

Galatians - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Letters 3, Pastoral Care

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

I Doubt Whether Mrs. N.'S Case Was Not One for Warning, Prayer, and Pastoral Care, and Not for Exclusion

It is a mistake sometimes made, and the fear of a reproach and discredit arising from having a person who does not honor the gospel in our midst, leads the saints, who desire it may be honored, in a false course. Righteousness, specially when connected with character and honor, is rigid and repulsive because it is afraid of itself and for itself. Grace which dwells in perfect righteousness being above the thought of self, because it is divine in its nature, and being secure in perfect righteousness within, is gracious in tone without, can think for others. Such was Christ. How perfect in all His ways and love. He had never to think nor did not think what the effect for Himself would be of His intercourse with sinners. He thought entirely of and for others. This is the effect of intrinsic holiness and grace. He was holy enough to have no thought of aught else, and thus to be the companion of sinners for their sakes to deliver them, regardless of self. Now the Christian ought to be able through grace to do this, only he has to be on his guard for himself. There is this difference that the church has to be jealous and watchful for the glory of Christ and the holiness of the walk of its members. Still, I am persuaded that were we nearer the Lord, more thoroughly identified ourselves in spirit and walk with Him in the security of His grace, there would be more capacity to seize the good grace had wrought in others and be above the evil, dealing with it to heal in grace. For this no doubt straight paths must be made for the feet.

May the Lord guide the feet of His saints in all things.

1880.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Glorifying in the Cross

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Galatians 6:14

Nothing is so difficult as to take a man out of himself; it is impossible, except by giving him a new nature. Man glories in anything that will bring honor to himself—anything that distinguishes him from his neighbor. It does not signify what it is (it may be that he is the tallest man); anything his pride may come into in that which gives him advantage over others. Some may glory in their talents. There are differences in men's minds; vanity is seen more in some, wishing for the good opinion of others; pride more in others, having a good opinion of themselves. Wealth, knowledge, anything that distinguishes a man, he will glory in, and make a little world around himself by it.

There is another thing, too, that men glory in, besides talent, birth, wealth, and so forth, and that is his religion. Take a Jew, and you will find he glories in not being a Turk; the Christian, so called, glories in that he is not a heathen and a publican. Man will thus take the very thing that God has given to take him out of himself to accredit himself with. Those who are so deluded as to be throwing themselves down to Juggernaut may have less to glory in, or to fancy they can glory in; but the measure of truth, connected with the religion men hold, is the very occasion of their glorying. Thus the Turk, who owns God, will glory in his religion over those who do not; the Jew, in his religion—he has the truth, and “salvation is of the Jews”; the Gentile Christian, too, has truth, but then he prides himself upon it, and this brings in the mischief. The subtlety of the enemy is seen in proportion as it is truth in which he makes a man glory; and it is not so difficult to detect, either, for if you are proud of being a Christian, the whole thing is told at once.

It is quite another thing, of course, for the true, genuine child of God walking in the power of the cross, etc., who glories in that he knows God. With Jonah there was just this pride at work: he was proud of being a Jew, and would not go to Nineveh, as God told him, because he was afraid of losing his reputation. He had rather have seen all Nineveh destroyed, than have his own credit as a prophet lost. Jonah was a true prophet, but, glorying in himself, he turned his religion into a ground of self-glorying. Whatever you are decking yourself out with—it may even be with a knowledge of Scripture—it is glorying in the flesh. Ever so little a thing is enough to make us pleased with ourselves; what we should not notice in another is quite enough to raise our own importance.

Glorifying in religion is a deeper thing. Whatever comes from man must be worthless. A man cannot glory in being a sinner. Conscience can never glory, and there is no true religion without the conscience—not speaking now of righteousness in Christ. What is it then in religion that man glories in? It always must have a legal character, because there must be something for him to do—hard penance, or anything, no matter at what cost, if it only glorifies self. “As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised... they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh” (Gal. 6:12-13). Man could bind heavy burdens. Why should he? Because self would have to do something. When man glories in self there may be the truth in a measure, but it is of the legal character always, because there must be something man can do for God. Glorying in the flesh is not glorying in sin, but, as in Philippians 3, religious glorying, glorying in something besides Christ.

But in the cross man has nothing to say to it. It is not my cross, but “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14), and the only part I had in Christ's cross was sin. My sin had to do with it, for it brought Him there. This puts man down altogether. That which saves man, and what God delights in, man could not put a finger to in bearing. “The foolishness of God is wiser than men” (1 Cor. 1:25). The one single thing I have in the cross is my sin. There is this further thought: we are utterly lost without it. Divine love treats me as an utterly lost sinner, and the more I see that perfect divine love, the more I see how vile I am, utterly contemptible, defiled and lost. I have liked defiling myself; I am a wretched slave, dragged down to my defilement. The cross, when I see what it is, destroys my glorying in self, and puts truth in the inward parts, too, for it not only shows me how bad I am, but it makes me glad to confess my sin, instead of making excuses for it. I am awakened to say, I am guilty of having loved all this. Love opens the heart, and enables me to come and tell Him how bad I am. I thus delight to record all that He has done, all that I owe Him; and that is thankfulness. My heart tells out its vileness; there is no guile—not delighting in the sin, of course, but rejoicing in the remedy.

Then we have, on the other side, farther, God's delight in the cross. “Having made peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20), God gives us to delight with Him in the value of it. And first we see in it God's unutterable love—not love called out, like ours, by a lovable object. No; “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). It was love acting in its own proper energy—from itself only—so properly divine that a soul expecting it, as a matter of course, could not be a fit object for it. God's work and God's way are shown in a manner that man could not and ought not to have thought of. I am a poor miserable sinner, and there I see God's love in giving His own Son. When He forgives, there is the positive active energy of love in giving the best thing—the thing nearest to itself—for sin, which is the thing farthest from itself, giving it to be “made sin.” When I look at the cross, I see perfect and infinite love, God giving His Son to be “made sin”; I see perfect and infinite wisdom also.

With a conscience, I cannot enjoy God's love without seeing Him dealing about my sins. Even a sparrow God can be good to, it is true; but can God accept me in my sins? Can He accept an imperfect offering? As Micah says, Can I give “the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” Cain brought the fruit of his own work, without any sense of sin: the hardness of his heart was proved by it, and an utter forgetfulness about his sin. I see in the cross what my sin is. I cannot look at that as God sees it without learning God. Man has forgotten God enough to rise up against Him who was God's remedy for his misery. Then judgment must be exercised: God's authority must be vindicated. “It became him... to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). Are angels to see man flying in God's face, and He take no notice of it? No! Therefore, “it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things,” and so forth. God is a righteous judge, and judgment must be executed. There is judgment as well as love seen in the cross; not only Christ, the Holy One, being made sin, but undergoing the judgment due to sin. There is the unsparing wrath of God against the sin, but God's perfect love to the sinner. There His majesty, which we insulted, is vindicated: even the Son bows to that. If He is to keep up the brightness of the Father's glory, He must vindicate His character in this way. God's truth was proved at the cross. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Man had forgotten this; but Christ stands up, the witness of God in such a world, that what God has said is true. “The wages of sin is death.” The love with which God wins man to Him proves this very thing at the same time.

There is more in the cross. God accomplishes all His purposes by it. He is bringing “many sons to glory” (Heb. 2:10), and how could He bring these defiled sinners into the same glory with His own Son? Why, God has so fully accomplished the work that, when in the glory with Him, we shall be a part of the display of that glory. Therefore He says, “That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace”—a Mary Magdalene, a thief upon the cross, trophies of that grace, through all eternity! And how could He set them in such a place with His own Son? His own glory and love rise over all our sin and put it all away: He Himself has done it.

For us, then, the cross has done two things: it has given peace of conscience—and not what man can see outside, and then spoil. No, He has “perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). All sin is blotted out and put away. I can glory in the cross, then, for my sins are gone!

Again, “After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God”—poor wretched things that we are, to be made the vessels of such love and grace. The conscience has certainty and peace, and more than that, a confidence that Adam in innocence could never have had. There is communion and peace in my own soul, and there is another thing also—I have clearness of understanding in the ways of God. Should I go through a course of ceremonies, genuflexions, and so forth, to add to my perfectness which I have through the cross? You do not know the cross; you do not know what Christ—what God—has done by the cross, if you are trying other things to make you better. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin?” (Jer. 13:23). When you know not the cross, you may use all these efforts to satisfy and quiet your conscience. When you know it, it leaves spiritual affections free. When I see the cross, I can love God. If I have offended Him, I can go off to Him directly and tell Him; for I am a child, and my relationship is not thereby altered. My fellowship is with the Father and the Son—this is my happy privilege.

When I can glory in the cross, there is an end of glorying in self; for I am nothing but a sinner. He has brought us to God by the cross, for Christ has suffered, the just for the unjust. Are our souls glorying in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, or in vanity, or in self? If you are not glorying in the cross, it is your own loss, not to say your own sin; for you can never see God's love, God's holiness, God's wisdom, God's truth, as on the cross. Even where you are you may learn it, for you have not to climb up somewhere to get it; but it has come to you where you are. It is not, when you are better you may come. You cannot come when you are better, though it will make you better. It is as a sinner you must come. The apostle came as “the chief of sinners.” Then “the world,” as he says, “is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14). The very nature which is connected with the world is what occasioned Christ's death, therefore, when I glory in the cross, I am crucified to the world.

Letters 2, Assembly in a City; Unity of the Body of Christ; Exaggeration of Truth; Holiness; Presence of the Holy Spirit; the House and Body; Kneeling in Prayer; Members of the Body Not a Church; Principles Exercised at the Beginning; Historical Beginning of the Brethren, The

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

I quite agree with you as to kneeling, and do so unless standing up, so as to be heard when praying myself, and so do the brethren who are not used to American churches; indeed, all at prayer meetings. When close packed, it is sometimes more difficult, but my spirit goes wholly with you in it. I was myself the beginning of what the world calls Plymouth brethren, though we began in Dublin. The name Plymouth arose from the earliest publications which attracted attention issuing thence, and was so far harmless, as no human name was attached to them; one cannot help the world giving some. The great question is, what the word of God says... We do not meet on the ground of churches, but of the unity of the body of Christ, and membership of that one body. Membership of a church I do not find in scripture, nor a number of separate assemblies in one place (though as to mere locality they may be several, and meet in private houses, as at Jerusalem, but still be one assembly), and discipline in the church affects the standing of the person externally in the whole church of God. The great truth I find in scripture on this point is that the coming down of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost formed believers into one body, members of Christ, the Head in heaven. God's assembly in each place represented this unity, undivided from all the rest, in that place. (See 1 Corinthians—address of the Epistle.) The vital truth is the personal presence of the Holy Ghost, baptizing into one body united to the Head. There is another character of the church, the habitation of God through the Spirit. The corruption of the dark ages has made the realization of this more difficult, but has not altered the truth of the word. We have the promise which first led me to meet, that wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, He is in their midst, only it must be in the unity of the body.

