

# The Epistle to the Galatians

## Introduction

This epistle was addressed to the churches in Galatia. The authorship of this document has never been doubted and it has been well stated that "whoever is prepared to deny the genuineness of this epistle, would pronounce on himself the sentence of incapacity to distinguish true from false." Like the Corinthian epistle this Galatian epistle has in every way the characteristic marks of the Apostle Paul.

Galatia was a prominent province of Asia Minor. The leading cities were Ancyra, Pessinus and Tavium. The inhabitants of Galatia were not Orientals, but Gauls or Celts. They had pillaged Delphi in the third century before Christ and had settled in the central parts of Asia Minor, which was then named Gallograecia or Galatia. Classical writers give a description of their character. "The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves and fond of change, and not to be trusted." The leading characteristic seems to have been fickleness, which is also prominent in the opening chapter of this epistle. The apostle was greatly surprised by it. "I marvel that ye are so quickly changing from him who called you in the power of the grace of Christ unto another Gospel." When the apostle had visited them for the first time, they had received him with open arms and had shown him much kindness. But when afterwards false teachers appeared amongst them, who preached another Gospel, they listened willingly to them and became cold and indifferent towards the Apostle Paul and the Gospel he had brought to them. They had received the Gospel and experienced its blessed power, but they were so unstable that they were about ready to give up the Gospel of Grace and to turn back to the weak and beggarly elements, to the law and its ordinances.

Paul had been in Galatia (Acts 16: 6). He had preached the Gospel in this province and God had blessed the preaching, so that many were saved and a number of churches were founded. From chapter 4: 13-14 in this epistle, we learn something additional. "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you, at the first. 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." It seems he was then troubled with the thorn in the flesh. They had received him as a messenger of God and sympathized with his affliction that if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul (4: 15). From this statement some have concluded that Paul's affliction was the well-known oriental eye-disease, ophthalmia. Later he visited Galatia again and strengthened the disciples (Acts 18: 23).

## The Work of Judaizing Teachers

The men who had gone to the Galatian churches and disturbed them were Judaizing teachers. Their evil teaching consisted in a denial of the Gospel of Grace, so blessedly unfolded in the epistle to the Romans. They taught that a simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not sufficient for salvation, that in order to be saved the keeping of the law is necessary and that a Christian must observe the precepts of the law of Moses. Circumcision was especially emphasized by them. They had been to Antioch and taught "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15: 1). They had also constrained the Galatians to submit to circumcision (5: 2; 6: 12). In order to establish themselves, they tried to undermine the apostleship of Paul and they attacked his authority. Peter evidently was in their eyes the great apostle of authority and as Paul was independent of Peter in his ministry and apostleship, as he had not been sent by Peter, they belittled him. It seems as if the fable of an apostolic succession was invented by these perverters of the Gospel of Grace.

## The Object of the Epistle

The object of this epistle is the defense of the Gospel which Paul had received by the revelation of Jesus Christ. In order to do this successfully the apostle had first of all to defend his own apostolic authority. After he had done so he fully exposed the evil teachings by which the Galatians were being deceived and showed them the perniciousness of the doctrine to which they had listened. The work of Christ on the cross was at stake, "for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." The exposure is made by a number of contrasts between law and grace in which the apostle shows what the law could not do and what grace has done. The object of the epistle therefore is to defend the gospel, as he writes in the second chapter "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you;" to point out the seriousness of the false teaching which was, through Satan's power, bewitching them, and in warning them to lead them back upon the foundation of grace from which they had fallen.

## The Practical Value and Importance

From critical sides it has repeatedly been stated that the Epistle to the Galatians contains a controversy of the church in the first century which has no longer interest for us, as there is no danger of Christians becoming Jews. Who would think in the twentieth century of submitting to circumcision in order to be saved? Or who would keep the ordinances of the law and Jewish holidays to obtain righteousness? And so this epistle is looked upon by some as having little value for our times. But the opposite is true. The perverted gospel which is so severely condemned in this epistle, upon which the anathema is pronounced, is the very gospel which is almost universally preached and accepted in our days. Christendom is thoroughly leavened with the leaven of legalism. And even a little leaven of it leaveneth the whole lump (5: 9). To begin with, ritualism, so prominent in Christendom, is Galatianism. In fact ritualism had its beginning in the Judaizing teachers, who mixed law and grace and taught that ordinances are necessary for salvation. Their fatal error was the principle that works are needed to justify a sinner before God and that blessings can only come through ordinances. And this is the error in ritualistic Christendom. These Judaizing teachers looked to man and human authority; they acknowledged Peter as the apostle of authority. Ritualism teaches human authority and believes in a succession which has its source in Peter. Ritualism in denying the gospel of grace and teaching the necessity of law--keeping ordinances, keeping of holidays, has become corrupt in doctrine and practice. The all-sufficiency of the work of Christ is no longer believed and Christ Himself is dishonored. Romanism is the great and powerful Galatian system. It is branded in Revelation as the great whore, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Protestantism also is leavened by this evil leaven of legalism. Works and ordinances are in many denominations looked upon as being necessary to obtain righteousness and blessings from God. There is hardly any denomination which is free from the Galatian error. It is often present in a very subtle form. Most prominent today is that evil doctrine which maintains that salvation is by character. They speak of Christ and believe in Christ helping man, but that salvation is by grace, and that an eternal and perfect salvation is the free gift of God bestowed upon the believing sinner, on account of the finished work on the cross, is denied. This also is a perverted gospel, which is exposed in this epistle. We shall point out more fully in the exposition of the text the different errors and phases of legalism. The epistle, in view of the present day drift away from the gospel of grace, is of great importance. This great defense of the gospel should be much studied and obeyed by all who stand for and love the faith delivered unto the Saints.

The time when the epistle was written and where it was written cannot be positively determined. It is probable that Paul wrote the epistle while he was at Ephesus (Acts 19) from autumn 54 till Pentecost 57. The subscription "written from Rome " is incorrect.

