns to submit himself unto others as far as the decision of the matter is concerned, and this

he did with all the force of a great spirit, delivering to the churches as he returned from Jerusalem, the decrees of the apostles and elders for to keep. He saw that either all must be given up, or the encroachments of these Jewish enactments must be refused; and knowing what the issue must be, he fought for the truth as against the great enemy of souls, whom he discerned behind all this legality—Satan, to whom the law was now a very different thing to what it was when it was the testimony to the one true God, as opposed to demon worship. A further and complete revelation having been given of that only God, together with a full testimony to the worthlessness and inability of man to accomplish anything for God, Satan can take up the law which appeals to man to *do*, and so shut out from him all that God has *done* in Christ on his behalf, and which comes to him in the gospel of His Son. No wonder the apostle strenuously resists the inroads of this past testimony, which is used in the enemy's hand to destroy the blessedness of the present testimony of God to man. May our hearts, beloved brethren, be kept in the full tide of God's love, so that we be not stranded upon the rocks and shoals of a would-be human righteousness.

CONFERENCE ADDS NOTHING TO HIM.

But those who seemed to be somewhat in con-

ference, added nothing to Paul. Whatever they were made no difference to him, nor to God, who accepteth no man's person. (Ver. 6.) Paul had the truth about the question and knew what ought to be done. And if the Lord shewed him that he was to submit himself to his brethren, and allow them to decide the matter, yet he would have it settled in no other way than according to the conclusion he himself had already arrived at, having, as we have seen, the Lord's mind beforehand. And thus, in the conference at Jerusalem, no new thought as to the truth, or as to the right decision to come to, was added to him by any of them. He, however, acknowledged the other apostles as leaders there, by going to them privately first about it, and then bringing the question before them and the elders together; and afterwards before the whole church at Jerusalem, where the question was finally decided. And here is a scriptural example of a man who by the Spirit is taught what is right upon a certain question, and who goes to put the matter before the brethren, with his mind fully made up as to the issue, and who will accept nothing else as a decision but that which he himself has previously come to before the Lord. Why then did he go up to Jerusalem? Ah, here is the grace both of the Lord and of His apostle. What a solemn precedent it would have been to have had this matter settled at Antioch, in a way

that would have traversed all the assembly prejudices at Jerusalem!

THE LORD'S CARE FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

But He who is the Head of the one body, the church, cared for and guarded that church against any scriptural precedent for division; and this is shewn again and again in the Acts. We may trace this in the fact that the three great classes who formed the nucleus of the church—the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles—were all made dependent upon the apostles first chosen for the privileges they enjoyed, specially in connection with the Holy Ghost. For at Pentecost it was through the apostles that the Jews at Jerusalem received the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts ii.) And at Samaria, none of those who believed received the Holy Spirit until the apostles came down and laid their hands upon them. (Acts viii.) Then in the case of the Gentiles, Peter was sent to them of Cornelius's household to speak words unto them whereby they might be saved, whereupon the Holy Spirit fell upon them also. (Acts x.) Paul's ministry is afterwards linked up with that of the other apostles, by the resistance together with them of Jewish tendencies in chapter xv., and by the

communication of the Holy Spirit, through the laying on of his hands in chapter xix. Thus Christ, the Head of the church, guarded the unity of that church which is His body upon earth in early days so that we have no precedent in scripture for division contrary to the truth. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, must ever remain a foundation truth for faith.

THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

And this is here manifested with the apostles, who, "When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go to the heathen and they unto the circumcision." (Vers. 7, 9.) All that James, Cephas, and John looked for, was that the work should be entrusted to him by the same Lord, and accredited by the same energy of the Spirit as they themselves held and proved their commission by. And this they perceived was by no means wanting in Paul's case. He was entrusted with a distinct branch of the work necessary for the building up of the one body, and the same effectual power characterised his work toward the Gentiles, as had before made Peter's work so noted among the Jews. Paul claims that such an administration of the

gospel was entrusted to him in 1 Cor. ix. 17, so that he was bound, whether with or against his will, to go on with it; and here this is perceived by spiritual men, who recognise that grace and gift, a commission from the Head, and the effectual power of the Holy Ghost are his; and these pillars of the Jewish church own the apostolate of Paul to the Gentiles, and without seeking to patronise him, or to subject him to their authority, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, happy that he should carry out his commission to the Gentiles untrammelled, as they also to the Jews.

This was the opposite of adding anything to him; the Lord had taken care so to furnish the vessel He used toward the heathen, that they could not add to him. All they could do was to recognise the Lord's grace, and own His right to use whom He would and as He would. Happy for us, beloved brethren, when we can do this in our intercourse with each other as servants of the same Lord. How much trouble it would save us, were we to cultivate ability to carry out the injunction, Look not every man on his own qualities, but every man also on the qualities of others; and learn to esteem others better than ourselves. A little more of the energy of the Spirit that was in the apostles in mighty power, might lead us to perceive in each other the grace given to each; though it be true as has

been said, that "It takes a great deal of grace in one to perceive a little grace in another."

ONLY REMEMBER THE POOR.

One thing, however, they thought it necessary to stipulate as a kind of balance for Paul, "That we should remember the poor, the same," says he, "which I also was forward to do." (Ver. 10.) Possibly they thought that his desire to be free from all legal trammels and his high doctrine might render him oblivious to the every-day matter of fact business of this scene of sorrow. But He who cared for the poor under the olden dispensation and left them in the land, that, whensoever they would, His people might do them good, had rendered the apostle of the glorified Christ diligent to follow His example, who first laid aside His glory, to do good to the poor and the outcast. There was no need of hesitation even in this, for he who is most conscious of the dignity to which he is raised, will be most competent to stoop to the lowest, or to meet the smallest need; as even Christ was, who has left us an example that we should follow in His steps. And the following a Christ who has brought in heavenly blessing, can but make a man diligent to spread abroad blessings of an earthly character.

THE THIRD INTERVIEW.

A third interview with Peter is given in the next verse, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." (Ver. 11.) This time the great apostle of the circumcision does not appear in so favourable a light as the Galatians would fain have him viewed in. If the first interview set forth the then unruffled friendship that existed between the two apostles, by their abiding together fifteen days; and the second manifests the practical recognition of equality between them as servants of the same Lord; in this third interview the apostle of the Gentiles rises in moral superiority to the Jewish apostle, and, steadfast for the truth, he withstands Peter to the face because he was to be condemned.

This interview at Antioch is evidently subsequent to the others, and Peter's conduct seems to be utterly inconsistent with his previous procedure as to this very question of the relationship of the Gentiles with the Jewish ordinances. He had been mainly instrumental in settling the matter for these Gentile believers at Antioch, delivering them from the yoke which neither they (the Jews) nor their fathers were able to bear. This was at the conference at Jerusalem as we have seen: where he recounts the vision granted by the Lord to him, to break down his

Jewish prejudices; and now, when he is come to Antioch he shews that he is personally superior to these prejudices by eating with the Gentile Christians there; and this was right.

PETER DISSEMBLES.

But being sensitive to the opinions of others, when certain came from James "he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." (Ver. 12.) Thus he surrenders all that had been gained by the conference, and subverts the truth of the gospel. It was in itself apparently a very trivial act, but in principle all that had been contended for was lost by it. How much often hangs upon a trifling act! May the Lord keep His people clear as to the moral bearing of their actions in a day like the present! This being so, the act of the apostle Peter carries away all the Jews, insomuch that even Barnabas succumbs to the dissimulation; a very serious matter indeed, for Barnabas had wrought with Paul in all his work among the Gentiles and knew well the power of God in saving and delivering them, apart altogether from these rites and ceremonies. How the enemy must have gloried in his success, and anticipated a complete triumph over the truth of the gospel, which was the stake for which he was playing! It was solemn indeed to see such men as Peter and Barnabas, deservedly held in

high esteem because of their piety and devotedness, lend the weight of their character to such a device of the enemy. And this is part of his subtlety who always aims to entrap in his devices those who will lead others astray, men of note, had in reputation because of their piety and good qualities. How necessary to be on the watch against his devices !

PAUL SUSTAINED AND FIRM.

But there was still one man, sustained of God, who had not surrendered his liberty, and all the machinations of the enemy were not allowed to entrap him. Paul at once detects this device of the devil, and he, who can at the dictation of the Lord submit himself to Peter and others for the settlement of questions when the unity of the assembly was at stake, will submit to no man who will surrender the truth of the gospel ; and he does not hesitate to rebuke the apostle Peter himself, and that before them all, when he builded again the things he had destroyed. Such conduct was not to walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, which must be maintained at all cost, spite of Peter, or an angel from heaven, and consequently Paul defends that truth with all the force of his being.

Thus he who before had privately sought Peter's approval, now publicly rebukes him, saying to him, "If thou, being a Jew, livest

after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Ver. 14.) Now it would appear from this verse that the withdrawal of the Jews from the Gentiles was not so simple an act, but that it involved also the compelling the Gentiles to Judaize; the tendency being to bring all upon Jewish ground, and thus merge the distinction between Christianity and Judaism, a thing always in view by Satan. God has indeed made of Jew and Gentile one, but not upon ground that either of them had before occupied, but one new man in Christ: a truth absolutely necessary to recognise in order to escape this constant aim of the enemy.

From this point the apostle leaves the history, having recounted those incidents which illustrate his present object, and branches out into the doctrines that are involved, in the inconsistency of adding legal enactments, to complete the Christian standing; or, even yielding to the prejudices of those who do so.

JUSTIFICATION BY THE FAITH OF CHRIST.

Those who were Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles, had been glad to abandon the works of the law as a means of justification, conscious that, on that principle, no man had been, or could be justified. On the other hand, any man, be he Jew or Gentile, could be justified

by the faith of Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all. Why then put sinners of the Gentiles under the law for justification? Even the Jews had believed in Jesus Christ, that they might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law. (Ver. 16.)

The trial of man in the person of the Jew, on the principle of the law, had been universal in its bearing, and the law had concluded all under sin, so that it was plain NO FLESH could be justified on that principle. But God has set forth Christ to declare His righteousness that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, be he whom he may, Jew or Gentile; for it has been proved there is no difference between them. No difference, also, blessed be His name, in the riches of God's grace, which reaches out to all, so that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Now if the Jew had given up the law as a means of justification, where was the sense of putting the Gentiles under it? Why, in any way, turn back to that which recognised the existence of, and appealed to, the flesh—an utterly corrupt thing in both Jew and Gentile—when the faith of Christ swept it entirely off the scene, and brought in that which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created it.

To turn back to the law was to say that they

had been found sinners in seeking to be justified in Christ. (Ver. 17.) Surely Peter was not prepared for this! Were the Galatians? How dreadful the thought! To make Christ, who died for sin, the minister of sin! Solemn effect of turning back to the law. For those who thus turned back, declared plainly that they had made a mistake, and had become sinners by trusting in Christ. Does not every spiritual mind echo Paul's exclamation? Far be the thought!

To spiritual discernment, the building again the things once destroyed can have no other voice than this. It is to make myself a transgressor in ever having left that to which I now turn back. (Ver. 18.) Christ the minister of sin! Myself a transgressor! Oh, beloved! are we prepared for such an interpretation of our action if we turn to the law? Is Christendom prepared to accept this? It must surely do so, or else it must set Paul on one side as the mouth-piece of Christ in glory, and ignore even the sacrifice of Christ Himself, to redeem them that were under the law.

THE LAW A RULE OF DEATH. ALIVE TO GOD.

But not only does the law not justify, it kills, and moreover condemns. How right faith owns this to be! And this is in order that life may manifest itself Godward. "I through the law

am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." (Ver. 19.) Here the apostle makes a personal application of the truth, in the power of a living faith. It was true to him by faith, which leads to it being practically true. The law brings death in, because man is a transgressor, and this a quickened conscience owns. When the spirituality of the law is seen in the conscience, death is brought in there. "I was alive without the law once: but when the law came, sin revived, and I died."

Paul, for instance, had thought himself faultless until he saw the spirituality of the law, its application to the desires, as well as to the acts; so that when it condemns coveting, it condemns all; for who under law can control the desire to possess what is not his own? One may not be conscious of it until the law speaks in the conscience and says "Thou shalt not;" and then, if there is uprightness, which at least there is in every quickened soul, death is owned in the conscience, as its only portion on that ground. Thus the law kills, and the conscience says, "I died."

But, if I am dead through the operation of the law, then I am dead to the law which kills me. Death, however, is not the object, it is only in order to another thing; "That I might live unto God." Impossible to live to God under law which keeps me ever occupied with myself.

Faith on the contrary reckons with God, that I have become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that I might be to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that I may bring forth fruit to God. And again, that I am "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through [or in] Jesus Christ."

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

But how can it be that I am dead to the law, while still alive in the body? The next verse gives the answer. "I am crucified *with* Christ." Christ as my substitute, was, in fact, crucified for sin and transgression. By faith I own that, "I"—the old evil "I," or, man alive in the flesh, that life to which sin and the law attached—was crucified with Him; that He died my death, and I delight to shew my association with Him there, and to reckon that I died with Him to all that to which He died, so that, the law having slain me in the Person of my substitute, has nothing more to say to me, having dominion over a man only as long as he liveth.

What grace, indeed, that God should give His Son to suffer, as He suffered for such as we. May God preserve us as His people, from frustrating this His grace.

NEVERTHELESS I LIVE.

Nevertheless "I," personally, individually, am not dead, but live. The condemnation fell upon

the head of that blessed Christ in whom God condemned sin in the flesh, and who thus delivered us from the condemnation.

So that I live. "I"—the person who had yielded myself to the motions of sins, and my members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, having thus brought forth fruit unto death, and who am myself worthy of that death, "I"—find myself still alive, because the penalty has been borne by my substitute who died instead of me. I live indeed, but at what a cost! I no longer live therefore, the old "I," but

CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.

Christ—who alone could bear the condemnation and exhaust the judgment, in the power of that holy and mighty life in which He was raised from the dead—now liveth in me, the escaped person who should have died. And faith thus reckons, "that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Thus alone am I able to live unto God.

In the above passage there are three "I's." The old sinful "I," the personal individual "I," and the new "I," which is Christ.

The old "I," is judicially gone from before God in the Substitute. The person escapes the condemnation, and becomes the vessel for the

expression of the new "I," which is Christ, who lives in the man.

But while the old "I" is cleared away from before God judicially, he is not, as yet, cleared out actually from the person. Here faith finds its province, and the man of faith reckons with God, "I am crucified with Christ," holding himself to be dead to all that in which he once lived, and alive unto God, Christ living in him.

All this is intensely personal, individual, and practical. It was true to Paul when he rebuked Peter. It was not true to Peter when he withdrew from the Gentiles.

To-day while it is true of every Christian judicially, it is true only to those who, by a present living faith, reckon with God, and carry into practice what they thus believe.

Thus far we have Christ as life, and this is of God, and an entirely new life. It is that life, in the power of which, when the body is also quickened, we shall behold Himself actually. We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is.

But inasmuch as we now live in the flesh, that is, in the body as it is at present constituted, and are here upon earth, and not present with Him who is our life, we must have a principle to live by, which we shall not need when there, and an Object to govern us which will morally conform us to itself.

That principle is the faith of the Son of God ; not the law as a rule of life.

That object is Christ, the Son of God in glory.

In that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

Here then is a mixed condition of things. In a body of flesh and blood, suited to the demands of a fallen nature, and with that nature actually alive in us, but to which by faith we reckon ourselves dead.

In present possession of another life and nature also, to the full manifestation of which these bodies are not suited, but in which the life may express itself in all the details of that body, in its relationships down here on earth, and in all things governed by Him, who lives in glory and thus conforms us to Himself morally.

The whole thing will be complete when the body, either raised or changed, will be like Him, and thus becomes a suited vessel for the manifestation of the life which is already ours. Till then,

“I LIVE BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD.”

We, with Christ as our life, turn by faith to the Son of God in glory. He, there, is above all the difficulties of the pathway here, and faith brings His power into them all ; frees from the law of sin and death, and all the restraints that would curb the freedom of the new life—the

new "I." Faith, as a principle, lifts above all seen things and has to do with Himself amid the unseen and eternal things. It makes substance of things hoped for, gives evidence of things unseen, making them to the soul much more real, than the real seen and tangible things that surround us in this scene of sight and sense. It occupies us also with

THE TRUE OBJECT: "THE SON OF GOD."

Christ, who accomplished the work by which we live, has been raised from the dead, and thus declared to be the Son of God with power. All power is given into His hands, who is Himself, personally above all the trials of this life, having conquered all, and who is able to apply that power to us, to enable us also to walk superior to them; as He enabled Peter to walk upon the waters, while he kept his eyes upon Himself, and looked not at the surrounding circumstances.

Faith then in Him, as Son of God up there, enables us to express His life in all earthly relationships that are ours down here; taking them all up in a new and heavenly way, fulfilling them as Christ would and did fulfil them. So that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may do all to the glory of God.

He, Himself, being the object, and the pattern to which I am to be conformed, with Himself, where He is in glory, I shall by faith be ever

occupied with Him there, and thus be transformed morally into His image now, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

What a life on earth must this truth produce, where appropriated by living faith! What a life in the apostles! What in ourselves, beloved brethren? Alas, for us that there should be contrast! It surely needs but the personal application of this truth to produce in us the same expression of life. May His love constrain us also thus to apply it.

LOVE THE MOTIVE.

I do not now seek to make myself perfect by the law, that He may love me. On the contrary, His having loved me thus, becomes the link that holds the soul to Him, and the motive for devotedness. The Son of God, "Who loved me." How marvellous the thought.

He—the Son of God, in all the glory of His Person and estate, and me, when in all the vile-ness of my condition as a conscience-stricken sinner, dead under the sentence of a spiritual law, and with nothing but condemnation before me. Who would have supposed that between such contrary beings there could have been anything like love? Yet so it was, but this on His part alone; He loved me. No love primarily on my side towards Him; the opposite rather.

"Him first, me last, nothing between but love."

This furnishes a motive for the appropriation of the truth that the law could never supply—the love of Christ, personally, individually to me. It was this that led to apostolic fervour; this to the steadfastness of the martyrs amid the flames. Is aught else necessary to sustain the soul amid the enervating influences of a worldly Christianity? Surely, nothing, beloved brethren! Only let our souls enter in the power of the Spirit into “He loved me,” and all is clear to us. May the Lord minister this to His saints in these days of lukewarmness.

