

## MOUNT SINAI AND CALVARY.

*"Ye are not come unto the mount . . . that  
burned with fire," &c.—Heb. xii. 18.*

I have stood beneath the "burning mount,"  
And heard the loud trumpet sound,  
While the thunders pealed, and the lightnings  
flashed,

And the earthquake shook the ground ;  
And Moses himself, the man of God,  
Who had braved the tyrant's ire,  
And cleft the sea with his shepherd-rod,  
Yet quailed before Sinai's fire !

How terrible was that mighty voice,  
More dread than the lightning's flame,  
That there His holy and righteous law,  
Did to Israel's host proclaim !  
It exposed, and judged all my words and ways,  
And searched out the depths within :  
I cannot abide in this awful blaze ;  
It has shown me I'm nought but sin.

Moses descends from the burning mount,  
The tables are in his hand ;  
His face so reflects that condemning light,  
No soul before him can stand :  
With the fiery law that convicts of guilt,  
He speaks of the shadows of grace ;  
But till the true blood of the Lamb is spilt,  
The veil must enshroud his face.

On Calvary I've adoring stood,  
And gazed on that wondrous tree,  
Where the holy spotless Lamb of God  
Was slain for a wretch like me !

How my heart has stirred at that solemn cry,  
 While the sun was enwrapt in night,  
 "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"  
 Most blessèd, most awful sight!

My sins were laid on His sacred head,  
 My curse by my Lord was borne;  
 For me a victim my Saviour bled,  
 And endurèd that death of scorn;  
 Himself He gave my poor heart to win  
 (Was ever love, Lord, like Thine!)  
 From the paths of folly, and shame, and sin,  
 And fill it with joys divine.

I've watched by the tomb, where my Saviour lay,  
 When He entered the gloomy grave;  
 That by death He the power of death might slay,  
 And His lambs from the lion save.  
 Oh, glorious time when the Victor rose!  
 He liveth no more to die;  
 He hath bruised the head of our mighty foes,  
 For us was His victory!

The gates of heaven are opened wide,  
 At His name all the angels bow;  
 The Son of man, who was crucified,  
 Is crownèd in glory now:  
 We love to look up, and behold Him there,  
 The Lamb for His chosen slain;  
 And soon shall His bride all His glories share,  
 With her Head and her Lord shall reign.  
 And now I draw near to the throne of grace,  
 For His blood and my Priest are there;  
 And I joyfully seek my Father's face,  
 With my censer of praise and prayer:  
 The burning mount, the mystic veil,  
 With my terrors and guilt are gone;  
 My conscience has peace that can never fail,  
 'Tis the Lamb on high on the throne!

**GALATIANS.**

The great principles which constitute the bases of the Epistle to the Galatians are of great interest and importance. It is upon the face of it elementary, the churches of Galatia being in imminent danger of adding Judaism to Christianity in such a way as to destroy the nature of Christianity itself. Nor was theirs the only age in which liability to do so has existed, and has had to be watched against.

The law is a testing of human nature, to see whether it can produce righteousness for God, and a perfect rule of righteousness for that nature in all it owes to God and to a man's neighbour. So that it claims subjection, and that man should fulfil its requirements under penalty moreover of judgment. The authority of God, the subjection of man to His commandments, and a perfect rule of conduct for man in his present state as a child of Adam are all involved in this system. But man, conscious he ought to fulfil it, his own conscience telling him it is right, and not suspecting his own weakness and the depth of his ruin, and seeing that keeping it would be righteousness for him before God, readily takes it up as the way of having that righteousness, and enjoying divine favour—of being right when judgment comes. When unawakened, observance of its outward claims satisfies the natural conscience; if understood spiritually, it leads to the discovery of that law in our members which hinders all success in the attempt. But God having established

