

GALATIANS

W. J. Franklin

Chapter 1:1-10

PREFACE

Galatia was a Roman province bounded by Paphlagonia, Bithynia, Phrygia, Lycaonia, Cappadocia and Pontus. Its inhabitants, according to ancient testimony, were “Fickle in their resolves, fond of change, and not to be trusted.” Still another ancient writer says, “Frank, impetuous, impressionable, intelligent, but extremely inconstant, fond of show and perpetually quarreling.” They manifested this character in their Christianity.

The word, “Galatia,” means “Milky” according to Jackson. This trait of their needing milk is clearly seen in the present epistle. Many of God’s precious saints never come to sufficient maturity to be able to feed on the wonderful grace of God in its fulness. They insist on some law keeping, some human merit and a mixture of law and grace. Such were the people in Galatia to whom Paul preached through an infirmity of the flesh—Gal. 4:13.

The following outline may help the reader to a better grasp of this book which has been called “The Christian declaration of independence.”

1. Introduction and salutation_____ 1:1-10.
2. Vindication of Paul’s apostolic authority____ 1:11-2:14.
3. Justification by faith alone_____ 2:15-4:31.
4. Practical application_____ 5:1-6:10.
5. Conclusion_____ 6:11-18.

Note what is said of the Judaizers, and what they are said to do.

1. They trouble the saints and pervert the Gospel—1:7.
2. Some are false brethren—2:4.
3. They dissemble (Act as hypocrites)—2:13.
4. They bewitch God’s people—3:1.
5. They hinder those who would run in the race—5:7.
6. They make fools of God’s people—3:1.
7. Paul wished them to be cut off—5:12.
8. They have the curse of God resting on them—1:8,9.

INTRODUCTION

“Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither of man.”—V.1. The false teachers, seemingly, had endeavoured to place Paul in a subordinate position to the twelve as though he had derived his authority and commission from them. He refutes this in the very first verse by saying that his apostolic call was neither from nor through man. Not the twelve, nor even one of the twelve, had anything to do with his ministry. He belonged to an entirely different set of apostles, even those called of God to work among the Gentiles, and he himself was commissioned to reveal the **full purpose** of God among the Gentiles for this age. His call was directly from the glorified Christ—and God the Father—Acts 26:16-18. Back of Christ was God the Father. Finally, the Holy Spirit called on men to recognize what He had done—Acts 13:1,2.

“All the brethren which are with me”—V. 2. These brethren, though unnamed, gave all the weight of their influence and their full support to this important epistle in which an effort is made to destroy the damning doctrine of legality which had raised its head in Galatia. By “All the brethren” being associated with Paul, notice was served to the Galatians that they were forsaking the common faith.

Paul did not refer to them as “churches of God or of Christ,” but simply as the “churches of Galatia.” He was clearly in doubt regarding their state—4:20. He rebuked their evil doctrine more severely than he did the moral evil of Corinth; simply because that without the Gospel of Christ in its purity there can be no morality.

“Grace to you and peace from God”—V.3. This was Paul’s usual salutation. However, in his letters to Timothy and Titus, he added the word, “Mercy,” with the other two graces. In experience, there is no peace apart from grace. But where grace is known in its fulness, there is the “Peace of God that passeth understanding.”

“Who gave Himself for our sins.”—V. 4. Better, “He gave Himself in behalf of our sins.” Elsewhere, the word in the Greek which means, “In our stead,” is used. He not only died on our behalf, but in our stead. “On our behalf” may be an act of kindness, but “In our stead” is substitution. “This present evil world” or age, from which we have been delivered, is “Evil;” especially from a religious viewpoint. The “Jews’ religion” along with many other later religions of like nature would again bring us into bondage. By going back to the law, the Galatians had denied this deliverance and were brought into bondage to that which God had abandoned and completely set aside. It is no longer owned of God, but is called simply, “The Jews’ religion”—2:14. These “Weak and beggarly elements” (4:9) can only bring them into bondage again.

“To whom be glory forever and ever, amen”—V. 5. We like Paul’s acclamation of praise in the Greek. It exclaims, “To whom be glory into the ages of the ages, amen.” God purchased a fallen race at great expense to Himself. His Son had to “Beggar” Himself to provide redemption. This was done in pure grace, and there can be no mixture of human merit. God will not give the glory for this work to another. See Isa. 42:8. Let us give all the glory to the One to whom it is due.

Chapter 1:6-10

THEME OF THE EPISTLE

Without his usual words of thanksgiving (See I Cor. 1:4) and with few preliminaries, Paul plunged into his message. He marveled at the sudden transference of their feelings and affections from the One who had called them, to another gospel—V. 6. Later in this epistle, he told them that such a move was a fall from grace—5:4. The sweet message of the grace of God is to the effect that sinners can now have all the favour of God without having to earn or merit it, but simply on the basis of faith. This is on a level so much higher than that of the law of Moses that to go back to law is to fall from the high plane of grace to which God has brought us.

“Which is not another Gospel”—V. 7. This so-called gospel put them back under the burdens from which grace had freed them. Jesus said, “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”—Matt. 11:28. The word, “Labour,” in this verse means, “To overburden with ceremony or religious or spiritual anxiety”—Strong. The Galatians had gone back to a morbidly scrupulous position under the law which can never give ease to the heart. In this state, the Spirit of God cannot work properly—5:18. Furthermore, Christ is of no practical benefit to those who had fallen from grace—5:4.

This “pretended Gospel” TROUBLED the Galatians. That is, it agitated or disturbed them by causing them to become self-occupied instead of having their hearts set on Christ. They were persuaded that they must seek to earn the favour of God by conduct or work.

This false Gospel PERVERTED the Gospel of Christ. That is, it transmuted or corrupted the Gospel. The Gospel is a pure grace message which will not permit an admixture. To endeavour to add something to the Gospel can only take from it, as nothing can be added to that which is perfect and complete. To add to the Gospel of Christ is to insult God and say that the work of Christ is not sufficient. The Galatians had not denied the coming of Christ, they merely wished to bring in circumcision, and the observance of days, months, times and years—4:10; 6:12,13. However, note the terrible position that such a course placed them in—5:3,4. The Gospel Paul preached is the whole counsel of God for the whole man.

“Let him be accursed”—V. 8. This verse contains some of the strongest language used in the writings of the apostle. What a fate is in store for the propagators of a “salvation by works” gospel! Paul was so sure that his Gospel was from God that he could pronounce a curse even on an angel if it dared present a plan of salvation contrary to that which he had proclaimed. Angels were used of God in the giving of the law—3:19. God had not used angels in bringing the message of grace, but frail humanity. The Judaizers may have used this against Paul’s message, and that would be the reason he spoke of the angels here.

The Holy Spirit was so deeply concerned that He inspired Paul to repeat, “Let him be accursed”—V. 9. (See I Cor. 16:22 where the word is left untranslated.)

“For do I now persuade men or God?”—V. 10. The foregoing words are not the words of a man who was seeking to please men. If one is to please men, he must flatter and make every appeal to their ego, fawn upon them and appeal to the old nature all he can. Paul would show every kindness, but would never compromise his Gospel nor his character by truckling to men. By such methods, he would have ceased to be the love slave of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1:11-19

PAUL’S APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

“The Gospel which is preached of me is not after man”—V. 11. It is not a human invention. No cunning of man could produce it. Rather, it came directly from God. Paul was not taught by some school nor by a man nor a group of men, but by Jesus Christ. Note that in this verse for the first time in this epistle, he called these Galatians, “Brethren.”

“Neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ”—V. 12. No other minister brought it to him. No apostle taught him. On the road to Damascus, Christ appeared to him and gave him his call and commission personally, and outlined his work for him—Acts 26:13-19. A little later, God said of Paul, “He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel”—Acts 9:15. Then the great truth contained in his epistles begin to be revealed to him. Jesus appeared to him personally on different occasions, and also revealed the Gospel of the grace of God to him.

“For ye have heard of my conversation (Manner of life) in time past in the Jews’ religion how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and wasted it.”—V. 13. Both the Jews and the Christians knew of Paul’s conduct. Many of the Christians knew it from bitter punishment and imprisonment. Read the following citations for a review of his persecution of the early church—Acts 8:3; 9:1,2; 22:4,5; 26:9-11; I Cor. 15:9. Nothing would have pleased Saul, the Pharisee, more than to completely stamp out of the earth the whole church of God.

“Profited in the Jews’ religion”—V. 14. The “Jews’ religion” has to do with meat and drink—Col. 2:16. It is observance of days, months, times and years—Gal. 4:10. It is ritual, circumcision and ceremony. Not one of these things have to do with, nor are they a part of Christianity. God gave Moses a law and feasts that were entirely new to Israel. They were so new that a religious economy began at that time. Even so, Paul stands in somewhat the same

position with the church. His was a new revelation. None of the twelve could add anything to his message.

In this age, grace and the “Jews’ religion” will not mix. Let us not try to read the Mosaic law into the church, nor read the church backward into the old dispensation. Trying to add something to the Gospel of the grace of God is simply bringing in something that will prove a curse to the one who brings it and to the one who hears it. May God enable us to set Judaism aside completely, even as He has done.

Paul’s zeal, which seemingly was for God in the past of his life, was found to be for the tradition of his fathers. Those traditions had so encrusted the Word of God that it was difficult to break through the built-up comments of the Rabbis and find the Word of God. Read Jesus’ severe and stern rebuke of such traditions—Mark 7:3-13.

“Who separated me from my mother’s womb”—V. 15. These words remind us of God’s words to Jeremiah—Jer. 1:5; see also the prophetic words uttered concerning Josiah many years before his birth—I Kings 13:2,3.

If there was ever a man whose call was manifestly and evidently of pure grace, it was the call of Saul, the Pharisee. However, it takes the death of Jesus to suffice for the worst, and nothing less can prevail for the best. Whether we know it or not, we are all entirely dependent on the grace of God.

“To reveal His Son in me”—V. 16. Not only to him, but in him. How forceful was that revelation to break at once the hold of Judaism on him and its spell over him.

