

St. Matthew takes up the thread where Malachi dropped it, and records how the Prophecy, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me," was fulfilled in those days when "John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea." His preaching was not that of one bidding the Jews to look forward to the destruction of the Church, but to its perfection; his theme was God's ability to enlarge it by "raising up children unto Abraham." St. Matthew and St. Luke take care to unite the two dispensations by the link of Christ's genealogy; the one prefixing it to the history of His natural, the other to the history of His ministerial life. St. Paul never supposed that his conversion, though it opened his eyes and turned him from darkness to light, had transferred him into a new Church. We find St. Paul at Antioch, and St. Stephen at Jerusalem, commencing their arguments for conversion, by a *recapitulation* of Jewish Church history, to show how intimate the union was between the old and new dispensations. They sum up the past history of Judaism to show that its natural issue was in "Him whom they knew not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets which were read every Sabbath day," and that the transition from the Jewish to the Christian stage of the one Church was most easy, natural and philosophical. Throughout the epistles we find that St. Paul's leading idea was that Christianized Gentiles are the true sons of faithful Abraham.