

GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

The apostle Paul is the author of Galatians. The very term "Galatia" had two meanings. The Roman province of Galatia embraced a very large section of Asia Minor. It had originally been populated by the Gauls from Western Europe.

Paul's first missionary tour was spent in the establishment of churches in the south part of the greater Galatian province, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe being among them.

There are the repeated references to Barnabas in a manner suggesting that he was fully known to the persons receiving this letter; and, of course, those churches of South Galatia were the only ones, as far as either secular history or the New Testament is concerned, in which Barnabas was a companion and helper of Paul.

The great crest of the Jewish-Christian confrontation reached its flood at the so called Jerusalem Council. (Acts 15)

Date: From the above, it is clear that the date of Galatians coincides very closely with that of the Jerusalem Council, which must be very near that of the year 50 A.D.

Theme: The vital and all-pervading theme of Galatians is that of the Law of Moses versus the Law of Christ, with its corollary of Justification by the Faith of Christ. The false doctrine which makes Galatians a charter of "salvation by faith alone" is nowhere visible in it, but on the other hand is thwarted and denied by every line of it.

JUSTIFICATION BY THE FAITH OF CHRIST

It is the "faith of Christ," not "faith in Christ" which Paul presented as the ground of justification. The true ground of justification is the perfect faith and obedience of the Son of God and never in a million years the mere subjective faith of sinners. Serious students of God's word should more and more concern themselves with this incredibly important truth. The faith and obedience of Christ achieved during His earthly ministry, "The righteousness of God in Christ." Men are saved through being "in Christ," fully identified with Christ, and "as Christ."

CHAPTER 1

This chapter contains Paul's salutation (verse 1-5), the dramatic introduction of his reason for writing the epistle, which was the developing apostasy of the Galatians (verse 6-10), a bold defense of his apostleship (verses 11-17), and the additional evidence of his independence and authority as an apostle (verses 18-24).

Verse 1

"Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles did not always stress his apostleship in the same manner.

False teachers who were stealing the Galatians away from the truth were challenging Paul's apostleship. Regarding the identity of those who were denying Paul's apostolic authority among the Galatians, it is clear enough that they were Judaizers.

"Not sent from men, nor through the agency of man This does not deny that human agency was involved in Paul's conversion, for he was baptized by Ananias. (Acts 22:12ff)

It should be noted that Paul was not here making a distinction between himself and the other true apostles in Jerusalem. R. A. Cole, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Galatians, p. 32 wrote: "For they did not owe their commission to man any more than he did." The truth affirmed here was two-fold, (a) Paul's apostleship was on a full equality with that of the twelve, and (b) it was genuine, as contrasted with that of the false teachers who were operating among the Galatians.

"Who raised Him from the dead . . . J. W. McGarvey, The Standard Bible Commentary, Galatians, p. 249, was surely correct in pointing out that by this reference to the resurrection of Christ, "Paul paved the way" for the principle theme of the epistle, which is justification through the faith of Jesus Christ, rather than by the Law of Moses.

Not going beyond the things written (1 Corinthians 4:6) was a caution which Paul faithfully honored. His gospel was revealed to him from on High. It was in no manner whatever any different from the gospel already being preached by the Twelve, except in the single particular of extending it to Gentiles.

Verses 2-3

"All the brethren . . ." does not imply that Paul discussed the situation in Galatia with his associates and that they concurred in his admonitions; on the contrary, John Wesley, One volume New Testament Commentary, in loco wrote: "This phase must be regarded as belonging exclusively to the greeting, and not to the exhortations which follow it."

"Churches of Galatia" It is remarkable that Paul did not address them as churches "of God" or "of Christ." James Macknight, op. cit., p. 108 said: "Possibly it was, because they did not deserve such honorable appellations because of their great defection."

Of deep significance are the titles of God and Christ in the third verse. Paul spoke of "the Father" when he had in mind the unique relationship between God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone in the New Testament referred to God as "my Father, but also taught his followers to say "our" Father. W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, ii, p. 274, i, 190 wrote: "Jesus" is the transliteration of the Hebrew name Joshua, meaning Jehovah is salvation, or Jehovah is Savior; and "Christ is the Greek rendition of the Hebrew word Messiah, meaning anointed."

"Lord" is the translation of a Greek term *Kurios*. The Christians from the very first, applied the term to Christ in the sense of absolute Deity. Thus Thomas said of Christ, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:29); Peter on Pentecost preached of Jesus that God had made Him Lord" (Acts 2:36); and again, in the home of Cornelius, said "He is Lord of all." (Acts 10:36)

Verse 4

"Who gave Himself for our sins . . ." The essential Christian doctrine of Christ's vicarious sacrifice of Himself to save men from sin is here emphasized in order to contrast the true source of salvation in Christ with the false premise of the Judaizers which made redemption to depend upon observing forms and ceremonies of the Law of Moses.

Paul noted that Christ's giving Himself was according to the will of God. The word "ransom" is used of this sacrifice. William Sanday, op. cit., p. 427 observed: "It was a sacrifice for sinners, wrought in their behalf, a sacrifice wrought in their stead. He suffered in order that they might not suffer."

Paul's stressing this here, James Macknight, op. cit., p.109 said: "Was for the purpose of convincing the Galatians that the pardon of sin was not to be obtained by the Levitical atonements, nor by any service prescribed in the Law."

"He might deliver . . ." suggests rescue from a state of utter helplessness.

"This present evil age, the world is evil in the sense of its population being largely dominated by the influence of Satan. (1 John 5:19)

The pagan culture of the ancient Roman Empire represented the culmination of long centuries of mankind's turning away from God and walking in darkness.

Verse 5

The paramount function of all created things is to glorify God. It is true of the material universe. "The heavens declare the glory of God." (Psalm 19:1) It is true of the angels; for when they appeared at the birth of Christ, their song was "Glory to God in the highest." (Luke 2:14)

Since the very purpose of man's existence is to glorify God, it follows that when man circumvents or countermands this purpose, he forfeits his right to live. Man cannot rise in his own strength alone, but must place his hand in the hand of the Creator, and, like Enoch of old, learn to walk with God. How profound is the thought that man at last may attain eternal fellowship with the Father.

Verse 6

William Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 37 pointed out that it was Paul's usual manner to: "Commend before he began to condemn," but here is nothing like that here.

"So quickly deserting Him The present tense indicates that the defection of the Galatians was well under way and still going. There are several meanings of this clause: (a) J. W. McGarvey, op. cit., p. 250 said: "It refers to moral speed," that is, they were more quickly accepting the false teaching than they had accepted the gospel at first; (b) John Wesley, op. cit., in loco said: "It means, "so soon after Paul's visit to them," or (c) it means, "So soon after their conversion."

