

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle reproves the Galatians for their disobedience to the Gospel, and departure from it; confirms the doctrine of justification by faith, by various arguments; shows the use of the law, and the abrogation of it, and makes mention of several privileges which belong to believers in Christ. He begins with a sharp reproof of the Galatians, and represents them as foolish and bewitched, and charges them with disobedience to the truth of the Gospel, which is aggravated by the clearness of the Gospel ministry, in which a crucified Christ, and justification by him, had been so evidently set before them, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:1), and by the fruit and effect of it, they having received the Spirit by it, and not by the preaching of the law of works, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:2) and it still increased their folly, that whereas they had begun with the Spirit of God, and set out in a dependence on him and his grace, they seemed now as if they would end in a carnal and legal way, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:3). To which is added, the consideration of their having suffered many things for the sake of the Gospel, which must be suffered in vain should they relinquish the Gospel, though the apostle hoped otherwise of them, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:4), nay, they had not only received through the preaching of the Gospel the Spirit, and his graces, but even extraordinary gifts attended it, for the confirmation of it, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:5), so that this case of theirs was a very aggravated one, and they were guilty of great folly and madness: from hence the apostle passes to the main thing in dispute, the great truth of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, which these persons were departing from, and which he establishes by several arguments; and first from the instance and example of Abraham, who was justified by faith, as appears from that which he believed, being imputed to him as his justifying righteousness, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:6), and as many as are believers in Christ are his spiritual children, and so undoubtedly are justified the same way their father was, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:7), and particularly that the Gentiles are justified by faith is clear from the preaching of the Gospel to Abraham, and the promise made unto him, that in his seed all nations should be blessed; that is, with the blessing of justification, (~~RRB~~Galatians 3:8). The conclusion of which

instance and example is, that as faithful Abraham was blessed with a justifying righteousness through faith, so all that believe are blessed along with him with the same blessing, (^{<RB>}Galatians 3:9), and that no man can be justified by the works of the law is certain, since the law is so far from justifying any on account of obedience to it, that it pronounces a curse upon all that do not perfectly and constantly fulfil it, (^{<RB>}Galatians 3:10). And this is still further evident from a passage in the prophecy of (^{<RB>}Habakkuk 2:4) which declares, that the just live by faith, or that those who are truly righteous are such who are justified by it, (^{<RB>}Galatians 3:11). And this is illustrated by the law and faith being contrary; for if a just man lives by faith, then not by the law, for the law does not direct a man to believe, but to work, and to live by his works, (^{<RB>}Galatians 3:12). And the apostle having spoken of the law as a cursing law, takes the opportunity of showing how believers are delivered from the curse of it, which is done by Christ's being made a curse for them; and that he was, appears from his being crucified and hanged on a tree; the ends of which were, that the same blessing of justification Abraham had, might come upon the Gentiles through Christ, and that they might by faith receive the promise of the Spirit, (^{<RB>}Galatians 3:13,14) so that it is clear from hence, that the blessing of justification is through Christ's being made a curse, and is received by faith, and is not by the works of the law. The apostle next argues from the inheritance being by covenant, testament, or promise, and therefore not by the law: he observes, that a man's covenant or testament, when confirmed, can neither be disannulled, nor have anything added to it, and much less can the covenant or testament of God, confirmed of him in Christ, be disannulled by the law, or the promise in it be made of none effect by that which was several hundred years after a declaration of it to Abraham, to whom, and to whose seed, the promises were made; so that it unavoidably follows, that since the inheritance or blessing of life is by promise, as is clear from its being given to Abraham by promise, then it is not of the law, (^{<RB>}Galatians 3:15-18). And whereas an objection might arise, if this be the case, of what use and service can the law be? to what purpose, or for what end, was that given? The apostle answers, that it was added because of transgressions; and that it was to endure until Christ should come, to whom the promise was made; and accordingly it was published in a very grand and solemn manner by angels, and was put into the hands of a mediator, Moses, who stood between God as one party, and the people of Israel as another, (^{<RB>}Galatians 3:19,20). Moreover, as it might be further objected, that, according to this way of reasoning, the law

is against the promises; the apostle replies in a way of detestation and abhorrence of any such thing, and by an argument from the insufficiency of the law to justify, since it cannot give life, (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:21). And then proceeds to point out another use of the law, which is to conclude men under sin, or convince men of it, that they, seeing their need of righteousness and life by Christ might receive the promise of it through faith in him (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:22), and so far were men from being justified by the law under the former dispensation, that they were kept under it as in a garrison, and shut up in it as in a prison, until Christ, the object of faith, was revealed, and released them, (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:23), and was moreover as a rigid and severe schoolmaster; and so it continued until the times of Christ; and these therefore being the uses of the law, it is a clear case that justification is by faith, and not by that, (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:24). Besides, Christ being now come, the Jews themselves are no more under this law as a schoolmaster; it is now abolished, and therefore there is no justification by it, (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:25). And that this is the case of true believers in Christ is evident, because such are the children of God, and are taught and led by the Spirit of God, and are free, and not under the law as a schoolmaster, (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:26). Besides, as they are baptized into Christ, they have put him on, as the Lord their righteousness, and so profess to be justified by him, and him only, (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:27), and these, let them be of what nation, sex, state, and condition soever, are all one in Christ, and are all justified in one and the same way; and being Christ's they are Abraham's spiritual seed, and so heirs of the same promise of righteousness and life as he, (^{<REF>}Galatians 3:28,29).

Ver. 1. *O foolish Galatians*, etc.] Referring not to any national character, as some have thought, by which they were distinguished from others for their rudeness in knowledge, their ignorance and folly, as the Cretians for their lying, etc.. nor to their former state in unregeneracy, it being common to all men, to God's elect themselves, before conversion, to be foolish in a moral and spiritual sense; but to their present stupidity about the article of justification, it being an instance of most egregious folly to leave Christ for Moses, the Gospel for the law, and the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which brings so much solid peace and comfort with it, for the doctrine of justification, by the works of the law, which naturally leads to bondage. Now this was said, not rashly, nor in anger, or on purpose to reproach and provoke, and so not at all contrary to (^{<REF>}Matthew 5:22) but in like manner as Christ said to his disciples, “O

fools, and slow of heart to believe”, etc.. (⁴²²⁵Luke 24:25). So the apostle here, as pitying the Galatians, grieved for them, and as one surprised and astonished that ever people of such light, that had had the Gospel so clearly preached to them, should ever give into such a notion.

Who hath bewitched you? some false teacher or another had, or it cannot be conceived how their heads should ever have been turned this way; which must be understood, not in a literal and proper sense, as Simon Magus bewitched the people of Samaria with his sorceries, but in a figurative and improper one; that as sorcerers and enchanters cast a mist before people's eyes, or, by some evil arts or juggling tricks, deceive their sight, and make objects seem to appear which do not, or in a different form than they really do, so these deceitful workers, who had transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ, as Satan sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, had set this doctrine in a false light before them, thereby to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. Though the apostle reproves the Galatians for their folly and weakness in giving in so easily to such deceptions, yet he imputes the chief fault unto, and lays the greatest blame on the false teachers; whom he represents as sorcerers and enchanters, and their doctrine, particularly that of justification by works, as witchcraft; it being pleasing to men, a gratifying of carnal reason, and operating as a charm upon the pride of human nature. What Samuel said to Saul, (⁴¹⁵²1 Samuel 15:22,23) may be applied to the present case, “to obey” the truth “is better than sacrifice”, than all the rituals of the ceremonial law: “and to hearken” to the Gospel of Christ, “than the fat of rams”, or any of the legal institutions; “for rebellion” against, and opposition to any of the doctrines of the Gospel, and especially to this of justification by the righteousness of Christ, “is as the sin of witchcraft”. The Greek word, **βασκανω**, signifies “to envy”, and hence, “to bewitch”; because the mischief, by witchcrafts, generally proceeds from envy; and so the Syriac version, which the Arabic follows, renders it, **ܘܟܒ ܡܫܝܘܢܡ**, “who hath envied you”, which suggests this sense, that the false apostles envying their light and knowledge in the Gospel, their faith, peace, comfort, and happiness, had endeavoured to introduce another doctrine among them, subversive of all this.

That ye should not obey the truth. This clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Syriac version. By “the truth” is meant, either the whole Gospel, often so called, in opposition to the law, and the types and shadows of it; and because it is contained in the

Scriptures of truth, and comes from the God of truth; the substance of it is Christ, who is the truth, and is what the Spirit of truth leads into; or else particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which is the truth the apostle is establishing, and these Galatians seemed to be going off from, through the artful insinuations of the false teachers. Formerly these people had not only heard this truth, but embraced it: they received the love of it, were strongly affected to it, and firmly believed but now they began to hesitate and doubt about it; they were not so fully persuaded of it as heretofore; they seemed ready to let it go, at least did not hold it fast, and the profession of it, without wavering as before; they were fallen from some degree of the steadfastness of their faith in, and of the obedience of it to this truth, which is what was the design of the false apostles, and is here charged upon the Galatians. The aggravations of which follow in this, and in some subsequent verses,

before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth; meaning in the ministry of the Gospel, in the clear preaching of it by the apostle; Jesus Christ was the sum and substance of his ministry, in which he was set forth and described, and, as it were, painted to the life by him; the glories and excellencies of his divine person, the nature of his office, as Mediator, the suitability of him as a Saviour, the fulness of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, were so fully, and in such a lively manner expressed, that it was as if Christ was personally and visibly present with them; yea, he was so described in his sufferings and death, as hanging, bleeding, dying on the accursed tree, that he seemed to be as it were, as the apostle adds,

crucified among you: for this cannot be understood literally, for he was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem; nor does it respect the sin of the Galatians in departing from the Gospel, as if that was a crucifying of him again, and a putting him to open shame; nor their sufferings for the sake of Christ, as if he, in that sense, was crucified in them, and with them: but it intends the clear Gospel revelation of a crucified Christ, in the preaching of him by the apostle, which was such that no picture, no image, no crucifix would come up to, and which, where such preaching is, are altogether vain and needless; and the clear view these saints had, by faith, in the glass of the Gospel of Christ, and him crucified, which so realized the object, as if it was present and before the natural eye. Now this was an aggravation of their weakness and folly, that after such clear preaching, and clear sight,

they had of the Gospel, and of Christ in it, that they should in the least degree depart from it.