Let me recur to a point I touched on when speaking with you. I do not doubt the Spirit of God is graciously working and rousing saints to the consciousness that something more earnest, more true, more what Christianity was at first, is to be looked for. In this feeling more undivided holiness of heart and life is justly looked for. Where this desire is not accompanied by the divinely given knowledge of the hopeless character of the flesh, illusion and consequent weakness accompanies the effort after it, or thought of receiving it. There is another work, another truth besides forgiveness, the consciousness that we have died in or with Christ (not merely that He has died for our sins) and in this the neck of self is broken. I know I am in Christ, and Christ in me: Christ is my place with God, not Adam: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is received in grace, and to me, then, to live is Christ; and I reckon myself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is not simply being born of God, but, through the anointing of the Holy Ghost consequent on redemption, the consciousness of being in Christ and Christ in me—the state of Rom. 8 in contrast with the state in chapter 7, which is a renewed but undelivered man still under the law. Now I ought always to walk and have every thought in the Spirit, and only so, but that does not change the nature of the flesh. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh"; but that does not change the lusts of the flesh. It lusts against the Spirit, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"; its mind is enmity against God. I have ever the right to reckon myself dead; to have no thought but what comes from the Spirit. But as the flesh is lawless without law; breaks the law, is not subject to it, when law is there; rejects Christ when God is present in grace; so, even in him who has the Spirit, it lusts against it, and if a man has been in the third heaven, would, if not kept down, puff him up about it. I have no need to watch against it, if it be not always an evil thing. When this is lost, the truth of a new life from Christ is lost with it. It is not the old Adam reformed, which is our life, but the last Adam, Christ, is our life; and, He having died for us, we have a right to treat the flesh as dead—but that, because it is evil and unchanged in its nature, as what we have received in grace is pure and holy in itself, and I am to manifest only this, the life of Jesus in my mortal body: for this I must always bear about the cross. I will not go further, dear brother: I regretted missing you, but all is well. As I did, I write these few lines, and shall be glad to hear from you. Peace be with you, and the gracious and constant help of the blessed Lord.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Boston [date uncertain].

Notes and Jottings, Galatians 2:14-21, Memoranda From an Address at Kennington.

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

THIS epistle, generally, deals with the fundamental principles of the gospel, i.e., justification by faith, and another which I will speak of.

The Galatians had received Judaism, and it was that which made the apostle stand in doubt about them.

But Christianity is the fullest revelation of God, first in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"—and in the work of the Lord Jesus, and then in the gift of the Holy Ghost which followed; the full revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, i.e., the Godhead fully revealed. And, now, "through him [i.e., Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." These are things which the angels desire to look into, elementary to Christianity though they are.

But the world into which God has sent salvation is utter vanity; and the Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world"; a world indeed whose true character is brought out by Christ's coming into it, as He says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me," and again, "Now is the judgment of this world." Our place is this, we are in a world which is in utter darkness from Christ having gone out of it ("The night is far spent"); it is here that we are, and it is here that we have this revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. While Christ was in the world, He was the light of it, but the Light has now gone to a much brighter and more blessed scene.

In Galatia, Judaizing teachers had brought in the law, and it seemed plausible to insist upon it. But the law had power over a man only so long as he lived. Judaism belonged to this world, it was set up to try if man could walk with God in it.

Only God could not then reveal Himself to man. He dwelt in the thick darkness. Quite true His cloud filled the tabernacle, but what was the effect? Just this, that man could not go in. That was under law, i.e., the rule for man here, but not for heaven and a heavenly people; you do not talk of "killing" in heaven, or about stealing or false witness.

The Lord could pick out two words in it which went beyond this, but it was more contrast than likeness after all, showing still that man could not be with God. It dealt with man on the earth, God saying, as it were, "I am behind the veil, and nobody must come near Me." Indeed that was so.

The law was provisional with its washings and carnal ordinances that enabled a man to have to say to God, while He was still behind a veil. Had God displayed His glory, they would all have been cut off in their sins. By means of sacrifices certain legal failures were met, so that the people might go on; but they were still in the world.

Under it there was a continual memorial of sins. Sins were not absolutely put away. It was thus a provision that intimated something better was to come; but the veil was unrent and the repetition of the sacrifices showed that the work was not done. It was grace in a provisional way only.

Looked at simply and purely, the law is condemnation to everybody, for the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins. It was a dealing with man as man down here, testing him. That was the great point of the law. It did not say that men were lost; it turned out they were, when they found it was spiritual, and they came to judge themselves; but they were under probation for our instruction while God was testing them.

And then another step was taken. Christ came, and God was in Christ; and there at last, God comes out, though that is only half the truth.

He clothed Himself with humiliation and dwelt with men in perfect goodness and in perfect love, removing every outward evil that sin had brought in; the Holy and the Blessed One passed through this world, manifesting the Father Himself amongst men where they were.

This was no law sent to men to require them to be something in order to come up to God and answer for themselves. It was grace.

And in it all, I find God sovereign above evil. He did not come to seek righteous men but sinners, and just because they were sinners; if the heart has found redemption, it is blessed to turn back and take the gospels and see all that He was there. The perfect goodness and love of God brought down even lower, in a sense, than men, that men might learn what God in goodness is.

Yet the Lord must say, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain."

If He came into a world that was sinful, for His love He had hatred; His presentation among men was the last thing God could attempt, and, by itself, it only increased the sinfulness of man. All that passed in the midst of Judaism. By itself, His presentation would never have made a basis for Christianity, because there was no atonement made. In John 12, directly He takes the place of the Son of man, His widest title, He says, I must die or else I must abide alone.

In His dying for us the foundation of Christianity was laid. He was "lifted up," not crucified on the earth, as He says, "Lifted up from the earth." He must be an entirely rejected Christ, and that unto death, or there could be no point of attraction for men.

There were promises to the Jews and He was "minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers"; but man's sin must be thoroughly brought out; not merely his sins, but the state he is in. Sins were there, no doubt, plenty; and as God looks down upon the world, what does He see but corruption and violence?

Now that the whole world has rejected the Son of God, its day of probation is over, so that it is said, "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

And yet in another sense, the end of the world has not come; but when you talk of God's dealings with man, as man in this world, it had come to an end. He could do no more for His vineyard than He had done, it was all of no use. Whether as without law, or as under law, or with Christ Himself among them, they would have God upon no terms whatever.

Then I see in the cross that man, in Christ, is gone from the world; on the other hand, He says Himself, "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do," and there you have man glorifying God in the place of sin.

So the whole thing is morally settled.

I get perfect sin in man, if I may use such an expression, because it was hatred against God acting in love, and I get this Blessed One perfect in His love to His Father, and perfect in obedience in the very place where He is "made sin."

Therefore, you see, the whole work as regards God's judgment, and what glorified God as the ground of God's dealings, was complete and finished; and what is the consequence?

Man goes right up into the glory of God.

The hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father; but the world was done with. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." All was at an end before God.

People say, "But did not God create these things?" To be sure He did, but the devil makes people use them to reject Christ. You can't have them in connection with the Father, because they are of the world which rejected the Son; "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

Since the rending of the veil, there can no longer be any religion for the world as such. Christ "gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world"; and so He sends the Holy Ghost down to those who believe on Him, to connect them with Himself in heaven.

A real Christian, then, is a man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is sealed with the Holy Ghost. He is thus entirely connected with the Lord in heaven.

Just as the Lord came out of heaven to the earth, so now man has gone in to the glory of God; that is the other side of the truth; and it is as our Forerunner, too.

This is the complete salvation that I get when I get Christianity.

There is nothing of the flesh in Christianity, and nothing for the flesh. The apostle had been a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but now he does not know even Christ after the flesh; and therefore he asks the Colossians, " Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? " They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; and the law applies to all that; but I have died in Christ, and the whole question now is one of connection with Him. We are passing through the world which rejected Him, but we are connected with Him in glory. He came in love, and is gone in righteousness, and we are " made the righteousness of God in him "-that which is fit for heaven, and nothing else is. Sealed with the Holy Ghost, I stand between the first coming of that Blessed One, and His second coming to put me into the full place that He has earned for me. My sins are totally gone forever. I have not merely forgiveness at any given moment for what I have done; blessedly true though that is, it is only half the truth. But Christ has offered one sacrifice for sin, one only, and that, at the end of the world; if that has not wrought for me a perfect acceptance and justification, I shall never have one, because He cannot die again, "for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world." If there is any sin left for Christ to clear me of, He must die again and shed His blood again to do it, and that cannot be.

But, having made propitiation by His blood, Christ is in the presence of God for us, and therefore, when I go to God at any time, imputation is impossible, or God would deny both the Christ who is before Him, and what He has done.

I have to humble myself for my faults, and the deeper the better, but if I allow imputation, I am denying the efficacy of Christ's work.

Anything less is nothing better than mere priestly absolution; but that cannot be now, because God has accepted this one offering, and Christ is sitting. Sitting is an emphatic word. " Sit! " The priests of old never did, but Christ does; He has sat down in continuity from henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool.

Then, He will rise up for judgment.

Now, for His friends He is sitting there.

Other blessed truths come in in their place; but as regards our standing, God never remembers our sins and iniquities any more; and the worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sins.

I insist upon this because it is most vital.

If your sins-I speak as to the work done for them, I am not talking about your feelings as to them-if your sins are not put away by the blood of Christ-I speak to Christians-they never can be. But He has borne my sins in His own body on the tree, and I am as white as snow.

Then another thing. There is the nature-the flesh. What about that? That is not sin committed. Nor does its existence in me give me a bad conscience; if it did, I never should have a good one. But how have I to deal with it? I am crucified with Christ. I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. But under the law you cannot live unto God; I am crucified with Christ; it is not merely that Christ has died—been crucified, but I have died—been crucified with Him. So in Rom. 8, " What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, [for sin, not for sins] condemned sin in the flesh."

Where did God condemn sin in the flesh? On the cross. Thank God! It is all condemned and done with; where it was condemned it died. Ah! then the condemnation is over, gone, and I, as in the flesh before God, am gone, and now have nothing more to say to it.

