

CHAPTER III.

REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE, TO THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM.

THE two chapters of Galatians that we have already studied give us sufficient idea of the entire book, so that we can practically take leave of the Galatian brethren, and consider it as addressed solely to us. The circumstances that called forth the writing of the epistle were that the Galatians, having accepted the Gospel, were led astray by false teachers, who presented to them "another gospel," that is, a counterfeit gospel, since there is but one for all time and for all men. The way it was presented to them was, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye can not be saved." Outward circumcision was given as a sign of righteousness which the individual already possessed by faith. Rom. 4:11. It was a sign that the law was written in the heart by the Spirit, and it was, therefore, only a mockery and a sham when the law was transgressed. Rom. 2:25-29. But for one to be circumcised in order to be saved, was to put his trust in works of his own and not in Christ. Now, although there is in these days no question as to whether or not a man should submit to the specific rite of circumcision in order to be saved, the question of salvation itself, whether by human works or by Christ alone, is as alive as ever. {96}

Instead of attacking their error, and combating it with hard argument, the apostle begins with experience, the relation of which illustrates the case in hand. In this narrative he has occasion to show that salvation is wholly by faith, for all men alike, and not in any degree by works. As Christ tasted death for every man, so every man who is saved must have Christ's personal experience of death and resurrection and life. Christ in the flesh does what the law could not do. Gal. 2:21; Rom. 8:3, 4. But that very fact witnesses to the righteousness of the law. If the law were at fault, Christ would not fulfil its demands. He shows its righteousness by fulfilling, or doing, what it demands, not simply for us, but in us. The grace of God in Christ attests the majesty and holiness of the law. We do not frustrate the grace of God; if righteousness could come by the law, then would Christ be dead in vain. But to claim that the law could be abolished, or could relax its claims, and thus be of no account, is also to say that Christ is dead in vain. Let it be repeated, righteousness can not possibly come by the law, but only by the faith of Christ; but the fact that the righteousness of the law could be attained in no other way by us than by the crucifixion and resurrection and life of Christ in us, shows the infinite greatness and holiness of the law.

"O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hear- {97} ing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye

now perfected in the flesh? Did ye suffer so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain. He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know therefore that they which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident; for, The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men, Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, {98} as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise; but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise. What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law. Howbeit the Scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

"But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." Galatians 3, R.V. {99}

The Sin of Witchcraft.

The apostle asks those who are departing from God and His truth, "Who hath bewitched you?" "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1

Sam. 15:22, 23. If you look up this text in the Bible, you will see that in both instances the words "is as" are added. The literal Hebrew is, "Rebellion is the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry." And how so?—Plainly enough, for stubbornness and rebellion are rejection of God; and he who rejects God, puts himself under the control of evil spirits. All idolatry is devil-worship. "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils." 1 Cor. 10:20. There is no middle ground. Christ says, "He that is not with Me is against Me." Matt. 12:30. That is, disobedience, rejection of the Lord, is the spirit of antichrist. The Galatian brethren were, as we have already seen, departing from God, and consequently they were inevitably, although perhaps unconsciously, relapsing into idolatry.

The Safeguard against Spiritualism.

Spiritualism is only another name for ancient witchcraft and soothsaying. It is a fraud, but not the kind of fraud that most people think it is. There is reality in it. It is a fraud in that while it professes to receive communications from the spirits of the dead, it has communication only with the spirits of devils, since "the dead know {100} not anything." To be a Spiritualist medium is to give one's self to the control of demons. Now there is only one protection against this, and that is to hold fast to the Word of God. He who lightly regards God's Word, severs himself from association with God, and puts himself within Satan's influence. Even though a man denounce Spiritualism in the strongest terms, if he does not hold to God's Word, he will sooner or later be carried away by the strong delusion. Only by keeping the Word of Christ's patience can men be kept from the temptation that is coming on all the world. Rev. 3:10. "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), is the spirit of Satan, the spirit of antichrist; and the Gospel of Christ, which reveals the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16, 17), is the only possible salvation from it.

Christ Crucified before Us.

"Who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?" Jesus was set forth before the Galatians, when Paul preached to them, as openly crucified before their eyes. So vivid was the presentation, that they could actually see Christ crucified. It was not skillful word-painting on the part of Paul, nor imagination on the part of the Galatians, for then it would have been only deception. No; it was an actual fact; Christ was there, crucified, before their eyes, and Paul by the Spirit enabled them to see Him. We know that it was not Paul's skill in making beautiful word pictures that enabled them to fancy that they saw the crucifixion, for elsewhere Paul says that he deter- {101} mined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that he purposely and carefully refrained from using the wisdom of words, for fear that he should make the cross of Christ without effect. 1 Cor. 1:17, 18; 2:1-4. The experience of the Galatians in this matter was not peculiar to them. The cross of Christ is a present thing. The expression, "Come to the cross," is not an empty form of words, but an invitation that can be literally complied with. Christ is crucified before us, and each blade of grass, each leaf in the forest, reveals the fact. Yea, we have the testimony in

our own bodies, in that, although sinful and corruptible, we yet live. Not until one has seen Christ crucified before his eyes, and can see the cross of Christ at every turn, does one know the reality of the Gospel. Let those scoff who will; the fact that a blind man can not see the sun, and denies that it shines, will not deter one who sees it from talking of its glory. Many there are who can testify that it is something more than a figure of speech, when the apostle says that Christ was crucified before the eyes of the Galatians. They have had the experience. God grant that this study of Galatians, before it is finished, may be the means of opening the eyes of many more, so that they may see Christ crucified before their eyes, and know Him crucified in them and for them.

A Good Beginning.

The question, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" admits of but one answer. It was by the hearing of faith. The Spirit is given to those who believe. John 7:39; {102} Eph. 1:13. The question also shows that the Galatians had received the Holy Spirit. There is no other way of beginning the Christian life. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. 12:3. In the beginning the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, begetting life and activity in the creation; for without the Spirit there is no motion—no life. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zech. 4:6. The Spirit of God alone can carry out the perfect will of God, and no works that a man can do can bring Him into the soul, any more than a dead man can manufacture the breath by which he can be made to live and move. Those to whom Paul addressed this Epistle had seen Christ crucified before their eyes, and had accepted Him through the Spirit. Have you also seen and accepted Him?

Hold Fast the Beginning.

"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?" Foolish is but a feeble term for it. The man who has not power to begin a work, has strength to finish it! He who has not strength to put one foot before the other, or even to stand alone, has strength enough in himself to win a race! Impossible. Who has power to beget himself? No one; we come into this world without having begotten ourselves; we are born without strength; and, therefore, all the strength that ever manifests itself in us, comes from another than ourselves. It is all given to us. The new-born babe is the representative of man. "A man is born into the world." All the strength that any man has {103} of himself is found in the infant as it utters its first cry with its first breath. And even that feeble strength is not of itself. Even so in things spiritual. "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth." James 1:18. We can no more live righteous lives by our own strength than we could beget ourselves. The work that is begun by the Spirit, must be carried to completion by the Spirit. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Heb. 3:14. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6. And He alone can do it.

Experience in the Gospel.

"Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" These questions show that the experience of the Galatian brethren had been as deep and as real as would be expected from those before whose eyes Christ was openly crucified. The Spirit had been given to them, miracles had been wrought among them, and even by them, for the gifts of the Spirit accompany the gift of the Spirit; and as the result of this living Gospel among them, they had suffered persecution; for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3:12. This makes the case the more serious. Having shared the sufferings of Christ, they were now departing from Him; and this departure from Christ, through whom alone righteousness can come, was {104} marked by disobedience to the law of truth. They were insensibly but inevitably transgressing the law to which they were looking for salvation.

Abraham Believed God.

