

nourish them better in this hope, he displayed it for them to see and, so to speak, taste, under earthly benefits. But now that the gospel has more plainly and clearly revealed the grace of the future life, the Lord leads our minds to meditate upon it directly, laying aside the lower mode of training that he used with the Israelites.

Those who do not pay attention to this plan of God think that the ancient people did not transcend those benefits promised to the body.

The point of our quarrel with men of this sort is this: they teach that the Israelites deemed the possession of the Land of Canaan their highest and ultimate blessedness, and that after the revelation of Christ it typified for us the heavenly inheritance. We contend, on the contrary, that, in the earthly possession they enjoyed, they looked, as in a mirror, upon the future Inheritance they believed to have been prepared for them in heaven. . . .

The second difference between the Old and New Testaments consists in figures: that, in the absence of the reality, it showed but an image and shadow in place of the substance; the New Testament reveals the very substance of truth as present. . . .

I come to the third difference, taken from Jeremiah. His words are: 'Behold, the days will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the agreement which I made with your fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I ruled over them. . . . But this will be the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel . . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts . . . and I will forgive their iniquity. And each will not teach his neighbor, each man his brother. For all will know, from the least to the greatest.' (Jer. 31:31-34). . . . From these words the apostle took occasion to make a comparison between the law and the gospel, calling the former literal, the latter spiritual doctrine; the former he speaks of as carved on tablets of stone, the latter as written upon man's hearts; the former is the preaching of death, the latter of life; the former of condemnation, the latter of righteousness; the former to be made void, the latter to abide (II Cor. 3:6-11). . . . the apostle speaks more opprobriously of the law than the prophet does -- not simply in respect to the law itself, but, because of certain wretches who aped the law and, by their perverse zeal for ceremonies, they are contrasting the Old and New Testaments, consider nothing in the law except what properly belongs to it. For example: the law contains here and there promises of mercy, but because they have been borrowed from elsewhere, they are not counted part of the law, when only the nature of the law is under discussion. They ascribe to it only this function: to enjoin what is right, to forbid what is wicked; to promise a reward to the keepers of righteousness, and threaten transgressors with punishment; but at the same time not to change or correct the depravity of heart that by nature inheres in all man.

. . . We are not to surmise from this difference between letter and spirit that the Lord had fruitlessly bestowed his law upon the Jews, and that none of them turned to him. But it was put forward by way of comparison to commend the grace abounding, wherewith the same Lawgiver -- assuming, as it were, a new character -- honored the preaching of the gospel. For suppose we reckon the multitude of those whom he gathers into