THE PROOF OF LOVE.

This follows: “He gave himself for me.” He—the Son of God, for me, even for ME. Who can measure the contrast? Who the love? All that He is, is mine now. His love was not ended with His death, it lives in resurrection with Himself. And all that love has wrought, all it has earned, all, all is mine. It proved itself in dying, it exists in resurrection life and power. So that I can say now by faith—God grant it to each—He died my death, that I might live His life. And this is the only right expression for us, it is faith’s judgment.

And, beloved brethren, we must begin here. We may go on to, He loved us, and gave himself for us; that is, the company, in new creation association. (Eph. v. 2.) Or to, “He

loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Eph. v. 25.) We may revel, as we apprehend this, in a more comprehensive enjoyment of the character of His love; but the spring, the beginning of all, is here, He loved *me*. He delivered Himself up for me, to die my death, that I might die *with* Him by faith, as I die *IN HIM*, judicially.

Now if I rejoice to know that, when He gave Himself for my sins, there was an end of my sins; how should I rejoice to know also, that there is an end of me, since He gave Himself for me? I am crucified with Christ. I do not regret having died to the world, or to the law, since I hold all that Christ has obtained, in and with Him. Christ in His love! Christ in His death! Christ in resurrection life and power. Christ is mine!

"Yes, I through grace am His, and He is mine."

We have, then, in this wonderful passage these five things, namely:

1. Justification by the faith of Christ.
2. Christ as life.
3. The faith of the Son of God, as a principle (or rule) of life.
4. Christ, the Son of God in glory, as an Object.
5. Love as a motive for the practical application of all the rest.

I DO NOT FRUSTRATE THE GRACE OF GOD.

Thus the chapter closes. "For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Ver. 21.) What Peter was doing *was* frustrating that grace. It was but a little thing apparently, just withdrawing from the Gentiles because of the prejudices of the Jews. The Galatians also were frustrating the grace of God. They were adding circumcision to their Christianity, and were debtors to keep the whole law. In both these cases the apostle insists that grace was frustrated, and Christ dead in vain, or for nothing. His death was useless if the law could, in any wise whatever, produce righteousness. And it cannot be touched in any one point without making the persons who touch it responsible to fulfil it wholly.

Now apply this to-day in a notable instance. How largely is the fourth commandment pressed as binding upon Christians. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." Now mark—this cannot be accepted without binding upon the shoulders the responsibility to keep the whole law. It frustrates the grace of God, equally with what Peter and the Galatians were doing, a thing that cannot be allowed now any more than in their day. Christianity, to-day as ever, consists wholly of Christ. It is not Christ *and* something else—Christ and the law—but Christ is all.

IF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS BY LAW, CHRIST HAS
DIED FOR NOTHING.

To depart from this Christ, is, not only to frustrate grace, but to say that Christ has died for nothing. It is to lose Christianity altogether. For it is not possible to make Christ and the law which killed Him as a substitute for those who had broken it, agree together in producing righteousness in the believer.

If the law could have produced righteousness, then there would have been no need for Christ's death. But if Christ must die beneath the penalty of the broken law for me, then it has been proved that it is impossible that I can keep the law, to produce a righteousness of my own. Nor can it add to the divine righteousness with which I am invested through the efficacy of His death.

How small a thing, beloved, destroys the truth. The least concession to Judaism, in principle, destroys Christianity. The two systems are based upon entirely different foundations.

Judaism appeals to man as not yet proved to be utterly corrupt, but it only brings out the fact that he is so.

Christianity is based upon the fact that man is utterly corrupt, proved to be so, not only by his inability to keep the law, but more fully by

his hatred and murder of Christ, in whom perfect goodness was displayed before him.

As Christians we cannot afford to admit anything that would deprive us of the *grace* that led God to give His Son for us, who told out in such marvellous measures the otherwise unknown love of His heart.

“ He loved me, and gave himself for me ” !



CHAPTER III.

THE close of the last chapter gave us the operation of the law in putting a soul to death, not only to the world, but also to itself. The law kills; but then it condemns too. Paul says: "I, through the law am dead to the law," and yet he was still living. The condemnation had been escaped because Christ had borne it.

The point here is, that, if the law had put him to death, it had put him to death to itself; so that it had no further claims upon him. And although he was a man alive on earth in the body, yet had he died in his substitute to the law, in order that he might live to God. He, therefore, reckoned that he was "crucified with Christ." This whole passage, as we saw, was Paul's own personal appropriation of the truth, though open to us all to appropriate to ourselves in the power of faith.

Christ had borne the death and condemnation; and rising from the dead—He, who only could exhaust death—had communicated life to Paul and to all believers—the life in which He got the victory over death; that is to say, it is a risen life, and new order of life for man, to which the law cannot attach. The law has only to say to man in the flesh; but the man who is

risen again from the dead, quickened together with Christ in the power of eternal life, and who is energised by the Spirit of God, has nothing whatever to say to the law, nor can the law have anything to say to that man; for the law was not made for a righteous man, and the man that is in Christ risen from the dead is righteous. Hence the apostle goes on to say: "the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." He did not own the law as a rule of life. To Paul, Christ was life and Object, and the faith of the Son of God ruled his life.

We have in Colossians, also, something similar to this, in the phrase: "Christ is all and in all." Here, after several remarkable verses in the earlier part of the epistle, he brings us up to the place where the Spirit makes everything of Christ. Christ is all as object, and in all as power to pursue this object. The only true object for the Christian, is Christ, the Son of God.

CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT.

Having thus presented Christ to us in a very full way, both as life and object, the apostle, in chapter iii., turns to the Spirit as the proof of the reality of faith, as a principle for availing themselves of the power of Christianity. So

that we have here, as elsewhere, Christ and the Spirit brought in by the apostle, as the only remedy for the wrong condition into which they had fallen. He does not question their having received the Spirit, because of their practical state, but argues from the fact of their having received the Spirit, to prove to them their present wrong condition.

Now it is of all importance for us to understand that Christ and the Spirit are the two Persons and Powers that are paramount in, and constitute, Christianity. Christ on high—a man set up in a new position before God, at His right hand. Consequent upon this, the Spirit of God down here on earth, dwelling in man—that is, the believer—and setting him up with an entirely new power in the very place of his failure. Thus is produced in man upon earth, a state, answerable to the new standing he has on high, in Christ at God's right hand. It was this by which Christianity was introduced in the Acts, after the death of Christ. We begin there in resurrection; a man had been raised from among the dead, leaving all else in death. He began again in resurrection a new order of being, away, above the power of sin and death, in a life suited to heaven, into which He entered as His disciples surrounded Him, carrying with Him thence their hearts and affections. Then in chapter ii. the Spirit comes as the fulfilment of the promise of

the Father, to comfort their hearts for the loss of Christ; and as sent of the Son from the Father, a new power to testify of Christ's exaltation. This fills them with a heavenly joy that lifted them above all earthly motives and objects, so that, though Jews, they could part with their earthly possessions and accept whatever came, so that they might glorify Him who had redeemed them for heaven.

So, too, when the apostle lays the foundation of the truth in the Epistle to the Romans, he begins with Christ: the glory of His Person (chap. i.), and work (chaps. iii.—vii.), and then, having established a position for righteousness, "in Christ" (chap. viii. 1), he speaks very fully of the Spirit as the Spirit of life, liberty, sonship, intercession, and hope. Christ and the Spirit are thus laid as the foundation of the doctrine of Christianity.

When the Corinthians would resuscitate and give the rein to the first man, in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, the apostle brings in the remedy. Christ, in the first chapter, substitutes the natural man before God; and the Spirit, in the second chapter, substitutes all the powers of the natural man. So much so that it is said, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It is a new man and a new power.

When the Galatians seek to restrain the flesh by the law, thus giving it a place as alive and recognised, Christ and the Spirit are the alone remedy, as we have seen.

In Philippians, for walk as heavenly men on earth, we have Christ as life, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as power. (Chap. i.)

In Ephesians, it is Christ in whom all things in heaven and earth are to be headed up, and the Spirit with which we are to be filled, as at the first, to enable us to answer to all the exhortations for walk, whether in the church, the world, the family, or to carry on warfare in the heavenlies.

God knows no other foundation or power than Christ and the Spirit. No other remedy for a wrong state than Christ and the Spirit. May we not test ourselves thus in whatever may be before us. Is it Christ? Is it in the Spirit's power I hope to do this?

SENSELESS, BEWITCHED.

The Galatians were refusing the Spirit's power and going back to the law. No wonder, then, that the apostle breaks out: "O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you, . . . before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified." (Ver. 1.) If he were here to-day, would he not say, O senseless people, to some now? Are there not many who are refusing

the power of the Spirit, and turning back to the law as a means of restraining the flesh? There are numbers who call themselves by the name of Christ and boast of the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, and even of deliverance, who do not know the true power of deliverance. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

To turn to the law is to be bewitched. The devil is under it all. Witches in olden times were to be slain, because witchcraft was recognised as the power of the devil; and it is as though the apostle had said, To make a mistake of this kind is to fall into the trap of the devil. "Who hath bewitched you?" This is a solemn statement of the apostle's; to seek to make the law a rule of life is, beside making Christ to have died in vain, to be bewitched.

Now before their very eyes "Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified." So that they had to break through that which separated them from the world, and the law, to go back to the law again. It was indeed witchery. The graphic words of the apostle, in the power of the Holy Spirit, had so portrayed Christ as crucified, that they had, as it were, beheld the scene of the crucifixion. But, alas! it had not taken possession of their souls practically. They could not with the apostle, say, "I am crucified with

Christ." Their affections were moved, but they had not learned to put the cross between themselves and all that appealed to them as alive in the first man.

The apostle seems always to have presented Christ in this way when meeting error. Christ, and Him crucified. Anything that gives the first man a place, whether legalism of the Galatians, or the license of the Corinthians. Thus he presents Christ. It may be they think to aid Christianity by their wisdom or their legalism; but Christianity needs no aid, it knows no stepping stones. In it Christ is all, and in all. It comes to people who are dead, and it gives them life; now you cannot have a stepping stone to life. You are either alive or dead before God; and if alive before God, then alive in Christ at His right hand; and to this the law has nothing to say. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

HOW DID YOU RECEIVE THE SPIRIT?

"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Ver. 2.) An important question; and one that differs altogether from that usually asked to-day. This is, have you received the Spirit? Right enough if a man is not in a full christian state. It was put by Paul to the twelve at Ephesus, who knew

only John's baptism. (See Acts xix.) But with the full ministry of the apostle, it was well known when a man had the Spirit, there could be no mistake about it. Paul recognised no one as Christ's until he had the Spirit of Christ. (See Rom. viii. 9.) Alas! that Christians should so little believe in the presence of the Holy Spirit, that the question in our chapter should lose its force. People are working to get the Spirit, when there is no real work but by the Spirit. No doubt defective teaching is largely responsible for this state of things; nevertheless it remains a fact, that the believer is sealed with the Spirit so soon as he believes in the Lord Jesus and receives the gospel as the gospel of his salvation. (Eph. i. 13.)

These Galatians HAD received the Spirit of God. They had begun in the Spirit. (Ver. 3.) Had suffered many things on account of it. (Ver. 4.) There were those who had even ministered the Spirit to others, and wrought miracles. (Ver. 5.) But alas! after all this they were falling back to the law, and abandoning their place of vantage in the Spirit.

Now when the Jews were under the law, they had not received the Spirit of God at all, in the sense in which He came to dwell on earth at Pentecost. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John vii. 39.) So that on the principle of works of

law, the Spirit could not be obtained, any more than justification. (See chap. ii.)

But these Galatians had the Spirit, who were never under law until Judaising teachers put them there, after they had become Christians. Alas! for them. Alas! for Christianity.

It was not then by the works of the law they had received the Spirit, but by the hearing of faith. Think of it. We receive God the Holy Spirit, as an inmate, into our once poor wretched hearts by hearing words, in the power of a living faith.

The Gentile Cornelius is an example for Galatians, whether of that day or this (and there are many such to-day), of how the Spirit is received. Cornelius was told to send for Peter, that he might hear words whereby he should be saved. In hearing those words Cornelius was saved; and while hearing those same words, the Holy Spirit fell upon him, and all that were with him, as upon the Jews at Pentecost.

Here, then, is the answer to the question. It is by the hearing of faith we receive the Holy Spirit.

This is consequent, evidently, upon the forgiveness of sins, which is also by the hearing of faith. Now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

PROOF OF THE SPIRIT'S PRESENCE.

We may, perhaps, here turn aside to answer a

question a real soul may be led to ask to-day. How may I know that I have the Spirit of God? There are, perhaps, two general proofs of this. One is that I am able to say, "Abba, Father." Twice we get this expression in the scriptures, as applied to us. (Chap. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 15.) If therefore one can say in reality, "Abba, Father," then one has the Spirit of God, for it is only by the Spirit that this can be said.

Such an one may not know much about the doctrine of it, or be able to explain it, yet if you could see him in his closet alone, you would hear him cry, as he unburdened his heart, "Abba, Father." This is surely a proof that such have the Spirit. Can you, beloved, look up and say "Abba, Father"? Many there are who can say it, who would yet fear to say they had the Spirit, spite of the fact that they could not say "Abba, Father," apart from the Spirit.

Thrice altogether is this expression used in scripture. Twice in reference to us as we have seen; in the other case it is used by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when He was in the direst extremity on earth, in the garden of Gethsemane. "Abba, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

The other proof of the Spirit in us is given in Romans v. 5, where we have, "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." Now to have God's love thus shed abroad in our hearts, not our love, but His, though in our hearts, and to find one's heart going out to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, because they are His, this is a proof that one has the Spirit.

To cry "Abba, Father," in the closet, and to be happy in the company of Christians when one meets them, these are proofs of the Spirit's presence in one. But it is outside oneself that one must look to see the love expressed. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.)

Now it is interesting to see that Paul presents the Spirit in three different ways in these chapters. (1.) As the Spirit of sonship. (Chap. iv. 6.) But if sons, then of the free woman, so that He is (2) The Spirit of liberty. (Chap. iv. 31.) And (3) The Spirit of power. (Chap. v. 17.)

THE FLESH CANNOT PERFECT THE SPIRIT'S WORK.

"Are ye so senseless, having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Ver. 3.) Was it not a senseless thing? They knew they had begun in the Spirit; why then turn to the law? It was to seek to be made perfect by the flesh. Besides the law was given to the Jews only, who were unable themselves to

keep it, and it was a senseless thing in them to try to impose it upon the Gentiles, to whom it was never given by God. But they, allowing themselves to be put under the law, must necessarily find the impossibility of curbing the flesh by the law, even in a Christian.

No man ever tried to put the flesh in himself under restraint even by God's law, who did not, by reason of the very nature of the flesh, break through the restraint. The fleshly mind "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Now, to put it under restraint is to treat it as alive; whereas the only way is to treat it as dead, and this can only be done in the energy of a new life, of which the Spirit's presence was the proof and power.

But it is not life alone that is needed, though victory cannot be obtained without it; the Spirit also is necessary, and is the alone power by which to keep the flesh in the place of death. (Chap. v. 17.)

He accredits them with suffering for Christ's sake. Had they "suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain." (Ver. 4.) He had hope of them yet. To be made perfect by the flesh was to make Christ's death and their faith and sufferings vain; but he trusted they would yet recover themselves. The denial of any part of God's system of truth is to nullify all. So the Corinthians, by the denial of the resurrection of

the dead, denied Christ's resurrection, and made their faith vain.

But some had ministered the Spirit, and wrought miracles among them. How had they done it? by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Ver. 5.) The power to communicate the Spirit to others could be purchased no more by the works of the law, than by the money offered by that wretched man, who was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity—Simon Magus. And while the fact of working miracles proved the fact of the Spirit's presence, yet is it in itself of less importance than the possession of the Spirit Himself, which neither they nor he denied. But this the law never produced, so that we are again brought back to faith—as the alone means of putting them in their present position; and the Spirit—by which alone they can be made perfect, and get the victory over the flesh.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH AN EXAMPLE FOR GENTILES.

“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” (Ver. 6.) This is quoted from Genesis xv. 6. God promised Abraham that his seed should be as the stars of heaven. Here we have the heavenly side of the promises. One springing from himself should be his heir, and his seed should be as the stars of heaven. In Genesis xii. 2, 3, it is personal

blessing, and an earthly nation, with all families of the earth blessed through them. Now Abraham knew nothing about law, but was accounted righteous on the principle of faith, and that in a promise of a numerous seed (a heavenly seed according to the figure used). It was upon this principle that these Galatians had come into the sphere of blessing, otherwise there had been no hope for them. Why, therefore, would they not know "That they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham"? (Ver. 7.)

This same Abraham was a wonderful man, and might well be called the "father of the faithful." When God spake to him he did not intrude himself, his doubts, or his views, between himself and God, but "believed God." He considered nothing but God. God *is* and was all.

In the first instance, called by God from his country, kindred, and his father's house, to a country he and his seed should after receive for an inheritance—Abraham believed God. He obeyed, not knowing whither he went. (Gen. xii. 1.) Upon entering that land, God pledged Himself to bless him, and make a great nation of him: Abraham believed God. (Gen. xii. 3.) Again, calling him to look to the heavens and count the number of the stars, He adds, "So shall thy seed be:" Abraham believed God. (Gen. xv. 5.) Before Isaac was born, God said to him, "I have made thee a father of many

nations:" still—Abraham believed God. (Gen. xvii. 5.) And when Isaac, the promised seed, came, God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." He goes unhesitatingly. Why? because—Abraham believed God. (Gen. xxii. 2.)

Thus he learnt the God of resurrection, and the scripture was fulfilled which said: "Abraham believed God." (Jas. ii. 23.) To him God had promised to fulfil every pledge in Isaac, and if he was slain, God must raise him up again, or the promise fail.

