

Introduction to Galatians – John W. Gregson

After Paul and Barnabas had been commissioned by the church at Antioch in Syria, they began their first missionary journey accompanied by John Mark, a nephew of Barnabas. The company left Antioch and sailed to the island of Cyprus landing in Paphos. Thence loosing from Paphos they "came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem" (Acts 13:13).

After landing on the shore of Asia Minor, and going into Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue. There the elders read from the law and the prophets, then they asked Paul and Barnabas to speak. Paul stood up and began preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the synagogue. As he preached the gospel to the Jews in the synagogue, of course, some were saved, but the majority would not hear that Jesus was the promised Messiah. So Paul and Barnabas grew bold, and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you (the Jews); but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

The Gentiles to whom the missionaries preached "were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). From Antioch Paul and Barnabas made their way into Iconium thence to Lystra and Derbe which were cities in Lycaonia. It was in Lystra that Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city and left for dead. God, however, strengthened him, and the missionaries made their way back through Derbe, Iconium and back to Antioch confirming the new-born souls as they went on their way. They also "ordained elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch" (Acts 14:23-26). Thus ended, in Antioch, their first missionary journey.

On Paul's second missionary journey, in the company of Silas and without John Mark this time, the missionary company visited the cities of Derbe, Lystra and Iconium again as well as going "throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit allowed them not. And they, passing by Mysia, came down to Troas" (Acts 16:6-8). There is some controversy about how far inland the missionaries went preaching the gospel. Theologians are divided into the North Galatian and the South Galatian theory. Did Paul and his missionary crew include cities in Pontus and Bithynia on the north and Phrygia on the southwest and Cappadocia on the east? Possibly! We can be assured that the missionaries labored wherever and whenever the Holy Spirit led and directed them.

The purpose of the letter to the Galatians was to counteract the heretical teachers that had crept into the churches, teaching that circumcision was necessary for salvation (5:2;6:12ff), and the observance of days and months and seasons and years (4:10; 21). These false teachers, furthermore, tried to discredit Paul personally. Paul's defense can be found in 1:10,12,13. The letter was probably written from Corinth about 50 or 51 A.D. The Apostle Paul writes of some of the trials he endured in II Timothy 3:11, "persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at

Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me."

Soon after Paul and Barnabas had left Asia Minor, the Judaizing zealots began their efforts; asserting that Gentiles could not be saved without being circumcized and obeying the law. De Haan writes that these legalistic Judaizers in the Galatian churches were those who taught "that we are saved by grace, and then after that we are KEPT by the Law, making our ultimate salvation dependent on OUR WORKS instead of the GRACE OF GOD. To combat this error the Holy Spirit chose Paul to write the Epistle to the Galatians. It is the strongest argument that we are SAVED, KEPT, AND FINALLY REDEEMED BY GRACE, without the works of the law" (p. II). The apostle refutes this false doctrine in Galatians 2:19, "For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." De Haan further states, "This Epistle to the Galatians was written to Gentiles in Galatia who had believed the Gospel. But the message is as much needed, and even more, in these days of a mongrel gospel of grace and law. Galatianism is the subtlest of all the errors concerning the place of law-works in salvation" (p. 12).

Yeager says "Galatianism is in varying degrees associated with Legalism, Judaism, Pelagianism, Arminianism, the Romanism of the Jesuits (not the Jansenists), Thomism and Modernism. This heresy has been opposed by Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Calvin, Luther and the Reformed Theology of modern times" (Volume XIII, p. 564).

Paul wrote later in Romans 11:6, if salvation is "by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Salvation is not a matter of law and grace, but it is a matter of law or grace, for it cannot be both.

Exhortation to Christian Freedom
Galatians 1:1-5

The Epistle to the Galatians, written by the Apostle Paul, has been called the MAGNA CHARTA of Christian freedom, it is an indignant protest against all efforts to put Christians under bondage to legalism of any sort. There were certain Judaizing zealots who were asserting that Gentiles could not be saved without first surrendering to the rite of circumcision and obeying the law.

Paul and Barnabas had preached in -the region of Galatia and had established evangelical churches there during their first missionary journey into Asia Minor. Some months after this, the Judaizers had come in behind these missionaries and had sought to lead the new converts astray by instructing them that in order to be saved, or in order to maintain their salvation, they must add certain things to it. They were being pressured to waver from the teaching that "salvation is by grace through faith." The Judaizers were teaching that salvation came to the individual partly by grace and partly by works done by the new convert.

The Lord's churches have always been faced with pressure on every side which would make them compromise. The world calls upon the true church to lose its distinctiveness. Fanatical groups press the church to adopt certain pet themes and to go off on tangents.

Some heretical groups even challenge the Lord's churches to match their dedication and fervency. Some of the churches of Galatia were being led astray by certain false doctrines and in this letter, they are challenged by the Apostle Paul to stand steadfast in the faith.

So, trouble had arisen in Galatia. Certain Jewish teachers had come from Palestine with their false doctrine. They even went so far as to question Paul's authority as an apostle, and furthermore, they repudiated his teaching of the doctrine of grace.

1. Reason For the Epistle - 1,2.

The writer begins the epistle this way, "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:" Verse one answers the opposition which Paul encountered with these Judaizers concerning his apostleship. It is true that the writer was not one of the original twelve apostles, and in this epistle he proves his independence from the twelve, but he also defends his equality with them as recognized by the original apostles. As an apostle, Paul is a minister plenipotentiary. He is God's own special ambassador; from beginning to the end, the letter breathes Paul, an emissary extraordinary.

Paul denies that his apostleship has a human source; that is, no man had been the medium or channel through which his commission to serve as an apostle, had been made known to him. Paul's call to be an apostle came through Jesus Christ as he claimed in I Corinthians 9:1, "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ, our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?" The apostle, furthermore, refers to his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ as to the time and place that he received his commission as an apostle.

Paul states that Jesus appeared to him saying, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I sent thee" (Acts 26:16,17). The word translated "sent" here is the same word translated "apostle" throughout the Bible.

Although Paul did not become a believer nor an apostle during the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ, he did receive his commission from the risen and ascended Lord. The apostle seems to say here, "My apostleship is genuine; hence, so is the gospel which I proclaim, no matter what the Judaizers who disturb you may say. I am a divinely appointed emissary." Since the apostle and his message are backed by divine authority, those who reject him and his gospel are rejectors of Christ. They oppose the very One whom the Father has honored by raising Him from the dead. The "brethren" mentioned in verse 2 must have been Paul's co-workers, just how many and who they were, we are not sure. The apostle writes to the churches(plural), thus recognizing their autonomy.

These churches were self-governing, democratic organizations, just like the Lord's true churches of today. They were not addressed "churches of Galatia" in the episcopal sense, but to the "churches of Galatia" in the congregational sense. The plurality of the Galatian churches, each of them forming a distinct organization, is expressed again in I Corinthians 16:1, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so

do ye." The leaven of the Judaizers appears to be working very extensively among the churches of the Galatian area.

2. Christ's Sacrifice is Sufficient - 3-5.

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from 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 God and our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (verses 3-5). The greeting is commonplace in most of the Pauline epistles.

In verse 4 a long description of Christ's work is given. The greatness of Christ's act of self-surrender is stressed in order to underscore the grievous nature of the sin of those who teach that this supreme sacrifice must be supplemented by law-works. Christ's death was sufficient to "deliver" us or "rescue" us out of this present world dominated by evil. The Son gave Himself; He was not forced to Calvary against His will. Jesus' act of dying was the deliberate execution of a divine plan in which God the Father and the Holy Spirit concurred. The Father "spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32). Christ's self-surrender had a reconciling significance. When the apostle contemplates the Father's love revealed in delivering up His Own dear Son, the Only-begotten, for our salvation, Paul's soul is lost in wonder, love and praise, so that he exclaims in verse 5; "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The word "age" in verse 4 is sometimes translated "world;" that is, the world qualified by sin and morally evil. Paul indicates that the world is evil. It has men in its grasp who are helpless until rescued by the Holy Spirit in response to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "This present age is evil - a monster with helpless mankind in its grip, from whose slavery we can be rescued only by the sacrificial death of the Son of God. This evil age murdered the Son of God. The future ages will be characterized by glory to Him Who died to save us from this present evil age. The present age rejected God's Son. Every future age will praise Him" (Yeager, Vol. XIII, p. 568).

So in the introduction of this short epistle we have noted that the occasion which prompted the apostle to write the letter was the sinister influence which Judaistic trouble-makers were exerting upon the churches of Galatia. The purpose of the letter was to counteract a dangerous error by re-emphasizing the glorious gospel of free grace in Christ Jesus: justification by faith alone, apart from the works of the law, and to urge those addressed to adorn their faith and prove its genuine character by means of a life in which the fruit of the Spirit would abound. These facts we need to keep in mind as we study further in the Book of Galatians.

Paul's doxology calls his readers to exalt God for the divine work of redemption as transcendent and beyond praise, high and lifted up above the realm of criticism and objection. Cole says, "the epistle is a statement of Paul's gospel. It is the refusal to allow salvation to depend on anything save the work done for helpless man by God Almighty, and enjoyed by a faith which is itself a gift of God; it is a cry from Christian freedom" (p. II).

To God Be the Glory

Galatians 1: 6-10

Wherever the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel and wherever he established churches, he was "dogged" by Judaizers who came along after him and endeavored, often with much success, to persuade the converts that it was essential for them that they keep the Jewish law. They were challenged to exchange the wonderful Gospel of complete salvation by grace, for one of good works. This is staggering - and it is being done even in our time! This epistle deals with the seriousness of adding to the simple Gospel.

1. Inconsistency Observed - 6,7.

After his very brief introduction (verses 1-5), the writer begins the theme of his epistle by writing, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." The very essence of the gospel is at stake. Paul expresses amazement and consternation that his converts in the churches of Galatia have, so soon after conversion, been led astray by these false teachers. They were mixing Jewish ritual with Christian faith; they were in the process of transferring their loyalty from the One Who in His grace and mercy had called them.

To depart from the truth is to depart from God. The very essence of being a Christian is a personal relationship to God, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, not just believing certain things. To reject the true doctrine and teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus indicates a rejection of the true God. "The Galatians had not only abandoned their theological position, which Paul had taught them, but they had abandoned a personal, loving God, Who had manifested that love in the grace of Christ" (Cole, p. 38).

The Galatians had turned away from the gospel. The word translated "removed" means to "turn away," "to transfer one's self to a different course of thinking and acting," "to change one's mind" or "to desert one's military post." They had done this in favor of other teachings; that is, the teachings that faith plus law-works was the way of salvation.

This doctrine was a perversion of the true gospel. The Judaizers may have had persuasive arguments; -they may have been positive in their presentation; regardless of how plausible their argument may have sounded, if it denied or changed the original gospel which they had heard, the writer is saying, "Have nothing to do with this unsound doctrine."

Christians are to exercise steadfastness to the truth. Even though false teachers may arise to try to throw one into confusion, they may try to shake one up, or trouble an individual; we should not believe any person who changes the gospel of Christ. The Judaizers were perverting or "twisting" the gospel to make it different. Of course, there is no such thing as another REAL gospel. It is no gospel at all, but a yoke of bondage to the law and the abolition of grace. This so-called other gospel was nothing more than an attempt to "overturn the gospel that had Christ as its content and to live out an opposing principle" (Ridderbos, p. 49).

2. A Curse is Pronounced on False Teachers - 8,9.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Here the apostle teaches the Galatians to pay no attention to the outward qualifications of the messenger. The outward person of the messenger does not validate his message; rather, the nature of the message validates the messenger. Even if an angel or any man preach any other message than the gospel message, let him be accursed. The apostle may have used the word "angel" here to show the Galatians the possibility of Satan himself appearing as an angel of light to deceive them.

Paul's wish is that such an individual should be under the curse or under the "wrath of God." These words are rather severe for these Judaizing trouble makers but at the same time it is also a word of remonstrance and warning for the Galatians, who were in the process of allowing themselves to be misled, and were actually moving away from the One Who, in His love and mercy, had called them to salvation. The gospel of Christ is so holy that anyone who independently modifies it brings a curse of God down upon his head. The word "anathema" means "something doomed to die." The apostle puts the messenger who would pervert the gospel under the wrath of God; doomed to destruction. Not just any messenger, even an angelic messenger.

Paul is not condemning tradition as such, but rather, he condemns tradition that conflicts with the word and command of God. In one sense, however, Paul's own experience represents a decisive break with religious tradition, seen in its Jewish form. He describes himself in verse 14 as a "great traditionalist."

3. Paul Seeks God's Favor - 10.

"For do I now seek favor of men, or of God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be a servant of Christ." Had the apostle heard the charge that he had been trying to play up to the people in order to gain effect? Evidently these Judaizers were not only perverting the true gospel but were also accusing Paul of vacillating even from true Christianity. They seem to have at least insinuated that when he was among the Jews, he preached the need of circumcision and the keeping of the law in order to curry favor with them. To these Judaizers Paul was an ecclesiastical politician, not a theologian.

Paul was not, however, out to win people by telling them what they liked to hear. "One who trims his sails to every breeze of opinion and bias, cannot be a servant of Christ" (Hendriksen, p. 44). Of course, no man in his right mind could accuse Paul of going out of his way to curry favor with anybody. Since he had met the Lord on the road to Damascus, he had deliberately renounced the sin of pleasing men in favor of that of pleasing God alone. He had long ago learned that it was impossible to please God and men at the same time; in fact, this doctrine can be found among the first truths taught to his new converts. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as men pleasers."

It is true and Paul is to be commended for it; he did use tact in his presentation of the gospel to various individuals and groups. Tactfulness is not a vice but rather a virtue when paired with honesty and truth. Some will confess that Paul failed to use tact in renouncing the Galatians like he did, but he could not be a bondservant of Christ if he were to speak smooth things to the Galatians. "The preacher who wishes to please God had better not try to please men. Preaching 'in the flesh' is the preaching that stoops to an attempt to appeal to the audience on a human basis. Such a preacher dresses in a manner to attract attention, speaks good English, tries to be funny, flatters his audience. Such preaching can never please God (Romans 8:8)" (Yeager, Volume XIII, p. 575).

The writer joyfully acknowledges Jesus as his Redeemer, Owner, and Lord, and is completely surrendered to Him. Such an example deserves our imitation. Paul's chief concern was God's glory! Such should be our aim in life.

The Gospel is From God
Gala-Hans 1: 11-17

In this passage of Scripture, the writer is making a vigorous defense of the Gospel which he preaches. There were those who had sought to pervert the Gospel by adding to it; thus, they were seeking to lead the Galatians astray. The apostle is rather vehement in his attack on the opponents of the true Gospel because of the seriousness of the error which they taught. This error sought to separate people from simple faith in Christ. Today, people need to be taught the essentials of the faith by men who have experienced the power of the Gospel and have been called and anointed of God for His service.