Ver. 2. *This one thing would I learn of you*, etc..] Though there were many things he could have put to them, yet he would only ask this one question, which, if rightly attended to, and honestly answered, must expose their folly, and put an end to the controversy upon this head:

received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? This question supposes they had received the Spirit; that is, the Spirit of God, as a spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of Christ; as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification; as a spirit of faith and adoption; and as the earnest, seal, and pledge of their future glory. Now the apostle asks, whether they received this Spirit “by the works of the law”; meaning, either whether they could imagine, that they by their obedience to the law had merited and procured the Spirit of God; or whether they thought that the Spirit came to them, and into their hearts, through the doctrine or preaching of the law: the former could not be true, for if they could not obtain righteousness and life by the works of the law, then not the Spirit; besides, works done without the Spirit of God, are not properly good works: not the latter, for though by the law is the knowledge of sin, yet this leaves nothing but a sense of wrath and damnation in the conscience; it is the killing letter, and a ministration of condemnation and death, and not of the Spirit, and of life; this belongs to the Gospel, “or the hearing of faith”; for by “faith”, is meant the Gospel, and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; and by “the hearing” of it, the preaching of it, the report of it, (²⁵⁰Isaiah 53:1) which, in the Hebrew text, is **wnt [mç]**, “our hearing”, that by which the Gospel is heard and understood. Now in this way the Spirit of God is received; while the Gospel is preaching he falls on them that hear it, conveys himself into their hearts, and begets them again by the word of truth: and in this way the Galatians came by the Spirit, and which is another aggravation of their folly, that they should enjoy so great an advantage by the Gospel, and yet be so easily removed from it.

Ver. 3. *Are ye so foolish?* etc..] Is it possible you should be so stupid? and do you, or can you continue so?

having begun in the Spirit; that is, either in the Spirit of God, whom they had received through the preaching of the Gospel. They set out in a

profession of religion in the light, under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit; they began to worship the Lord in spirit, and in truth, without any confidence in the flesh; they entered upon the service of God, and a newness of life, a different conversation than before, a spiritual way of living in a dependence on the grace and help of the divine Spirit: or in the Gospel, which is the Spirit that gives life, is the ministration of the Spirit of God, and contains spiritual doctrines, and gives an account of spiritual blessings, and is attended with the Holy Ghost, and with power. This was first preached unto them, and they embraced it; this they begun and set out with in their Christian profession, and yet it looked as if they sought to end with something else:

are you now made perfect by the flesh? or “in” it; not in carnality, in the lusts of the flesh, as if they now walked and lived after the flesh, in a carnal, dissolute, wicked course of life; for the apostle is not charging them with immoralities, but complaining of their principles: wherefore, by “the flesh” is meant, either the strength of mere nature, in opposition to the Spirit of God, by which they endeavoured to perform obedience to the law; or else the law itself, in distinction from the Gospel; and particularly the ceremonial law, the law of a carnal commandment, and which consisted of carnal ordinances, and only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; and also their obedience to it; yea, even all their own righteousness, the best of it, which is but flesh, merely external, weak, and insufficient to justify before God. This is a third aggravation of their folly, that whereas they begun their Christian race depending upon the Spirit and grace of God, now they seemed to be taking a step as if they thought to finish it in the mere strength of nature; and whereas they set out with the clear Gospel of Christ, and sought for justification only by his righteousness, they were now verging to the law, and seeking to make their justifying righteousness perfect, by joining the works of the law unto it, which needed them not, but was perfect without them.

Ver. 4. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?* etc..] These Galatians had suffered great reproach, many afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, as all that embrace it must expect to do; and which to them that persevere in the faith of the Gospel will not be in vain, they will be followed with eternal life and glory; not that these things are meritorious of such happiness, or deserve such a reward; the reward of them is not of debt, but of grace. But, if such who have made a profession, and have suffered for it, should after all relinquish it, their sufferings for it are in

vain; they will come short of that glory which is promised to them that suffer for righteousness sake: and this is another aggravation of the folly of these persons, that they should suffer so much persecution for the Gospel, which, if not true, they must have suffered in vain, and might as well have avoided it; and, if true, by relinquishing it not only sustain a great loss, but bring great hurt and damage to themselves:

if it be yet in vain; by which words the apostle does, as it were, correct himself, and expresses his hope of them, that they would see their mistake, revoke their error, and abide by the truth of the Gospel.

Ver. 5. *He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit*, etc..] By whom he means not himself, nor any other minister of the Gospel, in whose power it does not lie to minister the Spirit, either the ordinary or the extraordinary gifts of it unto men; but either God or Christ who had ministered, and still continued to minister the grace of the Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel; or rather the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which were manifested at the first preaching of the Gospel to them for the confirmation of it, and which they were still supplied with, as the following words show:

and worketh miracles among you; so that this is a distinct argument from that in (^{<RHD>}Galatians 3:2) and a further proof and aggravation of the folly and stupidity of the members of this church, who had not only received through the Gospel the Spirit, as a spirit of regeneration, at least many of them, but had seen the Gospel confirmed by the extraordinary gifts, signs, and wonders of the Holy Ghost, and which were still among them; and yet they were departing from this Gospel, through which all this was done: for it is asked,

doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? and the apostle's meaning is, that these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and these miracles done among them, did not attend the preaching of the law, or the doctrine of justification by works, taught by the false apostles, but the doctrine of faith, of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, delivered by him and others, for the truth of which he appeals to themselves; and therefore they must be guilty of the most egregious folly, once to think of, or take anyone step towards a departure from that doctrine. The Alexandrian copy reads here, as in (^{<RHD>}Galatians 3:2), "received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Ver. 6. *Even as Abraham believed God*, etc..] The apostle having observed, that the special grace and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were received not through the preaching of the law, but through the doctrine of faith; by an easy transition, passes on to a further confirmation of the doctrine of justification by faith, by producing the instance of Abraham, what the Scripture says of him, and the promise made unto him; which is very appropriate to his purpose, since Abraham was certainly a righteous man, the first of the circumcision, and the head of the Jewish nation; and whom the false teachers much gloried in, and boasted of their being his seed, and of being circumcised as he was; and would fain have persuaded the Gentiles to the same practice, in imitation of him, and as necessary to their justification before God; whereas the apostle here shows, referring to (^{<0157>}Genesis 15:6) that Abraham was justified by faith, and not by any works whatever, much less by circumcision; for what he here refers to, was many years before his circumcision; and since therefore he was a justified person, declared to be so, before it and without it, it was not necessary to his justification, nor is it to any other person's: he

believed God. The object of faith is God, Father, Son, and Spirit; here Jehovah the Son seems principally intended, who in (^{<0157>}Genesis 15:1) is called the “Word of the Lord”; the essential Word, who was with God from everlasting, and was God, and in the fulness of time was made flesh and dwelt among men; and “Abraham's shield”, the same the apostle in (^{<0157>}Ephesians 6:16) calls “the shield of faith”; meaning not the grace of faith, but Christ the object of faith; which faith lays hold on, and makes use of as a shield against the temptations of Satan: and also his “exceeding great reward”; his all in all, being made to him, as to all believers, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: him he believed, not only that he was God, but he believed his word of promise, and in his power and faithfulness to fulfil it; which regarded not only his natural offspring, and a numerous race, the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, and many temporal good things in it, but the Messiah, and spiritual blessings in him: he “believed in the Lord”, (^{<0157>}Genesis 15:6) in Jehovah the Word, in him as his shield, and exceeding great reward, in him as the Lord his righteousness:

and it was accounted to him for righteousness; that is, by God, whom he believed; for the sense is, not that Abraham ascribed righteousness to God, and celebrated his justice and faithfulness, as some; nor, as others, that Abraham was accounted a righteous man by the world; but that something

was accounted by God to Abraham as his righteousness, which could not be the act of his faith; for faith is not a man's righteousness, neither in whole nor in part; faith and righteousness are two distinct things, and are often distinguished one from another in Scripture: besides, that which was accounted to Abraham for righteousness, is imputed to others also; (see ^{<B123>}Romans 4:23,24) which can never be true of the act of his faith; but is of the object of it, the word of the Lord, his shield and exceeding great reward, the Lord his righteousness and strength, who is made or accounted, as to him, so to others, righteousness. The righteousness of Christ, whom he believed in, was accounted to him as his justifying righteousness now for faith to be accounted for righteousness, is all one as to be justified by faith; that is, by Christ, or by his righteousness imputed and received by faith; and if Abraham was justified this way, as he was, the apostle has his argument against the false teachers.