The reason why Paul speedily moved to attack and destroy the rampant heresy involved a number of facts, the details of which he would set forth in the

bulk of the epistle. F. Roy Coad, A New Testament Commentary, p. 446 said: "The new teaching was retrograde, a return to bondage (5:1)."

To surrender to the Judaizers was to reduce Christianity to the status of merely another quarreling Jewish sect; and to encumber Christianity with the burdensome traditions of the Jewish legal system was to negate the glory of the cross of Christ and to make the death of Christ on Calvary of no effect. It should be constantly borne in mind that the error Galatians was designed to correct was that of grafting Judaism into Christianity. There is absolutely nothing in this letter which may legitimately be construed as the stressing of "faith only" as opposed to "faith and obedience" as proclaimed in the Christian doctrine, but defending the true doctrine already known and preached, from the encroachments of Judaism. Some of the comment one encounters regarding Galatians misses this very important point.

Verse 7

Regarding the exact meaning, William M. Ramsay, A Historical Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, p. 264 wrote: "A different gospel which is nothing else save that there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

There is no hint in this passage that Paul actually considered Judaism "another gospel" in any genuine sense.

A New Testament writer flatly declared that men are not justified "by faith alone" (James 2:24); and no scholar had a right to contradict the New Testament.

Note: Any person familiar with the meaning of ordinary words must know that salvation "by faith alone" means salvation without obeying the Christian ordinances, without holiness, without moral conduct, without respect for any Christian duty, without the church and without the new birth or anything else.

Such is the meaning of the word "alone" or its equivalent "only."

"There are some who are disturbing you. W. E. Vine, op. cit., p. 157 stated that the word thus rendered by his verse means: "Subverting the souls of believes by evil doctrine."

Verse 8

Paul's indignation here stood upon the very highest ground. John Wesley, op. cit., in loco, said: "It is not on account of antagonism to himself, but

antagonism to the truth. Though he himself should fall away from it, the truth must still be supreme."

"An angel from heaven . . ." J. W. McGarvey, *op. cit.*, p. 251 pointed out that the word of Christ was superior to that of angels who had ministered the old covenant, and: "The sayings of Jesus were weightier than the words of angels in this very respect." This probably accounts for Paul injecting the thought of angels into this passage. Also, as R. A. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 42 wrote: "Paul may be using this word to show them the possibility of Satan himself appearing as an angel of light to deceive them."

"Let him be accursed . . ." Some have sought to soften the meaning of this word, but there can be no doubt that it is the strongest curse that can be uttered, having the meaning of "yielded up to the wrath of God, surrendered to the curse of God. (Herman N. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 50)

"Gospel . . . preached to you" It is a gross error to suppose that Paul's gospel was different from that proclaimed by all the Twelve, although it is true that Paul had a more accurate understanding of its being for Gentiles and not restricted to Jews only.

Paul did not say, "The gospel I preach but, the gospel we preach." J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.* p. 947 affirmed that the "we," both here and in the following verse is epistolary," (suitable to letter writing)

Verse 9

In this verse Paul applied the curse concretely to the false teachers operating among the Galatians at that very moment. This progression from the general to the specific dramatically emphasized the fatal danger of surrendering to Judaism.

Verse 10

"Seeking the favor of men Paul brought into view in these words the bitter human opposition that accompanied his preaching everywhere he went. Arthur W. Pink, *op. cit.*, p. 74 said: "His patient endurance made manifest that he was a genuine minister of Christ." "If I were still trying to please men. . ." The adverb here marks the contrast between his position before and since conversion." The adverb here "marks the contrast between his position before and since conversion." W. J. Conybeare, *The Life and Epistles of Saint Paul*, p. 480) Yes, when Paul was a Pharisee, he attempted to serve God and please men at the

same time, but no such thing was possible for the Christian apostle. "Bond servant of Christ . . ." The word actually means "servant" or "slave"; and with Paul it was no pious pretense. He truly served the Lord.

Verses 11-12

Paul's affirmation that he possessed a personal revelation from the Lord of glory which had endowed him with full and complete knowledge of the gospel was indeed bold and astonishing. There has not arisen another like him since the New Testament times. None of the so-called "inspired" leaders of current times is worthy to be compared with Paul.

Paul would at once offer proof to substantiate so bold a declaration; and, first of all, he appealed to the record which was open and to be read of all men concerning what the gospel had wrought in his own amazing life.

Verses 13-14

In these two verses, William Hendricksen, op. sct., p.52, wrote, "Paul was saying that no human persuasion could ever have been able to impart the gospel to such a confirmed and ferocious persecutor."

Only the power of God could have done such a thing. And what was that power? It was noted above that the Spirit of God through the enabling power to work miracles had confirmed the fact of Paul's having the revelation from Christ (verse 12); but it should be carefully noted that the Holy Spirit, even in the Twelve, was not that of conveying God's truth to them, but that of helping them to remember the truth Christ conveyed; and the same fact is in evidence with reverence to the revelation Paul had received from Christ, not from the Holy Spirit.

The proposition that the Holy Spirit operated upon Paul directly, independently of the word which Christ delivered to humanity, is a contradiction of everything in the New Testament. If the Spirit could have done such a thing; it would not have been necessary at all for Christ to have come into this world in the first place, nor would it have been necessary for Him to appear personally to Saul of Tarsus. Paul received a full knowledge of the gospel in exactly the same manner as the Twelve received it, that is, from Christ Himself, as Paul affirmed in verse 12; and the function of the Holy Spirit in Paul was to enable Paul to remember all that Jesus said, exactly in the case of the Twelve. (John 14:26)

"I used to persecute the church of God . . ." This went even further than many Pharisees were willing to go. Everett F. Harrison, Wycliffe Bible Commentary page 695 said: "The ravening wolf of Benjamin" was "trying to destroy the church."

"I was advancing in Judaism. Judaism includes both the divine original as conveyed through Moses and the prophets and also that incredibly large body of traditions and elaborations of it which had been added by the religious hierarchy of Israel, the latter coming in time to surpass (in their eyes) the importance of the God-given law itself, making it "of no effect." (Mark 7:13; Matthew 15:16)

Paul's here speaking of Judaism as something apart from Christianity shows that within two decades after the resurrection of Christ the term had come synonymous with opposition to Christianity. However, since Jews were the first Christians and have always been welcome to accept Christ, the term "Jews," as used here and extensively in John, has religious rather than racial overtones. "Church of God Paul also referred to the community of believers as the church of Christ; and apparently the reason for making it "church of God" in this place was to emphasize that the church was not merely that of Christ but also, in view of Christ's oneness and equality with God (a fact the Judaizers at work among the Galatians would deny), the Christians were the congregation of God, no less than being the church of Christ.