The above sentence is quoted three times in the New Testament. First, to prove that, before God, faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness, before he was said to be justified by works. (Rom. iv. 3.) Here, it is to shew that we receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith, as Abraham was accounted righteous upon that principle; and being thus of faith, we become the children of faithful Abraham. Thirdly, it is cited to shew that faith must have its practical outcome, and the man of faith become the faithful man. (Jas. ii. 23.) Faithful, is what comes out at the end of the course.

SCRIPTURE FORESEES.

Now, the scripture foresaw all this. "And

the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." (Ver. 8.)

Mark first how he speaks of the scriptures. They are living oracles; the prescience of God is in them. Christ thus practically used the scriptures: "It is written;" "By the words of thy mouth I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Paul, the vessel of inspiration to fulfil or complete the word of God, appealed also to the Old Testament scripture. "The scripture foreseeing." What! Had the scripture eyes? Had the scripture a mind? Yes! It is the word of the living God, and all the attributes of the living God are predicable of it. The written word is the transcript of the living word, and this is Christ Himself. In this sense it is looked at here, as though it were God Himself.

What did scripture foresee? Four hundred and thirty years before the law came it foresaw that God would justify the heathen on the principle of faith. God's dealing with Abraham was on the same principle as the gospel which Paul proclaimed; "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 3.) This was one of the first promises made to Abraham, and nothing is said in it about the seed; it is, however, confirmed later on with an oath to the seed. (Gen. xxii. 18.) Here, only that part of

the promise is quoted which affects the Gentiles ; suited to the object before the mind of the apostle. The other part of the promise, that of Abraham should come a great nation, that is, the Jews, is yet to be fulfilled, and on this ground, of promise and faith in a coming day.

“So then, they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.” (Ver. 9.) Here is the alone means of blessing. It was faith in the case of Abraham, and it is faith in our case also. On no other principle can God deal with man if He wishes to bless him. “Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all . . . before God.” (Rom. iv. 16, 17.)

THE CURSE OF THE LAW.

It is faith, as we have seen, that alone brings the blessing : and this is in contrast with the law which brings only the curse. Here the apostle quotes a remarkable scripture, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse : for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Ver. 10.)

Now if we turn to the passage from which this verse is quoted, we shall find that six tribes

were to stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless ; and six upon Mount Ebal to curse. But in fact the blessings were not at all pronounced, because scripture "foresaw" again that no blessing could come under the law. Therefore the blessings are omitted, but the Levites were to pronounce from Ebal, with a loud voice, the curses in detail. Now there you have it. The law can only bring a curse. What are you going in for, a curse or a blessing ? Do you desire blessing from God ? It must be on the principle of faith. Do you desire to keep the law ? Then you must be under the curse, for the law never did anything else but minister death and condemnation. The last verse of the passage is quoted, as comprehensive of all. The least failure brings the curse. How then can law-keepers expect anything else ?

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.

Moreover, the prophets corroborate this on the other side, and shew that the law does not justify, but that righteousness comes with life. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident : for, The just shall live by faith." (Ver. 11.) Life is not the outcome of righteousness ; but righteousness is the outcome of life ; and faith is the rule of life. So these words of the prophet Habakkuk (chap. ii. 14), who came after the law, bring out and confirm what is contained in the promises before the

law; and thus the righteousness of God, without the law, is witnessed by the law, and the prophets.

Law is neither the principle of justification, nor the rule of life. Faith substitutes it in both these cases, and faith itself is the outcome of a new nature; the old knows no such principle.

“And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” (Ver. 12.) Now no man ever has done them in the entirety of their spiritual application; no man ever lived thus. Nothing but the curse remains for all who put themselves upon the principle of law keeping before God.

This citation is from Leviticus xviii. 5, and is in contrast here with faith. The just man lives by faith in a glorious object; while the legalist lives in the things he does, and never attains to righteousness, but brings ever the curse upon himself.

CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US.

The only deliverance from this state of things is through Christ. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Vers. 13, 14.)

Here we have a provision from the law itself to admit of Christ becoming a curse, to remove the curse from off the man who deserved it. Wonderful provision indeed. It had really become a question on the one hand, Are all men to be swept off the scene? Or on the other, Will God bless man spite of the outstanding curse of the law? To sweep them to perdition, would be *righteous*, but, Where the *grace*? To bless them in their guilty condition might indicate a kind of grace, but, Where the righteousness? God's plan shines out as maintaining all His attributes, and Christ bears the curse, thus upholding righteousness as the basis of true grace, so that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles. Wonderful provision of a wonderful God!

No one can ever know what it is to be redeemed from the curse, unless one has had in one's soul the sense of being under the curse. The devil boldly denies there is such a thing as the curse to-day. There is no hell is part of his lying gospel. Alas! how many believe him. But no man gets blessing in his soul from God, who has not realised, that if he had his *deserts* he would go to hell, and there remain for ever. Do not believe the devil when he tells you there is no hell, no curse.

The Lord Jesus Himself repeats three times over the very strongest word (Gehenna) used for hell in Mark ix., where He says:

You had better "enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." (Ver. 43.)

"It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." (Ver. 45.)

"It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Vers. 47, 48.)

Such will assuredly be the destination of every soul who is not redeemed from the curse which he deserves. Not that every one was put under the law by God. The Gentiles were already under the curse, being sinners. The Jews fell under it as transgressors, by breaking the law. There is but one way out from under this curse, and this way is by Christ being made a curse for us. Now this was not only to lift the curse from those who were under it; but that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles also, by Jesus Christ.

ABRAHAM'S BLESSING OURS BY FAITH.

Now we have already seen that they which are of faith are Abraham's sons. But the blessing of this verse is higher than that; it is connected with that which proves we are sons of God. It is contained in the last part of our verse, "that

we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The promise to Abraham contained in germ a great many blessings that were developed by the prophets later on. Both Isaiah and Ezekiel refer to promises of the Spirit, but these both are more connected with Jews. This is, however, greatly expanded when we come to Joel, who certainly includes the Gentiles in this promise. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." (Chap. ii. 28.) This is quoted by Peter in Acts ii. to shew that what took place then was of this kind.

Here, then, the promise of the Spirit is extended to the Gentiles; and in our chapter the apostle says, that Christ was made a curse for us, that the promise of the Spirit might come upon the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ by faith. Thus by faith this inestimable blessing comes upon us then, and not on the principle of works of law.

May I not ask, Do you know what it is to be indwelt by that Holy Spirit? How can the Christian do without Him? He is the power by which his life flourishes, and is the One who enables him to enter into every branch of privilege and blessing. For personal satisfaction, and power to rise to the source whence the blessing comes (John iv.); for power to present

the blessing to others (John vii.); for conscious knowledge that Christ is a divine Person; that we are in Him before God; and that He is in us down here, we need the Holy Spirit in this His day. (John xiv.) Do not let false teaching rob you of the enjoyment of that which belongs to you. Our poor dull hearts so little open to the truth of God. We need, indeed, the power and energy of the Holy Spirit to expand them; but if we deny His presence, how can we but grieve Him? what wonder, then, that He does not testify to our spirits of these things.

Observe, that in verses 6-14 there are no less than six quotations from the Old Testament. Two are from the promises to Abraham. Three from the law. One from the prophets. They go to shew that the righteousness of God, pledged in the promises to Abraham, is witnessed by the law and the prophets.

Now in the passage from verses 15 to 18, the apostle shews what the relationship of the law with the promise is; then raises and answers two questions, one in verse 19, the other in verse 21; and then draws his conclusion.

THE LAW CANNOT MAKE THE PROMISE VOID.

As to the relation of the law with the promise, he first of all shews that, "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto." (Ver. 15.) No

one would think of setting aside even man's covenant, signed, sealed and delivered; or seek to add new provisions thereto, it would not be considered righteous. How much less can God's covenant be touched!

Now God had made promises to Abraham and to his seed, "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Ver. 16.) The promise, made to Abraham, in Genesis xii. 3 was confirmed by an oath to Isaac in Genesis xxii. 16-18. "Because God could swear by no greater, he sware by himself." Let it be observed, that it is not till after Abraham had received his son back again, as it were from the dead, that the promise is confirmed to Isaac, who is thus a type of the risen Christ. Isaac did not actually die, for God found a substitute for him. But there was no substitute found for Him who was God's Son. He did die, and rose again. It is to Him the promise is confirmed.

Both the promises above referred to are those in which the Gentiles were to have a part, and the one to the seed indicates the heavenly character of the blessing. There are other promises made to Abraham, which have reference to the earthly inheritance, and the blessing of the Jews. These also are to be fulfilled in Christ, and on the principle of faith. It is well to note the difference of these promises, which are, however,

linked together in one grand whole in Christ. Then, how good to see that we are brought into the higher and heavenly things, on the ground of promise and faith in Christ.

This promise, stronger than any covenant, confirmed before of God to Christ, "the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Ver. 17.) Note here, the promise is called a covenant, while the law is not so called. This covenant, which was confirmed by an oath to Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the law, cannot be disannulled by the law, nor is the law a new provision to this covenant. It came in long after and simply had nothing to do with the promise.

Moreover the inheritance could not come by the law, as it was part of the promise made long before. "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Ver. 18.)

In these four verses, then, the relationship of the law to the promises is laid down plainly. God is shewn to have pledged Himself by His word and by His oath—two immutable things—to give to Abraham's seed, that is, to Christ, the blessing, whether carthly or heavenly; and in this blessing the Gentiles were to have part by faith. Now the law, which came in so long after, had nothing to do with the promise. It did not

set it aside, nor did it even add a new clause to it. It did but shew the necessity of the promise.

THE LAW TO BRING IN TRANSGRESSION.

No wonder the question should now be raised, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" And the answer is as unexpected as it is wonderful, "It was added for the sake of transgression." (Ver. 19.) That is to say, to prove to the Jew, who did not know himself a sinner, that he could not keep the law, and was therefore a transgressor, and thus a sinner. Not to make men sinners, for God never did that; but being sinners and not knowing it, the law comes in that they may learn by it, they cannot keep it, and so by transgression become convicted of sin. This was distinctly the object of the giving of the law; and with this in view, God did give a law that He knew man could not keep.

The question of righteousness must necessarily be raised, in order to prove to man that he must be a debtor to grace. Hence, the promise is first, and secured by oath. Then, lest man should think he deserved that which was promised, God proposed the law. Man not knowing himself, eagerly accepted it; saying, "All that the Lord hath commanded will we do." "Very well," God said, "I will try you." Now, in result, all are proved to be transgressors, and at the entire disposal of God, to do what He will with

them. God then retires into His sovereignty, and falls back upon His promise. If it were not so, no human being would ever get blessing at all.

Further, the law was given, "Until the Seed should come to whom the promise was made." And only until that time. It was to cease then even as a proposed means of blessing. And what was to follow? Blessing was to come through that Seed, which was Christ. Who, then, are to be blessed with Him, since the raising of the question of righteousness has proved that none but He is worthy? This is the problem to be solved. No one but Christ can claim blessing on the ground of righteousness. Will God fulfil His promises spite of the failure of the descendants of Abraham to fulfil their obligations to Him? God will assuredly fulfil His promises, since the character of those to whom the promises were made was not in view when they were made. Yet they, having proved themselves utterly unworthy upon the ground of righteousness, there is nothing but grace left for them.

This, however, is not as is supposed, grace pure and simple, apart from the question of righteousness. People oftentimes have only this false idea of grace, which would bring in the most terrible confusion. They do not see that it is absolutely necessary that grace should have

a righteous foundation—should, as it is said, “reign through righteousness.” God cannot deny Himself. Neither can His promise fail, nor can His righteousness be forfeited—His holiness abandoned. God’s own wonderful plan is, that the promised Seed should bear the curse, thus satisfying the divine righteousness, in order that the blessing might flow to all those for whom it was purposed, Jew or Gentile, by faith of Jesus Christ; all having alike been proved to be sinners.

TWO PARTS TO THE LEGAL COVENANT.

Another thing that shewed the necessity for the cessation of the law as a proposed means of blessing, is that it was “ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.” (Ver. 20.) A mediator comes in between two parties, and it is cited here to shew that there was a second party to the legal covenant, in contrast to the absolute promise of the eternal God, who is One. The fulfilment of this covenant depended, consequently, not upon God, but upon man; and he could not do his part, so the thing must fail, as far as blessing is concerned; while the curse alone is thus secured. Whereas if it is a question of promise, all depends upon God, who, “what he hath promised, is also able to perform,” and thus blessing is secured.

When God spake to Abraham, He spake directly to him, no one came between them, but God spake face to face with him, as a man speaketh to his friend. On the other hand, immediately man takes upon himself to keep the law, and utters the memorable words, "All that the Lord hath commanded we will do, and be obedient," God says, Set bounds unto the people round about. Distance comes in at once, and Moses is brought in as mediator. Angelic glory surrounds the mount, and the people could not endure it. How great the contrast!

But we have a greater contrast in Psalm lxviii. 17, 18. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. Jehovah is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Here the law in the hands of a mediator is in contrast to the ascended Christ. The law could only drive man to a distance, but the ascended Christ, as a man, receives gifts for men, which He gives even to the rebellious. Jehovah came down, and man was put at a distance under law. Christ has accomplished redemption, and man, in His person, has ascended on high, and sits upon the very throne of Jehovah.

Man naturally has the idea that God is

demanding something of him, "I knew thee, that thou art a hard man," is his thought. If I could only bring something to Him. Why, beloved, God is the only friend you have. Have to do with Him now, and you will infallibly be blessed. Surely you will not seek to put yourselves under the curse. Never mind the law with its angels and mediator. Have to do directly with God in Christ. He is your friend. Hear Him and believe Him. He will pour such a blessing into your soul, that there shall not be room enough to contain it. It may break the vessel but the blessing shall abide.

IS THE LAW AGAINST THE PROMISES ?

The second question is now raised, "Is the law against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Ver. 21.) No, indeed, the law is not against the promises, but it is in order to shew the absolute necessity of the promises. The law could not give life; how then, righteousness, which is the outcome of life? It was only negative and was in every case damnatory. It could do nothing else but condemn, and thus proved that man was utterly dependent upon God and His promises. God can act wherever this is recognised. When man owns that he has no righteousness, God comes in and says, "Now

I can display my righteousness. Do not get in my way ; give me room to act." How often do we lose the blessing because we do not get out of His way. Alas, this is true, whether of saints or sinners. Let us, beloved, get out of His way and leave Him room to bless. Let us not thrust ourselves between Him and our blessing. There is no life under the law, no righteousness, no blessing.

THE LAW'S CONCLUSION.

"The scripture hath concluded all under sin." Here then is the conclusion of the law, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Jews and Gentiles are all alike ; for " What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." But just here, God's way opens out, It is all in order, " That the promise of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe." (Ver. 22.) God's promises are fulfilled, on the principle of faith, through Jesus Christ, to all, whoever they may be, Jews or Gentiles, apart altogether from law keeping, either for righteousness, or as a rule of life. Well indeed is it for us to trust in the God of resurrection. When we are shut up to death, under sin, then the God of resurrection can come

in, and there is no limit to the blessing He bestows

The law was right enough before faith came, and the children were kept under it too. Not indeed as a means of producing righteousness; but as a witness of righteousness yet to come. It also served a very useful purpose, in keeping the knowledge of the only true God amongst men who otherwise would have been wholly sunken in idolatry. There was the testimony, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah. But the law accomplished nothing for the people, they were but shut up under it, to the faith which should afterwards be revealed. (Ver. 23.)

THE LAW A SCHOOLMASTER UNTIL CHRIST CAME.

It was like putting the heir, while a minor, under a schoolmaster until Christ came; in whom alone by faith they were to be justified; God thus guarding His people until the Person and work of His Son could be a matter for the obedience of faith. In those days the Seed was coming in whom the promises should be made good; but now that Christ has come, the law is no longer needed; faith in Him does away with it.

The law was our schoolmaster until Christ came, but now that He is come and faith in Him is proclaimed we need the pedagogue no longer,

but enter into the privileges of our position. If we have practically learnt the very wholesome lessons the schoolmaster was appointed to teach us, we enter all the more readily into our privileges. These lessons had a distinct reference to our inability to do anything of ourselves, to deserve blessing at God's hand; or even to conserve it when given. (Vers. 24, 25.)

SONS OF GOD BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.

Now our privileges are of the very highest character. We are introduced into the position, not as sons, of Abraham only, which is indeed true, but of an infinitely higher position, and one that Abraham himself never entered into, even that of sons of God, and on the same principle of faith, but in Christ Jesus. (Ver. 26.) Marvellous result of faith. But this blessed One, in whom we believe, is none other than the Son of God. And if He takes my place in death and condemnation, it is in order that I may have His place in life and resurrection; and in relationship with His Father and God.

And all is made good to us in resurrection. Is this not enough to lift us clean above the scene through which we pass? True, we still have the flesh in us while here, and can never get rid of it, but we need no law to keep it under. As sons we have the Spirit dwelling

within, and in the power of that Spirit, can keep it in the place of death.

ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.

They had been baptised unto Christ, and had consequently put on Christ, and were all one upon entirely new ground before God. It was not right to make a distinction between Jew and Gentile now, as Peter had done; nor was it right to try to make the Gentiles live as did the Jews. For the Gentiles had not become Jews, nor had the Jews become Gentiles, but both were made one in Christ Jesus, the new Man before God. And as viewed in Him, before God, all national and social distinctions and relationships are done away. All these distinctions will for ever cease when in His blessed presence. But even now, in being baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have, where it is real, put on Christ; this was the bearing of the ordinance, and Christ alone should be manifested in our intercourse with each other. We are to carry this out in the power of the Spirit, and to recognise the unity of all Christians as such. (Vers. 27, 28.) The only distinction now to be recognised, is that between Christians and the world, to which we have been crucified.

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Ver. 29.) There could be no doubt of their being

Abraham's seed, if they were of Christ, since He has been proved to be the Seed, and the inheritance is surely His and theirs. He will hold the inheritance through them. But as yet it still lies beyond, and is thus a matter of faith, though sure as all else that depends upon God and His promise.

We here see how the apostle insists on every blessing coming to us on the principle of faith. One never knows a single truth of God apart from faith.

