**my voice** (from what, to what? Some  
say, from mildness to severity. But  
surely such a change would be altogether  
beside the tone of this deeply affectionate  
address. I should rather hold,—from  
my former severity, when I became your  
enemy by *telling the truth*, to the softness and mildness of a mother, still *telling  
the truth,* but in another tone).

**21—30.]** *Illustration of the relative positions of the law and the promise, by an  
allegorical interpretation of the history of  
the two sons of Abraham:* “intended to  
destroy the influence of the false Apostles  
with their own weapons, and to root it up  
out of its own proper soil” (Meyer).

**21.] do ye not hear** (heed) **the law,** listen to  
that which the law imparts and impresses  
on its hearers?

**22.] For** answers to  
a tacit assumption of a negative answer to  
the foregoing question—‘nay, ye do not:  
*for*,’ &c.

**23.] after the flesh,** i.e., **according to nature**, in her usual course: **the  
other, by [virtue of] the promise,** as the  
efficient cause of Sarah’s becoming pregnant contrary to nature: see Rom. iv. 19.

**24.] Which things are allegorical**  
(i.e. as in text, **have another meaning:**  
are to be understood otherwise than according to their literal sense. It was the practice of the Rabbinical Jews to allegorize the Old Test. history. “Almost  
all the things narrated have with them  
their allegorical and mystical interpretation. Nor can we depreciate their labours  
in this matter. For St. Paul treats things  
in the same way, e.g. by speaking of  
the first and second Adam, of spiritual  
meat and drink, of Hagar, &c. So  
also John speaks of the mystical Sodom  
and Egypt, and predicts by revelation the  
infliction of the Egyptian plagues on the  
enemies of the church.” Schöttgen. How  
various persons take this allegorical comment of the Apostle, depends very much  
on their views of his authority as a Scripture interpreter. To those who receive the  
law as a great system of prophetic figures,  
there can be no difficulty in believing the  
events by which the giving of the law was  
prepared to have been prophetic figures  
also: not losing thereby any of their historic  
reality, but bearing to those who were able  
to see it aright, this deeper meaning. And  
to such persons, the fact of St. Paul and  
other sacred writers adducing such allegorical interpretations brings no surprise  
and no difficulty, but only strong confirmation of their belief that there are  
such deeper meanings lying hid under  
the O.T. history. That the Rabbis and the Fathers, holding such deeper senses,  
should have often missed them, and allegorized fancifully and absurdly, is nothing to the purpose: it is surely most  
illogical to argue that because they were  
wrong, St. Paul cannot be right. The  
only thing which really does create any  
difficulty in my mind, is, that Commentators with spiritual discernment, and appreciation of such a man as our Apostle,  
should content themselves with quietly  
casting aside his Scripture interpretation  
wherever, as here, it passes their comprehension. On their own view of him, it  
would be at least worth while to consider  
whether his knowledge of his own Scriptures may not have surpassed ours. But  
to those who believe that he had the Spirit  
of God, this passage speaks very solemnly;  
and I quite agree with Mr. Conybeare in  
his note on this place, “The lesson to be  
drawn from this whole passage, as regards  
the Christian use of the O.T., is of an  
importance which can scarcely be overrated.” Of course no one, who reads,  
marks, learns, and inwardly digests the  
Seriptures, can subscribe to the shallow  
and indolent dictum of Macknight, ‘This  
is to be laid down as a fixed rule, that *no  
ancient history is to be considered as  
allegorical, but that which inspired*