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ - 11,12.

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." In spite of the fact that the Galatians have deviated from the truth, the apostle still regards them as members of the same spiritual family to which he, too, belongs. To them he says, "I do solemnly declare... that the good news is not of human invention or philosophy. "

The gospel which Paul preaches does not find its source in man's desire or wisdom; it is not the result of human ingenuity or device. Man, often, prefers to keep his self-esteem by working for his salvation and thus seeks to patronize God by good works, but God does not desire patronization but rather He desires that we place our FAITH AND TRUST IN HIM. The Bible teaches that man is naturally depraved; It condemns man's free will, his strength, wisdom and righteousness. There is no good in man to deserve God's grace. But God desires to save man by imputing His grace and love to him; God does this through the channel of faith. The apostle further states that the gospel was not transmitted to him by way of tradition from father to son, nor by instruction from teacher to pupil. Paul did not receive his commission nor his teaching concerning the gospel in the school of Gamaliel at Jerusalem, nor did he "sit at the feet" of the apostles, nor was he instructed at the University of Tarsus. He declares that he received the gospel by direct revelation of Jesus Christ exactly as the other apostles had received it.

It was on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3ff) that the Apostle Paul was personally converted to Christianity, and it was on this occasion that Jesus Christ called him into the ministry to the Gentiles. The Bible speaks of a God-called ministry. True ministers of the gospel have a divine call, a call from God to preach His Word. The apostle had received training in the Jewish rabbinical schools of his day, but his call to the ministry came direct from God. On the Damascus Road, the apostle saw Christ as Victor, full of mercy and grace, reaching out His loving arms to embrace him, and ALL those who would place their faith and trust in Him. "The agency by which Paul learned what to preach was a personal visit with Jesus Christ. He describes this experience in II Corinthians 12:1-7 and Ephesians 3:1-7. ..Had the Apostle Paul admitted that he learned his theology from Peter, James, John or the other Apostles, he would have been taking a subordinate place to them, and his later dispute with Peter (Galatians 2:11-14) would have been viewed as an improper insubordination of student to teacher" (Yeager, Volume XIII, pp. 577,8).

2. The Persecutor Became a Preacher - 13,14.

"For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more 13 exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." Herein the apostle speaks of his violent persecution which was directed against God's peculiar treasure. His church, and his purpose of utterly destroying it. Paul's former life style as a zealous Jew and Pharisee was characterized by his belief that it was his duty to God to stamp out Christianity, which he regarded as heresy. He understood that Judaism, a religion of works and bondage, and Christianity, a religion of grace and freedom, were irreconcilable enemies. The man from Tarsus was bent on oppression and destruction and his whole soul was put into it. In his pre-conversion state, he was a dedicated enthusiast, filled with Pharisaic zeal. His progress was greater than that of most of his peers. In fact, he tells us here that he was "chopping ahead" in the Jewish religion, "hewing out a path" as a pioneer would cut his way through a forest, destroying every obstacle in order to advance (Hendriksen, p. 51).

The "traditions of my fathers," which the writer mentions here, is not only an adherence to Mosaic law but also that body of Jewish oral law called the "halakah" which was an addition to the Mosaic law. It was a system of "working their way" into the kingdom of heaven. And because the writer had advanced further in the Jewish religion than others of his day, he was naturally more advanced in hatred against the Christian religion which taught salvation by grace through faith rather than a system of working to become worthy of entrance into God's kingdom. Now since his conversion, all this had changed - the apostle is now as zealous and enthusiastic to promote Christianity as he formerly was zealous to destroy Christianity and all Christians (Acts 9:20,21). His purpose here is to show that the gospel which he now preaches is FROM GOD, and not from man; that is, after the traditions of man.

3. Called by God's Grace - 15-17.

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I

conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."

Here is the apostle's conversion story "from the inside;" "Paul was not a "second-hand" apostle. God in His sovereign good pleasure and marvelous love set this zealous young man apart - consecrated him, saved him and assigned him to plenary apostleship. Paul's conversion to Christ changed him from a man breathing out murderous threats against Christ's church into a man who breathed doxologies and blessings, reflecting God's marvelous and redeeming love toward unworthy and undeserving sinners.

God had SEPARATED Paul from his mother's womb. "There is no reason why we cannot take 'separated' both to mean God's eternal call to salvation and service for Paul and also the time of his physical birth, since Scripture clearly teaches the theological interpretation of history (Ephesians 1:11). God has set Paul apart for salvation and the preaching of the gospel before he was born, and He also chose the time when he should be born. His birth took place at a point in time, but his spiritual separation was from eternity. We do well to remember that God is not subject to chronology" (Yeager, Volume XIII, p. 582).

After his conversion and call -to the ministry, Paul writes that he did not confer with flesh and blood; that is, he sought no conference with human advisors. The apostle was determined to demonstrate to the Galatians that his standing as an Apostle can be traced only to Christ Himself. He turned away from human influence in order to reflect in solitude on the matter of his calling and the future which his life was to take. He did not go up to Jerusalem, nor did Paul discuss theological questions with Ananias, nor any other Christian in Damascus, but rather Paul withdrew into Arabia - there to rest, to pray and to meditate upon the words spoken to him by the Lord Jesus Christ on that unforgettable occasion. Paul needed to sit at Jesus' feet as the other apostles had done.

Yeager seems to -think that it was while Paul was in the Arabian desert that he had the experience related in II Corinthians 12:1-7 (Ibid, p. 585); however, this could have taken place in Lystra when Paul was stoned, dragged out of the city and left for dead. Having spent some time in Arabia (probably in the northern peninsula near Damascus), he returned to Damascus and there he began preaching the Gospel which he had previously sought to destroy. Paul did not go up to Jerusalem until three years after his return to Damascus; then he went up to see Peter.

Paul, no doubt, equated his Damascus Road experience comparable to any confrontation of Christ with Peter and Thomas in post-resurrection days.

A Further Defense of the Gospel
Galatians 1:18-24

After Paul's conversion and call to the ministry, the apostle withdrew in~oo Arabia - there to rest~ to pray and to meditate upon the wo~s spoken to him by the aqra Jesus Christ on that unforgettable occasion. Having s~ent some time in Arabia, he returned -t~a. Damascus (Acts

9:20), and there he began preaching the Gospel which he had previously sought to destroy. Furthermore, he poached the Gospel in the SYNAGOGUES of the Jews. What boldness! What courage! May God help us to have the same boldness and the same courage to declare God's gospel today!!

In this passage before us, the Apostle Paul further defends the gospel against his critics. The Judaizers had brought against the apostle certain accusations that he was not a true defender of the faith. These Judaizers had sought to undermine the apostle's teaching by, at least inferring, that the gospel which he preached came from man. He has declared in preceding verses that the commission to preach came direct from God, and in these verses, he sets out to prove that he did not confer with man for the purpose of getting man's approval, not even the elders in the Christian religion.

1. A Visit with Peter and James - 18,19.

"Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days" (verse 18). Having spent some time in Arabia and in Damascus, the apostle afterward went up to Jerusalem. During this time spent in Arabia, it is assumed that the new apostle to the Gentiles did some meditation and some soul-searching concerning this religion called Christianity. He had already received his commission from the Lord himself and according to Acts 9:20, upon his return to Damascus, he began preaching in the synagogues of the Jews.

In fact, the preaching of the gospel resulted in stirring up the Jews, so that they plotted together to kill the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:23,24). It became necessary for him to escape the Jews and their sinister plot by being let down outside the city wall in a large basket. He fled to safety by turning toward Jerusalem, there to seek refuge among others who had embraced Christianity. His desire to see some of the original apostles was for the purpose of gaining some valuable information about the life of Christ while He was still upon the earth.

It is pure conjecture to think that the apostle knew Jesus during the Lord's personal ministry. If Paul knew Him, he was not directly acquainted with some of the details of our Lord's ministry. It is significant to note that there is no evidence but that these two apostles, Peter and Paul, met on a footing of equality. Neither received his commission or his gospel from the other. The Apostle Peter did not exercise any ecclesiastical authority over Paul, nor any of the other Christians, for that matter. Paul's gospel was fully developed before his visit to Jerusalem. His "visit" (for the purpose of becoming acquainted with Peter in Jerusalem) for fifteen days was not for the purpose of securing his authorization as an apostle nor to get instructions from Peter. It was during this two weeks visit in Jerusalem that Paul met Barnabas who introduced Paul to the Christians. They were afraid of Paul until Barnabas gave them some assurance that Paul was harmless (Acts 9:27). Were it not for Barnabas' introduction of Paul, one wonders if Peter and James would have received the former persecutor of the church.

"But other of the apostles saw I none, except James, the Lord's brother" (verse 19). The reason Paul did not see the other apostles was probably due to the fact that they may have left Jerusalem because of the persecution or because they were on preaching missions extending to outlying areas. There is a possibility the other apostles were unconvinced of Paul's "about face." Further

tradition and theory is exploded here in the fact that a brother of Jesus is mentioned, namely James. Both the gospels of Matthew (13:35) and Mark (6:3) speak of brothers and sisters of our Lord - these were, no doubt, children born to Mary and Joseph following the birth of Jesus Christ Who was the first-born son of Mary. To say that Mary remained a virgin after Jesus' birth is pure hypocrisy.

2. Paul's Further Missionary Exploits - 20-24.

Now since the apostle is aware that his word is still challenged, he adds in verse 20, "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not" (verse 20). The apostle solemnly affirms, with an appeal to God's own presence and omniscience, that he is telling the truth. He confirms with an oath, everything he has said concerning his apostleship being from God and not from men. Paul's relationship with the apostles was separated by a great distance for many years following this Jerusalem visit. God's plan for the apostle is to send him far away to the Gentiles (Acts 9:30; 22:17-21).

Verses 21 through 23 tell of Paul's further missionary exploits following his Jerusalem visit. "Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ;" (verses 21,22). Again in defense of his commission and gospel, he states that he journeyed to places so remote that the possibility of contact with the original apostles, to receive the gospel from them or to be seriously influenced by them, was excluded. Paul would not journey to Jerusalem for some fourteen years, and during these years he had no personal contact with the residents of Jerusalem; however, they heard again and again of his work "up north" among the Gentiles and they glorified God. The former persecutor was now a preacher of the faith. Before his conversion Paul was always devastating the church; now Paul was always preaching. The church members in Judaea were always hearing about it.

In verse 22 the apostle was unknown to these churches in the area of Judaea outside of Jerusalem; he had made no personal appearance before them nor the apostles who were serving them. "But they had heard only. He who persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (verse 23). Here it is plain to see that the Christians approved of the gospel which was preached by the apostle. They recognized it as the same "good news" which the other apostles preached, and they realized that he was now preaching with the same zeal that he once manifested while trying to destroy the church. The apostle was preaching the "faith-system;" that is, the gospel which he had previously tried to destroy.

The chapter concludes in verse 24, "And they glorified God in me (on my account)." The believers were not suspicious, as those of Jerusalem had been at one time, nor were they indifferent, nor unforgiving, but they were rejoicing exceedingly that God was using a former persecutor of the church as a preacher of the gospel. The Jerusalem Christians accepted Paul's conversion as genuine. Here again is the premise - the messenger does not validate the message, but rather the message validates the messenger. So, it is the gospel that matters, and not the preacher.

Christianity, A Religion of Freedom
Galatians 2:1-5

2. Titus, a Test-case - 3-5.

Since Timothy was a Jew, he would be treated like a Jew. But Titus was not a Jew, and so did not have to become one in order to know the gospel. The Judaizers had sought to make a test case of Titus who was a Gentile, but Paul writes in verse 3, "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised;" (in fact, the suggestion would never have arisen) but for the uninvited "sham brothers." Since Titus did not have to embrace the Jewish religion in order to be saved, then this was proof positive that the Gentiles could be saved by grace without any admixture of works. Those, today, who teach salvation partly by grace and partly by works need to reread and take heed to the book of Galatians. If Titus could be saved "by grace through faith" (Ephesians 2:8,9), then so indeed could the Galatians.

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (verse 4). It was at this point that the Apostle Peter struck at the very heart of the matter in his sermon recorded in Acts 15:10 which reads, "Now, therefore, why put God to the test, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" The salvation which God provides through His Son is a salvation by grace through faith and not a salvation by grace plus works.

Those who believed and taught this false doctrine were called by the apostle, "sham-brethren," (NEB) or "false brethren." Their teaching and doctrine was not true. It is interesting to note that the word used here means "coming in from the side," "over the wall," "interlopers." They had sneaked in or slipped into the fellowship. Paul is vehement that the whole purpose of these false brethren was only to peep and pry into Gentile Christian liberty and bring men back again into slavery, this time to the Jewish law.

Most of us would like to have been party to the conference; in fact, Yeager states, "We could wish only to have been present to hear the fierce argument between Paul and the Judaizers as Titus and the eleven Apostles sat by and listened, in Paul's defense of Titus, he had full opportunity to lay bare his innermost theological soul. At the end of the argument the Apostles had no doubt what Paul believed. The charges could never be made that they approved him only because they really did not understand him fully." (Vol. XIV, pp. 6,7).

Verse 5 reads, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." The apostle was by no means a stubborn, inflexible individual. He was an accommodating, congenial minister of the Gospel. He was not willing, however, to put any obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. Christianity is not a religion of slavery but a religion of freedom, it was the founder of Christianity, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ...If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:32,36).

"Silence gives consent," and what men tolerate they are indirectly endorsing. Paul never withdrew from the false brethren "not an inch, nor a millimeter." Paul stood his ground, and the

Judaizers argued a lost case. One wonders if the true Apostles did not listen with ill-conceived delight as Paul demolished legalism.

* * * * *

God's salvation for lost mankind is "by grace through faith" and by faith alone. Anyone who denies this is trying to enslave Christ's saints. We should not stand for it.

The Gospel is for Everyone
Galatians 2:6-10

The apostle had just written in verses 1-5 concerning the fact that Christianity is a religion of freedom. The person who embraces Christianity is freed from the law; the law has performed its perfect work - that of pointing individuals to Christ. Paul would write later (3:24,25), "Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster (child-conductor) to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." In other words, he is saying here, "the law cannot save, but it can bring people to Christ, Who can save. "

1. No Disrespect Meant - 6.

Paul points out the fact that some of the early Christians had trusted Christ for salvation - now they are encouraged by false brethren to be subject to the law in order to stay saved. Paul says that he confronted them with the truth. He writes, "But of these who seemed to be somewhat (whatever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man's person) --for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." In his meeting with the other apostles and elders in Jerusalem, no new doctrine was discussed, but the question was settled once and for all.