## The Division of Galatians

The Epistle consists of three parts. In the first part (chapters 1 and 2) the apostle defends his apostolic authority and that he was absolutely independent of those who were apostles before him. He shows how he became an apostle and traces his own experience. Then he speaks of his visit to Jerusalem and what took place there at that time. The gospel he preached had been acknowledged by James, Peter and John, a fact which these Judaizing teachers had kept from the Galatians. A third fact is brought by Paul to their attention. Peter had been made prominent by these false teachers; they made it appear as if all the authority was invested in Peter. Perhaps they spoke of him as almost perfect. But Paul shows that Peter had no authority whatever over him. Paul had rebuked him when he had done wrong and committed a most serious mistake.

The second part (chapters 3 and 4) contains the defense of the truth of the gospel itself. The Holy Spirit leads deep into the blessed truths of Christianity, and by a number of vital contrasts between law and grace shows what the law cannot do and what grace has done. Not ordinances, the works of the law make a sinner righteous before God, but it is faith which justifies. Why the law was given and how the limit of the law is reached when faith has come, as well as the blessed fact that those who are of faith are sons and heirs of God, indwelt by the Spirit of sonship, is all unfolded in this section. Here we learn that the law cannot give righteousness and that the justified believer is no longer under the law. "We are no longer under the schoolmaster." The third part (chapters 5 and 6) shows how a believer who is justified by faith, no longer under the law, but under grace, should walk. It is the walk in the Spirit and the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. The division of this epistle is therefore as follows:

I. THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL CONCERNING HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY. Chapters 1-2

II. CONTRASTS BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE. Chapters 3-4

III. THE WALK OF THE JUSTIFIED BELIEVER, AS NOT UNDER THE LAW BUT UNDER GRACE. Chapters 5-6

## Analysis and Annotations

### I. THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL CONCERNING HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY AND THE GOSPEL

#### CHAPTER 1

1. The Introduction. 1-5

2. The Rebuke. 6-10

3. Paul's Gospel Given by Revelation. 11-12

4. How Paul became an Apostle Independent of Jerusalem. 13-24

The introductory words of this Epistle are brief and of deep significance. He speaks of himself as an apostle not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father. His apostleship had been called in question and the gospel he preached branded as lacking authority. This opening statement of how Paul became an apostle is more fully developed in the main part of this chapter (verses 11-24). He did not receive his apostleship through any man; his authority was neither successional nor derived. The Judaizing teachers who had sown their evil seed among the Galatians, had spoken of Peter as the apostle with authority and probably demanded that he should be recognized as the ecclesiastical head. Inasmuch as Paul had not been constituted an apostle through Peter's authority, they said that he was no apostle at all. With their wrong doctrines about the law as a means to obtain righteousness, they evidently attempted to foster upon Christian

ground an ecclesiastical authority, corresponding to the successional priesthood of the law covenant. What was begun by these false teachers has become the curse of Christianity, for any priestly assumption in the church is the corruption of Christian doctrine.

The Apostle Paul declares therefore that the source of his authority and his ministry was higher than man. He received his commission "through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from among the dead." On the way to Damascus the risen Christ appeared to him in glory and made him an apostle. God the Father, who had raised His Son from the dead and gave Him glory (1 Peter 1: 21) also made Paul an apostle. To be one of the twelve apostles it was necessary to have been an eyewitness of His deeds and a listener to His words (Acts 1: 21). Matthias met this requirement and was therefore divinely chosen to fill the place of Judas. Some teach that Paul should have been put in the apostolate as the twelfth. But Paul could not have been one of the twelve apostles for he did not follow the Lord Jesus during the days of His earthly ministry. He did not know Christ after the flesh, but his acquaintance with Him began when he beheld Him in resurrection-glory. All his ministry, the gospel he preached, the glorious truths he taught, had their blessed source in the risen and exalted Christ. He therefore owned no other source, no other authority, but God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he mentions in these introductory words "all the brethren which are with me." This means that the brethren with him endorsed all he was about to write to the Galatians in his great, God-given defense of the gospel. None of them could have any sympathy whatever with the most serious errors, aiming at the very heart of true Christianity, to which the Galatians had been willing listeners.

Another important fact is that the epistle is not addressed "to the church in Galatia " but "to the churches." The Spirit of God in the Corinthian Epistles addressed the Corinthians as "the church of God, the sanctified in Christ, called Saints" (1 Corinthians 1: 2). In spite of their carnal walk and their spiritual declension the church in Corinth is recognized as being the church of God and its members as Saints. In writing to the Galatians, who were relinquishing the essential truths of the gospel of grace, departing from it and going back to the law as a means of justification, the Spirit of God does not make use of these distinguishing terms. He does not recognize as the church of God those who fall away from grace. From this we may learn that doctrinal evil is even a more serious matter than moral evil. How serious a thing a perverted gospel is we shall soon discover. "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to Whom be glory forever and ever, Amen." The great truth in these concluding introductory words the Galatians had forgotten. Righteousness cannot come by the law, to which the Galatians were turning again. Man destitute of all righteousness, helpless to obtain any kind of righteousness, is a lost and condemned sinner. But Christ came and gave Himself for our sins and to deliver us from this present evil age.

The words of introduction are followed by words of rebuke and painful surprise. The Apostle marvelled at their strange behavior, that they were so quickly changing from him who had called them in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel. From his lips they had heard the glad tidings of the grace of Christ when they were serving idols (4: 8). And now suddenly they were abandoning the gospel which had brought them such blessing, peace and power, and had saved them from the degradation of idolatry. They were accepting a different gospel, which was not another. Though another gospel was preached unto them, it was no gospel at all, for there can be no other gospel. There is but one gospel and that is the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the love-gift of God, who became incarnate in order to die for sinners and be the propitiation for our sins. He finished the great work on the cross, a work which has glorified God and which enables Him to be a just God and a justifier (Romans 3: 26) of all them that believe in Jesus. And He who finished this work is at the right hand of God. Therefore God has not another gospel, nor can He tolerate the perversion of His gospel. This is what the false teachers among the Galatians were doing as Paul writes: "but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." They were perverting the gospel by teaching that the finished work of Christ was not sufficient for

salvation, but that man must add his works, keep the law, and become circumcised. It was a God-dishonoring denial of the completeness and perfection of the work of Christ. And this perversion of the gospel, and more than that, the setting aside of that gospel altogether, is the almost universal thing in Christendom in our times. We hear much of "salvation by character," which is Satan's invention. Ritualism which makes ordinances the necessary means of salvation is another perversion of the gospel of grace; and so is the teaching of Seventh Day Adventism. The phrase one hears so much, "God has done His part and we must do our part," is another phase of a perverted gospel. Man is a lost sinner, helpless and hopeless in himself; he can do nothing, for he is without strength (Romans 5: 6). The doing is all on God's side; all the sinner can do is to accept what the grace of God in Christ offers to him. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2: 8-9).