"Extremely zealous Acts 9:1 and 22:4 reveal the murderous and fantastic persecution Paul mounted against Christianity, resulting in the death of "both men and women." Paul's hatred of the church sprang from the vivid accuracy which he saw in the true nature of Judaism, the typical forms and ceremonies of which are simply not reconcilable with Christianity. The very heart of the sacred Law itself was typical and preparatory by nature; and Paul's favorite words regarding it were "abrogated, done away, taken away, annulled, etc." It was this aspect of Christianity, truly understood, which so antagonized and enraged Saul of Tarsus. As soon as he accepted Christ, he accepted the very first corollary of that faith, that is, as far as worshipping Almighty God is concerned, it is all over and done with for Judaism.

Verses 15-17

The revelation which Jesus Christ gave personally to Paul was exactly the same as that given to the Twelve. Paul did not claim superiority to them but

equality with them and that implies the equality of the revelation to himself with that of the Twelve.

It should be carefully noted that the revelation did not "flash into Paul's mind," as some claim; but it was conveyed personally by Jesus Christ our Lord..

"Called me through His grace . . . It was not the Holy Spirit which called Paul, for Paul himself taught that the Spirit was an endowment only of those already sons of God; and, as always in the New Testament, the call of God means God's invitation accepted. Paul became a Son of God in the same manner as all Christians, by believing, repenting, confessing Christ and being baptized into Him. (Acts 22:16)

"I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. The meaning is, "I did not confer with any human being." Paul did not apply to the Twelve for permission to accept his call from Christ to the apostleship.

Nothing of the length of time Paul spent in Arabia is known except that from the time of his conversion at Damascus and his preaching in that city for an undetermined length of time, till his escape from the plot under Aretas, was three years, including the sojourn in Arabia.

Verse 18

Paul noted that it was three whole years after he had become a preaching apostle and that even then he saw only Peter and James. William M. Ramsey, *op. cit.*, p. 283 says the word "visit" here was "used by those who go to see great and famous cities."

Paul went to see two of the most distinguished persons in the early church in the same way one would go to see any celebrity.

That so busy and distinguished a person as Peter would have devoted an entire fifteen days to Paul show that he received and entertained him as an equal, and not merely as some appellant seeking a favor.

Verses 19-20

"Except James . . ." The frequent persecutions might have caused the other apostles to be absent from the city; or they might have been engaged in various preaching missions in Judaea.

"James the Lord's brother." This was one of the persons mentioned as brothers and sister of Jesus, that is, children born to Mary and Joseph.

"Before God, I am not lying . . ." Paul considered the information he conveyed here as paramount in importance and appealed to God who knows the hearts of all men, indicating the absolute truth and sincerity of his words.

Verse 21

Tarsus is the chief city of Cilicia; and that was exactly where Luke says Barnabus found Paul and brought him to Antioch, the capital city of Syria; and the fact of the order of Paul's going those places (in Acts) was Cilicia and Syria. Since it had been at Antioch in Syria, where Paul had bestowed the new name on the followers of Christ. (Acts 11:26)

Verse 22

There is a distinction between Judaea and Jerusalem. In all probability, Paul would not have been in that city some two or three Lord's days without visiting the church there; but, as the Jews were trying to kill him, it could be that he had attended worship as inconspicuously as possible.

"In Christ This is one of the most meaningful phrases in the New Testament. Raymond T. Stamm, op. cit., p. 464 said that: "It is Paul's most unique phrase, being used 164 times in Paul's letters."

Herman N. Ridderbos, op. cit. p. 72 wrote: "As a matter of fact, this in Christ represents, in a remarkable and comprehensive way, the whole profound view which Paul unfolds in his letters concerning the significance for believers of the salvation that has appeared in Christ."

All Christians are those, and those only, who have been "baptized into Christ."

Verse 23

Nothing in the New Testament more emphatically nails down the fact that Paul did not bring a "brand-new way of salvation." The gospel he preached was exactly the truth he persecuted.

If one might be permitted to speculate upon the reason why Almighty God moved to supplement the personnel of the original Twelve by the addition of Paul, the reason must be sought in the fact that in one essential particular the Twelve did not fully comprehend the absolute freedom (a term Paul himself used to describe the break in Romans 7:1ff) of Christianity from the totality of Judaism.

Paul never went beyond Jesus' revelation to the Twelve, except in the application of the gospel to all men, and to Gentiles in particular, instead of merely to Jews. Peter, for example, on Pentecost had plainly declared that the gospel was for "them that are afar off," obviously meaning Gentiles. J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.*, p. 948 wrote: "Preacheth the faith proclaims the necessity of trust in Christ as the sole essential to salvation."

Paul was reaching the same gospel Peter preached, and Peter commanded believers to "repent and be baptized" in order to receive remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)

Verse 24

Arthur W. Pink said: "To honor that blessed One whose we are and whom we serve, to so conduct myself that fellow saints glorify God in me, that is to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." (Titus 2:10)

Herman N. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 74 commented on the fact that the churches of Judea glorified God in Paul, despite their having suffered so much at his hands. How different the attitude among the Galatians who had received only good from Him."

R. A. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 59 accurately pointed out the reason why those in Judaea glorified God in Paul, said: "They recognized his gospel at once as that which they had preached."

THOUGHTS REGARDING ANOTHER GOSPEL

Paul's times were not unique in producing advocates of "another gospel," which in reality is no gospel." but falsehood.

Some advocate the gospel of salvation by morality, supposing that the only requirement for eternal life is to live respectably before one's contemporaries. Others advocate the gospel of an infallible church, whereas no church was ever infallible, not even any that were founded, or planted, by the apostles themselves, as detailed in the first chapters of Revelation. Still others preach the gospel of salvation by faith only, notwithstanding the fact that such a so-called gospel is anti-scriptural, delusive, deceitful and contrary to everything in the New Testament. The great fad of our own times is the gospel of humanism, which deifies man himself, leaves the Son of God completely out of consideration.

Contrasting with all such false gospels is the only one true and eternal gospel of Jesus Christ revealed in the New Testament; and if one desires to know what it is and receive its blessings, he must find it there, and having found it: (a) believe the great facts it reveals, (b) obey its commandments, and (c) receive its glorious promises! Amen!

