

the communion of his church from all peoples, men regenerated by his spirit through the preaching of the gospel. Then we will say that in ancient Israel there were very few -- almost none -- who embraced the Lord's covenant with their whole hearts and minds. Yet, reckoned by themselves without comparison, there were many.

The fourth difference arises out of the third. Scripture calls the Old Testament one of 'bondage' because it produces fear in men's minds; but the New Testament, one of 'freedom' because it lifts them to trust and assurance . . . . To sum up: the Old Testament struck consciences with fear and trembling, but by the benefit of the New they are released into joy. The Old held consciences bound by the yoke of bondage; the New by its spirit of liberality emancipates them into freedom.

But suppose that our opponents object that, among the Israelites, the holy patriarchs were an exception; since they were obviously endowed with the same Spirit of faith as we, it follows that they shared the same freedom and joy. To this we reply: neither of these arose from the law. But when through the law the patriarchs felt themselves both oppressed by their enslaved condition, and wearied by anxiety of conscience, they fled for refuge to the gospel. . . Further, we shall deny that they were so endowed with the spirit of freedom and assurance as not in some degree to experience the fear and bondage arising from the law. For, however much they enjoyed the privilege that they had received through the grace of the gospel, they were still subject to the same bonds and burdens of ceremonial observances as the common people. They were compelled to observe those ceremonies punctiliously, symbols of a tutelage resembling bondage (cf. Gal. 4:2-3); and the written bonds (cf. Col. 2:14), whereby they confessed themselves guilty of sin, did not free them from obligation. Hence, they are rightly said, in contrast to us, to have been under the testament of bondage and fear, when we consider that common dispensation by which the Lord at that time dealt with the Israelites. . . . The fifth difference, which may be added, lies in the fact that until the advent of Christ, the Lord set apart one nation within which to confine the covenant of his grace . . . . He lodged his covenant, so to speak, in their bosom; he manifested the presence of his majesty to them; he showered every privilege upon them . . . . in communicating his Word to them, he joined them to himself, that he might be called and esteemed their God . . . . 'But when the fullness of time came' (Gal. 4:4) which was appointed for the restoration of all things, he was revealed as the reconciler of God and men; 'the wall' that for so long had confined God's mercy within the boundaries of Israel 'was broken down' (Eph. 2:14). 'Peace was announced to those who were far off, and to those who were near' (Eph. 2:17) that together they might be reconciled to God and welded into one people (Eph. 2:16).

The calling of the Gentiles, therefore, is a notable mark of the excellence of the New Testament over the Old. Indeed, this had been attested before by many very clear utterances of the prophets, but in such a way that its fulfillment was postponed until the kingdom of the Messiah . . . .

. . . God ought not to be considered changeable merely because he accommodated diverse forms to different ages, as he knew would be expedient for each . . . . if a householder instructs, rules, and guides, his children one way in Infancy, another way in youth, and still another