the law, it was a very difficult and delicate thing to shew that, as a system, it was passed away, not because it was not right in its place, and useful too for its own real purpose, but to make way for a system of grace purposed and promised long before the law was established ; and that by the discovery that it was death and condemnation to be under it, that the mind of the flesh (the nature the law dealt with) was not subject to it, and could not be, and that we escape its curse as under it, not by the destruction of its authority, but by dying as so under it, and that by the body of Christ in whom we then found ourselves in a new life beyond its condemnation. The cross makes all things clear. But the credit of the flesh (that is, of himself) is dear to the natural man, and till he had discovered that in him (that is, in his flesh) there was no good thing, he was loth to give up a rule he knew to be right, in the humbling confession that he was such a sinner that it could be only his condemnation, the law of sin so strong in his members, himself so disposed to evil, that the law, weak through the flesh, could only condemn him. Judaising teachers, proud in their own conceits, zealous of the law as the credit of their nation, could not bear to have it set aside as necessary for the way of righteousness and life with God ; and the ministry which judged the flesh in Jew and Gentile, and freed the latter from all subjection to the Jewish system, was intolerable to them. Man always clings to the law, speciously alleging God's claims and holiness, till

he experimentally finds (in the discovery of the true character of the flesh) his true state, that as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.

Hence Paul, both as to his own ministry and the place the law held, was in perpetual conflict with these Judaising teachers. The more intimate we are with his writings, the more we shall find how he was harassed by it, and how his writings continually bear on the point that you cannot mix the two systems, law and grace. This lay at the root of all his doctrine, and in all its highest developments, as well as in its first elements. The counsels of God, in the second Man, were formed before the world was, or man was responsible at all, and revealed only after that second Man was come, and had accomplished the work on which the bringing all these counsels into effect was founded. The apostle's doctrine, fully unfolded, brought out the ground and scope of these counsels in their full development in Christ, and, as to us, in a new and heavenly position of man in and with Him ; while the true state of the first man, responsible for his walk, of which the law was the perfect rule, gave occasion for insisting on the first elements of the truth, and the necessity of setting aside the first man, and thus for the application of the law, which could reach him only as long as he lived, in order to substitute grace and divine righteousness, not because the law was wrong, but because being right it was death and condemnation to man under

it. Christ met this responsibility for us on the cross, magnifying the law by bearing its curse, but bringing us, dead to sin and alive in Him, into connection withal with another—Himself raised from the dead. In His death God had condemned sin in the flesh, and brought in what was divine in righteousness and life in place of man, when Christ was for sin a sacrifice for sin on the cross. These elements the Epistle to the Galatians fully instruct us in, without going into the counsels whose accomplishment is based on the cross. These are found elsewhere, most fully in the Ephesians.

The first part of the Epistle to the Galatians is occupied with the independence of Paul's ministry. It was neither *of* nor *by* man. From the apostles he received nothing. The revelations he received, and his apostolic authority were immediately from the Lord. At the end of chapter ii. the apostle gives, in earnest and burning words, the whole bearing of the law on the gospel, and how they were related one to another; but of this at the close. I will now shew how he sets the law and the gospel over against one another.

Up to the flood, save the testimony of godly men and prophets, God did not interfere after the history of man's perverseness was complete in Adam and Cain. That issued in the judgment of the flood. After that, God began anew to deal with man, to unfold His ways to him in the state in which he was. And they were carried on till the full proof of man's irreclaimable state was

given in the rejection of Christ. The first of these dealings, after scattering men into nations and tongues and languages, was His taking Abraham out of them all for Himself, and making him the stock and root of a new family on the earth, God's family fleshly or spiritual ; the former, Israel ; the latter, the one Seed, Christ. Leaving aside for the moment Israel, the seed according to the flesh, to whom the promises will surely be accomplished in grace, we find the promise made to Abram in chapter xii., and confirmed in the seed in chapter xxii. This referred to all nations who were to be blessed in the Seed, the one Seed, typified by Isaac, offered up and raised in figure. On this the apostle insists. The blessing came by promise. This, confirmed as it was to Isaac, could not be disannulled, and (what is more directly to the point) could not be added to. The law could not be annexed to it as a condition. To that there were two parties ; but God was only one. The accomplishment of this conditional promise depended on the fidelity of both, and hence had no stability. God's promise depended on Himself alone. His faithfulness was its security, and it could not fail. But the law, coming four hundred and thirty years after, could not invalidate or be added to the confirmed promise. The law is not against the promises of God, but merely came in by the bye till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, bringing in transgression but not righteousness. The law