"But though we, or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (anathema). As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any other gospel than that ye did receive, let him be accursed." These are strong and solemn words. Some have suggested that Paul was carried away by his passion, when he heard that his authority had been impeached, and that he wrote unwisely. They forget that it was not Paul who penned these words but the Spirit of God. The anathema upon the perverters of the gospel of Christ is fully justified when we consider what is at stake. The perversion of the gospel touches the unspeakably blessed work of Christ on Calvary's cross. If in any way righteousness is through the law, by what man does, then Christ died in vain (2: 21). Behind every perversion of the gospel, be it Ritualism, Christian Science, Seventh-Day Keeping, the new theology and other systems, stands the enemy of the truth of God, who always aims at the Person and Work of Christ. God, and it is a solemn truth, can do nothing else than put His curse upon those who reject, pervert and falsify the gospel of His Son. The ardent words of the apostle are very remarkable. The Holy Spirit has given us God's own testimony, that if an angel came to teach what the apostle had not taught, he would be anathema. It little mattered who he might be, if he contradicted the testimony of God. Paul well knew that he had received it from God Himself, and he who opposed or falsified it, opposed the authority of God, and the truth which He in His grace made known.

Let Christians take heed to the solemn words of the apostle. We possess them in this Epistle, as well as in others which he wrote. They are the touchstone for all teaching; and we need to study them in order to know if he who speaks, tells us the truth of God. So solemn was this point, so deeply was it felt by the apostle, that he again repeats what he had before said--that whoever should preach any other gospel than that which the Galatians had received from himself, should be anathema.--J. Nelson Darby.

Nor must we forget that a day is coming when the divine anathema pronounced here will be executed. God will surely not tolerate forever the rejection of His Son and the work He accomplished. The vengeance of God is in store for all who do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1: 8). The doom of an apostate Christendom is pre-written in God's Word; and the apostasy is the rejection and perversion of the gospel. Let God's people everywhere witness against the spurious gospel as positively and solemnly as the great servant of Christ did in these words.

In his testimony and service he was not a man-pleaser, "for if I were pleasing men, I should not be the servant of Christ." He did not seek the applause of men and of the world. If he accommodated himself to men, seeking to please them, he would not be Christ's servant. Characteristic of the preachers of a perverted gospel is that they are catering to the wishes of men. When sound doctrine is no longer endured, then after their own lusts do they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Timothy 4: 3). And Jude describes these "men-pleasers" as follows: "Their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 16).

The words of rebuke are followed by an historical account of his ministry, how he received the gospel and how he became an apostle independent of Jerusalem. The gospel he preached was not according to man, by which he meant, that he had not received it from any man, nor had somebody taught it to him. He did not get his instructions from those who were apostles before him. He had received it all by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ. It is then incorrect to speak of a "Pauline theology" and "Pauline gospel" as if his mind had somehow put it all together and constructed a gospel-scheme. No Mind of man could have ever invented or discovered the marvelous truths of the gospel. It is supernatural in its revelation and in its power. He then traces his remarkable experience once more, what a religious, zealous, law-keeping Jew he was. And where did all his zeal, his law-keeping lead him? It made him a persecutor of the church of God. (Legalism is harsh like the law which can only curse man. The great legalistic and ritualistic system, Rome, is the persecutor of the Saints of God. Wherever grace is denied and the legal principle is made prominent harshness and intolerance are the results, if not actual persecution.) On the road to Damascus the God who had separated him called him by his grace, and the Son of God in His glory was revealed to him as well as in him, so that He might preach Him to the Gentiles. And he did not confer with flesh and blood after his conversion, neither did he go to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before him. To go up to Jerusalem would have been for him a natural thing; to go back to the city where he had wrought such havoc as a persecutor and there to confess his guilt and testify of Christ, may have appealed to him as manly. But he did not confer with flesh and blood; he did not follow his own reasonings. And why should he go to Jerusalem to consult with the other apostles? Should he go there to report to them of what had happened, ask their council and gain their sanction? All this was unnecessary for he had received his call and commission from the Lord, and there was no need to go and consult any man about it. His independence of Jerusalem and his dependence on the Lord as His servant is thereby established. Jerusalem did not make him an apostle; the Lord had done this. Instead of going to see the apostles and put himself under them he went under the Lord, into Arabia and returned again to Damascus. After three years he went up to Jerusalem to visit with Peter. What happened during that visit? The apostles did not meet in council to examine Paul about his experience and fitness to preach the gospel. He did not seek the sanction or authority of Jerusalem, but he abode there with Peter for only fifteen days, to become acquainted with him. The other apostles he did not see at all, not even the beloved disciple, save James, the Lord's brother. All this proves his claim "an apostle not from men, nor through man." Afterwards he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, everywhere preaching and teaching his God-given gospel. The many churches of Judea did not know him by face, but heard that the erstwhile persecutor now preached the faith he once destroyed. He tells the Galatians how little he had to do with Peter and the other apostles. The false teachers had brought this against him and had challenged his authority as an apostle on account of not being linked with Peter. He fully avows all this and shows that his apostleship was entirely independent of Jerusalem and the twelve apostles. And here we have the character of true New Testament ministry. It is from the Lord, independent of man and human, ecclesiastical authority. Its message is the message of God.

