

The Epistle to the Galatians

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Galatians 1.....	2
Galatians 2.....	4
Galatians 3.....	7
Galatians 4.....	10
Galatians 5.....	13
Galatians 6.....	16

Introduction

The Epistle to the Galatians is corrective rather than instructive. It was not written simply to *instruct* the Assemblies in the great truths of the Gospel, as in the Epistle to the Romans; nor to unfold the truth of the Church as in the Epistle to the Ephesians; nor to present experience, proper to Christians, as in the Epistle to the Philippians. It was written to correct a great evil that had crept into the assemblies of Galatia. It has the same character as the Epistles to the Corinthians, but with this difference; the Epistle to the Galatians was written to correct legality, while the Epistles to the Corinthians were written to correct carnality, or worldliness (1 Cor. 3: 3). Though apparently so opposite, both evils are near akin inasmuch as both recognise the flesh. Legality is the effort to control the flesh by rules and cultivate the flesh by religious ceremonies. Lawlessness is the indulgence of the flesh.

Legality, by turning back to the principles of the law, at once gives the flesh a place, for the law appeals to the flesh, and the flesh brings in the world. Hence the law, the flesh and the world go together. To correct the wrong use of the law, and the evils of the flesh and the world, the Spirit of God brings in the Cross of Christ. Thus, in the Epistle we find the Cross applied to the law in Galatians 2: 20; to the flesh in Galatians 5: 24; and to the world in Galatians 6: 14.

Then, the law, the flesh and the world being set aside, we have brought in Christ, the Spirit and New Creation. Christ is presented as the rule of life, instead of the law (Gal. 2: 20); the Spirit instead of the flesh (Gal. 3: 3; 5: Gal. 16-25); and New Creation instead of the world (Gal. 6: 14, 15). We are not to be governed by the principles of the present world. but by the rule of New Creation.

Though both the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Epistle to the Galatians are corrective, it will be noticed that the Apostle uses far greater severity of expression in writing to the Galatians. This is striking, for, though both evils must necessarily be condemned by the Spirit. yet error in doctrine is more severely censured than evil in practice. With men it is ever the reverse. An easy-going age is very indifferent to what doctrine men teach, as long as their outward conduct is good. The reason is plain, for, as one has said, "*Nature* can take its measure of human conduct; but *faith* only can estimate the importance of the truth of God." Further, it has been truly remarked, "Laxity of walk, or worldly principle and habits, may be corrected by bringing in the light . . . but when the truth is corrupted, the light becomes darkness, and the very instrument by which God is pleased to work is destroyed."

Hence the severity of tone with which the Apostle writes, for in turning back to the law we gradually lose all that is vital. Law recognises man in the flesh and gives him a place in this world. It makes his blessing depend upon man fulfilling his responsibility, and thus shuts out God's grace, makes the work of Christ for us of no profit (Gal. 5: 4), sets aside the work of the Spirit in us (Gal. 3: 2), and changes Christianity into a religion of outward forms and ceremonies.

Galatians 1

It becomes clear, as we read the Epistle to the Galatians, that wrong doctrine, of a serious nature, had arisen in the Assemblies of Galatia. It was being taught that those who believe must be circumcised and observe all the precepts of the law of Moses, otherwise they could not be saved. They did not directly deny the truth of the Person of Christ, nor the facts of His death and resurrection, nor the necessity of faith in Christ; but they asserted that faith in Christ and His work was; not sufficient for salvation. This false teaching, by insisting on adding our works to the work of Christ, in order to be saved, set aside the sufficiency of the work of Christ and justification by faith. This false teaching had been introduced into the assemblies of Galatia by judaising teachers who had obtained a footing among the saints. Their attack was upon *the truth*, but the method adopted was not to face the truth, but to attack *the teacher of the truth*. They sought to persuade the saints that the Apostle Paul had not been sent by Peter and the other apostles, and therefore had no divine authority for his apostleship. If then he came without divine authority they could no longer accept the gospel that he preached as being the truth. Thus, instead of facing the truth that was in question, they fell back on personal abuse of the Apostle (Gal. 4: 17). Alas! how often in the conflicts that have arisen amongst the professing people of God, since that day, have similar tactics been adopted.

Briefly, then, the two great evils into which the assemblies at Galatia had fallen were the insistence of law-keeping in order to be saved, and the adoption of apostolic succession, or the principle of clerisy, in order to be a servant of the Lord. To meet these two evils the Apostle definitely refuses apostolic succession by establishing his apostleship as derived immediately from Christ Himself, and asserts the impossibility of combining the law and the gospel as a means of salvation. In the introductory verses the apostle gives a brief summary of the two great themes of his Epistle. In verses 1 and 2 he sums up the truth of his apostleship; in verses 3 to 5 he sums up the truth of his teaching.

(Vv. 1, 2.) At once the apostle asserts that his apostleship was not "from man" as a source, nor "by man" as a means. In Paul's apostleship it is evident there was no succession from others and no ordination by others. The statement that Paul's apostleship was "neither by man" strikes at the whole principle of clerisy. Those in the clerical system may freely admit that their authority is not from man, but they would not, and could not, say that it was neither *by man*. Paul received his authority, and his direction, not from Peter or the Twelve, but from the risen Christ.

The apostle adds importance to his epistle by uniting with him "all the brethren" which were with him. He thus shows that the Galatian assemblies were not only giving up the truths taught by himself, but were forsaking the common faith of the brethren. This surely has a warning for us, and should make us pause before asserting that which is contrary to the truth held by "all the brethren."

(Vv. 3-5.) Having asserted the truth of his apostleship, the apostle, in the following verses, gives a brief but beautiful summary of the truths that he taught. First, he proclaimed the greatness and efficacy of the work of Christ — the One who gave Himself for our sins. To turn back to the law and its ceremonies, as if to add thereby to the efficacy of the work of Christ, was to cast a slur upon Christ.

It was practically saying that though He "gave Himself" this inestimable gift was not enough. Secondly, the work of Christ not only settles the question of the believer's sins but delivers from this present evil world. Those who would put us back under law desire to make a fair show in the flesh and thus link us up with the world. Thirdly, the truth taught by the apostle was according to the will of God and our Father, and, above all, redounds to the glory of God for ever and ever. To put believers back under law was simply to indulge the will of man, and exalt men by seeking to make "a fair show in the flesh" (Gal. 6: 12), and thus "glory" in the flesh (6: 12, 13). Thus, at the outset of his epistle, the apostle presents the efficacy of the Person and work of Christ in meeting our needs, separating us from the world, and effecting the will of God for the eternal glory of God. Alas! Christendom has largely fallen into the Galatian heresy! While making a profession of Christianity, it practically sets aside the work of Christ by the works of men, leaves men in the world with the vain endeavour of making it a better and a brighter world, and seeks to carry out the will of man for the glory of man.

