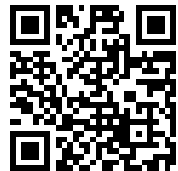
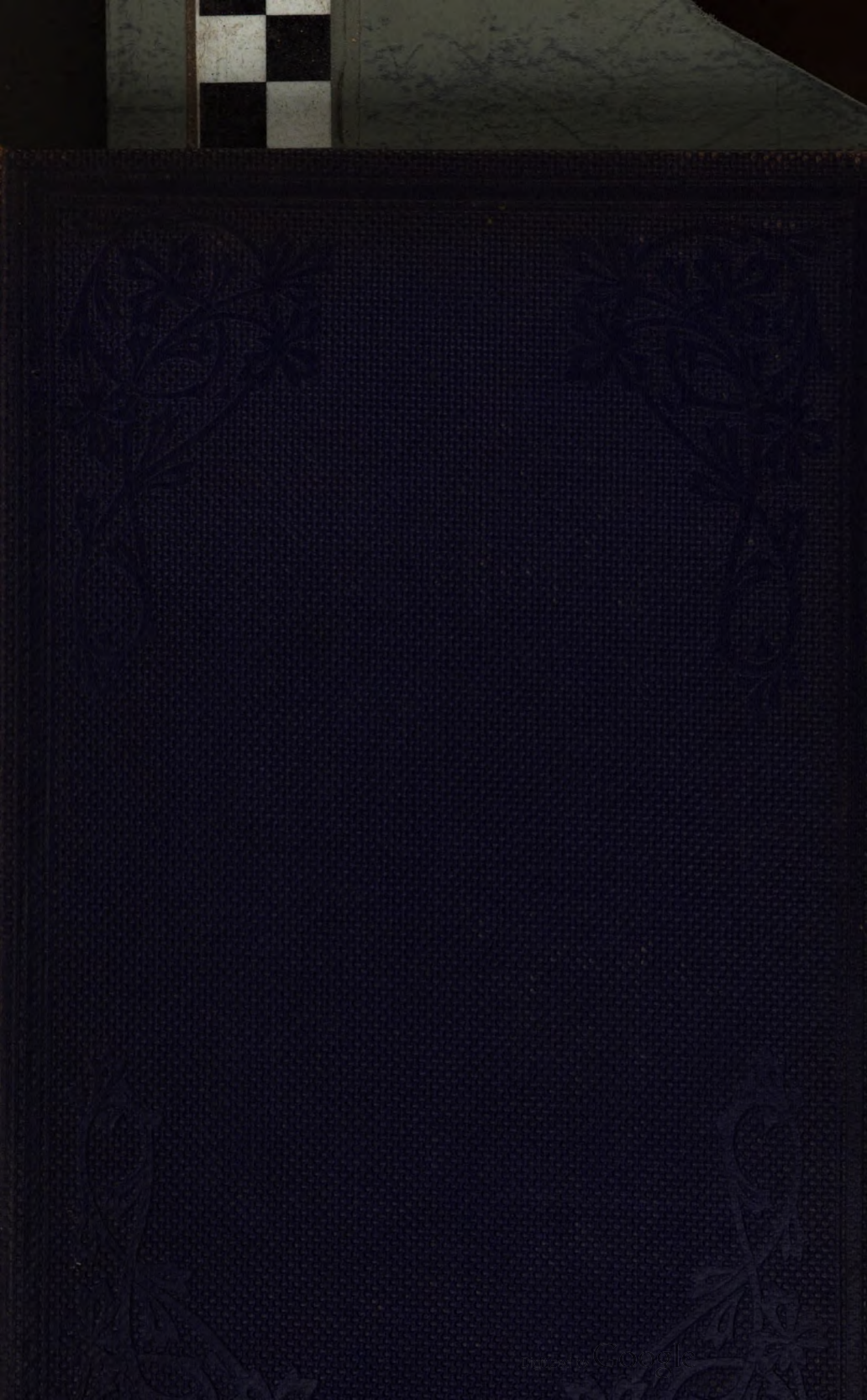
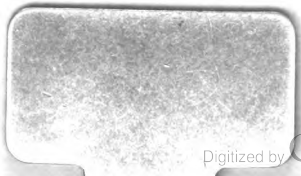

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THE PREFACES

TO

MARTIN LUTHER'S BIBLE.

THE PREFACES

TO THE

EARLY EDITIONS

OF

MARTIN LUTHER'S BIBLE.

EDITED BY

T. A. READWIN, F.G.S.,
&c., &c.

LONDON :

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INTRODUCTION.

THESE Prefaces were translated some years ago, and presented to the Editor by his late revered friend, Sir George Duckett, Bart., F.R.S., with the exception of the Preface to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which had been previously published. The Editor is now enabled to publish the Prefaces in a complete form, through the liberality of the Messrs. Hatchard, who have gratuitously placed the copyright of the "invaluable" Preface to the Romans at his disposal.

The object of the Prefaces was to illustrate the great principle of "Justification through Faith." They were partly the composition of Luther, and partly that of pious men, to whom the religious circle of the time must have looked with implicit confidence.

The earlier editions of Luther's Bible are very rare, and the later editions include the Prefaces either in a modified form (as various opinions prevailed) or omit them altogether.

It is, however, presumed that they have never lost their intrinsic value; and in that conviction they are now published, in grateful recollection of the original Translator, and in the hope that they may be found as useful in the present generation as in the time of the great Reformer.

T. A. READWIN.

STRETFORD, MANCHESTER,

May 18, 1863.

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INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO READ THE HOLY BIBLE.

For a right, salutary, and edifying perusal of Holy Writ it is requisite, *Firstly*: That man should humbly implore God for his enlightening grace; always bearing in mind that what proceeds from the Spirit of God can only be revealed through the Spirit of God. *Secondly*: That he should bring to it a mind free from all notions or affections which he may previously have entertained or encouraged; and should feel within himself a pure and hearty desire both to acquire a knowledge of, and to do, the will of God; or, in the words of Jesus, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John, ch. 7, v. 17). He must pay strict attention to words, in order that he may possess and retain that sound apprehension of the Spirit of God, which presumes an examination of the Scriptures such as Jesus enjoins (John, ch. 5, v. 39), "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

B

Thirdly: He should diligently consider, especially at the commencement of each Biblical work, the occasion, time, persons, and other circumstances; nay, even the title of the work itself; and, therefore, not read it in a cursory manner; but make it a matter of subsequent reflection. For this purpose, he should consult the several prefaces of *Luther*—to the Prophets, to Isaiah, and to the Epistle to the Romans. *Fourthly*: He should examine, not merely the objects of the chapters, but of the Books taken as a whole, and should generally consider all the points to which I have alluded, reading them attentively and repeatedly; for nothing contributes more to the acquisition of a clear and an intelligible meaning than our knowledge of the object. Thus, he who knows that the object of Habakkuk's prophecy was to tranquilize the minds of the pious, but timid, persons who were to witness the approaching destruction of Judea, will understand the meaning of the words in ch. 2, v. 3, that "the vision is yet for an appointed time; but, at the end, it shall speak," and will connect them with the fulfilment of the divine predictions; and especially with the promise of the coming of the Messiah. *Fifthly*: He should attend to the special object of the chapter or section, and look to the context, as it connects and illustrates both what precedes and follows; and this, it is obvious, requires thought and care. Thus, we cannot understand the third chapter to the Gala-

tians except we refer both to the previous and subsequent chapters, where St. Paul urges upon the Galatians the inefficacy of the doctrine that the mere observance of the Law is sufficient for salvation. *Sixthly*: We should not lightly deviate from the literal meaning of the words, particularly in matters of history and in cases of doctrine. Thus, Samson's Foxes (Judges, ch. 15, v. 4) have been interpreted to mean so many bundles of straw; and the passage (John, ch. 3, v. 5) in which water and the spirit are declared the media of repentance, has been explained as if Justification before God was inspired righteousness; whereas the word literally means an exemption from judgment. *Seventhly*: We have likewise to consider that the language in which the Holy Scriptures have been written has its own peculiar construction; and that, consequently, individual words, as well as collective idioms, must be separately and solicitously examined. Thus, to *go* and to *walk*, frequently signify to improve and augment. *Flesh* implies the whole man; and, more commonly, the man prior to a state of repentance. *Putting the soul into one's hand*, is exposing one's self to imminent danger. *Eighthly*: When a word in a discourse or narration is clear and simple we need not go beyond the obvious meaning and subject the Scriptures to the imputation of darkness and difficulty. So the word *eating*, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, cannot signify, at one and the same time,

physically eating the consecrated bread and spiritually eating the actual body of Christ. *Doing*, in the same sense, cannot signify a participation in the body and blood of Christ, and at the same time His actual sacrifice. *Ninthly*: Obscure and perspicuous passages, when they both relate to the same subject, should be compared; and Scripture should be explained by Scripture, that the analogy of Faith may remain unimpaired. Thus, the passage (Luke, ch. 14, v. 26) "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," is illustrated by Matthew (ch. 10, v. 37), "He that loveth his father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me." When we investigate the meaning by the help of parallel passages, we should pay more attention to the facts than to those passages which merely contain corresponding words. Thus, in Genesis (ch. 19, v. 26),¹ where Lot's wife looks back, the object and example are illustrated by Luke (ch. 17, v. 31, 32);² and we may see in the institution of the Lord's Supper (Matthew, ch. 26, v. 26, 27),³ that the question,

¹ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

² In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's Wife.

³ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.

according to the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, is not of the change of substance, but simply of communion. *Tenthly*: At the same time, corresponding words and idioms, taken in their literal sense, may, by their connexion with the context, shed much light upon a subject. The appearance of the Jews (Acts, ch. 24, v. 1)¹ before the Governor Felix, acquires additional value as a judicial proceeding when we refer to Hebrews (ch. 9, v. 24)² and connect it with our own appearance before our Mediator Christ in Heaven.

GENERAL AND SPECIAL RULES RELATING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

WE have chiefly to study in the Old Testament how we should *seek and find Christ*, who asserts distinctly (John, ch. 5, v. 39) that it testifies of Him; there is, therefore, no essential difference between the Old and the New Testament, although the mode of salvation is apparently different; but which, when closely examined, explains how St. Paul, in his doctrine of the Justification of Abraham, con-

¹ And after five days, Ananias the High Priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the Governor against Paul.

² For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

nects and continues his chain of reasoning, as it affects this doctrine, from the old down to the new covenant. (Romans, ch. 4, v. 1.)¹

The idioms of the Old Testament must not always be taken in a strictly literal sense. They are sometimes ornamental, mystical (mythical?) or mysterious; and govern or give a value to the word in proportion to its prospective relation to the New Testament. To this class belongs the passage (Isaiah, ch. 25, v. 6)² where the *fat banquet* typifies the call of the Gentiles under the New Covenant. In the same way, the elevation of the brazen Serpent denotes the death of Christ upon the cross; and the miraculous existence of Jonah in the belly of the fish, his burial. The prophecies in the Old, and their fulfilment in the New Testament, should be diligently compared and connected, affording both mutual and powerful confirmation. Thus, when we read the prediction of Isaiah (ch. 53, v. 9) "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," we understand the passage by connecting it through the medium of the New Testament with the details of the passion, and of the sepulture of Christ. The promises in the Old Testament are not merely indicative of earthly and

¹ What shall we then say that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

² In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

temporary, but of spiritual and eternal happiness. Thus, the promise of the blessing to the seed of Abraham (Gen. ch. 12, v. 3)¹ is to be understood by reading Galatians, ch. 3, v. 8 to 16;² and the promise of Life through the observance of the Mosaic Law (Leviticus, ch. 18, v. 5),³ when we read Luke, ch. 10, v. 28.⁴

RULES RELATING TO THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE GENERALLY.

IN the lives of the Patriarchs we are not merely to look for historical facts, but to carry our eyes onward to the time of Christ, and see how He was

¹ In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

² The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the Law, are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in the things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but, as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.

³ Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which, if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord.

⁴ And he (Jesus) said unto him, thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

promised, typified, and gladly accepted by them in faith. The offering of Abel, at the commencement of the world, was an anticipated allusion to the great ultimate sacrifice of Atonement. Thus, Abraham (Gen., ch. 22, v. 12, 13)¹ received Isaac, according to Hebrews, ch. 11, v. 19,² as a type of the resurrection; and the blessing of Jacob by Isaac had in view the coming of Christ and of His kingdom to their posterity. The Levitical law is not to be regarded as *a mere ceremonial ordinance*; but as comprising the *most glorious emblems of Christianity*; an object we should never lose sight of, and which is admirably illustrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We are here to observe that we should never extend the meaning of the emblem beyond what it obviously and spiritually requires; as it frequently happens that more is contained in the emblem than is to be met with in the Antitype; and more in the Antitype than is to be met with in the emblem. Thus, the High Priest was an emblem of Christ, so far as it related to sacrificing for the sins of the people; but not as it implied the necessity for sacrificing for his own sins, which of course

¹ And he said lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

² Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure.

could not apply to Christ. (Hebrews, ch. 5, v. 3).¹ On the other hand Moses was an emblem of Christ, so far as it related to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; not as it respected the time and manner, but solely as it respected the fact. The promises made to the Patriarchs were not always personally fulfilled to them, but occasionally to their successors. Thus, the promise made to Abraham to possess the land of Canaan (Gen., ch. 15, v. 18), was interpreted practically in favour of his descendants. The injunctions of the law must not be opposed to the evangelical promises of Grace, because they flow from distinct principles. Therefore, although it is said (Lev., ch. 10, v. 5) that the man who doeth the works of the law shall live by them, yet the evangelical promise (Mark, ch. 16, v. 16) that he who believes shall be saved, is in no degree affected by it. In the historical books we should carefully retain the same literal signification which the nature of every historical work requires. A person, a place, or a province has sometimes a distinct name; and sometimes distinct persons and places have the same names; all which we should carefully observe. Thus, Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah (2 Kings, ch. 23, v. 31) is called Johanan (1 Chron. ch. 3, v. 15) and Shallum (Jeremiah, ch. 22, v. 11). Nathan is the name of a prophet, and of a son of