CHAPTER 2

Two major divisions of this chapter are:

- (1) Paul's appeal to the fact that fourteen years after his conversion, the leading apostles in Jerusalem fully endorsed his preaching and extended to him the right hand of fellowship (1-10), and
- (2) that in one very important particular he had withstood the apostle Peter face to face, exposing his sin and hypocrisy, the obvious conclusion from such an incident being that (in one particular at least) he was superior to the apostles in Jerusalem (11-21).

Around these major themes of the chapter, however, Paul wove some of the most important theological principles revealed in the New Testament, introducing the main theme of Galatians in 2:16, which is "Justification by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Law of Moses."

Verse 1

The "fourteen years" here means fourteen years after his conversion. He left out of consideration altogether a trip to Jerusalem which he and Barnabas had made to deliver famine relief "to the elders" in Jerusalem (Acts 11:30); but the trip came about the time when Peter was imprisoned, James had been martyred and all the apostles were in hiding, it could have had no bearing whatever on what Paul was emphasizing here.

"I went up again to Jerusalem has the simple meaning of "upon another occasion I went up to Jerusalem." In these verses is the so-called Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1ff), and that there is no need to identify it as the famine visit of Acts 11:30. Everett F. Harrison, *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 698, asked, "If the question of the admission of Gentiles into the church had been settled on the famine visit, why was another conference necessary to settle the same question?"

"Titus ... Barnabas" It should be noted that Paul, in order to avoid assuming any domination over Barnabas, stated that he went "with" him; whereas, in the case of Titus, one of his faithful followers, he referred to "taking him."

One of Paul's purposes was to prove that he properly respected and honored those who were apostles before him; and as William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 16, noted, "To prove that his independence was not anarchy, nor schismatic and sectarian, but that his gospel was indeed no other than the faith delivered to the church."

Verse 2

"A revelation From Luke." (Acts 15:2) It is clear that the church in Antioch commissioned Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem; but from this it is learned that Paul went by "revelation." James Macknight, *Apostolic Epistles with Commentary and Notes*, p.122 said, "If the church at Antioch was directed by Divine revelation to send Paul and Barnabas on this mission, he could justly say he went by revelation."

There is also the possibility that Paul, at first, would not go, until specifically commanded by Christ to do so. It is a fact that Christ personally stood by Paul on occasions. (Acts 22:18)

Paul's reasons for going were not for the purpose of straightening out the error that, for the moment, that was rampant in the church in that city. There is nothing in this whole episode that reveals "the Mother Church settling important matters of doctrine."

"Submitted to them Paul's efforts here were directed to the purpose of correcting false views prevalent in the church in Jerusalem. Herman N. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 81, wrote, "This does not mean that Paul had begun to feel insecure about his gospel." It was an effort to unify the church.

"Who were of reputation" Paul's mention of this, using similar and somewhat more emphatic terms, no less than four times in this passage would definitely suggest that very possibility.

"Did so in private" There were private discussions which took place before the public and more formal meeting later on. David Lipscomb, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles*, p. 203, said, "These private consultations were a wise precaution to avoid misunderstanding. Such private conferences are

usually held in connection with public assemblies for the purpose of preparing and maturing business for final action."

"That I might be running, or had run, in vain" If the Twelve had repudiated Paul's gospel, it would, in a sense, have nullified his whole life's work, making it to be largely "in vain." Paul definitely did not mean here that he had any question regarding his own redemption.

Verses 3-5

F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions*, p. 103, said, "The apostle's language here is somewhat ambiguous, making the interpretation go be: The first time I took Titus to Jerusalem the question was not even raised; but at a later time, the false brethren spied on us and demanded that he be circumcised; but we refused to do so, etc."

Even under pressure from the demands initiated by the false brethren, Titus was not circumcised, the mention of the false brethren being for the purpose of showing how the question came up. Paul absolutely refused to have Titus circumcised; and that, even if pressure was applied to Titus personally, he also refused to accommodate the Judaizers.

"To spy out our liberty" The Judaizing party in the church were prepared to go to any lengths to enforce law-keeping and circumcision upon all who became Christians, whether Jew or Gentile.

"Liberty which we have in Christ Jesus" The liberty which Paul had in view here was primarily freedom from the ceremonials of Judaism; but there is a notable and extensive freedom "in Christ" from all encumbering religious devices. The grand ordinances of Christianity are only two in number, that is, baptism and the Lord's Supper; and one of these is observed only once at the beginning of the Christian life.

It was not freedom from Christ's commandments that Paul taught, but freedom from the forms and ceremonies of Judaism. (Matthew 5:19)

E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 74, wrote that the contrast between the teaching of Paul and the teaching of men is observable in the following:

PAUL: The binding of circumcision and Jewish ceremonial upon Christians violates the truth that the Christian religion is all that is needed for salvation . . . TRUE."

MEN: The binding of circumcision, etc., nullified the truth that faith in Christ is the sole and sufficient ground of justification . . . FALSE."

Verse 6

"Those who were of high reputation" Paul does not here question the legitimate reputation and prominence of the Twelve, but he is careful not to admit any lack of equality with them on his own behalf. R. E. Howard, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Vol. IX, p. 41, said, "He did not want to imply total submission to their judgment, or deny his own unique and divinely given authority."

"God shows no partiality" No man's opinion should be received merely upon the basis of who he is, his position in life, of any office he holds. Even Jesus our Lord did not require men to believe Him upon the basis that God had given Him a message, and that the message of God was what He taught.

Not even an apostle should be believed as a man but as a true messenger of God. How differently are the sayings of men urged upon us, today. A bishop has spoken, a pope has circulated an encyclical, the head of a church has spoken, or a general conference has decided it, etc.

"Contributed nothing to me" Paul was the one who imputed the truth on that occasion, not the so-called council. How amazing is a comment like this: Raymond T. Stamm, *op. cit.*, p. 474, wrote, "Contributed nothing to me . . . Paul does not mean that he received from them nothing essential for his gospel. What Paul did mean, namely, that the council made no contribution of any kind whatever to the gospel he preached, to the revelation of Christ which he had received or to anything whatever that concerned Paul.

The council made no contribution whatever to the gospel, the great result of the meeting being that they received Paul's views in their entirety and began to preach as they should have been doing already.

The question of whether Gentiles were to be circumcised had long ago been revealed to the Twelve, as well as to Paul. Peter himself had received into full fellowship the uncircumcised Cornelius, baptizing him into Christ, and defending the action against some who questioned it. (Acts 10 and 11)

Verses 7-8

"Gospel to the uncircumcised to the circumcised" E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 75, was correct in the observation that, "This does not indicate any diversity in

the doctrine communicated to the uncircumcision from that communicated to Jews, but simply a diversity in the sphere of its proclamation."