If I look at myself as a child of God, I say, I died as a child of Adam on the cross.

Whose child are you, then?

I am God's child, and I do not own the flesh any more. So he says, " Yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead."

I accept death unto sin also, and I do not belong to this world, or its religion; no, nor would I have it for I have Christ in the glory of God.

The apostle does not talk of sin in Philippians, because, though going through the world, he has passed out of that condition entirely, and is there simply seen as running through the world towards the prize.

So now, we know God revealed, not hidden behind a veil, and our place is with Christ where He is.

In Romans the Christian is always viewed upon earth; he has died to sin, is alive in Christ, and is perfectly justified; he is walking through the world in that condition, and has to yield himself up to God.

In Colossians you get him dead, as in Romans, but also risen with Christ, and he has a hope laid up for him in heaven.

In Ephesians you get a step further, as there he is sitting in the heavenly places.

Each of these three is a Christian state, so far.

And now let us see how the Christian lives. You cannot live in this world without an object before you; so he says, " I live by the faith of the Son of God." How far can we say that we live by the faith of the Son of God? " Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," that will be by the faith of the Son of God.

I may fail, but here he speaks as a Christian.

And mark how this acts upon the heart and the affections, it is He " who loved me and gave himself for me."

You get two things connected together: Christ lives in me, and is this blessed object, and I have the certainty of His deep affection for me. He has laid down His life for me, and I live by the faith of Him. How far can we say that?

His death has closed the whole history of man in the flesh. He loved us and gave Himself for our sins, and now He is the First-born among many brethren. Then are we living for Christ, or has the world got hold of our hearts? It is possible to live like Lot for a time. Are we living in association of faith with Christ in heaven or are we living in this world?

The time is short; it is the time of God's long-suffering now, and Peter says, He " is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

God knows the moment when grace will cease to gather souls to Christ in glory. Be assured there is reality with God; " We walk by faith, not by sight." Which are we living by? Faith or sight?

Things to attract are stretched out on every hand. Shops are full of things everywhere; we know well what that is, but do we allow all that? Or are we so living by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, that the world and the devil cannot distract us? We are liable to it, all of us. But can we say, " This one thing I do "?

The Lord is patient in His love, but are we with purpose of heart living to Him who died for us and rose again? We know how far short we come, but still, is there a perfect heart with us so that our conscience is good? Conscience is purged and made perfect before God, by the blood of Christ, but I speak of it now in a practical sense.

There is for us the present joy of having Christ in our hearts, by the power of the Holy Ghost, until we reach that blessed day, when He shall come and take us to be with Himself.

The great truth and essence of Christianity is that it takes the heart out of this world, and fixes it on Christ. It makes us live by Christ, on Christ, and to Christ.

Letters 3, Greek Words Translated to "Except" and "Save" Compared

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

I do not think the smallest doubt can rest on the sense of Gal. 2:16.1 We have only to read the rest of the verse to make the meaning of the apostle perfectly clear, and more than clear if possible, earnestly contradicting such a sense: ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. That makes his meaning incontrovertible. But he adds as anxious to insist on the point, διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ. How this can be an explanation that we shall be justified by works of law by the faith of Christ, I am at a loss to understand. But it is a mistake as to the force of εἰ μὴ or εἰ δὲ μὴ. Not that it is not used as "unless" or "except." But its connection with the main idea of the previous phrase, and opposition to the manner there stated, is common: it is really stronger than ἀλλά having the force of only, or but only. Compare Rom. 14:14, where the δι αὐτοῦ; must be left out, and the "unclean," or main idea taken by itself. Only in that case a thing is unclean, and the point is the opposition to the way or manner. It is exactly so here. There κοινός & is the common idea, justifying here-δι αὐτοῦ the special case hypothetically put and denied. Introduce δι αὐτοῦ; into the second member of the sentence and you make nonsense of the whole. And so you do here if we read what follows. So Matt. 12:4. It was not lawful for him to eat nor those with him, but only for the priests. So Luke 4:26, 27, but (or but only) to Sarepta, which was not in Israel: so as to Naaman. There is always the contradiction of, or opposition to, something in εἰ μὴ The question is to what? In the first case it is of priests to common Jews; in Luke it is to "in Israel;" in Romans "by nature" or to him who so esteems it; in Galatians law and Christ; and there is always a common idea too, as in Matthew, lawfulness to eat; in Luke, widows or lepers; in Romans uncleanness; in Galatians, justifying. Hence the common idea is not uncommonly left out, and only εἰ δὲ μὴ put in, and the contradicting matter only stated. Meyer, Ellicott, De Wette, Hammond, Fritzsche on Rom. 14:14, all take it as "but," or "but only" in Gal. 2:16. The difference of ἀλλά seems to me to be that there is not necessarily a common point or subject as well as contrast, but simply contrast (not this, but that); with εἰ μὴ there is always a common point about which the contrast takes place. But it is a great mistake to think that it makes the whole antecedent clause the common point, which is what the question would do, so that the clause following it is a condition simply of the whole. You may see the grammatical statements in Klotz's Devarius, Hoogeveen, or Viger, Bose Ellipses, and Winer 654 (sec. 66), the rest under el and the Commentaries in loco. In both, passages from the classics will be found. The point of the difference of ἀλλά and εἰ μὴ, has not been noticed that I am aware of; but I think it will be found just. There does not seem to me to be the smallest doubt as to the sense of the passage; at any rate, that it means what the question supposes by the grammatical force of the words is a mistake. Passages such as Rom. 14:14 demonstrate it, and others, too, as Mark 13:32; Rev. 9:4. In 1 Cor. 7:17 it stands elliptically by itself for "only." Rom. 3:27 fully confirms what I have said of the difference of ἀλλά,. When the supposed common point is set as to be, and a condition or way of it is negated, what follows εἰ μὴ is exclusive and contradictory of the condition or way. Thus οὐδέ τις ἄλλος αἴτιος ἀθανάτων εἰ μὴ νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς. A cause is supposed, ἄλλος negated, εἰ μὴ exclusive and contradictory of ἄλλος; when there is no negative and the case supposed, the εἰ μὴ negatives the supposition and says why. Μιλτιάδην δὲ τὸν ἐν Μαραθῶνι εἰς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβαλεῖν ἐψηφίσαντο, καὶ εἰ μὴ διὰ τὸν πρύτανιν εἰπέσεν ἄν. "if it had not been for the Prytanis, he would have fallen into it." There are cases where μὴ is left out, and εἰ δέ put with a possible substitution. It answers in the cases of exclusion to καὶ; in Hebrew. See Wolff's Curæ in loco. When the whole sentence is negative, the εἰ μὴ becomes a positive affirmation of what follows, as 1 Cor. 10:13, Mark 8:14, and others. Schiitz's Hoogeveen

gives a pretty full explanation under the words εἰ μὴ. In result, the negation of works, or faith in Christ to the contradiction or exclusion, of works of law, is clearly the sense of the passage.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 3, Christian Position as to Life and the Spirit, The

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Gal. 2:19-3: 14

THERE are two things presented here which distinguish the Christian. The first is an entirely new life in the presence of the Lord Jesus. (Gal. 2:19, &c.) The second is the possession of the Holy Ghost (chap. 3), in contrast with the law, and also the promises; for the accomplishment is quite distinct from the hope. The difference is immense; for, in order to enjoy the effect of the promise, it is needful that faith come in and that righteousness be accomplished. The perfect righteousness of Christ in God's presence must be put on. One cannot have the accomplishment of the promise save in Christ.

The Galatians had, to a certain point, succeeded in introducing some measure of works of the law in order to salvation. Not that the name of Christ was set aside, but His work was despised. Now God in His grace has set us before Him without questions: they have been all solved in Christ and God. We are not clear till we have recognized ourselves under the efficacy of all that Christ has done for our salvation, and we cannot enjoy it as long as there are questions to be solved.

To enjoy the efficacy of Christ's work is the foundation of all. It is the joy of the full revelation of God. Abraham had precious promises. (Gen. 15; 17.) But it is one thing to have promises like those made to Abraham, precious as this is without doubt, a totally different thing to have a full entire revelation of God in respect of us, such as we have in the epistles. The work which has been fully and clearly revealed has put me where Jesus is in the presence of God, happy and without a cloud. What Christ has done the law could not do, and did not pretend to it; for the law, having a shadow of things to come, showed, after all, that God could not be revealed therein. Why? Because righteousness was not accomplished: it would have been judgment, for the law demanded its fulfillment. The Holy Ghost tells us that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. God kept Himself in the thick darkness.

Now they were seeking to add things in order to be saved, when the believer was without questions in the presence of God. Therefore, says the apostle, "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. I have done wrong then in overthrowing them, I am a transgressor and Christ a minister of sin!" (Gal. 2.) " But," he adds, " I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

What then is the effect of the law, and wherefore serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, but it is not a thing which I could accomplish. The apostle has not even the idea of such a thing, for the law was given to show man that he was a sinner. The righteousness which is by faith is quite another thing from abiding under the law. I know all the power of the law; it can only condemn me. But now I am dead to the law. How happy to know the thing by grace, for grace is of little moment to me if I am under law! The knowledge of grace makes me understand that, the more God is good, the more guilty am I if I offend Him. The revelation of this grace of God, if the law enters and I must render an account, makes one more culpable in every respect. When Moses came down from the mountain, he brought a ministry of condemnation and death. (Compare Ex. 34 and 2 Cor. 3.) God had proclaimed Himself as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and sin, and that would by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. This was not a ministry of pure grace, as some suppose; for God had said, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. (Ex. 32:33.) But under grace he who sins against such a God is more guilty than a sinner under the ministry of condemnation and death. Nor is this a piece of reasoning; for the word says that Moses put a veil on his face, that the children of Israel could not look to the end of that which is abolished. If God impute my sin to me, all this goodness does but aggravate my case.

What is it that I really want? The manifestation of righteousness. For whatever was the goodness of God displayed, it rendered man more blamable, and promise could not take this away. The people were guilty, and the ministry with which Moses was invested was a ministry of condemnation and death. But the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:22, 23.) God, knowing that which should be manifested, bore with sins. The cross has only displayed His righteousness which He has declared at this time. We are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness. (Rom. 3:24, 25.)