## CHAPTER 2

1. How Jerusalem had Confirmed the Gospel Paul Preached. 1-10

2. Peter's Failure; Paul's Rebuke and Testimony. 11-21

Fourteen years passed by before he ever saw Jerusalem again. What wonderful years of service these years were! The great servant of Christ had preached the divine message in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The day of Christ will reveal the blessed results of these years. Acts 15 must be read to see why Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem. The same false teachers had visited the great Gentile center, Antioch, and taught "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Then Paul and Barnabas were appointed to go to Jerusalem to lay this question before the apostles and elders. Here the additional information is given that Paul went up by a direct revelation from God. It shows his dependence on the Lord. They also took Titus with

them, who was a Gentile believer and not circumcised. He was acknowledged as in Christian fellowship and not compelled to be circumcised. This, in itself, was sufficient evidence that the apostles in Jerusalem did not sanction the teaching that circumcision is necessary for salvation. Paul communicated to the leaders in Jerusalem the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. He did so privately first, for there was grave danger of a division in the body of Christ which he wanted to avoid; he did this so that he might not run in vain. In all this he manifested a gracious spirit. But when the false brethren introduced their perverted gospel to bring him and his fellow-laborers into bondage, he did not yield to them for a moment, but contended earnestly for the faith "that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you." The result was the full confirmation of the Gospel Paul preached, by James, Cephas and John, who gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. The pillars of the church, as these three Apostles are called, recognized the fact that the gospel of the uncircumcision had been committed unto Paul, as the gospel to the circumcision was Peter's calling and ministry. Both apostleships were from God and depended upon His gift. Thus the Apostle Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, to whom was also committed the truth concerning the church, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, one body with Christ as the Head.

"It is evident that these facts are of great importance in the history of the church of God. How often have we not heard Peter spoken of as head of the church. That Peter, ardent and full of zeal, began the work at Jerusalem, the Lord working mightily by his means, is certain; we see it plainly in scripture. But he had nothing to do with the work carried on among the Gentiles. That work was done by Paul, who was sent by the Lord, Himself, and Paul entirely rejected the authority of Peter. For him, Peter was but a man; and he, sent by Christ, was independent of men. The church among the Gentiles is the fruit of Paul's, not of Peter's work, it owed its origin to Paul and to his labor, and in no way to Peter, whom Paul had to resist with all his strength, in order to keep the assemblies among the Gentiles free from the influence of that spirit which ruled Christians, who were the fruit of Peter's work. God maintained unity by His grace; had He not kept the church, it would have been divided into two parts, even in the days of the Apostles themselves" (Darby, Epistle to the Galatians).

This confirmation of Paul and the gospel he preached was a complete answer to the false claims and accusations of the enemies of the apostle.

A more serious matter is next brought to our attention. It shows the failure of Peter and how he had compromised the truth of the gospel. This exposure was necessary, for the false teachers claimed for Peter a special place of authority as if he were the perfect apostle, whose words and actions were next to infallible. The perverted gospel which teaches law-keeping and ordinances as necessary means for salvation, puts up man as authority and looks to man and not to the risen and glorified Lord. The Judaistic claims of Peter's superiority was the starting point of the Romish system, which asserts that Peter occupied a place as the visible head of the church in Rome, and which has culminated in the wicked assumption that the popes are the infallible vice-regents of Christ on earth.

Peter had visited Antioch and Paul had to withstand him to the face, for he was blameworthy.

Coming to Antioch, where Peter found a large Gentile church he there enjoyed his liberty in Christ; he ate with the Gentiles, realizing that the middle wall of partition was broken down (Ephesians 2: 14) and that believing Jews and Gentiles were one in Christ. All went well till some from James in Jerusalem showed themselves in Antioch. Then Peter, afraid of opposition, not because he thought in the least that he was wrong, separated himself, leaving them which were of the circumcision. His example led the other Jewish believers to dissemble likewise with him and even Barnabas joined in and, as a result, the unity of the Spirit was given up and the truth of the gospel marred. And Paul when he saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, rebuked Peter before them all. The leaven of the Pharisee, hypocrisy, is manifest in Peter's action. He wanted to appear before those who were still Jewish in their customs and sentiments as being in sympathy with them, and therefore he gave up his liberty in Christ, which he knew was according to the truth

of the gospel. Paul rebuking Peter in public shows that Peter had not the least authority over Paul.

"If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" These are the words Paul addressed to Peter. Why should Gentiles be forced to live as Jews, when Peter, being a Jew, had lived as the Gentiles? Verses 15-18 reveal the fatal consequences of Peter's action. He shows that Peter was a transgressor by building again what he had destroyed (verse 18). How had Peter done so and what suggested the question "Is, therefore, Christ the minister of sin?" (verse 17). When Peter refused to eat with the Gentiles he went back to the law and was thereby attempting to be justified by works; he was building again the law. But, previous to that, he had abandoned the law as a means of justification before God and he had believed in Jesus Christ to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law. He had found out that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." By building again the system of the law, which he had given up as unable to justify him, he made himself a transgressor, because he had left it. Inasmuch as it was Christ who had led him to do this--was, then, Christ a minister of sin? God forbid. It was the doctrine of Christ which had made him a transgressor in giving up the law; for in building it again and going back to it he acknowledged that he was wrong when he had rejected it as a means of justification. This is the argument of these verses.

The concluding verses of this chapter give the truth of the position of a believer in Christ who is justified by faith. It is Paul's individual testimony which every believer in Christ may repeat, for what was the apostle's position is ours also. "For I through the law died to the law, that I might live unto God." The law had pronounced the sentence of death and condemnation upon him and, through the law he had died to the law. But the sentence of the law was executed upon him in the person of Christ, who took the curse of the law, the condemnation, upon Himself, and believing in Christ he had died as to the old man. The law had slain him, but Christ had died in his stead, and thus he had died to the law, for the law only has dominion over a man as long as he lives. Death, the death of Christ, had freed him from the dominion of the law. As having died with Christ, he was dead to the law. (Romans 6-7 gives us the doctrine concerning these blessed facts of being dead to the law and delivered from the power of sin.)

All this is true of every believer. The great and precious truth of being dead with Christ and living unto God is blessedly stated in Paul's triumphant declaration, "I was crucified with Christ." (Not "I am crucified"; not in the sense of living as crucified with Christ, etc., but "I was crucified," put to death as to the old man, when Christ died.) The death of Christ has not only set the believer free from the guilt of sins, but has also put him to death as to the old man and delivered him from the power of sin in the flesh. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin" (Romans 6: 6). Then follow the other equally blessed statements: "Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Dead to sin and the law, the believer no longer lives in his old life, but he has another life, which is Christ--"Christ liveth in me." It is that life which we receive, believing on Him.

The principle which governs this life is not the law principle, but it is a life lived in the faith of the Son of God. "All life in the creature has an object--we cannot walk without one. If the Lord Jesus is our life, He is also, personally, the object of the life, and we live by faith in Him. The heart sees Him, looks to Him, feeds upon Him, is assured of His love, for He gave Himself for us. The life that we live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Happy certainty! Blessed assurance! It is a new life, the old man is crucified, and Christ, whose perfect love we know, is the sole object of faith and of the heart."