¹ And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

David; and Bethlehem the name of a town in the tribe of Judah, and in the tribe of Zebulon. Sometimes that which has already taken place is described as subsequent to the fact in point of time; and that which is subsequent as if it had already taken place. Thus, we read in Gen., ch. 11, of the confusion of tongues, although this last must have preceded the genealogy which is described in the 10th chapter. In the same way the spies are stated to have been let down by Rahab, previous to the conversation and the arrangement they had made with one another. We must not take the numbers and chronology too literally; as a *certain* number is occasionally used for an *uncertain* number; and an *imperfect* for a *perfect* time. Thus, in 1 Kings, ch. 2, v. 11, David is said to have reigned forty years; when it appears from 2 Samuel, ch. 2, v. 11, that he reigned six months longer. The times, however, should be well distinguished, in order that the harmony of the sacred books in historical transactions may be observed. Therefore, when it is mentioned in 2 Kings, ch. 8, v. 26, that Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and in 2 Chronicles, ch. 22, v. 2, that he was forty-two, we must take the first number from the time of his birth, and the second from the time of his family entering upon the kingdom of Israel, and thus distinguish the one from the other. Cases frequently occur, described according to the opinion

prevailing at the time, but not according to the real fact; they may be said to be related, rather than approved; and hence, we are not to take the language and the actions of even pious men as a standard for our imitation, or as an example to follow, in opposition to established truths. Thus, the vision or spirit at Endor is called *Samuel*, because so called by the witch and by King Saul. (1 Sam., ch. 28, v. 11.) To this class belongs the impious discourse of Sennacherib to Hezekiah, which is historically true; but morally false. The murder and adultery of which David was guilty, as well as many other sins recorded in the Holy Scriptures, are not written as a *justification* for us to plead; but as an example to *avoid*. In reading the book of Job, we are to observe that much is brought forward by the friends of Job which the Holy Scriptures do not, in the narration, sanction as true; and that in the hour of temptation Job frequently uses language which will not bear the severity of criticism. Of the last we may take the 23rd, and of the first, the 34th chapter as an example. In the Psalms we are to bear in mind the history of David; to connect with the psalm the vindication of its contents, and to reflect how far David is speaking in his own person, and how far in the character of a prophet; and that the maledictions against his enemies, and against the enemies of religion, are not models for us to follow;

but prophetic denunciations of their approaching punishment. In the proverbs of Solomon we are not to look for closeness of connexion; but to the antithesis of a sentence, and to the mode of expression where the same subject is repeated in different ways. This facilitates and illustrates the meaning, as may be seen by comparing ch. 14, v. 32,¹ with ch. 28, v. 1.² In Ecclesiastes we are to examine whether the preacher speaks in his own or in another name; whether he looks to the fact, intrinsically or superficially; whether he speaks according to authority, or according to the suggestion of advice. Thus, the passage, ch. 3, v. 18,³ refers solely to external appearance, and ch. 11, v. 9,⁴ to spiritual admonition. The Song of Solomon should be read as abstractedly as possible from all personal feelings and physical affections; we should reflect that under a variety of images, and by the attachment of the Bride, is to be understood the love of Christ towards his Church, and the respondent sympathy of his disciples. In reading the Prophets

¹ The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death.

² The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.

³ I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves were beasts.

⁴ Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

we should make ourselves acquainted with the circumstances of the times, and of the nations that bordered upon Israel; with their state of prosperity and decline; and with the tribes and demarkation of the land of Israel itself. These may be collected from the historical books. *Luther*, in his preface to the Prophets, has made this a subject of particular attention. With these previous resources, we must observe of whom the Prophet speaks in any text or chapter; whether of himself or of another; whether of the past, the present, or the future; whether in a literal or in an allegorical sense. Thus, the Chamberlain from Ethiopia asked Philip with great propriety (Acts, ch. 8, v. 34), of whom Isaiah was speaking, whether of himself or of another? In order to ascertain this, we ought not merely to know but to think a little upon the marks and characters which are connected with the Prophets, and with the subjects of their prophecy. When all, or the principal marks and characters apply to a subject, so as to leave no doubt of the identity, we should not travel from the literal meaning; but when they are inapplicable, we should look to the fact, or to the person evidently intended to be described, and adopt the illustration in a higher or more spiritual sense. It is thus we find the names of Israel, Babylon, Egypt, Tyre and Sidon in the Prophets. As long as the characters permit it, we understand them to mean the places

and the persons whose names they bear; but when these characters cannot possibly apply, we must then take them in a spiritual sense, and explain Israel as the Church of Christ, and Babylon and Egypt as her enemies—nor must we forget that the Prophets frequently describe spiritual and invisible consequences in national and visible emblems; and veil the mysteries of the New Testament in the language of the Levitical Law. Thus, in Joel, ch. 2, v. 28, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are prefigured by dreams, by visions, and by prophecies, in the same manner as the new temple is in Ezekiel, ch. 40, v. 48. We are not to deduce our creeds or our articles of faith from the Apocryphal writings; nor are we to lay great stress upon their language, because we consider them to have been composed *not* under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and therefore comprising many erroneous notions. The New Testament has not been improperly called the Key or Sequel to the Old; because the prophecies relating to Christ and to his Church in the Old Testament receive their plenary fulfilment and illustration in the New. Hence references are frequently made to passages in the Old Testament, and these passages are occasionally quoted; in which case we are to remark that these passages are sometimes literal, sometimes allegorical, and sometimes contain the name of the original writer; whilst at other times the obvious meaning of the passage recalls his name

and his authority. Thus, the prophecy of Hosea, ch. 2, v. 23,¹ is to be understood in the sense assigned to it in Romans, ch. 9, v. 25,² and Matthew, ch. 1, v. 23,³ evidently to Isaiah, ch. 11, v. 1,⁴ and ch. 7, v. 14.⁵

We must regard the Gospels as historical books, adopting the obvious or popular meaning of their words, and not indulging in any mystical or forced interpretation. The narrations of the Evangelists are adapted to harmonise with one another; we must consider them what they are, as faithful historians; and read them, as far as we can, with reference to their chronology. The parables and comparisons in the Gospels should be carefully read with this object; and they will receive additional illustration either from the intrinsic character of the parables themselves, or from the context and spirit of the adjoining verses; or from some cause, local or otherwise, which may be supposed to have induced our Saviour to have delivered them. Thus, the parable of the unfruitful fig tree (Luke, ch. 13, v. 6), shews the object to be that God has great

¹ I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy: and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

² As he said also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

³ Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.

⁴ There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

⁵ Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.

patience with sinners, and that he pardons them, not on account of their own merits, but solely through the intercession of Christ. The parables of the unjust Judge, and of the Pharisee and the Publican in the 18th chapter of St. Luke, are explained by the verses in the beginning of it; the parable of the rich and of the poor, in the 16th, by the verses at the end. The parable of the vineyard (Matthew, ch. 20) is best illustrated by the preceding contexts, which gave Jesus an opportunity of delivering it with effect.

The history known under the name of the Acts of the Apostles is the history of the early Church, under the more immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. It acquaints us with its progress, with its labours, its promulgation, its persecution; the whole under the guidance, the protection, and the blessing of God. It assures us that the several promises and predictions proceeding from the Holy Ghost, declaring the office and the exertions of the Apostles, the confirmation of their doctrine by corresponding signs, and the hatred, troubles, and obstinacy which they would be called upon to encounter, were accurately fulfilled. They mention the Apostles generally, but relate more particularly to St. Paul, to whose Epistles, as well as to those of the others, these histories may be considered as an introduction. Amongst these Epistles, St. Paul's are obviously the most prominent; and we must observe

that he generally begins with a doctrine, and ends with an application. His language is short and expressive, and abounding in parentheses; and he frequently makes use of words which require to be well considered and well understood. Examples of this style and manner are to be met with in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians; and of parentheses in Ephesians, ch. 2, v. 2 to 13. So also in Galatians, ch. 5, v. 17,¹ and Ephesians, ch. 4, v. 22,² he uses "flesh" and "old man," for sin; and in Romans, ch. 8, v. 1,³ and Col. ch. 3, v. 10,⁴ he uses "spirit" and "new man," for regeneration; and in Romans, ch. 7, v. 4,⁵ the *body* of Christ for the *doctrines* of Christ. He especially demonstrates the truth of these doctrines by the most stringent conclusions, and occasionally passes from details to generalities, where the main proposition is in other respects so settled as to justify this mode of reasoning. An instance of the first are his proofs of the resurrection of the dead, 1 Cor., ch. 15; and of the second, in Romans, ch. 4, v. 2,⁶ where he concludes

¹ For the *flesh* lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the one to the other.

² That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

³ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the *Spirit*.

⁴ And have put on the *new man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him.

⁵ Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

⁶ For, if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

from Abraham and his justification in favour of our justification, an argument which is irresistible ; as the doctrine of justification is not only advanced and maintained both in the Old and New Testament, but explained by St. Paul himself in his Epistle to the Romans, ch. 3, v. 22 to 24.¹

In the Epistles of the other Apostles, and in reference to the doctrine of Justification by Faith, the abuse resulting from it is obviated by the injunctions to be charitable, to be patient under persecution, and to persevere in purity of doctrine. With this recollection constantly in view, the conflicting passages, James, ch. 2, v. 24,² and Romans, ch. 3, v. 28,³ may be consistently reconciled.

With respect to the Revelation of St. John, we should never forget the particular request of all commentators, that we should be well acquainted with Ecclesiastical History ; that we should accurately observe its connexion with the prophetic visions ; and that we should wait with patience for the development and fulfilment of that which remains obscure.

¹ Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference ; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

² Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

³ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.

PREFACE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT BY
MARTIN LUTHER.

SOME consider the Old Testament as unimportant, and intended only for the Jewish people, and, therefore, now obsolete, as referring to historical events long since past. They conceive they have quite enough in the New Testament, alleging that they have only a spiritual meaning to seek in the Old; and such has been the opinion of Origen, Jerome, and many great men. But Christ says (John, ch. 5, v. 39), "Search the Scriptures, for they testify of me;" and St. Paul commands Timothy (1 Timothy, ch. 4, v. 13) that he should give attention to reading, and he boasts (Romans, ch. 1, v. 2) that the Gospel had been promised by God in the Scriptures, and (1 Cor., ch. 15, v. 3, 4; Romans, ch. 9, v. 5) that Christ descended from David, died, and rose again, according to the Scriptures; and St. Peter refers us more than once to the Scriptures (2 Peter, ch. 1, v. 19, and ch. 3, v. 15, 16). By this

they teach us that the writings of the Old Testament are not to be despised, but to be perused with due diligence, because they form, in themselves, the strong foundations of the New Testament, confirming the New by a reference to the Old. St. Luke writes also (Acts, ch. 17, v. 11) that the converts at Berea¹ were more noble "than those in Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures daily" whether they were in conformity with the doctrine of St. Paul. In the same way, therefore, that we should not reject the foundation and demonstration of the New Testament, so ought we, with equal affection, to esteem the Old. And what is the New Testament but the public declaration and announcement of Christ, previously made known in the language of the Old Testament, and fulfilled in the person of Christ? That those who are unacquainted with it may have the means and the inducement to read it to advantage, I have endeavoured, under the blessing of God, to give as good an explanation as my capacity will permit. I entreat, therefore, and I admonish every pious

¹ In Luther's translation (ch. 17, v. 10) it runs as follows:—v. 16, 17, "But the brethren immediately expedited in the night Paul and Silas to Berea, and when they came there, they went into the Jewish Synagogue. For they were the most noble amongst them at Thessalonica who received the word most willingly and searched daily in the Scriptures, whether it so were." This is the literal translation, and both the *Textus receptus* of Mill and Griesbach may justify both Luther's and our own authorised version. Wistestir has some various readings, but not to affect the sense. The only question is, whether the converts at Berea or Thessalonica examined the Scriptures in the sense St. Paul or St. Luke uses.

Christian that he should not be shocked at the simplicity of the language and of the history ; but that he should read without doubting, however inconsistent it may appear, believing it to express the words and works, the judgments, and the history of the majesty, of the power, and of the wisdom of God. For these are the Scriptures, before which the wise and the learned are as fools, and yet they are open to the humble, to the simple, and to the poor (Matt., ch. 11, v. 25). Lay aside, therefore, whatever may be your own thoughts and feelings, and regard the Scriptures as the highest and most invaluable sanctuary, as a treasure of such wealth that it never can be sufficiently explored. You may thus find that godly wisdom which is given to us by God himself, and with such simplicity and plainness that all pride is humbled before it. Here you will see the swaddling clothes and the manger, in which Christ is lying, and to which the angels directed the shepherds (Luke, ch. 2, v. 12). The swaddling clothes are mean and insignificant, but Christ, the treasure lying in them, is invaluable. Learn, also, that this book is a Book of Law, which teaches us what we are to do and what we are to avoid, and which gives us histories and examples in what manner the law has been obeyed and violated. In the same way, also, the New Testament is a Gospel, or a Book of Grace, and teaches us in what manner we are to obey, that the Law

may be fulfilled. But in the Old, as well as in the New Testament, in addition to the doctrine of grace, many other doctrines are introduced. Such are the laws and commandments for the government of the flesh; because, in this life, the spirit is not perfect, nor will mere abstract grace direct us. There are, therefore, in the Old Testament, besides the laws, many promises and declarations of grace, by which the holy fathers, and the prophets, as well as ourselves, are comprehended, under the law, in the faith of Christ. The leading doctrine of the New Testament is to announce grace and peace, through forgiveness of sins, in Christ; and the fundamental principle of the Old Testament is to lay down a law, and to point to us what is sin, and to require obedience. This is what you have to look to in the Old Testament. Beginning with the Books of Moses, we are taught in his first book how all things have been created, and next (and this is essentially vital) how sin and death came into the world, namely, by the fall of Adam, through the malignity of the devil (Genesis, ch. 3, v. 4). We then learn, but long before Moses appeared, from whence the remedy was to come which should conquer sin and death, namely, not through law, or through any works of man, for then there was no law, but through the seed of the woman, through Christ (Genesis, ch. 3, v. 15), promised both to Adam and to Abraham (Genesis, ch. 12, v. 3), in

order that faith, from the beginning of Scripture, might be unequivocally exalted above all works, laws, and merits. Therefore, the first book of Moses is almost confined to examples of faith and infidelity, and to the fruits which faith and infidelity have severally produced ; and hence it becomes, as it were, an evangelical work. In the second book, when the world was now peopled, and had so fallen into blindness that it was almost difficult to say what sin was and how death followed, God brings forward Moses with the law, and separates to himself a peculiar people, that through them the world might be more enlightened, and the nature of sin revived and expounded through the law. He encircles this people with laws of every kind ; he distinguishes them from every other nation ; he commands them to build a tabernacle, and institutes divine worship ; he orders them to submit to rules and to public officers, and through the medium of the promulgation of these laws, and security at the same time for their execution, that they shall be governed with temporal wisdom in this world, and shall enjoy spiritual wisdom as it relates to God. In the third book the priesthood is specially ordained, together with its laws and privileges, and the rule prescribed how priests are to act, and how they are to teach the people. From this we may perceive that the sacerdotal office is only introduced