His revelation of Christ was inward even as the revelation given to John in the book of Revelation was outward.

“That I might preach Him among the Gentiles.” His message was more than a theory. He did not preach a series of vague and odd theories. His message was a Person. It continued to be so in all his missionary travels. See Acts 17:3; I Cor. 2:2.

“I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Some are so bound up in the traditions of men that they would actually feel that they should consult men as to whether they should obey God or not. Not so Paul. His message was so pointedly and immediately from God that he felt no need to go to the twelve or even to one of them.

“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me”—V. 17. This would have been the logical and human thing to do. However, with such clear and positive call from God, why consult flesh and blood? Like Moses and Elijah, Paul went into Arabia. By the fact that he later in this epistle mentions “Sinai which is in Arabia,” we feel confident that that is the part of Arabia that he visited. See Gal. 4:25. Jesus also spent forty days in a wilderness before entering His ministry, but for a different purpose than the afore-mentioned men. We do not know what wilderness He visited, inasmuch as the Scripture does not mention it by name.

Paul acted independently of the other apostles, as being directly taught of God. He wished the brethren in Galatia to see that his call, commission and ability came from God alone, and that he was not constituted an apostle by the twelve or by any other man, but that he was called and sent by the glorified Christ. His message could not be improved by listening to the twelve but, on the contrary, he could, and doubtlessly did, add many things to them. See II Pet. 3:15,16.

“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see (Make the acquaintance of) Peter”—V. 18. This get-acquainted visit is recorded in Acts 9:26-29. The “many days” of Acts 9:23 probably cover the trip into Arabia and the whole three years from his conversion until he made this trip to Jerusalem.

During this time, God had been unfolding by revelation the many phases of the truth Paul preached as recorded

in the book of Acts and in his epistles.

There is certainly no apostolic succession here. God was doing a new thing, even turning entirely to the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. It was becoming fully manifest that Israel had rejected Christ with His message. Paul had written earlier that “The wrath is come upon them to the full”—I Thess. 2:16. Peter, James and John who were to go to the circumcision soon found their door closing. Paul seems to have given the closing word to the Jews—Acts. 28:28. This new message for the newly revealed purpose was given to Paul. He could not have obtained it from the twelve, for they did not know it. Paul had been preaching all those three years with no authority or commission from the twelve. When he did lay his message before them, they gave their full approval and the right hand of fellowship. He doubtless was glad to have their fellowship, but he did not need man’s credentials even though the men happened to be as important as the twelve apostles of the kingdom. Paul had, or rather, later worked out from a new center, even Antioch.

“Other apostles saw I none save James the Lord’s brother”—V. 19. Seemingly, the other apostles had also scattered from Jerusalem at that time. Later, Paul saw Peter, James and John—Gal. 2:9. He may have met the apostolic body at a later time—Acts 15:2-6. One of their number had been killed between these two mentioned visits—Acts 12:1,2. So we have no record that Paul ever saw other than these three apostles of the twelve.

Chapter 1:20-2:2

PAUL AFFIRMS THE TRUTH OF HIS STATEMENTS

“Before God I lie not”—V. 20. It was and is very important to see that Paul was not taught his Gospel by other men. His message in its fulness was not known to others, therefore, others could not have taught him, but his message came directly from God.

“Afterwards, I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia”—V. 21. After his visit with Peter, Paul again went into regions far from Jerusalem where there were no apostles, hence, they could not teach him. It seems that he traveled from Arabia to Damascus, then to Jerusalem, later into Syria and Cilicia. In Damascus, his life was plotted against—Acts 9:24,25; II Cor. 11:32. The same thing happened in Jerusalem—Acts 9:29. It was after this that he went into Syria and Cilicia, He may have established churches in those countries, as he later visited them and confirmed them.—Acts 15:23,41. He does not mention the visit to Jerusalem recorded in Acts 11:27-30, as that was, seemingly, such a short stay.

UNKNOWN BY FACE TO THE JUDEAN CHURCHES

“Was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea”—V. 22. Paul was converted in another country. He had never preached or evangelized in Judea. He was known to a few by face in Jerusalem, and had at that time met two or three of the apostles. He was not even known to the churches in Judea, so how could he be a disciple of the older apostles?

“But they had heard only that he that persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed”—V. 23. Saul, the hardhearted Pharisee, was well known as a persecutor. The good news, though almost unbelievable, of his conversion would have spread rapidly among the Christians.

“They glorified God in me”—V. 24. Seemingly, those Jews were more glad for him than were the Galatians. No human instrument was used in the conversion of this deep-dyed sinner. His conversion, call to the ministry, preparation and commission to preach to the Gentiles was directly from the risen Christ, and not from the kingdom apostles. No marvel that the other Christians gave God all the glory for his being called by Christ. When he was saved, he had been found in open rebellion against Christ. He had also been a severe scourge to many of Christ’s

servants. His call was very evidently in pure grace. When Jesus had been on earth, other apostles had answered His call. Not so Paul. His call came after Jesus was glorified in heaven. His call in pure grace qualified him as a herald to the Gentiles, who needed pure grace preached to them.

THIRD TRIP TO JERUSALEM

“Then fourteen years afterward I went up again to Jerusalem”—2:1. When Paul fled from Damascus, he went to Jerusalem—Acts 9:26. Then he went to take an offering to the distressed brethren—Acts 11:30. The trip mentioned here is also recorded in Acts 15.

The “Fourteen” years seems to date from the one mentioned in 1:18. All that time he had been labouring for the Lord in preaching, teaching and missionary work with no interference or contact with any of the twelve apostles.

Acts 15 records the historical fact that Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to settle the question of the believer’s relationship to the law. The decree issued there settled all questions regarding these facts. Christians were in no sense to be put under the law. However, Paul did not cite that declaration or refer to it in any manner. His object was to show the Galatians that the same Lord who ordained the twelve kingdom apostles had likewise given his apostolic authority among the Gentiles.

A GENTILE ADMITTED INTO FELLOWSHIP

“Took Titus with me.” Paul manifested great boldness in taking an uncircumcised Gentile into the Jerusalem assembly. Also, he manifested the great liberty of fellowship and liberty the assembly in Antioch enjoyed, despite the race of man from which one may have come. Would that all the Lord’s people would leave Jerusalem and come to Antioch. We feel that Paul’s taking Titus was also a test to see what would be the attitude of the leaders of Jerusalem.

It was a remarkable victory over the Judaizers for Titus to be permitted into the conference without being called on to observe any Jewish rites whatsoever.

LED BY THE LORD

“I went up by revelation”—V. 2. This verse shows that Paul had not gone to Jerusalem merely at the solicitation of the assembly in Antioch, nor just as their agent, but by direct revelation of God. This shows that all matters should be taken to the Lord. Some things that look so plausible prove not to be of the Lord, and others that do not look so good prove that God is in them.

“Lest by any means I should run or had run in vain.” If the Judaizers were permitted to continue with the backing of Jerusalem, the legal message would work disaster among the Gentile converts, even as it had in Galatia. Paul would have to say to many even as he said to Galatia, “My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”—4:19; or, “I am afraid of you lest I bestowed labour on you in vain”—4:11.

The time had come for a bold statement from Jerusalem. There had to be harmony or an open break would come. Paul knew his message well. He knew it to be of God. Let us not feel that he had to submit it to Jerusalem for its approval. He wished the apostles and elders to declare themselves that they stood with him that salvation was by grace, through faith alone. Acts 15 shows that such statement was issued.

“But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised”—V. 3, R.V. Paul wished the Galatians to know that a Gentile was admitted to full fellowship in the Jerusalem assembly, even fully fellowshiped at the conference. This manifested that the twelve did not disagree with the Gospel of grace to the Gentiles.

“And that because of false brethren brought in”—V. 4. These false brethren had insisted that Gentiles be circumcised and compelled to keep the law of Moses—Acts 15:5. Paul circumcised Timothy at a later date to keep from giving unnecessary offence to unsaved Jews—Acts 16:3. However, if the apostles had insisted that Titus be circumcised in order to be fellowshiped, it would have been to strengthen the legal party who had caused the conference to be called in the first place. Paul and the other apostles flatly refused to yield in any measure. All who were there were supposed to be believers, and there was no need to make allowances for unsaved Jews. One can make allowance for even weaker brethren, but to make rites or ceremonies a part of the basis for fellowship is just to compromise with the enemy.

“Who came in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage again”—V. 4. The liberty which truly-taught Christians enjoy, is complete freedom from the law of Moses or any rite or ceremony, bondage to days, or any other outward thing as gaining the favour of God. It is liberty to fellowship any man in Christ regardless of race, whether Gentile or Jew, and to have complete spiritual freedom to enjoy other people of Christ with no scruples regarding the law of Moses. The “Bondage” that people would bring us into is bondage in any measure to the law of Moses. “I have Christ and need no more” should be the thought of the Christian.

NO COMPROMISE IN PAUL

“To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you”—V. 5. Paul was very gracious and could be as tender as a mother, but there was no compromise in his nature. Now that such vital truths are under consideration, he would not be moved a hair’s breadth. He would not give any ground whatsoever to the legal party. He would not place a yoke on the necks of the Gentile disciples. The truth of the Gospel at this place is the complete acceptance of the Gentiles as fellow-heirs on the basis of grace, and fellow partakers of the Gospel in Christ. This must be apart from law, for the law of Moses required that the Jews stay separate from the nations. There is never any reason to yield one point of the truth, and we need never give way to false brethren. In the Jerusalem conference, Paul was fighting that the truth might continue with the saints. In this letter, he was fighting that the saints might continue with the truth.

“But those who seemed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person) for they who seemed to be somewhat added nothing to me”—V. 6. A happier translation of the first part of this verse would be, “Those who were reputed to be pillars.” Paul was not speaking disrespectfully of the other apostles. However, he did wish to show that the foremost apostles could add nothing to the message God had given him, and that they had nothing over him. Anyway, God is no respecter of persons.