"It is this which always characterizes the life of Christ in us: He Himself is its object--He alone. The fact, that it is by dying for us in love that He who was capable of it, the Son of God--has given us thus freed from sin this life as our own, being ever before the mind, in our eyes He is clothed with the love He has thus shown us. We live by faith of the Son of God, who has loved us, and given



Himself for us. And here it is personal life, the individual faith that attaches us to Christ, and makes Him precious to us as the object of the soul's intimate faith." (Synopsis)

And then the conclusion. "I do not frustrate (set aside) the grace of God; for if righteousness is by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (or: has died for nothing). If righteousness can be obtained by works, by a self-made character, or through keeping ordinances, then the death of Christ was superfluous and the grace of God is set aside. Christ is dead in vain if there is any other way to obtain righteousness than by faith in Him and through the grace of God.

## II. CONTRASTS BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE

### CHAPTER 3

1. The gift of the Spirit not by the works of the law, but by hearing of faith. v.1-5
2. Righteousness not bestowed by the law, but by faith. v. 6-9
3. The law curses; the curse born by Christ. v. 10-14
4. The law cannot annul the covenant of promise, v. 15-18
5. Wherefore serveth the law? v. 19-22
6. Faith having come--no longer under the law, v.23-25
7. Sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, v. 26-29

What the law could not do and what grace has done for the believer in Christ is now unfolded. Paul addresses them as foolish, and asks, "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Who was responsible for the awful error they were following so destructive to the whole truth of the gospel? It was the witchery of Satan; as he tells them later, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you" (chapter 5: 7-8). As Christians, they possessed the Holy Spirit, as all true Christians receive Him and are sealed by the Spirit. They also enjoyed the ministry of the Spirit through the different gifts. And now he asks the question "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" There is no promise in the law that if it is kept in obedience, that God would send His Spirit to the heart of man to be the indwelling guest and make the obedient keeper of the law the temple of the Holy Spirit. The law does not promise even the Spirit. In Ezekiel 36: 27 the promise is made, "I will put My Spirit within you", but, as the context shows, this promise refers to the future when the remnant of Israel will turn to the Lord and the promised spiritual and national blessings are given to them through grace. The Galatians knew nothing of the law and were not under the law, for they were, by nature, idolaters. They had received the Spirit by hearing of faith. Before this great gift could ever be bestowed the Son of God had to die on the cross and be glorified (John 7: 39). And all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, also receive the great gift of grace, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Sonship. They had received the Holy Spirit by simply believing. They were sealed by that Spirit and knew thereby that they were redeemed and the sons of God. If they possessed this seal of divine righteousness why should they add to it the works of the law? They acted, indeed, foolishly.

(Strange, unscriptural doctrines concerning the Holy Spirit are taught in different sects and parties. Some teach that the Christian should earnestly seek this gift, and the baptism with the Spirit. They claim that each individual must make a definite experience of receiving the baptism with the Spirit. This seeking includes, what they term, a full surrender, etc., and after enough seeking, surrender, giving up and praying, they claim to have received the power of the Holy Spirit. The argument here refutes this teaching. The Holy Spirit is given to every believer in Christ.)

The second argument is concerning righteousness. These false teachers made much of Abraham and the Jews honored him as the father of the nation. How did he obtain righteousness? It was not by the works of the law, for there was no law and no ordinances. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." He believed and grace imputed this to him for righteousness.

This took place before his circumcision. "How was it, then, reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also" (Romans 4: 10-13). Thus, righteousness is apart from the law and circumcision has nothing whatever to do with salvation; neither has baptism or any other ordinance. These Judaizing teachers and perverters of the gospel probably told the Galatians about being linked with Abraham and the privilege of being the children of Abraham. Paul writes them that, as believers, they are without the works of the law and circumcision, the children of Abraham. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And the Scriptures, the Word of God, had anticipated this. The Word of God foresaw that, ultimately, in God's gracious purpose, the Gentiles were to be justified by faith. The Word of God had, so to speak, preached the gospel unto Abraham, the very gospel Paul was heralding among the Gentiles. This gospel-message, preached by the Scriptures, is the announcement, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." The logical conclusion, therefore, is "they which be of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."

The law cannot give righteousness, but it gives man something and that is the curse. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law demands obedience, but it has no power to give a nature which delights in the law to keep it, nor can it bestow the power to fulfill its demands. Nothing can the law give to the sinner, but the curse. (See quotation from Deuteronomy 27: 11-26. Six tribes were put on Mt. Gerizim to bless and six upon Mt. Ebal to curse. The six tribes on Gerizim were silent; they could utter no blessing, for the law cannot bless. But the tribes on Mt. Ebal uttered twelve times the word "Cursed." This is what the law does.)

But grace had also stated the faith principle in the Old Testament. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is manifest, for the just shall live by faith." But redemption has come. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." If a believer then goes back to the law and puts himself under that law, tries to live by it, he puts himself under the curse. He slights the precious work of Christ, who took the curse upon Himself, so that it can no longer fall upon us. And the result of Christ having removed the curse of the law is that the blessing of Abraham might be extended to the Gentiles through Him, so that all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, should receive the promised Spirit.

In verses 15-18, the priority of the grace-covenant is shown and that the law-covenant which came 430 years after cannot disannul the former covenant nor make the promise of none effect. If a covenant is made and confirmed, it cannot be rightly disannulled nor can anything be added to the same. The promises were made to Abraham; they were unconditional promises with no "if" attached to them, grace is the foundation of them. These promises were, afterward, confirmed to his seed. And that one seed (not seeds) is Christ. Isaac was a type of Him. And the original promise that all nations should be blessed in Abraham (Genesis 12: 1-3) had been confirmed after the promised seed, Isaac, had been upon the altar (Genesis 22: 18). Isaac, upon the altar and taken from the altar, was a type of Christ, His death and resurrection (Hebrews 11: 19). The law-covenant can, therefore, not disannul the promise nor add to it. If the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