as the consequence of the announcement and of the definition of sin, and that they, the priests, are to declare the ordinances of God, and to make atonement for the sins of the people. So that everything which relates to sin and to sinners proceeds from and is revealed by God. For this reason, no temporal duties were assigned to the priests, nor were they permitted or required to rule in a temporal manner, but solely to regulate the conduct of the people, and to confine themselves to this duty. In the fourth book, priests and princes having been established, the tabernacle and the service of God prepared, and whatever relates to the people of God having been ordained, the whole is put into execution, and the trial made of the operation and of the effect. The book speaks much, therefore, of the disobedience of the people, and of the punishment which this disobedience entailed. And thus it is, at all times, laws are easy to be given, but when they come into practice, and men are called upon to obey them, nothing but obstacles present themselves, and what the law requires is either resisted or evaded. That this book is a remarkable instance of the impossibility of making people virtuous by mere laws St. Paul shows, when he says, the law works only sin and transgression (Romans, ch. 4, v. 15). In the fifth book, the people, having now been punished for their disobedience, and the

favour of God so extended to them, that they have been allowed to conquer two kingdoms, but with the accompanying condition that they should, with desire and with affection, obey the commandments of God, Moses recapitulates the entire law, together with all the intervening events, except such as relate to the priesthood. He explains to them a second time whatever concerns the temporal and spiritual administration of a people. Moses, therefore, like a consummate legislator, fulfilled his duty in every respect, not only by giving the law, but by his constant readiness to enforce it, explaining it where it was obscure, and supplying it where it was defective. But this explanation, in the fifth book, really contains no more than the doctrine of obedience to God, and love of your neighbour, a doctrine to which all the laws of God invariably tend. Hence Moses, in his explanations, reproveth whatever may be obstructive to faith in God as far as the 12th chapter, and from thence to the end of the book whatever is adverse to charity. We may observe here, as prominent, that Moses so completely encompasses the people with laws, that he leaves no space open for reason, either to select their own works or to construct their own forms of divine worship. He teaches nothing beyond the fear of God, to trust in him, and to love him, and he gives so many instructions with respect to public worship, to sacrifices, to fastings, to vows, to repent-

ance, to *repentance*¹ and *atonement*, that no man can have any excuse for adopting any other ceremonies. In short, he teaches them how to plant and to build, to marry and to fight, to *repent*¹ and to *atone*, to govern their children, their servants, and their houses, to purchase and to sell, to borrow and to adjust, and everything which is to be done externally or internally, so much so, that some regulations seem almost superfluous or nugatory. And why does God do all this? Because, having taken the people under his own special protection, that they might be his people, and that he should be their God, he desires to govern them in such a manner that all their conduct should be exemplary, and should be under a strict and thoroughly defined control. For when any man does that for which he has not the previous authority or sanction of the Word of God, such conduct is not acceptable to God, and may be considered as either vain or useless. For in the 4th chapter, 2nd verse, and in the 12th chapter, 32nd verse, he specifically requires that they should add nothing to his laws; and

¹ There is great difficulty in translating this word, namely, Nüss, in German, which signifies "Penance." But Luther had been a monk, and, therefore, he translates with Beza and the Vulgate, *μστάνοσα*, "Do penance," bearing the same meaning as "Pœnitentian" in Latin, and "La Pénitence" in French. Matt., ch. 3, v. 2; ch. 4, v. 17. Mark, ch. 1, v. 4. Luke, ch. 3, v. 3. The Protestants in France now use the words "Repentir" and "Repentanu." Amongst the modern Germans the word signifies, as with us, "deep mental sincere remorse and reformation," but the Roman Catholics retain it rigidly as favouring their doctrine of Penance being a sacrament.

ch. 12, v. 8, he lays it down, as a rule, that they should not act according to their own individual notions of propriety. The Psalmists and the Prophets perpetually exclaim that the people are doing what they consider to be good works, the result of their own imaginations, but which never have been stamped by the direct sanction of God. For God never will or can permit that they who profess to be his servants should deserve any reward from doing what he has not commanded them to do, let the actions be what they may: for obedience is the test and virtue of every work connected with, or dependent upon, the Word of God. Hence, as this life cannot be carried on without external rites and recognised ceremonies, he ordained that they should practice certain forms of recognition and of adoration, and he confirmed these forms by divine authority, that as they must, either from desire or necessity, perform some outward worship, they should adhere to that one which he ordained, and not invent another of their own; they might thus be certain of walking in the right path, and of their whole conduct being governed by strict obedience to the ordinances of God. They were prohibited in every respect from following their own inclinations, or the dictates of their own unassisted reason, whether in apparently doing good or in pursuing their own views of prosperity; and sufficient space, and room, and time, and persons, and means, and

materials were allotted to them, so that they might have no reason to complain, or be induced to follow the example of serving other gods. It may be here proper to remark, that the laws delivered to the Israelites were of three kinds; some related to the administration of personal property, or what we should term municipal or agrarian laws. They were established by God in condescension to the sinful passions of men, and confined to one object. Therefore, these laws were merely prohibitory laws, and did not involve any point of doctrine. Such, for instance, where Moses declares that a man may give a bill of divorcement to his wife (Deut., ch. 24, v. 1), that he may try his wife's fidelity by the sacrifice of jealousy (Num., ch. 5, v. 14), and that he should be conditionally obliged to marry his brother's widow¹ (Deut., ch. 25, v. 5). These are all worldly laws. There are other laws which relate, as I have before said, to the performance of divine service. But, above all these, there are the laws relating to faith and charity, and all other laws must be tested by this joint standard, and our works must be judged by the same criterion, namely, that they shall not have violated these two grand principles. For where they violate these two grand principles, they are both void and vain, useless and ineffectual. Thus we read that David did

¹ In Luther's original preface the words are, "and that he may add to the number of his wives."

not order that Joab should suffer death, although from having twice committed murder Joab deserved it (2 Samuel, ch. 3, v. 27; and ch. 20, v. 10). He promised also the woman of Thecoah that her son should not die, although he had slain his brother (2 Samuel, ch. 14, v. 11), nor does he kill Absalom (2 Samuel, ch. 14, v. 21), and David himself eats the shew-bread reserved expressly for the priests (1 Samuel, ch. 21, v. 6). Tamar also ('according to the then prevailing notions) imagined the king would not object to give her in marriage to his half-brother (2 Samuel, ch. 13, v. 13). From these, and similar examples, it may be presumed that kings, priests, and princes did not consider themselves reprehensible if they deviated from the literal strictness of the law, where the case did not appear to militate against faith and charity. Faith, therefore, in Christ is superior to all laws, and the law is subservient to faith; for all laws are, or ought to be, grounded upon faith and charity; all laws, therefore, which are in opposition to these two great principles cannot be considered as obligatory. The Jews of the present day act exceedingly wrong by observing, with such extreme punctiliousness, certain laws of Moses, and by preferring the sacrifice of peace and quiet to the supposed defilement of eating and drinking with Christians. They do not attend to the meaning and spirit of the law. But

¹ This is my parenthesis.—*G. D.*

this is the light in which laws ought to be viewed, not only by Jews, but by every person who lives in community with or under the protection of laws. Christ says, we do not violate the Sabbath if, when an ox falls into a ditch, we drag him out. And yet, this is only a temporary loss or inconvenience. How much more right have we to act in opposition to laws when extreme personal safety requires it, and the main objects of faith and charity are not violated. Christ tells us that David was justified when he eat the holy bread (Matt., ch. 12, v. 4). Now, what can be the reason that Moses mixes up his laws in a manner so apparently irregular? Why has he not separated and methodised the temporal and spiritual laws, and reserved a special chapter for faith and charity? Nay, he sometimes repeats a law so often, and uses the same words so frequently, that the mind confesses a degree of tedium in reading it. But the answer is, that Moses writes in conformity with the nature of the human mind, and agreeably to the experience of life. So that his book is at once an image and an example of the versatility of man. And thus it is, in the process of life, at one moment you have to do this, and at the next moment another work; so that no man, although leading in other respects a sincerely religious life, is able to say that to-day he will dedicate himself to spiritual, and to-morrow to temporal affairs. God regulates and distributes

laws, as he does the stars in the heavens and the flowers in the fields, and a man should be, therefore, at all times alive and attentive to the object before him. It is thus that Moses has mingled the materials of his work, and it is necessarily connected with the nature of his office that he should be extremely urgent and be frequent in repetition. For he who will rule a people through the medium of law, must be impressive, patient, persevering, and imperative. He must act with the multitude as he would with cattle. No law executes itself through attachment and through affection, but it is always connected with compulsion and with necessity. Moses, therefore, as a lawgiver, was obliged to recognise this inherent repugnance in man to laws, and to enforce upon his people, even to nausea, the fact of their unworthiness and their unwillingness to receive laws from God, and the indispensable necessity of aspiring to divine favour. In the third place, it is the object of Moses to define, through the medium of law, the nature of sin, and to reduce to its real inferior state the arrogance of all human capacity. Hence, St. Paul calls himself a minister of sin (Galatians, ch. 2, v. 18), and his office a ministry of death (2 Cor., ch. 3, v. 7). The knowledge of sin came only through the law (Romans, ch. 3, v. 20, and ch. 7, v. 7), and no man is justified by the works of the law before God. For Moses could not by the law do more than point out what

we ought to perform, and what we ought to avoid. But he could not give us either the power or the capacity to perform or to avoid these things, and he leaves us, therefore, in the full participation of sin. Remaining, consequently, in our sins, death becomes a natural result, both as a punishment and a satisfaction for the offence. Hence, St. Paul terms sin the sting of death (1 Cor., ch. 15, v. 56), because death, through sin, claims ascendancy over us. If there were no law, there would be no sin (Romans, ch. 4, v. 15). The ministerial office is distinctly an office of trespass, attacking and correcting sin through the coercive remedy of law, whilst death succeeds sin both in effect and power; so that the office of Moses was justly styled by St. Paul an administration of sin and death (2 Cor., ch. 3, v. 7 to 9), for he communicates nothing to us through the law but sin and death. But this administration of sin and death is essentially necessary, for where there is no law from God, human reason is so blind that it is incapable of knowing sin (Romans, ch. 3, v. 20; ch. 7, v. 7, 8), for human reason does not know that infidelity, or having no faith in God, is sin. Nay, it does not even know that we ought to believe and trust in God. We walk, therefore, hardened in our blindness, unconscious of the nature and existence of sin, doing, occasionally, good works, and leading in other respects a decent and reputable life. We then imagine that we have

done enough; now, this has been the case both with heathens and with hypocrites who have lived, as they conceived, a most respectable life. Human reason does not know that sin consists in the corrupt inclinations of the flesh, and in the hatred of our enemies. But, whilst they both observe and fear that this is the case with all men, they conclude the feeling to be both natural and justifiable. They consider it, therefore, as quite sufficient if they attend to external works. Thus, human reason considers its infirmity to be its strength, its sin to be a virtue, its evil to be a good, and it rests satisfied and incompetent. To dispel this blindness, and to tame this arrogance of heart, is the office and the object of Moses. But this he cannot effect without previously developing and declaring the reality; and this he does through the law when he teaches us that we are to love and to fear, to believe in and to trust to, God. We are not, therefore, to entertain either prejudices or enmities, either predilections or passions, at variance with this great principle. When our nature receives these laws, our inward consciousness makes us tremble, knowing that we have no trust, no faith, no fear, no love of God, and no purity of soul. We recognise our positive infidelity, our doubts, contempt, and enmity to the divine law, and that our feelings with respect to our neighbours are mixed up with evil thoughts and evil wishes. When we find these things, we fall

back upon our mortal state, and we then understand what is meant by death destroying the sinner, and carrying him off to the miseries of an inferior world. This it is which explains the introduction of death through the medium of sin, or in other words, how sin kills us. This it is which signifies putting sin into motion through the medium of the law, and rendering it so evident as to paralyze all our arrogance into a state of hesitation, terror, and despair. It is then that we exclaim with the prophet Isaiah, that the Lord has forsaken us, or in other words, that we are servants of the Devil (Isaiah, ch. 49, v. 14), that we never can be saved. St. Paul says the same in a few words (1 Cor., ch. 15, v. 56), the sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law. Death stings and destroys us, and renders the sin which is found in us worthy of death. That sin should be found in us, and that it should consign us so powerfully to death, is the consequence of the law which has revealed sin to us, and which has enabled us to know what we previously did not know, and without which knowledge we considered ourselves secure. We may here observe the power with which Moses executes his legislative office, for that he may still further show the unworthiness of man, and reduce humanity to its proper level, he not only gives laws declaring those things to be sins which we ourselves naturally admit to be so, and which the ten commandments embrace, but he de-

clares those things to be sins which we in ourselves scarcely feel or admit to be sins, and he repeatedly and pointedly insists upon their prohibition. Infidelity and unhallowed desires are in themselves sins, and merit the punishment otherwise assigned to them. But that we should not eat leavened bread at Easter (Exodus, ch. 12, v. 15), that we should not eat an unclean animal (Leviticus, ch. 11, v. 4), that we should make no marks upon our bodies (Leviticus, ch. 19, v. 28; ch. 21, v. 5), and whatever the Levitical law may class under the head of transgressions is not, nor can it be, in itself sinful, but becomes sinful only through the fact of the prohibition by law, which law may be repealed. But the ten commandments cannot be repealed, because the sin exists precisely the same as if the ten commandments never had existed, or if man had never been acquainted with them; just as infidelity is a sin amongst heathens although they knew not, neither have heard, what sin is. We may see, therefore, that these numerous laws were given by Moses not only that no one should presume to act upon his own notions of purity and holiness, but that sins should be increased and multiplied to such an extent that the conscience should be loaded, and that hardened blindness should gradually perceive and feel its perfect inefficacy and unworthiness to do anything good, and thus be compelled and carried on by the law to look beyond the law, and to culti-

vate the promises of God revealed in the coming of Christ. For every law that proceeds from God must be wise and right, even though its commandments should specify carrying away dirt and picking up stones. That man, therefore, cannot be considered to be pious, or to be in a sound state of heart, who either does not heed the law or who conforms to it with reluctance. But it is the very constitution of our nature to obey with reluctance. Our nature recognises and feels its own weakness and inferiority whenever it refers to the revealed law of God, and it sighs for divine assistance and for reconciliation into the divine favour through grace in Christ. When Christ, therefore, appeared the law became of non-effect, especially that part of the Levitical law which makes *that* to be sin which in itself is not sin. It is then that the ten commandments are no longer Levitical; not that we can dispense with their obligations or authority, but that the authority of Moses ceases with regard to them, and the otherwise inevitable consequence of sin is no longer irremediable, in so far as sin still remains the sting of death. But sin is forgiven through Christ, and man is reconciled to God. The heart begins to feel a desire and to entertain a deference for the law, which no longer enjoins, entails, or ensures punishment. A state of sin was established through disobedience to the ten commandments, and man was not only liable to but deserving of death, before the effusion of