1. We have life, by faith in Christ Jesus.

2. We have righteousness, by faith in Christ Jesus.

3. We are sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.

4. We have the Spirit, whereby we cry Abba, Father, by faith.

5. We have the inheritance, by faith in Christ Jesus.

The Spirit of God dwells in us down here, and makes good to us all the blessings of the inheritance; not an earthly inheritance, but a heavenly one. He has not come to make millennial saints of us; but He HAS made us sons of God. Now if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; and after all, it is more—ininitely more—to be a son, than to enter into the inheritance, blessed as that is.

We have life, righteousness, the Spirit, and the inheritance, and we are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This is true of the simplest believer.

May the Lord enable us to enter into our privileges more by faith, and to enjoy His presence, in whom all our blessings centre.



CHAPTER IV.

WE have three things in this chapter, which follow upon what we have already looked at in the previous chapters. They are—sonship, with which goes heirship and liberty. The apostle is here developing a little what he had already brought before them in chapter iii. 26, where he says, “For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Before entering upon this, however, we will endeavour to lay hold of the line of truth which the Spirit of God brings out in this epistle, which is both interesting for our souls, and important as far as our experience is concerned.

PROMISE, AND THE WAYS OF GOD.

The counsels of God are not properly unfolded in the epistle, but many of the blessings, which are the fruit of counsel, are shewn to be involved in the promises, which are here very precious developed for us; and God's ways are discussed and unfolded.

In the end of chapter ii., where the doctrinal part of the epistle commences, we have life and righteousness by faith, and Christ presented as the glorious Sun that henceforth ruled the day

for the apostle. May it be so more with us. This really takes the soul out completely from under the law, and all that to which the law appertains. Dead to the law that I might live unto God, shews that a new thing is in the scene, and is supposed in the epistle—a new creation, as he says in chapter vi. 15. Paul was living a new kind of life, by a new power and with a new object. Everything new; everything lifted high above the platform upon which the first man walked, and above all the things that belong to that scene and sphere.

In chapter iii. the argument continues, and faith is shewn to be the great principle upon which all is made good to us. We have some wonderful truths presented to us in this chapter. The Spirit and the flesh are brought into contrast with each other; the hearing of faith with the works of the law; the curse under the law which brought no justification, and from which we are delivered by Christ becoming a curse for us, with the blessing that comes to us through that same death. In verse 14 he shews that the Spirit is involved in the promise and comes upon us by faith. And in verse 26, after having proved that Christ is the promised seed, and we are of that seed by faith, therefore, because He is Son, we also become sons of God by faith.

Now, this would hardly be gathered from the promises, but the fringe of the unpledged counsels

is touched upon here. Promise is the fruit of counsel, but all the counsel was not pledged by promise, that is, to Abraham; although to Christ, before the foundation of the world, deeper things were pledged, but of these we knew nothing until Christ came and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel.

The question of the relationship between the law and the promises, is also raised and settled, shewing that while man could not righteously claim the fulfilment of the promises, yet that God, retiring into Himself, and acting in sovereignty, could find a righteous way to fulfil them. This could only be by sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin. As we sing:—

“No victim of inferior worth
 Could ward the stroke which justice aimed;
 For none but He, in heaven or earth,
 Could offer that which justice claimed.”

THE HEIR IN HIS MINORITY.

To turn now to our chapter, the apostle argues that, as in human things, while the heir is a child he is under authority, so in divine. “Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all.” (Ver. 1.) He who, being a Jew, was something more than a Jew outwardly, was an heir, but he knew nothing of what liberty was,

not indeed of sonship. He was only like a servant in the house, and did as he was bidden. But in order to fit him for the place he was eventually to occupy, it was necessary that he should be "under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father." (Ver. 2.) Humanly speaking, a man attains his majority at a certain time, that is, when he is twenty-one years of age. Until then he is a minor in the eyes of the law—an infant. He has not the position of a son, nor the confidence of the father, but is being educated for this position, and to fit him to act worthily of it. It is a great day in the history of a man when he attains his majority, and is usually celebrated by a feast.

In like manner, says the apostle, "We, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." (Ver. 3.) We may mark here, that the elements of the world reduce the soul to a state of bondage. And though the time is now past for this, as far as God is concerned, yet a return to these elements means infallibly a return to bondage. The word "elements," here, is the same as is used in 2 Peter iii 10, where it is written: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shalt melt with fervent heat." (See ver. 12 also.) Now this gives the idea. Peter speaks of the elements which go to compose the earth as an abode for man. Paul speaks of the law as one

of the elements that go to make up the world as a system of things, in which God was proving what man was.

SOME ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD.

In writing to the Hebrews, the apostle speaks of the first covenant, as having ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary. There was a tabernacle made in which was the visible sign of Jehovah's presence. This, with that which accompanied it, in the ritual, the sacrifices, and the law, was all part of the elements of the world, and connected with the relationship of a child in his minority. Such a condition wants something to appeal to the senses, and it had that which appealed to the senses, but which was all, at the same time, typical. It was all to pass away when the Son of God, and faith in Him, came. They were all shadows which were to disappear when the substance came.

The law is one of the elements of this state of things; it binds the soul with chains. It is that which a man goes on with, without any sense in the soul of relationship; without any fellowship with, or confidence in, the father. Such a soul is altogether like a child in its minority, and is treated in that way—no fellowship, no confidence. Alas, how many there are to-day who are satisfied to go on in this state of things. But let such souls remember that it is a culpable state to be

in to-day, right as it might have been in the days before Christ came.

It is practically saying, I do not want His confidence. I do not want to enter into this new condition of things. I will remain stunted, a dwarf, a babe! Is not that a solemn state of things? What would you think of one who spoke like that? Yet there are hundreds of persons saying it to-day; not, perhaps, in words, but they are going on with, and are content to remain in, that which keeps them in darkness, amid the full blaze of the light that shines from the face of Jesus Christ in glory.

THE FULNESS OF THE TIME.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Vers. 4, 5.) What is the fulness of the time here spoken of? Is it not that time when man, having been fully proved under every trial to which he could be subjected, was found to be utterly worthless and without power? He had been tried in innocence; without law; under law; under priest, prophet, king; under government, whether patriarchal, Noahic, national, or universal; under promise; and last of all, under fulfilment of promise in the person of the Messiah sent unto His people. Then, and not till then,

scripture concluded all under sin. Then, and not till then, the fulness of the time had come.

The picked sample of mankind, descending direct from Abraham, the depository of the promises, had been delivered from among the Gentiles, put under the law, blessed with all favour, and hedged about from the other nations. This had but proved that no amount of privilege could produce fruit from the tree of human responsibility. Moreover, when the promises were fulfilled in the promised seed, their true Messiah, they shewed themselves utterly regardless of all that God had done, and rejected Him. So that, not only was man rejected and turned out of the garden at the first; but when God came down to His own world in grace to sinful man, man rejected and cast Him out.

GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON.

But then came out what God had done. What was it ? Fulfilled His promises ? Ah, more ! infinitely more ! When this fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son. Think of that, beloved ! His Son ! Where was that pledged by promise in the Old Testament ? And yet, perhaps, it might have been gathered, and certainly no promise could be fulfilled without it. We need to lay hold of the dignity of the Person of Him who accomplished the work. The Son of God ! ! ! If this is laid hold

of, we shall never be surprised at the results of this work to every one who accepts it.

I can quite understand a person saying, I do not like to say this is all true of me. And in a certain sense this seems to be a right kind of humility. But, after all, this only means that you have not really learnt what you are—one of the “all under sin,” the submerged “all;” the “all” cast upon God for Him to do as He will with, who acts according to His own glory, and not our deserts. Learn yourself thus as one of that writhing, seething mass of iniquity; and that God sent His Son to go down beneath the ruin of the SUBMERGED RACE, to deliver all who accept Him, and you will not hesitate to speak after Him as to the results to yourself.

REDEMPTION.

“Born of a woman,” by whom sin came, so that the efficacy of His work might be as far-reaching as sinful “man that is born of a woman.” “Born under the law,” that transgressors under it might be redeemed. And thus, both might receive the adoption of sons. Wide as the world is the aspect of the efficacy of His precious work! Firm as a rock its results for all who believe it!

People argue that because all died in Adam, so all are to share in the results of Christ's work. They speak of what they call the “solidarité” of the race. That as all fell together in Adam, so

all must be raised together in Christ. But this is human reasoning, and ignores responsibility and faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The word of God settles this as all other difficulties. It is not the raising of the old race, but the forming of a new race; albeit those who compose it are those who, being originally of the fallen race, have abandoned it, and by faith have appropriated each one for himself the work of Christ, and those only. Judgment, and condemnation await all the rest.

Still the results of Christ's work, the efficacy of His blood, reaches out to all men wherever they are found, and in whatever condition they may be. There is not a soul, whether he be a sinner doing his own will, or one who has been proved a transgressor under the law, towards whom the efficacy of that work does not reach. If such a soul accepts by faith the report of that efficacy, it will raise *him* from the sea of iniquity beneath which the whole race is submerged, and give him a portion in the new race before God. Not one of that race but will own, that if he had his deserts, he would be weltering in hell, from which, alone, Christ's blood, and a living faith in it, inwrought by the Spirit of God, could save him.

SONSHIP.

Through the work of the Son of God then, which embraces and atones for, both the sins of

the Gentile and the transgressions of the Jew, those who have faith in Him become sons of God. Do we understand it? Have we accepted the immensity of the dignity thus conferred upon us? What a wonderful thing to think that I am brought into the same relationship with the Father as the Lord Jesus Christ was in, as a man down here. There is more than nature in it, that was of old when the heir was but an infant; there is now, both relationship and position. Beside this there is also the attaining one's majority in

THE CONSCIOUSNESS WHICH THE SPIRIT GIVES.

What a wonderful day it is in the experience of a soul when it attains its majority. I can now say, I am a Son of God! This is more than being a Son of Abraham. And, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Ver. 6.) The very same words are thus put into our lips as the blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself used. This is no longer a state of bondage and darkness, knowing nothing; but God has in the riches of His grace, abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will. We have the confidence of the Father, and the ability to enter into all He unfolds, so that we can act in all respects with

Him, knowing His mind about things. This is the portion of every believer to-day.

Notice first, I am a son. Then because of that the Spirit of God takes up His abode in my heart. This brings me consciously into all the joy of it. I know what I am. Now what a man is is more than all that he may have. One may be as poor as the blessed Master was down here; but it is more to be able to say, as I walk through the streets, I am a son of God, than to be able to speak of the possession of untold riches down here. Think of the dignity of it! It is not what I have here, but what I am; and by the grace of God I am what I am. Raised to the very highest dignity it is possible to put upon a creature, it would be a coming down from my excellency to exchange my position as a son of God, for that of a son of the Queen. There is a dignity to confer upon a man, a sinner originally! It is sonship! Not merely nature, though, blessed be His name, not without nature.

CONFIDENCE.

Thus entering upon one's majority, one enjoys the confidence of the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ, when on earth, could say, "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth." Nothing that the Father does, that He does not shew to the Son. This was

the confidence between them. All things were open to Him. Now they are opened to us also. When the Son came, He came to unfold all that was in the heart of the Father to us. "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." This indicates not only the relationship and position, but also confidence and communion. The blessed God treats us with confidence, having put us in the place of sons, and giving us the blessed consciousness of it, for the Spirit of His Son in our hearts cries, "Abba, Father." May our hearts have filial confidence in Him at all times.

The Spirit is thus the proof of sonship. But the cry, "Abba, Father," is the proof of the Spirit's presence. Now, beloved, can you cry, "Abba, Father"? If so, then you have the Spirit of God's Son in your heart. And if you have His Spirit, then you are a son. Surely, then, you will not go back voluntarily into bondage? Think! Thou art no longer bondsman, but son! You are no longer in the place of a minor. What wonderful words to those who have been in bondage. Now, some of the beloved saints of God to-day do but feebly understand the force of it, they have never been through any deep exercise as to it; things have gone smoothly with them since they were converted, but their time will come. On the other hand, others are content to go on plodding

through an experience of bondage, as though it were a right experience for a son. But what a marvellous thing it is to be brought into deliverance from such a state! What a moment in one's experience! Those who have been in bondage can appreciate such a deliverance when it comes. May it be the happy experience of all who love His name. When God causes the light of His truth to break into the soul, the thing is done at once. One ray from the scriptures brings light. The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple. And here is light for them that are in darkness; liberty for those in bondage. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Ver. 7.)

HEIRSHIP.

Now, for one moment consider this heirship. Is it to be an heir of Abraham simply? Oh, no, it is infinitely more. An heir of God through Christ. Abraham's heirs, according to the flesh, will inherit the land—the earth; but sons of God inherit with Christ. Now God hath appointed the Son heir of all things. They, therefore, who are sons of God, inherit all things with Him. "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John xvi. 15.)

Again, "In the dispensation of the fulness of the times, he will head up all in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are upon earth, even in him, in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. i. 10, 11.) True, we are not yet in possession of the inheritance, but we are joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. viii. 17.) This inheritance then has a double side to it; we inherit suffering with Him for a little while, and then the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which is reserved in heaven for us.

God promised to Abraham that his seed should inherit the land; and it was limited from the river of Egypt, to the great river, the river Euphrates. Would that satisfy your hearts, beloved friends? Ah no! The Son of God inherits much more than that; heaven and earth are His. Already He is set far above all heavenly principalities and powers; and it is the heavenly portion that is our proper portion with Him, albeit, we reign over the ransomed earth also. Yet the wonder of it all shall be, that God will fill the heavens through the work of that blessed man Christ Jesus, with men that were unfit to live upon earth. And if for a while we suffer here below, there being a needs-be for it, yet has

He sent down the Holy Spirit to lead our hearts into the present enjoyment of heavenly things.

The whole creation suffers and groans together in the bondage of corruption, being made subject to it, not of its own will, but by Him who was placed at its head. We, who have the Spirit of Christ, see this suffering, and as He felt the fact of all that which came from His hand perfect, being submerged beneath this dreadful bondage, and groaned and wept and sighed in unison with it; so we groan within ourselves as we wait for the adoption, that is to say, the redemption of our bodies. But this Spirit is the Spirit of adoption also, as we have seen, and lifts the heart unto the unseen and eternal things, and enables it to enjoy them. What a thing that I, a poor worm of earth, should be related to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be able to cry, Abba, Father! May that Spirit enable us to enter more into the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

RETROGRESSION.

But what is the state of Christendom to-day? It is in bondage. It may struggle to be free, but the very struggle proves the bondage. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service to them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are

known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Vers. 8, 9.) They had worshipped blocks of wood and stone, with Satan behind them; they had performed all the devilish rites at those degrading feasts, which had been inaugurated by priestcraft, to the worship of those heathen gods, which were no gods; they had done things which cannot even be repeated by naturally decent persons. Yet these things were considered part of the worship, in feasts which were dedicated to demons. They had been turned from this heathen worship to the true God, and now they were going back to the law; and the apostle says, It is all one as though you had turned back to heathendom.

Is not this a solemn state of things? And is not Christendom guilty in the same way? Assuredly it is! If it has been delivered from its heathendom by a professed faith in Christ, and now turns back again to keep the law, it is a return to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, a desire again to be in bondage. It is not a bit of good saying, "The law was given of God, and I am going to endeavour to keep it." No, says the apostle, You might just as well be an idolater as go back to the law. It is an immensely solemn thing, dear friends. The apostle says, You might just as well go back

to your old practices—and we must remember that our forefathers were in awful darkness, as worshippers of the Druidical oak—as put yourselves under the law. And yet this is just what we get all around us in Christendom to-day. What will be the issue of it? It will end in the worship of Antichrist—a man—the very worst form of idolatry. I know that Christendom does not believe it, but it is nevertheless true. Oh, that many who see or hear these lines, may be delivered from it before it come to pass.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

There was no true knowledge of God in their turning back to Judaism. It was wholly contrary to His nature and character, as revealed in the gospel. One time they knew nothing of the true God at all, then they did service to them that be no gods. Now they had a certain knowledge of God, as He had revealed Himself as a Saviour-God. Had they gone on to know more of Him, they would have been preserved from this retrograde movement. The more I know of a person, the more I know what suits him: and God is now in the light, so that there was no excuse for them. The apostle checks himself in saying, "After that ye have known God," and adds, "or rather are known of God." One may ask, Can it be questioned that a saved person

knows God? I may know Him as a Saviour, but I need the knowledge of all that is revealed of God, to preserve me in the right path from the errors that surround me.

Certainly to turn to Judaism was a proof that these Galatians did not know God as they should have done. Just as the denial of the resurrection at Corinth was a proof that there "some had not the knowledge of God." Christendom, too, is proving to-day its want of the knowledge of the God it professes to worship, and is rearing all around its altars "To the unknown God."

YE OBSERVE DAYS, "I AM AFRAID OF YOU."

As a proof of this sad state of things, the apostle brings forward their observance of days; a thing which had indeed been imposed upon the Jews in olden times, but to which these Gentiles had turned in going back to the law. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Vers. 10, 11.) It is remarkable that he should pitch upon this observance of days, as a further proof of their retrogression, since this is the very thing into which Christendom has also fallen. It has its Christmas day, its Good Friday, its Easter day, its sabbaths and its saints' days.

What? one may ask; Is the observance of Christmas day one of the things he condemns?

Assuredly, none of these days are found in scripture. Moreover, it is well known by any one that has read anything about the matter, that they were all heathen feasts, dedicated originally to the various gods and goddesses known among them, but altered to suit Christians, and names of saints substituted for the names of the heroes, or demons which they bore. As far as Christmas day is concerned, the only thing certain is, that Christ was not born on that day, nor at that season of the year. How full is the calendar of these days. Yet the saints are delivered from them all—holy days (saints' days), new moons, even sabbaths, as being only a shadow, while the substance is Christ. (Col. ii. 16, 17.)

There never was a truer picture of the man who goes back to ritualistic observances, than the old fable of the dog and the shadow. It is well known. A dog crossing a stream with a piece of meat in its mouth, sees the shadow of the piece it carries reflected from the smooth surface of the water. Endeavouring to obtain the shadow, it drops the substance and loses all. So with the ritualist, he drops the substance while attempting to lay hold of the shadow. Christ, who is the substance of all the types of the Old Testament, has come, and faith is here. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. The ritual gives but the shadow of things to come, not even the image, and the

ritualist loses the sense of a present Christ in the soul, while cleaving to types, that are done away in Christ.