The questions asked in verses 3, 4, and 5 suggest their own answer. The Spirit was ministered, and miracles were wrought, not by works of law, but by "the hearing of faith," that is, by the obedience of faith, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Rom. 10:17. Thus Paul's labor, and the first experience of the Galatians, were exactly in line with the experience of Abraham, whose faith was accounted for righteousness. Let it be remembered that the "false brethren" who preached "another gospel," even the false gospel of righteousness by works, were Jews, and claimed Abraham for their father. It would be their boast that they were children of Abraham, and they would appeal to their circumcision as proof of the fact. But the very thing upon which they relied as proving them to be children of Abraham, was proof that they were not; for "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Abraham had the righteousness of faith before he was circumcised. Rom. 4:11. "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Abraham was not justified by works (Rom. 4:2, 3), but his faith "wrought righteousness."

The same trouble still exists. People take the sign for the substance, the end for the means. They see that righteousness reveals itself in good works; therefore, they assume that the good works bring the {105} righteousness. Righteousness gained by trusting, good works wrought without working, seem to them impractical and fanciful. They call themselves "practical" men, and believe that the only way to have a thing done is to do it. But the truth is that all such men are highly impractical. A man absolutely "without strength" can not do anything, not even so much as raise himself up to take the medicine that is offered him; and any counsel for him to try to do it would be impractical. Only in the Lord is there righteousness and strength. Isa. 45:24. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light." Ps.

37:5, 6. Abraham is the father of all who believe for righteousness, and of those only. The only practical thing is to trust, even as he did.

The Gospel to the Gentiles.

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham." This verse will bear much reading. An understanding of it will guard one against many errors. And it is not difficult to understand; simply hold to what it says, and you have it.

(a) For one thing, the verse shows us that the Gospel was preached at least as early as the days of Abraham.

(b) It was God Himself who preached it; therefore, it was the true and only Gospel.

(c) It was the same Gospel that Paul preached; so {106} that we have no other Gospel than that which Abraham had.

(d) The Gospel differs in no particular now from what it was in Abraham's day; for his day was the day of Christ. John 8:56.

God requires just the same things now that He required then, and nothing more.

Moreover, the Gospel was then preached to the Gentiles, for Abraham was a Gentile, or, in other words, a heathen. He was brought up as a heathen, for "Terah, the father of Abraham," "served other gods" (Josh. 24:2), and was a heathen till the Gospel was preached to him. So the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles was no new thing in the days of Peter and Paul. The Jewish nation was taken out from among the heathen, and it is only by the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen that Israel is built up and saved. See Acts 15:14-18; Rom. 11:25, 26. The very existence of the people Israel always was and still is a standing proof that God's purpose is to save a people from among the Gentiles. It is in fulfillment of this purpose that Israel exists.

Thus we see that the apostle takes the Galatians, and us, back to the fountain-head,—to the place where God Himself preaches the Gospel to us Gentiles. No Gentile can hope to be saved in any other way or by any other gospel than that by which Abraham was saved.

Blessed with Abraham.

"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Mark the close connection between this and the preceding verse. The Gospel was {107} preached to Abraham in the words, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." (It should be remembered, in passing, that the words "heathen," or "Gentiles," as in the Revised Version, and "nations," in verse 8, come from the very same Greek word.) This blessing is the blessing of righteousness through Christ, as we learn from Acts 3:25, 26: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Because God preached the Gospel to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," those who believe are blessed with the faithful Abraham. There is no blessing for

any man except the blessing which Abraham received, and the Gospel preached to him is the only Gospel there is for any people under heaven; for besides the name of Jesus, in whom Abraham believed, "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." In Him "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1:14. The forgiveness of sins carries with it all blessings.

A Contrast: Under the Curse.

Note the sharp contrast in verses 9 and 10. "They which be of faith are blessed," but "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Faith brings the blessing; works bring the curse, or, rather, leave one under the curse. The curse is on all, for "he that believeth not is con- {108} demned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." John 3:18. Faith removes the curse.

Who are under the curse?—"As many as are of the works of the law." Note that it does not say that those who do the law are under the curse, for that would be a contradiction of Rev. 22:14: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Ps. 119:1.

So, then, they that are of faith are keepers of the law; for they that are of faith are blessed, and those who do the commandments are blessed. By faith they do the commandments. The Gospel is contrary to human nature, and so it is that we become doers of the law, not by doing, but by believing. If we worked for righteousness, we should be exercising only our own sinful human nature, and so would get no nearer to righteousness, but farther from it; but by believing the "exceeding great and precious promises," we become partakers of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), and then all our works are wrought in God. "The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore?—Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that {109} stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a Stumbling-stone and Rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." Rom. 9:30-33.

What the Curse Is.

No one can read Gal. 3:10 carefully and thoughtfully without seeing that the curse is transgression of the law. Disobedience to God's law is itself the curse; for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Rom. 5:12. Sin has death wrapped up in it. Without sin death would be impossible, for "the sting of death is sin." 1 Cor. 15:56. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Why? Is it because the law is a curse?—Not by any means. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Rom. 7:12. Why, then, are as many as are of the works of the law under the curse?—Because it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Mark it well: They are not cursed because they do the

law, but because they do not do it. So, then, we see that being of the works of the law does not mean that one is doing the law. No; "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. All are under the curse, and he who thinks to get out by his own works, remains there. The curse consists in not continuing in all things that are written in the law; therefore, the blessing means perfect conformity to the law. This is as plain as language can make it. {110}

Blessing and Cursing.

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God." Deut. 11:26-28. This is the living word of God, addressed to each one of us personally. "The law worketh wrath" (Rom. 4:15), but the wrath of God comes only on the children of disobedience (Eph. 5:6). If we truly believe, we are not condemned, but only because faith brings us into harmony with the law—the life of God. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." James 1:25.

Good Works.

The Bible does not disparage good works. On the contrary, it exalts them. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable." Titus 3:8. The charge against the unbelieving is that they are "unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1:16. Timothy was exhorted to "charge them that are rich in this world," "that they do good, that they be rich in good works." 1 Tim. 6:17, 18. And the apostle Paul prayed for us all, that we might "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work." Col. 1:10. Still further, we are assured that God has {111} created us in Christ Jesus "unto good works," "that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10.

He has Himself prepared these works for us, wrought them out, and laid them up for all who trust in Him. Ps. 31:19. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." John 6:29. Good works are commended, but we can not do them. They can be performed only by the One who is good, and that is God. If there be ever any good in us, it is God who worketh in us. There is no disparagement of anything that He does. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Heb. 13:20, 21.

Who Are the Just?

When we read the frequent statement, "The just shall live by faith," it is necessary to have a clear idea of what the word "just" means. If we read the same text in the Revised

Version, we shall learn. It has it, "The righteous shall live by faith." To be justified by faith is to be made righteous by faith. "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17), and "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Therefore, all unrighteousness is transgression of the law, and of course all righteousness is obedience to the law. So we see that the just, or righteous, man is the man who obeys the law, and to be justified is to be made a keeper of the law. {112}

How to Become Just.

Righteousness is the end to be obtained, and the law of God is the standard. "The law worketh wrath," because "all have sinned," and "the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." How shall we become doers of the law, and thus escape wrath, or the curse? The answer is, "The righteous shall live by faith." By faith, not by works, we become doers of the law. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Rom. 10:10. That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident. From what does it appear?—From this, —that "the just shall live by faith." If righteousness came by works, then it would not be by faith; "if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." Rom. 11:6. "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. 4:4, 5. There is no exception, no half-way working. It is not said that some of the just shall live by faith, or that they shall live by faith and works, but, simply, "the just shall live by faith," and that proves that it is not by their own works. All of the just are made and kept just by faith alone. This is because the law is so holy. It is greater than can be done by man; only Divine power can accomplish it; so by faith we receive the Lord Jesus, and He lives the perfect law in us.

The Law Not of Faith.