grace through the manifestation of Jesus Christ. St. Paul teaches this when he says (2 Cor., ch. 3, v. 13, 14) that the glory which was on the face of Moses ceased, as a consequence of the glory revealed in the appearance of Jesus Christ. That is, the office of Moses, which only led to sin and shame, through the clear development of our inadequacy and unworthiness, no longer gives us any uneasiness or terrifies us by the contingency or condition of death. For we have now the glory in the face of Christ through the mission of grace, and by which we know Christ, through whose righteousness, life, and power, the law is fulfilled and death and hell overcome. It was thus that the three Apostles saw Moses and Elias upon Mount Thabor, and yet they were not afraid, although it was the glory in the face of Christ (Matt., ch. 17, v. 4 ; Luke, ch. 9, v. 33). But as Christ was not present when the dazzling splendour obliged Moses to put a veil upon his face, the children of Israel could not support it (Exodus, ch. 34, v. 30, 31). There are three sorts of persons who profess to obey or who do obey the law. First, those who hear and yet despise the law, and lead a reckless, thoughtless life. It may be said of them that they are without law. These are represented by the worshippers of the calf in the wilderness, upon whose account Moses brake the two tables, and the law did not reach their hearts (Exodus, ch. 32, v. 6 to 19). Secondly, those

who adopt the law, but without power to obey it, inasmuch as they are without grace. They could not see the face of Moses when he brought the tables to them a second time (Exodus, ch. 34, v. 29, 30). The law was given to them, and they do not obey the law, they place a veil over their face and lead a hypocritical life, doing the external works of the law, but what the law when the veil is removed converts entirely into sin, for the law testifies that our powers are nothing independent of the grace of Christ. Thirdly, those who see Moses without a veil. The last are those who understand the law, and that it requires impossible things. It is then that sin marches in its strength (1 Cor., ch. 15, v. 56), that death is mighty, that the spear of Goliath is as a weaver's beam, and that the point of it weighs six hundred shekels of brass. The children of Israel flew before it, and we are only relieved from its effects by the real David, or Christ the Lord. For if the glory of Christ did not come in aid of the glory of Moses, no one would be able to support the splendour of the law and the terrors of sin and death. These last depend not upon works or merits, since we learn from the law that to know and to be conscious of our own unworthiness was the office of Moses and the object of the law (Gal., ch. 3, v. 24). Moses has himself declared that his office and his words were to continue until the coming of Christ, that as a preacher he was

then to cease, for he says (Deut., ch. 10, v. 15) that the Lord their God will raise up a prophet like unto him from amongst his brethren, and that unto him they should hearken. This is the most important sentence, and the very pith of the Mosaic dispensation, and has, therefore, been strenuously and satisfactorily urged and argued by the Apostles (John, ch. 1, v. 45; ch. 6, v. 14; Acts, ch. 3, v. 22; ch. 7, v. 37). The abolition of the law, and the confirmation of the gospels which these arguments illustrate, have furnished ample materials to the prophets. For since God has promised another prophet whom they were called upon to hear, it follows that he would teach them a doctrine distinct from Moses; and as Moses concedes to him his authority, and retires in order that the other may be heard, the second prophet cannot teach through the law, because Moses has already done this in the completest manner, and there could be no necessity for the sake of the law to raise up another prophet. Consequently, this promise must contemplate the doctrine of grace and of Christ. It is from this reason that St. Paul calls the doctrine of Moses—the Old Testament (2 Cor., ch. 3, v. 14); Christ does the same when he introduces the New Testament (Matt., ch. 26, v. 28); and it is a testament for this reason, that God promised and assigned the land of Canaan to the people of Israel upon this condition, that they should observe this testament; and

when he gave it he confirmed it by the sacrifice and by the blood of bulls and goats (Exodus, ch. 24, v. 8). But as this testament rested not upon the grace of God, but upon the merit of works, it would naturally become old and faulty, and the promised land would again be lost because the law could not be fulfilled by works. Another testament was, therefore, necessary, which should be exempt from the infirmities of age, and should be founded upon the words and upon the works of God in order that it might endure for ever (Heb., ch. 13, v. 20). It was, therefore, confirmed through the death and by the blood of an eternal person, and an everlasting country was both promised and given. I here conclude my remarks upon the books and upon the offices of Moses. But, what are then the other books of the prophets and the sacred histories? The answer is that they are identified with Moses. They prosecute, collectively, the office of Moses, and counteract the false prophets, who would lead the people to a mere reliance upon works, and divert them from the spiritual observance and knowledge of the Mosaic law. And they are consistent in this, that through the right understanding of the law they preserved the mind in a consciousness of its own insufficiency, and taught their hearers to look, like Moses, to the Messiah. They amplify, therefore, and illustrate what Moses has said of Christ, as well through the examples of those who obeyed

as of those who neglected the Mosaic law, and they indicate the punishment and recompense attendant upon both. So that the prophets are agents, expounders, and witnesses of the Mosaic truth, leading men through the law to Christ. Here it becomes incumbent upon me to show the spiritual tendency of the Levitical law and of the Mosaic priesthood. Moses is of a truth the fountain of wisdom and understanding, from which has flowed all that the prophets have known and have said. The New Testament is founded upon it, and flows from the same source. It shall be my office to give a brief compendium of it, for the benefit of those who have grace to embrace, to improve, and to comprehend it. If you wish your interpretation to be sure and sound, you must take Christ as your standard. He it is to whom everything refers. In the high priest, Aaron, we are to see Christ alone, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. 7, v. 15): an epistle, I must observe, which of itself is almost sufficient to interpret the Mosaic types. Christ himself is clearly the sacrifice, or the altar, a voluntary offering by his own blood, and so distinctly stated in the Hebrews (ch. 1, v. 27; ch. 13, v. 10). But as the Levitical high priest by his offerings only expiated artificial sins, or sins which according to natural religion are not sins, so Christ, our high priest, has once for all by his own sacrifice and his own blood taken away actual sin, and has passed through the curtain, that

he might reconcile us to God. Everything, therefore, which is written of the high priest may be interpreted personally of Christ, and can apply to no other person. But the sons of the high priest, who assist at the daily sacrifices, are emblematical of us Christians, who dwell before our Father in heaven and are here in the body upon earth, but not otherwise with him except spiritually through faith. Their office, and the manner in which they are to perform their sacrifice, denote the preaching of the gospel, under which the old man is mortified and sacrificed to God. His spirit is consumed spiritually, in the fervour of charity, through the Divine Spirit, and the man becomes metaphorically a sweet smelling savour to God, or has a good, a clear, and a safe conscience before his Maker. It is in this point of view that St. Paul considers it (Romans, ch. 12, v. 1) when he instructs us that we are to render up our bodies a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice to God. And this we do, as I have said, by a strict conformity with the gospel both in preaching and in believing. This may be considered a sufficient introduction to the necessity of seeking Christ and the gospel in the Old Testament.

PREFACE TO THE PSALMS.

MANY of the holy fathers have highly eulogised the Psalms, and preferred them to the other sacred books of Scripture. The work, in fact, abundantly eulogises the Master. I will add now my own praise and my own gratitude. So many legends of saints have been circulated in former days, and so many histories of sufferings and of works for our imitation written, that the Psalms at one time were quite neglected; they were involved in so much obscurity that scarcely one Psalm was properly understood, and yet they afforded such pre-eminent consolation as, even in their badly understood state, to influence and to strengthen the hearts of the pious and the devout. Their language was an object of veneration. But I maintain that no legend and no manual of devotion has ever yet appeared, or can, superior to the Book of Psalms; and if a man wished either to read or to select what is best, both in example, in legend, and in history, he could not do better than adopt the Book of Psalms. For we do not merely find here what one or two saints have done, but what the head of all saints has done, and what all saints still do. We learn how we are to conduct ourselves with respect to God, to our friends, and to our foes, and how we are to act in all cases of danger and uncertainty. But the Psalms

are especially dear and valuable from their detailing to us, so clearly and prophetically, the death and resurrection of Christ; and so declaring his kingdom, and the state and spirit of Christianity, that they may be fairly called a little Bible, in which everything that is in the whole Bible is contained in a beautiful and compendious manner; and they may be considered, therefore, a preparatory *vade mecum* or hand-book to it. It would seem to me as if the Holy Ghost had inspired the composer with the idea of a small Bible, or of an epitome of Christianity and godly men, so that those who have not the means of reading the whole Bible may find the summary and sense condensed in a small volume. But above all, there is a virtue and a soul which breathes throughout the Psalms, whilst in other religious books they are full, not of the words, but of the works of the saints. The Psalms are an exception. They breathe the very odour of sanctity: for they not only relate the works but the words of holy men, how they communed with and prayed to God, and how they still commune and pray to him. so that other legends and other examples, when placed in comparison with the Psalms, appear dumb, empty, and unprofitable. The Psalms represent to us the life and the image of sanctity. A dumb man, when placed in opposition to a man who can speak, may be considered as a man half dead; for there is no more powerful or more noble

distinction in man than that of speech, which elevates him above all other animals, more than form or any other action. Wood and stone may by the art of the engraver acquire a semblance of humanity; and an animal can hear, see, smell, sing, move, stand, eat, drink, fast, and suffer thirst, hunger, frost, and hard fare as well as a man. But the Psalms do more. They give us not only the daily but the best language of holy men, the language which they used in their applications to and intercourse with God, corresponding both with the gravity of the case and the seriousness of the subject. By these means, we have not only laid open to us their words and their works, but their very heart—the vital treasure of the soul,—so that we can look into the ground and foundation of their words and works, that is into their hearts. We know the thoughts they have entertained, the resolutions they have formed, and the conduct they have pursued in every state of doubt, danger, and difficulty. This, however, is not the case with the histories and the legends which describe the manners and the miracles of saints. It is impossible for me to dive into the heart of a man whose works I alone see, and of whose reputation I only hear. As I should much more prefer hearing the language of a saint to seeing his actions, so I would rather look into his heart and inspect his soul than hear his language. But the Psalms in this respect are

copious, since they give us the certainty of knowing both how holy men thought and how they addressed their words towards God and towards man. For the heart of man is like a ship upon a troubled ocean, driven about by winds from every corner of the earth. Care and fear, under the apprehension of impending evils, impel it one way; grief and fear, under the influence of present distress, impel it another; hope and presumption, and the prospect of future prosperity, another; the actual possession of prosperity and the breezes of security and of pleasure, another. But these tempests of the heart induce us to hold the language of earnestness, and to examine the bearings and the recesses of the soul. For he who is weighed down by fear and poverty speaks of misfortunes in a very different way from him who basks in the sunshine of prosperity; and he who is elated by prosperity speaks and sings of joys in a totally different strain from him who lives under the trammels of fear. It has been well said that it comes not from the heart when a wretched man is to laugh, and a gay man is to weep; the avenues to his heart are closed, and the whole effect is disappointment. But what is the chief subject of the Psalms, if it is not earnestness of language in all the storms and contradictions of life? Where shall we find words more adapted to express joy, than what are contained in the Psalms of thanksgiving and of praise? We see

here the hearts of saints. Our thoughts are like the flowers of a beautiful and well-cultivated garden, and our gratification consists in a grateful adoration of divine goodness. Again, where do you find more profound expressions of melancholy and of sorrow than are contained in the Psalms of affliction and of mourning? You look, I say, into the very hearts of holy men; you become familiar with death, and the interior of the tomb is opened to you. We see it dead and dark, under a consciousness of the just wrath of God, and we perceive that His countenance is, as it were, turned away from us. In the two great passions of fear and hope, we find them depicted in language which no painter can embody, and which the greatest human actor would ineffectually attempt to transcend. But what is the most glorious of all is, that when they speak of the Deity they use language which is instinctive with a superfluity of life, and which gives an importance to words beyond the conception of man. In speaking with human beings upon these subjects we rarely succeed in reaching the heart. We feel a deficiency of fervour, and we acknowledge that there is not in ourselves an adequacy of devotion. The impression is different. Hence it arises that the Psalms are a book for all religious men, and that every reader, under every circumstance of life, meets with words which apply to his own situation, and which seem so adapted to his case that he

could neither compose, discover, or desire anything which so little required alteration or improvement. And there is also this advantage, that when we are gratified by the language, and sympathise with it, we are certain of being in the communion of saints; and that all saints must have felt as we feel, because we unite with them in uttering the same song of adoration. Singular! that the Psalmist should have been able to make them speak in this manner to God, and which must have been the effect of their speaking in faith, because to a person without faith the Psalms are not a source of gratification. Finally, an assurance is given to us, upon which we may confidently rely, that we may without fear and hesitation follow in the footsteps of the good men who have preceded us. Examples drawn from other books, and from the legends which are contained in them, describe the works of saints as far beyond our imitation; or else they relate to facts which it would be hazardous to apply to our own situation, because they frequently give rise to sects and to opinions which only end in contradicting or depreciating the greater part of those good men whom we have been instructed to revere. But the Psalms inculcate no such feeling of dissent or schism. They lead us to fear, to rejoice, and to hope, and to a serious coincidence of thought and of language with the good and with the wise. In short, if you wish to see the Christian church painted in the true

colours of life and beauty, if you wish to possess it in miniature, take the Psalms, and you will find in them a faithful mirror reflecting with perfect purity the image of Christianity. You will find yourself in them, and also that great principle "Know thyself" engraved in them, as well as God himself and the creatures whom He has made. Let us, in consequence, be grateful to our Maker for this his unspeakable goodness, and let us accept and enjoy it with equal devotion and diligence, and so honour and praise him that we may avoid, by not being unthankful, the effects of his just punishment. In former times, what a treasure it would have been to have well understood the Psalms, and to have been able to have heard and read them in the common language of our own country. But this was a comfort which we did not experience. Blessed are the eyes which see what we see, and the ears which hear what we hear. But we are like the Israelites in the wilderness, blindly exclaiming, whilst the manna continued to nourish them, "Our souls are disgusted with this insipid food." But we should recollect how they were plagued and punished, in order that we ourselves may escape a similar punishment. May the Father of all grace and mercy preserve us in this, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To him be praise and honour, thanksgiving and glory, both for this Book of Psalms and for his unspeakable, innumerable, eternal blessings. Amen! Amen!

E

PREFACE TO THE PROPHETS.