The important thing for our souls is that God's righteousness has been fully revealed. It is not that faith denies the authority of the law: "yea, we establish the law." Faith owns that the law demands perfect righteousness; but it also says, "If I seek my salvation by the works of the law, I am condemned and lost." But now faith says, " I, through the law, am dead to the law." This is what Christ has accomplished for us personally. Christ has put Himself under the sentence of the cross, and by His death I am crucified with Him. The life in which I was responsible and I had sinned exists no longer. This it is which makes such a total difference. The life in which God saw me a sinner, the life to which sin is attached and consequently condemnation and death, no more exists. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This is not yet all. It is no more a question for me, if I can find the favor of God by keeping the law; for I live no longer according to this life, but in the life of Christ who loved me. My responsibility as to this life is gone: Christ has loved me, and loved me as I am. Such is the sole relation that I know; and I am sure of His love. It is the action of Christ for me which has set me thus, and not mine for Him.

It is true that I have failed; but I am dead. And my responsibility, as a saved person, flows from this that Christ has loved and saved me, and from the relations which exist between Him and me. If my soul has not understood its responsibility before God as saved, I have not understood the gospel; nevertheless, I cannot deny it: God has revealed it to me. It is not any more a question of what I ought to be, but of what Christ has done, and done for me. What I find is, that He has loved me as I was. I find in Jesus the manifestation of the God who loved me. I have the full assurance before God, that I have no longer anything to do with this first life, the life of the first Adam; but that I live now in another life, communicated by the second Adam, even Christ, of whose love to me I am assured.

There is a great difference between the enjoyment of a lost child introduced into a family, and that of him who is adopted there. The child may find the father to be kind, but he has not yet the child's heart, nor position, as long as he feels himself a mere foundling. As soon, however, as his position is changed, because he understands that the head of the family is become his father by adoption, he enjoys those intimate relations which exist between a parent and his child.

Everything depends on the relations which exist. One cannot enjoy the affections of God without being His child; all depends on the knowledge and enjoyment of this relationship. Then the heart is happy, and such is the place of the Christian. The effect of Christ's work is to set us thus in the relation in which Jesus stands with the Father.

The apostle presents us with a second position in Gal. 3:2: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" To this he replies: "As many [persons] as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."... "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Now we have the contrast, not only with the law, but also with the promises; for Christ is far above the promises, seeing that He is Himself their accomplishment. Those who are of the works of the law-on that ground and principle-are cursed; those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Gal. 3:9.) Impossible to have joy in God's presence without the question of sin's being settled. Can we stand before God without that? No; righteousness is necessary. If I have the least thing upon my conscience, how can I be happy in the light? For one must be there without spot. But Christ has done more than answer to righteousness; and herein we find a glorious manifestation in Christ, for He has accomplished, in perfection, all that was demanded of man, and He is now glorified. We enjoy not merely the righteousness which was required, but this-that God has been glorified; and this is much more. Had God merely shown Himself just, He would have cut off all men as sinners: without the work of Christ, God's majesty would have been compromised; but Christ gave Himself up to be the vessel for displaying on the cross all that God is for us. God Himself has been so glorified, that Christ could say, "Therefore doth my Father love me." The God-man has not only satisfied the righteousness of God, but, besides, the consequence of His perfect work is that we can rejoice in His presence without questions and without trouble of conscience. We have received not life only but the Holy Ghost as the seal of our justification, and in order that we may understand all the effect of this righteousness to enjoy it without a cloud in the Father's presence.

Another thing besides flows thence-the base on which the Church is founded. For this is not on what man was not, but on what he is in Christ; and in this manifestation Christ has unfolded all that was in God for us. The Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:15.) There is the truth, because God has been manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory. This had not been all promised. For the Church to receive her existence, it was needful that God should be manifested in flesh. Christ having accomplished the work of redemption, God has introduced man in His presence, and set him in glory. Having proved man to be a sinner, He was not contented to take away sin, but He would see him His own, and make him enjoy all His grace in perfect peace, giving him to understand that His righteousness was accomplished in Christ. Such is the Church. Souls convinced of sin enjoy all the fullness of the sovereign grace of God, because there is no more question of sins for them. By the gift of the Holy Ghost this effect is produced; there is the consciousness of the perfect righteousness of God Himself without conscience of sins. Can you say that there is no more question of sins for you? Is this question entirely at rest, and your relation to God founded on that? Have you recognized that your responsibility, your relation with God, is based upon the accomplished righteousness in Christ? If so, you are happy and blessed. Formerly you were sinners, but now you can say, God loves me. I do not speak of your thoughts; but you have made the discovery that you are God's children by faith in Christ Jesus, that your responsibility as sinners is closed. Are your hearts thus at large? to consider before Him that you are crucified with Christ, and that sin is gone for you? I cannot have the feelings of a bride towards one whom I dread as my judge: I need the consciousness of being in the presence of my bridegroom, according to that lovingkindness which is better than life.

Is God your daily resource in your faults and sins, even when you have committed them? Do you believe that His love can do that? There is where the apostle regards the Christian as set; and, when the contrary happens, the Jewish position is more or less taken by the heart. If I have not full confidence in God, I must seek something outside, instead of having recourse to God to find strength and to restore my soul. If God is your resource, you will not seek the law. The touchstone for the child of God is, whether his resources are in God or in himself. Perhaps, like the Jews, he seeks to offer sacrifices. If Christians, we are under grace, and it is of moment for us to be clear as to the position Christ has brought us into. There we are blessed in His presence; there also we are in possession of the precious things which are promised us. For, I repeat, it is not the promises which constitute our joy, but Christ, in whom we have them all Yea, and Amen, in virtue of the work which has been wrought and accepted; and we can be strangers and pilgrims.

May God strengthen us more and more in the consciousness of His love, which has saved us, and brings us into His presence to enjoy all that He is for us. Then Christ will be the object of all our thoughts. May we have it simple and settled before us, that it is no more ourselves that live, but Christ that lives in us, that nothing is wanting to the accomplishment of the requirements of God, and that our position is based upon His love.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 5, Christianity Not Christendom

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

THE times in which we are-the question in every serious man's mind, " Are we to go back to popery or not? " the fears of surprised Protestants; and the insolent pretensions of Papists and Puseyites (while the only thing that has courage by their side is infidelity, and indifference to truth, which rather favors error than truth, because truth is truth, and insists on itself) the heart-sickening imbecility of those who govern, or rather who are afraid to govern; the solemn sight that courage is found only on the side of evil, so that it looks like the judgment of God-lead one to ask, What is this church so vaunted by dishonest Puseyites, and honest Roman Catholics, or those who, from its prestige and influence, whatever that prestige and influence may be, cling to it, while they do not believe one word about it, for such is the case very widely in Roman Catholic countries. What is this church, this great system, which carries such weight with men?

We must not suppose that anglicans, or evangelicals, or dissenters, have escaped its influence; they may be anxious to avoid its being quite popish, or to lower its condition to open infidelity. Men may be high church or broad church, Roman or Greek; but they are all church of some kind, or would be. They may have altars instead of tables, or cry establishments down; but if they do, they will dignify the once modest chapel with the name of church. What is this church? that word which has such charm in it; is it something from God, and of God, as it stands?

That it has some charm in it is evident from the well-known fact, that whereas in the popular English Bible of the day there was " congregation," where now we have " church," king James insisted that church, and only church, should be there. It has a successional character, and however small the rivulet in which some think to have pure water, still it is to be derived from larger ones into channels which, they pretend, make the water pure. The grosser corruptions were purged away three centuries ago; what resulted has largely turned to infidelity, and many are going back to the superstitions as that which is in the old channel.

What is this great system, this potent idea? Is a successional church, corrupt or purified or infidelized (if I may coin a new word for a new state of things), a church of the past, on a pattern some centuries ago, or a church of the future, with no pattern at all but man's fancied competency in this age to do better and be wiser than all before him-is any church as now understood, coming down from ages past, however reformed and arranged, a thing of God? Is it to pass in some shape on this descendible principle? Is there that which, calling itself a church, exercises authority over the mind of man according to the mind of God? We are forced to look the whole question in the face: is the existing professing church, whatever shape it may assume, a thing which God owns? Is a successional body, in any shape, true or right according to God? I repeat, this question is forced upon us, the whole question; not, Is this or that church right?

The universal confusion, Greek rejecting Rome, Puseyites coyly flirting with it, Protestants abhorring it, dissenters seeking to pull down what exists, because it stands in their way, joining Rome for this purpose, episcopalians trying to keep it together, truth or no truth, Rome itself divided through idolatry of the Virgin, and infallibility of the pope, which notoriously contradicts all history, yet increasing her sway in the world; all in confusion, as all admit, from the pope to dissenters, all wanting to have the church right, though all for very different reasons thinking its state wrong; making the inquiry as to which is right hopeless. They have raised the question: what is it they are fighting about? Each party, no doubt, trust themselves; but every man's hand is against his neighbor, and how is the sober looker-on to trust them?

I am well aware that the good churchman will tell me that this is the effect of schism, and that people have what calls itself the church to look to; but how am I to know which is the church? I am told there are marks of it, yet who is to assign the true ones? But be it so, catholicity is one of them, that is, universality; but more than half professing Christendom is outside what pretends to be it, and hundreds of thousands of its most respectable members leaving it as corrupt. Sanctity? But history shows it to have been the most unholy thing that ever existed. Apostolic succession? A man must be a learned man to know if it exist, and if he is, he will know it did not; that nothing is more uncertain, if not certain that it is broken. Besides, to make my salvation depend on the right succession of a set of wicked men, who put down one another in the dark ages, is rather too strong. Then, unity? The oldest church, the Greek, counting by millions, reject and denounce it. Unity, holiness, catholicity, are a fable as regards the church; excellent blessed things, only not to be found nowadays.

The conscience of half Europe rose against the open, flagrant, impious iniquity of what they call the church. Nay, take it altogether, the change of system shows, at the rate it has gone on, that the boasted church could not take care of its children-was incompetent to prevent the mischief. All we simple people know is, that Quicquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi. The church cannot be trusted, it has not been able somehow to take care of itself. In Roman Catholic countries, and now also in Protestant ones, not only scientific men, but masses of the uneducated are turned, or turning, infidels; and the remedy is superstitious ceremonies and a going back to what was so notoriously corrupt that natural conscience would stand it no longer; when to be a clergyman, or of religion, was universally to be esteemed worthless, submitted to for the necessities of sacramental grace, and despised for licensed and unlicensed immorality.