Ver. 7. *Know ye therefore*, etc..] Or “ye know”; this is a thing known by you, at least may, or should be; it ought not to be contradicted or disputed, it is so plain a case, and so clear a point:

that they which are of faith; of the faith of Abraham, as in (^{<B116>}Romans 4:16) have the same faith as he had, for nature and kind; though it may not be to the same degree, yet exercised on the same object, Jehovah the Word, the Lord our righteousness, and wrought by the same Spirit; or who are of the faith of Christ, believers in him with all their hearts, and for themselves; who look to him for righteousness and life, who seek for justification by his righteousness, and trust in him alone for it, and not in the works of the law:

the same are the children of Abraham; his spiritual seed, though they may not be his natural offspring; for he is the father of all that believe, whether of the circumcision or the uncircumcision, and of none else in a spiritual sense: in this the apostle strikes at the false teachers, who boasted of their being the seed of Abraham, his natural descendants, which they might be, and yet not his spiritual children; for none are such, but they that are of faith, or seek for righteousness by faith; not they that are of the law, or seek for justification by the works of it, and so not heirs of the blessing; were they, faith would be made void, and the promise of none effect, (^{<B114>}Romans 5:14) and his view herein is to prove, that the Gentiles, who believe, are the true seed of Abraham, the children of the promise, those in many nations, he was promised to be the father of; and his further view is

to observe, that as the father of the faithful was justified, so are all his children; and that as he was justified by faith, so are they.

Ver. 8. *And the Scripture foreseeing*, etc..] This seems to agree with the Jewish forms or citing passages of Scripture, *bwtkh har hm*, “what does the Scripture foresee?” and *hrwt htar hm*,^{f37} “what does the law foresee?” The Scripture here, by a “prosopopeia”, is represented as foreseeing an event that would come to pass, and accordingly spoke of it before hand, and designs God the author of the Scripture; and so the Syriac version renders it, “for seeing” *ahl a [dy mdqd*, “that God” foreknew, etc.. and means either the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, is privy to all his counsels and decrees, and to this of the justification of the Gentiles; or God the Father, who justifies the uncircumcision through faith, according to his own provision and predetermination of it, before the world was; for he was in Christ, reconciling the world, his elect among the Gentiles, from all eternity; when he resolved not to impute their sins to them, but to his Son, who engaged to be their surety: or rather the Son of God, since he was the preacher of this to Abraham; who lay in the bosom of the Father, and was not only acquainted with all his purposes and determinations, but entered into a covenant with him, for, and on the behalf of the people, the chosen ones, among the Gentiles as well as Jews; and undertook to bring in a righteousness for them, by which, being received by faith, they should evidentially, manifestly, in the court of their own consciences, be justified: wherefore the wisdom of God, the eternal Logos, having such a certain foresight, both as God and as Mediator, concerned in the covenant of grace for his people,

that God would justify the Heathen through faith: that is, that whereas a righteousness would be wrought out, and brought in, for the justification of all God's elect, and the doctrine of it be preached among the Gentiles, to whom faith would be given to lay hold on, and receive this righteousness, God would hereby, and hereupon pronounce the sentence of justification in the court of conscience; from whence follow peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; the Scripture, the author, and substance of it, God the Word,

preached before, the Gospel unto Abraham; for not to the Father or the Spirit, as to the Son, can preaching be so well ascribed: Christ was the first preacher of the Gospel that ever was; he first preached it to Adam and Eve in the garden, and afterwards to Abraham: it was Gospel, it was good news to him, that the Messiah should spring from him, and all nations be blessed

in him; he rejoiced at it, and by faith saw Christ's day and was glad and particularly that part of the Gospel, and which is a principal part of it, justification by faith; and that, as it concerned the Gentiles, was preached unto him; and before his circumcision, of which that was a sign and seal, namely, that the righteousness of faith should be upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; and before the law of works was given on Mount Sinai, and long before the doctrine of justification by faith was preached unto the Gentiles, and they enjoyed the comfort of it; which shows this to be the Gospel, and to be no new doctrine, nor different from what was so early taught; the sum and substance of which lies in these words, "in thee shall all nations be blessed"; the passage referred to, is in (^{<012B>}Genesis 12:3) and is repeated (^{<018B>}Genesis 18:18) and in ^{<022B>}*Genesis 22:18* is thus expressed,

in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; which shows, that this is not to be understood of Abraham personally, but of his seed; and which cannot intend Isaac, the immediate seed of Abraham, in whom it was never verified; and besides, is carried down to his seed, (^{<026B>}Genesis 26:4) as not terminating in him; and for the same reason it cannot design Jacob, the immediate seed of Isaac; (see ^{<028B>}Genesis 28:14) nor the whole body of the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, in whom it never had its completion; for when and how have the nations of the earth been blessed in them? either whilst in their own land, when they would have no conversation with them, neither on a civil or sacred account, unless they conformed to their rites; or since their dispersion, so far from it, that their name is used by way of reproach, and as a proverb, a taunt, and a curse everywhere; but it is to be understood of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the son of Abraham, took upon him the seed of Abraham, and to whom it is applied, (^{<031B>}Galatians 3:16) as by the Apostle Peter, (^{<042B>}Acts 3:25,26). The phrase being "blessed in" him, does not signify a blessing of themselves or others, or a proverbial expression that should be used among the Gentiles, "God bless thee as Abraham, or the God of Abraham bless thee, or God bless you as he did the Israelites, or seed of Abraham"; for no one instance can be produced of the nations of the world ever using such a form of blessing; no history, sacred or profane, makes mention that these, or any other Jewish forms of blessing, were ever used among the Gentiles: but here it designs blessings in Christ, and not temporal, but spiritual ones, even all spiritual blessings; as redemption, reconciliation, peace, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life, and particularly justification; this is the blessedness more especially intended, which comes not upon the

circumcision only, but the uncircumcision also; and they that partake of this are blessed indeed; for they are justified from all sin, are free from condemnation, secure from the wrath of God, have a title to eternal life, and shall certainly be glorified: and when it is said that “all nations” shall be thus blessed, the meaning is, not that every individual of all nations shall enjoy this happiness, for all are not in Christ, nor have his righteousness imputed to them, nor have faith in him, there are many that will be condemned with the world; but some of all nations, that God will have saved, and Christ has redeemed by his blood; and these are the many he justifies, even all the elect of God, in the various nations of the world.

Ver. 9. *So then they which be of faith*, etc..] This is the apostle's conclusion upon the whole, from the instance of Abraham, and, the promise made to him; and is an explanation of the preceding clause, and shows that it must be taken in a limited sense, and understood not of every individual; only of those who are of the same faith with Abraham, are believers in Christ, and seek for justification by faith in him, and not by the works of the law:

these are blessed with faithful Abraham; in his seed Christ; they are blessed with a justifying righteousness in Christ as he was, and will be blessed with eternal life as he is; they shall sit with him, and with Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. The character of “faithful” given to him, respects not his uprightness and integrity among men, but his faith in God; and does not suppose that he was blessed for his faith, but that it was through faith that he received the blessing of justification, and not by the works of the law; and that in the same way, all that believe enjoy the same favour, for to them it is limited and restrained: nor can the Jews of all men find fault with this interpretation of the apostle's, since they themselves interpret the above clause of some particular persons of the nations of the world, and say in so many words, that

“the meaning is, not that all the men of the world should be blessed, but that every family that is in the world, *wtnwmaw wt [mçml brqttç*, “that comes to the obedience and faith of him” (God,) to it shall adhere the blessing and providence. ^{f38}”

Ver. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law*, etc..] The apostle does not say, “as many as were of the law”, to whom it belonged, who were born and brought up in it, and to whom it was given, the Jews; for

there were some of them who believed in Christ, were blessed with Abraham, and not under the curse of the law; nor does he say, “as many as do the works of the law”: for the works of the law are to be done, though not in order to obtain righteousness and life by them; yet it is not the doing of them, but the not doing of them, that entails the curse on men: his meaning is, that as many as seek for justification by the works of the law, and trust in their own righteousness for acceptance with God, these are so far from being blessed or justified hereby, that they

are under the curse, that is, of the law; they are under its sentence of condemnation and death, they are deserving of, and liable to the second death, eternal death, the wrath of God, here meant by the curse; to which they are exposed, and which will light upon them, for aught their righteousness can do for them; for trusting in their works, they are trusting in the flesh, and so bring down upon themselves the curse threatened to the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm; not only that trusts in a man of flesh and blood, but in the works of man; his own, or any other mere creature's: besides, by so doing, he rejects Christ and his righteousness, whereby only is deliverance from the curse of the law; nor is it possible by his present obedience to the law, be it ever so good, that he can remove the guilt of former transgressions, and free himself from obligation to punishment for them: nor is it practicable for fallen man to fulfil the law of works, and if he fails but in one point, he is guilty of all, and is so pronounced by the law; and he stands before God convicted, his mouth stopped, and he condemned and cursed by that law he seeks for righteousness by the deeds of:

for it is written, (^{f37b}Deuteronomy 27:26)

cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. The law requires doing; it is not content with mere theory without practice; it is not enough to know it, or hear it, it must be done. The Jews boasted of their knowledge, and trusted much to the hearing of it read every sabbath day; but not those who had a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law, or were hearers of it, were just before God, but the doers of it are justified; and it requires perfect obedience, an observance of all things contained in it, which can never be performed by fallen man. The Jews pretend ^{f39}, that Abraham their Father *hl wk hrwth l k puyq*, “fulfilled all the whole law”; and the same they say ^{f40} of the Israelites in common, than which nothing is more untrue; for

in many things all men offend: moreover, the law requires constant perfect obedience; not only that a man should do all things commanded in it, but that he should continue to do them from his infancy, to the day of his death; and in failure hereof, it pronounces every man cursed, without any respect to persons, or any regard to pleas, taken from the infirmity of human nature, the sincerity of the heart, or repentance for transgressions. It should be observed, that the word “all” is not in the Hebrew text, in (^{f42b}Deuteronomy 27:26), but is manifestly implied, an indefinite proposition being equal to an universal one; and agreeably to the true sense of the words, it is inserted by the apostle here, as it is in the Septuagint and Samaritan versions there; and perfectly accords with the sense of the best interpreters among the Jews; one of them has this gloss upon the words ^{f41}, **hl wk hrwth l k ta l k ak**, “here he (Moses) comprehends all the whole law”; and another ^{f42} says the same thing, almost in the same words; this