“But contrariwise”—V. 7. As to the message of salvation, there was perfect agreement between Paul and the conference at Jerusalem. The kingdom apostles saw plainly that Paul had the message for the Gentiles. He was expressly sent of the Lord to the Gentiles as was Peter to the Jews. They didn’t censure Paul for what he was preaching, neither did they try to persuade him to preach something else, nor did they add to what he had already preached.

“For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles”—V. 8. The same God qualified and sent each man to fill each his respective place. Men, then or now, do not have the right to play one personality against another.

“When James, Cephas and John...perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship”—V. 9. There was no “Disfellowship” as the Galatians might have thought. Rather, Paul went from Jerusalem with the full approval of the other apostles. “That we should go to the heathen and they to the circumcision.” The heathen lands were Paul’s sphere. May we as Gentile Christians realize what man God raised up for the Gentiles and for this age. Peter’s epistles were written to scattered Christians of the dispersion. Paul wrote nine letters to established Gentile churches.

“Only they would that we remember the poor.”—V. 10. God was so plainly with the apostle Paul that all the other apostles expressed was that he remember the poor, which was already an established part of his ministry. See Acts. 11:27-30.

PAUL REBUKES PETER

“I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed”—V. 11. Peter knew the truth of salvation—Acts 15:7-11. However, in Antioch, he betrayed a deep principle which Paul could not let pass. Peter was to be blamed. He made no reply to Paul, for there was no defence of his position. Peter was inspired to write infallibly in his letters, but not so was he inspired in all his actions and deeds. It is evident that Paul was not like many of our day. He did not see Peter as so superior to all around that he, Paul, needed to keep a safe distance and maintain a respectful silence before him.

“Before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles”—V. 12. We are reminded of the wisdom of old, “The fear of man bringeth a snare”—Pro. 29:25. In eating with the Gentiles, Peter had said in essence that he was free from the law and all legal restrictions. But he was snared because of his fear of the circumcision. He was swept off his feet by the opinion of others.

“And the other Jews dissembled likewise”—V. 13. The word translated, “Dissembled,” means, “To act hypocritically in concert with.” It was a sad thing indeed when a leading apostle led in hypocrisy! Even Barnabas, long associated with the Apostle Paul, was also led into playing a false part, as the word, “Dissimulation,” means. Both Peter and Barnabas were guilty of a grave breach of doctrine and practice. They well merited the severe rebuke from the Lord administered by Paul. Even though God had chosen Peter to open the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 15:7-11), he now forsook them and would have left them completely confused had it not been for Paul who was willing to stand for truth if he had to stand alone. All the other Jews led by Peter and Barnabas separated from them. However, Paul strongly defended the Gospel of the grace of God and emphasized the fact that both Jew and Gentile stood in the same position before God. Of all the Jews present, whether Peter, Barnabas or the one who came from James, or the local Christian Jews, Paul alone stood steadfast for the Gospel of pure grace.

The terrible thing that was done was that “They walked not uprightly according to the Gospel”—V. 14. At one time, Peter had eaten with the Gentiles and had gone to them with the Gospel at the command of God—Acts 11:2-18. He had agreed that God saved Gentiles on the basis of faith alone—Acts 15:7-11. But now, he turned his back on all that he knew to be a revelation from God. This was not an upright walk. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness”—Rom. 10:4—is a truth that could have well been emphasized at that time. The return to national separation or ceremony was to build again the things they had destroyed. “Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” The words, “To live as do the Jews,” are all one word in the Greek and means, “To Judaize,” or become as a Jew. Peter knew that they were not under the law, but he acted as if they were. This was pure hypocrisy.

Chapter 2:15-21

“We who are Jews by nature”—V. 15. Not proselytes, nor sinners by choice, but professedly, the people of God, walking in all the light we had.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law”—V.16. No man can rightfully claim righteousness in the sight of God on the basis of works. “But by the faith of Jesus Christ,” that is, faith in Jesus Christ. “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” If it could be, it would still be just flesh with a human righteousness, and no heavenly life. Dependence on law in any way is just dependence on the flesh. If Christ is our all in all, we shall realize that there can be no dependence on ordinances of the law, and even those that God gave the church are for signs and not as a means of salvation. Water Baptism is to mark our separation from the world by death and resurrection, but can never be relied upon to save us, or make us more saved, or to keep us.

In heaven, there will be no ordinances. Why rely on them here to fill a place God never intended them to fill? Only Jesus can justify, and that from all things—Acts 13:39. Paul is putting before us in these verses the difference in believing and doing as a basis for righteousness. Jewish law nor any other law could justify man before God. See Psa. 143:2. Law was mighty to condemn, but powerless to save. It ministered condemnation and death, but never righteousness and life. It was “Weak through the flesh.” It had to condemn both the sin and the sinner. By coming to Jesus for justification, we say that law cannot save us. Emphatically, “By the works of the law, no flesh can to justified.” Jesus alone, is both means and instrument of justification.

IS CHRIST THE MINISTER OF SIN?

Peter implied that He is when he went back to the law. If we Jews renounced the law as a system of justification and placed our faith in Christ for justification, then in turn come back to the law, did Christ minister sin or righteousness to us? If He is all sufficient, we renounce Him to some extent when we return to law. Is Christ an agent of sin? “God forbid” or “Let it not be.” A very strong negation is used by Paul. It is said to be a vehement indignant aversion. If Christ failed to justify, then we must go to the law. Did we not acquire righteousness when we went to Him?

I MAKE MYSELF A TRANSGRESSOR

“If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor”—V. 18. We might ask, what had Paul destroyed? The law as a means of justification. Peter and Paul had had many an occasion to witness that God saved completely apart from the law. Both had turned from law as a means of justification or approach unto God. Both had turned to Christ as a means or source of justification. They had agreed in Acts 15 that God saved alone by faith. Now to return to the law of Moses was a refutation of all that had gone before. Peter stood deeply in need, not of being convinced, but of being convicted. He was building the things which he had destroyed. Somewhere he was wrong, either in turning from the law or in turning back to it. The latter constituted him a transgressor.

“For I through the law died unto law that I might live unto God”—V. 19, R.V. Paul is not discussing the fact that Christ died for my sins in this section, but the fact that justification is by faith in Christ, and that we died with Him. Rom. 7, gives us Paul’s experience with the law. It could but condemn to death—II Cor. 3. Paul died in His substitute, as verse twenty informs us. He tried the law for justification, but failed in every point. We are now dead with Christ, hence dead to all law. This leaves the flesh without a voice, because it is dead. Since we died, the law, also, is forever silent, to the God-taught believer. Law cannot go beyond the grave, or even reach into it.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

“I have been crucified with Christ”—V. 20, R.V. Our death with Christ forever broke all relationship to the law. Law can have no dominion over the dead. Not only so, but we are now alive in another sphere where the law has no dominion. Even if it did, Christ is our new life, and law could never accuse Him. We died once for all in His death. We are not seeking to become dead, nor are we seeking to die. We simply reckon ourselves to have died with Him according to God’s Word—Rom. 6. Law does not operate where we are. The law kills, but Christ makes alive, yea, more He becomes the life of the believer. We do not receive just a dead orthodox doctrine, but a living Person as our life.

Paul could now shout it or utter it in warm, subdued, emotion-packed tones, “Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

DID CHRIST DIE IN VAIN?

“I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain”—V. 21. What Paul is saying is that he does not put aside the grace of God, or despise it. If we preach law, we must put the grace of God to one side. If a law could justify, why did Christ die?

Let us take a look at the words, “In vain.” The various translations have different and interesting renderings. Note the following: “For naught,” “For nothing,” “Christ’s death was useless,” “There was no need for Christ’s death.” All this, if righteousness could have been acquired by law. The Greek word so translated is “Dorean.” It is translated the following ways: “Without a cause”—John 15:25, “Freely”—Rom. 3:24. And in the verse before us, “In vain” or for naught. This should show us that the death of Christ was an absolute necessity if we were to be saved.

Peter, Barnabas and all the other Jews who dissembled were making void or frustrating the grace of God. So do all who turn back to the law as a means of justification, sanctification or as a rule of life.

Chapter 3:1-9

BEWITCHED FROM THEIR TRUE POSITION

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes, Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.”—V. 1. Those saints were “Slow of understanding,” as “foolish” means. They had become fascinated or spellbound by false teachers leading them back to the law of Moses. Paul calls this witchcraft.

“Jesus Christ set forth crucified” indicated Paul’s message among the heathen. See I Cor. 2:2. Jesus had been set forth graphically or placarded before their eyes. That is, in a vivid manner.

APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE

“Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith”—V. 2. Paul is contrasting law works, and faith hearing. The answer to the question rested with them, and should have served to cause them to see the folly of the doctrine they had imbibed. They knew that they didn’t even know, or have, the law when they were led to Christ. Yet He had confirmed His preached Word among them on the simple basis of faith. Now why try to take from God’s plan?

“Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh”—V.3 As works and faith were contrasted in the preceding verse, so flesh and spirit are contrasted in this verse. They had begun their Christian life by simple faith in Christ and had thereby received the Spirit with all His graces and gifts. Now why try to perfect the flesh with law righteousness, rites, ceremonies and carnal efforts to meet its moral requirements? There is not perfection for man apart from Christ. Law can add nothing, but simply take away from man’s peace of mind. It leaves him unsettled and ill at ease.

“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain.”—V. 4. That is, persecution from fellow countrymen, and probably from the Jews. Their own people would have persecuted them for forsaking their native religion. The Jews for approaching the Lord without the aid of the law. Was all that suffering for naught? If they

had suffered for the message of pure grace, had they been wrong in this? Now by turning back to the law, persecution would cease, but so would their blessing.

“He that ministereth to you the Spirit and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?”—V. 5. Again we have a contrast. Do the blessings of God abound in your midst as a reward for your works of the law or as a result of your faith in God? As Gentiles, they didn’t know the law when they were first saved, yet they were blessed. This fact should have been sufficient evidence that they did not need the law.