THE ONE FEAST DAY OF CHRISTIANITY.

There is, however, one great feast and feast day given us in the New Testament, and one in which all the great typical feast days of the Old Testament are centred and condensed. This is not the day of the birth of Christ, nor even of His crucifixion—necessary as these are to it—but it is the day of His resurrection. The first day of the week—the Lord's day. A day which tells of the accomplishment of all that Christ came to perform. The will of God accomplished, judgment exhausted, sins put away. A day which tells of victory and liberty to the believer. Blessed day! A recurring day! One in every seven days! He who turns to other days does not know what it is to enter into the victory which Christ has won, and which God gives to the believer through Him. It may be he is ignorant through false teaching, but ignorance is culpable in a day of the full glory that shines from the face of Jesus Christ, the Man at God's right hand. I do not wish to offend any, I would rather be helpful in delivering. Remember it is the apostle who says, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years; I am afraid of you."

“BE AS I AM, FREE FROM THE LAW!”

Yet his heart yearns over them, and he beseeches them to maintain the liberty into which he had introduced them, and in which he stood himself. “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are; ye have not injured me at all.” (Ver. 12.) The apostle had been delivered from under the law; while they, naturally, were free from it, never having been put under it by God. He now boasted of his freedom from it, while they had fallen under its bondage, and reproached him with being nothing more than a Gentile. Yet he counts it not an injury, but glories in it, entreating them also to resume their place of liberty, practically, “Be as I am.” Free from the law! For I am as ye are naturally. Free from the law! And though they reproached him with being a Gentile, yet he would not count it as an injury, if but they would step back into their true place of liberty. Yet how serious the change in their condition. They had returned to bondage!

Again we may remark, How graphically this state of things describes what is seen in Christendom to-day, only it is in a more advanced form. Who hath bewitched you? he had asked of them. And all such are bewitched still, while the devil, who has bewitched them, laughs in his sleeve at the clever men of the nineteenth

century, bowing down like bulrushes, before their imagery. Christians, even, are involved in it, and Satan is satisfied, if he cannot take away their life, to hinder their enjoying it in its native liberty. Alas! What willing tools even the people of God are in his hands. How little they accredit God with the magnificent grace that has been brought to them in the gospel.

It is well to remember that the apostle is defending the truth of the gospel here. He was set for the defence and confirmation of the gospel. He is here fulfilling this ministry of the gospel. It is not the ministry of the church, which was also his. Yet the gospel is never complete without the church, which is the mystery of the gospel; and so here he touches upon it, though it is seen in the character of a city, a free city, however, as it surely is. He will have no mingling of bondage and freedom, law and gospel, and so he insists upon it as far as he is concerned, that Christians never shall be slaves! Will you put yourselves under bondage? Brethren, be as I am!

YE DID RECEIVE ME; AM I BECOME YOUR ENEMY?

But before entering upon the allegory of the two cities, he refers touchingly to their first reception of him. How differently they viewed him then and now. His infirmity in the flesh was known to them when at the first he had preached the gospel unto them. There was no

despising him then, no rejecting him, though he had used no human means to hide his infirmity or to dress up the gospel. They had received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus, whose ambassador he was. (Vers. 13, 14.) Their souls had been knit to him, as to Christ Himself, and they had recognised the truth of the prophetic scripture, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace; and bring glad tidings of good things." How well, beloved, we know what it is to cling to those who thus bring God's delivering power in the gospel to us. And how right it is. Alas, that hearts could so soon be turned away from such! But this was the apostle's portion, both here and at Corinth; and has been the portion of many since. Would that the same abnegation of self, and care for the beloved ones were always manifested, as in his case here.

His ministry had been fruitful also of spiritual grace among them, but where was now the blessedness of those days? They spake of this blessedness, and he bare them record, that, if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. (Ver. 15.) Possibly he refers to his thorn in the flesh in these verses. His eyes were weak, which is evident from the way he refers to the large characters in which he had written this epistle with his own hand. Then, they viewed

his infirmities tenderly, because of the wonderful power the truth had over their souls; but now they reproached him with them, led on by false and legal teachers.

“Why,” he asks, “has the word lost its power? Am I preaching a different gospel now? “Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Ver. 16.) The apostle had changed neither in the truth he preached, nor in his solicitude for them; but the Galatians, having gone back to the law, and to bondage, now counted him as an enemy because he told them the truth, who before had been as an angel unto them.

ZEAL IS GOOD, IF RIGHTLY DIRECTED.

But other influences were at work, and seducers were endeavouring to alienate the affections of the Galatians from the apostle, and, alas, too successfully. “They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.” (Vers. 17, 18.) The zeal of these Judaizers was not of the right kind. They desired to shut the apostle out from the Galatians, that they might be zealous after them. They wished to detach the affections of the hearts of the saints from the apostle, that they themselves might profit by anything these

affections might suggest; and the zeal of the Galatians, which had been rightly directed, was now turned into a channel the opposite of the right one. When the apostle was there, they had been zealous, as verse 15 shews. Now their zeal had been turned away to the upholding of the enemies of the gospel. Alas for them! Zeal there should indeed be always in a right cause; as the blessed Master could say, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." But it was not so with them now.

May we not apply this as a test to ourselves as servants of the Lord? He that is true in His service will seek to link the heart's affections with Christ; and in doing this he will get his own share. But he that is not true will seek to become himself the centre of admiration, and will be jealous of affections rightly placed upon others; seeking a place for himself. Self can live, even in the midst of a spiritual revival, and there is nothing more odious to God than this. Doubtless it is a snare which besets us all; may we be preserved. These Judaizers were zealous indeed, but for themselves, more as the Pharisee before them, who compass sea and land to make one proselyte. Alas, that the saints should be so soon turned away from the apostle, after he left them.

CHRIST FORMED IN YOU.

On the other hand, how affecting the solicitude

and love of the apostle, for those whom he recognised as his own spiritual children. This was no small matter for him. He had agonized for them, had travailed in birth of them, and was ready again to go through all, in order that the new man, Christ, might be formed in them. (Ver. 19.) They were but babes until then, and had become dwarfs by being seduced. No growth, no vigour, no power to bear arms for Christ! The Israelite of old must be able to declare his pedigree, and to bear arms. The man must be formed. In the Christian, Christ must be formed. This Paul desired, but it was not so; and so his agony for them continued. How blessedly he shines here in contrast to Moses, blessed man as he was. Moses said, "Have I brought all these people forth, that you should put them upon me as upon a nursing mother?" Moses was not prepared for this. But to Paul these saints were his own children. He was certainly an apostle to them.

And though he desired to be present with them, and to change his voice, for he stood in doubt of them (ver. 20) as he looked at their condition; yet he could say, as he turned to God about them, "I have confidence in you in the Lord, that ye will receive the truth, and your troublers their due judgment." (See chap. v. 10.) Looking at their condition, he says, "I am afraid of you. I stand in doubt of you." But thinking before the Lord

about them, and their past zeal, he says, as it were, I am quite sure it was not all in vain, but the Lord was in it and He will perfect His work, and bring you right. Happy assurance for a servant, even when the saints are wrong, but it is obtained only in the Lord's presence. Christ formed in the saints was what he wanted to see, and he was not satisfied to let his spiritual children drift off with every wind of doctrine.

LIBERTY.

He now enforces by an allegorical illustration, what we have called the third part of our chapter—Liberty. It is the birthright of the believer of the present day. The liberty of the Spirit; "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Now the liberty of the Spirit can brook no entanglement with the yoke of bondage. The bondwoman and her son must be cast out. The very law teaches it. "Tell me," he says, "ye that desire to be teachers of the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, and the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise." (Vers. 21-23.) Here we may note that the flesh and bondage go together: and promise and freedom. Now these two things set forth allegorically the two covenants; the covenant of

the law, and the covenant of promise. (See chap. iii. 17.) There are also two cities characterised by the two principles of the two covenants, set forth by these two women. Now God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise. He also looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Hagar then sets forth the covenant from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage. "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." (Vers. 24, 25.) The Christian has nothing to do with Hagar, nor with the covenant that genders to bondage, nor with the city that is characterised and set forth by this woman and principle. He looks for and belongs to another city. Not another earthly city, for Jerusalem will surely be restored, but a heavenly city. "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother." (Ver. 26.) Promise, freedom, heaven, all find their place here. And while of old it was written of Jerusalem, "This and that man was born in her;" "how much more blessed is it to know that our "names are written in heaven," and that we are "born from above."

But as then, there was an attempt to keep the two sons in Abraham's house; so now, Satan tries to ensnare the saint by an endeavour to maintain the two principles in the heart. But

this, nor the God of all grace, nor the Spirit, nor Paul will brook. It is impossible! Jerusalem which is above, is our mother, and we are free.

REJOICE, THOU BARREN!

Before following this out, the apostle gives parenthetically, a collateral proof of the distinctness and separateness of the two cities or companies—the earthly and the heavenly, in verse 27. “Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she that hath an husband.” This is quoted from Isaiah liv. 1., and refers to the time of the restoration of Jerusalem. When this is brought about, the church will be in view as the heavenly city; the many sons in glory, begotten to Jerusalem during her desolation; for salvation is of the Jews. The apostle has before his mind these two cities at that time, and passes in thought from one to the other, just as in Hebrews xii., after speaking of Zion, he passes on to “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” Jerusalem shall cry at that time, “Who hath begotten me these? . . . Behold I was left alone: These, Whence are they?” Thus shall even restored Jerusalem wonder at the heavenly glory of those who obtained salvation from Him whom they then own as their Messiah.

CHILDREN OF PROMISE. THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT.

Resuming his subject, he declares, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." (Ver. 28.) The freeborn children of promise, of our mother which is above, we are already heavenly in character, for, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." And we await the moment when, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." What have we to do with earth and the flesh; the law and its bondage?

But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so is it now. (Ver. 29.) The bondborn son was in the house, until the newborn of the freewoman was weaned, and was thus entering upon a distinct existence of his own, then the mocking Ishmael was discovered. Longer in possession, older and stronger, there can be no peace for the newborn, if he is to remain in the house. Persecution must be his portion. This is so in every case, whether in the house of Abraham, the heart of the saint, or in the church of God. Or wider still, in the renewed world. The fleshly bondborn child, or nature, persecutes the new spiritual freeborn child or nature. Impossible that there can be any coalition.

CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON.

There is nothing for it but that which Sarah,

who had no natural link with Ishmael, saw at once must be the case. It was she who gave utterance to that which, though grievous in Abraham's eyes, passes into the word of God as inspired, and is here quoted as scripture. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." (Ver. 30.) "God," says Sarah, "has made me to laugh, so that all that hear me will laugh with me." Why should this mocking Ishmael spoil my joy? He shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac (laughter). The heir of promise shall have the house to himself, and grievous as it was to Abraham, whose nature was involved, yet he owns the rightness of it and sends Hagar and Ishmael to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

So would the apostle it were with these Galatians. So would he have it with all the Lord's people to-day. Why should they embrace a principle that mars their delight, and hinders praise to Him who has saved them for His praise?

In the above passage we have the law, versus promise and grace; faith, versus works; the flesh, versus the Spirit; bondage, versus liberty; the earthly, versus the heavenly; and these are brought into sharp and vivid contrast with each other. It is impossible to mingle the two principles, or grace would cease to be grace, and

law would cease to be law. Neither can one be a citizen of two cities at the same time: he would be untrue to both. This was Satan's object then, as it is also now.

The Galatians were bound to admit that they were debtors to grace, and it was on the principle of faith that they had obtained life and the Spirit; and yet they wanted to be made perfect by the law. How much is this the case around us? How many are deceived by Satan's sophistry? Would that a clarion voice could arouse them! The condition of Christendom proves that the principles of the earthly Jerusalem and the covenant of Sinai with its bondage, are more largely accepted than the principles of the heavenly city and its covenant of promise and grace, with liberty.

Christian, awake! To which city do you belong? Under which covenant are you before God? Will you shackle yourself with bonds and chains? Or will you rejoice in the liberty with which the Son hath freed you? Remember! He hath made you a son. Will you practically refuse this glorious position, with all that attaches to it, of communion and confidence and heaven, to grope amid the darkness and bondage of earth? Lift up your head. Why go mourning all your days, when God hath given you occasion to rejoice? Abandon practically the Jerusalem which now is, with the bondage which belongs

to her children, and breathe the free air of Jerusalem above, which is your mother.

FREE MEN, STAND FAST.

For, brethren, "we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." (Ver. 30, chap. v. 1.) Here is the statement of what we are, and the necessity of standing fast. To give way to anything not connected with that which freed us, is to go back. There can be no advance but in following the law of the new life, in the power of the Spirit which communicated it. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The law of the ten commandments acting upon a nature that follows the law of sin and death, can never produce righteousness, or attain perfection. It is the Spirit, acting upon and empowering another nature which is of God, that alone gives the victory over all the desires of the old, and produces a practical righteousness that is well pleasing to God.

Brethren, stand fast! Satan has not ceased to deceive, to bewitch. But He who has made us sons and heirs, and who has set us in liberty, is ready to sustain us by His word and Spirit. Watch you! Stand fast in the faith!! Quit you like men!!! Be strong!!!!

CHAPTER V.

WE have seen in what has gone before that we were called to liberty: that the Spirit of which the apostle speaks, and which is given to us as believers, is the Spirit of liberty; and that it cannot brook any attempt at combination with the law, which entangles, and is a yoke of bondage.

STAND FAST IN LIBERTY!

Now he exhorts the saints to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. The revised version gives as an alternative reading, "For freedom has Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore." He has freed us in order to liberty. It is the liberty of the freewoman, which he spoke about in the last chapter; the liberty of the heavenly Jerusalem, Jerusalem which is above; and it suggests the fact of the truth of which we sing, "Heavenly men by birth." It is a wonderful thing to be a citizen of that country. Psalm lxxxvii. speaks thus: "Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." That is the earthly Zion. It was a much better thing to be a citizen of Sion than it was to be a citizen of any other earthly country,

because God had put His name and His glory there. But here it is in contrast with Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. It is the heavenly portion of the kingdom, in contrast to the earthly; and ours is a heavenly citizenship, in contrast to that of the citizens of earth. The earthly citizenship will not do for us, dear brethren! God sent His Son into the world, not to reinstate man in the position he had lost, not to bring him back in innocence to Paradise; but He brings us up from our lost earthly estate to the estate from which He Himself came, that is, to the heavenly city, to which in figure the Psalm doubtless refers Christ's birth, when it says, "The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people that this man was born there." (Ver. 6.) So that the thought of Paradise regained is altogether a mistake.

The Lord Jesus said, when entering upon His ministry, "Ye must be born again," or, born from above; that is, you must have a new nature. Now do you realise that you are thus born from a new source? If you are a Christian your birth-place is heaven, your portion a heavenly portion. You are born from above, born from an entirely new source. Of God are ye in Christ Jesus. So that the new nature is divine in its origin and heavenly in its character; "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are

heavenly;" and hence the portion of the Christian is of heaven and not of earth. As soon as one sees that, how utterly everything earthly falls short! We are lifted entirely above the world and its elements; as also above the earth which appeals to the natural man. We have an entirely new life, and are brought into an entirely new position.

BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN IN A YOKE OF BONDAGE.

Here the apostle exhorts to "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." (Ver. 1.) He does not desire slavery for free men. He does not wish us to be in bondage. He would that we should be in the enjoyment of our true liberty. They were putting themselves under law, and he says it is a yoke of bondage, just as much as if you were going back to heathendom. It is liberty we are called to, as we have lower down, "Ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." What is the character of the liberty we have been called unto, beloved friends? In one sense it is liberty to do what we desire to do; but then, mark, it is to do what I want to do as a *Christian*, not as a natural man. There was no restraint needed to make Christ love God, and His neighbour; it was His life. It

would have been restraint to hinder His loving both; and this is the difference between Christianity and the law. The law demanded that a man should do what he neither had the power nor the desire to do, and hence it was a yoke of bondage. What does it require of me? It says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." What man does it? Man is an utterly selfish being, and he cannot do it naturally. Christianity simply directs me in that which the new nature delights in, that is, love and obedience.

We are called, then, to liberty, and this, as we have seen, implies the new nature and its desires, a sort of christian instinct. We have a new life, and are made partakers, morally, of a new nature. A life which finds its origin with God; and a nature which is heavenly in its character.

Christ has set us free for freedom, and He would not have us entangled again with the yoke of bondage. He desires that the Christian should be in the liberty of life. He died that we might enjoy it. He died my death that I might *live* His life. He endured all that which was due to me, in order that I might live apart from all that which would bring me into bondage.

CHRIST SHALL PROFIT YOU NOTHING.

He now turns to exercise his apostolic authority

towards them, for they were the fruit of his labour. "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." (Ver. 2.) They were the seal of his apostleship, and as an apostle he speaks thus to them: There is no profit from the work of Christ for you if you turn to circumcision. By doing so you have adopted an old system of things to which in Christ you died, and to which Christ will not allow that His people are now alive. Christ profits you nothing. A very solemn word! Who is prepared deliberately to give the profit that accrues to them through Christ's death? Yet this is involved in turning to a legal ordinance. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." (Ver. 3.) There can be no dabbling with the law, either you are absolutely under it, or you are entirely delivered from it. A single ordinance accepted binds the whole law upon you; as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not IN ALL THINGS which are written in the book of the law to do them;" and if you are wholly under law, the efficacy of Christ's work is valueless to you. There can be no admixture of grace with the law; you cannot have Christ as a makeweight for the law.

FALLEN FROM GRACE.