The marvelous tenderness and forbearance of the Heavenly Father are fully in view in all of these remarkable events. The failure of the apostleship in Jerusalem to get on with preaching the gospel "to the whole creation" as Christ had commanded them to do (Mark 16:15-16), was the most deplorable sin they ever committed. For God to have permitted the Judaizing of Christianity would have been, in its final result, the restriction of salvation to Jews alone; and the entire premise of God's loving all men and desiring their salvation would have been countermanded and nullified. The intervention of God Himself at such a juncture was the only way to correct it.

The weakness of the Twelve, springing from their environment, and their failure (at first) to understand the worldwide, independent nature of Christianity, was contained by Almighty God in those events clustered around the name of Paul; and with infinite mercy and tenderness, the Father did not remove or punish the Twelve, but on the other hand, committed the preaching the Gentiles to one more able than themselves to do it. Later on, of course, the Twelve took up and discharged fully their total responsibility.

Verse 9

James and Cephas and John James the brother of John had already been slain by Herod (Acts 12), and this James was the oldest brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55f), which probably accounts for his influence in the Jerusalem church at this time.

"Were reputed to be pillars" There is a hint here that their specific behavior with regards to the Gentiles was unbecoming.

"The right hand of fellowship" Despite their own defection, they nevertheless unhesitatingly agreed that Paul was preaching the pure and unadulterated gospel, a thing which they, through timidity, at the moment were not doing; and some little time would elapse before they would.

Verse 10

Paul mentioned this as a practical matter and with a view to alerting the Galatian churches that they might expect him to raise money from them to be distributed among the poor. On Paul's final visit to Jerusalem, he delivered such a contribution to James and the elders in Jerusalem. (Acts 21:17)

THE CONFRONTATION WITH PETER

The next eleven verses (11-21) were written, it seems, to emphasize, not merely that Paul's gospel had been approved by the Twelve, but that in one grave particular, he preached the true gospel even when it was opposed by such men as Peter and even Barnabas. J. R. Dummelow, Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 949, wrote, "Some hold that Saint Paul in this passage is not mentioning a later instance of his independence, but merely another instance of it which was earlier in time than that mentioned in verses 1-10."

Favoring that understanding are the indefinite "when Cephas came to Antioch" (verse 11), and the "before that" of verse 12, which may be Paul's way of saying that the episode he was about to relate happened "before" the one just recorded.

Verse 11

"He stood condemned" Peter was not merely condemned by a fellow apostle, he was self-condemned, his own conscience reproving and repudiating his actions. Paul stated in Romans 2:1, the principle that holds a man self-condemned if he practices what he condemns in others. This Peter did, for he advocated eating with Gentiles in Acts 10; but here he refused to do so.

Before going any further with this sad failure of their beloved Peter, it should be brought to mind that this was only a momentary thing.

Henry H. Halley, Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 561, wrote, "It took a few years for the apostles to get adjusted to the new teaching; and Paul had adjusted more quickly than Peter did. The Galatian incident happened after Paul had come all the way out of Judaism, and while Peter was coming out. But Peter did come all the way out before any of the books of the New Testament were written, and there is not an iota of difference between the teachings of Paul and Peter in the New Testament."

Verses 12-13

"From James" In Acts 15, it is learned that these Judaizers actually had no commission whatever from James (Acts 15:24), yet they were sinfully and deceitfully operating in his name.

The identity of these Judaizers is provided in Acts 6:7, 15:5, where it is made clear that they were priests of the sect of the Pharisees who had accepted

the gospel, but were unwilling to give up the customs and ceremonies of Judaism.

Paul here made extenuating remarks regarding the conduct of both Peter and Barnabas, Peter's mistake being due to fear of the powerful Pharisaical party and Barnabas being that he was just "carried away" with it in a moment of weakness.

Verse 14

"I said to Cephas in the presence of all" This bold rebuke administered by Paul to Peter may not be taken as a relaxation of Jesus' rule that the brother having sinned should first be approached privately.

It is not certainly known that Paul had not already , in this case, taken the steps of the first and second admonitions, as he had instructed Titus to do (3:10); but no matter what Paul did, it is the instruction to Titus that more correctly fits the analogy with church leaders today.

Verses 15-16

This passage announces the great theme of Galatians, which is Justification by the Faith of Christ.

Note: Strong voices have for years been crying out against the perversion down to men in the Greek New Testament. Foy E, Wallace, Jr., A Review of the inherent in changing God's word to read otherwise than the way it is handed New Versions, p. 509, decried the butchering of the passage at hand thus, "In this verse (Galatians 2:16), "by the faith of Christ" is changed to "only through faith in Christ;" but "the faith of Christ" refers to the gospel system of faith, and they have manipulated this passage to teach justification by faith only, going so far as to change "the works of the law (the law of Moses) to deeds dictated by law;" yet faith itself is a law. Romans 3:27 A committee of text-makers who will artfully twist such a specific gospel passage to implement the false doctrine of faith alone will do anything in the name of translation."

Great scholars have demanded that this passage be translated correctly as "the faith of Christ." The usual definition of faith as the word is used in the New Testament is not trust/faith as usually thought , but "faithfulness," in the sense of "obedience," "reliability," or "fidelity."

Thus the "faith of Christ" includes both his own trust/faith in the heavenly Father, and his perfect obedience and fidelity in the discharge of his mission of

redemption. The doctrine of salvation through faith only is wrong on many counts. It is wrong in misunderstanding the sinner's trust/faith as the ground of justification, whereas it is actually the obedient faith of the Son of God; and even in the Lord's case, it was not faith only, but faith and perfect obedience. It is totally wrong to regard "faith in Christ" as reference to the theological concept of trust/faith, or subjective faith of the sinner; because as noted by George Howard, Article: "The Faith of Christ," in Expositor Times, Vol. 7, p. 212-214, "The usual definition in the New Testament is not that at all, but fidelity (faithful devotion)."

Let the key expression "in Christ" be given its proper emphasis, and it at once is clear that no man who ever breathed has "faith in Christ" when he himself has refused to be baptized into Christ, in which case he might have faith "out of Christ," but not "in Christ."

Another legitimate meaning of "faith in Christ" is faith exercised by one who is "in Christ," having been baptized into Him, made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and fully identified as a member of Christ's spiritual body the church.

"The faith of Christ" meaning His perfect fidelity and obedience, is actually the ground of man's redemption. Absolute perfection is required of all who would be saved (Matthew 5:48), a state that is not attainable by any man who ever lived, save only Jesus Christ our Lord. Perfection, being the sine qua non without which, none shall enter eternal life, how may it be procured and in a sense achieved by man?