FAITH, NOT WORKS THE BASIS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SONSHIP

“Even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness”—V. 6. See also Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3-5. When there was no law, no sabbath keeping and no circumcision, Abraham, in the same position as a Gentile, believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. No special character or self righteousness, just simple faith. If he were justified long before the law was given it had to be by faith. Therefore the law is not essential to salvation. The words, “Even as,” indicate that as all blessing came to Abraham through faith, so salvation comes to us also by faith.

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham”—V. 7. In a spiritual sense, such are the only true children Abraham has. Most of his descendants are not believers at all. If they can claim the blessing of his covenant on the basis of mere fleshly descent, then all the true Arabs, the Edomites and many other peoples can claim the blessing, inasmuch as Abraham had eight sons.

“The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the Gospel to Abraham, saying, “In thee shall all nations be blessed”—V. 8. God offers salvation to the heathen on the same basis that He offered it to Abraham. There is no other way for the nations. We can announce clearly and freely, that there is a full provision made for every individual of whatever color or race to be saved with a salvation like Abraham’s. This text teaches that not only did the Abrahamic covenant antedate the law, but the Gospel itself is also older than the law, inasmuch as it was preached to Abraham over four hundred years before the law was given.

“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham”—V.9. Faith blesses with all God’s favour. Law brings only a curse. We know nothing or, at best, little about Abraham’s character. However, we know much regarding his faith. It is in the latter that we are blessed with him.

Chapter 3:10-14

ALL WHO ARE UNDER THE LAW ARE UNDER A CURSE

“For as many as are under the works of the law are under a curse”—V. 10. The law cannot bless. All who depend on it have the disfavour of God. It is saying that we do not need Christ and His righteousness but that we can produce one of our own. It is impossible for any earthly man to keep the precepts of the law. “Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things which are written in the law to do them.” Let us forever have done with the law and let us regard a man who teaches it as a means of salvation as being more dangerous than a cobra snake. May we speak freely of such a man as Paul did, and say, “Let him be accursed”—Gal. 1:8,9. They promulgate a most dangerous doctrine and should be completely abhorred.

“But that no man is justified by law in the sight of God it is evident; for, The just shall live by faith”—V. 11. This is the way we came into spiritual life and it is the way we continue with God. “We walk by faith”—II Cor. 5:7.

Abraham was justified by faith before the law. Habbakuk testifies that the just man under the law lives by faith—Hab. 2:4. The book of Galatians shows that since the law men are justified by faith.

“The law is not of faith but, the man who doeth them shall live in them”—V. 12. No chance here to rest on the works of another. A man must do his own works. Each man must provide his own salvation. He must produce his own righteousness and character, then be his own acceptance before God. He must give up Christ completely and rest on his own merit. If men are to have life under the law, they must earn it. These two verses, 11 and 12, are a contrast on obtaining life on the basis of works of the law and the simple faith of Abraham. Wholeheartedly, let us go the faith way.

Law cannot forgive a man nor show mercy. According to your works and not how much you have believed is the basis of law. Let a man but fail, and he is no longer righteous, and he forfeits his life. The law could benefit no one unless he worked successfully at it, and who did? No one could keep it. No one was saved by it. The Jews completely missed the purpose of the law.

CHRIST BORE THE CURSE OF THE LAW THAT BELIEVERS MIGHT BE BLESSED

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law”—V. 13. Only God can fully tell us what took place at the cross. To the world, a criminal was dying. Before God, Jesus was becoming a curse. He was bearing our sickness. He was being made sin for us. He was bearing the guilt of the world. But to our text. Law is forever silenced as far as a believer is concerned. We cannot be cursed by it. It can never raise its voice regarding a believer in Christ. When Jesus fulfilled the text, “Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree,” He removed all penalty regarding us. That text seems to have been written just for the crucifixion. The Jews “Esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted”—Isa. 53:4. This was true, but they did not know the reason for it.

Those who were completely under the curse of the law are now, by faith made entirely free from it all, Hallelujah! They now claim His blessing and righteousness. It is no longer “He that doeth these things shall live by them,” but “By Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”—Acts 13:39.

This was in order “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.”—V. 14. We who were far off are now made nigh—Eph. 2:13. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings—Eph. 1:3. The blessing of Abraham was first justification by faith. Flowing from this is peace with God, life as a gift and the hope of eternal glory.

The Spirit was promised and on the day of Pentecost, the promise was realized by the hundred and twenty. Also, all who by faith come asking will also realize the preciousness of being filled with the Holy Spirit which came from God our Father in answer to Jesus’ prayer.

Chapter 3:15-29

THE PROMISE TO THE SEED

“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”—V. 15. Paul is drawing an example from legal and civil life. If a will, document or bond is properly executed, it is protected in the courts, nothing can be added, nor set it aside.

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to thy seeds, as of many; but as of one,

And to thy seed which is Christ”—V. 16. The Abrahamic covenant was really made with Christ. It was made and confirmed, or ratified. It was an unconditional promise. If anything such as the law had been added, it would have made the promise conditional and destroyed the very nature of the covenant.

THE LEGAL COVENANT CANNOT ABROGATE THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

“And this I say that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years later cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”—V. 17. Thank God, the law came too late to set aside the promise. The word, “Confirmed,” means to ratify previously. God made the Abrahamic covenant a permanent affair and called it an everlasting covenant long before the law was given—Gen. 17:13,19. The blessings of God for the Gentile nations are deposited in that covenant. If the law set it aside, there is nothing for the Gentile.

“For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” The law and promise mutually exclude each other. They are entirely different principles. Abraham’s blessing was by promise, which brought faith into play. If a condition could be added, it automatically destroys the nature of the Abrahamic covenant. However, it had been given by promise and not by law.

THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator”—V. 19. The law was added for the “Sake” of sin as the word, “Because,” means. It did not cause sin, but aggravated it. By the law sin became exceeding sinful. Where there was no law there was no transgression. There was sin, but it was not open rebellion against the revealed will of God. By the law, sin became transgression. It was set as a barrier against the will of man, not to check sin, but to manifest it. Man leaped over the barrier and continued to sin as he had before in manifest contrariety to God’s righteous requirements. This rebellion reached its climax when man crucified the One with Whom the law originated. The law could only produce transgression, not check it. It did not produce sin, but only forced it to become transgression. The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. God was concealed. Note the following texts regarding the angels in relationship to the law—Psa. 68:17; Acts 7:38; Heb. 2:2. During the giving of the law, there was angelic glory manifested. Moses saw God’s back parts, and even the glory reflected in his face had to be hidden and only brought fear to those who saw him. Ex. 34:29-33. The law did not, nay, could not bring man and God together. It could put them further apart only. Moses was a “Go-Between,” and the people did not talk with God at all. All this is in contrast with the Abrahamic covenant. There was no mediator. There were no angels to ordain it. It was God speaking in sweetest fellowship with Abraham alone.

“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.”—V. 20. God was the only one involved in giving the covenant to Abraham. The law was an agreement between two parties, God and the children of Israel. Moses mediated the covenant. But God, without the angels or a mediator made an unconditional covenant with Abraham, and everything depends on Him in that covenant.

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily, righteousness would have been by the law.”—V. 21. The law could minister only death because of the sin in the life of man. It could not make righteous or alive. It is rightfully called “The ministration of death”—II Cor. 3.

“But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe”—V. 22. The Scriptures reach a conclusion that all have sinned—I Kings 8:46; Ecc. 7:20. God has shut them all up together. See Rom. 11:32. The promise will be accomplished for us on the ground that we believe. Men were shut up as criminals by the law, and we might add, shut out as well. They must await the coming of the seed in whom the promise was realized in order to receive both life and righteousness.

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed”—V. 23. “The faith” stands in contrast to the law. The former is believing once for all a story. The latter is doing or working all our lives and never accomplishing anything. The “Kept” means to keep inward. “Shut up” like the leper of old—Lev. 13:14. The “Faith” that came is a principle of God’s dealings with us. The law manifested the total ruin of the race. If God were to go on dealing with man, He had to do it on a different basis. That is when faith was revealed.

THE LAW, A SCHOOL MASTER TO THE JEWS

“Wherefore the law has been our schoolmaster to Christ, that we might be justified by faith”—V. 24. Berry’s Interlinear. The words, “To bring us to Christ,” do not belong. That is why they are in italics in our common version. After God declared that His present basis of dealing with man was entirely on the basis of faith, law was finished as a religious economy. The law was up to or until Christ. He was its boundary line. The race is through with it.

NOT UNDER A SCHOOLMASTER

“But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster”—V. 25. Paul repeatedly uses every terminology to teach us that we are not under the law. See Rom. 6:14; 7:6. Scripture means what it says and says what it means. We are under no part of the law whatsoever. God is not in the salvage business. He did not try to save the best of the law and tack it to the new dispensation. If people still feel a need of the law, it is a sign of babyhood, and a very shallow knowledge of Christ.

SONS OF GOD BY FAITH

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”—V. 26. No person ever has become a son of God by works of the law. No one can grow to full maturity who is in spirit under the law. He cannot truthfully be there, for God never reckons it so. Not being children, we do not need a schoolmaster. We have entered into a much higher place than anyone under the law could have. A schoolmaster is not proper for such. We may learn lessons from the types found in the law or obtain knowledge concerning the fact that the law manifested the total ruin of the race, but we are in no way under it.

THE GOSPEL BLESSES ALL

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”—V. 27. “Baptized into Christ” may properly be translated, “Baptized to Christ,” and we believe this to be the truth of it. We are not put into Christ by baptism. We have clothed ourselves with Christ. This makes a Christian of us, to put on Christ. We have put Him on as our character. Before God, we stand in all His beauty and perfection. Hallelujah!