Salvation is by grace through faith and not through the deeds of the law. There was no new imposition upon the Gentile believers of any new rules of conduct. The only admonition to the Gentile believers is found in Acts 15:28,29, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well."

So the gospel is extended to the Gentiles freely. It is not necessary for them to become converts to Christianity through the Jewish religion; they did not have to become proselytes of Judaism before they embraced the Christian religion. Paul means no disrespect in this verse, but he asserts his independence sharply. Simply stated, the apostles made no new contribution to Paul's thought. God had made Paul a peer with the other apostles. He won his point when he persuaded Peter, James and John to agree with him and Barnabas in their contention. There was complete freedom from the bondage of the Mosaic ceremonial law for the Gentile Christians.

2. Unity is Reached and Fellowship is Gained - 7-9.

"But, (on the contrary), when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles) -- And when James, and Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision."

The only distinction made here is that some of the apostles are to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and some are to preach the gospel to the Jews. It is very clear here that equal honor is accorded to Paul and Peter. The same Lord Who had empowered Peter was now energizing Paul on his missionary endeavor among the Gentiles. A sense of "belongingness" was established by giving the right hands of fellowship. A mutual agreement and acknowledgement is made between the two missionary groups. Paul and Barnabas are to preach to the Gentiles, while James, Peter and John are to preach among the Jews.

This proves a number of things, namely, that ONE gospel suffices for every age, for every culture, and for every area. Methods of presentation of the gospel may vary from time to time, but the gospel which was preached in the first century is the same gospel which is preached today.

The gospel is relevant for every age. Salvation by grace through faith, the message of the love of God in Christ, is still the message needed in our twentieth century. The New Testament is not a "hodgepodge" of conflicting theologies; that is, a theology of John, a theology of Peter, a theology of Paul - not so, it is an harmonious, beautifully variegated unit. It is remarkable that these five men who met for the Jerusalem conference referred to here, produced between them, no less than twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of our New Testament. It is remarkable and impossible without the inspiration of the Scriptures by the power of God's Holy Spirit. The Bible is indeed inspired of God.

Paul was not overawed by the Jerusalem brethren. The brethren heartily and enthusiastically endorsed both Paul and Barnabas. Their handshakes served as the conformation of a solemn covenant into which these five men entered, as they divided the work-load. So, if Paul's gospel was accepted, then his apostleship must be accepted too. Just as Peter's apostolic ministry to the Jews was sealed by the work of the Spirit in the hearts of the hearers, so the seal of Paul's apostolic ministry was the harvest of the Gentiles given him by God. All those who have been saved by the grace of God are in the family of God, whether they are Jews or Gentiles - in Christ they are one. "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" (Galatians 3:28).

3. Obligations to the Poor and Needy - 10.

"Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was diligent to do." This was the only stipulation made. Poverty was a problem in the first century as it is in many areas today. The Christians were admonished to give assistance to fellow Christians who were in need regardless of their nationality or background. A few years prior to this, Barnabas and Paul had been sent on a relief mission. Now they agree that such assistance should be continued. The

apostles to the Gentiles were agreeable and eager to continue this practice of "open handed liberality."

This was actually a principle of Christianity which was given by the Master Teacher when he said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye measure it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). The efforts of the Apostle Paul to collect money in all Gentile churches is evident in the Corinthian epistles; he faithfully carried out the charge.

Of course a fuller account of this Jerusalem conference is found in Acts 15:1-29.

Consistency - Thou Art a Jewel
Galat-Lans 2:11-16

In this passage the writer is seeking to emphasize the essential independence both of his GOSPEL and his POSITION. The Apostle Paul has already affirmed that he is an apostle by divine calling and not by human commission. He has, furthermore, affirmed that God has called him to be a messenger to the Gentiles. The gospel message is for both Jew and Gentile, and the good news which he preaches to the Gentiles is the same message which others are preaching to the Jews. And although people may have different backgrounds and different cultures - the gospel message is for all. Because it is a universal gospel - consistency must be maintained.

1. Paul Rebuked Peter - 11,12.

"Now when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Peter had committed an error of conduct so serious that Paul rebuked him or condemned him. Paul uses the words which mean "to face in opposition" or "to stand against." When Peter did not live up to convictions, Paul found it necessary to challenge him. Inside the Christian church when they had a "love feast," Peter did not hesitate to eat with the Gentiles, but when the group came down from Jerusalem then Peter refused to eat with the Gentiles.

We find the error pointed out in succeeding verses. Notice verse 12, "For before certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision." Since God had saved the Gentiles, and they were no longer unclean in God's sight or in the sight of the Jews, Peter was now associating with them and eating with them. When some of Peter's Jewish brethren, however, came down from Jerusalem, he withdrew himself from the Gentiles refusing to eat with them.

What Peter was doing was "playing the hypocrite." He was acting not only against his conscience and against the revelation that he had received in Acts 10, but also against his whole past tradition and custom. One reason why it was so difficult for a devout Jew to eat with a Gentile was because of the MAN-MADE rules which the rabbis had laid down regarding the consumption of food. The Apostle Peter had already been told of God, in Acts 10:15, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Peter was motivated by fear. He was afraid of the criticism he might receive from his Jewish brethren. Instability was again exerting itself, as it had done so often before in the life of the apostle. "For all the bombast, the Big Fisherman had not quite conquered his moral cowardice (Luke 22:57-60). Once afraid to stand for Jesus, he is now afraid to draw criticism from the enemies of the gospel" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 18). Peter began to "draw-back;" he separated himself like a Pharisee as if half afraid of the Judaizers in the Jerusalem church. Perhaps he was also afraid that James might not endorse what he had been doing. Steadfastness was not one of the admirable traits possessed by the Apostle Peter.

2. Peter Needed to Live Consistently - 13,14.

"And the other Jews dissembled in like manner with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their false pretense." Peter was hiding his real beliefs, just as an actor conceals his real face under a mask. He seemed to have changed his practice because of social pressure. Paul felt that Peter's conduct was inconsistent with the truth and was giving a wrong impression to the public about the gospel of Christ. When Paul accused Peter of insincerity or hypocrisy he was not using too strong a word. The conduct of Peter was all the more reprehensible because he was a recognized leader. An old adage goes like this, "If the gold tarnish, what will the brass do."

Even Barnabas, whom we would never have accused of narrow-mindedness, who had co-operated with Paul in the establishment of several churches in Gentile regions, and who must have enjoyed many a meal with the young Gentile converts from the pagan world, now meekly went along with Peter in his insincere behavior. The word "dissemble" here means "to act with insincerity; to conceal real views and act hypocritically." Oh, CONSISTENCY, thou art a JEWEL I! The courage and firmness of Paul's reaction to this inexcusable hypocrisy merit profound admiration. He states further in verse 14, "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all. If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Paul saw that Peter and his followers were not "straight-footing it" in accordance with the truth of the gospel. The words "they walked not uprightly" literally means, "they were not walking with a straight foot." Not only was Peter guilty, but Barnabas also, along with others; but Peter was looked up to as a leader. Since the apostle refers to this incident which took place several years before, there is the distinct possibility that some of the Galatians were guilty of the same sin of hypocrisy.

3. Justification Comes By Faith - 15,16.

"We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith of Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." It was inexcusable for the Jews to impose upon the Gentiles a works-for-salvation plan since the Jews had learned that they could not be saved by the strict observance of legal requirements, neither divine nor human.

So why should they place a yoke upon the Gentiles. Here again Paul makes a point which had been discussed in Jerusalem and recorded in Acts 15:10, "Now, therefore, why put God to the test, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" The same principle is involved here. The salvation which God provides through His Son is a salvation-by-grace-through-faith and not a salvation-by- grace-plus-works .

A person is made "just" simply by the wiping out his guilt. A person is not righteous and just until he is doing what is right; this is possible only in Jesus Christ. Criswell states, "Justification by the faith of Christ is the great truth of the gospel. Believing in Christ is the source of righteousness, because of what Jesus Christ has already done." He wrote furthermore, "If there is any key to the gospel preached by the Apostle Paul, it is that we are saved by grace and not by works. ..(Paul) wrote it in a white heat. The very composition of the book is a thunderbolt" (p. 43).

So quoting from Psalm 143:2, "For in (God's) sight shall no man living be justified," Paul concludes that even the God honored Jews (Paul, Peter and all the rest) could not be saved by the law. They came to know that and trusted Christ in order to be saved by faith, since salvation by works is No Thoroughfare.

Salvation is a Personal Matter
Galatians 2:17-21

In a previous message we learned that our justification has its foundation in God and in Christ. Our salvation is based upon God's sovereign grace in Christ Jesus. Of course, justification is a legal term meaning "upright, righteous, innocent, faultless, holy." Justification is that gracious act of God whereby He acquits men and declares them acceptable to Him. Justification is the opposite of condemnation. In Romans (8;1,33) Paul wrote "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ..Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth?"

1. Dead To The Law - 17-19.

"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid" (verse 17). Just because we are saved by grace and not by the deeds of the law does not mean that Jesus encourages sin. Paul writes, "perish the thought." In fact, when an individual is saved from his sins, there is also taken from him the desire TO sin. Since we have been saved by grace and not by law-works, we are not at liberty to sin.

By sinning against God, after we are saved, we do lose the fellowship with God, because He is a holy and a righteous God and One Who cannot look with any degree of favor upon sin. The sinner loses fellowship but not relationship. Sin displeases God and it disqualifies the soul from fellowship with God. The teaching, "salvation by grace through faith" does not remove all incentive for moral effort and goodness. When we are justified before God, this action involves a subsequent total change in our moral behavior but this "total change" in itself could never commend us to God. The Apostle Paul answers his own question by saying, "God forbid," or

"by no means." A thousand times NO to the suggestion that Christ encourages sin!! "When a Christian behaves inconsistently, as Peter did, it appears that he is involving Christ in his sin since the essence of Christianity is the fact that the believer is inextricably united with the Godhead. Thus our Lord is made to appear in the role of one who condones, if He does not indeed support sin. Paul was revolted by the thought" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 26).

"For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" (verse 18). The law, within itself, is not sinful. The true purpose of the law is to convince men of sin and point them to Jesus Christ Who was the Perfect One, keeping God's law to the ultimate degree. Those who trust the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ for justification and then add the law to supplement grace or to keep them saved, are transgressing the very purpose and nature of the law. Peter, by his shifts in behavior, had contradicted himself helplessly as Paul shows by this condition. When he lived like a Gentile, he tore down the ceremonial law. When he lived like a Jew, he tore down salvation by grace.

"For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (verse 19). The apostle is stating here that if ever a man could have been saved by a strict adherence to the law, that man was the Apostle Paul. Oh, how hard the apostle had tried! Listen to what he writes in Philippians 3:4-6, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath reasons for which he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Dare we claim salvation by our goodness? Paul could not, nor can we. God's law demanded nothing less than inward perfection; loving God with ALL the heart, ALL the soul, ALL the mind, and ALL our strength, plus loving our neighbor as ourselves.

You may ask the question, "Why did God give His perfect law if He knew that none of His creation could keep it?" I remind you that - a PERFECT GOD could give nothing less than a PERFECT LAW. This perfect law had scourged the apostle until, by the marvelous grace of God, he found Christ (or more literally, Christ sought and found him), and the apostle found peace in Christ. God's wise purpose could now be realized as the apostle "lives unto God." When he wholly cast himself upon the merits of Christ, then and only then, could he fulfill God's requirements under the law.

The Christian's conduct is not of himself; it is from the Lord. The word "law" here means the expressed will of God or according to the will of God. The law of God was written as Scripture - the Ten Words of Mount Sinai. The law of God is God's way of doing things. According to the Ten Commandments, man is a sinner. And as a sinner, he would in himself be destroyed; but here Paul writes as a Christian.

2. Crucified With Christ - 20,21.

"I am crucified with Christ; 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" (verse 20). This verse seems to contain a riddle, but actually what the writer is saying is this; "Something marvelous has happened to me in the past, with abiding significance for the present and for all future times." The "old man," the flesh is now dead, and the "new

man" is alive forever more. This "new man" is really the "God-like" man shining through Paul's life. When the believer says, "Christ liveth in me," he means that Christ is now making the choices, the selections; He is making the decisions. Christ is the sole meaning of life for him now; every moment is passed in conscious dependence on Him, to whom he looks for everything. This is true Christian faith" (Cole, p. 83).

The apostle Paul had the perfect right to say that he had been crucified along with Christ and also that with Christ he had been raised from the dead. In Christ, the writer, along with those of us who are saved, have received all our strength. In Him we trust completely, on His righteousness, which has been imputed to us, we base our hope for eternity on Christ. The song writer has very aptly written: "On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand."

You see, salvation is a personal encounter. Each individual must decide for himself, each believer experiences his own fellowship with Christ, personally relying upon Him with all the confidence of his own heart. Christ is the Object of our faith, not something pertaining to Christ, but Christ Himself. Christ gave Himself up to shame, condemnation, scourging, mockery, crucifixion and abandonment by the Heavenly Father. All of this He did, for you and for me.

"I do not make void the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (verse 21). Man must decide whether he will cast himself upon the merits of Jesus Christ and trust Him completely and wholly for salvation or imagine that by doing good and giving everyone his due he can be saved. The writer would remind you, however, if you do not trust Christ for salvation, then you are still in your sins, and eternal destruction awaits you, because you have failed to come to God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. So far as you are concerned personally, Christ has died in vain.

Jesus suffered and died vicariously; that is, he died in MY place and in YOUR place. He gave Himself as an ATONEMENT for sin. In His at-one-ment He became one with us. The atonement brings the sinner and Christ together as one.

Paul Questions -the Galatians
Gala-tians 3: 1-6

After the apostle has written of freedom through the gospel of Christ and the fact that the Christian is dead to the law of Moses, he now proceeds to question them about their relationship to the law. In the preceding verse Paul states that the righteousness that God the Father accepts from one of His children does not come from the law. If it does then our Lord has died in vain.

Justification in the sight of God must come, not from the law, but from grace through faith. The Holy Spirit accompanies the reception of salvation; He is a witness that those who embrace it are the children of God. Furthermore, it is sanctioned by miracles and all men are saved like Abraham was saved and justified. Salvation by grace through faith and not by the deeds of the law fulfills all the predictions of the Old Testament.

1. The Galatians Made a Good Start - 1,2.

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, -that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been openly set forth, crucified among you?" (verse 1). The word "foolish" indicates an attitude of heart as well as a quality of mind. Neither the Galatians nor any other Christian should be so foolish as to barter the truth of God for a lie of Satan, peace for unrest, assurance for doubt, joy for fear or freedom for bondage.