If, then, the law cannot give the Spirit of God, if it cannot give righteousness, if the law has no

blessing for man, but pronounces a curse upon him, if it cannot, in any way, affect the original grace-covenant made with Abraham, confirmed in Isaac, then the logical question which follows is "Why did God give the law?"--"Wherefore, then, serveth the law?" (verse 19). The answer is "It was added because of transgressions." It was added not that sin might be curbed, or man might be saved by it, but that man might be constituted a transgressor and his hopeless and guilty condition fully demonstrated. It was introduced as a parenthetical thing, between the original promise and its fulfillment in Christ, in order that the moral condition of man might be manifested. (See also Romans 3: 20; 5: 13; 5: 20; 7: 7-9.) Therefore, it was a mere addition "till the seed (Christ) should come, to whom the promise was made." And the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. "Now, a mediator is not of one; but God is one." Angels in glory were present at Sinai (Psalm 68: 17); God did not reveal Himself in His glory and a mediator was needed, that is, Moses. The statement "a mediator is not of one" means that mediatorship necessitates two parties. So there were God and Israel, Moses between as the mediator. But in the promise, the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, God was the only One who spoke. Its fulfillment is not (as in the law-covenant) dependent upon a faithful God and Israel's obedience, but on God's faithfulness alone; all depended upon God Himself. The mediatorship of the Lord Jesus Christ is a different thing and not in view here at all. But the law is not against the promises of God. Man needed life; the law could not give that, neither can it give righteousness. All--Jews and Gentiles--were shut up under sin, so that the promise made to Abraham might be fulfilled to all believers through faith in Jesus Christ.

"Before faith came--that is, before Christ had died and faith, as the great principle for the fullest blessing, had been made known--we, the Jews, were kept under the law, shut up to the faith which should, afterwards, be revealed." The Apostle writes of the condition of the Jews before the cross of Christ and before the faith in Him was fully revealed. Therefore, the law was their schoolmaster unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith. The law was, for the Jews, a pedagogue, just as a pedagogue in a Greek household had charge of the children during their minority. The authorized version, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," is not correct. Upon this the statement is often made that the law is like a whip to bring us to accept Christ. But that is not the meaning. The law was the schoolmaster for the Jews unto Christ, until Christ came--the schoolmaster up to the time of Christ. Verse 25 makes this clear. "But after that faith is come"--faith being fully made known after the finished work of Christ and preached in the Gospel--"we are no longer under the schoolmaster." A great change has come since the faith has been made known through the gospel. Not alone are believers no longer under the schoolmaster, but they are Sons of God. "For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ." Life and righteousness, the life from above and the righteousness of God are needed for divine sonship. The law cannot give life and righteousness, but grace bestows both on the believer and makes him a son of God. Being baptized unto Christ, they had put on Christ and had assumed in profession the name of Christ; a new place given to all, "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Inasmuch as they were Christ's, heirs of the promise, they could not be under the law. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

## CHAPTER 4

1. Under the law in the state of minority. 1-3
2. The Son revealed to redeem. 4-5
3. Because ye are Sons; the Spirit of Sonship. 6-7
4. The backsliding Galatians. 8-20
5. The sons of the bondwoman and of the free woman. 21-31

Jewish believers were, before Christ had died, the children of God, and as such they did not differ from servants. They were in a state of minority, as children who do not know the father's thoughts, nor could they fully know God as Father.

"He compares the believer before the coming of Christ to a child under age, who has no direct relation with his father as to his thoughts, but who receives his father's orders, without his accounting for them to him, as a servant would receive them. He is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Thus the Jews, although they were heirs of the promises, were not in connection with the Father and His counsels in Jesus, but were in tutelage to principles that appertained to the system of the present world, which is but a corrupt and fallen creation. Their walk was ordained of God in this system, but did not go beyond it. We speak of the system by which they were guided, whatever divine light they might receive, from time to time, to reveal heaven to them, to encourage them in hope, while making the system under the rule of which they were placed yet darker. Under the law then, heirs as they were, they were still in bondage."-- Synopsis

But a great change had taken place. "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem those under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." God sent His Son from His bosom to become man and "made under the law." He took His place down here in two relationships. First with man, through the woman, and with the Jews, as born under the law. Sin and death came in by the woman; Christ came into this world by woman also. Through the law, man is under condemnation and Christ came as under that law. But that law was no bondage for Him. He fully worked out the righteousness of the law. Yet his righteous and holy life could not redeem those under the law. Redemption from the curse of the law was accomplished in the death of the Cross. And the glorious result of the coming of the Son of God and His finished work is for all believers in Him "the adoption of sons"--that is, placed, through grace, before God as sons. And because believing Jews and Gentiles are sons, through the efficacy of the redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ, God sent the blessed proof and power of sonship. "He sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The Holy Spirit was given as the seal of redemption, and as the joy of sonship. "Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

"Was it possible, then, that any could desire to put the Gentiles under the law, when they (the Jews) had been brought out from it themselves by the will of God, the work of Christ, and the witness of the Holy Spirit? What a gross inconsistency! What a subversion, not only of the truth of God revealed in the gospel, but also of redemption, which is its basis! For Christ bought off those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, bringing them, by grace, into a place of known salvation and intelligent joy in relation with our God and Father, out of that bondage and nonage which the law supposes."--W. Kelly

Then follows the appeal of the apostle to the backsliding Galatians, who were fast falling away from grace and turning to the weak and beggarly elements. Verses 8-10 are of much interest and significance. They were heathen, and knowing not God, they served idols. Now, as being converted, they had known God, or rather God had known them. Turning to Judaism, to the law with its ordinances, meant, for them, a turning back to the weak and beggarly elementary things in which they were as heathen. They were, practically, turning again to that which they had left--"how turn ye again?" As heathen they had ceremonies, different offerings, and they observed different days by which they tried to please their supposed gods. Ritualistic observances upon Christian ground are more than a perverted gospel: they are heathenish in principle. Some African fetich-priest attires himself in a fantastic costume. He takes a rattle, dances and mumbles something in an unintelligible way. Then he declares what he does will induce the gods to send rain. In a magnificent edifice caged "church" stands a man who wears different colored robes. This man goes through different ceremonies, bows and crosses himself, mumbles something in a foreign language, then lifts up a receptacle before which the people bow in worship. He claims that, through him, blessing comes upon the people. Both, the African heathen-priest and the ritualistic-

priest follow the same principle, and the practice of the so-called "Christian priest" is as much heathenish as the practice of the other. And so as to the observance of special holy days, months and years. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." The gospel knows nothing of the observance of days and seasons such as saint-days, Lent, etc. All these special saint-days and most of the feast-days kept in Christendom were taken from the heathen.