But, he continues, "Christ is become of no

effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Ver. 4.) Now here we have a scriptural definition of what it is to fall from grace. It is to put yourself under law. We have the thought to-day in theology that to fall from grace is to lose the life communicated to us, and it is put forth in a way that greatly distresses souls. Christians may even come to think that they have lost their life; but that is an entirely mistaken thought. God has not communicated to us a life that we can lose; that upon the face of it denies the very lowest thought in eternal life. It is quite true that Adam lost his life. But his was not eternal life. God put Adam in a place of responsibility, and made his life dependent upon the fulfilment of that responsibility, and he failed, as must always be the case when the creature is put upon his own responsibility for the maintenance of anything committed to him. But there is no responsibility as far as either the communication, or the maintenance of our life and position "in Christ" is concerned. For neither did I obtain life "in Christ" through fulfilment of responsibility, nor can I maintain my position in Him before God upon that ground. Who can? But God has given us an entirely new position and life, and we cannot possibly fall from that. If we have life in Christ, we can never lose it, because it is not in

our keeping at all. "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

But these Galatians were going back to law, and Paul says to them, "You have fallen from grace." It was a matter of practical walk, and there is but one true argument from continuance in a faulty walk. To go back to the law as a rule of life, or even to do as Peter did, withdraw yourself from the freedom which belongs to you to pander to legal prejudices, in fact, to put oneself under law in any form, is to fall from grace, and to be deprived of all profit from Christ as separated from Him in that way. Not that one who has life can lose it, although the apostle stood in doubt of some of those who had thus fallen, for there were unreal persons among them, who had crept in unawares. There were the Judaising teachers, whom he calls false teachers, who did not know Christ, and who wanted to have them circumcised, and thus to give the flesh a place.

GLORY! THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

In contrast to thus seeking righteousness by the law we have: "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Ver. 5.) They were seeking to attain to a righteousness of their own, and that is just what the object of the law is. No man ever put himself under law unless that was his object.

But, says the apostle, we through the Spirit wait for *the hope* of righteousness; not for righteousness, which we have already; for we are made the righteousness of God *in Christ*. But we wait for the hope of it, because it is not yet absolutely fulfilled. We have it as in Christ it is true, but the effect of it is glory, and we are to be with Him there. The righteousness of God demanded that the blessed Lord Jesus Christ who had accomplished all His will, even though it led Him to death, should be raised from the dead. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. And not only is He Himself in the glory, but every soul that trusts in Him is to be there also. That is what we wait for. We wait for the moment when the righteousness shall be displayed, and that will be in glory.

We have righteousness now on the principle of faith, and it is no mere human righteousness wrought out by "the first man," but is divine in its origin and source, and no less so in its channel, for the blessed One who accomplished the work was none other than the Son of the living God Himself. He it was who became man, and as such He shed His blood and bowed His holy head in death. But the glory of the Father demanded that He should be raised from the dead, and not only that, but He pledges

Himself that all who believe in Him shall be there in the glory with Him. Not only is righteousness reckoned to us, but as viewed in Christ we are already made the righteousness of God in Him, though that has yet to be displayed. Who can tell now that we are made the righteousness of God? The men of the world do not see it. They do not know anything about divine righteousness. They can understand practical righteousness which must be the outcome of divine righteousness.

Thus in this verse is a new trait of the Spirit which we have not looked at before. He is the Spirit of hope, and that hope is the glory of God, in the which we rejoice.

FAITH WORKS BY LOVE.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” (Ver. 6.) Neither if you are circumcised are you the better, nor if uncircumcised are you the worse. Faith is everything. Now faith is opposed to law, and it works by love, which is in contrast to the enmity the law stirs up. Love appears to be presented here as the motive power of faith; the love of God shed abroad in the heart. I look up and see Christ upon the throne; I hear the blessed words of God, that all who are His are to be up there with Him. Faith does not

doubt it, but believes and accepts it, realising something of the infinite love of God that could thus take up a poor wretch like me, and give me the hope of glory, and shed His love abroad in my heart. But this indeed based upon the sacrifice of His beloved Son. This immediately manifests itself in love toward all those who belong to Him. Faith works by love. Well, there is our position. We are waiting for the hope of righteousness, not trying to make out a righteousness of our own; and meantime faith works by love. We have the Spirit, and in the power of the Spirit we wait for the hope of righteousness. And who can tell how soon that hope will be fructified? In a moment, we who are now in this mixed condition, in a body which is groaning, with the groaning creation, to be delivered, and yet rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, shall be transformed to His image, and be ushered into the place where He now is for us.

WHO HAS HINDERED YOU?

This chapter, more than any other, shews the agitated state of the mind of the apostle. He digresses abruptly from his subject, and in short, disjointed sentences, appeals to them. "Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?" (Ver. 7.) In no other of his epistles do you find his mind in such a

disturbed state as in this; yet, underlying all, it is upon the one central thought that led to the epistle. All the blessed truth that he had established amongst them had been turned topsy-turvy by the entrance of these Judaising teachers. They say, We are obeying the law. Never mind the law, it is a hindrance, it stops you in your running, he says. Obey the truth. You have truth in the law, no doubt, but the law is not **THE TRUTH**. It is a true delineation of what man ought to be for God, and it was given to man upon earth—to man looking for life here on earth. It deals with earth and men of the earth, and no doubt a man ought to keep the law, but it has proved him to be utterly incapable of doing so. And he who goes back to it is not obeying the truth. The truth raises you completely above it. Doubtless it is in itself true, but it could effect nothing because of the evil of the flesh, and it is not a revelation of what God is. The law simply sets forth what man ought to be, not what God in His grace has revealed of Himself to us to-day. The revelation that God has given to-day is not what I ought to be for God, but what God is for me. And this is in the cross! Oh, how vast the difference! There never was a man who was what he ought to be for God. Who shall say that God is not more than any necessity was laid upon Him to be to man? Infinitely more

than any mind could conceive! The truth sets a man free; the law hinders and stops him!

A WRONG PERSUASION. LEAVEN!

“This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.” (Ver. 8.) It was not what they were called to at all. They were called out of heathendom, as saints of God, not from heathendom to Jewdom, but from heathendom to liberty and glory. This would lift them above earth altogether. But now they were going back to earth, to that from which they had been called by God; and to be persuaded to circumcision and the law, was not of God, but of the devil; and the expression ‘leaven’ is applied to it, a thing always evil in scripture. “A little leaven leaveth the whole lump.” (Ver. 9.) He uses this expression here, where the evil is doctrinal; he also uses it in Corinthians where the evil is moral. Which of the two is the worse? One may say, they are both alike, since he uses the same expression in both instances. No, they are not alike. The apostle deals here with those who were sapping the very foundations of Christianity by legalism, in a way he does not deal with those who had fallen into moral evil. It is infinitely worse to sap the foundations of Christianity by false doctrine, than even to permit a man who has done some moral evil to remain in the assembly, bad as that is and

strongly as he deprecates it. Take an illustration: It is very much worse to teach that it is right for a man to get drunk, than to be overtaken with the influence of drink. The whore-monger and the drunkard God will judge. The poor wretch who falls under the power of drink declares openly what he is, and he falls in his own sin, which goes before to judgment. He may not affect others much, except that he disgusts them. But the false teacher makes hundreds of others like himself. False doctrine produces false persons. The Galatians were being removed from the foundation.

CONFIDENCE THROUGH THE LORD.

Looking upon them, his mind is perturbed about them. He fears the worst. But looking up to God, he says, "I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded." He was assured that when he went first amongst them there was real work and he would not give them up. He was ready to travail in birth again till Christ was formed in them. They were dear to God, and they were dear to the heart of the apostle as the fruit of his ministry. He says in effect, If you will calmly and quietly sit down, and consider what I am writing to you, I have confidence in you that you will receive it as the truth, that ye will be none otherwise minded. God grant it may be

the case with any soul now, who has fallen into the error that they had fallen into! The saint of God who sits down calmly and quietly in the presence of the Lord with God's word in his hand, will not be carried away by so false a persuasion. He has confidence that the true ones will be delivered. But there is something else also in this verse.

The apostle seems to mark out some individual in particular. He does not give the name, as God's grace so frequently withholds the names of those doing wrong. You get various lists of names in scripture, of those who have done well, and if God can introduce the name of any one who has been faithful to Him in any little thing, He will cause that name to be recorded. In Romans xvi. you get a list of names, the greater part of which are women's names, and they are for all eternity recorded in the book. But the name of the man in Corinthians v. who had fallen into moral evil is not given, and the name of the man here is not given, but he does say something about him. "He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." (Ver. 10.) Now consider, what was he to be judged for? For troubling the saints of God with the law? That makes it a very serious thing to trouble the saints of God, whether by legality or by license or by any other character of leaven. Left to the Lord, such a one will bear his own

judgment. He will not have the man who teaches a doctrine or a theory which draws the soul from the faith of Christ, and from the heavenly character of Christianity, to go without punishment.

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.

“And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased, I would that they would even cut themselves off who throw you into confusion.” (Vers. 11, 12.) This is the rendering in the new translation. That they would even cut themselves off. How strong the language again! But how needed! They want to glory in your flesh; to cut it off with the sharp knives of circumcision. I would that they would even cut themselves off! Paul preached the cross, and for that he suffered persecution. He preached the circumcision not done by hand, even “the putting off of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ.” (Col. ii. 11.) Try to deal with the flesh in the way of law, and you will find that you have no power over it at all. Take the cross, and you will find that it is death all round to the flesh, but you will have persecution with it. How many persons wear the cross as an ornament who have no idea of applying that cross to the very thing they are ornamenting. If I know how to use it, there is

nothing like it. The cross comes in in this epistle in many and varied ways, and wonderful it is to see the use Paul makes of it.

OUR CALLING IS TO LIBERTY, NOT LICENSE.

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” (Ver. 13.) Now this liberty is the liberty of life! We have seen that justification and the Spirit come with life, you can get neither apart from it. This deals with the sins of the old and gives power to the new life, to live according to the desires of that life. That is to say, there is liberty for you to do just what you want to do as a renewed man. It is to let the new life have its own proper portion, undistractedly delighting in God.

What was liberty for Christ? It was to do the will of His Father. “My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me.” If it had been possible, which it was not, it would have been bondage to Christ to hinder Him from doing the will of God. And this is what the devil tried to do. He used Peter and others to attempt it. That will ended in death, because the will of God was, through Christ, to bring us to Himself. Liberty for Christ was to do the will of God, and that is what we are called to.

But do not make a mistake; do not forget

the flesh is in us. It is liberty for the new nature, not license for the flesh. There is an expression in John's epistle which helps here, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." (Chap. v. 4.) Its tendency is to overcome the world. It is not simply that it is capable of overcoming the world, but it never acts but in that way. We have the flesh in us, and the flesh will take occasion. We have to guard against that, and by love serve one another. Christ ever delighted to do God's will. He found His meat and drink in doing it. And what was he doing at the moment He uttered those words? He was delivering a poor wretched woman from all her sin, and giving her that for which her heart ardently longed—satisfaction.

We are at liberty to serve each other by love. Are we, brethren, doing this? Do not we need such an exhortation as this? Do you know of a saint of God who is tried and perplexed, who needs a word of comfort? Well, you are at liberty to minister to that one, and I am quite sure that the new nature in you will desire to do it. The flesh may say, Do not do it, but it is one's privilege to do it; yea, even to laying down one's life for the brethren.

LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.

We have been called unto liberty, but as we

have seen it is liberty for the new life to express itself, and love is one of the characteristics of the new life. If, therefore, we use our liberty to serve one another by love, we fulfil the law. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Ver. 14.) This was an impossibility under the law, which did not give life. Under Christianity it is one of the characteristics of the life given, and is manifested in the power of the Spirit without the demands of the law.

Blessed it is to yield ourselves to the desires of the new nature and, in the Spirit's power, to fructify these desires. How often we lose our opportunities! Having this world's good and seeing our brother have need, we shut our bowels of compassion. The love of God is not there actively and practically. We miss our opportunity; our heart condemns us; our prayers are hindered! (See 1 John iii. 17, 20.) The opposite of this is of course true, and then our hearts do not condemn us, and we have confidence towards God, and whatsoever we ask we receive.

Naturally and legally we should not be half as sorry if our neighbour's house was burnt down as if it were our own. God's love shed abroad in the heart can work even this in His own. God hath not given to us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

But these legalists were biting and devouring one another, and it was necessary to warn them: "Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." (Ver. 15.) This was by no means a happy outcome of legality. Biting and devouring one another springs not from life and love, but from the flesh which the law acts upon, stirring up all its evil tendencies. Destruction, and not edification, is the result; as a house divided against itself falls!

May the Lord deliver His saints from this, to-day, in the power of the Spirit, otherwise we shall drop into it. We may thank God for the knowledge that we are not under the law; but if we are careless we shall find our legal hearts will work, and instead of serving one another by love, we, too, shall be biting and devouring one another.

HOLINESS.

Up to this chapter the question of righteousness has been mostly before us. Now the apostle deals with that of holiness and sanctification. A few words on the difference of these things may help us here. God is both holy and righteous. Holiness is more intimately connected with the nature of God. It is the inherent love of good and hatred of evil. This is seen everywhere in God. He loves the good, but abominates all that is evil. When only by

imputation, sin was put upon Christ, God shewed His hatred of it and judged it there. The good He loves and knows how to honour wherever manifested. This is inherent holiness. Practical holiness or sanctification is just the living this out in His own.

Now, man was created innocent, not holy. When the devil said to Eve at the beginning: "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil:" it was, so far, quite true. But this knowledge was attained, not in connection with a holy nature that loved good and hated evil, but with a fallen nature which loved the evil and hated the good. Hence there is no such thing as holiness for fallen human nature. In this respect they were not as God, but this the devil hid from them. Conscience came with the fall, and man knew that he was a sinner.

As born of God, we have a nature which is of God as to its source, and which does love the good and hate the evil. There never was a saint of God of whom this was not true. Even the man in Romans vii. loves the good and hates the evil, but as yet does not know the power which will enable him to perform it. He cries: "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctification is the practical outcome of

holiness, in the power of the Spirit, which enables the new nature to fulfil its desires. The person is thus practically sanctified. There is beside and behind this the fact that I am already judicially sanctified; by the will of God, by the blood of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit of God. But what we here speak of is what is known as practical sanctification, and this is what the apostle deals with in these verses. It is, as we have seen, the outcome of life, and not the effort to attain something I have not. The so-called "holiness by faith" is after all a mere effort of nature. Now even if nature knew anything of faith at all, practical holiness is not attained by a single act of faith in that way. Admitted, that for practical sanctification one must walk by faith, yet it is the outcome of a holy nature communicated by the sovereign act of God, and which was not attained by faith.

Righteousness is that attribute of God, which metes out to all their due, whether reward for that which is good, or punishment for that which is evil. This of course is true in man also, only man must render to God His due as well as to his neighbour, and this is far higher than his own thought of righteousness, which shuts God out.

WALK IN THE SPIRIT.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye

shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (Ver. 16.) Here, the idea in the word for "walk" is the "general conversation," and the Spirit of God is presented as that which alone can enable the new "I" to fulfil the desires of the intrinsic holiness which belongs to it. If I yield myself to it, I am lifted above the lusts of the flesh. The flesh remains with its lusts, but if I walk in the power of the Spirit, I fulfil other desires and not the lusts of the flesh. I have a bad temper, for instance, and if, instead of seeking to make it better, I live in the power of the Spirit, I shall not be irritated by that which will otherwise surely arouse it.

As an illustration: Suppose for a moment it were possible to give to a fish the nature and powers of a bird without eradicating its original nature. One might take it out of the water, and say, "You are delivered from the necessity of swimming in the water any more, soar away into the higher, brighter element:" and away it flies. All the time it exercises the power of the new nature it would be delivered from the water; but as soon as it ceased to use this power, it would drop into the grosser element again, and all its old surroundings and enemies have power over it as before.

It is just so with the Christian. Walking in the power of the new nature, he will be free from the power of the old, and will experience

what a wonderful deliverance has been wrought for him.

THE SPIRIT MORE POWERFUL THAN THE
FLESH.

But this is further pursued; "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these things are opposed one to the other, that ye should not do the things that ye desire." (Ver. 17 New Trans.) Here, evidently, the flesh is still there with its lusts; but, blessed be God, the Spirit also is there with its desires. Which is the strongest? The flesh never gives in, it is never dead, and hence there is constant conflict. Not true christian warfare, but a warfare that answers to the conflict with Amalek in the wilderness. And we must overcome here first, before there can be true spiritual vigour and growth, or true christian conflict, which is for the truth, as in Ephesians vi.

There is always a tendency in the natural heart to do what is wrong. The flesh comes in and excuses one from doing what is right. It says, do not be too severe upon yourself; give a little license, do not hold the girdle too tight. On the other hand, Satan suggests, now you must keep this or that under by the law. But this is the flesh still, for it recognises the flesh as alive, whereas the way of power is to reckon one's self dead to it, and yielding one's self to

the Spirit's desires to be lifted above the flesh and its lusts.

The man in Romans vii. wills to do good, but does not find the power, because he tries the law, as the Galatians were also doing. But he presents here the Spirit as being more powerful than the flesh and enabling the person to do what otherwise he could not do.

In olden times the navies of Europe were composed of frigates and full-rigged ships, which were dependent for their motion upon the wind and their sails. Under these conditions they were often driven by contrary winds and tides in a direction the opposite of that in which they wished to go. But when steam was applied as a motive power, they hauled these frigates up on to the slips again, shortened their masts, cut down their topsides, and put steam boilers into them, and a pair of engines, and launched them again upon the ocean, but with a power within that rendered them superior to adverse winds and tides. This, they, appropriately enough, called converting them. These converted steamships could do now what they could not do before, that is, steam dead in the teeth of the wind and tide.

So with the Christian. Let him curtail that which presents itself to the old motive power, and cultivate the new power within, and he will not fulfil the desires of the flesh, for the new

power is stronger than the old. If the flesh were not there this verse were worthless; but now one is not compelled to do what one would do naturally. The Spirit is able to overcome the flesh. A large amount of the power of the Spirit may be, and is, expended in us negatively, and in thus overcoming the friction and *vis inertia* of a machine, before any real work can be performed. But the Holy Spirit has higher functions; He takes of the things of the risen Christ and reveals them unto us, enabling us to bring forth fruit to God. If, however, the flesh is not overcome this cannot be.

But we look forward to the day when we shall have no flesh to overcome, and no friction between flesh and Spirit, and shall have a spiritual body as well as a spiritual nature, and when all the energy of the Spirit will be available to reveal Christ and His glories to our souls. What a day that will be, beloved. Paul may have tasted a little of it when he said, I was not conscious of the body. (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) Not that the body is the same as the flesh, but the very body in its present condition is a hindering power, whenever we are conscious of it. Does not the heart long for the moment when the Spirit will be free to use all His power in opening up the glories of Christ to it? God grant we may taste a little more of it now!

