

not in the oldness of the letter—the Mosaic dispensation engraven on tables of stone.

I suppose, my brethren, that you, especially, who are desirous that the Gentile believers should be circumcised and keep the law are ready to exclaim—"What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Can it produce such effects as you have attributed to it?"

By no means. Indeed I had not even known what was meant by sin, cept by the law! For I had not even known that to possess a strong or inordinate desire for the goods of my neighbor was sin, unless the law had said, "You shall not lust." But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of inordinate desire; for without the law sin was dead. I knew not whether I was doing right or wrong until the law discovered this to me. For I was alive, once, without the law; I suppose that now you are ready to say, "What, brother Paul, were you ever without the law? Why, the law existed long before you knew any thing!" Hold, brother, I am in a figure transferring these things to myself, so that you may the more easily understand me, just as I did last year when I wrote a letter to our brethren in Connath, in order the more effectually to exhibit the absurdity of the false Apostle's conduct, I transferred it to myself and Apolos, and now I am showing you the situation of our brethren, the children of Israel—their views and feelings in Egypt, previous to receiving the law and the effect produced by its annunciation from Sinai. I was telling you when interrupted, that I was alive without the law—I had no condemnation in Egypt, however much I coveted my neighbors goods and family; but when the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," came, I began to reflect on the past, and suddenly my whole conduct came up before me—sin revived, and I died. Yes, the commandment that was designed for life and happiness I found to be unto death; for it exhibited my conduct as justly exposing me to the displeasure of Heaven, and promised me no way of escape. For sin, like a deceitful enemy, taking occasion by the commandment which exposed me and deceived me; and not only so, but this very sin made a sword of the commandment, and by it slew me. Wherefore, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good.

I suppose, now, brethren, you are ready to say, has then that which was good become death to me? By no means. The law has injured no one. It is sin that produces the injury—it is sin that becomes death, in order that it might manifest itself, causing death in me by that which is good; so that sin, (through the commandment) might be an exceedingly great sinner. You will understand, brethren, that here I personally sin, and speak of him as a tyrant, as I have already said he led me into bondage, and then seized the commandment that I had transgressed and killed me—I say *killed me*, for I am as one dead, for the sentence of death has already passed. But I attach no blame to the law for this; for we know that the law is spiritual; it takes cognizance even of our most secret thoughts, but I am carnal, under the dominion of my passions, indeed sold under sin. My passions have so long triumphed, that that which I do, I do not approve; I am so completely sub-