Following upon the introductory verses, the Apostle, in the first two chapters, presents certain historical facts in relation to himself, which prove the Divine authority of his apostleship apart altogether from man. Then in chapters 3 to 6 he re-asserts his teaching and its effect, in contrast to the law, and the result for those who put themselves under law.

(Vv. 6, 7.) The apostle commences by expressing his amazement at the inconsistency of the Galatians. Time was when they had received him "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (Gal. 4: 14). Now their attitude had entirely changed, and they were calling in question his authority. But, what was yet more serious, in rejecting him they were also rejecting the gospel that he preached - the only true gospel, for Paul will not admit that there is another gospel than the one that he preached.

In contrast to Paul, through whom the gospel of the grace of God had been made known to them, there were those who troubled the Galatian believers by preaching, not the gospel of Christ, but a perversion of the gospel. These false teachers did not directly deny the facts of the gospel, but they perverted them. A perversion is often more dangerous than a flat denial, for in a perversion there is sufficient truth to deceive the unwary, and sufficient error to make the truth of no effect.

Thus the apostle touches upon the two forms of departure from the truth into which the Galatian assemblies were falling. First, they were giving up the divine authority of the word of God and asserting human authority; secondly, they were giving up the pure gospel as the way of salvation and falling back on law and human tradition. Alas! are these not the two evils that have so largely corrupted the Christian profession of today?

(Vv. 8, 9.) Before proceeding further, the Apostle, with intensely solemn and ardent words, pronounces a curse upon any who preach as glad tidings anything contrary to that which they had received through his preaching. If the Apostle himself, or even an angel, preach any other gospel, let him be accursed. These are words which completely exclude all development or further light, of which men speak, that would set aside the alone sufficiency of the work of Christ to secure the salvation of everyone that believes.

(V. 10.) In speaking in these solemn and plain terms, Paul makes manifest that he is no mere man pleaser, ready to abandon the truth and compromise with error, in order to stand well with the crowd. No man was more gentle, lowly and gracious than the Apostle, but no one was bolder, more vehement and plain of speech if the truth was in question. Were it otherwise, he would have ceased to be "the servant of Christ." Well for every servant to follow his example, even as he also followed Christ (1 Cor. 11: 1). In the presence of insults the Lord was silent (Mark 15: 3-5). When it was a question of bearing witness to the truth He spoke out plainly (John 18: 33-38).

(Vv. 11, 12.) Having given these introductory warnings, the Apostle proceeds to give a detailed statement of his Divine authority for the gospel that he preached. He makes three distinct claims for the gospel.

First, the glad tidings that he preached were "not according to man." Men dream of a gospel which would exalt man by offering him blessing as the result of his own efforts. God's glad tidings, while indeed they bring eternal blessing to man, do so in a way that brings eternal glory to God.

Secondly, the glad tidings preached by Paul did not come "from man" as a source.

Thirdly, the Apostle was not taught the gospel by man; he received it "by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

(Vv. 13, 14.) In proof of these statements, the Apostle, in the verses that follow, goes over his history, which indeed they had already heard. In doing so, he recounts only those incidents which show how God dealt with him, and communicated the gospel to him, entirely apart from the intervention of man.

First, he reminds the Galatian believers that, in his unconverted days, he had Persecuted the Church of God and wasted it. With all the intense prejudice of a bigoted Jew he had gone beyond the measure of others in his hatred of the Church. When others were learning the truth through the preaching of the gospel and being brought into the Church, he was persecuting it. His zeal for the Jew's religion and the traditions of the fathers effectually blinded him to the preaching of the Apostles. It is evident, then, that in his unconverted days he was unreached by the preaching of others.

(Vv. 15-17.) Then, when the moment came that he was called by grace he did not confer with flesh and blood. He did not go to Jerusalem, the seat of traditional authority, nor did he confer with those who were Apostles before him. It was God that called him; God revealed His Son in him; and God gave him his commission to preach the glad tidings among the Gentiles. God had direct dealings and communications with the Apostle apart from men, from Jerusalem and the other Apostles.

(Vv. 18, 19.) Having spent three years in Arabia and Damascus, the Apostle pays a visit of fifteen days to Peter at Jerusalem. The only other Apostle he saw was James, the brother of our Lord. This visit, then, was not an official one to receive instructions, or ordination, but rather a personal one to make the acquaintance of Peter.

(Vv. 20-24.) The Apostle adds solemn importance to his words by reminding us that he speaks "before God," and adds, "I lie not." Good for us all, if at all times we speak as consciously in the presence of God, and can truly say, "Behold, before God, I lie not." After his visit to Jerusalem he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. So far from receiving any communications, or authority, from the assemblies of Judea, he was unknown to them even by face. This only they knew, that the one-time persecutor was now a preacher of the faith which once he had sought to destroy. Hearing what he was doing they did not interfere with the Apostle or give him instructions and advice, nor did they complain that he was preaching apart from the authority of the twelve; but they glorified God for all that He was doing in and through the Apostle. Thus the very man that these false teachers were seeking to belittle was one in whom the Assemblies in Judea, the centre of the legal system, found occasion to glorify God.

Galatians 2

(V. 1.) Fourteen years later, the Apostle again visited Jerusalem, accompanied by Barnabas and

Titus. This visit, of which we have further details in Acts. 15, was precisely on account of this judaizing teaching introduced by "false brethren unawares brought in" who were troubling the assemblies in Galatia.

Paul and Barnabas had withstood this false teaching at Antioch, but, in His wisdom, God would have this question raised and settled at Jerusalem, and therefore the stand made at Antioch, however right, was not allowed to settle the matter. Had the question been settled at Antioch there would possibly have been a division in the Church, one section, mainly composed of Jewish converts, bound by the law with their centre at Jerusalem; the other section composed of Gentile converts, free from the law, with their centre at Antioch.

(V. 2.) From the Acts we learn that the brethren at Antioch decided that Paul and Barnabas should go to Jerusalem. Here we learn the additional fact that the Apostle went up by revelation, a further proof that though he acted in fellowship with his brethren, and with their counsel, yet he did so as guided by direct revelation from God.

