remains in his natural state of uncircumcision’

**if it fulfil the law**] Such  
is the supposition—that an uncircumcised  
man could fully act up to the (moral) requirements of the law.

**judge**, i.e. ‘rise  
up in judgment against,’ judge indirectly  
by his example. See Matt. xii. 41, 42,  
where the more definite word ‘*condemn*’  
is used in a sense precisely similar.

**through** is here used of the *state in which  
the man is* when he does the act, *regarded  
as the medium* throughwhich the act is  
done. The “*by*” of the A. V. gives too  
much the idea of the state being the *instrument, by means of which*.

**29.**] **inwardly or in secret**, as a qualification  
of the Jew, is parallel with **of the heart** as  
a qualification of *circumcision: both* designating the inner and spiritual reality,  
of which the name of Jew and the carnal  
circumcision are only the signs.—“ *Circumcision of the heart*” is no new expression:—we have it virtually in Deut. x.  
16; Jer. iv. 4: see also Acts vii. 51.

**in the spirit, not in the letter**] Not  
merely ‘spiritually, not externally ? nor  
does the word “*spirit*” allude to the  
*necessitating cause* of circumcision (the  
uncleanness of the inner man):—nor signify  
the *material* ; nor the *rule* ; but the *living  
power or element*, wherewith that inner  
sphere of being is filled,—in being used as  
in Acts xvii. 28, of that in which any thing  
lives and moves,—comp. “j*oy in the Holy  
Ghost*,” ch. 17,—“*love in the spirit*,”  
Col. i. 8,—‘‘*to serve in newness of spirit*,”  
ch, vii. 6,—“‘*to be in the spirit*,” ch. viii. 9.  
So that **the spirit** *here* is not man’s spirit,  
nor properly the Holy Spirit, but *the  
spirit*, as opposed to *the letter*, of the  
Jewish law and of all God’s revelation of  
Himself.

**whose praise**] viz. of the  
true Jew: the circumcision of the heart, as  
belonging to him, is subordinate.—The  
praise of such a character, (for *praise* it  
must be,) can only come from Him who  
sees in secret (Matt. vi. 4, 6), and can discern the heart.

**III. 1–20.**] TAKING INTO ALL FAIR ACCOUNT THE REAL ADVANTAGES OF THE JEWS, THESE CANNOT, BY THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE ITSELF  
CONCERNING THEM, EXEMPT THEM FROM  
THIS SENTENCE OF GUILTINESS BEFORE  
GOD, IN WHICH ALL FLESH ARE INVOLVED.

**1–4.**] The circumcised  
Jew did unquestionably possess great advantages, which were not annulled by the  
rebellion of some.

1.] **then**, i.e. seeing that things are so. If true Judaism  
and true circumcision be merely spiritual,  
what is the profit of external Judaism and  
ceremonial circumcision?

**advantage**] **profit, pre-eminence**. It is best to take  
the question, not as *coming from an obJector*, which supposition has obscured  
several parts of this Epistle, but as *asked  
by the Apostle himself*, anticipating the  
thoughts of his reader.

**2.**] The words,  
**much every way**, answer the first question  
of ver. 1, but take no account of the  
second, as it is virtually included in the  
first. Nor can it be properly regarded as  
answered in ch. iv. 1 ff. (see there.)

**every way**] i.e. in all departments of  
the spiritual life.

**first indeed**] The Apostle begins as if intending to instance