The Galatians had been "bewitched;" someone had cast a spell upon them by profane words and teaching. Paul is saying in essence "Who has brought you under his control of this sinister means?" Paul, as their missionary, had preached to them and had vividly set before them a picture of the crucified Lord; he drew them a word picture. The words, "openly (evidently) set forth" refers to the placards that were publically displayed in a forum or in the marketplace for all citizens to see. Since they had no newspapers or magazines, public announcements were thus displayed publically and openly. The message of Christ had been preached publically and openly to the Gentiles. Furthermore, they were knowledgeable that Jesus Christ had been crucified publically for them; they had forsaken paganism and idolatry and were born again into the kingdom of God (Criswell, p. 74).

Both the Scriptures and the Galatians experience gave testimony that man is justified before God by grace through faith. The Galatian Christians had experienced this grace, but considered the false doctrine of staying in God's grace by observing days, months, seasons and years and belief in the necessity of circumcision for salvation. Faith in Christ must not be supplemented by Mosaic ritualism, for a Christ supplemented is a Christ supplanted.

"This only would I learn of you. Received ye that Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (verse 2). The Galatians were questioned as to how they received salvation. What had they done? Had they been circumcised? Had they observed legal ordinances? Was it effected by some ethical means? Paul wrote in Romans 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." He could have asked the Galatians, "Were you happy and contented to begin the journey of service to God by faith?"

2. Salvation is Perfected by Faith - 3, 4.

"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (verse 3). It is pure folly to think that beginning the journey by faith the Galatians would be perfected by the deeds of the flesh such as keeping the law. To trust in such things as ritual, a moral life, scientific achievement, intellectual attainment, physical charm, financial resources, political power, doctrinal liberalism, or even doctrinal purity is folly. To base one's

hopes on anything apart from Christ is to place confidence in the flesh (Hendricksen, p. 114). After all, the whole Christian way is 'supernatural' from start to finish; the Jewish path, however, had become a thoroughly 'naturalistic' way.

True Christianity is begun with the Spirit; He convinces; He originates; He sustains; He consummates the whole salvation experience, "(the Comforter) will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and judgment: of sin, because they believe not on (Jesus); of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11).

"Have ye suffered so many things in vain? -- if it be yet in vain." (verse 4). It is true that the Christian

endures many trials and tribulations which should increase his faith. God uses the experiences His children endure to mature them in Christian service. The Spirit is given and the miracles He performs within us are blessings because we believe the gospel and not because one meets the demands of the law. Blessings which God bestowed upon the Galatians, and indeed upon all Christians, were given because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly God wants any and all of His children to profit spiritually by his experiences. Did the Galatians suffer their trials and tribulations without the desired results?

3. Missionaries and Pastors Are Examples - 5.

"He, therefore, -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?" The Apostle Paul, other ministers and missionaries of the gospel who visited Galatia had shown clearly that their power came from the Holy Spirit by their faith in God. Surely they did not think that these things happened to them because of legal observances of Judaism or because lost sinners heard the good news of the gospel of God's grace and believed unto supernatural salvation and then maintained their salvation by the deeds of the law?

4. Abraham is a Good Example - 6.

"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Many years before the law was given at Sinai, Abraham believed God (he put his faith in Him), and God reckoned his faith for righteousness (Genesis 15:6). The great patriarch's justification before God occurred before

his circumcision and many years before the law was given. If Abraham placed his confidence in God and if Abraham obeyed God's revealed will, why shouldn't the Galatians recognize that they were saved and their salvation was maintained by faith and not by the deeds of the law or human activity. It was before circumcision and before the law that Abraham was given the wonderful promise - "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:2).

Abraham was the pioneer in living in faith so far as the Bible is concerned. "For what saith the scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10).

Paul uses a bookkeeping or accounting -term here - "accounted." In an accounting sense the word means: to impute, to enter upon the books as an asset or a liability. God entered the asset of righteousness upon Abraham's balance sheet before he was circumcised and before he was confronted with the Ten Commandments. In fact the covenant of the law was given on Mount Sinai 430 years after Abraham was saved. that were the promises of God that Abraham believed, on the basis of which righteousness was imputed to him? First, the miracle of Isaac's birth (Genesis 15:1-21:8; Romans 4:13-25), and secondly, the miracle of resurrection of his dead son (Genesis 22:11-19; Hebrews 11:17-19). Saving faith involves ability to believe God's promise that He will work a miracle if He wishes to do so (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 37).

The Law Pronounces a Curse
Galatians 3: 7-12

Not only does the law have nothing to do with saving an individual; it cannot keep him saved. In fact, it pronounces a curse upon anyone who attempts to keep the law in order to be saved. Justification before God is by faith for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The Gentiles were never given the privilege of keeping the law. If the keeping the law brought salvation, only the Jewish nation who received the law, could be saved.

1. Our Goal - Sons of Abraham - 7.

"Know ye, therefore, that they who are of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham." Although some of the Galatians were not children of Abraham by birth, whether they were Jew or Gentiles they could be the children of Abraham

by faith. "Of faith" here means to be characterized or controlled by believing, to have TRUST IN JEHOVAH GOD as one's guiding principle. Spiritual likeness and not physical descent makes a person a true son of Abraham. Anyone who is a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a son of Abraham whether he is a Gentile or a Jew by race. This means that the Galatians saved by grace through faith alone under Paul's preaching were the true sons (children) of Abraham, despite the fact that they were Gentiles who had not been circumcised. The Judaizers, who were preaching another gospel (which is not good news) were not Abraham's sons, despite the fact that they had been circumcised. Gutzke wrote, "The whole experience of a Christian starts with the fact that God gives a promise, the believer responds to the promise, and as he believes in Him, God works in him 'to will and to do of his good pleasure'" (p. 57).

2. The Scripture Speaks Out - 8,9.

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying. In thee shall all nations be blessed" (verse 8). What the Scriptures promise God promises, for He is the Speaker and the Author. The thing foreseen, because it had been thus ordained before the foundation of the world, was that it was 'by faith' and not 'by works' that God would justify the Gentiles, or anyone for that matter. Later, Paul wrote to the Ephesians (1:4,11), "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him, in love. ..In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Doubtless -the Scriptures in the Old Testament, to which Paul was referring, were Genesis 12:3 and 18:18, "And (God) will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ..Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" God's plan of redemption included some representatives of all nations of men, with or without circumcision. When Peter preached his sermon recorded in Acts 3, he infers, that he believed that God would save some outside the pale of Judaism.

"So, then, they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (verse 9). A logical conclusion can be drawn from this verse. There are certain assurances given here: (1) those who profess faith, Jews and Gentiles, without

exception, are sons of Abraham, and (2) in Abraham, that is, "in his seed" shall all the nations be blessed, for it would be foretold that God would justify even the Gentiles by faith. Thus the conclusion, "therefore, those that are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the man of faith." "All believers dwell in the same tent (Isaiah 54:1-3). When the old dispensation ended it was not necessary to pitch a new tent; the old one was simply enlarged. All of God's children are represented by the same olive tree. The old tree did not have to be uprooted; new branches were grafted in among the old (Romans 11:17)" (Hendriksen, p. 125).

3. The Law Can Bring Only a Curse - 10-12.

"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" (verse 10). The word "curse" here refers to an imprecation or a prayer that the victim of the curse may be separated from someone (cast out). With reference to God, the curse is against a transgressor. The passage in Deuteronomy 27:26 reads, "Cursed be he who confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." This verse expresses negatively what the preceding verses treated positively. Those, if there are any, who depend upon obedience to -the demands of the law as a ground for salvation, are under a curse.

Yeager states that, "There are three unqualified quantitative statements in the passage. The subject is everyone who is not obeying the law. The legalist must obey all of the law all of the time. This constant obedience by everyone must be achieved in all spheres of the law. Everyone in every part of the law at every moment. Thus one transgression is as bad as a million. Perfection is perfection. It can be nothing less" (Vol. XIV, p. 43).

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for. The just shall live by faith" (verse II). The law cannot subdue man's sinful tendencies; only the blood of Christ and man's obedience to Christ can do so. Faith in Christ gives the victory. Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4, and the Judaizers should have read and observed the great prophet Habakkuk's writings. All sinners will be punished, ..but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Of course the prophet was not setting this faith in contrast to the works of the law, but over against the arrogance and self-confidence of the wicked. In the context, the Chaldeans and all would be punished under God's mighty

hand, but He would preserve the righteous because of their faith. The faith intended in Habakkuk 2 and Galatians 3, however, is that faith resting in God without regard to human care and effort.

"And the law is not of faith, but, the man that doeth them shall live in them" (verse 12). God has always urged people to abide by His laws, not for salvation, but to merit the mercy of God. Law, however, is the very opposite of faith. Leaning on the law means leaning on self; exercising faith means leaning on Jesus (Titus 3:4,5). "Those who expect to be justified by observing all the statutes and ordinances of the law should remember that, "he who does them shall live by them" (Hendriksen, p. 129). In this verse Paul quotes from Leviticus 18:5. Every system of 'natural religion' depends upon 'doing,' and, as far as this aspect is concerned. Mosaic Judaism had become a thoroughly 'natural' system, whatever the original aim and object.

The Law and the Promise Galatians 3: 13-18

The writer has in previous verses taken up the case of Abraham as he illustrates the necessity of faith. Now Paul proceeds to state the Abrahamic covenant as one of promise. The Mosaic covenant which was given 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant could not disannul the previous covenant. The Mosaic Covenant has a supplementary purpose? he shows how the later covenant would drive the souls who have been made hopeless by the Law into the arms of the "faithful Promiser."
1. Christ Jesus Became a Curse For Us - 13,14.

"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; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The Lord Jesus Christ purchased our salvation; He has made us free from the curse of the law; thus paying the ransom. He became a curse for us, taking our place, bearing our sin. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). "For (God) hath made (Jesus Christ), who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:22,23 which reads, "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him that day for he who is hanged is accursed by God, that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." Hanging on a tree was a custom by which a wrong-doer was executed, then his dead body was nailed to a post or tree. If the hanging of a DEAD body was a curse, how much more would not a slow, painful and shameful death by crucifixion of a LIVING person be a curse (Matthew 27:46), especially when that dying one was experiencing anguish beyond the power of description.

Death by hanging was the outward sign in Israel of a man who was thus cursed. Christ bore the same shame as a hanged DEAD person and was then called "God's cursed." The curse of the law brings death; the soul that sinneth it shall die.

But Christ died in our stead to redeem us from the curse of the law. Christ intervened in our behalf. The use of the word "redeem" means to buy something out of (or away from) the market. It means to redeem with the result that the purchased item will never again be placed on sale, in jeopardy to the market. "A wrist watch purchased in the market place can, if poverty demands, be pawned for money and thus placed back under the bondage of price. Salvation which is purchased cannot be pawned. It has been bought 'out of the market'" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 47).

Verse 14 indicates that the blessing of salvation came to Gentiles and Jews alike through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham exercised faith just like the New Testament saints did and like all saints down through the ages since New Testament days. In the Messiah, countless multitudes of people have been blessed; the Jew first, then men of every race and nation including Gentiles. God determined to bless Abraham, and because of him the elect of all nations, tribes, races and tongues were destined to be blessed (Revelation 5:9).

2. Covenants Once Made Are Binding - 15,16.

"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man annulleth or addeth to it" (verse 15). It is interesting to note here that the writer calls the Galatians, "brethren." He may scold them like a parent rebuking a son, but Paul still loves them and calls them his brethren. "After the manner of men" means that Paul is borrowing a figure from human relationships. In those relationships a settlement agreed upon, a covenant made or a testament put in force cannot be modified - the same principle holds true for what has been guaranteed to man by God. (Ridderbos) Paul is reasoning from human life; man-made covenants are binding

once they are made and notarized. A last will and testament, legally ratified cannot be annuled or nullified.

Furthermore, God had reaffirmed His covenant with Isaac and Jacob. "The inviolability and immutability of God's promise will become all the more evident when it is understood that it is a promise that concerns not physical Israel but Christ together with those who are in Him, for all the promises of God find their 'Yes' in Him" (Hendriksen, p. 134). "For all the promises of God in (Christ) are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (II Corinthians 1:20). God's promise to Abraham is superior to the law because it was earlier. Also, a death has occurred, not even a codicil can be added to the will. The covenant cannot be set aside at law - least of all, by the Torah given to Moses centuries later.

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not. And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ" (verse 16). The great blessing that is forthcoming from God is concentrated in one person, namely Christ. In Him alone all mankind will be blessed. Through the physical seed of Abraham his people inherited Canaan land, but through the spiritual seed (singular) of Abraham people inherited eternal life and inheritance in heaven, which is the "better country" referred to in Hebrews 11:16. The "many" are blessed in the "One."

Through Isaac, the promised child, the real Messiah is descended; it is through the promised Messiah Whom God will bless all the nations. Was Abraham aware of the prophecy concerning the conflict between the seed of man and the seed of the serpent? Most probably! But most important the Holy Spirit Who inspired Galatians also knew Genesis as well. So Christ, the Divine Notary, ratified the covenant between God and Abraham when He died, and God fulfilled the covenant when He raised Jesus up from the dead.

3. The Mosaic Covenant Added Nothing To the Abrahamic Covenant - 17,18.

"And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot annul, that it should make the promise of no effect" (verse 17). "A legal contract drawn properly by two men and notarized by a third cannot be broken in a human court. How much less shall God enter into contract relations with Abraham on the basis of an unconditional promise, taking care to have the contract notarized by His Son, Who was to be Abraham's child (Matthew 1:1) and then, 430 years later, change His mind and change the rules, thus withdrawing one contract and substituting a totally different contract based on a totally opposite principle" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, pp. 53,54).

So the conclusion is clear, if man-made covenants cannot be changed, certainly a covenant (testament) ratified by the unchangeable God, Whose word never fails cannot be annulled by a law.

Where did the expression "four hundred and thirty years" come from? Hendriksen quotes C.R. Erdman, who wrote, "it may not be unreasonable to suppose that it was from such a time, at which the promise was confirmed (to Jacob) that Paul is measuring the interval which extends to the giving of the law at Sinai" (p. 139).

"For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise" (verse 18). Salvation, then, is not a result of the law or law observance. Nor can the law be combined with grace, that is - law and promise or merit and grace to bring about the eternal bliss for God's children. The ultimate conclusion is that men are saved by grace through faith in God's promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is wholly a gift from God, not bought with money, nor earned by the sweat of human toil, nor won by conquest (Hendriksen). Abraham had to do nothing but believe. God did it all; salvation's plan is God's plan from start to finish.

Why Was the Law Given?

Galatians 3:19-22

If the law was not given in order to save its recipients, just why was it given? The Apostle Paul anticipated the question from the critics, and he proceeds to answer their question in this passage. The object of the law was to prepare men for the reception of the gospel by awakening them to a consciousness of their sins and convincing them of their need of the deliverance from guilt and condemnation, which the redemption of Christ affords.