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”—V. 28. In natural life, there are many social distinctions. As long as we are in the earth we have to recognize the order of the sexes. But in Christ, all races and male and female have the same privileges. All equally have a high priest. All have an advocate and all blessings are for all. Each one has the same right in prayer as any other member of the body of Christ. In the resurrection, all earthly distinctions, including the sexes, will disappear. See Luke 20. The word translated, “One,” is a masculine word. It refers to “One new man in Christ Jesus.” As each of us as Christians is in Him, so in the provision of God, all is true for each of us.

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”—V. 29. What a privilege to belong to Christ, “If ye are Christ’s.” As seed of Abraham, we are heirs according to promise. Abraham was associated with the law in no manner whatsoever. Hence we would have nothing in association with him in that category. But we have his blessing of justification through the promise, and we also have all that goes with it.

NO REALIZATION OF SONSHIP UNDER THE LAW

“Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all”—V. 1. A child, though an heir, must await the time appointed of his father. Though he be lord of all, he has no more liberty than a servant, though his life may not be as hard as the slave’s life. This was a picture of the children of God who were under the law before the coming of Christ. As God’s children, they were “Lords of all.” But God as “Father” had not been revealed as such. Neither were they yet acknowledged as “Sons of God” inasmuch as they were yet children.

“But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father”—V. 2. That is, they were under guardians and governors, those in charge of the family and its affairs until the heir reaches maturity or meets the conditions arranged by the father.

“Even so, we, when we were children were in bondage under the elements of the world”—V. 3. This verse shows the law to be bondage to those who were under it. Earlier it was called a curse-bringer, an unbearable yoke, a schoolmaster and other undesirable titles. We need to consider that this verse was written by a Jew who was very orthodox and that he wrote it about Jews.

The word, “Elements,” means, “The first lessons in outward things.” The law was just the abc part of God’s revelation, a rudimentary religion, and not God’s full plan revealed. It was an inexpressible bondage to those who were under it.

JEWISH BELIEVERS REDEEMED FROM UNDER THE LAW

“But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law”—V. 4. The “fulness of time” refers to the time appointed of the Father. When Jesus came, morality had reached a very low ebb. The religious world had left men disappointed both among the Jews and among the Gentiles. The philosophic world had promised much and delivered nothing. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. They were blind leaders of the blind. The race of mankind was tired, having too often had their expectations built up by some leader, just to have them come crashing to the ground again. Into this wornout, sin-sick generation, God sent His Son, after waiting many years in order to permit man to realize his utter helplessness and hopelessness.

“Made of a woman.” As sin came by woman, so did the redeemer from sin. Jesus was strictly the seed of the woman humanly speaking. See Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14. He was conceived and born of a virgin by the direct intervention of God. Jesus was sent and came because of the sovereign grace of God, and not because of merit on man’s part. In this coming, man’s responsibility was completely set aside. Law demanded that man provide a righteousness and character of his own. However, since the coming of Christ, man is no longer under the load of providing his own acceptable character before God, but can rely on another, even on Christ who is made unto us righteousness and righteousness is imputed to us who believe.

“Made (Became) under the law.” He was under it in order to fulfill it by His life and abolish it by His cross. As born of woman, He was associated with the whole race. As being under the law, He was identified with the Jewish people.

This verse shows God to be always on time. He could have sent His Son immediately after the fall of man, but permitted man to show himself entirely needy before He stepped in and met that need. Within forty years of Jesus death, both Jerusalem and Rome were burned and that within one year. Was God showing by His providence that neither nationalism nor legality could meet man’s need but only His Son?

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”—V. 5. Jesus paid the full redemption price to redeem the Jewish people who were under the law. Gentiles were also redeemed, but they were never under the law. The Jews had made a covenant with God to keep His law. Their promise was sealed with the blood of a sacrifice. From that position they had to be redeemed. The law, which was their tutor, no longer has authority over them. This was in order that...

“We may receive the adoption of sons.” The word translated, “Adoption” (Placing as a son) does not have the same meaning that we attach to our word, adoption. Paul alone used it in the New Testament, and it occurs in the following citations: Rom. 8:15,23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5. The Jewish people who truly believed God were saved, though under a legal covenant. However, in that position, they could never enter into the joy and privileges of sons. Regeneration has to do with relationship, kinship. However, adoption as used here has to do, not with relationship, but privilege, position and fellowship with the Father as adult sons, even those who are led of the Spirit—Rom. 8. Jesus became Son of man, that all men might have the opportunity of becoming sons of God.

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His son into your hearts crying Abba, Father”—V. 6. This verse has no reference to the Holy Ghost who came on the day of Pentecost to anoint those who had already received the Spirit of Christ. Note how it reads, “The Spirit of His Son,” which we receive in new birth.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father, came in answer to Jesus’ prayer, and was sent forth by both the Father and the Son. See John 14:16; 16:7; Acts 2:33. Those who received Him, had believed on and received Jesus long before.

In Matthew 3, Jesus the Christ, Son of God, coeternal, coexistent, and coequal with the Father, came in all the fulness of His personality to be baptized of John. When He came up out of the water, another personality, possessing all the afore-mentioned attributes of deity, came upon the first mentioned Person like a dove. This personality was called by Matthew “The Spirit of God,” He is never called the Son of God, neither does He ever call God His Father, as does Christ. In new birth, we receive the Spirit of the Son of God or the first mentioned personality in the above statement. This is the Spirit that causes us to cry, “Father.” Let us not confuse the Spirit of Christ which comes to us in new birth with the Holy Spirit who comes to anoint us when we believe for Him. God not only sent Christ forth to redeem us (V. 4), but now sends forth the Spirit of His Son to fill our hearts.

“Wherefore, thou art no more a servant but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ”—V. 7. Their servitude or slavery was to the Law of Moses. Law could never produce the spirit and freedom of sonship. It produced a servile spirit only. Many of God’s dear people insist on acting like a slave or a beggar. We are neither of these but are sons of God. As such we are heirs of God.

Chapter 4:7-11

“Wherefore, thou art no more a servant but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ”—V. 7. Their servitude or slavery was to the Law of Moses. Law could never produce the spirit and freedom of sonship. It produced a servile spirit only. Many of God’s dear people insist on acting like a slave or a beggar. We are neither of these but are sons of God. As such, we are heirs of God.

FROM FREEDOM OF SONS TO THE BONDAGE OF SLAVES

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods”—V. 8. This was the bondage in part of the Gentiles. Those gods, as personalities, had no existence except in the mind of their devotees. However, such is the imagination of man that he insists on some kind of bondage. Also, he is willing to

serve God if he can make Him after his own design.

“But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of Him, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”—V. 9. Rather than becoming acquainted with God, they were brought into a knowledge recognized of God.

The Galatians gave up religion to accept Christ. Now they were willing to turn from Christ to receive the Jews religion, which here is called, “weak and beggarly elements.” They could approach God as well through their own heathen religion as they could through the Jews religion, which was, not at all.

The law was weak through the flesh—Rom. 8:3. It had no power to save. It could not justify. It could do nothing positively on the behalf of man. All this in contrast to our great riches in Christ and our heirship through Him.

“Whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage.” Is it possible that, once having tasted the liberty and freedom of sonship, people can desire to return to a bondage far worse than that of Israel’s in Egypt? Yes, because people love self-righteousness and this the law develops. To return to the law after knowing the liberty of Christ is comparable to idolatry.

“Ye observe days”—V. 10., Sabbath days, new moons and such like. “And months,” such as the first month with two feasts or the seventh month with three feast times in it. “And times,” like the three great times of feasting when every male in Israel was required to be before the Lord. “And years,” like the Sabbatic year and the year of Jubilee of Lev. 25. These were all set aside at the cross. The church, Scripturally speaking, is a body of people with no day or days set apart above other days. Regardless of what men have done, and what they call their days, such as the Lenten season, or Palm Sunday, or Good Friday, God is not in the services connected with these things. We should recognize that they come from the enemy. The New Testament sanctions none of them.

People are prone to say, “What does it matter if we keep a day, or what day we keep as long as we keep a day such as Saturday or Sunday?” Let such an one read the next verse:

“I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed labour upon you in vain”—V. 11. Lawkeeping of any kind would keep them from full maturity. May God deliver us from obligation to days or any such things. Paul longed for the people to be fully occupied with Christ and to grow up fully in Him. This they could not do while occupied with the law in any of its phases.

Chapter 4:12-20

“Become Ye as I, because I also was as ye”—V. 12, Rotherham. He at one time had been trammled under the law, and had been as they had become. However, now it is learned that all his life of the past was nailed to the cross, and he was a new man in Christ. He was forever free from all legal ceremony. He invites them to free themselves, and become as he is. They are sons of God, why not enjoy their freedom? Why not drop all ceremony and anything else that does not contribute to the Christian life? “Ye have not injured me at all,” Rather the opposite as the following verses show, They had shown him every kindness in the past when he was among them. They had injured themselves and stood to be the real losers in turning away from the freedom of the Gospel.

APPEAL TO THEIR PAST

“Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first”—V. 13. It seems clear that Paul’s stay in Galatia was forced on him by some sickness and probably his personal plans had to be set aside

as a result. His zeal was marvelous. Though not able to travel, he preached the Gospel unto them. The reference to the eyes in V. 15, the large letters (Gr) of 6:11, the thorn in the flesh of II Cor. 12:7, coupled with the fact that he was blind for three days after his dazzling vision of Christ, it could be inferred that God left him a perpetual reminder in his eyes of that life-changing vision.

“And my temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus”—V. 14. The word translated “Temptation” can mean a trial of any kind. The word translated “Rejected” means, to spit out, to completely spurn. Whatever was causing his suffering at that time seems to have been repulsive.

Even though he was very ill at the time, they recognized him fully as one sent of God, even as an angel, or as speaking in the place of Jesus Christ. He said, in essence, you spoke of how fortunate you were to receive me as a messenger of God. Now you have completely veered from your former attitude.

“Where is the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.”—V. 15. They had shown a real happiness and an enthusiasm in having the privilege of receiving Paul. What had become of this? They were willing to heap every blessing upon him, even to giving him their own eyes. Their love for him had been fervent and, seemingly, strong. However, it seems that in accepting the accursed gospel of legality, all regard for Paul had ceased. What had happened to the “Blessedness?” They now treated him as an enemy. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend,” and truth often wounds; and it is wonderful to have a friend who has our interest at heart enough, and loves us so that he will wound us with truth, even though he wounds himself at the same time.

“Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”—V. 16. He was dealing truly with them. They had been swept off their feet by a false doctrine and by false servants of God. Was it necessary for them to become Paul’s enemy because he told them the truth regarding both their new gospel and their new ministers?

FALSE FRIEND WITH FALSE MOTIVES

“They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them”—V. 17. The false teachers zealously sought and courted the favour of the Galatians, but not to a good end. Legality can be so brazen and hypocritical. They have no honest principles. They would work themselves into the good graces of the Galatians that the Galatians might in turn set their affections upon them. They would completely exclude the saints from the Apostle Paul, from the fellowship of love and grace, yea, and from the fellowship of God, that they might have the advantage of the favour of the people for their own flesh. This controversy was very deep, and on the part of the legalizers, very cruel also. They seemingly would stop at nothing,

“But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you”—V. 18. They had manifested zeal in a good thing when Paul was present with them. However, being light in character, as soon as the new doctrine came, they were completely turned aside. They actually seemed to lose all respect for Paul and his Gospel of grace.

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”—V. 19. Paul had “Begotten them through the Gospel”—I Cor. 4:15. His interest was not that of a money grabber, but the heart interest of a parent. They were his LITTLE CHILDREN. He would not stand idly by and let them be ruined in their spiritual life. His burden at this time was not for a third birth but that Christ would be formed in them. That is, take shape or grow up in them. He wished them to grow up to full maturity in their head. There would be loss on both sides if they did not do so. They would not add much to his crown of rejoicing as would the saints at Philippi if they did not reach maturity. Their fruitfulness would be hindered. They could not be occupied with Christ and the law of Moses at the same time.

“I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you”—V. 20. He wanted to come face to face with them and change his tone, for he was perplexed concerning them. He could not fully know all the damage the false teachers had done, so could not fully repair it without being personally present. Also, he would rather change his voice from one of reproof to one of comfort and consolation.

Chapter 4:21-5:1

A SLAVE LAD AND A FREE SON

“Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”—V. 21. Seemingly, people would rather have a system than a person. Those people were refusing to hear the Gospel and its principle herald. It is also evident that they had not really heard the law. If its message had ever truly gotten through to their hearts, they could never have harbored a wish to be under it.

In this desire to be under the law, they manifested that they were wishing for something which could only destroy them. If they had known the law of Moses, they would have wanted no contact whatsoever with it.

“For it is written, Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman”—V. 22. Abraham actually had eight sons, but only two of them appear in this allegory. Paul saw in the historical narrative of Genesis an allegory that would depict the difference in those under grace and those under law. In the following part of the chapter, he masterfully outlined this.

The two sons stand respectively for the natural and spiritual sons of Abraham, the seed of the flesh and the seed of the Spirit, those who are brought forth by law, and those who are born of the grace of God.

“But he who was of the bond woman was after the flesh, but he of the free woman was by promise”—V. 23. Ishmael was born according to natural generation. There was nothing supernatural about his birth. Isaac was born in fulfillment of a promise after all nature had failed. When he was born, God had to intervene supernaturally. All hope in the flesh had failed. See Rom. 4:18-20.

“Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants, the one from Sinai, which is Agar”—V. 24. God has used types and figures, proverbs and parables to convey His mind to men. There are two fables that appear in His book—Judges 9:8-15; I Kings 14:9. These are but a few of the ways that He has chosen to inform men regarding His will. In the historical record that is now under consideration, he uses an allegory. The word so translated is simply the Greek word “itself.” It means “to speak, to say what is either designed or fitted to convey a meaning other than the literal one, to allegorize.”

The two women, Hagar and Sarah, typify two completely opposite covenants, the one covenant given to Abraham in positive and free grace; and the other given to Israel after the flesh, based on works, human merit and human righteousness.

The two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, are especially to the forefront, as types respectively of those who are under the legal bondage of the law, and those who are born in free grace. The legal covenant can “Gender” or bring forth children to and in bondage only.

“For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children”—V. 25. The children of earthly Jerusalem are in bondage to legal ceremony, to a morbid and an improperly taught conscience which continually accuses one if he doesn’t try to keep the law, and we might add, if he does try. For since when has law works been the answer to an accusing conscience? The result of this is

continual self-condemnation among the people of God. The law has power to bind, never to loose. It can lay heavy responsibility on men, but can never lift the load. Its bondage is oppressive, its condemnation unavoidable, its curse unbearable and its thunderous voice unendurable. Who can abide it?

“But Jerusalem which is above is free which is the mother of us all”—V. 26. This verse points us to the heavenly Jerusalem of Heb. 12:22. It brings to our minds the city for which Abraham was looking—Heb. 11:14-16; and turns our gaze to the great city of Rev. 21. This is the great mother city to which we all as saved people are bound. It has no legal ceremony, no observance of days. It has no legal bondage, so why should its children have such?

This city is like Sarah, it is free. Happy, laughing Isaac, the boy of God’s choice, the heir of all the wealth of Abraham is our type. We are the children of grace, bought by the precious blood of Christ. We are free in every sense of the word.

“For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry aloud thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she that hath an husband”—V. 27. Hagar had the husband. Sarah was the barren desolate woman. Today, she has many more children than Hagar inasmuch as we Christians are all her children. She is admonished to “Cry (Shout) aloud,” that is, in triumph.

WE ARE SONS OF A FREE MOTHER

“Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise”—V. 28. The “We” includes all of the saved of this age. How precious when we realize that we are fully free and that we are not in a mixed condition of part law and part grace. Also when we know that we are of the free woman in grace and are in no way related to Hagar, or the law of Moses. We have our new wine in new bottles inasmuch as the old skins of the old dispensation could in no wise contain the joys of a new dispensation—Matt. 9.

“But as then, he that was born after the flesh (With nothing miraculous about his birth) persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now”—V. 29. Ishmael’s mockery is here, by the Holy Spirit called “Persecution.” He was older than Isaac by fourteen years. Heretofore, his had been all the attention. He probably felt that he was better than Isaac. He seemed to resent the fact that Isaac was now the center of attention. He showed jealousy and had probably become morose. Such is the way of those under law.

It was very easy for Paul to realize who the real persecutors were. Almost without exception, wherever he went, he was persecuted by the Jews. He was born of and after the Spirit. They were, like Ishmael, brought forth to bondage.

“Nevertheless, what saith the Scriptures? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman”—V. 30. The believer needs not the law, anymore than Isaac needed Hagar, and he never did need her. Oh that God’s people had the faith to cast Hagar (Law) out as God said to do! Law can never cause those who are under it to become heirs of God. In the measure that people feel that they are under it, they are robbed of the blessings of Christ.

“So then brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free”—V. 31. This is Paul’s conclusion regarding the allegory, We are not cast out. We did not belong to Hagar, nor were we related to Sinai nor its covenant. We belong to Sarah, who remains the mistress of the house. We, according to the text before us, are free and are the true heirs of God.

STAND FIRM FOR AND IN YOUR FREEDOM

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free”—Gal. 5:1. This verse belongs with the topic of the fourth chapter. This God-given liberty from every jot and tittle of the Mosaic law came by and through Christ. Let us not be drawn into a scrupulous bondage to a system from which Christ, at such great price, has freed us. The old dispensation with its laws, ceremonies, feasts, holy days and special years has no authority to retain a hold on our conscience. Let us stand firmly and boldly for our freedom from the whole system.

Chapter 5:2-12

LEGALITY EXCLUDES THE BLESSING OF CHRIST

“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing”—V. 2. Circumcision here stands for all the ceremonial law. “Profit you nothing” indicates that a “By works righteousness” and a “By faith righteousness” will not mix. It has to be Christ or the law, and not part of each. They mutually exclude each other, The Galatians were circumcised out of reverence for the law. Their object was either to be justified, or add to their justification or to be more pious. All this indicated unbelief toward Christ. It indicates that they felt that they did not get what they were seeking from Him. God’s blessing flows to us through a channel of trust, confidence and faith. Unbelief brings us no blessing from God. All practical benefits from Christ are lost through unbelief.

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law”—V. 3. If law righteousness was sought, there was only one way to obtain it. One had to keep all the law. “He that doeth these things shall live by them.” However, there could be no half-way business. It was also written, “Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things which are written in the law to do them.” Thank God! We look to Christ alone for justification.

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”—V. 4. Christ will not bless people under, nor by, nor through the law. If people insist on the law and the righteousness they can produce, they shut themselves away from Christ as those who do not need Him. Such people have “Fallen from grace.” They would not have become backsliders in the common use of that word. They would not have become drunkards nor thieves. They would have become more strict in their lives, with a conscience of days, months and years. They would have become overly occupied with dress and meats. They would feel that they must build a self-righteousness of their own and would be less and less occupied with Christ. They would not know how to say truthfully that Christ was their righteousness—I Cor. 1:30. Grace is freely given to us of God. Under law men had to earn their way into the favour of God. Grace is on a very high plane, law on a very low one. To turn back to law after knowing the grace of God is to fall from grace, to fall back to a very low, nay, an impossible ground of approach to God. Anyway, the Gentile was never under the law, and the Christian does not need it, so why not rely fully upon Christ and His precious grace for all things Godward?

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”—V. 5. This verse is in contrast with the preceding verse. The Galatians were looking for a righteousness from the law. We who know wait for the hope of, or the hope connected with righteousness. We wait through the Spirit, not through law. “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” a truth spoken in connection with the justification of the believer by faith—Rom. 5:2. We, rather than waiting for the law to declare us righteous, are waiting for a “Crown of righteousness.” The Galatians did not feel that they were fully justified and turned back to the law. They were not fervently waiting for their glorious Lord from heaven. Those who know the truth know that they have been justified once for all and are looking for the “Blessed Hope.”