Yet if this is to be so, we must take heed to it

that we are walking practically in the power of the Spirit, and so are rendered superior to the lusts of the flesh. When this is so practically, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; our joy is full, our hearts are transported with His beauty; and thus we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord, the Spirit. Soon we shall be with Him, bearing absolutely His own image, the image of the heavenly.

LED OF THE SPIRIT.

· “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” (Ver. 18.) More powerful than the flesh, the Spirit is able to lift one above its lusts. This the law cannot do, but only stirs them up. It is impossible therefore that I can be led of the Spirit, and be under law at the same time. But although they had received the Spirit, yet they were not led of the Spirit, but had adopted the law as a means of keeping the flesh in abeyance, which it never could do.

But the leading of the Spirit is a blessed reality, full of comfort to those who know their inability to direct their own footsteps. Oh, Lord! I know it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Led of the Spirit, one is occupied with Christ, and not the flesh, and one's steps are directed aright. Yet those thus led do not boast of anything. To-day, however, men will boast of

anything. Seeing a thing should be true, they boast that it is true of themselves. Now, as real a thing as the leading of the Spirit undoubtedly is, it does ill become us to boast of it. One thus led, will ever be conscious of the rebellion and intractability of the flesh, even in such a path, and will speak with humility. Otherwise, he may be vaunting himself, and fall into the snare of the devil, whose object is to puff up the flesh in any shape.

The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are thrown into contrast in the next few verses of our chapter.

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH.

These are first enumerated, and are all such as proceed out of the heart of man, as our Lord said in Matthew xv. They are also such as the law stirs up within the heart; for demand and prohibition without power, ever impel the fallen nature to do the very things prohibited, "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Satan is well aware that the attempt to restrain the natural heart by the law, only stirs up all that is in it; just as introducing a pole into a stagnant pool only stirs up its foul odours, which may be otherwise quiescent.

This list of sixteen or seventeen "works" or

“sins,” gives first the filthiness of the flesh, then its idolatry, its enmity, and its love of so-called pleasure. (Vers. 19–21.) He warns them again as before also he had warned them, “That they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” A very solemn warning for those who had made so good a start!

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

The fruit of the Spirit is the easy natural outcome of walking in the Spirit, and being led of the Spirit. It is “fruit,” not “fruits.” That is, it is as it were, all in one bunch like a bunch of grapes, as one has said, but with nine different kinds of fruit on it. The first three of these are Godward, and for His eye. They are love, joy, peace. (Ver. 22.) If these are not present, none of the others will be manifested.

It is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

The joy of seeing that perfectly accomplished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, which has delivered me from every species of bondage, as also from the fear of wrath, and which fills my soul with transports of joy as I gaze upon Himself, who has satisfied all God’s claims.

There is peace about all that stood between the soul and God, and one enters into His peace about all its circumstances, which one recognises

as the result of His own ordering, and the best that could possibly be ordered.

These are what may be called internal fruit, which nobody sees but God. Others may see the effect of them, but they do not see the things themselves.

Then come three of a relative character: Longsuffering, gentleness, goodness. These will be manifested towards one's brethren, the world, and even one's enemies, if the first three fill the heart and one passes through the scene with God. Every one around can see these and appreciate them, even though the enemies of the truth may hate the person in whom they are produced.

The last three are personal; faith, meekness, temperance, and are necessary for the soul's sustenance as one passes through a world where one has to do with God on the one hand, and one's brethren and the people of the world on the other.

"Against such there is no law." (Ver. 23.) The outcome of life in the power of the Spirit, they are beyond all the demands of the law, there can be no prohibition of such graces. They shone in Christ to perfection, and God is pleased to reproduce them in His beloved saints, so precious is Christ to Him.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." (Ver. 24.) So that the flesh having now no existence before

God, the law has no more work to do. It has nothing to say to the Spirit's work, and the flesh is no more before God. This is true judicially of every Christian, and only needs to be made practically true by faith, and we have a complete answer to the question raised amongst these Galatians: What is to be done with the flesh? Why should it be raised again in our day? The cross is the only answer to it, and we thus become dead to the law by the body of Christ. Keep it in the place of death, and live out the new life in the power of the Holy Spirit. This life is free from the tendency to gravitate towards the world, and has ever an upward tendency towards Him who is its Object.

WALK BY THE SPIRIT. (THE RULE OF LIFE.)

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Ver. 25, N. T.) Here the Spirit is life, and the Spirit's rule of life is to be followed. The law gave no life and can furnish no rule for the new life. As we live so we are to walk; the same principle pervading the whole of the life from beginning to end. The Spirit's rule is here distinctly substituted for the law, as a rule of life, which is the idea in the word used here. It is the rule of the new creation too, as referred to in chapter vi. 15, 16, where the same word is used. As again in Philippians iii. 16, "Let us walk by the same rule." It is a blessed deliver-

ance from the law as a rule of life, which genders bondage, unto the rule of the Spirit which gives liberty.

This chapter is very full of the details of the Spirit's work, which we may now enumerate, with what has been before said in the epistle about the Spirit.

They had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, which Spirit was included in the blessing promised to Abraham. A wonderful unfolding of what was in God's mind, that, through Jesus Christ the Gentiles might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Chap. iii. 2, 14.) He is the spirit of sonship, with which goes heirship and liberty. (Chap. iv. 6, 7, 31.)

In our chapter the Spirit is much more fully spoken of in the details of His work as follows, viz. :—

The Spirit of hope by which we wait for glory. (Ver. 5.)

Our walk (general conversation) is to be in the Spirit. (Ver. 16.)

The Spirit of power (more powerful than the flesh.) (Ver. 17.)

Led of the Spirit we are not under law. (Ver. 18.)

The Spirit of fruitfulness. (Ver. 22.)

The Spirit of life. (Ver. 25.)

The Spirit which supplies the rule of life. (Ver. 25.)

We have thus a very full presentation of what the Spirit is to the Christian. The fruit of promise received by faith, the believer lives by the Spirit, walks in the Spirit, by the Spirit's rule obtains the victory over the flesh, led by the Spirit he is not under law, bears fruit by the Spirit, hopes for glory by the Spirit. And besides this he cries, Abba, Father, by the Spirit, realising he is an heir, and in the liberty of the freeborn. Happy those who walk in the power and liberty of the Spirit.

Doubtless we come far short of all this beloved, but we may surely hope for brighter things, even a revival of truth and power in our spirits and lives. Better *days* may not be, for we are in the last and difficult days; days when every truth is being given up, and that, alas! by those who have professed to hold the truth as revived to us. But these are the days when fidelity shines out more brightly. There is greater opportunity of shining now as lights in the world, amid the increasing darkness around. Faith ever says "Though every one else should refuse to follow the Lord in the power of the Spirit, why should not I?" May the Lord enable us to avail ourselves of our present opportunities!

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Ver. 26.)

This would be to drop back to the works of the flesh, which under the law are the only things produced.

We see in this chapter that holiness is the product of life in the power of the Spirit, which sustains the righteous soul in the hope of glory. Thus may the Christian live in liberty, free from entanglement with any yoke of bondage!



CHAPTER VI.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION, APART FROM LAW!

To sum up our last chapter, the Spirit is the power for sanctification. It is by the Spirit, from a nature that loves it, that holiness is produced. The apostle does not allow the law, either as a means of working our righteousness before God; nor as a means of producing sanctification. As justification is by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ; so also, sanctification or holiness, is the outcome of the new nature, acted upon by the energy of the Holy Spirit. Thus he refuses the law altogether for the Christian.

The law is not allowed to have any part in the christian economy at all, it is, as one of the elements of the world, gone for the Christian in the cross of Christ. The cross has swept away all that belongs to the world, there is not a vestige of it left for God, nor for faith. So that he takes up the elements one by one and shews we are delivered from them all. It is wonderful to see this, and that God has imparted a new nature, to which nothing that applied to the old, can attach nor have any part in. We ourselves,

personally, are now in a mixed condition of things, and have the two principles within us, but the old is not allowed, and the new only is recognised.

THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE
FLESH.

Returning for a little to chapter v. 24 we shall see that he there applies, in more general terms, the truth which before he appropriated to himself. "I am crucified with Christ." (Chap. ii. 20.) But now he says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." Here the truth is applied generally to the believer. It is true of all those that are Christ's. But it is one thing to have the general abstract truth pronounced by the Spirit, and it is another thing entirely for the individual believer to be able to appropriate that truth by faith to himself. We find in our experience as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ that we have to go through our spiritual education and to apply to ourselves all the truths that radiate from the cross of Christ.

Now, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts," is a judicial statement; and while it remains true of us, it is ours to make it true to ourselves individually. We have the same truth presented in a slightly different aspect in at least four

ways in scripture, and it will help us to see how it is brought practically to bear upon us.

YE ARE DEAD.

The first scripture is Colossians iii. 3. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Here, again, the truth is stated judicially; that is, it is a truth concerning us from God's point of view. It is a very full statement, and *no man has any part in the new order of things, but as he is looked at as dead to all that in which he once lived, in the old order.* We pass through death into life. I am not speaking about death to nature, or anything of that kind, but that we come into new-creation, in resurrection, through the narrow door of death. It is by the cross that we enter into it, and having entered, we leave everything that belongs to the old order, morally, behind. "Ye are dead," says the apostle, but yet you live. Your life is a hidden life, away, above the sphere in which your bodies are, where Christ sitteth. Therefore, seek the things that are above.

In Romans vi~~ii~~ we have an exhortation to apply this truth in a particular way, practically. "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." There we are exhorted to reckon that which is true of us judicially, to be true of us practically. Reckon with God,

beloved, faith always reckons with God. It is not that we are actually dead, for scripture says, "Reckon" yourselves to be dead, that is, be practically dead. We are held to be dead judicially by God, and to reckon with God is characteristic of faith. "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Here faith reckons with God. It says, I was dead in sins, He died for me, I now live not to myself, which would be to sin, but to Him who died for me. I reckon myself alive to God through or in Jesus Christ my Lord. It is in the power of the new life, we thus hold ourselves dead, as far as the old sinful Adam life is concerned. Doubtless it is a difficult thing to do, but Paul did it. Do we?

If we turn to 2 Corinthians iv. 10 we shall find further how Paul did it. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." What does he mean by that? He means that he is reckoning himself to be dead to everything down here, because it is all tarnished with sin. The word translated "dying," is literally "deadness." Jesus was dead to it all. Sin had left its stamp on everything down here, and He was necessarily dead to it. Now Paul reckoned this to be true of himself by

faith; "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." I believe it is rightly rendered "dying," because although Jesus was dead to it all, I am naturally alive to it, and have practically to die. I see a thing which pleases and appeals to me as a man, and I desire it. Am I to allow myself to be drawn away after it? Christ would not have so done. What shall I do? Shall I follow it out? No, just reckon yourself dead to it, and spend your money and your time in some other way. Spend it for the Lord, and thus the life of Jesus shall be manifest in your body.

DELIVERED UNTO DEATH.

Thus far we have three things, namely, 1. You are dead—judicially. 2. Reckon yourself to be dead—practically. 3. Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus. This last being an example in the apostle himself, who did reckon himself to be dead.

Now there is a fourth thing. "For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (Ver. 11.) Here it is God helping him to do the thing he desired to do. *Who* delivered him unto death? God did. How did he do it? Read verse 8, and you will see, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in

despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

Why did God put him into persecution? Why was the apostle allowed to be cast down, perplexed, troubled? Because Paul wanted to bear about in his body the dying of Jesus, and God says, I will help you to do it. He desired in all the vigour of divine life to serve the Lord, and the Lord made the very difficulties he encountered in his service a means of discipline to this end; ordering them indeed for this very purpose. The Lord says, You want to do it, Paul: I will put you into a place where you must do it. But we bear about in the body the dying of Jesus in order that the life also of Jesus may be manifest practically in our dying bodies. How wonderful this fact!

It is evident that the death and the life go together. God does not want dead men spiritually. He does not want us to wake up to the truth that we are dead and remain there. No, He gives us a new life, and He wants us to manifest that life in these mortal bodies. Now we cannot manifest that life except as we keep the old thing in death, or under the power of death. You have died in Christ, and are now to reckon yourself to be dead. I do it, says Paul, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifest." Then God says, I will help you in that, I will

put you into a place of trouble and perplexity and persecution, in order that you may do it. Saints of God to-day say, How is it I am in troublous, straightened circumstances? How is it I am so tried? Well, beloved, if we do not get persecution in the same way as in the apostle's days, yet we get sickness and difficulties and trials of various kinds in its place; and it is God helping us to hold ourselves in death, in order that the life of Jesus may shine out. And when this is the case we too shall be able to say, we glory in tribulation because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Lord, help Thy beloved people more to enter into this!

RESTORE THE FALLEN.

The last verse (26), "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another," is connected with chapter vi. 1, and shews evidently that these teachers of the law in Galatia were provoking and envying one another, as must necessarily be the case if a legal spirit is admitted. Such just become Pharisees, who boast that they are not as other men. That they do that which is right themselves, and are always ready to talk of others not having done so, glorying over them in consequence.

But it is vain glory, and here we have rather, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of

meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Ver. 1.) This is what we need to do, not to glory over each other, but to help each other; and if a brother is overtaken in a fault to look at him as one whom God loves, and seek to restore him in the spirit of meekness, remembering that we ourselves are in the body and are liable to be overtaken in the same way. Holiness, however, is not to be sacrificed because we are liable to do the same thing; that would be to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. But a spiritual brother, in the spirit of meekness, may seek at God's hand, and be used of God, to restore one who has been overtaken in a fault, to the platform of divine holiness from which he has practically fallen. Then comes connected with this:—

“BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.”

It was said of the Pharisees, that they bound heavy burdens grievous to be borne upon men's shoulders, but they would not touch them themselves with one of their little fingers. This same spirit was creeping in among the Galatians, as a fruit of their turning to law. And since they were so fond of law, they are now referred to a law of an entirely different kind, “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” (Ver. 2.) If you will have law, here's a law for you. I suppose nobody could think for

a moment that the law of the ten commandments is meant here. It is surely not that at all. It is the law of Christ, who came down here to bear our burdens, as we sometimes sing:

“ ’Twas grace that gave us to the Lamb,
Who all our burdens took.”

He not only bare our sicknesses and carried our sorrows, but when it became a question of our sins, He bore the wrath of God against them, and cried out in agony with the full weight of our sins pressing upon His holy spirit. Here is a law for us, beloved friends, the law of the Christ! Blessed to study His life, and discover the law of *it*, and follow it. No one ever went to Christ without getting relief. No needy or sin-burdened soul ever came into contact with that blessed One who did not get his need met. The leper was cleansed, the blind received sight, the lame were made to walk, and the famished had plenty presented to them. Every burden was borne by Him. But whilst He was dispensing His grace as He trod this scene He knew very well that the cross must be the end of His pathway here, every miracle brought the weight of this upon Him, and so His visage was marred more than any man's. He was the “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

A CHRISTIAN PARADOX.

The next few verses present what is known

as a christian paradox. As fulfilling the law of the Christ we are to restore the fallen and bear the burdens one of another. But, in connection with work, every man shall bear his own burden. Do we know enough of what this is, beloved? I do not think we do, if one may speak for others. How often one learns that others are bearing burdens that one is unable to touch? May it be less so with every one of us! Then as to work, it is easy to boast of another man's line of things made ready to our hands, but in this every man shall bear his own burden.

If a spiritual brother can put himself beneath the burden another bears, he may be able to help him before he breaks down, or even after to help him to rise. Blessed work this is, and powerful in the energy of the Spirit of Christ. But the law knew nothing of it. The reward lies indeed in *the future*, but a present reward, in the sense of Christ's approval, is the portion of the one who is able to receive the injunction. Again, one may surely wish that this were more known among the beloved children of God. We are to bear each other's burdens now, remembering that the day is coming when every man shall bear his own burden.

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then

shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." (Vers. 3, 4.) It was not by these would-be Judaisers that the Galatians had been brought to Christ; it was by the work of the apostle. Others came in and sought to win their hearts away, desiring to glory in them and to oust him. Therefore he says, "Let every man prove his own work." Now, if you fulfil the law of Christ and bear the burden of another you will get your own reward by-and-by, but if you interfere with the work of another, or attempt to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, you will find that the Lord Jesus deals in righteousness, and you will have to bear your own burden alone by-and-by, without any one to help you. You must not interfere with another's work, nor is there any need. The Lord has some little work for every one of His beloved saints to perform for Him, happy the man who pursues it quietly, awaiting His "Well done!" But alas! how often we try to stretch ourselves beyond our measure. Blessed it is to be able to rejoice in what the Lord has wrought by us; this in any case is the portion of those who have been used by Him. We are then able really to rejoice in that He uses others also, and would surely not seek to interfere with their work, a thing which usually ends in disaster.

“FOR EVERY MAN SHALL BEAR HIS OWN BURDEN.”

The day of appraisal is coming, when “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour,” for “we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” This is not to say that the Christian is to appear there to answer for his sins. Grace has *settled* all that long ago. But then we must also remember that God acts in government as well as in grace, and it is well for us to distinguish between grace and government. Grace forgives everything and brings the sinner into the presence of God as a son, clear of all that was against him, because of the righteous basis laid in the sacrifice of Christ. But now the eternal wheels of God’s government roll on as ever, and everything, whether according or contrary to the position I am placed in, is marked, and must bear its own reward or judgment; although the judgments and rewards of God’s government never undo the work that His grace has accomplished.

In verse 6 this is practically recognised and applied now. All are stewards. Has a man the truth and gift? Let him teach others. Are any taught divine things? Let them reciprocate in all good things. “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” In another place we are challenged thus: If we have sowed unto you spiritual

things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things? Blessed it is when thus there is reciprocity, and all things are enjoyed in happy fellowship. Nevertheless, Paul could say, I have not used this power. He would not be burdensome to them. A more blessed path was his; ready to spend and be spent for those for whom Christ died, he would minister unto them whether in spiritual or carnal things. Pouring the truth of God into their souls, and working night and day to supply the need of those who were with him. Wonderful man!