1. The Law Revealed Transgressions - 19,20.

"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" (verse 19). The law was given to awaken in man a sense of guilt; it made man aware that he could not live good enough to be saved. His good intentions fell far short of God's standard of perfection. Although it "pointed out" sin, the law could never remove the sin. It was somewhat like a mirror. Man can look into a mirror and see his disheveled hair, but the mirror cannot comb his hair.

The law was given to call forth the transgressions and make them manifest; by means of the law sin should be acknowledged as transgression in its proper and terrible character. The law makes guilt and evil greater. "Moreover, the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). The moral principles of the Ten

Commandments have always been in force. It was a sin for Cain to rise up against his brother, Abel, and kill him. It was a sin for Lot to enter into an incestuous relationship with his two daughters. These acts were committed before the law was given. Doubtless, Cain and Lot were aware of their sinful acts, but they probably did not know the exceeding sinfulness of their actions.

Man needed a rule, a guide, a barometer to know how God looked at sin. The law made man to view sinful acts as a holy God sees them. Before the law was given, only man's conscience convicted him of his sinfulness. Before the law was given at Mount Sinai, man's inner moral impressions either excused or accused him. "For when the Gentiles, ..having not the law are a law unto themselves ...their conscience also bearing witness, and their thought the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:14,15).

The law was added "till the seed should come." The implication here is that after our Lord, the Child of promise to Abraham, was born, the law was no longer a part of the picture, having fulfilled its purpose. A few verses later Paul states, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4). The coming of Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham, made the law PASSE (outmoded).

The law was ordained by angels; that is, God used angels as His mediators giving the Law to Moses who was another mediator. "Note that four persons or groups of persons were involved in the administration of the law. (1) God gave the law to (2) angels, who in turn gave it to (3) Moses, who gave it to (4) the nation Israel encamped in the foothills of Sinai, engaged in a series of drunken transgressions of every part of it" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 57).

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (verse 20). The law came through mediatorial channels; four parties were involved. To achieve its purpose, the law is dependent upon human appropriation and agreement. God is the Author of the law, but man is the subject of its fulfillment, in the giving of the promise to Abraham, however, no mediator intervened. God was at work alone; for He is not only the Author of the promise. He fulfills it also. Although Moses was God's mediator of the law, God gave the promise of grace without a mediator and made the fulfillment of His promise independent of human works. Moses was the mediator only in the sense that he took the tablets of stone from the angels who had received them from God and carried them down the mountain to give to the

people. Moses, therefore, was only an errand boy; a messenger; a delivery boy. God is the One. The Galatians were not dealing with Moses; they were dealing with God. Christ is God as well as man and thus, in Christ, God is still dealing directly with man.

2. The Law Was Not Intended To Give Life - 21,22.

"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 should have been by the law' (verse 21). Yeager translates this verse, "Is the law then opposed to the promises of God? Heaven forbid!" (Vol. XIV, p. 59). Both the promises of God and the law of God have their sources in God and could not, therefore, in the nature of the case, be incompatible. Both came from God, but for different purposes. One day God will bring the redeemed to heaven where His moral law will utterly prevail.

The law and the transgression of the law brought death; never could it bring life to its observers. If it could impart life then righteousness would have come by the law. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:2-4). The law aims at nothing more than what the promise grants. It cannot get man to fulfill itself. The law is not a quickening power, as is the promise (Romans 9:9).

Hovey says of the law, "(It) does not supercede the promise and render its fulfillment useless, for it cannot give spiritual life, justification and peace with God; furthermore, it prepares men for the grace promised through Christ by awakening in their hearts a sense of sin, and leading them to the Savior" (p. 48).

"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (verse 22). Paul writes in Romans, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23). God's Word identifies all under condemnation because all are transgressors. The law has never and can never set man free.

By the law and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, man is made conscious of sin. Man then yearns for a Divine Deliverer, and God responded by sending His Son. Old Testament saints were saved by looking forward to Christ's first coming; we look back to the historical fact of His coming as a sacrifice for sin. (Hendiksen)

The word translated "concluded" is an interesting word. The same word is used in verse 23 and translated "shut up." As fish are encircled and enclosed in a net (Luke 5:6), so the whole human race is surrounded by the declaration of our sinfulness by the scripture. Under the law the human race had no basis for salvation except the faith that was later to be revealed. The Purpose of the Law

Galatians 3: 23-29

In these verses the Apostle Paul explains fully the purpose of the law. Using language which was very common in his day, he likens the law to a schoolmaster. Although our culture is unacquainted with slavery and the customs of Paul's day, we owe a debt of gratitude for those who have diligently researched the customs.

1. The Law - Our Schoolmaster 23-25

"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed" (verse 23). Although Paul uses the first person plural here referring specifically to the Jews, he probably included the Gentiles who, though not under the Mosaic law, had a conscience to prod them to further conviction of sin (Romans 2:14-16). Until the coming of faith, sinners, both Jew and Gentile, were always "shut up" and surrounded (corralled, kept in custody). The law pointed out that man was a sinner. As he looked into the law, he was reminded daily that he was a sinner.

Like fish enclosed or encircled in a net (Luke 5:6), and like Paul kept by a garrison of soldiers (II Corinthians 11:32), man was under arrest, and there was no escape from the deadly confinement of the law, until the grace of God was manifested. Unless man was convinced that the escape routes were closed, he would never be made aware of his sinful condition and there was no way of escape unless God intervened. He could only fall into the arms of God and plead for mercy.

"Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (verse 24). In this verse Paul uses a human analogy to illustrate what the law could do.

What was a schoolmaster? Some versions translate the word PAIDAGOGOS - a strict tutor (Phillips), custodian (RSV), or guardian (Jerusalem Bible). Hendriksen says, "in the figure here used the 'pedagogue' is the man - generally a slave - in whose custody the slaveowner's boys were placed, in order that this trusted servant might conduct them to and from school, and might, in fact, watch over their conduct throughout the day. He was, accordingly, an escort or attendant, and also at the same time a disciplinarian" (p. 1481).

There is, however, another interpretation. "(The Roman pedagogue) was given familial control over the son and heir during the period from birth to official manhood (under Roman law, 14 years). It was the duty of the pedagogue to educate the boy and prepare him for the responsibilities of manhood. At the end of the tutorial period, when the boy became a man and, legally, a son and heir of the father, the pedagogue was declared to have performed his proper function and dismissed (as far as the child was concerned). This arrangement was for a purpose - that the biological (TEKNON) born one might be educated to the point where he could assume the responsibilities of (HUOIS)sonship" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 63).

"But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (verse 25). Whether the first or second interpretation is accepted, the principle is the same. The purpose of the pedagogue was to control the child until he was grown to majority, and then he was no longer needed. So the law, whenever it had accomplished its work of pointing out sin, and the individual saw his need of the grace of God and was willing to cast himself upon the mercies of God, then the law had accomplished what God intended. Faith in Christ had given him full sonship in God, and the restraints of the past are gone. (Cole) The slavery days are over.
2. Grace Makes Us Children of God - 26-29.

"For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (verse 26). A new-found freedom now exists because of faith and trust in God's Messiah. Everyone (Jew and Gentile) are no longer immature children but "in Christ" mature "sons of God," with all the rights and privileges of a "son."

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (verse 27). What is meant by "baptized into Christ?" Is Paul referring to "water" baptism or "Holy Spirit baptism?" If he means Holy Spirit baptism, we agree that this baptism is essential to salvation as the divine side of regeneration. If Paul means water baptism then "so-be-it." Water baptism is not a requirement for salvation; however, baptism is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

"When the Roman boy became a legal son and heir, at age 14, at which time he escaped the bondage of the pedagogue and assumed the role of a man, a ceremony was held at which he donned the TOGA VIRILIS - 'the toga of manhood'" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 66). Baptism is also a picture of laying aside garments of sin and putting on Christ and His robe of righteousness. The Christian is buried with Christ and arises to walk in "newness of life." The new-born Christian puts on Christ as a badge or uniform of service like that of a soldier. His uniform does not make him a soldier. His oath did that. He wears the uniform because he is soldier.

"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" (verse 28). In Christ Jesus there is no distinction so far as acceptance with God the Father. All are recognized as equals. Although there may be diversities of skill, knowledge and abilities, there is unity in Christ Jesus. "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13).

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (verse 29). All the redeemed are spiritual children of Abraham the blessed. So the Galatians truly did belong to Christ. They were Abraham's children and his heirs, since the promise of the inheritance was to Abraham and to his seed (Genesis 12:3).

No Longer Minors and Bondservants But Sons and Heirs
Galatians 4: 1-7

The writer has just finished his instructions concerning the fact that those who follow father Abraham in the faith are considered Abraham's children and the children of God. Furthermore, we are heirs of God by faith. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (3:29).

The law was given to bring man to see the need of God's grace. Paul writes that those under the law are like minors, but after the coming of the Messiah then the covenant of grace takes over. Hovey quotes Dr. Hackett, "Those who were children in a state of minority and pupilage, are advanced to the dignity of sons and heirs of God, and receive the seal of their adoption as such in the presence of the Spirit of God in their hearts" (p. 51).

The writer in the Pulpit Commentary explains the covenants of law and grace this way. The apostle now passes to a new phase of argument. Similarities of a testament, a prison, a schoolmaster are used to point out the condition of

believers under the law. Now he uses the similitude of an heir before he reaches majority. Before Christ's coming the culture was in an infantile stage, at the advent of Christ the fulness of time had come and the culture had reached MAJORITY (Vol. XX, p. 210).

1. Under Tutors and Governors - 1,2.

"Now I say -that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." There seems to be various opinions as to when a child reached majority. Nevertheless, a child differed in no way from a servant; that is, he was nothing better than a bondservant. He was an heir, but he did not have the rights of an heir until reaching a certain age. He had no rights to speak for himself in business affairs. His legal status was substantially that of a slave. He was subject to those who are placed over him by his father.

Four nouns in verse one claim our attention - heir, child, servant and lord. The heir is one who inherits property or assets from his father (one to whom possessions are dealt out). Usually the father's will or testament was read after his death, but this is not always true as in the case of the prodigal son. The child (babe) is usually a descendant under the age of fourteen or twenty-one depending upon which current law you chose (Roman or Jewish). The servant (bond-slave) was a person owned by a master; a chattel. Slavery was a common custom in New Testament times; probably as many as fifty percent of the human population were slaves. The lord (owner, master) was the owner of property and possessions.

The child was under tutors (overseers) or governors (stewards, house-managers). These tutors and governors were temporarily appointed for education and control over the child. This period, however, is not without end; it had been set by the father or by law.

7. r-nr] S~nl- His Son - 3-5.

"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of -the world. But, when the fullness of the time was come God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Now the writer draws a parallel. Before Christ's death all were under bondage (imprisoned) by the rudiments of this world. We were under the ABC's of the world. "Elements" or rudiments have to do with the crude elementary ideas (principles) of religion which were embodied in ritual acts testifying of sin, but bringing no peace to the conscience.

The apostle is speaking here of the Old Testament period when the Mosaic law was in effect. Verse four refers to "the fullness of time;" that is, at God's appointed time He "sent forth his Son." As drop after drop of water will make a bucket full, so day after day of time brought its "fullness" also. Paul is assumed to have had in mind at least the thought of heaven as the sphere of existence from which the Son and the Spirit were sent. This is the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2).

He "was made of a woman, made under the law." The fact that He was "made" implies a previous state of existence which "born" does not; however, Jesus was born on time - God's time. God did not plan the incarnation of the Savior in the garden of Eden, nor at the foot of Sinai. He foresaw

before the foundation of the world that sinful man would need a Savior. To be man's savior, Jesus must be totally human though not sinfully human. He was not depraved as was the human race. Depravity is not a normal characteristic of humanity; it is an abnormality. Our Lord was under obligation to keep the law (Matthew 5:17). The law which He came to fulfill was His law. Thus He found no difficulty in fulfilling it, for though He was man He was also God (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 74).

Jesus was able to "redeem" sinful man because He was the " (Passover) Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Christ can redeem or "buy us back" out of the slavery of sin and the law and make us children of God, that which was lost through our parent's sin in the garden of Eden. Our Lord's redemption made us fit subjects for adoption into God's family. To be "adopted" denotes the divine act of assigning to believers in Christ the position and privileges of sonship. The word "adoption" comes from two words means "to place" and "a son;" thus, God has placed us as a son; putting us into God's family. "The Christian is the adopted son of God. He is not merely a proselyte brought from another nation to share the privileges of the Jewish people; he is made a member of the family of God" (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, p. 53).

3. Sonship Through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - 6,7.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." God sent the Holy Spirit into each heart imparting that vivid consciousness of sonship which the son enjoys. "The Spirit himself beareth

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). The son cries out, "Father, Father." This is not a faint whisper but a crying out aloud. "Abba" is the honorific form of the Chaldaic noun "Father." "Abba, Father" is the outcry of joyful recognition, sweet response, appropriating love, overwhelming gratitude and filial trust. Hovey states that "union with Christ, sonship to God, and inworking of the Holy Spirit are inseparable blessings, and the apostle points out these logical order and relations" (p. 53). With these blessings also comes heirship. Each of God's children is "an heir of God through Christ." To be an "heir" means to possess every blessing in the theocratic kingdom to which its members are entitled. We are no longer a "bond-servant". We are accepted, beloved, cherished, honored with the Father's confidence.

Did the Galatians Want to Go Back Under the Law? Galatians 4:8-11

The writer likens -the law and legalism to an elementary religion; whereas, Christianity is an advanced religion. To be under the law, and remain under it is to observe the ABC's of religion. The Christian dispensation is far superior to the Jewish dispensation and religion. In folly and ingratitude the Galatians wanted to turn back to the beggarly elements of the past.

1. Bondage or Freedom? - 8.

"Nevertheless then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods." Before their conversion to Christianity and in their ignorance the Galatians served and worshipped idol gods which were in essence no gods at all. They were in bondage to or did bond-service to idols. After all, nearly all the Galatians were saved out of idolatry. Now Paul condemns them for wanting to go from bondage to freedom and back to bondage again. In his message on Mars' Hill, Paul refers to this period of time. He passed by the statues of various gods and goddesses and remarked, "I found an altar with this inscription TO THE UNKNOWN GOD". Least the idolaters at Athens leave out an important god, they made such an idol. "And the times of this ignorance God overlooked (winked at), but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

2. From Freedom and Back to Bondage - 9.

"But now, after ye have known God, or rather are known by God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, unto which ye desire again to be in bondage?" At least God knew the Galatians, and if they had truly placed their trust in Jesus Christ they knew God as their heavenly Father. Paul refers to the "weak and beggarly elements." They are "weak" or "feeble" because they had no power to deliver men from condemnation, and they were "beggarly" or "wretched" because they utterly failed to enrich the soul with any real good (Hovey).