“(says he) includes all the commandments which are in the law: and the note of a third is ^{f43}, there are some that say, this is to be understood **hrwth l k l** [“of the whole law”]; and there are others that say, it is to be understood of those things that are mentioned (above), but they say nothing, for it is written “to do them”; and it is right in my eyes, that he curses for the negative commands mentioned, and he curses him who does not keep even secretly the affirmative precepts, wherefore he says “to do them”:”

to which may be added, the observation of another of them ^{f44} that these words intimate, that a man ought to honour the law, **hç [mbw rwydbw hbçhmb**, “in thought, and word, and in deed”: nor should this be thought to be too severe, that the law of God curses men for nonperformance of the whole. The Athenians ^{f45} formerly condemned persons as guilty, though they had not broke the whole law, yet if they had transgressed but one syllable of it: upon the whole it is a clear point, that there can be no justification by the works of the law, since it curses in case of want of perfect and constant obedience to it.

Ver. 11. *But that no man is justified*, etc..] There are some that are justified, as all God's elect are, in his own mind and will from eternity; which will of his to justify them, upon the righteousness of his Son, undertook by him to bring in, is their justification in the court of heaven;

and all that believe in Christ are openly and manifestly justified in the court of conscience, under the testimony of the Spirit of God: but no one is justified

by the law; it is in the Greek text, “in the law”; there were many justified before the law was given, as Noah, Job, Abraham, and all the Ante-Mosaic believers; and there were many justified “in”, or under the legal dispensation; but none of them were justified by their obedience to the law, but by the righteousness they believed they had in the Lord: especially no man is justified

in the sight of God; who sees the heart, knows the spring of actions, and whose judgment is according to truth; that is, by the law and the deeds of it, however they may before men:

it is evident; it is a clear case, out of all dispute, as appears from (³⁰⁰⁴Habakkuk 2:4)

for the just shall live by faith; which may be read either, “the just by faith, shall live”: that is, the man who is just by faith, or justified by faith, not by it as a principle or act, or as the cause or matter of his justification, but by the object of his faith, Christ and his righteousness apprehended by faith, and so not just or justified by works; he shall live a life of justification, through that righteousness his faith receives; he shall live comfortably, with much peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, as the result of his being justified by faith; and shall live eternally, and never die the second death: or the “just shall live by faith”; he that is righteous, not by his own works, but by the obedience of Christ, shall live not upon faith, but by it on Christ, and his righteousness, which is revealed from faith to faith; and this makes it a clear point, that he is not justified by the law, for if he was, he would not live by faith on Christ, but in and by the deeds of the law.

Ver. 12. *And the law is not of faith*, etc..] The Arabic version adds, “but of man”; which as it is an addition to the text, so it contains false doctrine; for though the law is not of faith, yet not of man, but of God; the law does not consist of faith in Christ, nor does it require it, and that a man should live by it upon his righteousness; it is the Gospel that reveals the righteousness of Christ, and directs and encourages men to believe in him and be saved; nor does the law take any notice of a man's faith; nor has it anything to do with a man as a believer, but as a doer, in the point of justification:

but the man that doth them shall live in them; the passage referred to, is in (~~488B~~ Leviticus 18:5), the word “them”, relates to the statutes and judgments, not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, which are equally obligatory on Gentiles as on Jews. The Jewish doctors ^{f46} observe on those words, that

“it is not said, priests, Levites, and Israelites, but **ṣadik**, “the man”; lo, you learn from hence, that even a Gentile that studies in the law, is as an high priest:”

so that whatever man does the things contained in the law, that is, internally as well as externally, for the law is spiritual, reaches the inward part of man, and requires truth there, a conformity of heart and thought unto it, and that does them perfectly and constantly, without the least failure in matter or manner of obedience, such shall live in them and by them; the language of the law is, do this and live; so life, and the continuation of that happy natural life which Adam had in innocence, was promised to him, in case of his persisting in his obedience to the law; and so a long and prosperous life was promised to the Israelites in the land of Canaan, provided they observed the laws and statutes which were commanded them: but since eternal life is a promise made before the world began, is provided for in an everlasting covenant, is revealed in the Gospel, and is the pure gift of God's grace through Christ, it seems that it never was the will of God that it should be obtained by the works of the law; and which is a further proof that there can be no justification in the sight of God by them, (see ~~489D~~ Galatians 3:21).

Ver. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law*, etc..] The Redeemer is Christ, the Son of God; who was appointed and called to this work by his Father, and which he himself agreed to; he was spoken of in prophecy under this character; he came as such, and has obtained eternal redemption, for which he was abundantly qualified; as man, he was a near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption belonged; and as God, he was able to accomplish it. The persons redeemed are “us”, God's elect, both of Jews and Gentiles; a peculiar people, the people of Christ, whom the Father gave unto him; some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: the blessing obtained for them is redemption; a buying of them again, as the word signifies; they were his before by the Father's gift, and now he purchases them with the price of his own blood, and so delivers them “from the curse of the law”; its sentence of condemnation and death,

and the execution of it; so that they shall never be hurt by it, he having delivered them from wrath to come, and redeemed from the second death, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The manner in which this was done was by being

made a curse for us; the sense of which is, not only that he was like an accursed person, looked upon as such by the men of that wicked generation, who hid and turned away their faces from as an abominable execrable person, calling him a sinner, a Samaritan, and a devil; but was even accursed by the law; becoming the surety of his people, he was made under the law, stood in their legal place and stead and having the sins of them all imputed to him, and answerable for them, the law finding them on him, charges him with them, and curses him for them; yea, he was treated as such by the justice of God, even by his Father, who spared him not, awoke the sword of justice against him, and gave him up into his hands; delivered him up to death, even the accursed death of the cross, whereby it appeared that he was made a curse: “made”, by the will, counsel, and determination of God, and not without his own will and free consent; for he freely laid down his life, and gave himself, and made his soul an offering for sin:

for it is written. (^{f47}Deuteronomy 21:23),

cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: it is in the Hebrew text, **ywl t**, “he that is hanged”: which is the very name the Jews ^{f47} commonly call Christ by way of reproach; that is, “everyone that hangeth”, as the apostle rightly renders it; which is always the sense of an indefinite phrase, unless a restriction is put: adding out of the same verse, “on the tree”, by way of explanation; for which he cannot upon any account be found fault with, since it is manifest one hanged on a tree is meant, “who is accursed of God”, or “the curse of God”; the curse of God, in vindicating his righteous law, was visibly on such a person; as it was on Christ, when he hung on the cross, in the room and stead of his people; for he was made a curse, not for himself, or for any sins of his own, but for us; in our room and stead, for our sins, and to make atonement for them: upon the whole, the Jew ^{f48} has no reason to find fault as he does, either with the apostle’s sense, or citation of this passage; for whether it be rendered “hangeth”, or is “hanged”, the sense is the same; and though the apostle leaves out the word “God”, it is clear from what he says, that his meaning is, that the curse of God lighted upon Christ as the surety of his people, standing in

their legal place and stead, in order to redeem them from the law and its curse; since he says, he was “made a curse” for them, which must be done by the Lord himself: and whereas the Jew objects, that it is impossible that anyone, even an Israelite, should be delivered from the curses of the law, but by the observance of it, this shows his ignorance of the law, which, in case of sin, requires a penalty, and which is its curse; and it is not future observance of the law will free from that: and as for the Gentiles, he says, to whom the law was not given, and who were never under it, they are free from the curses of it, without a redemption; but as this is to be, understood not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, it is a mistake; the Gentiles are under the moral law, and being guilty of the violation of it, are liable to its curse; and cannot be delivered from it, but through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; by virtue of which, they have a part and portion in the blessings promised as follows.

Ver. 14. *That the blessing of Abraham*, etc..] The same blessing Abraham enjoyed, even justification by the righteousness of Christ; and what was promised to Abraham, that in him, his seed, that is Christ, the Gentiles should be blessed, or justified; for though this blessing may in general comprise every spiritual blessing, yet it chiefly regards that of justification; or a deliverance from the curse of the law, and which is the end of Christ's being made a curse, that this blessedness

might come on the Gentiles; the uncircumcision, as well as the circumcision; (see ^{f49}Romans 4:9) that is, upon as many of them as were ordained unto eternal life, and in consequence of that believe in Christ; quite contrary to a Jewish notion, that

“no blessing dwells but upon an Israelite ^{f49}:”

now though this blessing, as all other spiritual ones, were laid up in the covenant of grace, put into the hands of Christ, and God's elect blessed therewith, as considered in him, yet the curse of the law for their transgressions stood in the way of their personal enjoyment of it, to their peace and comfort in their own souls; wherefore Christ is made a curse for them, to make way for the blessing to take place upon them; which is by an act of God's grace imputed to them, and is received by faith:

through Jesus Christ; or “in Jesus Christ”, as the words may be read; meaning either, that this blessing comes upon the Gentiles that were in Christ, chosen in him, in union with him, and represented by him, both in

the covenant and on the cross; or else that Christ is the Mediator, as from whom, so through whom, this, as every blessing of grace, comes to the children of God:

that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith; Beza puts the copulative and to this clause, reading it, “and that we”, etc.. as does the Ethiopic version; thereby more clearly pointing out this to be another end of Christ's being made a curse for us: by “the promise of the Spirit” may be meant, either by an “hypallage”, the Spirit of promise, who opens and applies the promises; or the Spirit promised, not as a spirit of regeneration, conversion, and faith; for, as such, he cannot be received by faith; Since, antecedent to his being so, there can be no faith; but rather as a spirit of adoption, in respect to which he is said to be received, (~~ⲀⲚⲔⲐⲤ~~Romans 8:15) and this blessing of adoption, as in consequence of redemption from under the law, its curse and condemnation, (~~ⲀⲚⲔⲐⲤ~~Galatians 4:4-6). Or else a spiritual promise, in distinction from the temporal promise of the land of Canaan, made to Abraham and his natural seed, and means the promise of eternal life and happiness in the world to come; which promise is now received by faith, and that in consequence of the sufferings and death of Christ the testator; (see ~~ⲀⲚⲔⲐⲤ~~Hebrews 9:15).