"The law is not of faith." Of course it is the written law, no matter whether in a book or on tables of stone, that is here referred to. That law simply {113} says, "Do this," or, "Do not do that." "The man that doeth them shall live in them." That is the sole condition on which the written law offers life. Works, and works only, commend themselves to it. How those works are obtained is of no consequence to it, provided they are present. But none have done the requirements of the law, and so there can be no doers of the law, that is, none who in their own lives can present a record of perfect obedience.

Life Is Action.

"The man that doeth them shall live in them." But one must be alive in order to do. A dead man can do nothing, and he who is "dead in trespasses and sins" can do no righteousness. Christ is the only one in whom there is life, for He is the life, and He alone has done and can do the righteousness of the law. When, instead of being denied and repressed, He is acknowledged and received, He lives in us all the fullness of His life, so that it is no more we but Christ living in us, and then His obedience in us makes us righteous.

Our faith is counted for righteousness, simply because our faith appropriates the living Christ. In trust we yield our bodies as temples of God; Christ, the Living Stone, is enshrined in the heart, which becomes God's throne, and so the living law is our life; for out of the heart are the issues of life.

The Real Question at Issue.

Let the reader pay particular attention to the fact that there is in this epistle no controversy over the law, as to whether or not it should be obeyed. No one had claimed that the law was {114} abolished, or changed, or had lost its force. The epistle contains no hint of any such thing. The question was not if the law should be kept, but how it was to be kept. Justification—being made righteous—was admitted to be a necessity; the question was, Is it by faith, or by works? The false brethren were persuading the Galatians that they must be made righteous by their own efforts; Paul was by the Spirit showing that all such attempts were useless, and could result only in fastening more firmly the curse upon the sinner. Righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ is set forth to all men in all time as the only real righteousness. The false teachers made their boast in the law, but through breaking it caused the name of God to be blasphemed. Paul made his boast in Christ, and by the righteousness of the law, to which he thus submitted, caused the name of God to be glorified in him.

The Sting of Sin.

That death is the curse is evident from the last part of verse 13, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ was made a curse for us, in that He hung on a tree, that is, was crucified. But sin is the cause of death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. "The sting of death is sin." 1 Cor. 15:56. So we have the substance of verse 10 thus, that those who do not continue in the things written in the law are dead. That is, disobedience is death. And this is what the Scripture says: "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth {115} forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Sin contains death, and men out of Christ are "dead in trespasses and sins." It matters not that they walk about seemingly full of life, the words of Christ are, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." John 6:53. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Tim. 5:6. It is a living death—a body of death—that is endured. Rom. 7:24. Sin is the transgression of the law; the wages of sin is death. The curse, therefore, is the death that is carried about concealed even in the most attractive sin. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Redemption from the Curse.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." Let us stop right here and contemplate this fact, leaving the way of redemption for later consideration. We need to consider the statement very carefully, for some who read it straightway rush off frantically exclaiming, "We don't need to keep the law, because Christ has redeemed us from the curse

of it," as though the text said that Christ redeemed us from the curse of obedience. Such read the Scriptures to no profit. The curse, as we have seen it, is disobedience. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Therefore, Christ has redeemed us from disobedience to the law. God sent forth His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and {116} for sin, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Rom. 8:4.

Some one may lightly say, "Then we are all right; whatever we do is right so far as the law is concerned, since we are redeemed." It is true that all are redeemed, but not all have accepted redemption. Many say of Christ, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," and thrust the blessing of God from them. But redemption is for all; all have been purchased with the precious blood—the life—of Christ, and all may be, if they will, free from sin and death. By that blood we are redeemed from our "vain manner of life." 1 Peter 1:18, R.V.

Stop and think what this means; let the full force of the announcement impress itself upon your consciousness. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,"—from not continuing in all its righteous requirements. We need not sin any more. He has snapped asunder the cords of sin that bound us, so that we have but to accept His salvation in order to be free from every besetting sin. It is not necessary for us any longer to spend our lives in earnest longings for a better life, and in vain regrets for desires unrealized. Christ raises no false hopes, but He comes to the captives of sin, and cries to them, "Liberty! Your prison doors are open. Go forth." What more can be said? Christ has gained the complete victory over "this present evil world," over "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," and our faith in Him makes His victory ours. We have but to accept it. {117}

Christ Made a Curse for Us.

That "Christ died for the ungodly" is evident to all who read the Bible. He "was delivered for our offenses." Rom. 4:25. The Innocent suffered for the guilty; the Just for the unjust. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:5, 6. But death came by sin. Death is the curse that has passed upon all men, simply because "all have sinned." So, as Christ was "made a curse for us," it follows that Christ was "made to be sin on our behalf." 2 Cor. 5:21, R.V. He bore "our sins in His own body" up to the tree. 1 Peter 2:24, margin. Note that our sins were "in His body." It was no superficial work that He undertook. The sins were not merely figuratively laid on Him, but they were actually in Him. He was made a curse for us, made to be sin for us, and consequently suffered death for us.

To some this truth seems repugnant; to the Greeks it is foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block, but "to us who are saved, it is the power of God." For bear in mind that it was our sins that He bore in His own body—not His own sins. The same scripture that tells us that He was made to be sin for us, assures us that He "knew no sin." The same text that

tells us that He carried our sins "in His own body," is careful to let us know that He {118} "did no sin." The fact that He could carry our sin about with Him, and in Him, being actually made to be sin for us, and yet not do any sin, is to His everlasting glory and our eternal salvation from sin. All the sins of all men were on Him, yet no person ever discovered the trace of sin upon Him. No sin was ever manifested in His life, although He took all sin upon Himself. He received it and swallowed it up by the power of the endless life in which He swallows up death. He can bear sin, and yet be untainted by it. It is by this marvelous life that He redeems us. He gives us His life, so that we may be freed from every taint of the sin that is in our flesh.

Christ, "in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death," "was heard in that He feared." Heb. 5:7. But He died! Yes; but no one took His life from Him; He laid it down, that He might take it again. John 10:17, 18. The pangs of death were loosed, "because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." Acts 2:24. Why was it not possible for death to hold Him, even though He voluntarily put Himself in its power?—Because He "knew no sin;" He took sin upon Himself, but was saved from its power. He was "in all things" "made like unto His brethren," "in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. 2:17; 4:15), and since He could of Himself do nothing (John 5:30), He prayed to the Father to keep Him from being overcome and thereby falling under the power of death. And He was heard. In His case these words were fulfilled: "The Lord God will help {119} Me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth Me; who will contend with Me?" Isa. 50:7, 8.

Whose sin was it that thus oppressed Him, and from which He was delivered?—Not His own, for He had none. It was your sin and mine. Our sins have already been overcome—vanquished. We have to fight only with an already defeated foe. When you come to God "in the name of Jesus," having surrendered yourself to His death and life, so that you do not bear His name in vain, because Christ liveth in you, you have only to remember that every sin was on Him, and is still on Him, and that He is the conqueror, and straightway you will say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place." 2 Cor. 2:14.

The Revelation of the Cross.

In Gal. 3:13 we are brought back to the subject presented in Gal. 2:20 and 3:1,—the ever-present cross. The subject is inexhaustible, but the following few facts may serve to open it up to our minds:—

1. The redemption from sin and death is accomplished through the cross. Gal. 3:13.
2. The Gospel is all contained in the cross; for the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), and "unto us which {120} are saved" the cross of Christ "is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

THE GLAD TIDINGS — GALATIANS, CHAPTER THREE.

3. Christ is revealed to fallen men only as the Crucified and risen One. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby salvation may be obtained (Acts 4:12), and, therefore, it is all that God sets forth before men, since He does not wish to confuse them. "Christ and Him crucified," is all that Paul wished to know; it is all that any man needs to know. Thus the one thing that men need is salvation; if they get that, they get all things; but salvation is found only in the cross of Christ; therefore, God puts before the eyes of men nothing else: He gives them just what they need. Jesus Christ is by God set forth openly crucified before the eyes of every man, so that there is no excuse for any to be lost, or to continue in sin.