God's device of making one perfect, in the sense of being absolutely justified, is that of transferring him into Christ, identifying him with Christ and as Christ a transference and identity achieved on behalf of the Christian when he is in the spiritual body of Christ. Thus, Paul could say, "That we may present every man perfect in Christ." (Col. 1:28) As Paul would say a little later in this chapter, the life which the Christian lives is not his own, but Christ's. (Verse 20)

"Even we have believed in Christ Jesus" This is sinner's faith, introduced into the passage after the "faith of Christ" was mentioned just ahead of it; and if "faith of Christ" meant a sinner's believing in Christ, this clause would not have been added.

"Works of the Law" refers to Jewish ceremonials in the Law of Moses and has no reference whatever to the ordinances of the Christian religion and to moral obligations and duties of Christians.

Verse 17

Paul had just laid down the gospel that we are justified by the faith of Christ; and, in order to prevent any man from thinking that his own fidelity and compliance with Christ's teaching were not needed, Paul effectively denied such a thought with this verse. Christians are not saved in their sins but from their sins. And holiness is an attainment without which no man shall see the Lord. This does not imply that one has to be perfect, an impossibility anyway, but it does teach that a man must do his best to serve God. God will supply whatever is lacking on the Christian's part, so that at last every man shall be accounted "saved by grace" and not by any merit whatever.

Verse 18

William Hendriksen, *op. cit.*, p. 101, paraphrased the meaning of this as: "If I start to rebuild the very things I have torn down, it is then that I prove myself a transgressor."

"What I have once destroyed" would be the ceremonial regulations of Judaism; and Paul here stated that it would be sinful if again he reverted to their observance.

Verse 19

"Live to God is to be in Christ who lives at God's right hand" Where Christ is, there the Christian is; for because of his membership in Christ's spiritual body, there is a sense in which he "is Christ." Christ died, therefore we have died in His person on Calvary as our substitute. That is what Paul meant by saying, "We are baptized into His death."

Through the Christian's being "in Christ," and identified with Christ, he has already perished upon the cross in the person of his substitute. "Being dead to sin but alive unto God in Christ" (Romans 6:11) has a meaning parallel with this verse.

The Romans passage does not mean that "in Christ" the Christian is, no longer tempted; but that "in Christ" the penalty of sin, which is death, is already paid upon behalf of the Christ who died on the cross. Here the thought is that "in Christ" Christians have already fulfilled all of the law, since that is what Christ did; and we are "in Him" and "of Him." Also, there is here the thought that men are dead to the law through the body of Christ.

Verse 20

"No longer I who live" This touches the incredibly important truth that no man is ever saved in his own personal identity as possessing any true righteousness. All of the righteousness of God is in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3) He must renounce self and become identified with Christ who is righteous.

"As Christ," therefore, he is dead to sin, has fulfilled the law, is alive unto God, and the heir of eternal glory "in Christ."

This forsaking of one's identity to be Christ, in a sense, in Christ was announced by Christ Himself, who said, "If any one wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24)

Also, He said, "Abide in Me, and I in you." As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, if anyone does not abide in Me . . . cast them into the fire." (John 15:4-6)

Therefore, if a man is able to answer two questions affirmatively, there is no way he can be lost.

- (1) Is he "in Christ?" (The only way to be "in Christ" is to be baptized into Him.)
- (2) Will he be found in Him"? (Philippians 3:9) This means, will he still be "in Christ" when life ends, or the Lord comes?

The person described by affirmative answers to these questions is of them concerning who the voice from heaven said, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." (Revelation 14:13)

Verse 21

The great problem existing from the day man first committed sin is, "How can even God justly declare a human being to be righteous." That the Law of Moses could not do it is an axiom. If true righteousness could have been procured by any man who ever lived on earth through means of the Mosaic Law, Christ's death would not have been necessary.

"And how does God justly account a man to be righteous" It is not by shooting righteousness into him gratuitously because he believed, but by transferring the sinner into Christ who IS righteous, the sinner first of all renouncing his own identity, in the sense of having any merit (as Jesus said, "denying himself"), being baptized into Christ and remaining "in Him" till the final summons. It is the perfect faith and righteousness of Jesus Christ which

constitute "the righteousness of God through the FAITH OF CHRIST." (Romans 3:22-26) (Note: Romans chapter 3 has an extensive discussion of this.)

CHAPTER 3

This chapter is considered by many commentators and theologians to be the stronghold of their doctrine that the subjective faith only of Christians is the ground of justification, notwithstanding the truth that not a single word in the chapter may legitimately be construed as teaching such a proposition.

Some prior knowledge of Almighty God and the nature of His dealings with mankind will help to understand this chapter. From the days of Cain and Abel, one of whom was cursed and the other blessed, for the simple reason that the deeds of one were righteous and the deeds of the other were evil (1 John 3:12), and throughout the history of the patriarchs and continuing down through the Jewish monarchy, where of various kings it is said that some "did that which was right and good in the eyes of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 14:2), and of others, that they "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 33:2), with the result that some received God's blessing and others did not, men's obedience or disobedience to God's commandments has been the primary and invariable determination of their destiny.

Paul wrote the Corinthian church saying, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one maybe recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Any notion that Paul relaxed or countermanded this truth is erroneous. The relationship between Jews and the Law of Moses, as contrasted with the relationship between the Christian and the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:2) lies only in this:

- (1) if the Jew did his best to live up to the law (and failed, as all must fail), he nevertheless stood condemned anyway;
- (2) but if the Christian does his best to keep all of the commandments of the gospel (failing in particulars, as all must fail), he is nevertheless justified and remains uncondemned because through his identity with Christ "in Christ" and "as Christ," the righteousness of Christ,

with whom the true Christian is fully identified, stands in the stead of his own failure, saving his soul anyway.

But in such a conception there is no relaxation whatever of the eternal rule that obedience to God is the sine qua non of salvation.

In Christ, the obedience is provided by Christ, but certainly not on behalf of those who refused to obey, believed that they were not required to obey, or those who thought indifference and neglect never got around to obeying. The great fallacy of salvation only in "faith only" is that it utterly removes from human hearts all concern whatever with regard to keeping the commandments of the Lord.

All salvation is by grace, without human merit, unearned and incapable of being earned.

Another fundamental truth regarding this chapter was enunciated by Henry H. Halley, Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 561, wrote, "Those Galatians had swallowed the Judaizers' message so completely that they had instituted Jewish festival days and ceremonies (4:8-11), evidently trying to combine the gospel with the Mosaic Law. Paul plainly tells them the two systems do not combine."

The works vs. faith contrast in this epistle regards the incompatibility of Judaism and Christianity, and absolutely nothing else.

