

Here come up some important questions, viz: Did not Jesus abolish in his flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances, or in other words the religious ceremonies of the Jews? He did. How then can it be said that he did not abolish circumcision? Circumcision is not a religious ceremony of the Jews. It is a national institution separating the family of Abraham from the rest of mankind. A careful and a candid examination of its treatment in the scriptures will make this abundantly evident. The death of Jesus did not abolish the national institutions of the Jews. Paul circumcised one christian, and tells other christians that if they were circumcised Christ would profit them nothing. We may well wonder why he would do to one christian what he declares would eternally ruin other christians. The mystery is explained when we remember that circumcision belonged to Abraham's family as a national mark. Timothy was a son of Abraham, through his mother, and it was lawful for him to receive it as a national mark. The Galatian christians were not of the family of Abraham, and could not receive circumcision as a family mark. If they received it at all, it must be on religious grounds, and, in so doing, they would relinquish the religion of Christ and ruin themselves. It was lawful for Abraham's family, but not for others, to be circumcised.

Again, in 1st Cor., vii., 19, after Paul had directed every man to remain in the same state he was in when he embraced christianity, he adds: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing but the keeping of the commandments of God." Now, I submit that what is here affirmed of circumcision cannot be affirmed of any religious institution, whether it belong to a true, a typical, or a false religion. For example: Any institution or rite in the Jewish religion that is abolished is *something* to be abandoned. Any thing in that religion that is to be perpetuated is *something* to be retained. Every rite or command in the pagan religion that is wrong is *something* to be given up. Every institution or rite in the christian religion is *something* to be firmly held in its proper place. But here Paul declares that circumcision, so far as religion is concerned, is nothing, and also that its opposite is nothing. That circumcision and uncircumcision are matters of no account whatever. See also Gal v., 6:—"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." Also, chap. vi., 15:—"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision but a new creature." What is here predicted of circumcision cannot be predicted of any religious institution, therefore circumcision is not a religious institution.

But is this predicate true of a national institution? It is. So far as religion is concerned one national institution or its opposite is a matter of no consequence. For example: Being an Englishman or an American is of no account in christianity. Being a British subject is nothing, and being an American citizen is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God. For in Christ Jesus neither being a British subject availeth anything, nor an American citizen, but a new creature. Thus Paul would say to such as thought that a national peculiarity would interfere with their religion or their acceptance with God, "Is any called to God under the British government let him not (on that account) relinquish that government,