was not of faith ; its blessing was by those who were under it themselves doing it. Promise, and faith in the promise and promised One, went together. The law brought a curse ; Christ, the promised Seed, was made a curse for those under it, and when Christianity or faith came they were no longer under it at all. The law was an intermediate added thing, whose place ceased when the promised Seed came. The law and grace are contrasted, as the law and promise, faith and the Seed are, first for justification. A man under the law was a debtor himself to do the whole of it ; and a Christian taking this ground was fallen from grace ; Christ had become of none effect to him. A man who looked to the law frustrated the grace of God : if righteousness came by *it*, Christ was dead in vain.

But the contrast is applied to godly walk. The Spirit is opposed to the flesh. They are contrary one to the other in their nature. We are to walk after the Spirit, having the things of the Spirit before us, to produce its fruits ; but if we are led of the Spirit, we are not under law. Life and power and a heavenly object characterize the Spirit, in contrast with the law which deals with flesh, and in vain, instead of taking us out of it. Thus, as to godly walk as well as for righteousness, the law is contrasted with grace. On one side are grace, promise, faith, Christ, and the Spirit, and, I may add, a righteous standing before God ; on the other, the law claiming obedience



from the flesh, which does not render it, and out of which the law cannot deliver us. It gives no life. If there had been a law which could have given life, then, indeed, righteousness should have been by the law. It is this full contrast which makes the Galatians so striking.

The result is this. Being led of the Spirit we are not under law. What, then, is our state? We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope that belongs to it, that is, glory. How so? Being righteous in Christ, we have received the Spirit, and in the power of that we wait for what it so richly reveals. The contrast of the flesh and Spirit, and the power of the latter leaves the law functionless as to walk, whether in power or character. Law was a rule for flesh, a perfect one, but not for Spirit. This reveals heavenly things, Christ in glory, and changes us into His image. This was in no way the law's object.

How, then, is its real use and power stated in the epistle? Peter, when certain came from James, would no longer eat with the Gentiles. Paul withstood him to the face, the weakness of one yielding to the presence of Jews, the energetic faith of the other holding fast the truth of the gospel. Peter had left the law as the way of obtaining righteousness, and he was going back to it, building again what he had destroyed; he was then a transgressor in destroying it. Now Christ had led him to it. Christ then was the minister of sin. What was the effect of the law? Ah! we have, through grace, in

the earnestness of a holy conscience, its true work. It wrought death. The law had killed Paul (that is, in his conscience before God). He had been alive without it once. But thereby he was dead to it; and this, that in another way, in another life, he might live to God, which the flesh could not do. Had it been simply given effect to in himself, it had been curse and condemnation as well as death, but it was in Christ, who had died under its curse for him, and he was crucified with Christ, being thus dead, dead to law, and to sin at the same time, having done with the old Adam, to which the law applied; he was, nevertheless, now alive. Yet not he (which would have been the flesh) but Christ lived in him.

The law, and condemnation, and the flesh, were gone (so to speak) together as to Paul's position before God, and replaced by Christ and the Spirit, on which last he largely insists in what follows—chapter iii. But there is more; there is the object before the soul. "The life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." This is the great point. The divine person, who has so loved us and given Himself for us, whom we thus know in perfect grace, in love even unto death, is the sanctifying object of the whole life. We live by it. The law gave no object, any more than it gave life and strength. Here we have the most blessed one, where the heart is filled with love, and led out into confidence with an object that conforms it

to itself. The principle of dealing, grace, life, power, object, are all contrasted with law, which afforded none of these, and could therefore no more produce godliness than it could righteousness before God.