It would appear as if the unassisted reason of man could discover little in the Prophets that might be considered either profitable or salutary. The philosopher approaches the subject with arrogance, and at the same time his accurate and secular knowledge of Biblical history serves only to nourish doubts, to gratify vanity, or to justify scepticism. The consequence is that he reads with his eyes only, and his attention is confined to the construction of words and to the adjustment of facts. No wonder then that the Word of God should be now so disregarded, notwithstanding the signs of the times, which manifest the spiritual sovereignty of Christ and the events which in connection with it are perpetually present to us. How much more would the Prophets be despised if there were no history and no facts acting as the base or chain of prophecy. It was thus that the children of Israel despised the Word of God, although they had before their eyes the bread from heaven, the fiery pillar, and the protecting cloud,—although they enjoyed at once both the priesthood and the promised land. But we Christians ought not to be so ungrateful, so presumptuous, and so unjust to ourselves as not to

endeavour seriously to derive advantage from reading the Prophets. For in the first place, they announce and testify the advent and the coming of Christ: a faith through which we live, and through which all who have believed in Christ have lived and will live to the end of time. This is a source of great consolation, and a tower of strength to those who believe that we have such strong and ancient witnesses for the confirmation and for the blessing of the Christian faith. We can make our stand upon this rock before God against the injustice, the hypocrisy, and the falsehood of men and sects, supported as they are on one side by plausibility and numbers, and opposed on the other hand by the few who adhere to the cross of Christ, and who maintain that truth which the test of conscience assures them to be sound. I need scarcely allude to the ingenuity and to the attempts of Turks,¹ Papists, and infidels. Hence the confidence with which St. Peter speaks (1 Peter, ch. 1, v. 12). For the Prophets have not imparted to mankind what has been revealed to them for their own exclusive benefit, but for the benefit of those to whom by them the revelation has been communicated. These prophecies acquaint us that he who will be rich in Christ must fill his soul with knowledge and his heart with firmness, and that he must suffer much

¹ In Luther's time there was a religious creed of Mahometanism. The siege of Vienna was as late as 1683.

and many things before he can be a partaker of his glory. Through them we know that the glory of Christ will infallibly become our own, and that his kingdom will never fail; we must first suffer or be prepared to suffer disgrace, misery, and contempt for the name of Christ. Impatience and infidelity will not then perplex us, nor will any doubts embarrass us of that exceeding glory which even the angels, it is said, are desirous of contemplating. In the next place, the Prophets show us, both by experience and by example, that the first commandment is the corner-stone, and they call upon us by the authority of God to be firm in the faith and in the fear of God. And after having predicted the kingdom of Christ, they furnish us with abundant proofs that God requires the observance and punishes the violation of the first commandment. Therefore, when we read or when we hear the Prophets, we read or hear the menaces or the consolations of God. He menaces the ungodly who are proud and secure, and where the menaces are insufficient he enforces them by punishments, by plagues, by pestilences, by famine, even to their destruction, and he thus fulfills the threatenings involved in the first commandment. But he comforts those who fear God; he gives them counsel and assistance in distress; he sustains them by miracles and signs against the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the Devil; and thus he makes good

the consolation involved in the first commandment. With such doctrines and with such examples the Prophets are to us a volume rich in reference. We must not, therefore, be cast down when we see the fancied security and real pride with which the ungodly regard the power of God, troubling himself as little about his menaces as if there was no such being in the world. We see in the Prophets how completely all those have failed who have disregarded the menaces of God, whether they were the most powerful emperors or kings, or the most holy and learned men upon whom the sun ever shone. We see, too, that no one is ever deserted who has had confidence in the promises and consolations of God, whether they have been wretched sinners or miserable beggars. The blood of the righteous Abel "still speaketh," and the *fish*¹ was appointed who restored Jonah to the dry land. The Prophets by these examples prove that God insists upon the observance of his first commandment, and that he will be a gracious father to the poor and to those who believe on him. No one is too mean to be overlooked by God. On the other hand, he is an indignant judge against the proud and the ungodly,

¹ I observe in my translation I have put *whale*, which must be a mistake, as both Luther, Diodati, and our version use the word *great fish* in the Old Testament. There are no *whales* in the Mediterranean, but plenty of sharks; and the vulgar belief of the *whale* arises from the word in Matt., ch. 12, v. 39 being rendered *whale*, evidently copied from the *κῆτος* in the Septuagint, which is an argument against St. Matthew having translated his own Hebrew Gospel into Greek. It may have been done by some other hand.—G. D.

and no one is too great, too mighty, or too cunning to prevail against him, whether he be an emperor or a pope, the chief of the Mahometans or the Prince of Darkness. The Prophets are, for this reason, and especially at this time, both profitable and necessary to be read, that we may, under the blessing of God, be strengthened and comforted by their examples and by their precepts against the countless, inexpressible, and extreme miseries of this wretched world. With what perfect contempt does the Turk regard our Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom, when placed in comparison with himself and Mahomet? With what indifference are the poor Gospel and the Word of God considered both amongst ourselves and throughout the Papacy, when placed in opposition to the fallacious glory of human ordinances and sanctimonious holiness? How securely do freethinkers, epicures, and sophists, similar in character, revel in the licentiousness of imagination and in a total defiance of Holy Writ? How uncontrolled and wildly does every one live, according to his own views, and in disregard of religious truths? It would seem as if there were no God or Christ in this world, although God's very first commandment is so positive; it is still as ever, "tarry here, tarry there," and the question comes to this—Have the Prophets cheated us by their histories and their predictions? Many and mighty kings have come to a bad end, many little people

have followed them, and shall we escape? Again, many have been very wretched—nay, miserable, and yet they have been gloriously supported, and shall we be forsaken? We are not the first who have blustered and braved; we are not the first who have suffered and have been tormented. It is in this point of view that we must make the Prophets useful to us, and it is in this that they may be read with profit. And it is here worth while to enquire why there are more menaces and punishments contained in them than consolations and promises. The ungodly are always more numerous than the devout. It was, therefore, requisite to urge the law more than the promise, because otherwise the ungodly would fancy themselves in a state of security; and interpreting the consolations and the promises of God in their own favour, would apply the menaces and the punishments to others. Such is the delusion of the human mind that nothing would persuade them to the contrary. Their motto is “peace and security.” They cry out there is no danger (1 Thes., ch. 5, v. 3), and they adhere to that opinion until they are percipitated into ruin. Destruction, as St. Paul says, comes upon them suddenly. The Prophets exclaimed so much against idolatry, that it is worth while to enquire what that idolatry was, and what was its ostensible character. Papists, for instance, indulge themselves in the notion that they are by no means such idolaters as

the children of Israel. They do not esteem the Prophets as of any authority where they speak of the worship of images; they consider their denunciations as in no degree affecting them; nor do they connect in any relation with themselves the punishments which await idolatry. To charge them with the imputation, or to excite their apprehensions that it could apply to them would be ridiculous. The old Israelites acted in the same manner. They would not believe themselves to be idolatrous. The denunciations of the Prophets were pure fiction. Those who made them ought to be condemned as heretics. But the people of Israel were not such stupid idolaters as merely to worship wood and stone, especially their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, who contributed the most to the promotion of idolatry. But this was their idolatry, they neglected or abandoned the divine worship which had been ordained and established at Jerusalem, or wherever God had ordained and established it; they allowed their own fancies and devotions without any command from God to supersede the regular worship, and to introduce new customs, new persons, and new periods, all which Moses had distinctly prohibited in the 12th chapter of Deuteronomy, having uniformly referred them to some place chosen by God for his tabernacle and for his sanctuary. This false devotion constituted their idolatry. But they considered

it to be a great discovery, and they relied upon it as an improved and salutary institution, whilst it was in fact perfect rebellion against God and his commandments. Thus we find (1 Kings, ch. 12, v. 28) that Jeroboam did not merely set up two calves, but that he issued this proclamation to the people: You shall no more go up to Jerusalem; but behold, O Israel, here is thy God who has led thee out of Egypt. He does not say: Behold, O Israel, this is thy calf; but this is thy God who has led thee out of Egypt. He acknowledged distinctly that the God of Israel was the true God, by his having led them out of Egypt. He would not permit them to worship him at Jerusalem, but ordered them to seek him at Dan and at Bethel, in the golden calves. The meaning, therefore, evidently was that they might equally well sacrifice and serve God before the golden calves, as in a temple and before an altar hallowed by God at Jerusalem. This was distinctly trifling with the worship of God, and confessedly denying his having selected any place of worship. They built, therefore, upon their own notions and their own works, and not upon God alone. With these feelings of religion they covered the whole land with idolatry; every mountain, every valley, every grove had its altar, its sacrifice, and its incense; and this was called serving the God of Israel. He who held a different language was considered a heretic and a false

prophet. This is properly the establishment of idolatry, when without the command of God we introduce a divine worship in accordance with our own views. But God is not to learn from man in what manner man is to serve him. He will instruct us by his Word, which is alone to be our rule and guidance. Without his Word, however plausible and pious it may appear, it is mere idolatry and groundless fiction. I have, however, often written upon this subject. Hence it follows, that amongst Christians all those are to be considered idolatrous and subject to the animadversions of the Prophets, who have introduced or who adhere to a new form of worship which God has not commanded, but which even with good intentions they themselves have conceived. For by this they intimate their reliance upon their own good works, and not exclusively and unconditionally upon Jesus Christ. This is what the Prophets stigmatise as adultery, not being content with espousing Christ only but running after others, as if Christ were not alone competent to save us, and as if he had not redeemed us through himself independently of ourselves and of our own good works, but that we ought likewise to contribute our quota. But we know perfectly well that we have done nothing of the kind, that Christ died for us and took our sins upon him, not only before the world could know it but before we were born. The children of Israel had done absolutely

nothing when Egypt and when Pharoah were plagued, and when they were relieved by the death of the Egyptian first-born, solely by the almighty power of God and not in any degree whatever by their effort or concurrence. And yet the children of Israel are said to have worshipped idols, and to have served the one true God. But we, it seems, in our churches¹ serve the true God and the only Lord Jesus Christ, and we are not conscious of any idolatry. To this we answer that the children of Israel made use of the same language, and said generally that all their divine service was directed to this object, and they would not that it should be called "worshipping idols." Nay, they were even more intolerant than our own priests; they persecuted some of the Prophets even unto death, and they pursued religiously every true Prophet. They never would allow that they were guilty of idolatry. We read in Judges, ch. 17, v. 2, that when the mother of Micah received from her son the thousand and one pieces of silver, she said to him—Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son, that my son shall take it, and I have consecrated this silver to the Lord, to make me an idol and an image out of it. We see from this clearly that the mother had the true God in her mind the whole time, and that it was to

¹ It should be considered that when this was written the Roman Catholic was the prevailing religion, Protestantism was not established and the Reformation only in its cradle.

Him that she had consecrated the silver, with a view to an image and to an idol being made out of it. For she does not say, I have consecrated this silver to an idol, but to the Lord—a word which was perfectly well known amongst the Jews to designate the one true God. The Mahometans act precisely in the same manner, and pray according to their form of worship to the one true God who has made heaven and earth. And in the same way the Jews, the Turks, the Tartars of our days; but it is all pure idolatry. Again, that extraordinary man Gideon, how singular was his fate! (Judges, ch. 8, v. 27) who, when the children desired that he and his children should be their sovereign, answered (v. 23, 24)—I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord that is the only one true God, he shall rule over you. He then took the jewels which they gave him and he made out of them, not an image or an altar but priests' garments, and introduced into his own city the worship of God according to his own ideas of devotion. The Scriptures, however, say that all Israel became through these means guilty of idolatry, and that his house in consequence went to ruin. But yet this great and holy man did not intend to establish idolatry but to worship the one true God, and this may be gathered from his own words which are in themselves full of wisdom. The Lord, not I, shall rule over you. He thus clearly ascribes honour to

God alone, and recognises the one true God as the only God who ought to be acknowledged and to be worshipped. It is thus, as we have just now read, King Jeroboam did not call his golden calves idolatry, but the God of Israel, who had led them out of Egypt. Of course, he means here the only one true God, for no idol ever led them out of Egypt; and it was not because he wished to worship idols or false gods, but because he was apprehensive, as the text shows (v. 26, 27), that his people would revolt from him to the King of Judah, in consequence of their being under an obligation to go up to Jerusalem to worship. He established, therefore, a different form of worship in order to attach his people more strongly to him. He believed at the same time he was worshipping the one true God, whose temple was at Jerusalem, but that it was not obligatory on him to serve God at Jerusalem. But to what purpose so many words? God himself tells us that the children of Israel did not in their public worship intend to commit idolatry, but to worship the one true God. For Hosea says (ch. 2, v. 16)—Thus says the Lord: thou shalt call me my husband, and no longer call me my Baal; for I will take away the name of Baalim from their mouths; the name of Baalim shall no longer be remembered. Here we may perceive that the children of Israel were not conscious and did not intend the public service to be idolatrous,

but to represent the worship of the one true God, since in Hosea God plainly declares they shall no longer call him my Baal. Now, the worship of Baal was the most extensive, the most conspicuous, and the most splendid in Israel. And yet it was pure idolatry, although they actually supposed they were celebrating the worship of the one true God. It is, therefore, no sound argument on the part of our clergymen when they allege they have no idols in their churches, but that they spiritually worship the only one true God. It is not, therefore, to say or even to delude ourselves into the thought—I do all this for the honour of God, or I am now serving in spirit the true God, because all idolaters do and think the same. It is not a question of intention or of thought, otherwise those who martyred and persecuted the first Christians would be equally the servants of God, for they believed, as Christ himself says (John, ch. 16, v. 2), that by this they were doing God service. St. Paul also (Romans, ch. 10, v. 2) bears testimony to the Jews that they were zealous for God. Again (Acts, ch. 26, v. 7) he says that they serve God day and night in hopes to attain the promised salvation. Every one should be satisfied and convinced that the mode in which he serves God is in conformity with the Word and ordinances of God, and not the produce of his own imagination and good intentions. For he who worships God in a manner which is unsupported by

the testimony of God or the Holy Scriptures ought to know that he does not worship the one true God, but an idol of his own imagination, namely, his own thoughts and favourite opinions ; or, in other words, the Devil himself,—and thus renders applicable to himself the denunciations of all the Prophets. For the God does not exist who desires us to serve him as we choose, or as our own devotion suggests, or that we should establish any optional form of worship without the evidence of his sanction ; but the one true God has amply declared, and by his Word has revealed to mankind the mode of worship which he requires and accepts. To this it is our bounden duty to adhere, and we must not deviate from it either to the right or to the left. We must not increase or diminish it. We must not make it better or worse, otherwise there would be no end of idolatry, we should not be able to discriminate what is the real worship and what is idolatry ; all mean to serve the one true God, and all to use his right and his true name. Therefore, to Him the only one true Supreme Being, be all honour and glory through his blessed Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

PREFACE TO THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

HE who will read the Prophet Isaiah with advantage, and enter into the spirit of his writings (provided he has or knows nothing better), let him not despise my advice and suggestion. In the first place, let him not skip over the title or beginning of the book, but endeavour to comprehend it thoroughly.¹ He must not imagine that he understands Isaiah, and afterwards regret that he has undervalued the title and the first lines and perhaps the whole Prophet. The title is a glossary which may be said to illuminate the entire book. The finger of Isaiah seems to point to it as a guide to his reader and as a ground to his work. To him, however, who passes over or reads the title lightly, I should say he had much better leave the Prophet alone, for he will not understand him. Without a previous and intimate acquaintance with the title, it is impossible to appreciate the language and the meaning of the Prophet. I do not mean by the title you are to confine yourself to the words

¹ Luther was a great advocate for the headings of the chapters, so as to give the reader a condensed and preliminary notion of what he is going to read. I believe he had more trouble with Isaiah than with any other book in Scripture. Having read Gesenius I can understand his difficulty.

“Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Kings of Judah,” and so forth, but that you are to take the last Book of the Kings and the last Book of the Chronicles, to read them attentively and to make yourself well acquainted with the history, the recorded words, and the described facts, so far as they relate to these kings, from beginning to end. If we wish to understand the Prophet, it is necessary for us to have some knowledge of the situation of the country and the relative bearing of the events by which it has been distinguished. We should know what were the then prevailing sentiments of enemies, of neighbours, and of friends, and particularly how the inhabitants of the promised land conducted themselves in respect to the people of God, how to God himself, and how far the worship of God prevailed, and how far that of idols. Without some knowledge of the relative situations of the countries about Jerusalem and Judea, words and names which to us appear strange and difficult to understand are only productive of distaste and obscurity in reading. I shall, therefore, briefly explain to my unlearned readers the position of the countries about Jerusalem and about Judah, where Isaiah both lived and preached, in order that they may better understand what the Prophet means when he prophesies against the North and against the South. On the East side Jerusalem and Judah were chiefly bordered by the Dead Sea, where stood formerly Sodom and

Gomorrah. To the eastward of the Dead Sea were the countries of Moab and the children of Ammon. Further eastward were Babylon and Chaldæa, and still further eastward the land of Persia frequently mentioned by Isaiah. Towards the North is Mount Lebanon, and beyond that Damascus and Syria, and, still further North, Assyria, also frequently mentioned by Isaiah. To the West of Judah lived his bitterest enemies, the Philistines, upon the coasts of the Mediterranean or the Great Sea; and further northwards were the maritime districts of Tyre and Sidon, bordering on Galilæa. Towards the South were various countries—Egypt, Arabia, Nubia, the Red Sea, Edom or Idumæa, and Midian and Egypt both to the South and West of Judah. These are almost all the principal names occurring in the prophecies of Isaiah, and who environed the land of Judah either as neighbours, enemies, or friends, and who were like wolves around a sheepfold. With some of them they contracted alliances, but most of them were in the end of little or no use to them.

SUBJECT OF THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

You must divide the Prophet into three parts. In the first place he takes the same ground as the other Prophets, that is, he preaches much and long to his people—he reproveth their variety of sins, especially their excessive idolatry which had now become a popular disease; a method which earnest preachers never fail to adopt if they wish to make any impression on their hearers; and he endeavours to retain them in obedience by the menace of punishment and by the promise of blessings. He next prepares their minds and teaches them to expect the future realm of Christ which he predicts so clearly and so copiously that he particularises to the eye of faith the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary the mother of Christ (ch. 7, v. 14), describes the sufferings of Jesus in the 53rd chapter, together with his resurrection from the dead; and in short proclaims his kingdom so distinctly and powerfully that it would seem almost as if the event had actually taken place. He must, therefore, have been a very highly gifted Prophet. But all the Prophets, some more and some less, concur in teaching and reproveth the existing generation.

They announce the advent and the kingdom of Christ, and they direct the minds of the people to this point as to a general Saviour both of those who have gone before and of those who will follow; but no one in his vocation laboured more than Isaiah. In the second place, his prophecies particularly refer to the empire of Assyria and to Sennacherib their chief. He prophesies about them more than any other Prophet, and declares that this sovereign will conquer all the adjacent territories, including the Kingdom of Israel, and will also inflict serious injury upon the Kingdom of Judah. But he adheres with firmness to the promise that Jerusalem shall be protected and delivered from his grasp. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest miracles which occur in the history of the Bible; not so much on account of a most powerful monarch being defeated, as on account of the belief and confidence connected with it. The wonder was that any man in Jerusalem should have believed this prophetic assurance. Without doubt he must have been frequently met by the language of reproach and by the sarcasms of infidelity. But the belief was firm. Sennacherib was defeated and Jerusalem was delivered. The Prophet must have been dear in the sight of God. In the third place he predicts the captivity at Babylon, the concurring punishment of the Jews, and the destruction of their city by the Babylonian monarch. But it must have

been here his greatest difficulty, in the face of impending subjugation and captivity, to comfort and encourage his own people, and to warn them not only not to despair even under the most adverse circumstances, but to believe firmly and sincerely in the future kingdom of the Messiah, and in the truth and certainty of the prophecies which declared him. He foretells, fully and frequently, that Babylon shall be destroyed, that the Jews shall be delivered, and that they shall return to Jerusalem. He declares also, with solemnity and confidence, the names of the nations who shall destroy Babylon—the Medes and the Elamites or the Persians. He specifies the king who shall release the Jews and shall permit them to return to Jerusalem—Cyrus, whom he designates as the Anointed of God before there was ever a king in Persia.¹ To Isaiah the kingdom of Christ is all in all. He labours that the advent of Christ, and that the promises of grace and salvation may not be disbelieved, and that neither impatience nor misfortune may damp the spirits of his people, or extinguish their expectations or their faith. The above are the three heads into which the prophecies of Isaiah are divided. He does not preserve strict order in his book. The

¹ Properly speaking this was not the case; but it is true that the prophecies related to Cyrus, before the Persians conquered Media, without which they could never have reached Babylon. Luther had more trouble with Isaiah than with any other book.

three are frequently mixed together, so that the first is sometimes confounded with the others, and the third occasionally precedes the second. Whether this originated with the persons who read or wrote or who collected his prophecies (which is supposed to have been the case with some of the Psalms), or whether it was his own arrangement according as time, persons, or events influenced him, for in each separate part there may have been an inequality or a continuation of causes, it is impossible for me to say. He so far preserves order that he pursues the first part as the most important, from beginning to end, both throughout the second and in the third. In the same way is it incumbent upon us in our sermons never to lose sight of our principal object to reprove the sins of our hearers, and to inculcate the doctrine of Christ. And we should do this, although occasions may occur when we have to preach upon very important subjects, such for instance as the religion of Mahomet, or the duties of a sovereign. From this the reader may enter into the spirit of the Prophets, and may so adapt his mind to his arrangement that he would neither be distracted or tired, as would be the case, perhaps, with an unprepared person. We have exerted the greatest diligence in the translation of Isaiah, and we have endeavoured to render it as clear as possible. It is a work of great difficulty, and almost seemed in some parts to be hopeless.

This will be admitted by those who are well acquainted with German and with Hebrew. None more, however, than those who love to labour upon obscure passages, and consider this as the ultimatum of knowledge. For the original Hebrew is so eloquent that our unhandy German does not easily adapt itself to it. The benefit which a man may derive from reading Isaiah I should rather leave to his own experience than to my suggestions; and to him who neither has or will benefit by experience, my advice can be of little consequence. The language of Isaiah is full of life and comfort, and speaks to the heart of all who have tender consciences and whose minds are either excited or depressed. His menaces against the proud and sinful, and against those who persist wilfully in their errors, are sufficient to strike terror,—but you are to consider Isaiah as he was considered by the Jewish people, as a man despised, nay, even as a fool and a madman. For, in the light in which we consider him the Jews did not consider him, for he himself testifies (ch. 58) that they shoot their tongues against him, they pointed their fingers at him, they held up his preaching to scorn and derision, except, as is always the case, a few pious servants of God like King Hezekiah and some others; but otherwise it was a custom amongst the Jews to ridicule the Prophets. But this has been uniformly the lot of the servants of God who preach

his word. It has always been so, is so now, and ever will be. We may observe here that the Prophet principally reprove the people for the crying sin of idolatry; and not much more than three times does he mention their vices of pride, of gluttony, and of covetousness. But their presumption in choosing their own form of idol-worship, their conceit, and their reliance upon human sovereigns, he reprove at every step, which was intolerable to a people who believed themselves justified and perfect.

PREFACE TO THE NEW TESTAMENT BY

MARTIN LUTHER.

As the Old Testament is a book in which the law and commandments of God, as well as the history of those who have observed or disobeyed them, are written, so the New Testament is a book in which are contained the gospel and the promises of God, as well as the history of those who have believed or disbelieved them. Gospel, or Evangelism, is a Greek word signifying a good message—a good tale—a good cry—good tidings, under which we sing and rejoice, and which re-echoes to our bosom. When David overcame the great Goliath, a good cry and tidings of comfort spread amongst the Jewish people: their formidable enemy was slain, they themselves were preserved, they were placed in a state of joy and peace, they sang and they leaped for joy. The Gospel of God, or the New Testament, is therefore, a tale of good tidings going forth throughout the whole world through the

medium of the Apostles, and proceeding from a true David who has fought and overcome sin, death, and the Devil, in order that they who have been under the captivity of sin, under the plague of death, and under the influence of the Devil, might be redeemed without any claim or merit of their own—might be justified, regenerated, and saved—might be accepted in peace, and might be reconciled to God. For this they sing and give eternal thanks and praise to God, provided their faith only is firm, steady, and persevering. This goodly cry, or evangelical consolation, is called a New Testament from the analogy of a dying man regulating his affairs by will, and apportioning his property, when he shall have died, to his recorded heirs. Thus Christ, before he died, appointed and ordained that after his death his Gospel should be preached throughout the world, that all who believe might be heirs to the solid blessings which it imparts, namely: life, with which he has swallowed up death; righteousness, by which he has effaced sin; and salvation, by which he has overcome eternal condemnation. Poor human nature! entangled in sin, and with the apprehensions of death, what can be more consolatory than this gracious and loving message from his Saviour; and he must rejoice with exceeding joy, and from the very bottom of his heart, if he believes that it is true. God, in order to strengthen this belief, has in old times frequently promised this

Gospel through the Prophets in the Old Testament. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (ch. 1, v. 1, 2) says, that he was selected to preach this Gospel which God had in former times promised through the Prophets in the Scriptures—the Gospel of his Son born of the seed of David. Referring to some of these promises, we find the first (Genesis, ch. 3, v. 15) where God says to the serpent—I will place enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel. Christ is the seed of the woman and has bruised the head of the serpent, namely, sin and death, and the power and the prince of hell; for without this seed no man can escape sin, or death, or hell. Again (Genesis, ch. 22, v. 18), it is promised to Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. St. Paul (Gal., ch. 3, v. 16) says, that Christ is the seed of Abraham, who through the Gospel has blessed all the world. For where there is no Christ, man is still under the curse which fell upon Adam and all his children; and he is still subject to the power of sin, of death, and of hell. In opposition to the curse, the Gospel blesses all the world; calling out openly that he who believes in the promised seed of Abraham shall be freed from sin, death, and hell, and be justified unto life and unto salvation. Christ himself says (St. John, ch. 11, v. 26), He who believes in me shall never

die. He promised David (2 Samuel, ch. 7, v. 12), I will raise up thy seed after thee, who shall build a house unto my name, and I will confirm for ever the throne of his kingdom. I will be his father and he shall be my son. This is the kingdom of Christ of which the Gospel speaks, an eternal kingdom, a kingdom of life, of blessedness, and of righteousness, into which all those who believe shall enter from the captivity of sin and death. Similar Gospel promises are to be met with in the other Prophets. Thus Micha, ch. 5, v. 2: But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, although thou be little amongst the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel. Again (Hosea, ch. 13, v. 14), I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death! I will be thy plague. O grave! I will be thy destruction. Therefore is the Gospel nothing else but an annunciation of Christ the Son of God and of David, true God and yet man, who for us and for our sins has through his death and his resurrection overcome death and hell. The Gospel may be, therefore, either a long or a short story. It may be a long history if the narrator relates the several words and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ. It may be a short story if the historian does not go into detail, but states briefly the essence of it, like St. Peter and St. Paul, that through the death and resurrection of Christ they who believe in him are

no longer under the subjection of death and condemnation. Therefore, attend well to this! that you are not to make a Moses out of Christ, or a book of laws and doctrines out of the Gospel, as many have attempted and which even some prefaces of St. Jerome seem to imply; for the Gospel, properly speaking, does not call upon us to act in order that through it we may be pious and blessed, nay, it rather condemns such actions; but it calls upon us to believe in Christ, and that he has for our sakes overcome sin and death and hell, so that we may obtain, not through our works but through his works, through his death, through his sufferings, sanctity, life, and salvation; and that we should adopt his death and his victory, the same as if we had achieved it ourselves. But since the Gospels, as well as the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Paul, give many commandments, preach doctrines, and explain laws, which we are to consider equal to the other works and blessings of Christ; and since knowing the works and the history is still not the true knowledge of the Gospel, for you know not thereby that he has overcome sin, and death, and the Devil; nor is it even knowing the true Gospel when you hear and know such doctrine, but the real knowledge is when the voice comes and says—Christ is thine own, with his life, his doctrine, his works, his death, and his resurrection, with everything

in short that he has, does, is, and can do. We see, therefore, that he does not command but that he invites as a friend, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," &c., and the Apostles use the same language. They exhort, they entreat, they pray, so that you may from hence readily perceive that the Gospel is not a law book, but properly a declaration of the benefits conferred by Christ upon us, and of their efficacy through the conditions of belief. But Moses in his laws urges, insists, and threatens; his punishments are severe, for they are those of a task-master as well as of a legislator. Hence it comes that no law is given by which he who believes is justified before God. Whilst St. Paul says (2 Tim., ch. 1, v. 9), We are justified, we are regenerate, we are saved through faith. It is only necessary that his faith should be shown by his works. But where faith is he cannot refrain, he shows himself, he breaks forth into good works, he confesses and teaches the Gospel to the people, and ventures his life for it. Everything which he does and teaches he does for the benefit and assistance of his neighbour; his object is not merely to obtain the blessing of God, but he hazards his person, his property, and his honour, seeing what Christ has done for him, and following, therefore, his example. Such was the meaning of Christ when he gave his final commandment and resolved all into charity,

that by this men should recognise who were his disciples, and who sincere believers. For where works and charity do not abound, there the belief is not right; the Gospel does not apply, and Christ is not rightly known. Observe, therefore, and apply this when you read the New Testament, that you may be sensible that you read it rightly.

PREFACE TO THE ACTS OF THE
APOSTLES.