4. Christ is set forth before men only as the crucified Redeemer; and since that from which men need to be saved is the curse, He is set forth as bearing the curse. Wherever there is any curse, there is Christ bearing it. We have already seen that Christ bore, and still bears, our curse, in that He bears our sin. He also bears the curse of the earth itself, for He bore the crown of thorns, and the curse pronounced on the earth was, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth." Gen. 3:18. So the whole creation, which now groans under the curse, has been redeemed through the cross of Christ. Rom. 8:19-23.

5. It is only on the cross that Christ bears the curse, for His being made a curse for us was indicated by {121} His hanging on the cross. The cross is the symbol of the curse, but also of deliverance from the curse, since it is the cross of Christ, the Conqueror and Deliverer. The very curse itself, therefore, presents the cross, and proclaims our deliverance.

6. Where is the curse? Ah, where is it not? The blindest can see it, if he will but acknowledge the evidence of his own senses. Imperfection is a curse, yea, that is the curse; and imperfection is on everything connected with this earth. Man is imperfect, and even the finest plant that grows from the earth is not as perfect as it might be. There is nothing that meets the eye that does not show the possibility of improvement, even if our untrained eyes can not see the absolute necessity of it. When God made the earth, everything was "very good," or, as the Hebrew idiom has it, "good exceedingly." God Himself could see no chance, no possibility, for improvement. But now it is different. The gardener spends his thought and labor trying to improve the fruits and flowers under his care. And since the best that the earth produces reveals the curse, what need be said of the gnarled, stunted growths, the withered and blasted buds and leaves and fruits, and the noxious, poisonous weeds? Everywhere "hath the curse devoured the earth." Isa. 24:6.

7. What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? Is it discouragement? Nay; "for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:9. Although the curse is visible everywhere,—

"Change and decay in all around I see,"— {122}

yet things live, and men live. But the curse is death, and no man and no thing in creation can bear death and still live. Death kills. But Christ is He that liveth, and was dead, and is alive forevermore. Rev. 1:18. He alone can bear the curse—death—and still live. Therefore, the

fact that there is life on the earth and in man, in spite of the curse, is proof that the cross of Christ is everywhere. Every blade of grass, every leaf of the forest, every shrub and tree, every flower and fruit, even the bread that we eat, is stamped with the cross of Christ. In our own bodies is Christ crucified. Everywhere is that cross; and as the preaching of the cross is the power of God, which is the Gospel, so it is that the everlasting power of God is revealed in all things that He has made. That is "the power that worketh in us." Eph. 3:20. Rom. 1:16-20, compared with 1 Cor. 1:17, 18, amounts to a plain declaration that the cross of Christ is seen in all the things that God has made—even in our own bodies.

Courage from Despair.

"Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me." Ps. 40:12. But not only may we with confidence cry unto God out of the depths, but God in His infinite mercy has so ordered it that the very depths themselves are a source of confidence. The fact that we are in the depths of sin, and yet live, is proof that God Himself, in the person of Christ on the cross, is present with us to deliver us. So every- {123} thing, even the curse, for everything is under the curse, preaches the Gospel. Our own weakness and sinfulness, instead of being a cause of discouragement, are, if we believe the Lord, a pledge of redemption. Out of weakness we are made strong. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Rom. 8:37. Truly, God has not left Himself without witness among men. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John 5:10.

The Blessing from the Curse.

Christ bore the curse, in order that the blessing might come to us. He bears the curse now, being crucified before us, and in us, and we with Him, that we may continually experience the blessing. Death to Him is life to us. If we willingly bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, the life also of Jesus will be manifested in our mortal flesh. 2 Cor. 4:10, 11. He was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor. 5:21. What is the blessing that we receive through the curse that He bears? It is the blessing of salvation from sin; for as the curse is the transgression of the law (Gal. 3:10), the blessing consists in turning away every one of us from our iniquities (Acts 3:26). Christ suffered the curse, even sin and death, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." And what is the blessing of Abraham? The writer of this Epistle, having stated that Abraham was made righteous by faith, adds: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, {124} unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Rom. 4:6-8. And then he shows that this blessing comes on the Gentiles as well as on the Jews who believe, because Abraham received it when he was uncircumcised, "that he might be the father of all them that believe." The blessing is freedom from sin, even as the curse is the

doing of sin; and as the curse reveals the cross, so we find that the very curse is by the Lord made to proclaim the blessing. The fact that we live, although we are sinners, is the assurance that deliverance from the sin is ours. "While there's life there's hope," says the adage. Yes, because the Life is our hope. Thank God for the blessed hope! The blessing has come upon all men; for "as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. 5:18. God, who is "no respecter of persons," "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3. It is ours to keep. If any one has not this blessing, it is because he has not recognized the gift, or has deliberately thrown it away.

A Finished Work.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,"—from sin and death. This He has done by "being made a curse for us," and so we are freed from all necessity of sinning. Sin can have no dominion {125} over us if we accept Christ in truth, and without reserve. This was just as much a present truth in the days of Abraham, Moses, David, and Isaiah, as it is to-day. More than seven hundred years before the cross was raised on Calvary, Isaiah, who testified of the things which he understood, because his own sin had been purged by a live coal from God's altar, said: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. . . . The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:4-6. "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee." Isa. 44:22. Long before Isaiah's time, David wrote: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Ps. 103:10, 12.

"We which have believed do enter into rest," because "the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Heb. 4:3. The blessing that we received is "the blessing of Abraham." We have no other foundation than that of the apostles and prophets. Eph. 2:20. It is a full and complete salvation that God has provided; it awaits us as we come into the world; and we do not relieve God of any burden by rejecting it, nor do we add to His labor by accepting it. {126}

"The Promise of the Spirit."

Christ hath redeemed us, "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Do not make the mistake of reading this as though it were "that we might receive the promise of the gift of the Spirit." It does not say that, and it does not mean that, as a little thought will show. Christ has redeemed us, and that fact proves the gift of the Spirit, for it was only "through the eternal Spirit" that He offered Himself without spot to God. Heb. 9:14. But for the Spirit, we should not know that we were sinners; much less should we know redemption. The Spirit convinces of sin and of righteousness. John 16:8. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." 1 John 5:6. "He that believeth hath

the witness in himself." Christ is crucified in every man; that, as we have already seen, is shown in the fact that we are all under the curse, and Christ alone, on the cross, bears the curse. But it is through the Spirit that Christ dwells on earth among men. Faith enables us to receive the testimony of this witness, and rejoice in that which the possession of the Spirit assures.

Note further: The blessing of Abraham comes on us, in order that we may receive the promise of the Spirit. But it is only through the Spirit that the blessing comes; therefore, the blessing can not bring to us the promise that we shall receive the Spirit. We already have the Spirit with the blessing. But, having the blessing of the Spirit, namely, righteousness, we are sure of receiving that which the Spirit promises to the righteous, namely, an everlasting {127} inheritance. In blessing Abraham God promised him an inheritance. The expression, "the promise of the Spirit," is used, as is plainly to be seen, in the same sense as "the promise of God," "the gift of God;" that is, the promise or the gift which God bestows. The Spirit is the pledge of all good.

The Spirit the Pledge of Inheritance.

All God's gifts are in themselves promises of more. There is always much more to follow. God's purpose in the Gospel is to gather together in one all things in Jesus Christ, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that [or when] ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Eph. 1:10-14.

Of this inheritance we must speak further later on. Suffice it now to say that it is the inheritance promised to Abraham, whose children we become by faith. The inheritance belongs to all who are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus; and the Spirit that marks our sonship is the promise, the pledge, the first-fruits of that inheritance. Those who accept Christ's glorious deliverance from the curse of the law,—redemption not from obedience to the law, for obedience is not a curse, but from disobedience to the {128} law,—have in the Spirit a taste of the power and the blessing of the world to come.