GOD IS NOT MOCKED.

Now God's principle of government is introduced, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Ver. 7.) This form of words is used thrice, viz.:

1. When the character of those who shall not inherit the kingdom of God is shewn, we have, "Be not deceived, neither fornicators nor idolaters, . . . nor thieves, nor covetous, . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.)

2. When it was necessary to warn these same Corinthians that they were in danger of being corrupted by evil communications, "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. xv. 33.)

3. Here, where he gives the principles of God's government he also says, "Be not de-

ceived," but adds, "God is not mocked!" It is evident then, that there is danger of being deceived on all these points, but as to God's government, He is not mocked, He knows what we do.

We may not understand how grace and government can go on together; we may ask, How can God forgive the sinner, and yet take cognizance of everything the forgiven one does? How necessary, in such a case, it is to see that God's grace has not changed, but is the outcome of His nature, also that the principles of His government are always the same; and this will be manifested by-and-by when the whole universe shall be the display of the undeviating precision of His ways. It is therefore a truth which holds good, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Grace will make me a child, and government will chasten me with a rod, if a naughty child.

How could it possibly be otherwise? What sort of a son would he be whom the Father did not chasten? They are bastards, and not sons who are without chastisement. Whereas the Father of spirits chastens for their profit, that they may be partakers of HIS holiness and live. Grace, however, comes in again, when the righteousness of the government is recognised, to help the repentant one to bear the chastening.

There are various examples of this in the

word of God. Take, for instance, the children of Israel. They had been brought out of Egypt, they had known the blood on the lintel and the door posts, and they knew too, the power of God in opening up the Red Sea and giving them a dry passage to the other side, they had been brought to God in the wilderness and were in relationship with Him nationally on the ground of grace. Now God says, Will you obey Me? They answer immediately, Yes! They are then at once under government, and what do we find? They had nearly finished their short wilderness journey of eleven days, having got as far as Kadesh-Barnea, which was just on the south borders of Canaan, and Moses says: "Go up and spy out the land." What was the result? The spies brought back an evil report, the giants were there, the sons of Anak, and the Amalekites dwelt in the land, the cities were walled and very great.

Moreover they said, It is a very bad land! And the people said, We will not go up! Very well, says God, you shall wander for FORTY YEARS in the wilderness, and not one of you shall enter into the promised land. This is the result of God's government. Did their disobedience make them any the less His people? No, but it brought down His governmental hand upon them. It was impossible for the wheels of God's government to stop. Yet in His grace He went

with them and bare their manners all those forty years of governmental chastening. Such is the God we have to do with!

WHAT A MAN SOWETH HE SHALL REAP.

One has said, If a man is told to sow wheat in his master's field, and by some stupid mistake he sows a noxious weed, he cannot expect that weed to bring forth wheat. No, he must reap what he sows. And though the skill of the master might extract a drug from the weed, more valuable than the wheat crop would have been, yet the law remains, What a man soweth that shall he also reap. And this is true of all. He that sows to the flesh, must of the flesh reap corruption. What, a believer! Yes, even a believer.

Take David for another example. He was a man after God's own heart. But he committed sin; and when Nathan the prophet is sent by God to him to convict him of his sin, David confesses it and says, "I have sinned against the Lord," Nathan immediately answers "God has put away thy sin." There is grace. What about government? "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife." How solemnly David proved in after years the bitterness of departing from the paths of his Lord! And his children rising up in rebellion against him, was

a witness to the fact, that although he was a man after God's own heart, yet the sword of divine government was always upon him.

SOWING TO THE FLESH—SOWING TO THE SPIRIT.

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” (Ver. 8.) Now, in the case before us, What is sowing to the flesh? It is going back to the law. In a day like this, when there is so much going back to law, this may seem strange, yet after passing through the epistle with some measure of intelligence, it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion. They were bringing in the law as a rule of life. Now the law appeals to man in the flesh. It is recognised in the old state of things, but it has no place in the new order of things. If a man, therefore, puts himself under law he is sowing to the flesh; and moreover, he loses his opportunities of sowing to the Spirit.

Biting and devouring one another, provoking one another, envying one another, deceiving oneself, and boasting in another man's work made ready to our hands, is of the flesh and the outcome of going back to the law. This kind of work will bring forth corruption, it cannot bring forth anything else. Death and corruption, both of them, belong to the flesh, both to

the world. And the world can only fill my hands with that which will but "Adorn the triumph of death, and decorate the tomb." Death is passed upon this whole region to which we belong as children of Adam, and if a man puts himself under law, he puts himself in the place where he must reap death and corruption. The law can yield nothing else to the man who is under it.

God has enjoined no such thing upon the believer as endeavouring to keep the law of the ten commandments. On the contrary, He says: "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." But, on the other hand, "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." What a contrast between life everlasting and corruption! Now eternal life is here presented as a future thing, as again and again we have it presented in Paul's epistles. But he also shews us that it is ours now morally, and the Spirit is the power of it. If we sow to the Spirit, we shall bring forth the fruit of the Spirit for God's eye now, and the reaping for us will be eternal life.

To restore one overtaken in a fault, to bear another's burden, to prove one's own work, and so to rejoice in oneself alone and not in another, and to bear one's own burden is to sow to the Spirit. In that sphere of eternal life every fruit perfected here shall abide; and while the bliss

of being conformed to the image of the Lord there will be perfect, how blessed also will be the approval of the Master, for all that has been sown to the Spirit here in weakness. The white stone and the new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it! God grant His people may not sow for corruption, but to the Spirit to reap eternal life!

FAINT NOT!

With this before us we may well listen to the next verse: "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Ver. 9.) The harvest has not yet come. Let us then go on patiently sowing the seed, and we shall assuredly reap. Many of us desire and expect to reap on earth. Some are like children who turn up the earth to see if the seed is coming up, but we have need of patience, it is the sowing time now, let us not be weary, beloved!

In another passage God speaks about sowing and reaping also. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.) It is well to have an open ear to this, that we may know not only what it is to sow to the Spirit, but to sow bountifully. Most of us are sparse sowers enough. Oftentimes the flesh comes in and says, How little will meet

the need of this case? God's question is, How much can I bestow here; how much can I magnify Myself? Let us remember, there is that giveth and yet increaseth. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him.

ESPECIALLY THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” (Ver. 10.) There is just a little point here. It is not so much the immediate effect of what is done, but the spirit and the motive in the doing it. It is the work and the toil, the labour; that is not in vain in the Lord. The person for whom we labour may not be reached at the time, but the labour is there, and the labour will receive its reward. The effect may not come out, but it is what God sees in the motive and the doing. Why did I do it? Was it out of love to Christ? If so, it will surely receive its reward. The apostle himself, in the sense of what the saints were to Christ, could say, “I will very willingly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved.” (2 Cor. xii. 15.) God sees the motive, and marks the spirit and toil, and He will give His award in the day that is coming. Then shall every man have praise of God. No

one but He can rightly judge motives. Let us therefore, as we have opportunity, do good unto all men.

But there is a special class to whom we are called upon to do good, and that is, the household of faith. This is God's house; as it is said, "Whose house are we." Now, if we can only help one of the household of faith, that is a special direction in which our sowing will be crowned with success. We need to give this a little more attention, beloved, for there is surely a tendency in our hearts to give way. We know the days are difficult, and "brethren" are not like they used to be; still if we can only go on seeking to serve the saints of God for Christ's sake, depend upon it we shall receive our reward, and the darker the days, the greater the reward. Never mind if we meet with opposition and disappointment, the reaping time is coming, and if we faint not, we shall reap. But if we faint in the day of adversity our strength is small.

PAUL WRITES WITH HIS OWN HAND.

In closing up the epistle, the intensity of his feeling at what was transpiring among the churches in Galatia comes out. "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." (Ver. 11.) In the other epistles he did not write himself, he entrusted

that to others, adding the salutation with his own hand, as in 2 Thessalonians iii. 17. Although the Epistle to the Galatians is a small one in comparison with some other epistles, yet it was a large letter for him to write. Some have thought it should be, Ye see in how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand; and it may be so. But the point is, he wrote it with his own hand; impelled to manifest thus his complete rejection of the Judaizing tendency of the churches in this district. He would sweep those who were leading them astray away if he could. Let such be "Anathema," he says—a most terrible word for the apostle to use.

A FAIR SHEW IN THE FLESH.

But speaking of the letter, seems to bring again to his mind the object of the letter. "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh." (Vers. 12, 13.) The circumcised Jew could not keep the law. The very men who came down to insist upon the Gentiles being circumcised, condemned themselves by breaking the law they advocated for others. Yet they

desired to glory in the flesh of those who were never put under law.

Circumcision was an acknowledgment of that which man could boast in—the flesh. But the cross of Christ gave it no place, and was consequently ever an offence to it, and those who boasted in it. They desired to make a fair shew in the flesh, and were entrapping others into a link with the law; for they were debtors to do the whole law if they were circumcised. Paul accepted the offence and the persecution of the cross, and gloried in that alone; knowing, in blessed reality, how much else it brought, which the law never gave to its adherents.

Therefore he says: Whilst they desire to make a fair shew, and to glory in your flesh, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Ver. 14.) He seems to sum up everything in this, no glory for Paul but the cross of Christ. This stood between him and the world, by it he was crucified to the world and the world to him.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD.

I would like just to turn back upon the epistle to gather up briefly what the elements of the world are as given in it.

In chapter i. 3, 4, we have the "Lord Jesus

Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Here we have, first, that Christ gave Himself for our sins. Mark, sin (and its fruit—sins) is one of the elements of the world, and must be got rid of. People do not believe that this is so, but this is really what is presented to us in God's word. We may remember here that "the world" in scripture is not the earth as God made it, but that system of things which grew up under fallen man's hand at a distance from God, and consequently began in sin which was consummated by the murder of Christ.

Next comes the law as an element of the world, "I through the law am dead to the law." (Chap. ii. 19.) Here it is not the law that is dead, nor is it abrogated, but I have died to it in Christ's death. "Having died in that wherein we were held." Now the law remains as an element of the world and of worldly religion, but it kills me. I am therefore no longer under its influence, but am to be to Him who is raised from the dead, that I may bring forth fruit unto God.

The next thing is, "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." (Chap.

ii. 20.) Here a further connected truth comes out, that I, a man alive in the flesh, whoever that man may be, Saul of Tarsus, or any other man alive in the flesh, belong to the world. This is a third element of the world, and must also go from before God. Man himself is a sinner in the sight of God. Not only has he committed sins, but he is a sinner and can do nothing but sin, and he and his sins and the law which said, Thou shalt not sin, all belong to the world, and are all swept away, in fact and for faith by the cross.

Again, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Chap. iii. 13.) If the law is of the world, thank God the curse which is connected with it is also of the world. Now that curse was death. This we are redeemed from. "Death and the curse were in the cup" that the blessed Lord Jesus Christ took.

Then, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." (Chap. v. 24.) Here that evil principle which springs from man's will as opposed to God, is another element of the world from which the cross alone delivers us.

Further, the prince of this world himself, who uses the law to frustrate God's purpose in His people, has received his judgment in the cross, together with the world of which he is prince, as

the Lord said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John xii. 31.) The whole world was judged when Christ died, and upon the basis of that death, its prince shall be cast out.

Thus we have the elements of the world presented to us, and all of them for faith, are on the other side of the cross. They are these, namely, sin and sins; "I," that is, the man alive in the flesh; the flesh; the law; the curse of the law—death; the devil, as the prince of this world. They are all correlatives and go together as a whole to make up "the world."

GLORY IN THE CROSS.

What wonder, then, that after having gone through some of the elements of the world, the apostle should refuse altogether these legalisers, refuse circumcision and the law which recognises man as alive in the flesh, the thing in which they gloried? If Paul was to glory at all it must be in the cross. So may it be with us. For surely the cross stands between us and our sins, between us and our former self, between us and the flesh, the law, the curse which the law administers, and Satan: between us and the world as a whole.

What wonder, on the other hand, beloved friends, now that such a sweep has been made by the cross, the world having been condemned

in its prince, that the devil, who is the prince of this world, and who had opposed the truth of the One only God which was maintained in Judaism, should turn round and take up with Judaism now, which he makes to appear as honourable wisdom in the eyes of those who would make a fair shew in the flesh, in comparison with that which writes a universal death warrant upon every one and everything here! But those who know the value of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, can glory only in that cross, which stands between them and all that which goes to constitute the world. May that cross be more to us, that we may know what it is to put it upon self, not to wear it as an ornament to adorn oneself with, but to put it upon that wretched self which seeks adornment thus. Are we not in danger, beloved, of accepting this as a doctrine without knowing what it is to carry it out practically?

In our verse this is practically applied by faith. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul had seen in the blessed devotedness of Christ, which led Him to come down from the glory into this scene of woe, ending in the cross, for Himself the chief of sinners, an end of all glory save in that cross. He who had boasted himself before, of all that which belonged to him as a man in the flesh, saw now in that wonderful cross that which

broke his stubborn will, and subdued his haughty spirit. Henceforth I abandon all human righteousness, was the language of his life, and boast only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He, who was the Son of God, hung upon that cross for me, in order to redeem me from this present evil age. I cannot get back through that cross, either to the world or to the law. As God would not open up a way for the children of Israel to go back into Egypt, so will He not open up a way for His people to-day to go back to the world. We may go back in heart and disgrace ourselves, bringing His hand upon us in chastening, which in love He will not withhold. We may, as far as in us lies, trail the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in the dust, a thing, however, which cannot really be done. For, although we may dishonour and disgrace ourselves, yet, blessed be His Name, He is ever above us, and His glory remains untarnished. But get back to the world really, we cannot, save in heart, and alas, how many a child has a sense in his soul that this is true of him! Miserable men! Feeding upon ashes!

I AM CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD.

It is one thing to say, The world is crucified to me; but it is quite another thing for me to accept, I am crucified to the world. The proud world will say to us, "Yes, you are crucified to

us, we do not want to have anything to do with you." If we really hold the world to be crucified to us, we may depend upon it the world will hold us to be crucified to it.

It may be a comparatively easy thing to withdraw from the world, but it is a very different thing to be cast off by the world, and to bear the contempt of the proud men of the world. Those who know something of this, know that there is nothing that touches the spirit like it. "Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those who are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud." This is true to-day also. Paul says:—"I will glory in it, it is my boast, I will have nothing whatever to do with the world."

Christendom, as such, does not understand this truth at all, it has gone wholly after that against which the apostle here warns us. Never was a day in which the truth here presented needed more to be pressed! The mass of those in Christendom to-day are wholly under law and do not know what it is to be delivered from the world. Believer in Christ! You, who are sealed with the Holy Spirit, will you also boast in the law, and say that it does not matter that you go after that which crucified your Lord? Is it so that Christ has become of none effect unto you? That ye are fallen from grace? Surely it is better to boast with the apostle in the cross alone, by which the world is crucified unto you

and you unto the world. And what can two crucified things have to say to each other?

How many of those who are really Christians, and belong to the Lord Jesus, are deceived? How many are sowing to the flesh, having put themselves under law, and go on with the world? They are saying, We can work out a legal righteousness, when God has given them a divine righteousness! They say, in effect, we can restrain the flesh by the law! Well, the apostle says, "I cannot do it." Do you think you can do better than he? May God deliver His people from such a snare. Does He not love them? Has not He made a sufficient provision for them? He does love them, He gave His Son for them. Christ loves them, He gave Himself for them. He loves them, and has provided also this blessed book, which is full of instruction and direction for their pathway through this scene. There is not an evil or error in the world to-day, that is not fully exposed in principle in the word of God, and if we have eyes to see it, and ears to hear it, with hearts to desire His will, we have everything we need there.

A NEW CREATION.

"For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." (Ver. 15.) Neither if you are circumcised are you the better, nor if uncircumcised are you the

worse. No, we are all upon one dead level before God by nature, all on one common platform. We all belong to that writhing, seething mass of iniquity and death, which the old creation presents to God on the one hand, or we are upon the platform of new creation on the other.

There are but the two platforms, that of the old creation, and that of the new creation. Christ came down in order to raise us up to this divine platform, the new creation. To give us there, life and peace, and joy and liberty. If you are a Christian you belong to that platform, and not to the old. You are delivered from the one and brought upon the other before God. "If any man be in Christ, there is new creation." God has begun it already, and by-and-by, He will expunge from us everything that belongs to the old. Even all our natural relationships, to which we are rightly alive now, shall cease.

This is the second time this form of expression is used. In chapter v. 6, it is contrasted with faith, which is the only thing that avails us as having any "power" for us. Here it is contrasted with new creation, which is the only thing God recognizes.

THE RULE OF THE NEW CREATION.

"As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Ver. 17.) This rule is the rule of the

new creation, the Spirit's rule. The word is the same as that used in chapter v. 25. He does not wish peace upon those who do not walk according to this "rule," they follow not the things that make for peace. The day had come in which he had to discriminate, because there were some who were descending, being drawn away from the truth, whilst others were maintaining the truth. It is the latter class he has in view here. He does not wish peace to those who had adopted the law as a rule, the law could not produce peace.

The expression, Israel of God, refers to any who are of Israel naturally, who follow this rule. It does not, as some think, include all those who are Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, these being in view in the former part of the verse, as many as walk according to this rule. But he adds, "and upon the Israel of God," that is, those Christians, who being of Israel nationally, now walk according to this rule. These only of God's ancient people does he acknowledge now, for they are not all Israel who are of Israel.

"From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." (Ver. 17.) As a slave branded with a hot iron bore the marks of his master, so Paul bore the marks (stigmata) of his Master. He had been beaten again and again, had been stoned and left for dead. He bore about thus in his body the brands of his Master, the beautiful initials of the

Lord Jesus. Satan, who inflicted them, ought surely to respect them.

Now he abruptly closes with a salutation. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen." (Ver. 18.) There are no affectionate greetings, or messages, but rather with a sense of their need and as a duty he wishes them grace.

God grant that grace may be ours! That the mercy and peace, which he wishes to those who walk according to this rule of the new creation may be ours also! Amen!