The gospel being in question, he communicated to those in Jerusalem, who were held in reputation, what he himself had preached. He did not, then, receive the gospel that he preached from them, but, on the contrary, communicated it to them. He does this, not as leaving the leaders at Jerusalem to judge whether his gospel was according to God, but as opposing this outbreak of legalism which threatened to mar his work among the Gentiles, so that his labours would be in vain.

(V. 3.) In a parenthetical verse, the case of Titus is

brought forward to show that this legal teaching was not accepted, or insisted on, at Jerusalem; for, though Titus was a Greek, he was not compelled to be circumcised according to law.

(Vv. 4, 5.) Continuing his theme, the Apostle traces this legal teaching to false brethren unawares brought in, whose purpose was to bring the saints into bondage and attract to themselves (Gal. 4: 17). To such the Apostle gave place not for an hour. Under no plea of showing grace and love will he enter into any compromise when the truth is at stake. In other Scriptures we are exhorted to "be subject one to another" (1 Peter 5: 5); but when it is a question of "false brethren," and the truth is at stake, the apostle will not yield subjection for an hour.

(V. 6.) Apart, however, from these false brethren there were those in the assembly "who were conspicuous as being somewhat." Such might rightly, by reason of gift and spirituality, have a pre-eminent place. Nevertheless, the fact of their conspicuous position carried no weight with the Apostle when the truth was in question. God does not accept a man's person. With God it is not the prominence that a man has before his fellows that counts — not the person — but what there is of Christ in the person. Paul may give honour to such and love them as brethren, but they added no authority to that which he had already received from Christ.

(Vv. 7-10.) These brethren, who held a pre-eminent place, confirmed the Apostle in His preaching to the Gentiles. They recognised that the preaching to the Gentiles had been committed to the Apostle Paul, even as the preaching to the Jews had been committed to Peter, and they owned that God, who wrought so effectually in Peter, also worked mightily in the Apostle Paul toward the Gentiles. Further, James, Cephas and John, instead of imparting grace to Paul, perceived and owned the grace that was given to the Apostle. The result was that the leaders in the Assembly at Jerusalem gave the Apostle and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, and confirmed them in going to the Gentiles, while exhorting them to remember the poor, a matter, indeed, which Paul was ever ready to do.

Thus the Apostle shows that for years he had laboured among the Gentiles, God working

mightily by him, without receiving any authority or mission from other Apostles, and in due course his labours were fully recognised by other Apostles at Jerusalem as being of God. These details of the Apostle's work utterly condemned the Galatian assemblies for turning from the Apostle and calling in question his apostleship. So doing they not only turned from the Apostle but also ranged themselves in opposition to the pillars of the Church at Jerusalem, who refused this legal teaching in the very place where it arose. Moreover the whole passage refutes the false teaching of apostolic succession and that the Apostle Peter is the earthly head of the Church. Personally, he recognises that the mission to the Gentiles was not his service.

(Vv. 11-14.) The Apostle closes this portion of his Epistle by recalling another incident, which clearly shows that even Peter had not the smallest authority over Paul. On the contrary, an occasion arose when Paul was compelled to reprove and withstand Peter. When Peter visited Antioch, where the Church was mainly composed of Gentile believers, he showed that personally he was so entirely delivered from Jewish prejudices that he was free to eat with the Gentiles. When, however, certain Jewish believers came from Jerusalem, where the law and its ceremonies were still pressed by certain Christians, Peter withdrew and separated himself from the Gentile believers.

The root of Peter's failure, as so often with ourselves, was the vanity of the flesh that wanted to stand well with the opinion of others. He feared that he would lose his reputation with those "which were of the circumcision." This fear led him to dissemble and take a crooked path. He no longer walked uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. By his act he ignored the unity of the Spirit, denied the truth of the gospel, and brought in division amongst the saints. The fact that he held the position of an apostle only added to his offence, as one has said, "The more a man is honoured — and in this case there was true ground for respect — the greater the stumbling block to others if he fail." Thus in this case the effect of Peter's unfaithfulness was that the Jewish believers at Antioch dissembled in like manner, and even Barnabas was carried away by their dissimulation.

Under these circumstances, Paul, rightly recognising that the truth of God was at stake, "withstood him to the face" and publicly rebuked him "before them all." "If," said the Apostle, "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?"

(Vv. 15, 16.) Having fully established by these historical details the fact that he did not derive his authority from man, and would enter into no compromise when the truth was at stake, the Apostle passes on to speak of the gospel which was being perverted by this false teaching. Not only had Peter dissembled by freely eating and mixing with the Gentiles one moment, and then seeking to conceal what he had done by withdrawing and separating from them, but he had imperilled the gospel, for the bearing of his act, as the Apostle shows, was to destroy the truth of the Gospel. The truth was that those, like Peter, Paul and others, who were Jews by nature, had discovered that "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Having learnt this, they had believed in Jesus Christ, in order to be justified on the principle of the faith of Christ, and not by works of law; for, says the Apostle, "On the principle of works of law no flesh shall be justified."

(Vv. 17, 18.) Peter, together with other Jewish believers, had given up law as a means of justification, in order to be justified by Christ; but now, in refusing to eat with the Gentiles, he was going back to legal ordinances — the very things he had given up. If then he was right in giving up the law as a means of justification, he was clearly wrong in turning back to it. But it was for Christ's sake that he had given up the law. But if he was right in turning back to law, then Christ had led him to do wrong in giving it up. But this was impossible; for Christ cannot lead a man to do wrong, He is not a

minister of sin. It is evident that if we turn back to the law as a means of justification we are building again the things which we have destroyed, and make ourselves transgressors for having given up the law.

(V. 19.) Applying the truth to himself, the Apostle gives a beautiful summing up of the Christian position. The gospel proclaims the righteousness of God to man; the law demands righteousness from man and pronounces death upon the man that does not keep it. The soul that sinneth it shall die. Seeing that we have all sinned, neither Paul nor anyone else has kept the law. Therefore the law can only pronounce the sentence of death and judgment upon us.