Verse 1

"Jesus Christ and Him crucified" was the burden of Paul's preaching throughout every moment of his apostleship.

"Foolish Galatians . . . who has bewitched you . . ." William Barclay, The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, p. 24, declares that the word here means "the evil eye," rendering it, "Who has put the evil eye on you?" Still it is wrong to suppose that Paul absolved the Galatians themselves from the blame. It was their stupidity that lay at the base of it.

Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. This means that the dramatic story of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection had been emphatically and publicly proclaimed.

Verse 2

Note that "Law" has been capitalized throughout this chapter, meaning the Law of Moses. "By hearing with faith . . ." actually means "the obedience of

faith." In the New Testament, faith must be understood as an obedient faith. (Roman 1:5; 16:26) H. N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, p. 113, spoke of this passage as being "not easy to manage;" and indeed it is impossible to manage it in such a manner as to make it support the "faith only" thesis, except by mistranslating it.

The "obedience of faith" mentioned here at the head of the chapter makes it certain that Paul was dealing with a contrast between Judaism and Christianity, and not between two ways of understanding the gospel.

Verse 3

"By the Spirit . . . by the flesh," is another way of contrasting Judaism and Christianity, "the Spirit" being the endowment of all Christians, and "the flesh" being the total basis of Jewish confidence. But the constant manipulation of every text in the New Testament to fit the "faith only" notion must be maintained. William Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 327, wrote, "They received the Spirit by faith," as one declared, despite the fact that faith is not mentioned in this verse, and despite the further fact that nobody ever received the Spirit except in consequence of his believing, repenting and being baptized into Christ. (Acts 2:38) The full meaning is: "Are you so foolish, after receiving the Spirit in consequence of your faithful obedience to the gospel, to think that Judaism can bless you in any manner?"

Verse 4

V. E. Howard, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Vol. IX, p. 55, said, "This refers to the persecutions brought against them from the very first by the Judaizers."

Verse 5

"Works miracles among you . . ." This refers to the miracles which Paul himself had performed among them, notable examples of which as William M. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 237, wrote were:

- (1) the healing of the lame man at Lystra, (Acts 14:9), and
- (2) the signs and wonders done at Iconium, (Acts 14:3). Ramsey identified "the Galatians" as those churches of Paul's first missionary journey."

Verse 6

By the introduction of this great truth, Paul refuted the notion that the Law of Moses had had anything to do with the salvation of Abraham. Since Abraham was justified, or reckoned righteous in God's sight, without regard to the Law of Moses, Abraham being the ancestor of every Jew on earth, why should any of his remotest descendants, much less the Gentile Galatians, think to gain anything at all from it?

“Abraham believed God . . .” Abraham's faith, not his faith only but his obedient faith, was the basis of God's reckoning him to be righteous. Abraham did not obey perfectly; but the whole compass of his life was lived out in a frame of obedience to God's commands.

The ridiculous postulations of the “faith only” advocates to the effect that since Abraham was justified without obeying the Law of Moses (which never existed till centuries after Abraham) and without circumcision (which also came long after God's justification of him), therefore he was justified by “faith only” and without any obedience whatever, is just as illogical as it is ridiculous.

It was not Abraham's “mere faith” which resulted in justification, but justification was “by works.” It did not occur as soon as Abraham believed, but “in that he offered” Isaac.

Verse 7

The grand argument is that Abraham was justified upon the exhibition of an obedient faith; and persons today who manifest an obedient faith and persons through their acceptance of the gospel message and obedience to it are the true children of Abraham “in Christ.”

Verses 8-9

“Justify the Gentiles by faith . . .” The New Testament meaning of “faith” has been grossly distorted by post-Reformation theologians. George Howard, Article: “The Faith of Christ,” in *Expositor Times*, Vol. 7, p. 212-214, April, 1974 wrote, “In the New Testament, faith is most often faithfulness.” George Howard, *Ibid.* also said: “The normal meaning of faith in the Greek language is not trust and faith, but reliability or fidelity. “Anyone that has

knowledge of Paul's teaching could not possibly believe that Paul here meant that the Gentiles were to be saved by trust and faith only.

“Preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham . . .” The words: “All the nations shall be blessed in you . . .” identify what Paul meant by the gospel preached to Abraham. The word “nations” in the promise to Abraham means “Gentiles,” who would be saved in exactly the same manner as Abraham namely, by the “obedience of faith.”

Verse 10

The human impossibility of any man's doing “all the things of the law” rendered every man attempting to do so subject to the curse here quoted from Deuteronomy 27:26. The Galatians, by fooling around with circumcision and Jewish festival, had inadvertently obligated themselves, under penalty of God's curse, to keep the whole law, every jot and tittle of it, an achievement which only Jesus Christ accomplished.

Verses 11-12

“No one is justified by Law . . .” The reason this is true was cited in verse 10. There was another important indication of the same truth, which Paul then quoted from Habakkuk 2:4, that is, “The righteous shall live by faith;” thus the prophets had borne testimony to the fact that the purpose of God, even in the Old Testament, was looking for an “obedient faith” in His children and not merely for the legalistic type of rule-keeping which was the essence of the Law. The Law did not even require faith. Paul gave here from Leviticus 18:5, the meaning of which maybe paraphrased, “No matter about faith; do the Law and live.” This was the essence of Judaism.

Now, regarding the conceit that would make Habakkuk say, “The righteous shall live by FAITH ONLY!” Such a meaning was never in any Old Testament usage of faith. As we have already observed, trust and faith or faith only simply did not pertain to the word in the Old Testament. We might add that the meaning of trust and faith or faith only is also foreign to the meaning of the word in the New Testament, or even in the Greek language.

There was still another sense in which the Law was a curse, and Paul quickly pointed that out.

Verse 13

The quotation is from Deuteronomy 21:23; and since Christ was crucified on “the tree,” the curse of the Law rested upon the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind, and this in spite of the fact that Jesus our Lord was the unique and only person of all time who ever kept the totality of the Law in perfection.

Verse 14

“In Christ Jesus . . .” This is the cornerstone and foundation of the gospel Paul (and all the apostles) preached. The Gentiles will be blessed, along with Abraham, “in Christ,” thus becoming technically part of Christ’s spiritual body.

“Through faith . . .” The only honest translation is “through the faith,” meaning through the Christian religion.

The last thing on earth that this passage could mean is that the Gentiles shall be saved through trust and faith alone, which by any definition can be nothing but a subjective personal experience without any merit or trustworthiness whatever.