The Promise Was Made to Abraham.

It will be seen that Abraham is the one about whom this chapter centers. He is the one to whom the Gospel of world-wide salvation was preached. He believed, and received the blessing, even the blessing of righteousness. All who believe are blessed with believing Abraham. They who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse, in order that the blessing of Abraham might come on us. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made." "If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Thus it is clear that the promise to us is the promise that was made to Abraham,—the promise of an inheritance,—and in

which we share as his children. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse, that we might receive the inheritance of righteousness. Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God; because "He is the Mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death . . . they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Heb. 9:14, 15.

"And His Seed."

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one; and to thy Seed, which is Christ." There is {129} here no play upon words; the issue is a vital one. The controversy is over the way of salvation, whether it is by Christ alone, or by something else, or by Christ and something or somebody else. Many people imagine that it is by them,—that they must save themselves by making themselves good. Many others think that Christ is a valuable adjunct, a good assistant to their efforts; while others still are willing to give Him the first place, but not the only place. They regard themselves as good seconds. It is the Lord and they who do the work. But our text shuts off all this assumption and self-assertion. Not seeds, but the seed. Not many, but one. "And to thy Seed, which is Christ." Christ is the One.

Not Two Lines.

We hear much about the "spiritual seed" and the "literal seed" of Abraham. If that contrast meant anything at all, it would mean a fanciful seed as opposed to a real seed. The opposite of *spiritual* is *fleshly*, and the fleshly seed, as we shall see later on, is not the real seed, but only a bond-servant, to be cast out, having no share whatever in the inheritance. So there is no fleshly seed of Abraham. The spiritual seed, however, is a literal, or real, seed, even as Christ is "a quickening Spirit," and yet most real. It is possible for men walking about in the body, in this world, to be wholly spiritual, and such they must be, or else they are not children of Abraham. "They that are in the flesh can not please God." "Flesh and blood doth not inherit the kingdom of God." There is only one line of descendants from Abraham, only one set of real children, and they are those who are {130} of faith,—those who, by receiving Christ by faith, receive power to become sons of God.

Many Promises in One.

But while the Seed is singular, the promises are plural. It is not merely one specific promise that was made to Abraham and his Seed, but promises. God has nothing for any man that was not promised to Abraham; and all the promises of God are conveyed in Christ, in whom Abraham believed. "For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." 2 Cor. 1:20.

The Promised Inheritance.

That the thing promised, and the sum of all the promises, is an inheritance, is clearly seen from Gal. 3:15-18. The sixteenth verse has just been noted, and the seventeenth verse tells us that the law, coming in four hundred and thirty years after the promise was made and confirmed, can not make it of none effect; "for if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Verse 18. What this promised inheritance is may be seen by comparing the verse just quoted with Rom. 4:13: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." And so, although the heavens and the earth which are now are "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," when "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent {131} heat," we, "according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:7, 12, 13. This is the heavenly country for which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob looked.

An Inheritance without Curse.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse; . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." This "promise of the Spirit" we have seen to be the possession of the whole earth made new—redeemed from the curse; for "the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." The earth, fresh and new from the hand of God, perfect in every respect, was given to man for a possession. Gen. 1:27, 28, 31. Man sinned, and brought the curse upon himself. Christ has taken the whole curse, both of man and of all creation, upon Himself. He redeems the earth from the curse, that it may be the everlasting possession that God originally designed it to be, and He also redeems man from the curse, that he may be fitted for the possession of such an inheritance. This is the sum of the Gospel. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. This gift of eternal life is included in the promise of the inheritance, for God promised the land to Abraham and to his seed for "an everlasting possession." Gen. 17:7, 8. It is an inheritance of righteousness, because the promise that Abraham should be heir of the world was through the righteousness of faith. Righteousness, eternal life, and a place in which to live eternally,—these are all in the promise, and they {132} are all that could possibly be desired or given. To redeem man, but to give him no place in which to live, would be an incomplete work; the two things are parts of one whole, for the power by which we are redeemed is the power of creation,—the power by which the heavens and the earth are made new. When all is accomplished, "there shall be no more curse." Rev. 22:3.

The Covenants of Promise.

That the covenant and promise of God are one and the same thing, is clearly seen from Gal. 3:17, where it appears that to disannul the covenant would be to make void the promise. In Genesis 17 we read that God made a covenant with Abraham to give him the

land of Canaan—and with it the whole world—for an everlasting possession; but Gal. 3:18 says that God gave it to him by promise. God's covenants with men can be nothing else than promises to them: "Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." Rom. 11:35, 36. It is so rare for men to do anything without expecting an equivalent, that theologians have taken it for granted that it is the same with God. So they begin their dissertations on God's covenant with the statement that a covenant is "a mutual agreement between two or more persons, to do or refrain from doing certain things." But God does not make bargains with men, because He knows that they could not fulfil their part. After the flood God made a covenant with every beast of {133} the earth, and with every fowl; but the beasts and the birds did not promise anything in return. Gen. 9:9-16. They simply received the favor at the hand of God. That is all we can do. God promises us everything that we need, and more than we can ask or think, as a gift. We give Him ourselves, that is, nothing, and He gives us Himself, that is, everything. That which makes all the trouble is that even when men are willing to recognize the Lord at all, they want to make bargains with Him. They want it to be a "mutual" affair—a transaction in which they will be considered as on a par with God. But whoever deals with God must deal with Him on His own terms, that is, on a basis of fact—that we have nothing and are nothing, and He has everything and is everything, and gives everything.

The Covenant Confirmed.

The covenant, that is, the promise of God to give men the whole earth made new, after having made them free from the curse, was "confirmed before of God in Christ." He is the Surety of the new covenant, even the everlasting covenant. "For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." 2 Cor. 1:20, R.V. In Him we have obtained the inheritance (Eph. 1:11), for the Holy Spirit is the first-fruits of the inheritance, and the possession of the Holy Spirit is Christ Himself dwelling in the heart by faith. God blessed Abraham, saying, "In thy Seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," and this is fulfilled in Christ, {134} whom God has sent to bless us in turning us away from our iniquities. Acts 3:25, 26.

Confirmed by an Oath of God.

"When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself; . . . for men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Heb. 6:13-20. Compare Gen. 22:15-18.

It was the oath of God, therefore, that confirmed the covenant made to Abraham; that promise and oath to Abraham are our ground of hope, our strong consolation; they are "sure and steadfast," because the oath sets forth Christ as the pledge, the surety, and "He ever liveth." He upholds all things by the word of His power. Heb. 1:3. "In Him all things consist." Col. 1:17, R.V. Therefore, when God "interposed Himself by an oath," which is our consolation and hope in fleeing for refuge from sin, He pledged His own existence, and with it the entire universe, for our salvation. Surely a firm foundation for our hope is laid in His excellent Word. {135}

The Law Can Not Make the Covenant Void.

Do not forget as we proceed that the covenant and the promise are the same thing, and that it conveys land, even the whole earth made new, to Abraham and his seed; and remember also that, since only righteousness is to dwell in the new heavens and the new earth promised to Abraham and his seed, the promise includes the making righteous of all who believe. This is done in Christ, in whom the promise is confirmed. Now, "though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." Gal. 3:15. How much more must this be the case with God's covenant! Therefore, since perfect and everlasting righteousness was assured by the covenant made with Abraham, which was also confirmed in Christ, by the oath of God, it is impossible that the law, which was spoken four hundred and thirty years later, could introduce any new feature. The inheritance was given to Abraham by promise, but if after four hundred and thirty years it should transpire that now the inheritance must be gained in some other way, then the promise would be of no effect, and the covenant would be made void. But that would involve the overthrow of God's government, and the ending of His existence; for He pledged His own existence to give Abraham and his seed the inheritance and the righteousness necessary for it. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4:13. The Gospel was as full {136} and complete in the days of Abraham as it has ever been or ever will be. No addition to it, or change in its provisions or conditions, could possibly be made after God's oath to Abraham. Nothing can be taken away from it as it thus existed, and not one thing can ever be required from any man more than what was required of Abraham.