And this was the church! Is this what we are reduced to? or to turn infidel and deny the Savior that loved us and gave Himself for us? Assuredly not. The truth is as true as ever, divine love as full, above all our evil, the Lord as sure in His faithfulness, His arm unshortened. But the church, so called, cannot help us; it cannot help itself. Which church am I to trust to? Who will tell me? The church, I am told. Where is it? In Rome? No, cry loudly both the most ancient church, the Greek, and all the Protestants, who have more or less purified themselves from it, unless in despair of themselves they are going back to it, and now many of the most respectable of themselves who have broken with it. From Rome to which am I to go? Who will tell me that? I have a din of voices claiming to be right. We want Christianity, not Christendom; we have had enough of this.

Now I look all this in the face, and take the question up, not on the disputed claims of churches, who mutually disprove their respective claims, but on the question of the church, as man looks at it now, as we see it in every time as the subject of ecclesiastical history; and I say it never was, as a system, the institution of God, or what God established; but at all times, from its first appearance in ecclesiastical history, the departure, as a system, from what God established, and nothing else; primitive church and all; and the more it was formally established, the more it was corrupt. Saints, beloved of God I do not doubt were and are in it; but it was a corruption offensive to God from the beginning of its history. Take a history, any history, of the church, it is a history, not of God's institution, but of man's corruption. History and scripture both testify of this, and no man can speak of the church of ecclesiastical history, if he be an honest man, without admitting that it was man's corruption, not God's institution, or denying history and scripture alike; I say, from its outset as the subject of ecclesiastical records, or scripture statements.

That Christ has a church which He loved and gave Himself for, and will present to Himself a glorious church, no true Christian denies; nor that the work which gathered it was to be carried on on earth, nor that, in a scriptural sense, the foundation was laid on earth. All that is true; but my proposition is simple: the church as the subject of history never was anything but man's corruption; the people who composed it went on, but the moment it was left to man's responsibility it departed from God's principles.

Let not my reader be surprised. Let us speak of man. What is man before our eyes and the subject of history and of God's dealings? Is he, was he ever, in his actual history God's creature as He set him up? Never! He is the corruption of what God set up, and nothing else, save the one blessed One who came to save. Let me draw attention to a great principle running through scripture, that surprise may be less at my assertion, which may naturally astound many-so much do we cling to tradition; and here even an infidel may recognize, not the truth of God of course, but the principle that runs through what the believer owns, what I own, as a divine revelation. That principle is that in every case God set up that which was good positively or relatively, and the first thing man did was to corrupt and ruin it; and then history is the history of man's corrupt condition, though no doubt so much the more of God's patience and goodness.

Man was set up good. The first thing he did was to fall into sin and corrupt himself. His history is the history of a fallen race: God judged that world. I am putting the scripture account of what has always happened; not discussing its truth, but giving its view of what has taken place.

Noah was spared from a ruined world and government set up as restraint to man's passions. The first thing he does after his burnt-offering that is stated in scripture-mind, I am giving its view of things-is to get drunk, and we hear no more of him, and the world goes on to Babel and confusion.

The law was given when God called out a people for Himself, the world being gone into idolatry, worshipping stocks and stones, and given up to a reprobate mind. Before Moses comes down from the mount with the two tables of the law, the people have made a golden calf, and have cast off God altogether.

The priesthood was set up, consecrated of God: the first day after the consecration was complete, two of them offer strange fire, and Aaron never entered into the holy of holies in his robes of glory and beauty-was excluded from all ordinary access to God.

Royalty was set up; the son of David was to be God's king, build his temple, and be every way blessed. He loves many strange women, turns to idolatry, and the kingdom is ruined.

God afterward transfers power to the Gentiles, sets up the head of gold, leaving Jerusalem, casting down David's throne; and men often think, if despotic, they would do all manner of wise and good things. But Nebuchadnezzar casts the faithful into the fire, and gets in every sense a beast's heart. Gentile power is corrupt, ambitious, and violent-cannot, as scripture speaks, stay at home, what it describes by likening them to ravening beasts.

Such is the uniform account given me in scripture of what has gone on-God's ways, and man's ways when God has set up anything. I am not saying anything of grace on His part which is exalted, but of His public dealings, and man's conduct when God had instituted anything on earth-of man's history. Is it very surprising if the same thing has happened in Christianity? No doubt vastly increased light and an altogether fuller revelation of grace are found in Christianity. It was the revelation of God, not the government of man as he was, or law suited to him. But this is not the question, but, what has man been when this was committed to him? when he was placed under responsibility in respect of this revelation? Nor could I, nor could any, thank God, deny that there were saints when the general standing was one of total failure, and, in principle, apostasy from the first estate. There was Abel, and Noah, and Enoch, after the fall, and even fuller testimony as evil closed in, and Elijah's when Israel, in one sense because Israel, had made the golden calves, and gone after Baal; but that is not the question, but, what was the state of things?

Now I shall first present the historical fact before I quote the instructions of scripture on the subject; but scripture must itself tell us both the basis from which men fell away, and some of the facts too. Now Galatians, without going into the higher doctrines of Ephesians and Colossians, will afford us the great foundational basis, and in a measure what departure from it is. Two great principles lie at the base of Christianity, God's righteousness, Christ sitting at the right hand of God, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. Paul tells us (2 Cor. 3) that Christianity (or the gospel) was the ministration of righteousness and the ministration of the Spirit: these are the two great essential elements. So again, " But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested "; and again, " to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness "; and " the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ." So Phil. 3, " not having mine own righteousness which is by the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross, and left peace to His disciples. Peace was what was preached, and remission of sins: " being justified by faith," says the apostle, " we have peace with God," Christ having borne our sins in His own body on the tree.

The cross had told what man was. He had there rejected God's Son, His last messenger to seek fruit from men as such; and God's work of redemption and peace-making was wholly finished here, so that believers are reconciled to God, have no more conscience of sins. In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. They that are sanctified are perfected forever by one offering, and the Holy Ghost is a witness that our sins and inquiries are remembered no more; yea, we have boldness for the day of judgment, because as He (Christ) is, so are we in this world. It is on the work of grace in Christ that the apostle rests, and assures us of the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin, our being justified by faith; Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Now in the Galatian assemblies the Judaizing teachers had introduced the doctrine of righteousness by the law; and this the apostle earnestly combats. In no epistle do we find the anxiety that is in this, not a salutation at the end, not a kind word at the beginning; but, absorbed by the fatal subversion of Christianity that had got in amongst them, he plunges at once into his subject-" I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ: but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed."

He then goes on laboriously to deny any succession from the apostles; he had received neither the truth nor office from them; he was not of man nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father. His adversaries insisted on succession in the ministry and ordination, but he indignantly repudiated it; but the main point which he declared to be the subversion of Christianity was the introduction of righteousness by works of law, or law in any shape. It was frustrating, setting aside, and making void (ouk atheto) the grace of God, for if righteousness came by law, Christ was dead in vain. And as many as were of the works of the law were under the curse. This was the great thesis of the apostle: Christ is become of no effect unto you; as many of you as are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace. And what he especially appeals to in testimony of this is, that they had received the Holy Ghost as the seal of this doctrine of being justified by faith, and not by works of law; the presence of the Holy Ghost, and the way it came, decided the question.

I do not question that fruits of a new nature would follow, demonstrating the faith to be real, and that the Christian has to show his faith by his works, but never by works of law. The works which God delights in are alone those which are the fruit of faith. The Christian is bound, and disposed, if he is one, to do good works: you do right to claim them from him, but why? Because he is a Christian first. People have forgotten the simple principle that duties flow from the relationships we are already in, and cannot exist for us till we are in those relationships. I say this much to avoid mistakes, but it is not my subject. Man had duties as man, but he has failed in them; he is a sinner, and is lost, according to Christianity. The full exposition given in the Romans on this great point is, that Gentiles were lawless, the Jews law-breakers; that there was none righteous, no not one; that every mouth was stopped, and all the world guilty before God; all had sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that was in Christ Jesus. And Christianity teaches us that the blessed Son of God finished the work which His Father gave Him to do; and we read that by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses: that, when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of God; that, if this whole work of making peace and perfecting the believers forever were not accomplished by His one offering, He must have suffered often.

We have seen that it is by faith that we are justified; redemption is through His blood; and hence the believer's being justified through faith, reconciled to God, having peace with God, is one great pillar of Christianity, Christianity itself as a foundation including the blessed revelation of the Father in the Son: for it is not as slighting His blessed Person that I speak of His work, but when grace has drawn the heart to own His Person, the gospel is the answer to the need the revelation of His Person has created. So the poor woman in the city that was a sinner, drawn in deep humiliation to His Person, receives the answer, " Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." The thief who owned Him Lord and the Man who had done nothing amiss, and looked for the kingdom, received the blessed answer, " To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The other great truth which constitutes Christianity is the presence of the Holy Ghost; that the believer receives it, so that he is sealed thereby, and that the Spirit dwells in him. We have a kind of picture of the connection of both in John 20, when the Lord first says to Mary Magdalene to tell His brethren, " I go to my Father and your Father, my God and your God "; and then, when they gather, He is there, and says to them, " Peace be unto you," and " as my Father hath sent me, so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." I merely take the general thought that we get the disciples, the brethren, put into the same relationship to God and the Father as Christ Himself, peace proclaimed to them, and the Holy Ghost communicated to them.

I return to the Galatians, to which I first referred. We have seen how the apostle makes justification by faith a question of Christianity, or the contrary; and this we have seen confirmed by a crowd of passages, and divine righteousness put as the answer to there being none righteous, no, not one, amongst men, and this by the work of Christ effectual to us by faith, so that we are perfected forever by one offering, and no sin imputed to us. The apostle shows how this is no allowance of sin, but the way of power against it, in Rom. 6; only here I confine myself to the point in hand.

Now let us see what is said as to the Holy Spirit. This is directly everywhere connected with the exaltation of Christ as man to the right hand of God; that when man in the Person of the Lord Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God, in virtue of His perfectly glorifying God on the cross, the Holy Ghost was sent down here to dwell in them that believe; and that this made the distinctive difference of Christians and Christianity, divine righteousness having placed man on high; as the result of a work done for man's salvation and blessing, the Holy Ghost was given to those that believed. Let us proceed to cite the proofs; they may be multiplied, but the principal ones are so clear and definite that I need not go through them, though the distinctive character of the presence of the Holy Ghost marking out the essential difference of Christianity will be clearer the more we are acquainted with the Old and New Testaments.