Then what a tender appeal follows! He reminds them of the former days when he preached first the gospel unto them. In the infirmity of the flesh, physical weakness, they had not despised nor rejected him, but received him as an angel of God, as the Christ whose blessed ambassador he was. Then they enjoyed great blessedness and would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. But where was their blessedness now? Had he become their enemy in speaking the truth to them? He addresses them as His little children "of whom I travail in birth again."

He needed, so to speak, to travail in birth afresh with them till Christ should be formed in them. Nevertheless, he calls them his children: his love inspired him with confidence, and yet filled his heart with uneasiness. He would have desired to be with them that he might change his voice, suiting it to their state; not only teaching them the truth, but doing whatever their need required. Mark here the deep love of the apostle. Moses, faithful as he was, grew weary of the burden of the people and said: Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? (Numbers 11: 19); but the apostle is willing to travail in birth with them as his children a second time, in order that their souls might be saved.

Verses 21-31 give an interesting, typical foreshadowing and contrast. As they were abandoning grace, he wants the law to speak to them. Abraham had two sons, one by Hagar, the bondmaid, born after the flesh; the other son was Isaac, the son of promise, born by Sarah, the free woman. Both illustrate the covenants of God. Mount Sinai, the law-covenant, which gendereth to bondage, is represented in Hagar and her son; the other, the covenant of promise, "Jerusalem which is above"--the mother of us all--it is the true church of God viewed in her heavenly state; she is free. He quotes Isaiah 54: 1, "Rejoice thou, barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate has many more children than she which hath an husband." These words are addressed to Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom, in the time of her promised restoration. Then Israel, redeemed and blessed, will look back and find that, during our age, this gospel-age, many more children were begotten by the gospel, during the time when Israel was cast off and Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles than at the time when Jerusalem flourished and enjoyed the favor of Jehovah. "Now, we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Those who believe and are saved by grace are, therefore, the true children of promise. But, as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted "him that was after the Spirit, even so it is now." The Jews persecuted Paul for preaching the gospel. They opposed the gospel and all those who believed in Christ. But what was said about the bondwoman and her son? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the free woman." This has happened to Israel; she, for a time, is disowned and their house is left desolate. "So then, therefore, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." It would be impossible to be children of both. Equally impossible is it to be under law and under grace. The two cannot exist together. We are children of the free woman and of her only and have nothing whatever to do with the law-covenant. We belong to a risen Christ, with whom we have died, who has borne the curse for us and bestowed upon us life and righteousness, and, therefore, we are free from the law, from its service and ceremonies.

### III. THE WALK OF THE JUSTIFIED BELIEVER, AS NOT UNDER THE LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE

# CHAPTER 5

1. Stand fast! Be not entangled! 1-6
2. Exhortations and the law of love. 7-15
3. Flesh and Spirit. 16-21
4. The Fruit of the Spirit. 22-26

The first exhortation is to maintain, by faith, the liberty which is found in Christ, to stand fast in that liberty where with Christ has made the believer free and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. The believer has perfect liberty in Christ; he is absolutely dead to the law and the law is not to be used by him in any way. But verse 13, where the apostle speaks again of this liberty, must be brought in connection with the opening statement of this chapter. "For, brethren, ye have been called into liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." The liberty the believer has in Christ is to be used for holiness. When God redeems from the curse of the law it is a redemption unto holiness, to live a righteous and holy life; the holy Spirit indwelling the believer does not give license to live after the flesh.

But as being in Christ, dead to the law, if they become circumcised Christ would profit them nothing and they were bound to fulfill the whole law. Going back to the law for righteousness, they had fallen from grace. This is the only time "fallen from grace" is used in the Bible. It has been strangely misapplied by a certain system of theology to deny the security of the believer in Christ. It is generally used to describe a Christian who has fallen in sin and, as it is claimed, lost his relationship as a child of God and is, therefore, once more under judgment. Falling from grace does not mean this; it means to give up the grace of the gospel in order to satisfy the requirements of the law. To go back under the law and its bondage is falling from grace. Verse 5 does not mean that a believer hopes for righteousness; he possesses righteousness by faith. Indwelt by the Spirit, the believer waits not for righteousness, but for the hope of righteousness by faith. And the hope of righteousness is the coming glory, when all those who are saved by grace will be glorified and be like Christ.

Then the earnest pleadings and warnings. They had run well; who hindered them? It was Satan who had led them astray. Once more leaven is used. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Even so it is today in Christendom. The leaven of a perverted gospel has well nigh leavened everything. He was deeply concerned about the spiritual condition of these Galatian Christians. But while he was in doubt about them and he was overwhelmed with grief because they abandoned grace, his heart, after all, was also in peace about them. "I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be now otherwise minded." He cast them as his burden upon the Lord and he knew the Lord, who loveth His own, would after all bring it about that they would surely not be otherwise minded.

He who troubled them and bewitched them with that spurious gospel, whosoever he would be, would bear his judgment; and he wishes that these troublers were cut off. "And I, brethren, if I preach yet circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then is the offence of the cross ceased." He had probably been charged by some of endorsing circumcision and preaching it. If such were the case, what further excuse was there for the Jews to persecute him? If he were still preaching circumcision the offence of the cross would have been done away. Circumcision stands for the religion of the natural man. The religious spirit of the natural man is always in opposition to the true gospel. Difficulties will cease and the world will even applaud the preaching if the religion of the flesh, the "do-religion" -- "observe" -- "keep" -- "reform", etc., is proclaimed. Of this we see much today. The true gospel of grace, proclaimed upon the finished work of Christ, with nothing to do and nothing to pay, is still the same stumbling-block.

The believer possesses in Christ true liberty (verse 13); a liberty, as already stated, not to sin, but to walk and serve God in holiness. It is the liberty of the new nature, the divine nature, which gives

power over sin. The law seeks to constrain the old nature, which is impossible; but it is the mighty constraint of love, given by the Holy Spirit. And that love is the fulfillment of the law. The law, as a rule, for the believer's life is, therefore, not needed. The gospel of grace sets the believer free and makes him happy in the assurance of God's love and his own salvation; and the Holy Spirit is there. Under His guidance and power, walking in the Spirit, the lust of the flesh will not be fulfilled. And the believer, walking thus, has the blessed assurance that sin shall not have dominion over him. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6: 14). The law had not the power to do this, but grace has delivered us from the law of sin and death (Romans 8: 1-4).