What Is the Use of the Law?

This is the question that the apostle Paul asks in verse 19, both for the purpose of anticipating the objections of the Antinomians, and also that he may the more emphatically show the place of the law in the Gospel. The question is a very natural one. Since the inheritance is wholly by promise, and a covenant confirmed can not be changed,—nothing can be taken from it, and nothing added to it,—why did the law come in four hundred and thirty years afterward? "Wherefore then serveth the law?" More literally, Why then the law? What business has it here? What part does it act? Of what use is it?

The Question Answered.

"It was added because of transgressions." Let it be understood that "the entering of the law" at Sinai was not the beginning of its existence. The law of God existed in the days of Abraham, and was kept by him. Gen. 26:5. God proved the children of Israel, as to whether they would keep His law or not, more than a month before the law was spoken upon Sinai. Ex. 16:1-4, 27, 28. {137}

"It Was Added."

The word here rendered "added" is the same as that rendered "spoken" in Heb. 12:19: "They that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more." It is the same word that occurs in the Septuagint rendering of Deut. 5:22, where we read that God spoke the ten commandments with a great voice; "and He added no more." So we may read the answer to the question, "Wherefore then the law?" thus: "It was spoken because of transgressions." It is the reprover of sin.

Because of Transgressions.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound." Rom. 5:20. In other words, "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Rom. 7:13. It was given under circumstances of the most awful majesty, as a warning to the children of Israel that by their unbelief they were in danger of losing the promised inheritance. They did not, like Abraham, believe the Lord; and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." But the inheritance was promised "through the righteousness of faith," and, therefore, the unbelieving Jews could not receive it. So the law was spoken to them, to convince them that they had not the righteousness that was necessary for the possession of the inheritance; for, although righteousness does not come by the law, it must be witnessed by the law. Rom. 3:21. In short, the law was given to show them that they had not faith, and so were not true children of Abraham, and were therefore in a fair way to lose {138} the inheritance. God would have put His law into their hearts, even as He put it into Abraham's heart, if they had believed; but when they disbelieved, yet still professed to be heirs of the promise, it was necessary to show them in the most marked manner that their unbelief was sin. The law was spoken because of transgression, or, what is the same thing, because of the unbelief of the people.

Self-Confidence Is Sin.

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." Hab. 2:4. The people of Israel were full of self-confidence and of unbelief in God, as is shown by their murmuring against God's leading, and by their assumption of ability to do anything that God required, or to fulfil His promises. They had the same spirit as their descendants, who asked, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" John 6:28. They were so ignorant of God's righteousness that they thought that they could establish their own righteousness as an equivalent. Rom. 10:3. Unless they saw their sin, they could not avail themselves of the promise. Hence, the necessity of the speaking of the law.

The Ministration of Angels.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" Heb. 1:14, R.V. Just what office the "thousands of angels" who were at Sinai had to perform, we can not know; but we do know {139} that they have a close and deep interest in everything that concerns man, although the preaching of the Gospel is necessarily not committed to them. When the foundations of the earth were laid, "all the sons of God shouted for joy;" and a multitude of the heavenly host sang praises when the birth of the Saviour of mankind was announced. They are attendants upon the King of kings, waiting to "do His pleasure, harkening unto the voice of His word." It would not be otherwise than that they should attend as a royal body-guard when the law was proclaimed, and, of course, they were not there merely for pomp and parade. Stephen said to the murderous Sanhedrim: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Acts 7:51-53. Of him who is now the adversary, the devil, it was said, "Thou sealest up the sum," measure, or pattern. Eze. 28:12. The French of Segond has it, "Thou putttest the seal to perfection," and the Danish, "Thou stampest the seal upon the fit ordinance," indicating that before his fall he was what might be termed the keeper of the seal, and that it was his duty to affix it to every ordinance passed. Angels "excel in strength," and the fact that they were all present at the giving of the law shows that it was an event of the greatest magnitude and importance. {140}

In the Hand of a Mediator.

For the present we may pass by the question of time involved in the phrase, "till the Seed should come, to whom the promise was made," since our present study is the relation of the law to the promise. The law was given to the people from Sinai "in the hand of a Mediator." Who was this Mediator?—There can be only one answer: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2:5. "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." God is one, the people are the other, and Christ Jesus is the Mediator. Just as surely as God is one party to the transaction, Christ must be the Mediator, for there is no other mediator between God and men. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

Christ's Work as Mediator.

Man has wandered from God, and rebelled against Him. "All we like sheep have gone astray." Our iniquities have separated between us and Him. Isa. 59:1, 2. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. Christ came that He might destroy the enmity, and reconcile us to God; for He is our peace. Eph. 2:14-16. Christ "suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us

to God." 1 Peter 3:18. Through Him we have access to God. Rom. 5:1, 2; Eph. {141} 2:18. In Him the carnal mind, the rebellious mind, is taken away, and the mind of the Spirit given in its stead, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:3, 4. Christ's work is to save that which was lost, to restore that which was broken, to reunite that which was separated. His name is "God with us;" and so with Him dwelling in us we are made "partakers of the Divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4.

It should be understood that Christ's work as Mediator is not limited either as to time or extent. To be Mediator means more than to be intercessor. Christ was Mediator before sin came into the world, and will be Mediator when no sin is in the universe, and no need for expiation. "In Him all things consist." He is the very impress of the Father's being. He is the life. Only in and through Him does the life of God flow to all creation. He is, then, the means, medium, mediator, the way, by which the light of life pervades the universe. He did not first become Mediator at the fall of man, but was such from eternity. No one, not simply no man, but no created being, comes to the Father but by Christ. No angel can stand in the Divine presence except in Christ. No new power was developed, no new machinery, so to speak, was required to be set in motion by the entering of sin into the world. The power that had created all things only continued in God's infinite mercy, to work for the restoration of that which was lost. In Christ were all things created, and, therefore, in Him we {142} have redemption through His blood. Col. 1:14-17. The power that pervades and upholds the universe is the power that saves us. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

The Law Not against the Promise.

"Is the law then against the promises of God?"—Not by any means. Far from it. If it were, it would not be in the hands of a Mediator, Christ; for all the promises of God are in Him. 2 Cor. 1:20. So we find the law and the promise combined in Christ. We may know that the law was not and is not against the promises of God, from the fact that God gave both the promise and the law. We know, also, that the giving of the law introduced no new element into the covenant, since, having been confirmed, nothing could be added to or taken from it. But the law is not useless, else God would not have given it. It is not a matter of indifference whether we keep it or not, for God commands it. But, all the same, it is not against the promise, and brings no new element in. Why?—Simply because the law is in the promise. The promise of the Spirit includes this: "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Heb. 8:10. And this is what God indicated had been done for Abraham when "He gave him the covenant of circumcision." Read Rom. 4:11; 2:25-29; Phil. 3:3. {143}

The Law Magnifies the Promise.

The law, as already seen, is not against the promise, because it is in the promise. The promise that Abraham and his seed should inherit the world, was "through the righteousness of faith." But the law is righteousness, as God says: "Harken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law." Isa. 51:7. So, then, the righteousness which the law demands is the only righteousness that can inherit the promised land, but it is obtained, not by the works of the law, but by faith. The righteousness of the law is not attained by human efforts to do the law, but by faith. See Rom. 9:30-32. Therefore, the greater the righteousness which the law demands, the greater is seen to be the promise of God; for He has promised to give it to all who believe. Yea, He has sworn it. When, therefore, the law was spoken from Sinai, "out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice," accompanied by the sounding of the trumpet of God, and with the whole earth quaking at the presence of the Lord and all His holy angels, thus indicating the inconceivable greatness and majesty of the law of God, it was, to every one who remembered the oath of God, but a revelation of the wondrous greatness of God's promise; for all the righteousness which the law demands, He has sworn to give to every one who trusts Him. The "loud voice" with which the law was spoken, was the loud voice that from the mountain-tops proclaims the glad tidings of the saving mercy of God. See Isa. 40:9. God's precepts are promises; they {144} must necessarily be such, because He knows that men have no power. All that God requires is what He gives. When He says, "Thou shalt not," we may take it as His assurance that if we but trust Him He will preserve us from the sin against which He warns us. He will keep us from falling.