The promise of the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament, as characterizing Christianity, is sufficiently demonstrated by Peter's quotation of Joel: " It shall come to pass in the last days I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants and on my handmaids will I pour out in those days of my Spirit." It is only needful to remark that it was upon all, young and old, servants and handmaids, no trace of a clergy or body to whom it was limited, but formally the contrary: nor was it then only the apostles, there were a hundred and twenty there, and women among them. The Lord Himself had promised it: " If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given, oupo en], because Jesus was not yet glorified "; what was known as the Holy Ghost thus present among them was not yet.

And this is what the twelve disciples at Ephesus say; we have not so much as heard, not whether there be any Holy Ghost, but whether the Holy Ghost is (come). They were John's disciples, and he had spoken of baptizing with the Holy Ghost as one of the things which Jesus would do, presenting the work of Jesus as comprehended in the two things I have spoken of—the Lamb of God that takes away sin, and He that baptizes with the Holy Ghost. So the Lord Himself, " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go away, I will send him unto you." So again, " whom the Father will send in my name." When He is come, He will reprove (convict) the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, guide the disciples into all truth, and show them things to come. So Peter (when He was come according to promise), " being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost [note this reception of it for others on His exaltation], he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear ": and when pricked in their hearts, they asked, " Men and brethren, what shall we do? " he replies, " Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." So, before the priests, "

We are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost which is given to them that obey him." So to Cornelius God gives the proof that He will have the Gentiles by giving him the Holy Ghost, so that Peter could not forbid water. So at Samaria, they all receive the Holy Ghost by means of Peter and John, having been baptized by Philip. In the case referred to in Acts 19 Paul says, " Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? "

Peter, in his first Epistle, describing the order of dispensations, speaks of the prophets finding that the things they prophesied were not for them; neither have we got them: they are reported unto you, he says, " by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; wherefore be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

These are ample to show that the presence of the Holy Ghost, founded on the work of Christ and His exaltation, was the distinctive character of Christianity; the blessings connected with it run through the New Testament; the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, the knowledge that we are in Christ and Christ in us, the knowing that we are sons, so that we cry, Abba, Father-nay, dwelling in God, and God in us. True holy liberty, true divine knowledge, all and every enjoyment of blessings, and abounding in hope, and help in our infirmities, are attributed to the Holy Ghost; our good fruits are the fruits of the Spirit; our joy is joy in the Holy Ghost; our love, love in the Spirit; it is by one Spirit through Christ we have access to the Father: " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his "; and this is Christ being in us.

All this shows to an attentive mind that it is distinctive of the Christian, but though it be the bright and blessed side, I must not dwell on this further, but cite what FORMALLY shows it to be distinctive of the Christian; it is, " If we are led of the Spirit, we are not under law ": our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost which we have of God: we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by which we are sealed for the day of redemption. What is the appeal of the apostle to the Galatians connected with justification by faith? " This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh? " They were slipping away through Judaizing teachers, teachers of the law, who were subverting (we read) whole houses from justification by faith; and his appeal, as that which they all knew, is to their having received the Holy Ghost-not that they all walked well, but that the Holy Ghost was come, and that they had received it.

It may be said, But they who ministered the Spirit to them (an expression much to be noted) worked miracles. But all knew they had the Holy Ghost: if the flesh lusted in them, it lusted against the Spirit. In Romans a Christian is described as he that is after the Spirit: they were not in the flesh, their old Adam standing, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwelt in them. If any man had not the Spirit of Christ, he was none of His: and this is not mere temper, for he continues, " and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness ": the Christian state was the effect of Christ being in them. It is by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body: we are also builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

But it is not my object to draw all the consequences of the presence of the Holy Ghost, but merely to show that Christianity was characterized by it: even if they walked badly, they grieved the Holy Spirit of God by which they were sealed unto the day of redemption. It is not surprising. The Father sending the Son was the grand and mighty basis of Christianity, and the sending of the Spirit by both the Father and a glorified Christ was a witness of His Lordship and exaltation, and the great testimony in the world, and that by which we know the value of the work and exaltation of One, and our relationship with the other, as sons by grace with Him-that by which all was received here. Such was Christianity essentially in its basis. There were other collateral truths of course, and important ones too, but these formed its base, not only for our blessing, but for the full revelation of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

There were directions for order, and simple ordinances clearly referred to, as two, baptism and the Lord's supper; both telling of Christ's death (one initiatory, the other continual), of man judged, for Christ had been rejected, and of redemption accomplished in His death. I refer to them now simply to show that I acknowledge them fully and their value.

As a rule, elders and deacons were appointed in the various assemblies; ministry consisted in the exercise of gift (the gifts of the Spirit, who distributed to every man severally as He would), and each gifted person was a member of Christ's body, and exercised it according to scriptural order under the authority of Christ. The directions are found in I Corinthians, where there is no appearance of the existence of any elders at all. But such was Christianity as presented to us in scripture in its essential features. Has it preserved them? Is what is now called the church that Christianity, the system I find there?

The Christianity we find in scripture is: saints justified, no sin imputed to them, perfected forever, knowing they were forgiven and were sons, having personal consciousness of their relationship with God, accepted in the beloved, having full assurance of faith and hope, a confidence they were warned to hold fast; and, as to service, gifts from on high, through the power of the Holy Ghost, imposed on each one the duty of service, according to the gift he had received and the order prescribed in the word. If he had two talents or five talents, he was to trade with them-a wicked and slothful servant if he did not; as every man had received the gift, he was so to minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Women were to keep silence in the assemblies; men were to exercise their gifts according to prescribed order: these gifts were set in the whole church at large, and exercised according to God's will, as a distinct member of the one whole body. Some were signs of power (as to which there is no promise of continuance), others, the fruit of Christ's faithful care of His body-two of these being the foundation-to continue till we all come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: besides this, the edifying and growth of the body was carried on by that which every joint supplied, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.

Such was the Christian state scripturally, known personal relationship with God, according to the efficacy of Christ's redemption, and the Holy Ghost given to each, and working in each, as seemed good to Him, Christ giving from on high assuredly what was needed for the accomplishment of the assembly as His body, and these gifts operating in those that had them as members of the one body, and set in the assembly as a whole, in no way local. Besides this, and baptism and the Lord's supper, by one of which they were received into God's house, and by the other both the unity of the body and Christ's death were symbolized, there were local officers, elders appointed in every city. They were local offices, not gifts, though gifts they might have, and one was desirable to make their service in their office more effectual; but these were local, the gifts were not.

The church, as understood in modern times in all its compartments, is constituted, has its existence by, and is based on, the clergy and its sacraments, rot on an accomplished redemption and the presence and power of the Holy Ghost- a clergy which is called the ministry, and

even the church. I take, as a plain popular proof of the truth of this, the Evangelical Alliance. It abhors the corruption that has entered into the church, but it would not admit Quakers and Plymouth Brethren: the former reject clergy and sacraments, the latter clergy only, holding baptism and the Lord's supper, both insisting on ministry by the Spirit. I am not insisting now on their being right or wrong; I merely take it as a popular proof of the basis of the universal system, even where gross corruptions are resisted. It results in this, that the recognition of a clergy is the basis of the church, the sine qua non, the essential condition.

I am not, remark here, speaking of the corruption of the church. This was so great, that Nicholas Clemangis, the greatest man of his age in the middle ages, declares that putting a girl into a convent was making her a prostitute. Unnatural crimes were usual with the clergy; and Baronius declares that for a hundred years he cannot recognize the popes as legitimate popes at all, save for dates. They were not elected by the clergy, nor approved even by their vote, but put in by the mistresses of the marquises of Tuscany, sometimes those who were sons of a previous pope by their mothers after his death. And it came to fightings even at the moment of consecration, and, as whichever got the upper hand broke all the ordinations of the one whom he had driven out, a book was written to reassure people as to having any sacraments at all.

But this was the corruption of the church, and I do not enter into it. It is no wonder that the Holy Ghost, as scripture testifies of it, was utterly turned away from. My thesis is, not that the church as now held historically was corrupted, but that the church so held was itself the total departure in principle from scripture, from what Christ set up by the Holy Ghost. The doctrine of full justification by faith, founded on accomplished redemption, and the recognition of the Holy Ghost as present and a directing power, were lost, and the clergy and sacraments substituted for them. The Reformation removed many corruptions which had grown intolerable, and many false principles; but the notion of the church was still based on the clergy and the sacraments. It is hard to prove a negative; but it is quite certain that neither a full redemption, nor, though the words be used once or twice, a complete possessed justification by faith, as Paul teaches it, a perfecting forever by its one offering, a known personal acceptance in Christ, is ever found in any ecclesiastical writings after the canonical scriptures for long centuries. We have Barnabas saying they had forgiveness of sins by baptism (chap. 11): this, note, was only previous sins, administering a great blessing surely, but not the definite acceptance in Christ of a person to whom the Lord imputes no sin, so that there was no condemnation.¹ There was no trace of any full justification by faith, though of course Christ is owned as having come and having died as the Savior, along with a mass of strange allegorical interpretations. He calls Christianity a new law. We have a very meager reference to His dying for the forgiveness of our sins (chap. 5). But he insists on the cross and water going together (chap. 1), that is, baptism, putting their trust in the cross, descending into the water. We go down into the water, full of sins and pollutions, but come up again bringing forth fruit. He refers to the serpent of brass, but it is looking to Christ as able to give life. He says too, as regards God's dwelling in us, having received remission of our sins, and trusting in the name of the Lord, we are become renewed, being again created, as it were, from the beginning, wherefore God truly dwells in our house, that is, in us. But how does He dwell in us? The word of faith, the calling of His promise, the wisdom of His righteous judgments, etc., etc.

Now I have quoted all this because, while the epistle is so full of absurdities, that people have denied that it is of Barnabas, and one sees how one falls down a precipice after we leave inspiration, yet it has by far the most truth of any of these old writings. His attributing forgiveness of sins to baptism is very natural; for when a heathen or a Jew became professedly a Christian by baptism, he did administratively enter into the privileges belonging to Christianity, though this became soon the doctrine of the efficiency of the sacrament. But I cannot doubt that the writer was a Christian, and though despised by many ancient and modern writers, and the departure from the true Christian standing, from a gospel such as Paul's who was not sent to baptize, is flagrantly evident, still it contains by far the most truths of any of these ancient writers. I have quoted all that is of worth: the rest is really nonsense in general.