Ver. 15. *Brethren*, etc..] Whereas in (~~ⲀⲚⲔⲐⲤ~~Galatians 3:1), he calls them “foolish Galatians”, which might seem too harsh and severe, therefore, to mitigate and soften their resentments, he styles them brethren; hoping still well of them, and that they were not so far gone, but that they might be recovered; and imputing the blame and fault rather to their leaders and teachers, than to them:

I speak after the manner of men; agreeably to a Talmudic form of speech in use among the Jews, $\mu\delta\alpha\ \gamma\iota\upsilon\beta\ \acute{\gamma}\epsilon\lambda\ \kappa\ \eta\rho\omega\tau\ \eta\rho\beta\delta$, “the law speaks according to the language of the children of men”, or “after the manner of men”,^{f50}, when they argue from any Scripture, in which a word is repeated, and the latter word seems to point out something peculiar: but the apostle's meaning is, that the thing he was about to speak of was taken from among men, in common use with them, and what was obvious to the common sense and understanding of men, and might easily be applied and argued from, as it is by him:

though it be but a man's covenant, or testament, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto; if a covenant made between men, or a

man's will and testament, be confirmed, signed, sealed, and witnessed, in a proper manner, no other man can make them void, or take anything from them, or add anything to them, only the parties concerned by their own will and consent; and if this be the case among men, much less can the covenant of God, confirmed by two immutable things, his word and oath, or his will and testament, or any branch of it, be ever disannulled, or be capable of receiving any addition thereunto. The apostle seems to have a particular respect to that branch of the covenant and will of God, which regards the justification of men in his sight by the righteousness of Christ, to which the false teachers were for adding the works of the law.

Ver. 16. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made*, etc..] The promises design the promises of the covenant of grace mentioned in the next verse, which are exceeding great and precious, better than those of any other covenant; and which are all yea and amen in Christ, and are chiefly of a spiritual nature; though all the temporal blessings of God's people come to them in a covenant way, and by virtue of the promise; for godliness has the promise of this life, that God will verily feed them, withhold no good thing from them proper for them, sanctify all their afflictions, support under them, and never leave nor forsake them: but the promises here intended principally are such as these, that God will be their God, and they shall be his people, the promise of Christ as a Saviour and Redeemer of them; of the Spirit as their sanctifier, and the applier of all grace unto them; of justification by Christ's righteousness, and pardon by his blood; of adoption through free rich grace; of perseverance in grace, and of the eternal inheritance: now these promises were made, *ερηνησαν*, "were said unto", or spoken of, to Abraham and his seed; that is, they were discovered, made manifest, and applied to Abraham, the father of many nations; and were declared to belong to him and his spiritual seed, even all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; for the apostle is not speaking of the original make and constitution of the covenant of grace and its promises, which were made from all eternity; the grand promise of life was made before the world began, and Christ was set up as Mediator from everlasting, before ever the earth was, which suppose a covenant in which this promise was granted, and of which Christ was the Mediator as early; it was made long before Abraham, or any of his spiritual seed, were in being; nor was it made with any single person, any mere creature, Abraham, or any other, but with Christ, as the head and representative of the whole election of grace: but what is here treated of is, the declaration and

manifestation of the covenant, and its promises to Abraham; which was frequently done, as upon the call of him out of the land of Chaldea, upon his parting with Lot, when he was grown old, and when Eliezer his servant was like to be his heir, and just before the giving of him the covenant of circumcision, and again upon the offering up of his son Isaac:

he saith not unto seeds, as of many; in the plural number, as if Jews and Gentiles were in a different manner his spiritual seed:

but as of one; using the singular number:

and to thy seed, which is Christ; meaning not Christ personal, though he was of the seed of Abraham, a son of his, as was promised; but the covenant and the promises were not now made with, and to Christ, as personally considered, this was done in eternity; but Christ mystical, the church, which is the body of Christ, of which he is the head, and is called by his name, (^{<462D>}1 Corinthians 12:12) and designs all Abraham's spiritual seed, both Jews and Gentiles; who are all one in Christ, and so Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; hence there is no room for the objection of the Jew to the apostle's application of this passage to Christ ^{f51}, that the Scripture speaks not of any particular person, but of seed in a general and collective sense, of a large and numerous offspring; since the apostle designs such a seed by Christ, as numerous as the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea shore, even all believers in all nations, Abraham is the father of; though did the apostle mean Christ particularly, and personally considered, there are instances to be given, where the word "seed" is used, not in a collective sense, but of a single person, as in (^{<0085>}Genesis 4:25 15:3 21:13). Nor has the Jew ^{f52} any reason to charge him with a mistake, in observing that the word is not in the plural, but in the singular number, when it is the manner of the Hebrew language to speak of seed only in the singular number; but this is false, the word is used in the plural number, and so might have been here, had it been necessary, as in (^{<0085>}1 Samuel 8:15) concerning seed sown in the earth, from whence the metaphor is here taken. The first tract in the Jews' Misna, or oral law, is called, **μy[rz]**, "seeds"; and the word, even as spoken of the posterity of men, is used in the plural number in their Talmud ^{f53}; where they say,

"pecuniary judgments are not as capital ones; in pecuniary judgments, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; in capital judgments, his blood, and the blood **wytw[rz]**, "of his seeds", or

posterity, hang on him to the end of the world; for we so find in Cain, who slew his brother; as it is said, “the bloods of thy brother crieth”; it is not said, the blood of thy brother, but the bloods of thy brother, his blood, and the blood *wytw*[*rz*, “of his seeds”.”

Ver. 17. *And this I say*, etc..] Assert and affirm as a certain truth, that is not to be gainsaid;

that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul; by “the covenant” is meant, not the covenant made with Adam, as the federal head of all his posterity; for this was made two thousand years before the law was given; nor that which was made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, for that itself is the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after this covenant; nor the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham, for that was not so long by some years, before the giving of the law, as the date here fixed: but “a covenant confirmed of God in Christ”; a covenant in which Christ is concerned; a covenant made with him, of which he is the sum and substance, the Mediator, surety, and messenger; and such is what the Scriptures call the covenant of life and peace, and what we commonly style the covenant of grace and redemption; because the articles of redemption and reconciliation, of eternal life and salvation, by the free grace of God, are the principal things in it. This is said to be “in Christ”, *εις χριστον*, “with respect to Christ”; though the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out this clause, nor is it in the Alexandrian copy, and some others; meaning either that this covenant has respect to Christ personal, he having that concern in it, as just now mentioned, and as it was made manifest and confirmed to Abraham, was promised in it to spring from him; or rather that it has respect to Christ mystical, as before, to all Abraham's spiritual seed, both Jews and Gentiles: and this is said to be “confirmed of God”, with respect thereunto; which must be understood, not of the first establishment of the covenant, in and with Christ, for that was done in eternity; nor of the confirmation of it by his blood, which was at his death; nor of the confirmation of it in common to the saints by the Spirit of God, who is the seal of the covenant, as he is the Spirit of promise; but of a peculiar confirmation of it to Abraham, either by a frequent repetition thereof, or by annexing an oath unto it; or rather by those rites and usages, and even wonderful appearances, recorded in (⁻⁰¹⁵⁹Genesis 15:9,10) (⁻⁰¹⁵²Genesis 15:12,13,17,18) and which was “four hundred and thirty years before” the law was given, which are thus computed by the learned Pareus;

from the confirmation of the covenant, and taking Hagar for his wife, to the birth of Isaac, 15 years; from the birth of Isaac, to the birth of Jacob, 60 years, (^{<0233>}Genesis 25:26), from the birth of Jacob, to his going down into Egypt, 130 years, (^{<0470>}Genesis 47:9), from his going down to Egypt, to his death, 17 years, (^{<0478>}Genesis 47:28) from the death of Jacob, to the death of Joseph in Egypt, 53 years, (^{<0816>}Genesis 50:26) from the death of Joseph, to the birth of Moses, 75 years; from the birth of Moses, to the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt, and the giving of the law, 80 years, in all 430 years. The Jews reckoned the four hundred years spoken of to Abraham, (^{<0153>}Genesis 15:13) and mentioned by Stephen, (^{<4076>}Acts 7:6) from the birth of Isaac; but they reckon the four hundred and thirty years, the number given by Moses, (^{<0224>}Exodus 12:40) and by the apostle here, to begin from the confirming the covenant between the pieces, though somewhat differently counted; says one of their chronologers ^{f54}, we reckon the 430 years from the 70th year of Abraham, from whence to the birth of Isaac were 30 years, and from thence to the going out of Egypt, 400 years; and another ^{f55} of them says,

“they are to be reckoned from the time that the bondage was decreed, in the standing between the pieces; and there were 210 years of them from thence to the going down to Egypt, and these are the particulars; the 105 years which remained to Abraham, and the 105 years Isaac lived after the death of Abraham, and there were 10 years from the death of Isaac, to the going down to Egypt, and it remains that there were 210 years they stayed in Egypt:”

another ^{f56} of their writers says,

“that from the time that the decree of the captivity of Egypt was fixed between the pieces, to the birth of Isaac, were 30 years; and from the birth of Isaac to the going down of the children of Israel into Egypt, 400 years; take out from them the 60 years of Isaac, and the 130 years that Jacob had lived when he went into Egypt, and there remain 210.”