The Epistle thus contrasts grace, promise, faith, Christ, the Spirit for righteousness and walk alike, with law and flesh. The law was useful as bringing death on us, that is, on the old man, condemnation being borne by Christ, with whom we have died to it and flesh. A new place, and life, and righteousness, beyond the cross, is that into which we have entered, with Christ in heaven before us.



### HAGAR.

(*Gen. xvi.—xxv.*)

Abraham had already received the promise of a seed, so by faith in that promise (trusting God as the quickener of the dead), he was now standing in righteousness before Him. (*Gen. xv.*)

That promise, I may observe, had not mentioned Sarah in connection with the Seed, but there was strong intimation that she was to be the mother.

However, be this as it may, Sarah's suggestion to her husband at the opening of chap. xvi. too clearly discloses the working of an unbelieving heart, and the principle of confidence in the flesh, two things which go together and measure each other. The more the simplicity of faith is surren-

dered, and grace refused, will the law, either in its morality or religiousness, be taken up.

For grace, or the promise, calls us out of ourselves, unto God and His resources ; and Abraham had followed that call in Gen. xv. But now at the suggestion of Sarah he takes up himself again. He is back again in the flesh, or under the law, or becomes a dependant on his own resources. For these are all one and the same thing. Hagar is his confidence, and not the divine Quickener of the dead.

This is very sad ; but it is not destructive of his standing. Surely not. It betrays the bad, mistrustful habit of the soul, and has to be rebuked and chastened, but Abraham is still the heir of God through righteousness by faith.

Very expressive, I judge all this to be, and very significant or typical also. For the law, after this pattern, entered through man's confidence in himself, Israel accepting this offer of it and saying, "all that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. xix. 8\*); as Hagar is now seated in Abraham's house through the same want of faith and the same confidence in the flesh.

But there is much more of this same typical character. For Hagar's despising of her mistress, is, in the Lord's esteem, highly out of place ; and as He meets her in her wanderings, He knows her only as *Sarah's maid*, and sends her back with this

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\* And we see in Josh. xxiv., 19-24, the same confidence persisted in after experience.

injunction, "return to *thy mistress*, and submit thyself under her hand." She may get promises respecting the son that was to be born to her, but she is *Sarah's maid* still, and *submission* is her only duty. The law, too, has its hour. It may fill the house of God for a time, as Hagar and Hagar's seed now do the house of Abraham for fourteen years. But to the elect, or the heirs of promise, *even the dispensation of the law is, or was, still only a servant*. Sarah, likewise, may betray herself in other ways, in her undue impatience against Hagar, as well as in giving her to her husband, but still the relationship is unaffected by all this. *Hagar is still and only Sarah's maid, and as such she must reside in the family as long as she is permitted*.

All this is strong, decided teaching, and teaching of mysteries, as I have said. For Hagar, as we know (Gal. iv. 21-31), is the law of the Old covenant, which, though it filled and formed the house of God for its hour, was but serving some great purpose of instruction or discipline to the heirs of promise. And all the time there was a great underplot, so to express it, in this mystic house of the Patriarch; which, in a divine sense, was surely the chief thing. Ishmael is born and circumcised, and being the only child and heir apparent, he becomes the object no doubt of daily solicitude. But with God, Ishmael is but second. He appears to be principal in the scene, but he is not really or divinely so. Accordingly neither is he or his mother scarcely noticed by the Spirit or hand of God after

this, while they reside in the house, till the due time for their dismissal comes. Abraham, through human or fleshly fondness, draws him forward for a moment under God's eye, and he is circumcised as any purchased slave would have been; but neither is he or his bondwoman-mother the Lord's object. The elect Abraham and Sarah, or persons and things connected with them, are His thoughts. His communications are with them, and His discipline spent upon them, they learn and experience their value in His esteem, and others are made to know it also (xvii.—xx.).