“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love”—V. 6. Neither the Jewish way of life nor the Gentile religion held out help for man. Faith only produces

results in the new realm of life. And not only so, it is faith energized by love. So much so-called faith just draws attention to the one who claims it, as “God has shown me that if you will do certain things all will be healed,” but all do not get healed. What is it? Not faith. Such people have the reward they sought. The faith acceptable to God is faith motivated by love. Some of the Galatians seemed to believe they were Christians because they were circumcised. Paul’s statement killed all hope in such things. Note his usual trinity of graces—faith, hope and love—Vs. 5,6.

LEGALITY IS A HINDRANCE ONLY

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”—V. 7. They had been “Running the race with patience” until the teachers of law came their way. Their lives were centered upon Christ. They were living Christ-centered lives. Now they had been hindered by having their attention called to their uncircumcised flesh. They had ceased resting in Christ and were trying to rest in a day. They had forgotten that righteousness had been imputed to them, and were trying to weave a righteousness of their own. They were waiting to be justified by law instead of waiting for the glorious coming of Christ. Law as such can never help anyone. The Galatians were in a frame of mind that would not permit them to submit to the truth that all that God had for man was in Christ, and not partly in the law of Moses.

“This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you”—V. 8. The Galatians had convictions, but they were not God-given. They had been persuaded, but not by Christ. He who had called them away from the law, would never lead them back to it. There is no turning with Him. If it was right for them to turn away from law in the first place, it was wrong for them to go back to it. This leading could not have been of Christ.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”—V. 9. A little reliance on law can corrupt the whole Christian life, and a whole assembly can be defiled. A little leaven of legality would cause them to depart from Christ in that measure. Leaven, used symbolically, is false doctrine or practice, or any phase of error. As we read of the leaven of the Pharisees, the Saducees, and the Herodians. See I Cor. 5:6. When used figuratively, it is never used in a good sense.

“I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment whosoever he be”—V. 10. Paul had to put his confidence for them in the Lord; as they showed no reason why he should have confidence in them apart from the Lord. Their troubler, regardless of who or what he was, was facing the terrible prospect of the judgment of God for teaching error among the people of God, for stumbling them and taking from the glory of Christ.

“And I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased”—V. 11. Paul had circumcised Timothy because he was half Jew and would otherwise have been an offence to the Jews. He was thus being all things to all men—I Cor. 9; Acts 16:3. This was an entirely different motive than observing the rite as a means of salvation or justification. Nevertheless, some seem to have used it to prove that Paul yet preached it, and thus lend weight to their own evil doctrine of salvation by law. His answer is that he was still persecuted, of course by the Jews, for preaching the cross. If he presented some other means of salvation other than the cross of Jesus Christ, the Jews would not persecute him because of the cross, and the offence of the cross would cease.

“I would they were even cut off who trouble you”—V. 12. The R. V. had, “I would they would mutilate themselves,” which seems to be a bit nearer the Greek than the A. V. This shows Paul’s indignation at those men who were tampering with the very foundation of the Gospel. We could wish that men today would feel an equal wrath toward that which takes from the Gospel of Christ.

THE RESTRAINING POWER OF LOVE

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another”—V. 13. Liberty as here used, means a complete release from every part of the law. However, Paul is quick to admonish that this does not mean a liberty, freedom of license for the flesh. No one can yield to the flesh and please God or be in His perfect will. We should not permit the flesh to take advantage of our God-given freedom. “By love serve one another.” If they would insist on serving, let them serve each other in love and not submit themselves to the law of Moses.

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”—V. 14. The total law is the meaning, See Mt. 7:12; Rom. 13:9; and James 2:8 for sidelights on this. There could be no proper keeping of the law apart from a full measure of love for both God and man. Since no natural man could do this, it was impossible for him to keep the law. Since we are saved and have both life and righteousness, the basic needs of man, we do not need to keep the law. The offer of the law to those who kept it was life and righteousness. These we obtain from Christ. Why would we need the law, or why would we try to keep it?

“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another”—V. 15. The thought is to backbite, that is, smear another’s character in his absence. The natural result would be that each one would lose confidence in the other. Soon there would be no fellowship, no desire to meet with one another, hence, no church, no gathering, all consumed.

VICTORY OVER THE FLESH

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”—V. 16. There is in every earthly man the flesh with all its desires and appetites. Since the battle with flesh is coming before us, the Spirit is mentioned in this connection eight times. Seven times in this chapter and once in Chapter six. The cravings of the flesh are the unsatisfied desires of a nature away from God. Naturally, we would turn to law for a remedy but this can only bring defeat and not victory, as law can do naught but condemn. God’s way of victory is stated simply in this verse. Romans Chapters 6-8 give the way of victory in detail. The evil desires of the flesh are ever with us and we can feel their movings, but this verse states how we are not to fulfill them. We do not gain the victory by putting ourselves under the law but by walking in the Spirit and in His strength.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”—V. 17. The Spirit and the flesh are exact active opposites. They are energetic opponents. The word translated “Lust” is used in the Scripture sometimes in a good sense, sometimes in a bad sense. It means, “to set the heart upon, to long for or have an earnest desire.” Read carefully Romans 7 for a good example in conflicting desires in the same person. These desires as recorded in Romans seven flow from two natures in one person. Each nature of life has its own principles and sets of desires. The Spirit enters the struggle on the side of the new nature, and gives him the victory.

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” V. 18. The Spirit is a living present guide. He cannot operate under a legal system or a code of ethics. He does not need such things to direct us since He is a divine and ever present Person. “Ye are not under the law.” The law was given to men in the flesh, was addressed to the flesh and was weak through the flesh. As we are led of the Spirit, the fleshly nature cannot manifest itself. Hence, the law can say nothing, since there is no manifestation of the flesh.

WORKS OF THE FLESH

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these” V. 19. Some works of the flesh, such as murder, are wider in the scope of their evil than others. Some incur greater guilt, as killing would be worse than stealing something to eat. However, all flow from the energy of the flesh. Seventeen works of the flesh are here depicted. Rom. Ch. 1 and 3 along with I Cor. 6; Col. 3; I Tim. 1; II Tim. 3 list some of Paul’s groupings of the sins of the flesh, mind and spirit. In later verses of our chapter Paul names the ninefold fruit of the Spirit so that there need be no confusion.

Two moral sins head the list. The works mentioned are given in the following with their meanings. “Unclean-ness,” lewdness, impurity of motive, anything contrary to chastity. “Lasciviousness,” licentiousness, intemper-ance.

“Idolatry,” which is simply the worship of idols. “Witchcraft,” poison mingling, enchantment by drugs, profes-sion of knowledge of magic formulas. “Hatred,” enmities, hostilities, the opposite of love. “Variance,” strife, wrangling, disputes, lawsuits, contentions. “Emulations,” jealousy, envy, malice, to excel at another’s expense, lowering of others in order to exalt oneself, supporting good by unrighteous means. “Wrath,” turbulent passions, destroying harmony of the mind, producing domestic, social or civil strife, passionate outbursts. “Strife,” indigna-tion, anger. “Seditions,” contentions, to serve for hire, to serve a party spirit. “Heresies,” divisions, standing apart, dissensions.

“Envyings”—V. 21. This is the sin without reason or cause. It is the pain felt at the sight of happiness in others, one of the lowest passions of the fallen nature of man. “Murders,” killing or slaughter. “Drunkenness,” to debauch in drinking, drinking to excess. “Revellings,” lascivious feasting with obscene songs and music. “And such like.” This covers all other works of the flesh.

As a faithful father, Paul warned his little children that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Rewards come to us for work or service. We are heirs because of our birth. Like Esau of old, we can and may lose our birthright, but not our birth nor our life. The birthright is that which belongs to one because of his position in the family by birth.

Chapter 5:22-6:5

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith”—V. 22. Sweetly con-trasted with the works of the flesh is the fruit of the Spirit. This fruit, mentioned as being singular, is ninefold, even as the gifts of the Spirit are nine in number—I Cor. 12, and the beatitudes are nine in number—Matt. 5.

The list of unsavory sins, seventeen in number, are works of the flesh. They are separate. The fruit of the Spirit is one. The list of sins are called works, that is, they come from the energies of the flesh. The latter group of graces are said to be “Fruit,” that is, they are a crop, brought forth, cultivated and nourished of God. Both God and man feed on this fruit.

Since love heads the list, it has been said that “Joy” is love rejoicing, “Peace” is love resting, “Longsuffering” is love forbearing, “Gentleness” is love caressing, “Goodness” is love serving, “Faith” is love believing, “Meekness” is the love submitting, “Temperance” is love controlling.

The words as given in their proper order have the following meanings: “Love,” kindly concern, generosity. “Joy,” gladness, rejoicing, occasion of rejoicing, bliss. “Peace,” tranquility, concord, unity, love of peace, felicity of every kind of blessing and good, filling the soul instead of the former doubts and fears. “Longsuffering,” to be slow toward, to be long enduring, to exercise patience, to forbear. “Gentleness,” usefulness or excellence. “Goodness,” good, prof-itable, generous, beneficent, a desire to do good to others. “Faith,” belief, firm persuasion, ground of belief, faithful-

ness, honest integrity.

“Meekness” — V. 23; gentle, kind, mild, forgiving. “Temperance,” self restraint, self control, governed with regards to all appetites of the body. “Against such there is no law.” This is why if we “Walk in the Spirit, we are not under the law.” The law has nothing to say to such a person, nor can it find anything to condemn in his conduct, because it is Spirit-produced.

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”—V. 24. Since “our old man” was crucified with Christ, we count the old man dead and rest in Jesus. This is not a monkish effort on our part such as self-suicide or self-murder, neither is it committing crucifixion. It is seeing the old man with all his works as having been crucified with Christ, hence, we do not have to obey the flesh, neither do we have to condemn ourselves because of the base corruption of the depths of its sinful nature.