Josephus reckons ^{f57} these years from Abraham's coming into the land of Canaan, to the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and makes them 430, agreeably to (^{<0224>}Exodus 12:40) and to the apostle here, and to the Talmud; (See Gill on “^{<4076>}Acts 7:6”). However, be these computations as they will, it is certain, that the law, which was so long after the confirming of the covenant to Abraham, could not make it null and void: or

that it should make the promise of none effect; the particular promise of the covenant, respecting the justification of Abraham and his spiritual seed, by faith in the righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 18. *For if the inheritance be of the law*, etc..] By the inheritance is meant, either the eternal inheritance, everlasting life and happiness in heaven, which is the gift of God through Christ, and not attained to and enforced by the works of the law; or particularly the blessing of justification, promised in the covenant to Abraham, and his spiritual seed; even to the Gentiles, and inherited by them; which is not obtained through obedience to the law of works, nor does it belong to those who seek for it by the deeds of the law, for these are not heirs of it; (see ~~ROM~~ Romans 4:14). For was this the case,

it is no more of promise; it cannot be by merit and by promise, by works and grace too; these can never be reconciled, and consist together; if it is by promise, then not of the law; and if it is of the law, it is not by promise: “but” nothing is more certain than this, that

God gave it, freely, without any consideration of the works of the law,

to Abraham by promise; wherefore justification is not by works, but by the free grace of God, through faith in the righteousness of Christ; and in this way men become heirs according to the hope of eternal life: all which is directly opposite to the notion of the Jews, who say, that, ^{^d} [^{^g} wçry twxm rkçb,

“for the reward of the commandments, men shall inherit paradise
f58 .”

Ver. 19. *Wherefore why then serveth the law?* etc..] If this be the case, might an objector say, why was the law given? what ends and purposes are to be served by it? of what use can it be? there had as good been no law at all, if the inheritance is not of it, and there is no justification by it. To which it is answered,

it was added because of transgressions; four hundred and thirty years after the covenant made with Abraham; it did not succeed it, nor take the place of it, and so make it null and void; but was over and above added unto it, for the sake of restraining transgressions; which had there been no law, men would not have been accountable for them; and they would have gone into them without fear, and with impunity; but the law was given, to lay a

restraint on men, by forbidding such and such things, on pain of death; and also for the detecting, discovering, and making known transgressions, what they are, their nature and consequences; these the law charges men with, sets them before them, in their true light and proper colours; and convicts them of them, stops their mouths, and pronounces them guilty before God: moreover, this law entered in, over and above any other revelation God was pleased to make, “that the offence might abound”, (~~ROM~~ Romans 5:20) either that particular offence, the sin of Adam, the apostle is there speaking of; the heinous nature of which, its aggravated circumstances, and the justness of its imputation to his posterity, were more clearly discerned by this law; and so the Syriac version here renders it in the singular number, *atwnyj sm l j m*, “because of transgression”; or all other offences and transgressions, which are increased through the multiplicity of precepts, and attended with more aggravating circumstances, than if no law was given, and more eagerly pursued after, through the prohibition of them; such being the corrupt nature of man, that the more anything is forbidden, the more desirous it is of it: add to all this, that the law was given for the punishing of transgressions, for which it curses, and threatens with death, and inflicts it on Christless sinners: hence it is clear there can be no justification by it, and yet it is not useless and insignificant:

till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; either Christ the seed of the woman, and of Abraham, who was to come in the flesh, and is come; and to whom the grand promise of life, and all the promises of the covenant were made; not for himself, but for those he represented, and in whom they are all secure: until whose coming to finish transgression, and bring in everlasting righteousness, the law was to continue in the form in which, and the use for which it was added, and then to cease as the ministration of Moses; for through the coming of Christ it received its full accomplishment, and came to an end; the ceremonial law was utterly abolished, and the moral law ceased to be a covenant of works, though it continues a rule of walk and conversation; and the whole Mosaic economy was no more: or else the seed here intends the spiritual seed of Abraham; particularly among the Gentiles, to whom the promise of blessedness, of justification, and eternal life was made; and the sense be, that till such time that a generation of faithful men, of believers in Christ, should arise among the Gentiles, the law was to continue with the Jews; but when they should spring up, the middle wall of partition should be broken down, and Abraham's spiritual seed among Jews and Gentiles make up one body, one

people, and be fellow heirs and partakers of the promise of God in Christ, through the Gospel:

and it was ordained by angels; not Moses and Aaron, and Joshua, as some say; for though Moses was concerned in the giving of the law, yet not Aaron nor Joshua, nor are any of them ever called angels; but the holy elect angels are here meant, the ten thousands of saints, or holy ones, God came to Mount Sinai with, and the Lord was among, in the holy place; (see ^{<4073>}Deuteronomy 33:2 ^{<4987>}Psalm 68:17) and so the Jews say ^{f59} that the Lord appeared on Mount Sinai gloriously, *aykal md hytyk μ[*, “with companies”, or “troops of angels”, to give the law to his people: and this may be said to be “ordained” by them, inasmuch as it might be written and spoken by them, as the instruments and ministers God made use of; for though the tables are said to be the work of God, and the writing the writing of God, and to be written with the finger of God, and he is said to speak all the words of it, yet this hinders not, but that all this might be done by the means of angels; who might be employed in disposing and fitting the stones in the form they were, and in writing the law upon them; hence it is said to be given by the disposition of angels, (^{<4073>}Acts 7:53) and certain it is, that it was spoken by them, (^{<3012>}Hebrews 2:2) they forming in the air those articulate and audible sounds, when the law was delivered; who were also concerned in the thunderings and lightnings, and in the blowing of the trumpet, that waxed louder and louder at that time:

in the hand of a mediator; not Christ, as many interpreters, ancient and modern, have thought; for though he was present at the giving of the law, as appears from (^{<4073>}Acts 7:38 ^{<4987>}Psalm 68:17,18) and is the Mediator between God and man, and had the law in his hand, out of which it went forth as the lawgiver; and as the surety of his people has fulfilled it, and by so doing put an end to it, and delivered them from the curse and condemnation of it; yet he is the Mediator of the new and better covenant, not the ministration of death, but of life; and so Moses and Christ, the law and Gospel, the old and the new covenant, are continually opposed to each other; besides, the mediator here seems to be represented as inferior to the angels, and as receiving the law into his hands from them, by whom it was ordained; which to conceive of Christ, is very much to the demeaning and lessening of him. Moses is the mediator here meant, who stood between God and the people of Israel; not to make peace between them, but to show the word of God from him to them, and this at their own request; (see ^{<4073>}Deuteronomy 5:5,23-27), and in his hand the tables of the law

were, when he came down from the mount, and was a typical mediator of Christ. So the Jews say of him, that

“he was y[*xma*, “a mediator” between them and God^{f60}.”

Ver. 20. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one*, etc..] A mediator supposes two parties he stands between, and these at a distance from, or disagreeing with each other; where there is but one party, there can be no need of, nor any reason for, a mediator; so Christ is the Mediator between God and men, the daysman, (~~803~~ Job 9:33), that lays his hands upon them both; and Moses, he was the mediator between God and the Israelites:

but God is one; not in person, for there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, in nature and essence; so that though there are three persons, there is but one God, and who is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; who is of one mind concerning them, and has taken them into one and the same covenant, and makes use of one and the same method in the justification of them: but the true sense of the phrase here is, that whereas a mediator supposes two parties at variance, “God is one of the two”; as the Ethiopic version reads the words; he is a party offended, that stands off, and at a distance, which the law given by angels in the hand of a mediator shows; so that that is rather a sign of disagreement and alienation, and consequently that justification is not to be expected by it.

Ver. 21. *Is the law then against the promises of God?* etc..] If the law was added because of transgressions, and curses for them, and if the inheritance is not of it, but by promise, were it, it would not be by promise, then, says an objector, it is against the promises: these are contrary to one another, and God, in giving the one and the other, must contradict himself: to which it is replied,

God forbid; a way of speaking the apostle uses, when he would express his abhorrence and detestation of anything, as here; for though the law and promises are distinct things, and have their separate uses, yet they are not contradictory to each other; the law has its use, and so have the promises; the promises do not set aside the law as useless on all accounts, nor does the law disannul the promises, but is subservient to them:

for if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law; but the law cannot give life,

spiritual life to a dead sinner; God only can do this, Father, Son, and Spirit; so far is the law from giving it efficiently, that it is not so much as the means of it; it is not made use of this way; God makes use of the law to kill, but not to make alive; he makes use of the law to strike dead all a man's hopes of happiness, by the deeds of it; but it is the Gospel he uses to quicken and comfort; that is the Spirit that giveth life. The law requires as much of a dead sinner, as it did of Adam in innocence, but gives him no life, activity, and strength to perform; could it quicken him, and enable him to do all its demands perfectly, then there would be righteousness, and so justification by it, as by the promise; whence it appears that there is no contrariety in the law to the promises: the reason why there is no righteousness is, because it cannot give life, spiritual life and strength; and if so, then not eternal life; which is the free gift of God, and not the merit of men's works: this is directly contrary to a notion of the Jews, who cry up the law as a life giving law; say they ^{f61},

“great is the law, **hyçw[l μyyj tntwn ayhç**, “for it giveth life to them that do it”, in this world, and in the world to come:”

and elsewhere ^{f62},

“the law is a tree of life to all that study in it, **yyj ^wl bhyml**, “to give unto them life” in this world, and “to give unto them life” in the world to come.”