(V. 20.) For the one that believes in Jesus, this sentence of death has been carried out in the death of Christ our Substitute. His death was the death of our old man — the man under judgment. So the believer can say, "I am crucified with Christ." Thus having passed through death, in the death of our Substitute we are free from the law. The law can condemn a man to death because of the life that he has led; but directly the man is dead, he no longer lives in the life to which the law applied. The law can have nothing to say to a dead man. Moreover, if as believers we have died to the old life to which the law applies, we have a new life in Christ. So the Apostle can say, "Nevertheless I live: yet not I but Christ liveth in me." If I would see this new life in all its perfection, I must look at Christ. As one has said, "When I ... turn my eyes to Jesus, when I contemplate all His obedience, His purity, His grace, His tenderness, His patience, His devotedness, His holiness, His love, His entire freedom from all selfseeking, I can say, That is my life . . . It may be obscured in me; but it is none the less true, that that is my life" (J.N.D.). Thus it is our privilege to hold ourselves dead to the law that we may live this new life to God.

A further great truth is that this new life, like all life in the creature, has, and must have, an object to sustain the life. If the Lord Jesus is our life, He is also personally the object of the life. So the Apostle adds "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Faith sees Christ, looks to Him, confides in Him, feeds upon Him, abides in His love, in the blessed consciousness that He is for us in all the depths of love that led Him to give *Himself* for us.

(V. 21.) To turn back to the law is not only to make myself a transgressor for having given it up as a means of justification, but it is frustrating the grace of God, and, further, if righteousness come by the law, there was no need for the death of Christ — "Christ has died for nothing" (N. Tn.)

Galatians 3

(V. 1.) The apostle has shown that, in turning back to the law, the Galatians were setting aside the work of Christ and belittling the glory of His Person as the Son of God. To act thus was so unnatural that it would seem as if they were bewitched, for they were practically denying the truth of the cross, the great central fact of the gospel that had been proclaimed to them, for the apostle had set before them Christ crucified.

Moreover, to turn back to the law not only set aside Christ, but ignored the presence of the Holy Spirit and revived the flesh. The devil is opposed to Christ; the world to the Father; and the flesh to the Spirit. Thus, in the chapters that follow, we constantly have the Spirit and the flesh in opposition (Gal. 3: 3; Gal. 4: 29; Gal. 5: 16, 17; Gal. 6: 8). To demonstrate the folly of ignoring the Spirit and reviving the flesh by turning back to the law, the apostle, in the remaining portion of the Epistle, mainly dwells upon the blessings into which the Spirit leads us, and the solemn character of the flesh and the evils to

which it exposes us. He opens this fresh theme by seeking to reach the conscience of these saints with four searching questions as to the Holy Spirit.

(V. 2.) First, he enquires on what ground had they received this great gift of the Spirit? Was it "By the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" He does not question the fact that they had received the Spirit, but he asks was the Spirit received because of anything they had done — their works, which would be legal works? Or was it simply through faith in Christ, who had died and risen? Scripture plainly shows that it is the sinner that believes in Christ, and the believer that is sealed with the Spirit. Thus the apostle, when writing to the believers at Ephesus, can say, when speaking of Christ, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1: 13).

(V. 3.) Secondly, having begun their Christian life in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, were they now going to turn back to the law, as if by their own efforts they could walk rightly as Christians? The law applies to man in the flesh, so in turning back to the law they were not only ignoring the Holy Spirit, but reviving the flesh and seeking perfection in, and by, the flesh.

(V. 4.) Thirdly, were the things they had suffered for the truth's sake all in vain? The persecution they had endured had mainly come from the Jews, who, in seeking to maintain the law, had crucified Christ and resisted the Spirit. If these Galatian saints turned back to the law, the Jews would have no quarrel with them; the persecution had been unnecessary and would surely cease.

(V. 5.) Fourthly, there had been miracles of divine power amongst them. Were these manifestations of power the outcome of keeping the law, or were they the result of faith in the power of God?

(Vv. 6-9.) The answer to such questions was simple. All the blessing they had received, summed up in the crowning gift of the Holy Spirit, the sufferings they had endured, and the manifestation of divine power in their midst, were the outcome of receiving the gospel concerning Jesus by the hearing of faith.

A testimony from God, received by faith, has ever been the alone ground on which souls have come into blessing from God. Abraham is an outstanding example of one who, in Old Testament times, received blessing by faith. Moreover the history of Abraham shows that before law was given, and therefore altogether apart from law, God was blessing man on the principle of faith. The case of Abraham is all the more convincing, seeing he is the one, above all others, who was highly esteemed by the Jews. The very one in whom these advocates for the law boasted as being their father (John viii. 39), is the one who was blessed apart from law on the ground of faith. Abraham believed God, and was consequently reckoned to be in a righteous condition before God. It follows, therefore, that those alone, who are blessed on the principle of faith, are the true sons of Abraham. Such is the testimony of Scripture, which, foreseeing that God would justify the nations on the principle of faith, anticipated the gospel when the word came to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." So then they which are on the principle of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

(V. 10.) We have seen in the history of Abraham that the Old Testament Scriptures clearly anticipate the *blessings* coming to the Gentiles on the principle of faith: now we are to learn that Scripture is equally definite as to the testimony that God rendered through Moses, which says, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Deut. 27: 26). It is evident that none have continued to do all things demanded by the law; therefore the testimony of Moses can only lead to the conclusion that to go back to the law for blessing is to come under the curse. It has been said, "The law exacts; it requires men to keep it; it must have obedience:

but it neither gives a nature that desires to keep it, nor strength to do it."

(Vv. 11, 12.) Such is the testimony of Moses, the law-giver. But what do the prophets say? Their witness is equally plain, for Habakkuk states, "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2: 4). Now it is evident that the law is not of faith, for it says, "The man that *doeth* them shall live in them" (Lev. 18: 5).

(V. 13.) Above all, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse by being made a curse for us; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deut. 21: 23). Christ bears our curse that we might receive blessing, and the promise of the Spirit, through faith in Christ.

Thus, to turn back to the law for blessing is to neglect the example that Scripture gives us in Abraham, to close our eyes to the testimony rendered by Moses the lawgiver, to ignore the witness of Habakkuk, the prophet. and, most solemn of all, to put a slight upon Christ.

(Vv. 15, 16.) In the remaining portion of the chapter we learn the connection between law and promise, and the true service of the law. We are reminded that the promise of blessing to the Gentiles on the principle of faith was made to Abraham and his seed. The apostle quotes the words of the Lord addressed to Abraham when he had offered up his son Isaac, and received him back in a figure from the dead. He is careful to show that the seed of which this Scripture speaks is Christ, of Whom Isaac when offered up was a type (Gen. 22: 17, 18).

(Vv. 17, 18.) This promise was made 430 years before the law was given. Whatever the purpose of the law, it evidently cannot set aside the unconditional promise of God. But if the inheritance of blessing be by the law, it would make the promise of none effect. This is impossible for God cannot go back on His word.