WE are to read and regard this book not, as some have done, believing St. Luke to have confined himself to the personal history and to the actions of the Apostles, as so many examples of a good life; or as St. Augustine and many others have done, with a view to investigate the fact of the Apostles having everything in common with other Christians, which, however, could not last long and must infallibly come to an end,—but we are to observe that St. Luke teaches all Christianity, even to the end of the world, to consist in our being alone justified through faith in Christ, without any relation to the law, and without the aid of our own works. Such was the intention, such the principal object of this book.

He, therefore, insists powerfully upon the fact that the Apostles, in disseminating the doctrine of faith in Christ, taught that by it both Jews and Gentiles are saved without any merit or claims of their own. He relies upon the examples and the doctrine, as deduced from the history, that Jews and Gentiles are alone justified by the Gospel independent of the law. St. Peter testifies this in the 10th ch., v. 28, and in the 15th ch., v. 9. God in these cases made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, but as he gave to the Gentiles who lived without law the Holy Ghost, so he gave to the Jews the Holy Ghost through the Gospel, and not on account of the law or on account of their own works or merits. The doctrines of faith and the examples of faith are in this book placed upon the same footing. It may, therefore, be called not inappropriately a Glossary upon the Epistle of St. Paul. For where St. Paul teaches and exhorts with words and sayings from Holy Writ, St. Luke also shows and demonstrates by examples and through history what actually did take place, and must have taken place, namely, what St. Paul says that no law, no work, can justify man, but faith alone in Jesus Christ. You see in this book a beautiful mirror, in which the doctrine of Justification by Faith is clearly represented. For you find in the historical parts examples which are at once sure and satisfactory testimonies which will never fail you, and upon which you may with

confidence rely. Take for instance the conversion of St. Paul. Take another in the case of Cornelius the centurion, himself a Gentile, converted by the word of St. Peter as the angel predicted to him, and saved by his belief in what he heard from the mouth of the Apostle. Take again, the governor of the country, Sergius, and all the towns where Paul and Barnabas preached. Look to the first council of Jerusalem (ch. 15, v. 2), as well to all the discourses of Peter, Paul, Stephen, and Philip, and you will find that they all tend to the same point, namely, that we can only obtain grace and be justified through belief in Jesus Christ, independent of the law and of works. And we can with this book manfully withstand the arguments of our adversaries who refer us to the law as our guide, and to our own good works as the means; and they thus manifest the weakness of their arguments to the whole world. Therefore, St. Luke says that such examples of faith astonished and confounded the pious and believing Jews; but that the other, or disbelieving Jews, were maddened and quite frantic because helpless upon the subject. This was not to be wondered at, because they had been brought up in the law and had been accustomed to it from the age of Abraham, and they were beyond measure annoyed that the Gentiles, who were not under God's law, should become their equals in God's favour. But that our own people, we who

are all Gentiles, should blaspheme and persecute this article of our belief is ten times worse, since we both see and are unable to deny that the grace of God and the knowledge of Christ has been imparted to our forefathers without law and without merit, nay, even in a state of gross idolatry and vice. But they will succeed just as well with their crimes and their persecutions as the Jews of old with their rage and with their presumption. For He who had previously threatened the Jews, and warned them through Moses—I will anger you through a people who are not my people, and excite your fury against a people without knowledge. And again, through Hosea, ch. 2, v. 23—I will call them my people who are not my people; that is, who live without law and do not depend upon their works, and who have kept this promise. Even he menaces in a similar manner our modern blasphemers; and as he has begun so will he surely finish his work. But this they will not believe, until like the Jews they learn it by experience.

PREFACE TO ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE
ROMANS.

THIS Epistle is the right corner-stone of the New Testament, and the purest gospel, and is in itself so valuable that a Christian should not only know it by heart, word by word, but should have daily intercourse with it as with the daily bread of the soul. For it can never be too much and too well read and considered, and the more it is examined the more precious it becomes, and the more it will be relished. I wish, therefore, to offer my services, and through this preface to prepare the way, as far as God enables me, that it may be better understood by everyone. For it has hitherto been obscured by glosses and by frivolous unmeaning preachers, whilst it is in itself a clear light, almost sufficient to illuminate the entire Holy Scriptures. But, in the first place, we must become acquainted with the language, and know what St. Paul means by these words, *Law, Sin, Grace, Faith, Righteousness, Flesh, Spirit*, and so forth. There is otherwise no use in reading it.

You are not to understand here the word *Law* in a human sense, as teaching you what works you have to do and what to avoid, as in the case of

human laws, where the law is satisfied through works, although the heart has nothing to do with it. God judges the very ground of the heart; his law, therefore, requires the very ground of the heart, and is not content with works, but rather reproveth works done without the ground of the heart as hypocrisy and lies. Hence all men are called liars (Psalm 116, v. 11). No one, therefore, from the ground of his heart keeps or can keep the law of God, because everyone finds in himself a disinclination to good and an inclination to evil. Now, where there is no free inclination to good, the ground of the heart is not with the law of God, and sin decidedly prevails there, and the merited indignation of God, although outwardly there may be many good works and the conduct may appear respectable. Hence St. Paul concludes in the second chapter that the Jews are all sinners, and he says that the doers of the law are righteous before God, by which he means that no one through works is a doer of the law, and he speaks to them thus—You teach that one shall not commit adultery, and you commit adultery. Again, Wherein you judge another you condemn yourself, because you do precisely the same as that which you condemn. As if he should say—You live outwardly well, according to the works of the law, and yet you condemn those who do not live so. You know how to teach everyone. You see the mote in the eyes of others,

and are not aware of the beam in your own (Matt., ch. 7, v. 3). Outwardly you conform to the law, according to works, either from fear of punishment or from the hope of reward. But you do all this without a free inclination to or love of the law—you do it with disinclination and with constraint—you would rather do otherwise if there were no law. Hence it is to be concluded that from the bottom of your heart you are an enemy to the law. How is it then that you teach others not to steal, if you in your heart are a thief, and would willingly do so, in fact, if you dared? And yet with such hypocrites the outward act will not remain long behind. Therefore, you teach others and not yourself—you yourself know not what you teach. You have not yet well understood the law. Besides, the law makes the sin greater (as he says in chapter 5, verse 20), because man becomes more hostile to the law in proportion as it requires from him more than he can do. Hence he says (ch. 7, v. 14)—The law is spiritual. How so? If the law were not spiritual, works will be sufficient. But it is spiritual; for no one can do enough for the law, except everything that he does come from the bottom of the heart. The Spirit of God alone gives such a heart, and makes man equal to the law, so that he acquires in his heart an inclination to the law, and henceforth does nothing from fear or constraint but everything from a free heart. Therefore, the law, which

requires to be loved and filled with such hearts and with such spirits, is spiritual. When this is not the case, sin, disinclination, and enmity to the law, which is nevertheless good, just, and holy, remain at the bottom of the heart. Accustom yourself, therefore, to the Word, that it is a very different thing doing the works of the law and fulfilling the law. The works of the law are everything which a man does or can do under the law from his own free will and from his own powers. But, because amidst and with all these works there remain in the heart disinclination and constraint with respect to the law, all such works are lost and of no use, and this is what St. Paul means (ch. 3, v. 20) where he says—Through the works of the law no man is justified before God. Hence you see what deceivers schoolmen and sophists are when they tell you to prepare yourself with works for grace. How can you prepare yourself with works for grace if you do no good work without disinclination and an unwillingness in your heart? How shall our works please God when they come from a disinclined and unwilling heart? But to fulfill the law is to do the works of the law with inclination and affection, and freely, without the constraint of the law, to lead a godly and pious life, as if there were no law of punishment. But such an inclination and freedom of affection does the Holy Ghost pour into our hearts as he explains, chapter 5, verse 6. The Spirit,

however, is not given except and alone through faith in Jesus Christ, as he says in the introduction—Faith comes alone through the Word of God, or through the gospel, which preaches Christ, namely, that he is the Son of God and of man, who died and rose again for us. This he declares in the third, fourth, and tenth chapters. Hence it comes that faith alone justifies and fulfills the law, for it brings the Spirit from the merits of Christ. The Spirit makes an inclined and a free heart, such as the law requires, and then good works go forth of themselves from faith. This is his meaning in the third chapter, in which after having repudiated the works of the law, he would seem to supersede the law through faith. No! he says, we establish the law through faith, that is, we fulfill the law through faith.

Sin signifies in Scripture not merely the outward act of the body, but the whole system as it works and acts with the outward man; namely, the very bottom of the heart with all its strength, so that the word *doing* means a man giving himself up to and concurring with the sin. Hence no outward act of sin takes place without the inward man giving himself up entirely to it. But Scripture looks more particularly to the heart as the seat and principal source of the evil, namely, infidelity at the bottom of the heart. Since, therefore, faith alone justifies, and brings the Spirit and the desire to do good works; so infidelity alone sins, and,

acting upon the flesh, produces the desire of outward evil acts, as was the case with Adam and Eve in paradise (Genesis, ch. 3, v. 6). Hence Christ imputes sin to infidelity alone, when he says (John, ch. 16, v. 8 to 12), the Spirit shall reprove the world for sin, because they believe not on me. Therefore, before good or bad works are done, as good or bad fruits, there must previously be in the heart faith or infidelity as the root, the sap, and the main strength of sin; it is, therefore, called in Scripture the head of the serpent, and the head of the old dragon, which the seed of the woman was to crush, as was promised to Adam (Genesis, ch. 3, v. 15).

Grace and *gifts* have this distinction, that *grace* properly signifies the favour or affection of God, which of himself he bears towards us, and through which he inclines to pour Christ and the Spirit with his gifts into our hearts, as is clear from chapter 5, verse 15, when he says, "Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace," &c., &c. Although the gift and the grace daily improve in us, yet they are never perfect; evil desires and sin still survive in us, warring against the Spirit, namely, the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, as he explains it (Romans, ch. 7, v. 23; and Galatians, ch. 5, v. 17), and as it is announced to us (Genesis, ch. 3, v. 15). Nevertheless, *grace* does so much that we are regarded as fully and

entirely justified before God ; for his grace does not divide and parcel itself out like gifts, but receives us entirely into favour for the sake of Christ, our advocate and mediator, and the more so from the gifts of Christ having already begun in us. You can understand, therefore, the seventh chapter where St. Paul reproaches himself as a sinner, and yet in the first verse of the eighth chapter says, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," on account of the imperfection of their gifts and of the Spirit. But on account of our unmortified flesh we are still sinners ; but because we believe in Christ, and have the beginning of the Spirit, God is so favourable and gracious to us that he will not take into consideration or condemn our sins, but act towards us according to our faith in Christ, until sin is killed or mortified within us.

Faith is not the human fancy or dream which some hold to be faith, and when they see that no improvement of life or good works follow, and yet both hear and talk much about faith, then fall into error, and say faith is not sufficient, you must have good works, you must be pious and holy. This comes from hearing the gospel, and then forming for themselves out of their own abilities an imagination in their hearts which says, "I believe," and this they hold to be a right faith. But as it is only a human delusion and fancy, which is never felt in

the ground of the heart, it is good for nothing, and thus no improvement follows. Faith is a godly work in us which changes and regenerates us from God (John, ch. 1, v. 13), which kills the old Adam, makes us quite another man both in heart, courage, sense, and in every power, and brings along with it the Holy Spirit. Ah! faith is a lively, busy, active, powerful agent! it is impossible for it not to be doing, and that unceasingly, good. It does not ask what good works are to be done, but they are done without asking, and faith is always in action. He who does not these works is an unbeliever: one who looks about him for faith and good works as if he were in the dark, and does not know what faith and good works are, and yet is always talking and arguing upon the subject of faith and works. Faith is a living, well-considered confidence in the grace of God, so certain that one would die a thousand deaths for it. Such a confidence and consciousness of divine favour makes one cheerful, resolute, and pleased, both before God and his creatures, and this the Holy Spirit does through faith. The man becomes willing and desirous, without constraint, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything for the love and the praise of God, who has shown him such favour. It is impossible to separate works from faith, as impossible as to separate light from heat in the fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false thoughts, and of those

unprofitable teachers who set themselves up for judges of faith and good works and yet are great fools. Pray to God that he may give you faith, otherwise you may remain without faith to all eternity, whatever you may think and whatever you may do.

Righteousness is such a faith, and is called the righteousness of God, or that which is acceptable to God, because God gives it and imputes it to us as righteousness, for the sake of Christ our Mediator. It makes one man give to every other man what is his due. For through faith man becomes without sin, and feels pleasure in the commandments of God. He thus gives God his honour, and renders what is due to God; he serves man willingly as far as he is able, and he thus pays everyone. But our nature, our mere inclination, and our own powers alone cannot bring this righteousness into effect. For as no man can give himself faith, so also he cannot take away disbelief or the want of it. How can man take away, even one, the smallest sin? Whatever, therefore, is done without faith, or in unbelief, is all falsehood, hypocrisy, and sin, however speciously the reverse may be maintained (Romans, ch. 14, v. 23).

Flesh and *spirit* are not here to be understood as if flesh alone related to incontinence, and spirit only to the inward heart; but St. Paul, like Christ (John, ch. 3, v. 6), calls everything flesh which is born of flesh, namely, the whole man with body and

soul, with reason and all his faculties, because everything in him tends towards the flesh. You may, therefore, advisedly call him in the flesh who invents, teaches, and argues upon high spiritual matters without grace; and what the works of the flesh are you may learn from Galatians, ch. 5, v. 19, where heresy and hatred are ranked amongst the works of the flesh. And in Romans, ch. 8, v. 3, it says, that the law was weakened through the flesh, which is said not of incontinence alone but of all sins, and more especially of unbelief, which is the highest spiritual sin. Again, that man is to be called spiritual whose works are completely outward works, such as when Christ washed the feet of the disciples, and St. Peter when he launched his boat and fished. So that flesh is the man who inwardly and outwardly lives and does that which is useful to the flesh and serves our temporary life. Spirit is the man who inwardly and outwardly lives and does that which serves the spirit and the life of the world to come.

Without such an understanding of these words you will never understand this Epistle of St. Paul, or any other book of the Holy Scriptures. Beware, therefore, of those teachers who explain these words in another sense, let them be who they may, whether Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, or men like or even greater than they are. But we will now proceed to the Epistle.

As it is the duty of a preacher of the gospel to examine everything in the first place severely, through the revelation of the law and of sin, and to adjudge that to be sin which does not actively proceed from the spirit and from faith in Christ, that men may be led to a knowledge of themselves and of their own misery, in order that they may be humble and require assistance. So does St. Paul also, and begins in the first chapter by reproofing the coarse sins and want of faith, which were so open to the day as were the sins of the Gentiles, and which are so still where men live without the grace of God. Thus he says—The wrath of God is manifested from heaven, through the gospel, unto all men, on account of their ungodly living and of their unrighteousness. For although they know well, and acknowledge daily, that there is a God, nevertheless, nature when left to itself without grace is so bad that it neither thanks him nor honours him, but is blind to itself, and falls without ceasing into more wicked ways, until, after idolatry, it commits the most disgraceful sins, with every kind of vice, without shame, and allows others to do the same without reproof.