Ver. 22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin*, etc.] By the “Scripture” is meant, either the writing of the law in particular, the killing letter, or the whole Scripture, or God in it; and who by and in it has shown, declared, and proved, that all the individuals of human nature, Jews and Gentiles, and all that is in them, and done by them, are under the power and dominion of sin, defiled by it, and involved in the guilt of it; for it is not **παντας**, “all persons”, but **παντα**, “all things”, belonging to all persons; all the members of their bodies, and faculties of their souls; all their thoughts, inclinations, and intentions; all their works and services, even their best righteousness, which is as filthy rags; all are declared to be sinful and polluted, and men on account of them to be guilty before God, and liable to punishment; from whence there can be no escape by the law of works; for they are like men concluded, or shut up in a prison, from which there is no apparent likelihood of deliverance: now the Spirit of God, discovering to men this their wretched and desperate condition, under the law and sin,

reveals Christ and his righteousness to them, and enables and encourages them to believe in him, by whom only they can be justified from all things, they cannot by the law of Moses, in which they see themselves shut up, as in a prison:

that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe; by the “promise” is intended, the promise of life and salvation, and particularly of a justifying righteousness; which is given, not merited; righteousness is a gift, a gift of grace, a free gift, and so is eternal life; salvation in all its parts is of free grace; Christ is a free gift, and so are all things along with him; yea, faith itself, by which they are received, it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; Christ is the author and finisher, as well as the object of it; and therefore here called “the faith of Jesus Christ”: and such that have it, to them the promise, or the things promised, righteousness and life are given, which the law could not give; not to them that work, but to them that believe: thus the law is so far from being against the promises of God, that it is subservient to them; for though the law has no tendency in itself to bring persons to Christ, and to believe in him for righteousness, yet this concluding men under sin, showing them their desperate, and hopeless, and helpless condition, the Spirit of God takes occasion from hence to reveal Christ unto them, and to enable them as perishing creatures to venture on him, and lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel; and so they come to enjoy the grand promise of it, even life and salvation by Christ.

Ver. 23. *But before faith came*, etc..] This is to be understood, not of the grace of faith, which was under the former dispensation, as now; the Old Testament saints had the same Spirit of faith, and the same grace of faith, as for its nature, object, and use, as New Testament saints have; Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc.. believed in Christ, and were justified by faith in his righteousness, as we are. It is much better to understand it of the doctrine of faith, which though preached to Adam, and by Noah, and to Abraham, and by Isaiah, and others, yet not so clearly, largely, and fully, as by Jesus Christ and his apostles; so that the times of the Gospel may be called the times of faith, in comparison of the times of the law, and which some think is here meant; but it is best to interpret it of Christ, the object of faith, who was to come, and is come in the flesh, to fulfil the law; and, by so doing, has put an end to it; and to redeem his people from under it, and to save them with an everlasting salvation; for before this his coming in the

flesh, the people of the Jews, of whom the apostle was one, were under the law:

we were kept under the law; as persons in a garrison, as the word signifies; they were kept distinct and separate from the rest of the nations of the world, and had neither civil nor religious conversation with them; and so were preserved in some measure both from their impieties and idolatries, which otherwise they were naturally prone to; and as a distinct people, unto the coming of the Messiah, who was to arise from among them; so that their being kept under the law in this sense, was both for their honour and their safety: though the meaning may also be, that they were kept under it as persons under a military guard, as the word likewise imports; and signifies, that the law kept a strict guard and a watchful eye over them, as the Roman soldier had over Paul, that kept him, and held fast the chain in his hand, with which he was bound, that he might not get loose and escape from him; (see ^{<4036>}Acts 28:16,20) to which the apostle seems here to allude; the law kept them close to the discharge of their duty, and held them fast as prisoners; and which is more fully expressed in the next clause,

shut up. The Syriac version reads this in connection with the former, thus, *nyçybj dk l awh rj n aswmn* “the law kept us shut up”, as in a prison; and the same way reads the Arabic version; which shows the state and condition the Jews were in under the law, and how they were treated by it; not as good and righteous persons, but as persons in debt, as criminals and malefactors; a prison is made, and so the law, for such sort of persons; the law considered and used them as sinners, as criminals convicted and condemned; it did itself accuse, convict, and pronounce them guilty, and condemned them to punishment; and detained them as prisoners in its dark dungeon, where they had little light and comfort; and were as in a pit, wherein is no water; though they lay here as prisoners of hope, in expectation of the Messiah's coming; who was to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and to say to the prisoners, Come forth, and to them that sit in darkness, Show yourselves. Also the allusion may be to the custom of the eastern nations, in the usage of their slaves and captives; who in the daytime used to grind at a mill in a prison house, and in the night time were put down into a pit and shut up, and a mill stone put to the mouth of the pit ^{f63}; and so describes the state of bondage and slavery the Jews were in under the law, who differed nothing from servants, to whom the saints under the Gospel

dispensation are opposed, (~~ROM~~ Galatians 3:26) as being the children of God by faith in Christ. And in this uncomfortable condition they continued,

unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed; that is, until Christ the object of faith came, who was to be revealed, or made manifest in the flesh; who, before his incarnation, not only lay in the bosom of the Father, but was in a great measure hid under the types and prophecies of the Old Testament; which though they gave some hints of him, yet but obscure ones, in comparison of the revelation made of him by his appearance in human nature; by the testimonies of his Father by a voice from heaven of angels, of John the Baptist, and others; and by his own doctrines and miracles, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Ver. 24. *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ*, etc..] So the words should be read, as they are by the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; for the words “to bring us” are a supplement of our translators, and have nothing to answer to them in the original; and the sense of the passage is, that the law performed this office of a schoolmaster until the coming of Christ; which shows that till that time the church was in its minority, that the Jews were but children in knowledge and understanding, and therefore stood in need, and were under the care of a schoolmaster, the law, by which the whole Mosaic administration is designed. They were taught by the moral law, the letter, the writing on the two tables, with other statutes and judgments, their duty to God and men, what is to be done and to be avoided, what is righteousness and what is not, the nature of sin, its demerit and consequences; but these gave them no instructions about a Saviour, and life and righteousness by him. The ceremonial law gave them some hints of the Gospel scheme, and the way of salvation by Christ, but in a manner suited to their estate of childhood; by sights and shows, by types and figures, by rites and ceremonies, by shadows and sacrifices; it taught them by divers washings the pollution of their nature, their need of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin; by circumcision, the necessity of regeneration, and the internal circumcision of the heart; by the passover, the daily sacrifice and other offerings, the doctrines of redemption, satisfaction, and atonement; and by the brazen serpent, the necessity of looking to Christ for life and salvation, and by various other things in that branch of the legal economy: but besides the instruction the law gave, it made use of discipline as a schoolmaster does; it kept a strict eye and hand over them, and them close to the performance of their duty; and restrained

them from many things their inclinations led them to, threatening them with death in case of disobedience, and inflicting its penalties on delinquents; hence they that were under its discipline, were through fear of death it threatened them with, all their time subject to bondage: even the ceremonial law had something awful and tremendous in it; every beast that was slain in sacrifice was not only an instruction to them that they deserved to die as that creature did; but carried in it a tacit acknowledgment and confession of their own guilt; and the whole was an handwriting of ordinances against them. Moreover, the law being called a schoolmaster, shows that the use of it was but temporary, and its duration but for a time; children are not always to be under, nor designed to be always under a schoolmaster, no longer than till they are come to a proper age for greater business and higher exercises of life; so the law was to continue, and did continue, to be of this use and service to the Jewish church during its minority, until Christ came, the substance of all it taught and directed to: both the Jerusalem Targum and that of Jonathan ben Uzziel, on (~~0112~~ Numbers 11:12) use the very Greek word the apostle does here, concerning Moses, rendering the words, as a “pedagogue” or “schoolmaster” bears a sucking child into the land, etc..

That we might be justified by faith; by Christ the object of faith, by his righteousness, which faith looks unto and receives, and not by the law and the works of it; the people of the Jews were in such a state under the law, and the law of that use unto them before the coming of Christ, as above represented, that it might be made manifest, be a clear point, and out of all dispute, that there is no such thing as justification by the law; for how could ever such a blessing be expected from it, when men were kept under it as under a military guard; when they were shut up in it as in a prison, and were treated by it as malefactors, convicted and condemned; and when they were under the discipline of it, as a rigid and severe schoolmaster? this being their case till Christ came, when it ceased to be all this to them, he being the end of it for righteousness, it became a thing self-evident, that justification is only by him and his righteousness, and so the end here mentioned was answered.