THE SPIRITUAL WALK

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”—V. 25. Since we live (Have our home in the Spirit) let us stay at home. The Spirit will never cause us to be occupied with either our flesh—good or bad, or the law or self-righteousness. As we yield to Him, He will maintain us in a Christ-centered, Christ-occupied life.

“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another”—V. 26. Another version says, “Let us not be vainglorious.” This is an exhortation for all. Each person should judge his flesh in such matters. Provoking and envying are certainly not fruit of the Spirit, but some of the worst kind of the energies of the flesh. Law keeping always engenders self-righteousness, pride and egotism. It could so easily be used as a means of provoking others into envying us because of our very rigid life of day and feast keeping.

THE FALLEN TO BE RESTORED

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted”—V. 1. The word “Overtaken” means, to take one by surprise, to seize on without warning, to take one before he is aware. There can be unexpected slips as well as unbrotherly harshness in dealing with a failure. “Fault” means, a stumbling aside, a false step. When such thing occurs, it is a sure test of spirituality. Such things are hard to deal with because of so many who are not competent to deal with them. A deep test of our spirituality is our attitude and treatment toward a brother who has made a mistake. If people are arrogant and self-justifying in their mistake, it may be very difficult to help them. Nevertheless, our attitude must be one of meekness in a case like this one. Much depends on whether we “Would gain our brother” or not. We should wish to restore to a forfeited place, or position, or unite him completely, as the word means.

“In the spirit of meekness.” A legal mind is never tender toward a failing person. Many feel that the harder they can be on a person, the more spiritual they are. However, meekness and spirituality go together. The afore-quoted passage indicates that harshness or severity in such cases is of no avail. Each person endeavoring to so minister should remember that giving or taking correction in the right spirit is a difficult ministry. Also, he must look to himself lest in his legal attitude, he also be tempted to be over-much righteous, or take a holier-than-thou attitude, and to sin as the other has done.

There are degrees of failure, Matt. 18:15-19 shows one case where a brother refused to be reconciled, despite all brotherly effort. Rom. 16:17,18 shows some who were to be avoided. I Cor. 5 teaches that a case was before the apostle where a man was clearly to be put out of the assembly. II Thess, instructs regarding certain that they were not to have company with them. See 3:11-14. All cases cannot be dealt with the same, but each as God directs in His Word and gives wisdom for by His Spirit.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”—V. 2. This burden means a weight or anything hard to be borne, something that is grievous. It is another way of saying, “Weep with them that weep.” God’s people

should be tenderhearted and sympathetic. If the Galatians insisted on being under a law, why not fulfill the law of Christ which is, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Again, “This is my commandment that ye love one another.” This is the “Royal law.” If they were willing to bear the burden of legality surely they could help an overburdened brother. This burden may have been the fault mentioned in the preceding verse.

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself”—V. 3. We wonder if it is possible to be something without being nothing, but that would be in a different sense. Some people feel that they are superior to others in piety or ability. This leads to a dominant spirit and a harsh treatment of others. These may compare themselves unwisely with others. Their feeling of superiority is simply self-deception. To spiritual people, their folly is plain. See Ecc. 10:3. They are as sounding brass, as Samson without his hair. Lawkeeping gives rise to pride and conceit. People who deplore other manifestations of the flesh, many times reek with these two sins and think nothing of it.

“But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another”—V. 4. He is to prove his own works, not his self-conceited opinion of them. He would prove them by putting them under the exposing lens of the Word of God which misses nothing. This would give them their true value. Also, his cause of rejoicing would be, not by way of comparison and rejoicing that he was better than others, but that he had the approval of God.

“For every man shall bear his own burden”—V. 5. “Burden” in this verse means one’s own personal responsibility. It means a load or burden. It is used of the cargo of a ship or its freight. God gives each one of His people a responsibility. Each one must bear his burden and answer to God for the task God gave him to do, and for his personal conduct regarding it.

Chapter 6:6-18

SOWING AND REAPING IN GIVING

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things”—V. 6. “Communicate” means to have in common, to share or be a sharer, to communicate in the way of aid or relief. So the matter of sowing and reaping in this and the following verses has largely to do with the precious fruit of giving, and supporting the Gospel with our material means. Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” By way of application, we can extend the matter of sowing and reaping into other spheres of the Christian life.

We are quoting Wuest on V. 7, “Stop leading yourselves astray. God is not being outwitted and evaded. For whatsoever a man is in the habit of sowing, this also will he reap.” The word “Mocked” as used in the A. V. means to sneer with the nostrils drawn up in contempt. God will see to the reaping. Each will reap in kind and in proportion to the amount sown. Wrong sowing may have some pleasure in such matters as giving to please our flesh or gain the favour of someone we wish to impress, or using our money for propaganda purposes, but the reaping will be with sorrow and grief. The reaping and future joy should be what our hearts are set upon.

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”—V. 8. If a man does not sow, he cannot reap. Note, “THAT SHALL HE REAP.” If we wish to harvest a crop of corruption, we can sow to the flesh. Many in their giving are not wise enough to decide whether they are supporting truth or error. Some give to the fleshly appeal of others. Some give to be seen or to buy attention. All this will produce a harvest of corruption, just burnable material, wood, hay and stubble. See I Cor. 3.

On the other hand, sowing to the Spirit, is supporting that which the Spirit of God advocates and approves. If we are going to invest our funds for eternity, let us investigate before we invest. Let us be behind that which we know to be of God by examining it in the light of the exposing lens of God's Word.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season, we shall reap if we faint not”—V. 9. Because of the fact that rewards and glories are in the future, and we cannot realize them at once, many grow weary and faint in their minds. The path we tread is through an enemy's country. Sometimes the way is rough, discouragement will make inroad if permitted. However, if we continue in our work, there is a great reaping just ahead. Outward opposition, a frail body, limited means, all tend to slow us down in what we are doing for God. This does not change the fact that there is a due time for reaping.

We are kept going by the fact that for every seed sown, there will be truly a harvest. This is Spirit sowing or sowing to the Spirit and will bring its reward. Our sowing should have, not time, but eternity in view.

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”—V. 10. God gave to us and the grace unsparing. We are to be of the same spirit, as having a bountiful Father. However, we are “Especially” or most of all, or chiefly, to be kind and helpful to the household of faith. These are our own, God's own people, those in whom we have a special interest. “As we have opportunity,” refers to the present time of sowing. May God grant that we take advantage of the time given us to sow. We just pass this way once, the night cometh when no man can work.

PAUL'S AUTOGRAPH AND AUTHORIZATION

“Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand”—V. 11. We feel that a better rendering of the above would be, “Ye see in how large letters I have written unto you with my own hand.” Paul usually dictated his letters, then gave his own signature at the end. His letters were not just written from man to man, but were written for all saved people for the whole age, therefore, he wished all to know that they had come from his hand, and not from another. However, in this letter, whether to make it more impressive at the gravity of the situation, or because of the absence of someone to whom he could dictate the letter, we know not, but he wrote it with his own hand. Probably, had to use large letters because of defectiveness in vision.

MOTIVES OF THE RELIGIONISTS

“As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.”—V. 12. The Jewish religion had to do with the flesh only. Its devotees tried to make a fair show in the flesh. The first meanings of the word “Constrain” that is used in our verse means to force or compel. This was like making converts with the sword. The underlying motive was to escape the persecution of the cross. Paul had no interest in just gathering a group of followers as such. He wanted true disciples of Christ. And rather than trying to escape persecution because of the cross, he seemed to seek it by glorying (Boasting) in the cross.

“For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in you flesh”—V. 13. They would escape Jewish persecution, but have gained no favour with God. After observing the outward religious ceremonies, they would make a profession that they kept the law, but they did not, neither could they keep it.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”—V. 14. This is an outstanding verse. Others gloried in law-keeping or in Gentile vanities. Both ended at the cross. Paul reckoned that the history of his life and that of the world ended at the cross. Man’s responsibility to produce a righteousness that God could accept also ended at the cross. All self-effort, as a religion, ended in the reckoning of God at the cross. Paul reckoned with God. The cross that infuriated men to such deep degree became the object of Paul’s boasting.

The cross stamped the world and its religion, and manifested its true value. It had no value. The character of Judaism was that it crucified the One who had given the law. The world disowned Christ, one fully associated with Him would similarly be rejected and disowned.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature”—V. 15. In Jesus Christ, and in this new dispensation, nothing of Jewish ceremony or religion, nor uncircumcision, or anything the Gentile proffered was of any value whatsoever. There is a new rule now. Not according to law or lawlessness but according to a new unfallen creation which can be and is subject to God. Not a patched up human nature. Not a mangled human character, not a religion of works or self-improvement, but a new creation with Christ as its head and life.

“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God”—V. 16. See Psalms 125:5; 128:6. This last statement seems to be a quotation from the Psalms. The above-mentioned rule is the fact that nothing counts with God but a new creation. There absolutely must be new birth, a life from above. To those who walk according to this rule, Paul pronounces a benediction of peace and mercy. We feel that the “Israel of God” here speaks of the whole new creation.

A BRANDED SLAVE

“From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”—V.17. Paul had been a slave to law but now he has a new Master. Let no one try to reclaim him for the law. For he bore in his body the mark (brand mark) of the Lord Jesus. The world “Mark” means to burn in marks, a brand mark, or to brand. (I have seen these human branding irons in the form of the initials of the owner.) Paul probably referred to his scars from stonings and lashings. These were sure marks of ownership and persecution for the cross of Christ. The Judaizers gloried in their marks of the law, circumcision. He would glory in the marks and scars that had come to him because of the persecution of the cross. When an animal or a slave was branded, it carried the initials of its owner. Paul’s scars were counted to him, or we might say, by him, to be the initials of Jesus.

“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen”—V. 18. Even though Paul’s tone had been one of severe rebuke, he warmly called the Galatians, “Brethren.” They were truly born again, and in truth the children of God, but were deeply defiled by error. They had fallen from grace. They had accepted that which had worked a great hindrance in their lives, but still they were brethren. Paul concluded with his usual benediction of grace. He never at any time said, “Law be with you.” It could only hinder.