Is not this, in like manner, a word of instruction to us? Hagar and her child were in the house all this time. But Sarah and Abraham are *God's* objects. As again I may say, during the age of the law, the house of God was, it is true, manifested as under law—the law filled it with a material of its own workmanship; but there was all the while a hidden action of the Spirit with the elect—the elect in the house were really *God's* objects.

These two stages in the way of the Egyptian bondwoman are, thus, very significant. Her *entrance* into Abraham's house as the mother of his first child Ishmael, and then her *residence there* for a season, have this mystic sense in them. But these things do not dispose of the whole history. We have still to look at her *dismissal* from the house.

Her child grew up to boyhood, and was, as I have suggested, no doubt the object of family con-

cern. But the current which had long run underground, or was known only in the counsels and promises of God, must appear and assert its course. Grace and the covenant must have their way, and become principal in the scene. And therefore in due time, yea at the very right moment, "when the fulness of the time had come," Isaac is born.

The appearance of such a child was a great era. And soon was it found that he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, as well as for the joy of the elect. Abraham makes a feast, but Ishmael mocks over the very same event. Here was the revealing of hearts. One taunts what the other glories in. But Sarah is bolder still. She will not merely take part in Abraham's joy, but she is for judging the scorers. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son," says she. Here was another heart revealed, a great heart truly. Here was an energy of faith which far out-did even Abraham's. Abraham would personally and quietly enjoy the child of promise, but Sarah will not only do this, laughing with divine believing delight over him, but is for cleaning out by a summary dismissal all that would disturb his full unrivalled heirship of everything.

This was indeed great-hearted faith. This spoke the mind of God (Gal. iv. 30). This was *interpreting the gift of God, the child of promise, aright*. This was putting honour upon that gift as it well deserved. It was not a mother's fondness, but faith's boldness—for shall the gift of God be kept

merely on a level, on the same floor, as it were, with the fruit of human strength or the creatures of man's resources?

This great-hearted faith of Sarah is very encouraging, receiving, too, as it does, the full and ready sanction of the Lord Himself. It is very happy to watch this. It is well when the soul can, with Abraham, rejoice over the accomplished councils and promises of God. But it is better, when we can be so bold in the faith as with this joy to cast out from our hearts all spirit of bondage and fear, every fruit of nature and every confidence save in the sovereign and glorious resources of the living God—God of all grace and salvation as He is—when we can refuse to hear anything or to see anything, that may hush or cloud that goodness and power of God by which He has brought Himself unspeakably near to our hearts.

From the presence of such a faith as this everything must retire, and make room for God and His gift. Hagar is dismissed, and of course, the mocking Ishmael. Sarah will have it so—faith, rather, will have it so. And so will God; and Abraham, let fondness and nature be as reluctant as they may, must have it so likewise.

What precious mysteries may our souls thus feed upon, while they meditate on Hagar's *introduction* to the house, her *residence* in the house, and her *dismissal* from the house, of our *father* Abraham!

But I would now also, for a little, trace the results



of the birth of Isaac, of the appearance of the child of promise in the house of Abraham.

1. The *immediate* fruit of this appearance of Isaac, as I have been observing, is the dismissal of Hagar and her child. And, as I have also observed, this is a mystery.

"After that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master;" but the exhortation now is, "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." (Gal. iii. 25; v. 1.)

The Spirit of sonship displaces that of fear. *There must be no room in the house for two children of such opposite tempers.* Since Jesus had appeared, the elect stand in the righteousness of faith, and wait for the hope it inspires (Gal. v. 5.) and fear and bondage depart.

2. The *future* fruit of this great mystic event, is the covenant of peace between Abraham and the Gentiles, Abraham on that great occasion taking the lead, and soon afterwards owning, for the first time, the earth as a beautiful or millennial scene, and the Lord God as the everlasting God, or the Father of the millennial age (Gen. xxi. 22-33).

In this way the *immediate* and the *final* results of the appearance or birth of the child of the free-woman are exhibited. But there is more to be observed in the history down to ch. xxv. Another thing is incidentally shewn also—the fortunes of the outcast child of the bondwoman.