Previously the Galatians did not know God (verse 8) 7 now they do know Him (verse 9). "The Galatians by nature were awild, sensational, tempestuous and emotional people. The highly intellectual, spiritual concepts of faith and grace in an unseen (though not unfelt) God would appeal to them only when they were under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit and in the presence of a personality like Paul. Unregenerate man is an idol worshipper (Romans 1:21-23) and a materialist, and he can easily forget the pure spiritual worship of God (John 4:24)" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 79,80).

Legalists and do-gooders lead people to think they must work and work in order to be saved or in order to stay saved. "Luther, commenting on this verse and applying the lesson to his own day, tells us that he had known monks who zealously labored to please God for salvation, but the more they labored the more impatient, miserable, uncertain and fearful they became. And he adds, "people who prefer the laws to the gospel are like Aesop's dog who let go of the meat to snatch at the shadow in the water" (Hendriksen, p. 65).

3. How Much Legalism (Work) is Enough? - 10.

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."

This verse expresses negatively what preceding verses treat positively. The Galatians wanted to strictly observe every Sabbath law with its Sabbatical (7th) and Jubilee (50th) year observations. They desired to observe new moons (the first day of every month), festivals and holy days (years). To the Colossians Paul wrote, "Let no man, therefore judge you in food or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or of the new moon, or of a sabbath day, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (2:16,17)." The average Jew believed whole-heartedly that no son of Abraham who was circumcised would go to Gehenna. Jesus was all times aware of the Jew's strict adherence to the law. "And the scribes

and Pharisees watched (Jesus), whether he would heal on the sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against him" (Luke 6:7).

4. Had the Galatians Believed in Vain? - II.

"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." The apostle was fearful that his work with the Galatians had been to no purpose. Paul wrote (3:4), "Have ye suffered so many things in Vain? -- if it be yet in vain." He had labored or "foiled" implying hard work leading to real weariness; it explains the real trials of the Christian ministry. Had Paul wasted his time and his efforts to no avail or with few results of success? The Galatians were acting "irrational"; and truly "foolish" (3:1). Paul's labor with the Galatians had left him tired, weary and exhausted on various occasions.

A Drastic Change in the Galatians Galatians 4: 12-20

In the passage before us Paul stresses his appeal to the Galatians more emphatically. He reminds them of the tender relations between them during an earlier visit. He stood before them in affliction and they were sympathetic. He appeals to them for this same feeling now.

1. The Galatians Had Been Sympathetic - 12-14.

"Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are; ye have not injured me at all" (verse 12). In this verse Paul's plea is preliminary to what follows in verses 13 and 14. He is about to plead that the Galatians take the same view of him now that they did when he had visited them earlier. "Be as I," rejoicing in Christ Jesus as our sole and all-sufficing Righteousness before God as Paul did on his first visit with them. "I am as ye are" - Paul was once a zealous worker - keeping the law thereby hoping to attain legal ceremonial righteousness. He here implies that he "was once under the Jewish law and was trusting in obedience to it for justification before God, as the Galatians now proposed to do.

Paul was not offended; he had no reason to complain of any wrong done to him personally. He was not asking for their sympathy, just for a fellow-feeling that he once observed in them. Paul was asking them to put themselves in his place, as he once did for them. He asked them to be as frank and loving with him as he had always been to them.

"Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first" (verse 13). When Paul first visited in Galatia, he was afflicted with some bodily ailment. Paul calls it "an infirmity;" it was a weakness or debility. Luke does not refer to this infirmity in Acts 16; he only says that they passed through Galatian country, and he reveals none of the circumstances. Paul does say to the Galatians that he understood that they knew of his weakness because they remembered. Yeager translates this passage, "And you are aware that I preached to you at first because I was weak in the flesh" (Vol. XIV, p. 83). This bodily illness, whatever it may have been, was painful and humiliating. Doubtless this is referred to in II Corinthians 12:7,8 that he calls "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

"And my trial, which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (verse 14). Possibly this affliction was an eye infection which must have rendered the patient unattractive to his audience. Paul states that the Galatians did not despise (loathe or spurn) him; rather they received him as a divine messenger, which was proper, since he carried God's message to them as though Christ Jesus Himself had visited them. Would to God that all would receive the gospel messenger as a messenger from God!

2. Where Is The Blessing? - 15-18.

"Where is, then the blessedness ye spoke of? For I bear you witness that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (verse 15). The word MAKARISMOS translated blessedness here has had a variety of translations - satisfaction, felicitation, happy spirit, happy, happening, satisfaction, enthusiasm and others. The word is also found in Romans 4:6,9 which is a reference to Psalm 32:1,2 and translated "blessed," but what does "blessedness" mean? Hendriksen rather freely translates this verse, "You thought so highly of me at one time, and felt So HAPPY (emphasis mine) in my presence, that, had it been possible, you would have given me the most precious member of your body" (p. 173).

Ordinarily the "eye" is a more precious member if not the most precious member of the human body. This may have led some interpreters to conclude that Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was eye trouble. Paul may have intended this to be a rhetorical question, "Why has your attitude toward me changed?"

"Am I, -therefore, become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (verse 16). This verse expresses the apostle's continuous declaration of the gospel and his never flinching insistence upon the mortal danger of defecting from it. On his missionary journey to Galatia Paul told them

the truth, and despite his unattractive appearance, they received him as a god and would have even given their own eyes to him. Now they are looking upon him as a false teacher, and they are offended at his reprimand.

"They zealously seek you, but not for good; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might seek them" (verse 17). The false teachers among the Galatians were working hard to influence them, but their motives were not honorable and even ulterior. They did not have the Galatians best interests at heart. The word "exclude" here means to shut out, to rule out or as the NEB translates it "to bar the door." The law deliberately "herded men together" as sinners so that they might find salvation; these Judaizers are 'bolting men outside' lest they should enjoy salvation" (Cole, p. 126).

"But it is good to be zealously sought always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you" (verse 18). To be influenced in the right direction is a good thing; the Judaizer's motives were improper and selfish. Paul could hope that he could influence the Galatians to reject legalism and to return to the truth of the gospel of Christ. Instead of returning to Galatia himself, he is hoping this epistle will influence them to turn from the legalists. The apostle remembers the "simple-hearted joy and frank sympathy with each other's happiness of those days comes back to the apostle's mind with fresh force, after his brief mention and rebuke of the false-hearted congratulations and compliments by which they were now in danger of being ensnared" (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, p. 197).

3. Paul Longs to See Their Maturity - 19,20.

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (verse 19). Paul is like a "birth-mother" agonizing "until you take the shape of Christ." The Galatians were so immature that the apostle is travailing of them afresh, as if not yet born at all. To see church members grow in grace and mature into full-grown Christians is the heaviest burden a pastor can bear. Paul agonized, watching for signs of Christian growth of his flock. For them to go astray in their thinking and practice is as great as when they were lost.

"I desire to be present with you now, and to change my tone; for I stand in doubt of you" (verse 20). Paul desired to visit them so that he might lovingly plead with them in a pastoral tone of voice. He could put his heart into his voice; his pen stood between them (Robertson). He had doubts that his letter could solve the problem of their theological confusion.

An Allegory of Two Systems - Law and Grace
Galatians 4:21-5:1

Since the writer has no prospect of visiting Galatia to speak to the members of the churches, he included in his epistle an allegory hoping they will be impressed to give up their ideas of going back under the law. The Christians had forsaken the law and were saved by grace; now the false teachers had come in and beguiled them. They had desired to go back under the bondage of the law. Paul attempts in these verses to show the Galatians that their standing in Christ is far better than desiring to go back under the law.

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? (verse 21). The Galatians had been fascinated by rabbinic exegesis of the law. Now the apostle will give them an argument from the Old Testament Dispensation that, on their own terms, they must accept; thus, the allegory (Cole, p. 128). The Judaizers were not the only ones who could appeal to the Old Testament.

1. The Allegory - 22-26.

"For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman" (verse 22). Paul borrows a word from the Septuagint - Hagar was the personal property of Abraham and Sarah; she was a MAID-SERVANT. When it seemed hopeless that Sarah could bare a child, she developed a scheme whereby Abraham would father a child by Hagar. This child, they hoped, would be the heir and the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.

"But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise; which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, bearing children for bondage, who is Hagar" (verses 23,24). The child of Hagar, Ishmael, was conceived and born naturally, "after the flesh." Some fourteen years later Sarah miraculously conceived and bore Isaac. He was the "promised" child. Hagar and Ishmael represent the law and its slavery, and Sarah and Isaac, the miracle baby, represent grace, faith and its freedom. Ishmael was born in the common course of nature; Isaac was born after the Spirit, connected with the invisible spiritual world "through the promise. "

The two woman and the two sons are used as an allegory? that is, they represent the two covenants of law and grace. Abrains says, "An allegory undertakes to make a doctrine or thesis interesting and persuasive by converting it into a narrative in which the agents, and sometimes the setting as well, represent general concepts, moral qualities, or other abstractions" (p. 2).

"For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (verses 25,26). The words "answereth to" means in the same class, category or rank. Two contrasted ideas are presented here: Hagar - the slave mother, Sarah - the freewoman; Ishmael - the slave child, Isaac and the believers - the free children; covenant from Sinai and the covenant of promise; Jerusalem that now is and Jerusalem that is above.

The Jerusalem that is above, is where Christ is, and there is the citizenship of believers (Philippians 3:20). The FREE Jerusalem is the spiritual gathering place of all the saved (Hebrews 12:22). "It is in the heavenly Jerusalem that the grace covenant will see its greatest culmination. When he said that the heavenly Jerusalem is 'our mother' he meant by 'our' the mother of the elect, who are saved by grace through faith. ..Paul insisted that he and the Galatians who had been saved under his ministry were on the heavenly Jerusalem-Sarah-Isaac side of the allegory" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 97).

2. The Allegory Applied - 4:27-31.

"For it is written. Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she who hath an husband" (verse 27). Paul quotes from Isaiah 54:1. Although Isaiah was writing of deliverance from a foreign yoke; according to prophecy Zion would be restored and greatly blessed after the captivity. Furthermore, Isaiah's prophecy follows immediately upon the description of Christ's atoning death at Calvary (Isaiah 53:1-12). His death resulted in the covenant of grace which includes all who believe. Sarah was barren and sterile, but by the miraculous power of God, she became the mother of Isaac and all those that believe, the elect of God in every century.

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh

persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (verses 28,29). "As Isaac" means after the manner of Isaac. Isaac, conceived by faith and a child of promise, and we who are saved by grace through faith are in the same category. Both Isaac and the children of God by faith are given the grace of God through His miraculous life-giving power. We are all recipients of God's grace through unconditional promise. So Yeager writes, "The elements in the allegory are now all in place. The two covenants are works and grace; law and faith; Sinai and Calvary; Abraham and Hagar or Abraham and Sarah; Ishmael and Isaac" (Vol. XIV, p. 100).

Just as Isaac was mocked and persecuted by Ishmael so

are the children of God mocked, persecuted and harassed by the children of Satan. Robertson says that there is a Jewish tradition which represents Ishmael as shooting arrows at Isaac. Can you picture a nineteen year old boy pursuing a five year old brother with murder in his heart (Genesis 21:9)? Remember Cain and Abel? Furthermore, Ishmael did not leave Isaac in peace, he must have begrudged him his priorities and his privileges. So it is today, those who are fleshly lay snares for those who are spiritual.

"Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (verses 30,31). The writer again quotes from the Old Testament (Genesis 21:10). There was no room under the same roof (tent) for both Ishmael and Isaac; thus, there is no compatibility between the law and grace. The illegal heir must be banished and the legal heir must prevail. The law must give place to the gospel of grace. "As Ishmael was cast out that Isaac might live in peace, so the principle of legalistic self-righteousness must be rejected to enjoy the freedom that the Christian has in Christ" (Henderson, p. 44).

"Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (5:1). Who, in his right mind, after experiencing true freedom would want to go back under slavery? Now we do not wonder that Paul called the Galatians "foolish." Surely Christ would not have opened for us the gate of our prison (under the law) at such cost (His blood at Calvary) merely to transfer us to another prison (return to the law). Jesus said, "If -the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). How highly did the Apostle Paul also prize the freedom of Christian life and hope!!

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power.
Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.

Christian Freedom
Galatians 5:1-7

in verse 1 the writer emphasizes the importance of steadfastly holding to a whole-hearted assurance that in

Christ Jesus our freedom is complete. Contained therein is the command to "stop being held in" by a yoke of bondage. If Christ Jesus fulfilled the ceremonies required under the law, why should the Galatians go back to the bondage of observances under the law? Freedom is invisible; we are either free or enslaved. It is either Ishmael and his bondage or Isaac and his freedom.

The word "entangled" means to be ensnared like a fish in a net. In Christ there is freedom. What does Paul mean when he used the word "free?" Hendriksen says that it means "deliverance or rescue from the guilt of sin (Romans 6:18); from an accusing conscience (Hebrews 10:22); from the tyranny of Satan (II Timothy 2:26; Hebrews 2:14); and from the law; that is, the curse of the law" (pp. 191,192).

1. Maintain Your Liberty in Christ - 2-4.

"Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (verse 2). If the Galatians had themselves circumcised with the view of thereby obtaining righteousness before God, they forfeit all hope of receiving benefit from Christ. It is by relying upon Christ's work on the cross that salvation is secured; if one distrusts Christ completely his salvation is brought into peril. If one disbelieves that Christ's sacrifice is insufficient then his salvation is forfeited. Anyone who resorts to the law was never saved in the first place. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Romans 10:4).

"For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (verse 3). Paul "testifies" or affirms if one desires to put himself back afresh under this pedagogue (the law) then all the bidding of the law he must do. He who does so enrolls himself with those who share their obligations. He must put himself under all ordinances and ceremonies. The one who confesses his obligation to obey one part of the law admits his obligation to obey every part of it. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"(James 2:10). The law is complete (whole), like a chain; when one link is broken or severed the whole chain is worthless.

Of course, there is a great deal of distinction between the circumcision of Judaism and the circumcision as commonly practiced in our day. Today, it is a mere matter of physical hygiene. Then it was a matter of religious ritual which many thought of a sacrament helping one to be saved, or as in the case of Galatians, keep them saved. There is a world of difference then and now (Henderson).

"Christ is become of no effect, unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (verse 4). If the Galatians continue in the way they are

headed and determine to justify themselves by the law, they have rejected the Christian theology and grace. They are certainly fallen out of the STATE of grace; literally, "they have fallen out of grace." They have stopped depending on the grace of God and have started depending on their own observances and their own regulations. They are not depending on inward strength to do the will of God, but are depending on outward compliance to rules and regulations (Cole, p.140).