Conviction of Sin and of Righteousness.

Jesus said of the Comforter, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. Of Himself He said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Mark 2:17. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick." A man must feel his need before he will accept help; he must know his disease before he can apply the remedy. Even so the promise of righteousness will be utterly unheeded by one who does not realize that he is a sinner. The first part of the comforting work of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is to convince men of sin. So "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3:20. He who knows that he is a sinner is in the way to acknowledge it; and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Thus the law is in the hands of the Spirit an active agent in inducing men to accept the fullness of the promise. No one hates the man who has saved his life by pointing out to him an unknown peril; on the contrary, such an one is regarded as a {145} friend, and is always remembered with gratitude. Even so will the law be regarded by the one who has been prompted by its

warning voice to flee from the wrath to come. He will ever say, with the psalmist, "I hate vain thoughts, but Thy law do I love."

Righteousness and Life.

"If there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law." This shows us that righteousness is life. It is no mere formula, no dead theory or dogma, but is living action. Christ is the life, and He is, therefore, our righteousness. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." The law written on two tables of stone, could not give life, any more than could the stones on which it was written. All its precepts are perfect, but the flinty characters can not transform themselves into action. He who receives only the law in letter, has a "ministration of condemnation," and death. But "the Word was made flesh." In Christ, the Living Stone, the law is life and peace. Receiving Him through the "ministration of the Spirit," we have the life of righteousness, which the law approves.

This twenty-first verse shows that the giving of the law was to emphasize the importance of the promise. All the circumstances attending the giving of the law,—the trumpet tone, the awful voice, the quaking earth, the "fire, and blackness, and tempest," the thunders and lightnings, the bounds about the mount, beyond which it was death to pass,—all these told that "the law worketh wrath" to "the children of disobedience." But the very fact that the wrath {146} which the law works comes only on the children of disobedience, proves that the law is good, and that "the man that doeth them shall live in them." Did God wish to discourage the people?—Not by any means. The law must be kept, and the terrors of Sinai were designed to drive them back to the oath of God, which four hundred and thirty years before had been given to stand to all people in all ages as the assurance of righteousness through the crucified and ever-living Saviour.

All Shut Up in Prison.

Note the similarity between verses 8 and 22. "The Scripture hath concluded [that is, shut up] all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." We see that the Gospel is preached by the same thing—the Scripture—that shuts men up under sin. The word "conclude" means literally "shut up," just as is given in verse 23. Of course, a person who is shut up by the law is in prison. In human governments a criminal is shut up as soon as the law can get hold of him; God's law is everywhere present, and always active, and, therefore, the instant a man sins he is shut up. This is the condition of all the world, "for all have sinned," and "there is none righteous, no, not one."

Those disobedient ones to whom Christ preached in the days of Noah were "in prison." 1 Peter 3:19, 20. But they, like all other sinners, were "prisoners {147} of hope." Zech. 9:12. God "hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death."

Ps. 102:19, 20. Christ is given "for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." Isa. 42:6, 7.

Let me speak from personal experience to the sinner who does not yet know the joy and freedom of the Lord. Some day, if not already, you will be sharply convicted of sin by the Spirit of God. You may have been full of doubts and quibbles, of ready answers and self-defense, but then you will have nothing to say. You will then have no doubt about the reality of God and the Holy Spirit, and will need no argument to assure you of it; for you will know the voice of God speaking to your soul, and will feel, as did ancient Israel, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." Then you will know what it is to be shut up in prison,—in a prison whose walls seem to close on you, not only barring all escape, but seeming to suffocate you. The tales of people condemned to be buried alive with a heavy stone upon them, will seem very vivid and real to you, as you feel the tables of the law crushing out your life, and a hand of marble seems to be breaking your very heart. Then it will give you joy to remember that you are shut up for the sole purpose that "the promise by faith of Jesus Christ" might be accepted by you. As soon as you lay hold of that promise,—the key that {148} will unlock any door in Doubting Castle,—the prison doors will fly open, and you can say, "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped." Ps. 124:7.

Under the Law, Under Sin.

We have just read that the Scripture hath shut up all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. We know that whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23); therefore, to be under the law is identical with being under sin. We are under the law solely because we are under sin. The grace of God brings salvation from sin, so that when we accept God's grace we are no longer under the law, because we are freed from sin. Those who are under the law, therefore, are the transgressors of the law. The righteous are not under it, but are walking in it.

The Law a Jailer, a Taskmaster.

"So that the law hath been our tutor unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The words "to bring us" are marked both in the old version and the new as having been added to the text, so we have dropped them out. It really makes no material difference with the sense whether they are retained or omitted. It will be noticed also that the new version has "tutor" in the place of "schoolmaster." This is better, but the sense is still better conveyed by the word that is used in the German and Scandinavian translations, which signifies "master of a house of correction." The {149} single word in our language corresponding to it would be jailer. The Greek word is the word which we have in English as "pedagogue." The *paidagogos* was the slave who accompanied the boys to school to see that they did not play truant. If they attempted to run away, he would bring them back, and had authority even to

beat them to keep them in the way. The word has come to be used as meaning "schoolmaster," although the Greek word has not at all the idea of a schoolmaster. "Taskmaster" would be better. The idea here is rather that of a guard who accompanies a prisoner who is allowed to walk about outside the prison walls. The prisoner, although nominally at large, is really deprived of his liberty just the same as though he were actually in a cell. The fact is that all who do not believe are "under sin," "shut up" "under the law," and that, therefore, the law acts as their jailer. It is that that shuts them in, and will not let them off; the guilty can not escape in their guilt. God is merciful and gracious, but He will not clear the guilty. Ex. 34:6, 7. That is, He will not lie, by calling evil good; but He provides a way by which the guilty may lose their guilt. Then the law will no longer be against them, will no longer shut them up, and they can walk at liberty.

Only One Door.

Christ says, "I am the door." John 10:7, 9. He is also the sheepfold and the Shepherd. Men fancy that when they are outside the fold they are free, and that to come into the fold would mean a curtailing of their liberty; but it is exactly the reverse. The fold of Christ is "a large place," while unbelief is a narrow {150} prison. The sinner can have but a narrow range of thought; the true "free thinker" is the one who comprehends with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Outside of Christ is bondage; in Him alone is there freedom. Outside of Christ, the man is in prison, "holden with the cords of his sins." Prov. 5:22. "The strength of sin is the law." It is the law that declares him to be a sinner, and makes him conscious of his condition. "By the law is the knowledge of sin;" and "sin is not imputed when there is no law." Rom. 3:20; 5:13. The law really forms the sinner's prison walls. They close in on him, making him feel uncomfortable, oppressing him with a sense of sin, as though they would press his life out. In vain he makes frantic efforts to escape. Those commandments stand as firm as the everlasting hills. Whichever way he turns he finds a commandment which says to him, "You can find no freedom by me, for you have sinned." If he seeks to make friends with the law, and promises to keep it, he is no better off, for his sin still remains. It goads him and drives him to the only way of escape—"the promise by faith of Jesus Christ." In Christ he is made "free indeed," for in Christ he is made the righteousness of God. In Christ is "the perfect law of liberty."

The Law Preaches the Gospel.