Besides this, he makes us hasten to our appointed place by our works, and then gives a string of commandments to follow, among which he tells them to labor with their hands to give to the poor, that their sins might be forgiven them, and these commandments were the way of light. We get here some very faint trace of the first elements of the gospel, but the application of the blessing of it is by baptism and works, but he is pretty much on the ground of the historic church. Be ye taught, he says, of God, seeking what it is the Lord requires of you, and doing it, that ye may be saved in the day of judgment. We have nothing of the clergy. The epistle is found attached to the New Testament in the MSS. (as in Sinaiticus) along with Hermas. He distinctly substitutes (2) men's offering themselves for the burnt-offerings, and quotes the prophets as putting man's conduct in the place of sacrifices. It is an utter departure from the gospel as found in scripture, with happy signs that he did not intend to deny it.

In Polycarp we have one of the best of these epistles, and he quotes Paul to the Ephesians: "Knowing that by grace ye are saved, not by works, but by the faith of God, through Jesus Christ," again making it vague. We have no recognition of the Holy Ghost: I do not mean that he denies it. It is forgotten; but the clergy (though he has not a notion of episcopacy in an individual, nor writes as such, but the contrary) are fully recognized, "being subject to the priests and deacons as unto God and Christ." In fine, there is no harm in the epistle, not a trace of the gospel, save the quotation of Paul, Christ's death being used as an example, no recognition of the Holy Ghost, or any gift of the Spirit, but a full recognition of the clergy.

As to Clement, we have a long exhortation to peace: the blood of Christ is owned (it is precious to God, and has obtained the grace of repentance for the whole world) as given for us (21, 49). If we walk aright, obey the commands of God, we shall get the blessing, as all the ancient worthies (7, 9). Faith he refers to, but only acting by faith to get the blessing. "For what (32) was our father Abraham blessed? was it not because that through faith he wrought righteousness?" He says we are not justified by our own wisdom, or by the works which we have done in the holiness of our hearts, but by that faith by which God Almighty justified all men from the beginning (32). As to the clergy, he owns no bishop at Corinth - this is very marked in the letter; like Polycarp, he owns presbyters only; his letter would have been a flagrant disrespect if there had been one, and he states that the apostles appointed presbyters, but he knew no prelacy. But he is the first to introduce what soon corrupted the church. In insisting on order he refers to the chief-priest, priests, Levites, and laymen. This he speaks of as Jewish, and only by way of illustration; still it gave the direction to thought. So he speaks of offerings at the appointed seasons and the appointed place: God has ordained by His supreme will and authority both where and by what persons they are to be performed (40). In a word, the full doctrine of redemption and peace is dropped, the Holy Ghost, as a present thing, unknown (he refers to the Corinthians having had a great effusion of the Holy Ghost), and the clergy set up distinctly, and that on the pattern of Judaism. Two things are objected to in him, and that even as long ago as Photius, that he was unsound as to the divinity of Christ, and the Phoenix. We easily see that the power of the Holy Ghost

as inspiration was gone, so that the mere reference to the Phoenix is nothing extraordinary; what is to me in the matter is, that he refers to heathen priests and their inquiries as true knowledge and, so to speak, divine matters, and the miracle of the Phoenix appears as a plain sanction of heathenism.

As to the divinity of Christ, he is, to say the least, cloudy. It has been answered that he calls Him the scepter of the divine Majesty. This does not prove much, rather worse than nothing. Christ is throughout a man, a priest prescribing our offerings, and, what is strange, quoting Hebrews t, he says, " But unto the Son, saith the Lord, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, ask of me," etc. It cannot, perhaps, be said that he denied the Deity of the Lord, but it certainly is not in his mind; he is insensible to it, he thinks of the blessed Lord in another way; a full known salvation by grace he most assuredly knows not. There is no present Holy Ghost in his mind; and he sets up the clergy on the pattern of Judaism. His epistle is a distinct revelation of where Christians had got to. It is relied on for justifying the present state of the church. Prelacy it does not justify, it has no trace of such a thing, or of any individual episcopacy, but it does picture the general state, in its germinal principles. But it does not speak of a full redemption and peace; not a word of what Paul teaches of our standing as Christians, nothing; nor of the presence of the Holy Ghost. The clergy, and offerings at an appointed place, he insists on, quoting Judaism and the order of an army as a pattern and authority.

Further, Paul's doctrine as to the Holy Ghost and ministry are so completely ignored as to place these points on ground which obliterates and denies all Paul's teaching (42). He says, " The apostles brought us the good news of the gospel from the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ from God." Now this ignores the Holy Ghost, and the whole of that form of Christianity which resulted from Christ's exaltation. The blessed Lord says, " I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now; but when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." This Clement wholly ignores. But Paul flatly contradicts Clement's statement: I neither received it-speaking of the gospel he preached-of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; and this in Gal. 1:2, when he is carefully setting aside any connection with a derivation of office or truth from the apostles. He was sent forth from Antioch, it is expressly said, by the Holy Ghost, and this is so true, that he does not recognize the apostles as sent forth by Christ on earth, but only as gifts from Christ when ascended (Eph. 4:10, 11). " He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things; and he gave some apostles," etc. The apostles, during the lifetime of Christ, were forbidden to go to the Gentiles (Matt. 10), and the mission they received (Matt. 28) after Christ's resurrection, not after His ascension, they relinquished to Paul (Gal. 2:8, 9). However, I do not dwell on this; but the assertion of Clement denies the whole ministry and power of the Holy Ghost, as sent down from on high, after Christ's exaltation, and the truths into which He led the apostles, even the twelve themselves, and which Christ declares they could not bear when He was with them, and into which the Holy Ghost would lead them. So, as to power, too (Luke 24:49).

As to Ignatius little need be said. In the Syriac epistles there is no allusion to any gospel truth at all; in the shorter Greek ones, generally received till the Syriac were found, we find an allusion to salvation by the fruits of the cross in that to the Smyrnaeans (1, 2). But still, as in that to the Ephesians, it is sacramental forgiveness. Christ was born and baptized, that through His passion He might sanctify water to the washing away of sin. He suffered for us that we might be saved. He is sound in the faith, denounces the Gnostics and teachers of the Jewish law; but of the doctrine of redemption and peace there is not a trace, nor of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer. As to the clergy, the Greek epistles are a tissue of bombastical laudations, declaring that, apart from the bishop, they were without God and away from every blessing. In the Syriac of the epistle to Polycarp we have, " Look to the bishop, that God also may look upon you. I will be instead of the souls of those who are subject to the bishop, and the presbyters, and the deacons; with them may I have a portion with God."

As to sacraments, I am not aware that he speaks of baptism; a passage in the Epistle to the Romans may refer to the Lord's supper, or not. In Syriac, " I do not desire the food of corruption, neither the desires of this world; the bread of God I seek, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, and His blood I seek, which is love incorruptible "; in Greek, " I delight not in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life; I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born in these last days of the seed of David and Abraham; and the drink of God which I desire is His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life." He had said, " my love is crucified." It is hard to say exactly what he means, his language is so outrageously mystical and exaggerated. Thus he talks of being fervent in the blood of God. One thing is clear, that in about fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and Clement and Barnabas, episcopacy had got strong hold of some minds. Ignatius seems to have been inflamed by some divisions or difficulties, if the Greek epistles are genuine; but, while quite orthodox, the small dying remains of the sense of salvation to be found fifty years before were pretty much lost altogether, and the doctrine of the clergy ripened as constituting the church.

Hermas remains. Here all thought of divine truth is gone, and baptism and nonsensical heresy reign triumphant, with the proof that the system of immoral asceticism was grown up in the professing church, to say nothing of lying visions. He sees a tower, which is the church; but this tower is made up of the apostles, bishops, and doctors, and ministers. Then there were those who had suffered for the Lord's name, and are fallen asleep; then young ones are built in, but some who had sinned were cast out, and would be put into the tower if they repented. But there were those which fell by the water, and could not get in-they had doubted; these may repent, and be in a lower rank, but not in this tower. The water is clearly baptism; the builders are angels. Faith is one of seven virtues, only the first; and those that hold fast to their works shall have a place in the tower. In the fourth command (3) we are forgiven by baptism; then he has one repentance granted him; if he sins more, he shall hardly live: man has two angels, one suggests evil, the other good. If a man is sad in an evil sort, this vexes the Holy Spirit who dwells in him, and the Spirit entreats God, and leaves him. All this part is wholly of works and man's will, listening to the good Spirit in him.

In the fifth similitude he represents the work of Christ thus: A man had a farm, set his servant to stake the vineyard. This he did, but of his own good will dug it, and pulled up the weeds. The master, finding this, then takes counsel with his son and the angels what he should do, as the servant had done more than was required; so he makes the servant heir with the son. The master is the Creator, and the son is the Holy Ghost; the stakes, those set over His people to support them; the friends called to counsel are the angels; the servant is Christ, who was set to have their messengers to support the people, but of His own mind suffered to blot out their offenses. God placed in a chosen body, in which God should dwell, the Holy Spirit, which was created first of all. This body therefore into which the Holy Spirit was brought served that Spirit, walking rightly and purely in modesty, nor ever defiled that Spirit; and as He had served this Holy Spirit without blame, and done more than He was set to do, He was made heir with the master's son.

He seems to have had some scruple about his statements, for he answers the objection as to putting the Son of God there, that He was put in a place of authority to set His messengers over those the Father had delivered to Him. His instructor adds, he must keep his body clean and pure. Hermas then asks, what if, through ignorance, he had already defiled his Holy Spirit? His instructor replies, as for men's former actions which through ignorance they have committed, God only can afford a remedy unto them, for all power belongeth unto Him; but now guard thyself; and seeing God is Almighty and merciful, He will grant a remedy to what thou hast formerly done amiss, if for the time to come thou shalt not defile thy body and spirit.

In the ninth similitude (16) we find, if indeed I understand it, the dead of the Old Testament, though already dead, were sealed with baptism, or they could not be built into the tower, the church: how is somewhat obscure, but it seems the apostles and teachers, when they died, went down to the dead, and put the seal of baptism on them, so they came up alive with them (8: 3).

The great tree... is the law of God published throughout the whole earth. Now this law is the Son of God, who is preached to all the ends of the earth.... The great and venerable angel was Michael, who has power over this people, and governs them; for he has planted the law in the hearts of those who have believed; and therefore visits those to whom he has given the law, to see if they have kept it.

The immoral asceticism, to which I have alluded, I have, on the whole, decided to leave out. It is a fact well known by readers of ecclesiastical history, under the title of *pareisaktai*, or *subintroductae*. The only importance of introducing it here was the public sanction given to a most vile and abominable practice; for Hermas was read in the churches. This Hermas was brother to Pope Pius I (of old he was thought to be he of whom Paul speaks), and he lived about forty to sixty years after the death of the apostle John.