(Vv. 19, 20.) Seeing then that the blessing is secured by the sovereign grace of God that makes an unconditional promise, what purpose did the law serve? It came in because man is a sinner and proves him to be such, and that God is a holy God that cannot pass over sins. The law proves that if God bestows the blessing in sovereign *grace*, He does not do so at the expense of *righteousness*. Thus the law raises the question of righteousness, both the righteousness of men and the righteousness of God. It demands righteousness from man by telling him that his only course in relation to God and his fellow-men is to love God with all his heart and soul and spirit, and his neighbour as himself. But who has done this but our Lord Jesus Christ? Thus the law proves us to be sinners.

Having proved that we have no righteousness, it goes on to prove that the soul that sinneth must die, and thus that the righteousness of God demands the judgment of the sinner. It was added to prove that we are transgressors. It was ordained by angels, who did not directly bring God into display in all the glory of His love and grace, though making-known His Majesty. Moreover, it was not, like the promise, directly dependent upon God who made the promise. It was given through a mediator. But this supposes two parties, and that the proposed blessing depends upon the faithfulness of both parties in carrying out the conditions. Moses, the mediator, made known the terms of the law under which blessing depended upon obedience. At once the people accepted the terms by saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." But the promise to the Seed, Christ, depends entirely upon God Who is One, and in carrying out His promise acts wholly from Himself. Let us remember that here it is no question of Christ the Mediator, Who gave Himself a ransom for all, it is wholly a question of promise, and with that a mediator has nothing to say.

(Vv. 21, 22.) Is then the law against the promise of God? Far from it. The law demanded righteousness, but it gave no life. If it had given life it would have been possible to obey the law, and

righteousness would have been by the law and the blessing would have been obtained apart from any promise. But the law convicts of sin and shows that man cannot obtain the blessing by his own efforts, and thus proves the necessity of promise. Thus all are shut up under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

(Vv. 23-26.) Before faith came, that is Christianity, the Jews, during the period of law, were kept apart from the nations, in view of being justified on the principle of faith. In this sense the law held them in tutelage to conduct them to Christ, but Christianity being come they were brought into relationship with God by faith in Christ Jesus.

(Vv. 27-29.) Moreover, by baptism they had part in the profession of Christianity. Whether true believers or not, they had in baptism given up the ground of being Jews or Gentiles, slaves or freemen, and assumed the profession of Christianity and that they were united together as Christians. If then they were Christ's, they were Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise. Here, be it noted, the word "seed" is used in allusion to Genesis 11:i. 5, where the seed refers to all that believe.

Galatians 4

(Vv. 1-5.) Having shown the difference between law and promise, and the relation of one to the other, the apostle now contrasts the condition of believers under Christianity with that of godly believing Jews under law. During the period of the law there were indeed true children of God, as we know from John 11: 52; but they were scattered abroad and had no conscious sense of God as their Father, or of their relationship as sons. To illustrate this condition, the apostle likens them to a child who is the heir of a great inheritance, but while yet a child is under guardians and stewards, and has to obey. In this respect he is like a servant under bondage, even though he be lord of all. Even so, believers under law were hold in a spirit of bondage under principles which mark the world. Every natural man can understand a law which tells us what we are to do, and not to do, and that our blessing depends upon obedience to the law. It is a principle on which the world seeks to regulate all its affairs. It is, however, bondage to the believer; for while binding us down to obey in order to obtain blessing, it gives us no strength to carry out the demands of law. Moreover it gives no knowledge of the heart of the Father, nor access to the Father — the source of all blessing.

With "the fulness of time" all is changed. Did not the fulness of time come when man had fully manifested the evil of his heart, and entirely failed to answer to his responsibilities? When it was proved that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," and that all was over on man's side, then it was that God acted in pure sovereign grace by sending forth His Son, come of a woman, come under law.

The whole truth as to Christ's Person is presented in this short verse. He is a Divine Person — the Son; He is a true Man — "made of a woman"; He took up the responsibility of life on earth before God — "come under law."

Here then was One who know the Father, and could reveal the Father, for he is the Son. Here, too, was One who could redeem man from the bondage of the law, for having become Man under law, He perfectly kept the law that man had broken, and hence the law had no claim against Him. He is thus fitted to accomplish the great work of redemption by standing in the place of others who were under the curse of a broken law. This, blessed be His Name, He has done at the cross with the result that believers are redeemed from the condemnation of the law. No longer can the law say to the believer, "You have lusted, and you must die"; for the believer can point to the cross, and say, "It is true I have

broken the law and come under its curse; but Christ has died, and I am crucified with Him; I am therefore dead to the law and redeemed from its curse."

The claims of the law having been met, the way is clear for the believer to come into the blessing of a son, as the word says, "to receive sonship," not only to be a child, but to come into the place of liberty and favour that belongs to an heir.

(Vv. 6, 7.) Then, too, the portion of a son being given, we have also the Spirit. We do not receive the Spirit to make us sons; but being sons the Spirit is given to give us the conscious enjoyment of the relationship, so that we can say "Abba Father."

Moreover, if we are sons, we are also heirs of God. The glorious inheritance lies before us, but, even now, we can enjoy the relationship into which we are brought with the Father.

In these opening verses the apostle thus passes before us, firstly, the *incarnation* by which Christ comes into communication with all men as "come of a woman," and with the Jew, as born under law; secondly, *redemption*, by which, through the work of Christ, believers are redeemed from the curse of a broken law; and thirdly, *the coming of the Holy Spirit* to load us into the blessedness of our position as sons.

It is well to note how the glory of the Person of Christ, as the Son, is maintained. Again and again, through the ages, the Person of Christ has been attacked, and His eternal Sonship denied, by it being said that He only became the Son at His birth. In the effort to maintain this error it has been argued that the words "sent forth," in this passage, only refer to Christ as being sent forth after He had been born into the world. It is therefore well to notice that an exactly similar expression is used in this passage of the Holy Spirit. No one would dare to argue that, when we read "God *sent forth* the Spirit of His Son," it means that the Holy Spirit was not sent forth from heaven, and that the words only apply after He had come to earth. Is it not plain, to any one subject to the word, that the Holy Spirit "sent forth" from heaven was the Spirit before He came? In like manner does not this passage prove that the Son was sent forth from heaven, and was the Son before He became Man?