In the preceding part of the Epistle he had set forth Christian justification by faith, in contrast with works of the law. He here shows that God produces holiness. Instead of exacting it, as did the law with regard to human righteousness, from the nature which loves sin, He produces it in the human heart, as wrought by the Spirit.

"This life, produced in us by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word, is led by the Spirit who is given to believers; its rule is also in the word. Its fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. The Christian walk is the manifestation of this new life, of Christ our life, in the midst of the world. If we follow this path--Christ Himself--if we walk in His steps, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It is thus sin is avoided, not by taking the law to compel man to do what he does not like; the law has no power to compel the flesh to obey, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be. The new life loves to obey, loves holiness, and Christ is its strength and wisdom by the Holy Spirit. The flesh is indeed there; it lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh, to prevent man from walking as he would. But if we walk in the Spirit, we are not under the law." (Notes on Galatians--J. N. Darby)

The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are given in verses 19-23. In a more literal rendering, the works of the flesh, sixteen in number, are as follows: Fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strifes, jealousies, angers, contentions, disputes, factions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revels and things like these. Such is the old nature of man and such the fruit it bears. They that do such things, living according to the flesh, shall not inherit God's kingdom. And only the power of the Spirit of God can deliver from the outworking of this fallen nature, the flesh, which is still in the believer. The Holy Spirit is in the child of God to manifest this power, but it means subjection to Himself.

The Spirit also produces His own blessed fruit in the life of the believer. The first three parts: Love, joy and peace. These give the blessed consciousness the believer has in his heart of his relationship to God, which consciousness comes through the Spirit. The other six parts: "long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control," witness in the believer's walk to the fact that the love, the joy and peace of God are realities in the soul. The believer who walks according to the Spirit manifests in his walk the fruit of the indwelling Spirit and against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh and its lusts. They have accepted the sentence of the cross which has put the old man with its lusts into the place of death. God declares us as dead with Christ and looks upon us thus (Colossians 3: 3). And this great truth must be lived. The believer lives in the Spirit and is called upon to walk in the Spirit so that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in him. "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory (the law fosters such a spirit, but grace humbles), provoking one another, envying one another"--which is the sad effect of vain-glory, provocation and envy.

## CHAPTER 6

1. Concerning the Restoration of a brother. 1-5
2. Concerning Reaping and Sowing. 6-10

### 3. The conclusion. 11-18

Practical exhortations conclude the defense of the gospel. The previous chapter stated that they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh and its lusts. In the beginning of this chapter the treatment to be accorded to a man (a brother) who has been overtaken in a fault is given. The law would demand the cutting off of such a one. It is harsh and merciless. But grace bears a different message. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The sin of a believer does not put him out of the true church, the body of Christ, but it interrupts communion with God. The erring brother is to be treated in a spirit of meekness and to be restored. Then law is mentioned, but not the law of Moses, but the law of Christ. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." He is the great burden-bearer for His people and to bear the burdens of others is to act as the Lord Jesus does. None is to think of himself to be something when he is nothing; the legal spirit puffs up. Every man is to prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. "For every man shall bear his own burden"--this is in reference to the judgment-seat of Christ when each must give an account of himself.

Another instruction is concerning ministry to those who teach. "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." This is the way a loving and gracious Lord has appointed. The believer who receives the ministry of the Word through one of the gifts in the body of Christ has a personal responsibility towards him who ministers. He is to communicate to him in earthly things, and thus have a part in his ministry. How different in Christendom, with its fixed salaries, pew-rents and, worse still, when evangelists appeal to the unsaved, to Catholics and Jews, to swell the collection. Important is the principle of verses 7-9. We quote from another:

"We may repeat again that the toleration of evil is never grace. It would be a perversion of the very thought of grace to imagine this. 'Be not deceived,' he says, therefore, 'God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption and he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' These are principles of absolute necessity. Nothing can alter them. If a man sows a certain seed, he knows, or he should know, that he can get of that seed nothing but what is proper to it. If a man sows to his flesh, he sows, in fact, the corruption which he reaps. The very principle of self-will which must, of necessity, be in it, is a principle which is essentially that of sin. Every form of sin will come under this, and God may allow, in fact, such seed to come to harvest, in order that we may recognize its character, as we otherwise would not do. In the opposite way to that of the man who, bearing good seed, goes forth even weeping, but returns with joy, a man in this way may sow his seed rejoicing, but it will be the return that will be sorrowful. It does not follow that God cannot come in and deliver us from what would otherwise be the necessary fruit of such sowing, if only there be the true self-judgment of it in the soul; for to a Christian, the reaping of it is but in order to self-judgment, and if we will judge it first, there may be no need of reaping at all. Judge it first or last we surely must, or the thing will develop for what it is and be manifest, not to ourselves alone it may be, but to others also. On the other hand, 'He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' Blessed and wonderful reaping! The life is looked at here, Of course, in its practical character, in its fruits and activities. The life itself, the life which produces this, is no matter of reaping at all, it is what we must have to be Christians. Nevertheless, we can reap it as a practical thing, and the witness of it is that, even though reaped here upon earth, it is something which has eternity in it."-- Numerical Bible.

Verse 11 tells us that he had written this letter with his own hand and that in large letters. It seems as if the energy of the Holy Spirit came upon him in such a degree that he had to dispense with the usual amanuensis he employed. Then he reverts to the great controversy once more. These false teachers, the proselyting teachers, wanted to boast with the Galatians, but he knew only one boasting or glorying, "in the cross of our Lord Jesus, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The cross meant everything to him and thus it should be with every believer, saved



by grace.

But what does he mean when he speaks of bearing in his body the marks--the stigmata--of the Lord Jesus? The Romish conception of the supernaturally imprinted scars of the nails in the apostle's body does not need to be investigated, for it is a superstition. The expression simply means the trials and sufferings he underwent for Christ's sake and which left their marks on his frail body (2 Corinthians 11: 24-33). What the Galatians needed the most is the final word of Paul to the Galatians. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit, brethren."