When Paul states that "Christ is of no effect," he means the relationship with Christ is completely severed (NEB). The Galatians have separated or estranged themselves from Christ. The word is from EKPIPTO, meaning to "have been driven out of one's course" as of sailors who have been driven out of their normal (shipping) lane. (See also Acts 27:17,29 for use of the same word). De Haan says of the Galatians, "You who think you can be saved or kept by the law - you have been driven out of course, and missed the grace of God" (pp. 155,156). Yeager translates this phrase, "You have fallen out of favor" (Vol. XIV, p. 108).

2. Neither Circumcision or Uncircumcision Availeth Anything - 5,6.

"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (verse 5). By the enabling power of the Holy Spirit men are saved, and we anticipate (eagerly wait for) the culmination of our salvation which comes by faith. It is only through faith in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ applied by the Holy Spirit that we can ever expect to see glorification. It is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that the saved have faith, hope and imputed righteousness; not a lick of work, not a drop of water, not a moment of pretense and not an ounce of human merit is involved.

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (verse 6). The believer is "in Jesus Christ" like the Vine and branches of John 15:1-4. "That spiritual union which is maintained and operative through the action of the soul habitually cleaving to and depending upon Him and constantly receiving from Him responsive gifts of spiritual vitality and power" is what it means to be in Christ. Cole states, "What matters is the inward reality; the outward action does not count" (p. 113). He further illustrates this truth a good deal like being married. Whether there is a wedding ring or not does not make any difference. A wedding ring does not add nor take away. What really counts is the love and affection that is between the husband and the wife. So the union with Christ is much more important to the Christian than circumcision of the flesh.

True union with Christ is the only condition of acceptance with God. "The Gentile is not commended to God because he is uncircumcised any more than the Jew because he is. Neither the one nor the other avails to save. On the contrary it is something that neither of them has of himself. The kind of faith that is motivated by love creates in the life of the believer the fruits of the Holy Spirit (verses 22,23) which automatically fulfill the ethical demand of the law. In verse 5 faith and hope are associated. In verse 6, faith and love" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. III).

3. Why Stop Growing in Grace? - 7.

"Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" Paul uses one of his favorite figures drawn from the Isthmian Games or other public games common throughout the Roman Empire. "To run" applies to a course of service to God. Sometimes it compares the Christian's forward advance in self-improvement, as well as his continuing prosecution of work for Christ's cause. To be "hindered" is to be edged off the track or to have someone cut into one's path and block one's progress. The same Lord is used in Romans 15:22 where Paul is hindered from going to Rome and in I Thessalonians 2:18 where he is hindered from going to Thessalonica.

The Holy Spirit is Not the Author of Confusion Galatians 5:7-15

Unfortunately the last message was cut short. Although verse seven was included in the previous context, we will look at it again in this message. Using a figure of speech from the Isthmian Games or other public games common throughout the Roman Empire, Paul asked of the Galatians, "Who hindered you from obeying the truth?" In other words, "Who hindered you from completing your course in grace?" Or "who blocked your progress?" (verse 7). He answers their question for them in verse 8.

1. The Holy Spirit is Not Guilty - 8,9.

"This persuasion cometh not of him who called you" (verse 8). The things that hindered the young Galatian Christians did not come from the preaching that had won them to faith. Paul is not the guilty party, nor is the Holy Spirit Who wooed them through Paul's preaching and called them to salvation and to Christian growth. This "treacherous and deceptive persuasion;" that is, the mind to hearken to this doctrine, is not from God Who called you. It came from the Judaizers' persuasion. The Judaizers are guilty. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (verse 9).

Paul used the same expression in the form of a rhetorical question in I Corinthians 5:6, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" Here Paul is writing about the leaven of sexual immorality. In our lesson text, he is writing about the noxious leaven of another gospel wherein the Judaizers' attempt to lead the Galatians back under the law. They had already begun to observe days, new moons, feasts and ceremonies. Any good chef knows that just one rotten egg will spoil the batter of an otherwise potentially delicious cake. It does not take much poison to kill. A little pinch of yeast sets the whole lump of dough in fermentation.

2. Paul Expresses Some Optimism for the Galatians - 10-12.

"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" (verse 10). This optimism for correct Christian growth is not through their own power, however, but by the power of God. Ultimately Paul

feels that he can depend upon the Galatians much like he did the Philippians later. He said of them, "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (1:6).

Furthermore, Paul recognizes the fact that God will judge anyone who seeks to lead any member of His flock astray. Evidently Paul had the power to call down a curse upon the enemy; however, God's final judgment will be more severe.

"And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased" (verse 11). The Jews were Paul's persecutors because he preached against ceremonialism and legalism. The preaching of the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews (I Corinthians 1:23). Paul's theology was that only through Christ's death can the sinner be saved. Anyone in any age who preaches the Sacrifice on Calvary as the means of salvation will be persecuted. Furthermore, all who preach and teach will stand before the judgment bar of God and give an account of his stewardship, whether it is true or false. "I would they were even cut off who trouble you" (12).

The writer does not "pull his punches," with these who are enemies of the grace of God. He was not naive enough to believe that the Judaizers were actually going to carry circumcision to the extreme of emasculation. He writes in jest; these will not go as far as the cult of Cybele did in their worship in honor of strange gods. Yeager writes, "The passage reveals a bit of a sense of exaggerated humor. The Judaizers were always talking about genital surgery and urging it upon the Galatian men as the only means of

salvation. Paul wonders why they did not advocate more extensive surgery!" (Vol. XIV, p. 116)

3. Liberty Is Not License - 13-15.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (verse 13). Christians have been set free; liberty is in the plan of God for believers. This is a freedom from rules and regulations; however, it is not a license to do as one pleases. One is free from the law but not from the law of Christ. The word translated "occasion," here means to establish a bridgehead or a starting point for an expedition; a springboard. Christian liberty was not to be used as a way for Satan to get a greater hold on the believer. Of course, "flesh" here means the entire sinful nature of man. In contrast, liberty is to be used to serve one another as did Jesus when He washed the disciples' feet (John 13:4-16).

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself" (verse 14). Of course Paul elaborates on this principle in Romans 13:10 when he wrote, "Love worketh no ill to its neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." One might ask, "And who is my neighbor?" Surely the answer must be anyone with whom, in God's providence, we come into contact; anyone whom we can assist in any way, even though he hates us and in that sense is our 'enemy.'

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (verse 15). This is the pagan way of settling conflicts; the use of words to criticize others. The NEB suggests a 'cat-fight' - "But if you go on fighting other, tooth and nail, all you can expect is mutual destruction." Cole comments that Paul may have been thinking of some ancient story parallel to that of the two Kilkenny cats of Cromwellian time who fought so furiously that not a scrape of fur remained of either (p. 158). The Galatians might take to heart the admonition of the wise man, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Proverbs 18:19).

The Spirit vs. The Flesh
Galatians 5:16-21

"This I say then. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (verse 16). Paul would have the Galatians to know if they will walk according to the Spirit, they will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. The Christian is to let the prompting of the Spirit be his guide, and the grace of the Spirit his strength, in the course of

our daily life.

"Walk" is used over thirty times by Paul meaning to conduct one's daily life or to have a life governed by the Holy Spirit of God (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. V, p. 941). "To fulfill" means to accomplish, to gratify or to bring to fulfillment.

1. A Ri-U-pr- Conflict - 17.

"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." The Holy Spirit and the flesh are antagonists. In Romans 7:15,16 Paul wrote of the battle between the Spirit and his flesh, "For that which I do I understand (allow) not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." The Spirit and the flesh are represented as ethical opposites, each in constant conflict with the other. We never do what we wanted do, unless we yield to the one or the other of the two natures.

The "flesh" here could include all of civilization, its culture, refinements, art and music; all that a person has as a human being; the world with all of its allurements. It means all the tendencies and impulses of the old and unregenerate nature which lead to wrong conduct. The constant mutual opposition of the human, depraved nature of the Christian and the holy and divine nature planted within him by the Holy Spirit in regeneration is the point. (See Romans 7:14-25 for a more fully developed description of the principle which he states here in Galatians). To "lust" after something is to have a strong desire. Most of the time this word is used for desiring something evil.

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2. The Works of the Flesh - 18, 19.

"But if ye be led by -the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (verse 18). The cross and the high priestly work of Christ do for all Christians eliminate from the law its ceremonial prescriptions altogether; however, its moral prescriptions more fully perfected by the moral teachings of Christ and His apostles are incumbent upon us. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). Yeager states, "If the Holy Spirit indwells does not in fact infill, then the fleshly nature encounters little opposition from an aggrieved Holy Spirit and is free to work its hellish works. The Holy Spirit is resident; we must let Him be president. He resides; we must let Him preside. His residence insures ultimate salvation; His regnant residence assures the victorious life before as well as after glorification" (Vol XIV, p. 124).

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these" (19 a). Here again Paul uses an aphorism, "works of the flesh," which are the things prompted by bodily desires; offences against chastity. In this verse and the following verses. Cole divides these sins into four groups: the first three as breaches of sexual law; the next two have to do with ritual sins; the next eight are concerned more with social life; and the last two against strong drink (p. 161).

Paul begins his list of works of the flesh with adultery (in the KJV), but originally the word is "fornication," meaning prostitution, illicit sexual conduct of any person whether married or unmarried. The word is used for spiritual unfaithfulness as in Revelation (14:8; 17:2,4; 18:3). "Adultery" usually refers to unfaithfulness of a married person and is the translation of the word "MOICHAO" (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11,12). Next on the list is "uncleanness" or inoral impurity, unchastity, lustful living; it can also refer to physical impurity. The next word is "lasciviousness" or shameful outrage of public decency, debauchery and lewdness. Any removal of restraint or sensual sins of indecency are included here. In other locations in Holy Scripture the word is translated pernicious ways (II Peter 2:2); wantonness (Romans 13:13; II Peter 2:18); filthy (II Peter 2:7).

3. Further Works of the Flesh - 20,21.

"Idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies," (verse 20). "Idolatry" is anything or any one who replaces Jehovah God; the worship of idols and pagan deities. Idol worship has always been connected with and contributory to the grossest of sins. Idol worship tempts; God rescues from temptation. The idol

is faithless; God is faithful.

"Sorcery" or as the old KJV translates it "witchcraft."
This is the same word from which we get "PHARMACY;" that is, the use of drugs to engage in black magic. It literally means to "mix drugs." "Hatred" or hostility in any form; ill-feeling or enmity. "Strife" meaning discord, quarrelings, and wranglings. The word can mean brawling, raucous argument or strife of a vocal rather than physical nature. "Jealousy" is zeal, rivalry, envy, any jealous feeling at another's good. It could mean a fanatical devotion to a false cause.

"Wrath" is those passionate outbursts in fits of anger; a boiling up of the emotions. "Factions" means strife, contentions, self-seeking (a desire to put one's self forward), or selfishness. "Seditious" are divisions, dissensions, differences of opinion. "Heresies" refer to divisions of organized parties whether doctrine is involved or not. It can mean those principles which are chosen; tenets or opinions. The word is translated "sect," in the Acts (5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22).

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like; of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (verse 21). "Envyings" have to do with ill-will and envious desires. "Murders" - simply the taking of human life. "Drunkenness" - intoxications by drinking alcoholic beverages. "Revelings" - rioting, carousing; used "in Greek writings of a nocturnal and riotous process of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry" (Yeager, Vol. XII. p. 181). It sounds much like Mardi Gras celebrations or the wild beach-parties of teenagers might be our nearest equivalent.

"And the like..." is just elastic enough to stretch out over most anything any person would do naturally. This list was not meant to be exhaustive but rather representative. In this catalog are listed activities that are vulgar, unrefined, personal and secret - all intermingled and all obviously unacceptable to the child of God. The apostle is very candid in saying that those involved in such carryings-on will not be candidates for the kingdom of God. A person who is involved in such debauchery is not regenerated and has no inheritance in the divine kingdom.

The Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-26

The flesh can produce no fruit that is acceptable to God? it can never show a profit. In Ephesians 2:1 Paul writes, "And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" that is, the flesh is "dead." Although the flesh of humanity was designed to glorify the Creator,

since its fall the flesh can, of itself, do nothing to please God. The flesh can never produce anything that can be a fruit or an activity of the Holy Spirit. The saved person possesses the Holy Spirit and can only by the power of the Spirit produce fruit.

in this passage there is a picture of a lovely garden, with all the choicest growths of the Spirit. These nine graces need cultivation, although the seed is planted at the time of salvation. Each grace grows throughout the Christian life. After writing about the works of the flesh, the Apostle Paul begins verse 22 with, "But" which contrasts the fruit of the Spirit from the works of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is a state of the mind or habit of feeling; an outflowing of a life so as to produce a harvest. It is not a work of the believer; it is the work of Christ in his soul.

1. Graces Possessed By the Child of God - 22,23.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law." The word "fruit" is mentioned over sixty times in the New Testament and refers to either that which comes from the trees which God has created or, metaphorical ly, that which comes from the life of a child of God. Notice that the word "fruit" is singular. It is that organic, spontaneous product of the Spirit; the effect or the result of the Spirit. These graces may be divided into three categories: (1) graces that describe our relationship to God; (2) graces that describe our relationship to others and (3) graces that describe our relationship to one's self.

The first of these is "love." So many times in the New Testament the word is translated "charity" which we ordinarily associate with the sharing of our possessions with another. The definition of the "love" referred to here, however, is an unconquerable benevolence or invincible good-will. "Love" here is that characteristic that no matter what a person does to us, no matter how he treats us, no matter if he insults, injures or grieves us, we will never allow any bitterness against him to invade our hearts, but we will regard him with -that unconquerable benevolence and good-will which will seek nothing but his highest good. Christian love is that which unites us with God and every believer. This kind of love is further defined in I

Corinthians 13.

The second grace is "joy." "Joy" is cheerfulness, calm delight and gladness. The joy of the Christian is completely untouchable and unassailable. This joy seeks us through our pain; a joy over which sorrow, loss, pain nor grief are powerless to touch; joy which shines through tears and which nothing in life or death can take away. "Your joy no man taketh from you," Jesus said in John 16:22. The Christian's joy goes further than the dictionary definition - an emotion evoked by well-being, success, good fortune; delight; gaiety, bliss; to experience great pleasure or delight. "Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with JOY unspeakable and full of glory," so writes Peter in I Peter 1:8.

"Peace" is defined as absence of war, absence of conflict, harmony, concord, safety, security or tranquility. The Biblical word "peace?" however, goes far deeper than that. The peace that Jesus offers is the peace that no experience in life can ever take from us. It is a peace which no sorrow, no danger, no suffering can make less. It is the peace which is independent of outward circumstances. It is a peace that is at rest with God, with self and with others; an absence of quarreling and strife. It is the calm that settles down upon a soul at rest; it is that release from tension that comes from Christ Jesus.