(Vv. 8-11.) Having described the liberty of believers in this Christian day, in contrast with the bondage of the children of God under law, the apostle appeals to these Galatian saints as to their folly in turning from such blessedness to the bondage of the law. Time was when they "knew not God" and served those who, even nature should tell them, "are no gods." By grace they had been brought into the liberty of knowing God as the Father, and yet more, to be known of God as sons. How great then the folly of bringing themselves into bondage by turning back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. They were observing days and months, and times and years, as if blessing could be secured by the observance of an outward ritual which the natural man, whether Jew or heathen, could carry out. It is true that in the Epistle to the Romans the apostle exhorts Gentile believers to have forbearance towards a Jewish believer who might still cling to the observance of special days and the refusal of meats. But here he shows that for a Gentile to return to the system that observes certain days and ceremonies will involve a return, not only to Judaism, but to the idolatry of heathenism.

If the apostle viewed these Galatians only in the light of what they were doing he might well stand in doubt as to whether they were true Christians, for it is not necessary to be a converted man in order to observe days and seasons. This is a solemn consideration for Christendom which has so largely fallen into the Galatian error by once again turning back to external ceremonies, and the observance of man-made holy days, with the result foreseen by the apostle that it has largely fallen, not only into Judaism, but also, into the idolatry of heathenism in its adoration of the saints and worship of images.

(Vv. 12-18.) Having appealed to them as to their folly, he now beseeches them in love. He begs them to be as he was, for, though by birth a Jew under law, he had become like the Gentiles, free from the law. They might, alas! through listening to false teachers, have changed their thoughts of the apostle and reproached him for giving up the law as the way of blessing, but such reproaches and insults he counted as no injury to his reputation as a Christian.

He then. reminds them of their love to him when at the first he came amongst them preaching the gospel. In those days they received him as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus, and this in spite of the fact that he was amongst them in weakness, without "excellency of speech or of wisdom," that would make an appeal to the natural man (1 Cor. 2). Moreover they had not despised him because of physical weakness. Indeed, such was their love to him that, if possible, they would have given him their own eyes to meet his bodily infirmities.

Where then was the blessedness of those early days of their first love? He had preached the truth in those days, and was telling them the truth in his epistle. Did they then view him as an enemy because he brought the truth before them?

Alas! the sad fact was that there were those in their midst who were seeking to set these saints against the apostle in order to exalt themselves. The zeal of such was not for the truth, or for the saints, but for themselves. Such is the flesh that, under cover of zeal for the Lord's people, we can, but for the grace of God, belittle others to exalt ourselves. If the zeal that they had shown to the apostle when present with them was right, it would surely be right to maintain it in his absence.

(Vv. 19, 20.) If, however, their feelings had changed toward the apostle, his affections had not altered toward them. As at first he had with deep exercise preached Christ amongst them, so now he travailed in birth, as it were, that they might be restored to first love, so that once again Christ might have His right place in their hearts. To this end he longed to be present with them, and speak to them in a different way. At the moment he stands in doubt of them and is thus constrained to speak with great plainness of speech.

(Vv. 21-26). The apostle now appeals to the law itself, to show the unreasonableness of turning back to it. If they would not hear the gospel, nor listen to the apostle, let them listen to the law to which they were turning. At once the apostle recalls the times of Abraham and uses some facts in his history as an allegory to teach us the contrast between the bondage of a believer under law and the liberty of a believer under grace. Abraham had two sons by different women, one a bondmaid and the other a free woman. The son by the bondmaid "was born after the flesh," entirely according to the will of man. The other by the free woman was born by the sovereign intervention of God.

These two women set forth the two covenants; one of law which makes the blessing depend upon man carrying out his part of the covenant; the other the covenant of promise in which the blessing for man depends entirely upon the sovereign grace of God. Moreover, the two sons set forth the two conditions that result from these covenants; the one a condition of bondage; the other of liberty. Further, these two covenants and the conditions that result are connected with Mount Sinai, where the law was given, and with Jerusalem which is above from which sovereign grace flows forth to the world.

(V. 27.) Jerusalem on earth, and her children, who boasted in the law, had through the law fallen into bondage, and having broken the law had become desolate. Nevertheless, the prophet Isaiah is quoted to show that, during the time of her desolation, there will be more children than when the city was owned as God's earthly centre. Is this not in the sense that the very city that proved man's guilt, became the place from which the gospel of the grace of God went out to all the world? The apostles

were told by the Lord, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem*" (Luke 24: 47).

(Vv. 28-31.) Turning again to his allegory, the apostle says that believers now are like Isaac, the children of promise. But as it was in the day when Isaac was weaned, Ishmael mocked, so now the one born according to the flesh and under bondage of law, will persecute the one born after the Spirit and in the liberty of grace. The flesh and the Spirit are ever opposed. It was so in Abraham's house, it is so in the world, and even in the heart of the saint. It was always the religious Jew that persecuted the apostle. The covenant of law and the condition of bondage, represented by the bondwoman and her son, are to be cast off; for we are not the children of the bondwoman, but the free.

Galatians 5

(V. 1.) If on the one hand, we are to "*cast out*" the bondwoman, and thus abandon the principle of seeking to obtain blessing under law, which can only lead to bondage, on the other hand, let us see that we "*stand fast* therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

(Vv. 2-4.) With great plainness of speech the apostle warns these Gentile believers. He was the apostle chosen to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and had been used to their blessing. For these reasons his word should have had greater weight with them than that of others. He seems to remind them of this by saying, "Behold, *I Paul say unto you*, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." To be circumcised meant that they put themselves under law, which involved that in order to obtain the blessing they must keep the law. In this case they deprive themselves of the blessing that grace provides through Christ and His work. As far as their experience went, Christ and His work had become nothing to them. They had fallen from grace.

(Vv. 5, 6.) The apostle proceeds to give a very beautiful summary of the true Christian state, in contrast to the state of those under law. It is characterised by "hope," "faith" and "love." We are not working in the hope of securing blessing; we are waiting for the glory that is secured by the work of Christ. It is not righteousness that we wait for, but the fulfilment of the hope that belongs to those who are already justified through faith in Christ Jesus. Being justified by faith we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5: 2). Righteousness gives me the glory, not simply grace. Under law, righteousness demands that I should be kept out of glory; for, not having kept the law, "all have sinned and come short of the glory." Under grace, righteousness demands that the believer should go into glory, even as righteousness is declared in setting Christ in the glory (John 16: 10). It is due to Christ that, through His work on the cross, believers should be with Him in glory.