"But," says one, "the law says nothing of Christ." No; but all creation does speak of Christ, proclaiming the power of His salvation. We have seen that the cross of Christ, "Christ and Him {151} crucified," is to be seen in every leaf of the forest, and, indeed, in everything that exists. Not only so, but every fiber of man's being cries out for Christ. Men do not realize it, but Christ is "the Desire of all nations." It is He alone that "satisfies the desire of every living thing." Only in Him can relief be found for the world's unrest and longing. Now since Christ, in whom is peace, "for He is our peace," is seeking the weary and heavy-laden, and calling them to Himself, and every man has longings that nothing else in the world can

satisfy, it is evident that if the man is awakened by the law to keener consciousness of his condition, and the law continues goading him, giving him no rest, and shutting up every other way of escape, the man must at last find the Door of Safety, for it always stands open. He is the City of Refuge, to which every one pursued by the avenger of blood may flee, sure of finding a welcome. In Christ alone will the sinner find release from the lash of the law, for in Christ the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, and by Him it is fulfilled in us. Rom. 8:4. The law is so far from requiring men to keep it in order to be saved, as some suppose, that it will not allow anybody to be saved unless he has "the righteousness which is of God by faith,"—the faith of Jesus Christ.

When Faith Is Come.

Strangely enough, many have supposed that there was a definite time fixed for faith to come. This passage has been "interpreted" to mean that men were under the law until a certain time in the history of the world, and that at that time faith came, {152} and then they were henceforth free from the law. The coming of faith they make synonymous with the manifestation of Christ on earth. We can not say that anybody ever thought so, for such an "interpretation" indicates utter absence of thought about the matter. It would make men to be saved in bulk, regardless of any concurrence on their part. It would have it that up to a certain time all were in bondage under the law, and that from that time henceforth all were free from sin. A man's salvation would, therefore, depend simply on the accident of birth. If he lived before a certain time, he would be lost; if after, he would be saved. Such an absurdity need not take more of our time than the statement of it. No one can seriously think of the idea that the apostle is here speaking of a fixed, definite point of time in the history of the world, dividing between two so-called "dispensations," without at once abandoning it.

When, then, does faith come? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. Whenever a man receives the Word of God, the word of promise, which brings with it the fullness of the law, and no longer fights against it, but yields to it, then faith comes to him. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and you will see that faith came from the beginning. Since the days of Abel, men have found freedom by faith. The only time fixed is "now," "to-day." "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." {153}

Putting on Christ by Baptism.

"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Rom. 6:3. It is by His death that Christ redeems us from the curse of the law; but we must die with Him. Baptism is "the likeness of His death." We rise to walk "in newness of life," even Christ's life. See Gal. 2:20. Having put on Christ, we are one in Him. We are completely identified with Him. Our identity is lost in His. It is often said of one who has been converted, "He is so changed you would not know him; he is not the same man." No, he is not. God has turned him into "another man." Therefore, being one with Christ, he has a

right to whatever Christ has, and a right to "the heavenly places" where Christ sits. From the prison house of sin, he is exalted to the dwelling-place of God. This, of course, presupposes that baptism is with him a reality, not a mere outward form. It is not simply into the visible water that he is baptized, but "into Christ," into His life.

Baptism Doth Save Us.

The word "baptism," which is the Greek word transferred, not translated, has but one meaning, namely, to plunge into, to dip, to immerse. The Greek blacksmith baptized his iron in the water, to cool it. The housewife baptized her dishes in water, in order to clean them; and for the same purpose all would baptize their hands in water. yea, every man would baptize himself frequently, going {154} to the *baptisterion*, that is, the immersing pool, for that purpose. We have the same word transferred as "baptistry." It was and is a place where people could plunge in, and be wholly immersed in water.

That is not being "baptized into Christ," but it indicates what must be our relation to Him when we are baptized into Him. We must be swallowed up and lost to sight in His life. Only Christ will henceforth be seen, so that "it is no more I, but Christ," for "we are buried with Him by baptism into death." Rom. 6:4. Baptism doth save us "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" from the dead (1 Peter 3:21), because we are "baptized into His death," that "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Being reconciled to God by the death of Christ, we are "saved by His life." Rom. 5:10. So baptism into Christ, not the mere form, but the fact, does save us.

This baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God." If there be not a good conscience toward God, there is no Christian baptism. Therefore, the person to be baptized must be old enough to have a conscience in the matter. He must have a consciousness of sin, and also of forgiveness by Christ. He must know the life that is manifested, and must willingly give up his old life of sin for the new life of righteousness.

Baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" (1 Peter 3:21), not the outward cleansing of the body, but the purging of the soul and conscience. There is a fountain opened for sin and for unclean- {155} ness (Zech. 13:1), and this fountain is the blood, the life of Christ. That life flows in a stream from the throne of God, in the midst of which is the slain Lamb (Rev. 5:6), even as it flowed from the side of Christ on the cross. When, "through the eternal Spirit," He had offered Himself to God, there flowed from His side blood and water (John 19:34), "for there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8, R.V.). All these are also one with the Word, which is Spirit and life. John 6:63. Christ "loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Eph. 5:25, 26. Literally, "a water bath in the Word." In being buried in the water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the conscientious believer signifies his acceptance of the water of life, the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, and that he gives himself to live henceforth by every

word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. From that time he disappears from sight, and only the life of Christ is manifested in his mortal flesh.

One in Christ, the Seed.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "There is no difference." This is the key-note of the Gospel. All are alike sinners, and all are saved in the same way. They who would make a distinction on the ground of nationality, claiming that there is something different for the Jew than for the Gentile, might just as {156} well make a difference on the ground of sex, claiming that women can not be saved in the same way and at the same time as men, or that a servant can not be saved in the same way as his master. No; there is but one way, and all human beings, of whatever race or condition, are equal before God. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus," and Christ is the One. So it is that "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ." "For ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." There is but one seed, but it embraces all who are Christ's.

Only One Man.

In putting on Christ, we "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:24. He has abolished in His flesh the enmity,—the carnal mind,—"for to make in Himself of twain one new man." Eph. 2:15. He alone is the real man,—"the Man Christ Jesus." Outside of Him there is no real manhood. We come unto "a perfect man" only when we arrive at "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Eph. 4:13. In the fullness of time God will gather together in one all things in Christ. There will be but one Man, and only one Man's righteousness, even as the seed is but one. But "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

"Until the Seed Should Come."

It needs not many words now to determine what is meant by the phrase, "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." {157} We know what the seed is,—all who are Christ's,—and we know that it has not yet come in its fullness. To be sure, Christ was once manifested on earth in the flesh, but He did not receive the promised inheritance, any more than Abraham did. Abraham had not so much as to put his foot on (Acts 7:5), and Christ had not where to lay His head. Moreover, Christ can not come into the inheritance until Abraham does also, for the promise was "to Abraham and to his seed." The Lord by the prophet Ezekiel spoke of the inheritance at the time when David ceased to have a representative on his throne on earth, and He foretold the overthrow of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, in these words: "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Eze. 21:26, 27.

THE GLAD TIDINGS — GALATIANS, CHAPTER THREE.

So Christ sits on His Father's throne, "from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." Soon will He come, but not until the last soul has accepted Him that can by any possibility be induced to accept salvation. Those who are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, so that Christ can not come into the inheritance before they do. The seed is one, not divided. When He comes to execute judgment, and to slay those who said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," He comes "with ten thousands of His holy ones." Jude 14.

Then will the seed be complete, and the promise will be fulfilled. And until that time the law will {158} faithfully perform its task of stirring up and pricking the consciences of sinners, giving them no rest until they become identified with Christ, or cast Him off altogether. Do you accept the terms? Will you cease your complaints against the law which would save you from sinking into a fatal sleep? And will you in Christ accept its righteousness? Then, as Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise, you can rejoice in your freedom from the bondage of sin, singing:—

"I'm the child of a King,
The child of a King,
With Jesus my Saviour,
I'm the child of a King."

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