Ver. 25. *But after that faith is come,* etc..] That is, since Christ the object of faith is come in the flesh, and has fulfilled the law, and redeemed them that were under it from its bondage, curse, and condemnation:

we are no longer under a schoolmaster; under the law as such; as no longer under it as a military guard, nor in it as a prison, so neither under it as a schoolmaster; not needing its instructions, or its discipline; since Christ is come as a prophet to teach and instruct, as a priest to atone for sin, and make intercession for transgressors, and as a King to rule and govern; in whose hands, and not in the hands of Moses, the law now is, as a rule of walk and conversation.

Ver. 26. *For ye are all the children of God*, etc..] Not by nature, as Christ is the Son of God, for he is the only begotten of the Father, and in such sense as neither angels nor men are the sons of God; nor by creation, as Adam and all mankind, and the angels are; but by divine adoption by an act of God's rich and sovereign grace, putting them among the children in saying this the apostle directs himself to the Gentiles for their comfort, and says this of them all in a judgment of charity, they being under a profession of faith; lest they should think, because they were not Abraham's seed according to the flesh, nor were ever trained up under the law as a schoolmaster, that they were not the children of God: whereas they were such not by the law, as none indeed are,

but by faith in Christ Jesus; not that faith makes any the children of God, or puts them into such a relation; no, that is God's own act and deed; of his free rich grace and goodness, God the Father has predestinated his chosen ones to the adoption of children, and has secured and laid up this blessing for them in the covenant of grace; Christ by redemption has made way for their reception and enjoyment of it; the Spirit of God, in consequence of their sonship, as a spirit of adoption bears strong reason and argument, proving that they are not under the law as a schoolmaster, in which light it is here set by the apostle; since they are sons and not servants, and so free from the bondage of the law; they are sons grown up into the faith of Christ, and are led and taught by the Spirit of God, as they are that are the children of God by faith; and as is promised to the saints under the Gospel, that they shall be "all taught of God"; and therefore stood in no need of the law as a schoolmaster, which only was concerned with the Jews, whilst they were children under age; and has nothing to do with such, whether Jews or Gentiles, who believe in Christ, and are growing up into him their head, till they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of him.

Ver. 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ*, etc..] Not that it is to be imagined that these churches of Galatia, or any of the

primitive churches, consisted of baptized and unbaptized persons; for this would be acting contrary to the commission of Christ and the order of the Gospel: but this way of speaking supposes that there might be some of them, who though baptized in water, yet not into Christ; and that those who are truly and rightly baptized, who are proper subjects of it, and to whom it is administered in a proper manner, are baptized into Christ: not that by baptism they are brought into union with Christ, but into communion with him; for they are not merely baptized in his name, and by his authority, and according to his command, and into his doctrine, and a profession of him; but into a participation of the blessings of grace which are in him, and come through his sufferings and death; for they that are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death and resurrection from the dead; they are led by faith to behold the cleansing of their souls, and the remission of their sins by his blood, and their justification by his righteousness; how he was delivered for their offences, died for their sins, was buried in the grave, and their iniquities with him, and rose again for their justification; of all which, baptism, performed by immersion, is a lively emblem; and this is to be baptized into Christ, namely, being baptized believing in him, and calling on his name: and such

have put on Christ; both before and at baptism: before it they put him on as the Lord their righteousness; his righteousness is compared to a garment, is called the best robe, the wedding garment, fine linen, clean and white, the robe of righteousness, a garment down to the feet; this is imputed to the elect of God by the Father, through a gracious act of his, and what they are clothed and covered with by the Son, and is put upon them and applied unto them by the Spirit; and which faith receiving puts off its own rags of righteousness, and makes use of this as its proper dress to appear in before the most High; and such through divine grace are enabled to put off the old man and put on the new; that is, walk in their outward lives and conversation, not according to the dictates of corrupt nature, but according to the principles of grace, of the new man formed in the soul, for righteousness and holiness, and in imitation of Christ; having him for an example, and desiring to walk as he walked; which is another sense of putting on Christ, namely, a following of him in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; (see ^{<534}Romans 13:14) and such persons, as they are the proper subjects of baptism, who have believed in Christ for righteousness, and walk worthy of him; so in baptism they may also be said to put him on as they thereby and therein make a public profession of him, by deeds as

well as words, declaring him to be their Lord and King; and afresh exercise faith upon him, as their Saviour and Redeemer, and imitate and follow him in it, as their pattern; who himself submitted to it, leaving them an example that they should tread in his steps; which when they do, they may be said to put him on. The allusion is either to the putting off and putting on of clothes at baptism, which being performed by immersion, required such actions, which no other mode does; or, to the priests putting off their common clothes, and then bathing or dipping themselves in water, and, putting on the garments of the priesthood before they entered on their service; concerning which take the following rules prescribed by the Misnic doctors ^{f64};

“no man may enter the court for service, though clean, **l wbj yç d[**, “until he dips himself” five times, and washes his hands and feet ten times;”

for every time he immersed himself, he washed his hands and feet before and after: again,

“there is a vail of fine linen between him (the high priest) and the people; he puts off his clothes, **hl [l bj w dry**, “he goes down and dips himself, he comes up”, and wipes himself; then they bring him the golden garments, and “he puts them on”, and washes his hands and his feet; then they bring him the daily sacrifice, etc..”

and a little after,

“they bring him (the high priest on the day of atonement) to the house of Paryah, and in the holy place there was a vail of fine linen between him and the people; he washes his hands and his feet, and puts off his garments: R. Meir says, he puts off his garments, and then washes his hands and his feet; “he goes down and dips himself, he comes up again”, and wipes himself; then they bring him the white garments, and he puts them on, and washes his hands and his feet:”

all which may serve to illustrate this passage, and point out to us what the apostle alludes unto, as well as to observe to us the distinction the Jews made between the immersion of the whole body, and a washing of a part of it.

Ver. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek*, etc..] Not but that there were such in being; and in the churches of Christ, for the primitive churches consisted of both; but the meaning is, that there is no difference between them, the middle wall of partition being broken down, and that, in the business of justification and salvation, it signified nothing whether a man was a Jew or a Greek; he was never the better for being a circumcised Jew, nor never the worse for being an uncircumcised Gentile; both by nature are equally sinners, and stand in need of the justifying righteousness of Christ, and the regenerating grace of the Spirit. The Gospel was equally preached to both, and was made useful to some of the one and of the other; and who, believing in Christ, had a right to the same ordinances and privileges of the Gospel, and shared in the same blessings of grace.

There is neither bond nor free. There were such persons in the world then, and in the churches too; nor does the Gospel dissolve the civil and natural relations and obligations men are in and under to one another, it confirms and secures them; but the sense is, that God, in calling, justifying, and saving men, is no respecter of persons, as being high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, servants or masters: he calls, justifies, and saves men of every station and condition of life; and bond slaves and servants called by grace are Christ's free men, and have an equal right as those that are free to all the immunities of the Gospel: in some Heathen nations bond slaves and servants were not admitted, only freemen, to be present at the sacred service, and worship of their deities^{f65}; but the Gospel makes no such distinction of men in its doctrine, worship, and ordinances, which lie open to all ranks and orders of men:

there is neither male nor female; among the Heathens^{f66} also females were not admitted to some of their sacred rites and ceremonies; and among the Jews the males only were concerned in many things both of a civil and religious nature; no female might be heir to an inheritance with a male^{f67}; females had no share in the civil government, nor in the priesthood; males were to appear three times a year before the Lord, and, according to their oral law, women and servants were exempted^{f68}; the mark of circumcision, the sign of the covenant made with Abraham and his natural seed, was only upon the males; but now under the Gospel dispensation there is no distinction made between male and female as to divine things; as they are alike called by the grace of God, they have the same right to Gospel ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper, and to every spiritual privilege. The apostle's design is to show the common right of believers, of every

nation, condition, and sex, and to encourage the Gentiles, and demolish the pride, vanity, and boasting of the Jews, their men especially, who valued themselves upon these “three” very things which the apostle here makes no account of; as that they were Israelites and not Gentiles, freemen and not servants, men and not women; and in their public prayers they give thanks to God in this form,

“blessed be the Lord our God, the King of the world, that he hath made me an Israelite; blessed be the Lord, etc.. who hath not made me a Gentile; blessed be the Lord, etc.. who hath not made me a “servant”; blessed be the Lord, etc.. who hath not made me a “woman”;

instead of which last the woman say,

“blessed be the Lord, etc.. who hath made me as he pleased ^{f69}.”

for ye are all one in Christ Jesus; being alike chosen in him, united to him, redeemed by his blood, justified by his righteousness, regenerated by his Spirit, the children of God by faith in him, and heirs of the same grace and glory, they make, both Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, male and female, as it were but one new man in him; one body, of which he is the head, one spiritual seed of Abraham and of Christ.

Ver. 29. *For if ye be Christ's*, etc.] Or seeing ye are his, not by creation only, but by the Father's gift to him, by the purchase of his own blood, by the power of his grace, making them willing to give up themselves to him; not only his by profession, saying they are the Lord's, calling themselves by his name; but by possession, Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, and they having his Spirit as a spirit of regeneration and adoption:

then are ye Abraham's seed; not his natural but his spiritual seed, the seed that should come, and to whom the promises were made, (^{816}Galatians 3:16,19) and so were upon an equal foot even with the Jews that believed:

and heirs according to the promise; being the children of God, they are heirs of God; and being the spiritual children of Abraham, the children of the promise, which are counted for the seed, they are, according to the promise made to Abraham and his spiritual seed, heirs of the blessings of the grace of life, and of the eternal inheritance; of the blessing of justification of life, and of everlasting salvation; of this world and of the world to come; of all the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, and of

the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of the saints in light; to which they are begotten through the abundant mercy of God, for which they are made meet by the grace of Christ; and to which they have a right by his justifying righteousness.