By the earnest of the Spirit we can, even now, enjoy a foretaste by faith of the blessedness of this hope. "In Jesus Christ" circumcision can add nothing to the blessing, nor uncircumcision hinder the blessing. The believer, viewed as in Christ before God, is outside both Jewish and Gentile circles. This new position can only be apprehended by faith, and faith "worketh by love." The apostle has already said in his epistle, "I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who has *loved me*, and given Himself for me."

(Vv. 7-10.) In the early part of the epistle the apostle has clearly shown that in turning back to the law these believers had departed from the truth. From verse 7 to the end of the epistle he speaks of the effect of this evil upon their *practical walk*. He acknowledges that in time past, when subject to the truth, they did run well. But they had been hindered by listening to the persuasions of false teachers

who had brought trouble into their midst. The practical effect upon their walk and ways clearly proved that these troublers were not led by the God Who has called us to "run with patience the race that is set before us." Let us not forget that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Any departure from the truth, if unjudged, will lead to further decline, and the gradual deterioration of the whole body. Alas! does not the condition of Christendom, with its mixture of Judaism and Christianity, clearly show that it has become leavened with the Galatian evil? Looking only at the false teaching Paul foresaw that it would end in the whole company becoming corrupted. Nevertheless, the Lord was above all, and looking to the Lord gave the apostle confidence that in the end these saints would be brought to view these teachers and their false teaching with his mind — the mind of the Lord. As to these troublers the apostle was assured that they would have to bear the guilt and judgment of their subversive teaching.

How good for us all, in the difficulties that arise among the Lord's people, to look beyond the trouble and the troublers, and to see the Lord above all, the One Who can deliver His people from every snare and deal with those that cause the trouble.

(V. 11.) The apostle then touches upon that which made the teaching of these troublers so subtle. Already we have learnt that their underlying motive was to attract to themselves (Gal. 4: 17); now we learn that they did so by presenting a path to the saints that would free them from all persecution, and in which the offence of the cross would cease. Nothing can be more offensive to the religious Jew, under law, than the cross, for it is the complete condemnation of man before God, being the proof that the law is broken, and that man is under the curse. The preaching of the gospel, that in sovereign grace proclaims blessing through faith in Christ, will ever raise opposition from those who are trusting in their own works to obtain blessing. The apostle sees clearly that if we "obey the truth" the result will be persecution, however different the form it may take in the course of time.

(Vv. 12-15.) Seeing, then, the evil effect of this false teaching, the apostle can only wish that these troublers were cut off from the saints. His love for the truth and the welfare of believers made him intolerant of those whose teaching was destructive of Christian truth, robbing the saints of true liberty, and leading to practice, not only inconsistent with Christianity, but entirely contrary to the law to which they were turning back. "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But while the law demands love, it gives no ability to meet its demands; and, being holy, it can only condemn us, seeing we have all failed to meet its demands.

In contrast to the law, Christianity gives us a new nature that loves to obey and do the will of God, and a new power, the Holy Spirit, to carry out the desires of the new nature. This is liberty, not, indeed, to be used for an occasion to the flesh to exalt itself, but to serve one another. The flesh likes to be served; but love delights to serve. The self-righteousness that seeks to exalt itself by its own works has no love or compassion for others. As with these troublers, who had sought to set the saints against the apostle in order to attract to themselves (iv. 17), so the vanity of the flesh will ever lead to fault-finding, and the belittling of others, in the effort to exalt self. In this way strife and contention is raised among the people of God. And When once brethren start biting and devouring one another, they may well "take heed," for, if this spirit is unjudged, it will not be long before they are consumed one of another. Alas! how many companies of God's people have been broken up and scattered by individuals contending with one another, and insulting one another, rather than serving one another in love.

(Vv. 16, 17.) Now we are reminded that we can only escape the lusts of the flesh by walking in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is here to glorify Christ; the flesh seeks every occasion to gratify its vanity by exalting self. It is plain, therefore, that the flesh is opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit to the flesh. If walking in the Spirit — thinking, speaking, and acting in the Spirit — we shall be delivered from doing

the things that would be natural to us as fallen men.

The apostle does not say that if we walk in the Spirit, the flesh will not be in us, nor that the flesh will cease to lust and be in any way altered, but, if walking in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil its lusts. One has truly said, "The flesh strives to hinder us when we would walk according to the Spirit, and the Spirit resists the working of the flesh to prevent it from accomplishing its will." (J. N. D.).

(V. 18.) Moreover, if led of the Spirit, we are not under law. The Spirit has come to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. He leads us into occupation with Christ, the One Who has died for us and lives for us. The Spirit will not lead us under a law that makes demands upon us that we cannot meet, but under the influence of a love that passeth knowledge to which the new nature delights to respond.

(Vv. 19-21.) In the remaining verses of the chapter the apostle contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. It would appear that he sums up the works of the flesh under seven heads:

Firstly, he refers to the lusts of the flesh, "fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness" (N.Tn.)

Secondly, the superstition of the flesh, "idolatry" and "sorcery ":

Thirdly, the malice of the flesh, "hatred," leading to "strifes ":

Fourthly, the jealousy of the flesh, "jealousies," leading to "angers" and "contentions "

Fifthly, the reasoning of the flesh, leading to "contentions, disputes" and "schools of opinion ":

Sixthly, the self-love of the flesh, leading to "envyings" and "murders "

Seventhly, the worldly indulgence of the flesh, leading to "drunkenness, revellings, and such like."

Such is the terrible and unchanging character of the flesh, and those who live in these evils shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Let us remember that, seeing we have the flesh in us, and that it never alters, we have to dread the outbreak of the foulest sins, unless, in the power of the Spirit, our souls are occupied with Jesus, looking to Him for grace for every moment.

(Vv. 21-23.) If walking in the Spirit, we shall not only be preserved from "the works of the flesh," but we shall bring forth "the fruit of the Spirit." The flesh has its "works," but produces no fruit for God. The Spirit produces both good works and fruit; though, in this passage, the apostle speaks not of works, but of the beautiful Christian character from which all true work will flow. We are not all gifted, or called to be teachers and preachers, or to undertake great works. But "the fruit of the Spirit" is possible to all from the youngest to the oldest saint, and sets forth the essential condition for all true service.

" Love," "joy" and "peace" set forth the inward experience of the soul: "longsuffering" and "kindness," the attitude of soul towards others: "goodness" and "fidelity," the qualities that should actuate us in our dealings with others: "meekness" and "selfcontrol," the qualities that would lead us to consider patiently others, in contrast to the self-assertiveness of the flesh.

