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Lev. xix. 18.

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former.*—*These things ought ye to have done, says our Lord, and not to leave the other undone.* Again, when his divine power had restored the sick to health, they were commanded by him to repair to the temple, and purify themselves according to the Law. On all occasions, our divine Mediator showed the most anxious wish to bring within the pale of his salvation, the ancient people distinguished as the favourites of the Deity ; and it was for them that he poured forth the pathetic lamentation, when he beheld their obduracy rejecting the means of salvation which he had condescended even to *entreat* them to receive from his hands—*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not !* Luke xiii. 34. The abrogation of the Jewish Law was not then the object of Christ's mission, it became only the consequence of their own wicked and obdurate blindness, in rejecting with scorn the offers of salvation which were held forth to them, as the elder born, ere the Gentiles, like younger children, were invited to accept of the heritage which the others had repudiated.

It would be a vain and idle inquiry to ask, in what extent, or to what purpose the Mosaic ritual might have subsisted, had the Jews as a nation accepted of the treasure held forth to them. But it is evident, from many passages in Scripture, and in particular, from the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles, that not only was the Law of Moses esteemed cogent upon such as had been bred up in it, but many of the earlier Christian teachers erroneously conceived that its obligations extended to converts made from the heathen world at large. And although St. Paul combated this rigour, as opposite to the plan and scope of the Gospel, which offered salvation to Gentile as well as to Jew, and maintained the circumcision of the new Law was that of the heart and not of the letter ; yet, in contending for the freedom of the Gentiles, and thereby incalculably enlarging the pale of salvation, the Apostle condemns not the observances of the Jewish proselytes, but allows that out of circumcision arises much profit every way. Undestroyed, therefore, and uncondemned by the new doctrine, the Mosaic institutions continued to linger, as things permitted to the Jews, but not enjoined to other Christians, until that part of the Church which consisted of Christian Jews or Judaizing Christians, gradually diminishing, merged at length in the great mass of Christianity, and availed themselves of the general liberty.

We will suppose that our sceptic still prosecutes his objections, and urges further, that although the Law of Moses was not expressly abrogated by the Christian Dispensation, still it was superseded, and its destruction followed as a matter of course ; and therefore, that if Christ came not on purpose to destroy the Law and the Prophets, still by and through his mission, it was actually destroyed. To this we have already returned one answer. It was not the offer of the Gospel to the Jews, but their ignorant and prejudiced rejection of that inestimable gift, which occasioned the destruction of Jerusalem, and the desolation of Judah ; even as the storm and overthrow of a besieged city is not produced by a message, offering the inhabitants easy terms of safe submission, but by their own obstinacy in refusing to accept what was mercifully tendered. But another answer remains, comprehending within brief compass the great and awful mystery of Christianity.

Christ did not come, as we have already seen, to destroy the law ; but, *secondly*, he came to fulfil it. That which is fulfilled can in no sense be said to be destroyed, even though by means of its being fulfilled it should cease to exist. Thus, the crop of the husbandman is destroyed, if it perish through tempest in the field ; but if it is gathered into the garner, and put to the proper uses of man, it is not in any sense destroyed, though consumed ; but, on the contrary, the purposes of its being reared are legitimately fulfilled. And in this sense the law of Moses being fulfilled in Christ Jesus, remains no longer binding on his faithful followers. He hath gathered in the harvest, and invites them for his sake and his name, to partake of the bread of life, which by their own exertions they could never have obtained.

and he saw it, and

* Mathew xxiii. 23 ; and Luke xi. 42.