"Long-suffering" means to be slow towards others; to exercise patience; to forbear; endurance; perseverance; steadfastness. It is opposite of wrath or revenge. "Long-suffering" bears insult and injury without bitterness and without complaint. It is the spirit which bears the sheer foolishness of men without irritation. It is the spirit which can suffer unpleasant people with graciousness and fools without complaint. It is that spirit of continuing on and on and does not stop even when he gets hurt. "Long-suffering" is evident when one has -ene power to bear up under a burden; to stand tremendous strain. "Be patient toward all men," (I Thessalonians 5:14).

"Gentleness" is defined as mildness and refined in manner and disposition; to be well-born or descended. "Gentleness" is not a trait which man decides he is going to have. The more man matures spiritually, the more gentle he becomes. "Gentleness" may be defined as kindness, helpfulness and graciousness. The Lord Jesus Christ is the epitome of "gentleness." He is often pictured as the shepherd kindly and gently watching over the flock.

"Goodness" is -that grace that is born of God's Spirit, the ultimate source of all goodness, and it only takes full sway in our lives as we give control to Him. Picture a garden with both vegetables and weeds; the vegetables are the good and the weeds the evil. We must make a habit of

crushing out the evil so that the good might take root and grow. It is defined as uprightness of heart and life; a spirit controlled by moral and spiritual excellence.

"Faith" is next in Paul's catalog of graces. It is the ability to believe; assurance; belief in that which is revealed (in Scripture). Faith is the hope that is absolutely certain that what it believes is true and that what is expected will come. It is not the hope which looks forward with wistful longing; it is the hope which looks forward with utter certainty. The Christian's hope is more than hope; it is a hope that has turned to certainty.

"Faith" is manifested when the Christian puts his dependence upon God with his whole nature. "Without faith it is impossible to please (God)," Hebrews 11:6.

To help us understand "meekness" we will call on Moses to paint us a word picture. Moses did not think himself worthy of God's call to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. Someone has defined "meekness" as angry at the right time. One who is meek has every instinct, impulse and passion under control. "Meekness" can also mean humility; not arrogant. The meekness of Moses showed forth in his everyday living. If we possess meekness, it will show forth in our personality. We will be angry only at the right time; God will be in control of our passions, impulses and instincts; and we will be truly humble. A person is meek, when though he is injured he does not retaliate, though a victim of injustice; it is strength brought under control.

"A meek and quiet spirit, ..is in the sight of God of great price" I Peter 3:4.

"Self-control" or "temperance" is the last grace recorded in this passage. The apostle often referred to Christianity as a "race-course." Athletes undergo self-discipline and training to win a crown of laurel leaves. The Christian must discipline himself that he might be a vessel to be used of the Lord. One is temperate when he is controlled and moderate at all times; he is the master of appetites and passions. A person is temperate when in relation to food - moderation; in relation to anger - forbearance; in relation to success - humility; in relation to desire - restraint.

Against these graces there is no law. Yeager translates the last phrase of this verse, "law to forbid such things does not exist. ..There is no human legislation nor divine legislation against these graces; nothing that we do when we are filled with -the fruits of the Holy Spirit is against human statutes or the moral law of God" (Vol. XIV, pp.

137,138). There are no laws against these nine graces. There is no need for the law to a full-grown Christian; obey the Spirit and you will walk with Christ.

2. The Flesh is Dead; the Spirit is Alive - 24,25.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (verse 24). To have crucified the flesh means to put it away as a thing abhorred; that it, it must die the death. This is the secret to a victorious life.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (verse 25). "If" could mean "inasmuch as;" or "insofar as;" or even "since." The Christian whose life would be victorious must keep in step with the Holy Spirit, doing those things that please Him. To live in the Spirit is to live from day to day as he is led by the Spirit of God; thus maintaining one's self in the consciousness of the Spirit's presence. We are to let the outward life agree with the inward!

3. Evil Will Be Overcome - 26.

"Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." To overcome vain glory one must not be conceited so as to look for honors and popularity; thus, seeking credit which we do not deserve.

Serving Christ and Others

Galatians 5:25-26

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not come into the world to be served, but rather to serve others. Service for Christ is service to people in the name of Christ. In serving others in the name of Christ we promote peace, lift up the fallen, bear one another's burdens, support their teachers and do good to all men. Doing these things is a full-time job! Service for Christ needs to be on a one-to-one basis. It is brother helping brother and sister strengthening sister (Henderson).

Among the directions the apostle gives in this closing chapter are: the spirit with which Christians should admonish those who fall into sin, the patience which they should exhibit toward each other's faults, the duty of providing for the wants of Christian teachers, and performing unweariedly every good work, with the assurance that in due time they should have their reward (Hovey, p. 72).

1. Lift Up the Fallen - 5:26-6:1.

"Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." "Vain glory" is glory without reason or conceit. It is carnal nature to seek credit which one does

not deserve. Was there competition among the Galatians? Possibly some sought to gain the public spotlight, and some were envious of those who reached certain fame. Were these like the Pharisees whom Jesus condemned in Matthew 23:1-26 and Luke 18:11,12?

The apostle admonishes them to be more understanding of the brother who is overtaken in a "fault." Whenever a brother trespasses or lapses from the right path, he says to them, "restore him." The word "restore" was used of fishermen who "fit together" their broken nets or physicians who "set broken bones." Those who are more spiritual (walking under the control of the Spirit) must come to the rescue of a fallen friend. Two solemn duties are cited here: (1) maintain a personal spirit of meekness toward the brothers, and (2) guard yourself from being tempted lest you feel superior to the brother or maybe even commit the same sin as the fallen brother. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," (I Corinthians 10:12).

2. Always Aid a Brother in Need - 2-5.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (verse 2). A true brother will willingly, helpfully and sympathetically assist another brother or sister who may be carrying a heavy burden. One's mutual love, sympathy and helpfulness should embrace all the cares and sorrows of the spiritual brotherhood. Hendriksen says, the Christians should "tolerate each other," or "put up with each other," or "jointly shoulder each member's burdens" (p. 232). In these actions we fulfill Christ's law (see Galatians 5:14).

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (verse 3). Kenneth Taylor says of this verse, "If anyone thinks he is too great to stoop to this, he is fooling himself. He is really a nobody" (Henderson, p. 58). Just because we haven't fallen into the same sin does not mean we can't or won't. The person who imagines himself to be strong and able to stand alone, when in fact he may be weak in faith and love; he may be deluding himself. Conceit is not only unsympathetic, it is also unchristian and delusive. Cole uses the word "hoodwink" for deceive (p. 171). The apostle is attacking the spirit of overconfidence in one's self.

"But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (verse 4). Paul wanted the Galatians to test their conduct and spirit by the standard of Christ's law. To use the faults of others as a norm is to make it too easy for one's self! The possibility of glorying must arise from one's own work. To "prove" means to "scrutinize" one's own work. "Paul may mean that the Judaizers do well not to 'count scalps,' but

to see where they stand themselves, in view of the coming judgment" (Cole, p. 175). The person who looks at himself in the mirror of another person's conduct mirrors himself gently. He should look at himself in the mirror of God's law and of Christ's example.

"For every man shall bear his own burden" (verse 5). There is no conflict between the word translated "burden" in this verse and one in verse 2. Hovey quotes Hackett, "For each one shall carry his own load; the burdens which the apostle urges his readers to bear in verse 2 are the faults and offenses toward others, toward which we are required to be tolerant and charitable. The 'load' which every one has to carry is that of his own accountability for all his sins and deficiencies" (p. 73). Verse 2 speaks of a crushing weight, while verse 5 speaks of daily affairs for which one is responsible to God.

3. Treatment of Teachers - 6-10.

"Let him that is taught in the word share with him that teacheth in all good things" (verse 6). The old KJV uses "communicate" for the word "share," meaning fellowship, partnership, as well as a mutual sharing of all good things. The former (the taught) must share his goods with the latter (the teachers). In Philippians 4:15 the word is used for financial payment of the missionaries; in I Corinthians 9:10,11, Paul refers to sharing material possessions with those who preach the gospel and teach in the churches.

"Be not deceived, 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; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (verses 7,8). God will not be mocked or "fooled" (NEB); no one can "turn up his nose" to God without recompense. Divine principles are never to be ignored or sneered at.

"To sow to -the flesh" means to cultivate and gratify the fleshly cravings by one's course of life; one's general action in life is referred to his own personal gratification in his lower nature - to his own profit, pleasure, honor. "To sow to the Spirit" means to follow the Spirit in one's choice of reading materials, thought patterns, amusements and speech. The quality of the harvest is determined by the quality of the seed sown.

"The two terms 'corruption' and 'life everlasting' must be understood in a double sense: quantitative and qualitative. 'Corruption,' for example, far from amounting to annihilation, indicates 'everlasting destruction' (II Thessalonians 1:9). 'Life everlasting' is equal to duration (Matthew 25:46).. Qualitatively and thus with reference to both body and soul, the two - 'corruption' and 'life everlasting' form a striking contrast" (Hendriksen, p. 237).

"And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (verse 9). The Galatians are not to give up; lose heart or to have a flagging spirit. They may grow weary "in the way," but they should not grow tired "of the way." "Well-doing," literally means doing that which is beautiful. "Well-doing requires continued effort, constant toil, but nature, being fond of ease, lacks staying-power, is easily discouraged" (Op. cit. p. 238). Well-doing is the epitome of all that is involved in walking by the Spirit, as it has been detailed in the preceding passages. For their labors for the Lord, all will be rewarded in God's own time."

"As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially them who are of the household of faith" (verse 10). "As we have opportunity," means whenever we have a suitable occasion. All of the Christian life must be involved in cultivating daily relationships in the family of God. That involves leading others to Christ, building them up in Christ that they may go out for Christ to lead others to Christ (Henderson). Every believer in Christ is represented as belonging to one family and are urged to cultivate a family affection by rendering assistance to one another.

Glorying in the Cross Galatians 6:11-18

Paul concludes his letter with love. He has written warning, rebuke, exhortation, loving request and now calls the wavering Galatians back to faith in Christ. "The letter ends almost in a whisper, rather than a shout, but it breathes the very tears and heart-longing of a great apostle of God" (Henderson).

1 Paul Takes the Pen in Hand - 11

"Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." Rather than a lengthy letter, Paul probably refers to the large characters (sprawling, untidy letters of one not a scribe by trade) or his inability to write smaller letters because of an infirmity. Some think that Paul dictated most of the letter to an amanuensis (as he did other letters) and added the postscript and signature in his own hand to give it authenticity. Others think that, due to Paul's failing eyesight to which he may have alluded in Galatians 4:14,15, he was forced to write in larger characters than those used by his amanuensis in the rest of the letter. Maybe Paul wanted to call particular attention to this closing paragraph by penning large characters.

?- Pant Suffer~r33 Pp-rsecu+it-inn - 17.1?-

"As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should

suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (verse 12). To "constrain" means to compel, advise or urge; nevertheless, the Galatians were insisting on circumcision and the keeping of the law to avoid persecution, to relieve the stigma associated with the cross of Jesus. The Judaizers wanted to cut a good figure (make a fair show; make a good impression) to be popular with the people. This persecution was a general term comprehending the enmity, opposition and general threats to life brought to bear by influential Jews against the radical preaching of Christ. When a Jew departed from Jewish traditions and accepted Christ with a whole-heart, he could expect nothing but bitter persecution: ostracism, threats, calumny, and physical and mental torture.

"For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but desire -to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh" (verse 13). Yeager says, "the charge against the Judaizers in verse 12 is a serious one. Their only real motive was to avoid persecution. How can Paul be certain? Because the Judaizers themselves had never kept the law" (Vol. XIV, pp. 158,159). They taught the law and circumcision for salvation and tried to hide their personal failure to keep the law. The Judaizers gained the approval of their countrymen by making proselytes to Judaism. The real motive is selfish pride. The cross of Christ cancels (x's out) all pride of the flesh.

3. Crucified Unto the World - 14,15.

"But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (verse 14). Paul is saying here, "May boasting by me (to my advantage) never occur, except or because of the cross." The apostle is vividly contrasting his own feelings and behavior in relation to the cross of Christ with those of the leaders of the circumcision party whom he has been denouncing. The "cross of Christ" is the summary statement which embraces the whole doctrine of salvation by faith in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ in His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave. The "cross of Christ" is figuratively "the doctrine of Christ."

"To be crucified unto -the world" means one is dead so far as -the world having influence or control over his life. The world is anything and everything outside of Christ in which man seeks his glory and puts his trust, in fact, to Paul's mind, the thought of glorying in anything but the

cross of Christ was shocking. The "cross" represented the propitiatory death of the Redeemer. It was through Christ's propitiatory death that the apostle felt himself to be dead to the world, and the world dead unto him. The cross exposes man's desperate state, his utter bankruptcy that made such suffering necessary. Accordingly, it reveals the folly of human pride.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (verse 15). Kenneth Taylor says of this verse, "It doesn't make any difference now whether we have been circumcised or not; what counts is whether we really have been changed into new and different people" (Henderson, p. 63). A "new creature" is really a "new creation;" a holy seed implanted by the Spirit of God and nourished by His grace. What really counts is the circumcision of the heart, Romans 2:29 says, "But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart." This gift of the Spirit is the earmark and the guarantee of the new covenant (Hebrews 8:8ff).

4. Final Words - 16-18.

"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (verse 16). The "Israel of God" are the true descendants of Abraham by faith (Romans 9:6). Cole says, "The unbelieving Jews are like the Gentile 'dogs;' they are the mutilators; while the Christians are now the real Jews. Paul indicates, we (believing Jews) are 'real' Israel, we who serve God with spiritual worship and make our boast of Christ, and do not trust in outward things" (p. 184).

"Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (verse 17). To "trouble" is to annoy. Paul is saying to the Judaizers, "You want me to bear ritual cuts and gashes, do you? I bear such scars already, but they are those that mark me out as Christ's man" (Cole, p. 186). The marks or "stigmata" were brands that distinguished a slave or soldier as belonging to a certain master or commander. Jesus was Paul's Master and Protector. His brand is stamped on Paul's body; he bears this badge of an honorable servant.

"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen" (verse 18). Paul's conclusion is "very cordial and winsome in its manner. It has a healthy and ingratiating quality; there is nothing of irritation in it" (Ridderbos, p. 229). The "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" is the some total of all good which Paul wishes on his readers.

"The close seems a bit abrupt. Paul had discharged his obligation to the Galatians. He had visited them, preached to them, led them to Christ, later visited them to strengthen them and has now written this letter to explain the gospel truth again in counterattack against their epidemic of heresy. From now on, it was up to them" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 164).

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