Now, I have already given the very best things that are said in Barnabas, Clement, and Polycarp, and the other two, if good can be spoken of in Ignatius and Hermas. Some of old rejected Barnabas; the others have hardly been called into question as to genuineness. Some call Hermas inspired, as Origen; Irenaeus quotes it as scripture. Now, genuine or not, Hermas and Clement were read in the churches, not in result put in the canon, still were added at the end of the manuscripts of the New Testament, as Barnabas and Hermas in the Sinaitic, Clement in the Alexandrian, and so on. I do not know that Ignatius' epistles ever were; he was a martyr, and eager for martyrdom. Nor do I know that Polycarp's was; but in the early church it was a question as to most of them whether they were scripture or not. They were of the next highest authority, and some unquestionably constantly read in the churches. If Ignatius' Latin or Greek ones are spurious, the Syriac are there, and quite enough: nobody doubts that he wrote epistles-seven, it is said; nobody doubts that the primitive church teemed with forgeries and falsifications to prop up the system I refer to, and other foolish or evil things.

But we have enough to show that, immediately after the apostles (beginning with Clement, Paul's companion, whose epistles no one questions, Barnabas, of the same date, whoever wrote it, soon after 70; Ignatius, some say 106, others 116; Polycarp at the same date; Hermas some so years later) we have a collection of writings which express the then current thoughts and views, and which were more or less publicly read. Now in these writings we do not find a trace of the gospel, and redemption, and salvation, and blessings, which are found in Galatians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, John, or even Peter, who does not go so far as Paul and John; nor do we find the practical recognition of the Holy Ghost. I speak of their teachings. Polycarp and Ignatius were, no doubt, saints; Barnabas and Clement, it may be too, though in the last less appears; yet I would not call it in question. On the other hand the clergy and sacraments, particularly baptism (Paul was not sent to baptize), are the constituent elements of the church they are conversant with. They own Christ's death of course, but its effect or application, and the Christian's place, as Paul and other apostles put it, are nowhere found.

It is not, of course, the fact that there are elders that makes the sudden departure from scriptural truth and standing evident (Paul chose such), but that they and sacraments are everything- constitute the church; and what constituted Christianity as God gave it is gone.

All this led the way to hierarchical power, and finally to popery in the West; and, as to practice, the deliberate adoption of heathenism, days, and months, and years, formally judged in Galatians as a return to heathenism, and the deliberate substitution of saints' memories, as they were called, for those of demigods-places of memorial, where they feasted and got drunk in honor of saints instead of demi-gods, that at least, as Augustine expresses it, their drunkenness might be consecrated to saints, not to demons. And this was deliberately done everywhere, formally allowed in England, where temples were changed into churches; and these festivals were the origin of our village wakes, Christmas being the dissolute feast of the Luperalia.

But all these things were the fruits of this departure from Christianity. I speak of the departure itself. It had not come to this in Clement's and Barnabas' time; but the church, such as it is historically known and thought of to-day, had been substituted for Christianity.

I may sum up the system in the words of a writer long subsequent, as briefly stating the system, using another's translation: "Whereas the human race, by the demerit derived to it from the fault of the first sinner, had become pierced with the darts of eternal punishment.... Christ granted to it certain remedial sacraments, to the end that it might acknowledge the difference between what is merited by nature and what it received by grace; and that, as nature could bring punishment only, grace, not called grace if granted to merit, might furnish whatever appertains to salvation." This is its ripe formulary. The system began as soon as the apostles were gone.

There were two departures from truth: heresy, particularly at first Gnosticism-this ends in Antichrist; and a human view of the church, with the practical denial of the Christian's place by the Spirit; the last ends in Babylon. This takes essentially the character of the clergy, and the Spirit being with them; and so of the sacramental system as the channels of special grace. We may now see what light the New Testament throws on the subject; but history and the writings of the apostolic fathers, so called, from Clement to Hermas, show us plainly that the doctrine of the Christian's place in Christ, and of the Holy Ghost present and active in all saints, as also freely distributing His gifts as He will, was totally lost at once by Christians after the apostles were gone. I am not denying that there was a set of people gathered, which gathering, in fact, continued, and was corrupted gradually (this is clear), but that from the outset this gathered body of men lost the place, position, and power of that in which they had been established, and that the principles on which the gathering stood and was held to exist were, as soon as placed on their own responsibility, the contrary of what God had set them on. That it was not a body of persons knowing themselves to be in Christ, exalted as man at the right hand of God, consequent upon His having redeemed them, and perfected them forever, for whom there was no condemnation, every one of whom was anointed and sealed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, the earnest of the inheritance which they had not yet, which Holy Ghost, uniting them into one body, and distributing to every man severally as

He would, made each a servant of Christ in his place and gift, and responsible to trade with the talent confided to him; and, as every man had received the gift, so to minister the same; but a body of persons who were viewed as connected with a clergy, who might or might not be gifted, but their connection with whom formed them into one corporation, of which the administration of the sacraments formed the bond and link, and who by their works were to obtain salvation at the end.

Now this was really the Judaism against which the apostle so earnestly contended, and which met and harassed him in his service in every place, which would have a derived ordained ministry, disowning the power and title of the Spirit, and the true Lordship of Christ, and teaching justification by works, apostolic succession, and the observing of days and months and years.

Was this departure from Christ to be expected at once? or was the successional continuance of the outward body that which was secured by the Lord's promise? What does the word declare? Heresy fully contributed its part; but whatever was the cause, was the continuance of the body under God's approbation contemplated or not?

Let us see what was the state of things even before the apostle's death. " All they which be in Asia have turned away from me; all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ; the mystery of iniquity doth already work." So Paul. Peter says, " The time is come that judgment shall begin at the house of God." Jude says, " False brethren have crept in unawares." Was this to be remedied? " These are they," he says, " of whom Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, The Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment." So John, " Ye have heard that antichrist cometh, and already there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time." All this before the apostles were gone—Peter expecting no proper successional care and writing that " they might have these things always in remembrance "; Jude having to " contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints "; James telling them " to be patient to the coming of the Lord," that " the judge was at the door "; Peter, that delay was not " slackness concerning promise, but the long-suffering of God, not willing that any should perish "; the Lord Himself, hanging all in suspense over them, saying words already then misinterpreted, " If I will that he tarry till I come "; but all marking the decay and ruin, and teaching to look forward to the coming of the Lord.

But Paul, especially the apostle of the church, and who alone indeed formally speaks of it, gives us more precise and definite statements. " I know that after my decease grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock, yea, even of your own selves shall perverse men arise to draw away the disciples after them; wherefore watch, and remember," etc., etc. Thought of a successor, in these days called bishop, he had none; the existence of such, then or after his departure, is a thing unknown to him. He commends them to God and the word of His grace (compare the language of Ignatius in similar circumstances) which was able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. The time, he tells us, would come when they would not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables. This, mark, is a general character of the state of things. There were many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses. The result he fully states in 2 Tim. 3, " that in the last days perilous times should come," and then, giving a description answering to that in which he shows the state of heathenism, he closes by saying, " having the form of godliness, but denying the power of it "; but at the close of the chapter he says, " Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," and then refers to Timothy's having learned the truth from himself, and the power and authority of the scriptures as a safeguard.

The tares which the devil sowed in the field were to remain till harvest; the mystery of iniquity already working in the apostles' days would go on and ripen into the man of sin, and end in judgment. When the message comes from Christ through John to the churches, they have no authority but are judged, and the Christian is called upon to hear what the Spirit says to them; they were not competent to speak or guide, but he that had ears to hear was to listen to the judgment pronounced on them, to what was said. No voice of any universal church was to guide, but the individual to listen to the voice of testimony as to what was found in the church. The church did not judge or guide or teach, but the word revealed Christ's judgment of this church, and to that he who had ears was to listen.

The Gentiles have not continued in God's goodness and are to be cut off. But the origin of all this was that they, having begun in the Spirit, ended in the flesh. The clergy replaced the power and gifts of the Spirit, the sacraments His grace; and, the clergy being the ministry, the free distribution of the Holy Ghost, and the exercise of gift, where gift was, was set aside. The apostolic order was set aside, and the Christian position before God was lost, both connected with the presence of the Holy Ghost, as the expectation of God's Son from heaven was soon dropped out, men ceasing to watch for Him.

All the principles which constituted Christianity under apostolic teaching were lost in the body left behind them: the place of Christians in Christ, known by the Holy Ghost, His free presence and power working in living streams in individual Christians, under the authority of Christ, regulated by the word, and constant expectation of Christ from heaven. These were the principles of the church on earth, as established by God: what is called the church is the denial of all these, only the last was lost later than the others. But the church system was founded on an ordained clergy, with whom rested all ministry, and the sacraments as that which incorporated the laity under them, and thereby the establishment of the church on earth, not waiting for God's Son from heaven.

I am not denying the existence of elders, or of baptism and the Lord's supper: what I insist on is, that what has taken place is the substitution of these for the principles on which God founded His assembly in the world, and that this was immediate. The historical church is man's system, from the beginning, in contrast with God's: that system has been corrupted, but what has been corrupted is man's system, not God's. No doubt God had gathered the first materials into unity, but the principles on the which He founded His assembly resisted, specially by Judaism, during the life of the apostles, were given up when they were gone; and the system they had resisted became that which stood before men's eyes as the church. The free power of the Spirit, and known acceptance in an exalted Christ, ceased to be the constituent principles of those gathered; the clerical principle denying the Spirit, making elders the ministry as a clergy, that is, ordained teachers, not the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. This was first developed in local episcopacy, then in diocesan episcopacy and the hierarchy, and then in popery.

We are called on by God to go to the scriptures, which are abiding truth, knowing the Holy Ghost was to abide with us forever. Our choice is between, on one side, the authority of the word and the Holy Ghost, connected with what is called the universal priesthood of Christians (an incorrect application of an important truth); on the other, the infallible pope, or infidelity, the crown of the system of the clergy; or the no

longer disguised enmity of the human heart against God and His word. Only remark, the word of God and the Spirit of God, as acting in all saints, is alike set aside by both. The abominations, in which the departure I signalize (abominations worthy of, yea, worse than heathenism), in the professing church resulted, are known to those acquainted with ecclesiastical history; but that is not my object now. But it is well that he who is not familiar with that history should know that the very vilest and most degraded evil of which history has preserved the record is found in the history of what is called the church of God.

clickbible.org