At first he is all but dead. The provision with which he left Abraham's house is all spent, and he

is cast entirely upon God. But under His provision he grows up and thrives, as a man of the wilderness. There he dwells and has his occupation, and the prophecies which went before on him (ch. xvi.) were made good. But in the principle and taste of his mind he returns, as far as he can, to his mother's native land. *She gets him an Egyptian wife.*

All this is significant. For we know that Ishmael is, mystically, the children of "the Jerusalem that now is" (Gal. iv.). And quite after this pattern of Ishmael, is it now with the Jew ; for the Jew (or the nation of Israel) since the day of his dismissal from the house of God, since he ceased to be owned of the Lord in the land of his fathers, has been kept alive by the peculiar hand or provision of God. A full end has been made of other nations but not of Israel, and never will. For so runs the promise: outcast that people are, but not destroyed. They have, it is true, gone back all they could, to the flesh out of which by profession through circumcision they had come ; they have, in principle, returned to Egypt, or found affinity with the ways of an uncircumcised world ; but there they are to this day, kept by the present hand of God for the coming purposes of God, all their history marking the energies of a divine hand over them.

This is all significant : the wilderness of Ishmael is as much mystic ground as the land of Israel. But further, during this growth of Ishmael in the wilderness, the house of God has been enjoying its

liberty. Isaac has filled Abraham's and Sarah's heart with laughter. And all this liberty and joy was as much divine as the preservation of the life of Ishmael in the wilderness—the one betokening the *Spirit*, the other the *hand* of God. God sanctioned this joy. He would by no means have it otherwise.

And, blessed to tell it, it was a *worshipping* as well as a deep personal joy; for it could associate itself with any sacrifice. The father and the son, Abraham and Isaac, loved each other with the warmest affections, but at the bidding of the Lord they can go to the altar as the offerer and his lamb. And it was also a joy that could dwell in thoughts of *resurrection*, and lay its objects in scenes beyond the grave. And it was holy jealousy as well. It refused all kindredness or Ishmael's affinities with the world. Chapters xxii.-xxiv. exhibit these qualities in Abraham and Isaac, while Ishmael is growing up no better than an Egyptian in the desert.

This is, I believe, all deeply significant. Is it not the picture of what we in this age ought to be—in a *spirit of full gladness and liberty before our God*, but also in a *spirit of sacrifice*, and in a *spirit of separation from the world*?

Finally, as I have already anticipated, in a little time the scene will change to glory or the kingdom. Abraham or Israel will be courted by the Gentiles and their kings; the earth will be beautified, or planted with groves again; and the altar of the

everlasting or millennial God (see again ch. xxi.) will be raised, while a covenant of peace binds all the families of the earth together ; as here at the close of Abraham's seed, as by Keturah, are sent into distant lands, with gifts as from a father, though Isaac was at home the heir of his estate ! (xxv.)

“Witty inventions,” surely, divine wisdom employs to teach our souls with joy and profit !

NOTA BENE.—It is not unworthy of notice, in connection with the foregoing article, to observe what an illustration the conduct of Esau, in Gen. xxviii. 6-9, gives us of the truths, “the flesh profiteth nothing,” and “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Jno. vi. 63 ; Rom. viii. 8) ; and, at the same time, the readiness of the flesh, even in its worse forms, to turn to the law for help. Valuing a mess of pottage more than that to which the blessing of God was attached, Esau shews himself to be a “profane person,” thereby, under the government of God, forfeiting the blessing. He seeks the latter “carefully with tears,” but finds “no place of repentance.” In this position, instead of self-judgment and repentance, “seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not his father, Esau went . . . and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, to be his wife,” *joining affinity with the son of the bond-woman* Profanity and the law (in type) linked together ! Truly, as has been said (page 71), “the working of an unbelieving heart and the principle of confidence in the flesh go together and measure each other !”

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The difference between law and grace is—grace depends on what God is for me ; law, on what I am for God.