Against these Christ-like qualities there is no law. The law cannot control the flesh and cannot produce the blessed fruit of the Spirit, but this does not infer that the law is against these excellent qualities.

(Vv. 24-26.) Moreover, they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.

The true Christian position is that we accept the cross of Christ as the judgment of God upon the flesh, in order that we should no longer live by the flesh but "by the Spirit." If then we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit (N.Tn.). So walking we should not be vain-glorious, provoking the saints by envying one another.

Galatians 6

In contrast to the vanity of the flesh, of which the apostle has been speaking, and which provokes others and leads to envy, we are now exhorted to act in a spirit of love and grace to one another. Even if one be overtaken in a fault, let us seek to restore our failing brother, and do so in a right spirit. Let it not be in the spirit of the law which would naturally occupy us with our own good works and harden us towards our failing brother, but let it be in the spirit of meekness that gives us a sense of our own weakness while thinking tenderly of others.

(V. 2.) Moreover the spirit of grace and love would lead us, not merely to seek the restoration of a failing brother, but to enter into the sorrows of others and so help to relieve one another of the pressure of circumstances. So acting, we should be fulfilling "the law of Christ." We should be acting according to the law of love that marked His pathway. How tenderly He restored the failing disciples, when, with vain glory they provoked one another to strife, when they denied Him, and when all forsook Him (Luke 22: 24-32: Mark 14: 27, 28). How blessedly, in every step of His path, He entered into our sorrows, and served us in love, as we read, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 17). Following in His steps, we shall serve one another in love, and in so doing set forth something of the excellencies of Christ, the great end for which we are left in this world.

(V. 3.) The apostle then warns us against the selfimportance of the flesh that acts in a spirit so entirely contrary to the law of Christ. The law of Sinai, though exhorting us to love our neighbour as ourselves, of necessity occupies us with our own works, and this too often leads a man to think himself to be something. Thus it had been with these Galatian believers, who having turned back to law had become "desirous of vain glory," with the result that, in place of serving one another in love, they were biting and devouring one another, "provoking" and "envying one another." The apostle speaks with unfeigned contempt of those who boast themselves to be something when they are nothing. The one who acts thus deceives himself, but no one else. No man is so small as the man that thinks he is great. No one can boast in the presence of Christ. Out of His presence we may, like the disciples of old, strive amongst ourselves as to who shall be accounted the greatest: in His presence the Apostle himself owns that he is "less than the least of all saints" (Luke 22: 24: Eph. 3: 8).

(Vv. 4, 5.) Instead of deceiving ourselves by vain boasting, let us each test our own works. Are they works of law which magnify self, or works of love after the pattern of Christ? Paul had laboured in love in Galatia and the saints were the fruit of his work, and in that he can rejoice as belonging to himself. Others were using the apostle's work to exalt themselves and exclude him. Let us see that our works are true Christian works, that produce fruit in which we can rejoice. For each one is responsible for his own work, and in this sense "every man shall bear his own burden." Here, the word "burden" is a different word, in the original, to that translated "burden" in verse 2. In the first instance it has the sense of pressure which can be relieved or transferred to another. In this verse it implies a special load that has to be borne. We each are responsible for our own work and the result produced.

(V. 6.) Finally the apostle closes the exhortation as to our responsibilities to one another by reminding us to remember the needs of those who teach. Love will gladly seek to meet the temporal needs of those who minister to us the "good things" of the Spirit.

(Vv. 7-10.) The apostle now adds a solemn warning. He illustrates the government of God in our pathway through this world by the figure of sowing and reaping. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that, because we are Christians by the grace of God, we shall escape the results of our folly while in this life. "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." On the one hand, if we act in the flesh, we shall suffer, however much the mercy of God may mitigate the suffering when the failure is judged. On the other hand, to act in the Spirit will carry its bright reward not only down here but in the life everlasting. Therefore, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." In the presence of opposition and conflict we may faint, seeing little result of "well doing" we may grow weary, but let us press on, waiting God's "due season." "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126: 5, 6). Let us then seek to embrace every opportunity to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

(V. 11.) In closing his epistle the apostle presses upon these believers his deep anxiety for them by reminding them that he had written this long letter in his own handwriting, thus departing from his usual practice of having his letters transcribed and attaching his signature at the end.

(Vv. 12, 13.) Before closing he again makes a brief reference to the great subject of his epistle by once more exposing the character and motives of those who were troubling them. Already he has warned us that such were seeking to attract to themselves (Gal. 4: 17), actuated by a spirit of "vain glory" (Gal. 5: 26); now he plainly charges such with the "desire to make a fair show in the flesh," and thus to escape "persecution for the cross of Christ." Though circumcised, and thus making themselves responsible under law, they did not keep the law. But in pressing others to be circumcised they were linking them up with Judaism, and seeking thus to add to Jewish proselytes.

(V. 14.) Thus acting, these men sought to glory in a religious profession which brought them into favour with a world that had rejected Christ, and thus escape its persecution. In striking contrast, the apostle, representing the true Christian position, can say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Paul had no desire for the favour of a world that had crucified the Lord, who in love had died to save him: and the world did not want a man that gloried in the Lord that it had crucified.

(Vv. 15, 16.) The apostle, realising the blessedness of the Christian position, as set forth "in Christ Jesus," can state that to enter into this position it availed nothing to be either a circumcised Jew or an uncircumcised Gentile. It was entirely a question of a new creation, in which these earthly distinctions have no place.

To walk according to this rule — the rule of new creation — is to respond in faith to the grace that has called us, and to walk in consistency with this grace as dead to the law, the flesh, and the world (Gal. 2: 19; Gal. 5: 24; Gal. 6: 14). To such there will be peace and mercy, in their pathway through this world, not only upon the Gentile believers, such as the Galatians, but also "upon the Israel of God." The Israel of the flesh had crucified their Messiah, and come under judgment; the "Israel of God" were surely the godly remnant of the nation who by grace had believed and turned to the Lord. Mercy rested upon such.

(V. 17.) Having thus borne a faithful testimony to the truth, and against this solemn departure from the gospel he had preached to another gospel, which is not another, he can defy any man to trouble him by charging him with having sought the favour of the Jewish or Gentile world to escape persecution. If any man dared to question this let him look at the marks in his body which bore witness

to the suffering he had endured as proof of his faithfulness to the gospel he had preached.

(V. 18.) Feeling the intensely solemn departure from the truth that had taken place amongst these saints, the apostle closes his epistle without any of his usual affectionate greetings. Nevertheless he desires that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with them.