In the second chapter, he carries this reproof still further against those who seem outwardly pious and privately sin, as the Jews did, and who are yet all hypocrites, living well and honourably, but in their hearts enemies to the law of God. They delight in judging others, which is always the case with

these double dealers, considering themselves pure, although they are full of covetousness, hatred, pride, and all manner of uncleanness (Matt., ch. 23, v. 25). These are those who despise the goodness of God, and who from the hardness of their hearts heap indignation upon themselves. So that St. Paul, as a sincere expounder of the law, allows no one to be without sin, but denounces the wrath of God to all who rely upon their own nature and freedom of will for a good life—he declares them to be all public sinners. He says that they have hard hearts and impenitent souls.

In the third chapter he confounds them altogether. He says—One is the same as the other: they are all sinners before God, except that the Jews have had the Word of God, though many of them have not believed it, and faith in God and his truth never fail; and with reference to this he quotes a passage from the fifty-first Psalm (v. 6), that God is justified in his sayings. He afterwards returns to this, and shows, through the medium of Scripture, that they all are sinners, and that no man is justified through the works of the law, but that the law was given in order that sin might be known. He then proceeds and teaches us in the right way, how we must become holy and pious;—We are all, he says, sinners, and fail in the reputation which we ought to have before God; we are justified, without any merit of our own, through faith in Christ, who has earned this for us through his

blood, and is become for us a throne of grace from God, who forgives us all our past sins, in order that he may show that the righteousness which he gives, through faith alone, helps us, and which righteousness he has revealed in his own time through the gospel, and which he had previously testified through the law and through the prophets. Thus the law becomes established through faith, although the works of the law, together with all boasting, are cancelled by it.

In the fourth chapter, having in the preceding three chapters unfolded the nature of sin, and laid open the road to righteousness through faith, he proceeds to meet certain arguments and objections. In the first place, he takes that which all who hear about faith generally make—How can a man be justified without works? Are we then, they say, to do no good works? Upon which he takes Abraham as an example, and asks—What did Abraham with his works? Were all his works in vain? were they all unprofitable? Hence he concludes that Abraham, without his works, was justified solely through faith; so much so that, even before the test of circumcision, he is praised in Scripture, and righteousness imputed to him solely on account of his faith (Genesis, ch. 15, v. 6). But if the rite of circumcision, which God commanded, and was, therefore, a good work of obedience, did nothing for his righteousness, then

certainly can no other good work contribute to justification. But as the circumcision of Abraham was an outward sign, by which he testified his righteousness through faith, so are all good works but outward signs proceeding from faith, but which testify, like good fruits, that the man is inwardly already righteous before God. St. Paul thus confirms, by the powerful example of Scripture authority, his former doctrine of faith (ch. 3), and cites besides as a witness, David, in the thirty-second Psalm, where he says (v. 1) that a man may be justified without works, although he does not remain without works if he is justified. He then applies this argument to all the other parts of the law, and maintains that the Jews, merely on account of their descent through blood, cannot be the heirs of Abraham, much less on account of the works of the law; but that if they wish to be the heirs of Abraham, they must inherit the faith of Abraham, since Abraham was justified through faith, and called the father of all the faithful before the law, before Moses, and before the circumcision. The law, besides, operates to anger more than to grace, since no one conforms to it with desire and affection; and displeasure, therefore, more than favour comes through the works of the law. Faith can alone obtain the favour promised to Abraham, and these examples are written for our sakes, that we also might believe.

In the fifth chapter he comes to the fruits and to the works of faith, namely, peace, joy, love towards God and towards men, security, confidence, cheerfulness, courage and hope in trouble and under sufferings. For all these follow, where the faith is sound, on account of the exceeding mercy which God shows us in Christ, whom he ordained to die for us before we could even pray for that mercy; nay, whilst we were still enemies to him. The conclusion is, therefore, that faith justifies, independent of works, and yet it does not follow that we are to do no good works; holy works are not to remain behind, but those who rely on works, knowing nothing of them, they frame for themselves works of their own, in which there is neither peace, joy, safety, love, hope, consolation, or any kind of real Christian work and faith. He then launches out into an admirable description of the origin of sin and righteousness, of death and life; and makes a happy comparison between Adam and Christ. He explains this by saying that Christ coming as a second Adam, we inherit his righteousness through a new spiritual birth in faith, in the same way that we inherit the sin of the first Adam through the original birth in the flesh. By this it is proclaimed and confirmed that no man can, by works, rise from sin to righteousness, any more than he can prevent his being personally born. It is clear, therefore, that the divine law, which it is

reasonable to suppose should help, if anything could help, to righteousness, has come to us not only without that help, but has even increased sin, because our evil nature becomes still more hostile to it, and is the more anxious to gratify its propensities in proportion as the law forbids them. The law thus makes Christ more necessary, and the grace which may succour our nature more requisite.

In the sixth chapter he discusses that special work of faith—the conflict of the spirit with the flesh—of which the object is completely to mortify the sins and affections which survive justification. He teaches us that we are not delivered by faith from sin that we may be idle, lazy, and secure, as if there were no longer any sin in us. Sin still exists, but does not carry condemnation with it, on account of faith, against which it is contending. We have, therefore, in our own persons enough to do during our whole life, by taming our body, by mortifying its desires, and by controlling its members into a subjection to the spirit, and not to the passions, that we may be finally equal to the death and the resurrection of Christ, and fulfill our baptism (which signifies a death unto sin and a new life unto grace), until, being purified from sin, we rise bodily with Christ, and live for ever. And this, he says, we can do, because we are under grace and not under the law; which he explains

thus—Being without law does not mean that there is no law, and that every man may do what he likes ; but being under the law is when we do the works of the law without grace. Sin, then, certainly reigns through the law, because no man by nature is friendly to the law. Now this is a very great sin. But grace makes the law pleasant to us, and there is then no more sin, since the law is no longer against us, but one with us. This is the right freedom from sin and from the law, and this he pursues to the end of the chapter : the liberty of doing good with pleasure, and of living well without the compulsion of the law. This liberty is thus a spiritual liberty, which does not abrogate the law, but supplies what the law requires, namely, the desire and the affection, through which the law is appeased and ceases to importune and to urge us. It is just as if you were indebted to your sovereign lord, and you had no means of paying him. There are two ways in which you might be relieved ; first, by his forgiving the debt and cancelling the obligation ; secondly, by some good man paying for you, and giving you what was necessary to meet the claim. It is in this way that Christ has freed us from the law. It is not, therefore, a wild freedom as of this world, which is to do nothing, but one which, by doing much and everything, exempts us from the pressure and the obligations of the law.

In the seventh chapter he confirms this, by a comparison from married life—when the man dies, the wife is free. The connexion is dissolved, not that the wife may or ought to take another husband, but she is now, in the first instance, completely free, and is at liberty to marry again, which before she could not do, until her union with her first husband was dissolved. Our conscience, consequently, is bound to the law under the old and sinful man. When he is killed or mortified by the spirit, then is our conscience free—the one is separated from the other; not that our conscience is to become passive, but that it is now in right earnest to be subservient unto Christ, the second husband, and to bring forth fruits of life. He enters, afterwards, more fully into the operation of sin and of law, and how through the law sin becomes more exciting and more powerful. Our old man becomes more hostile to the law, because he cannot pay what the law requires. Sin is in his nature; of himself he can do nothing else; the law, therefore, is his death and his torment; not that the law is bad, but that our evil nature cannot bear the good, in requiring good from it. A sick man could not bear it if he was required to run or jump, or to go through the exercise of a man in full health. St. Paul concludes, therefore, that where the law is rightly known and properly understood, it does nothing more than remind us of our sins, subjecting

us to death through our sins, and making us the debtors of eternal wrath. This is well taught, and well felt too, by our conscience, whenever it comes into contact with the law. There must, therefore, be something else and even more than the law to make a man pious and holy. But they are blind who do not rightly comprehend the law; they presumptuously suppose they can satisfy it with works, not knowing how much the law requires, namely, a willing and an affectionate heart. These men do not look Moses in the face—the veil for them is spread before and covers it. He afterwards shows the conflict of spirit and of flesh in man, and quotes himself as an example, through which we may both learn and understand what is going forward in us, namely, the mortification of sin in ourselves. He calls both the spirit and the flesh a law, because as it is in the nature of the divine law to urge and to demand, so also is it in the nature of the flesh to urge, to demand, and to rage against the spirit, in order to have its own way; on the other hand, the spirit is urgent and absolute in opposition to the flesh, in order to have its own way also. And the conflict continues within us as long as we live, in some more, in some less, according as the spirit or the flesh prevail; and yet, notwithstanding all this, man remains a compound of both, and the spirit and the flesh continue to contend with one another, until the whole man becomes essentially spiritual.

In the eighth chapter he consoles the combatants, that, though in the flesh, they are not condemned ; and he points out afterwards what the nature of flesh and of spirit is, and how the spirit comes from Christ who has given us his Holy Spirit, that we may become spiritual, and may control the flesh. He assures us that we still remain the children of God, however strongly sin may rage in us, provided we only follow the impulse of the spirit, and resist sin with a view to mortify it. But since nothing is so effectual to the subjection of the flesh as crosses and sufferings, he consoles us under our sufferings, and we are aided by the spirit of love and of all creatures, by which he explains that the spirit within us and the creature itself is longing with us to be delivered from the burden of the flesh and of sin ; and we shall find that these three chapters, namely, the sixth, the seventh, and the eighth, are solely confined to the subject of faith, by which he means the death of the old Adam and the subjection of the flesh.

In the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters, he lays down the everlasting providence of God, by whom it is originally decreed who *shall* believe or who *shall not* believe, and who *shall* be delivered or *not* be delivered from sin, so as to be entirely taken out of the hands of man, and to depend upon the will of God alone, whether we shall be religious. And this is in the highest degree necessary ; for we

are so weak and vacillating, that if it depended upon ourselves, not a man would be saved, the Devil would decidedly get the better of us all.* But as it is certain that the providence of God cannot fail, and that no one can resist it, we have still hopes against sin. Here we have to reply, once for all, to those bold and daring spirits who bring their understanding to this question, and begin by investigating the depths of divine providence, and give themselves fruitless trouble to know whether they are so provided. These men must plunge into the difficulty, either that they are provided or that they must take their chance. Do you, however, read and attend to this epistle regularly; and make yourself well acquainted, in the first instance, with Christ and the Gospel, that you may be aware of your own sinfulness and of his grace. You must afterwards contend with sin, as you learn from the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters. You afterwards enter into the ninth chapter, where you find, amidst crosses and sufferings, the true doctrine of providence, and the consolation connected with it (chap. 9, 10, 11). For without sufferings, crosses, and the terrors of death, we cannot look at the great

* *Shall* means here the same as *will*, namely, a contingent futurity, according to the Saxon dialect. In the translation of J. Jonas it is rendered *accepturi sint*. The word *providence*, or *prevision*, or *provision*, or *administration* is applied by Luther to the whole order of salvation, according to the arrangement of divine wisdom; he does not mean an unconditional election.

question of providence without injury to ourselves and concealed anger against God. Our Adam must be first dead before he can sustain these things, and drink the strong wine. Beware, therefore, of drinking wine so long as you are a suckling. Every doctrine has its measure, its time, and its age.

In the twelfth chapter he teaches us the true worship of God, by which all Christians become priests, and sacrifice, not money or cattle, as in the law, but their own bodies with the mortification of their affections. Hence he describes the outward behaviour of Christians in this spiritual government: how they are to teach, to preach, to rule, to serve, to give, to suffer, to love, to live, and to act towards their friend, their foe, and everyone. Such are the works which a Christian does, for as has been said already, *Faith has no holy-days*. He teaches, in the thirteenth chapter, to honour and to obey worldly governments, which are constituted for this purpose, that although they do not make men pious before God, they enable pious men to enjoy external peace and protection; and bad men cannot openly do mischief without fear or with impunity. Therefore, they are to be honoured by pious men, although pious men may not require them. Finally, he resolves everything into charity, and concludes that we should follow the example of Christ, and do for others as he has done for us.

In the fourteenth chapter he teaches us how to

lead tender consciences cautiously in the faith, and to spare them, that the liberty of Christians may not be used to the injury but to the promotion of the weak. For where this is not the case, discord and contempt of the Gospel follow. This is of infinite importance, since it is better to give way a little to those who are weak in faith, until they gradually grow stronger, than that the doctrine of the Gospel should be entirely lost; and this work is a special work of charity, which is the more necessary in the present times, when by eating flesh and taking other liberties, without either heed or ceremony, we disturb weak consciences before they know the truth.

In the fifteenth chapter he takes Christ as an example how we ought to bear with others who are weak, as in the case of those who are evidently defective from their public sins and immoral habits, but whom we must not reject, but bear with them until they become better. For so has Christ done with us, and does so daily; that he tolerates our want of virtue, and bad habits, and every species of imperfection, and yet helps us without ceasing. He concludes by praying for them, by praising them, and by recommending them to God. He testifies his own office as a preacher, and in the mildest manner solicits their contributions for the poor at Jerusalem. Everything that he says, everything that he does is pure charity.

His greetings in the last chapter are accompanied with a liberal admonition to beware of the doctrines of men, which find their way into the truths and obstruct the purity of the Gospel. Precisely as if he had foreseen that from Rome, and through the medium of the Romans, would proceed those deceitful and abominable canons and decrees, and all the reptile swarm of human laws and commandments, which have swamped the whole world, and have annihilated this Epistle and the Holy Scriptures, together with all spirit and faith. Nothing now remains but that idol the stomach, against whose votaries St. Paul inveighs. May God defend us from them. Amen.

We, therefore, find in this Epistle most copiously treated whatever a Christian ought to know; namely, what are the law and the Gospel—sin, punishment, grace, faith, and righteousness, Christ and God, good works, charity, hope, and crosses; how we ought to act towards every one, whether he be a religious man or a sinner, strong or weak, friend or foe, and how we ought to act towards ourselves. And all this so admirably laid down with examples from Holy Writ, and so exemplified both by himself and from the Prophets, as to leave nothing to wish for. It would seem as if St. Paul in this Epistle wished to epitomise the whole faith and doctrine of the Gospel of Christ, and thus

prepare us an introduction to the whole of the Old Testament. For without doubt, he who has this Epistle well by heart has in him the light and the power of the Old Testament. Every Christian should, therefore, make it his own, and observe it constantly in practice. May the grace of God be with him! Amen.