Verse 15

Paul is here still exposing the sinful arguments of the Judaizers, who despite the fact of Abraham’s being accounted righteous by God, long before the giving of the Law, were insisting that God, in a sense, had amended the requirements of righteousness by the addition of the Mosaic Law. This Paul denied on the basis that, even in the case of a human covenant, it could not be altered by one of the parties after it had been ratified and confirmed, thus demonstrating the proof that God’s covenant with Abraham was founded, not upon his keeping the Law (which never existed till centuries afterward), but upon God’s promise made long before the Law came into being. The application of this is the same as that Paul pointed out in verse 6ff, namely that if the ancestor of all Jews was redeemed without the Law there could be no earthly use of anyone’s keeping it.

Verse 16

This is the verse that tells “how” the Gentiles and even the saints of the Old Testament are saved. They are saved “in Christ,” there being this correspondence between the manner of their salvation and our own, namely, that both for

them and for us, the basis of it was “the obedience faith,” notwithstanding the tests for them were not the same as the test which those under the New Covenant must meet. For us the manner of our being “in Christ” is dogmatically declared to be baptism of believers “into Christ,” as Paul would forcefully show a moment later. (Verse 3:27)

Note: This is the key verse of the entire third chapter. This eliminates completely the nonsense about being saved “by faith only,” by making it clear that all salvation is “in Christ,” a principle which Paul repeated 169 times in his writings!

Verse 17

This was Paul’s repetition for the sake of emphasis of the argument already declared above.

Verse 18

This is based on the profound truth that “all the nations” shall be blessed in the “seed singular” which is Christ. Any salvation allegedly derived from keeping the Law of Moses would of course, nullify and countermand this promise.

Verse 19

The Law of Moses expired by limitation when Christ came, because it was given only “until” that event.

“Because of transgressions . . .” The great service of the Law was to demonstrate that all men are sinners (even the Jews), a fact many of them were loath to admit.

Verse 20

This writer will spare the reader any exegesis of this verse. The full or even approximate meaning of it is unknown.

Verse 21

The impossibility of even God’s Law making men righteous derived from the weakness and frailty of men. Man alone, unaided, is simply incapable of fully measuring up to God’s perfect and holy standard. Glorious is the thought,

therefore that Christ did it for all men who will receive and obey Him. Christ fulfilled all of God's Law perfectly; and then, through the device of setting up an extra-literal "body," called in the New Testament "the body of Christ," into which men upon believing, repenting and being baptized are enrolled, thus becoming in a true sense "Christ," and therefore "in Him," achieving saving righteousness. That is what is meant by "the righteousness of God in Christ."

The present-day notion of God in some manner "injecting righteousness" or imputing righteousness to sinners upon the basis of mere faith is incorrect, because "faith only" bypasses the corporate body of Christ, which is His church. This means that it by-passes the "seed singular" who is Christ!

Verse 22

"That the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. The faith that saves is never that of the sinner, but that of Christ. Only His faith was perfect, and only His faith was perfectly obedient. In the ultimate sense, there is nothing that any sinner can either believe or perform that is capable of justifying him in the eyes of Almighty God, except in the limited and secondary sense of his "obedience of faith" upon his believing and being baptized, those being prerequisites of his salvation, and thus, in that lower sense, justifying him.

Thus the full meaning of verse 22 is that the "promise of sharing in the perfect faith and obedience of Christ (called the faith of Christ) might be given to them that believe."

The faith only concept is wrong on two counts:

- (1) the notion that it is the sinner's imperfect faith that saves, and
- (2) the proposition that faith should be understood as meaning "faith only." Not even Christ's faith was "faith only," He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." (Hebrews 5:9)

"Shut up all men under sin . . ." One great purpose of the Law of Moses was to convict Israel of sin and make the nation conscious of their need of salvation from it. As used by them, however, it became a source of greater pride than ever on their part. The Law's holy commandments were nullified,

expanded, contradicted, and perverted in countless ways: as Jesus Himself revealed to them,

“Thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do so many such things like that.” (Mark 7:13) If Israel had properly responded to the Law by realizing and confessing their inability to keep it, and the crying need of their souls for redemption from sin, there would have been a far different attitude on their part when the true Messiah came.

Verse 23

The figure of speech here is that of a jailer keeping his prisoners shut up. The Law could not save men, and the hope of deliverance from sin which the Law could not forgive could be realized only by the coming of the Holy One.

Verse 24

R. E. Howard, op. cit., p. 66, said, “The coming of faith (verse 23) here relates to the objective and historical coming of Christ on His redemptive mission and not to the repeated and subjective experience of believers.”

“The Law has become our tutor, (schoolmaster) to lead us to Christ . . .” (Note: Neither “schoolmaster (nor a tutor) conveys the thought of the Greek, where the word is “pedagogue.”)

Adam Clarke, Commentary on the Holy Bible, Vol. VI, p. 401, said, “He was not a schoolmaster (nor a tutor), but the servant who had the care of the children to lead them to and bring them back from school, and had care of them out of school hours.”

“Justified by faith . . .” A better rendition of it would be “justified by the faith.” As frequently in Paul’s writings, “faith” is used extensively as a metaphor (synecdoche) of the religion of Christ, or the; primary steps of obedience. As invariably in the New Testament, “faith” in such a context means “the obedience of faith.”

Verse 25

“Faith” is still being used in the sense of the historical arrival of the Christian religion, having no reference at all to subjective trust and faith of

individuals. The total separation of Christianity from the Law is here dramatically stated with the comparison to a “pedagogue” no longer needed.

Verse 26

James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 161, translated this verse correctly when he wrote, “For ye are all sons of God through the faith published by Jesus Christ.” R. A. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 87, remarked with reference to theology itself, “It is nothing more than ordinary rules of grammar and logic applied to the text of Scripture.” It is not knowledge of the Greek, but of the grammar, that leads to an accurate understanding of the New Testament.

Verse 27

“Baptized into Christ . . .” is here used in exactly the same manner that “faith” was in the preceding verse, that is, as a synecdoche for the primary steps of accepting the gospel and becoming a Christian. There is a difference between “faith” and “baptism,” for here it is declared that men are baptized “into” Christ, a declaration nowhere existing in the New Testament with regard to “faith.” “All of you were baptized into Christ . . .” is only another way of saying that “all of the Galatians” had been so baptized.

The use of “all of you . . .” means that any who might not have been baptized, were not in Christ. The prerequisites of baptism are faith and repentance. Any person being immersed without these vital prerequisites to baptism is not baptized at all, but merely wet. It must be confessed that perhaps there are those who have thus been immersed without being baptized; but while that is true enough, it does not alter the truth of verse 27. Some are immersed without being saved; but nobody was ever saved without being immersed.

Verse 28

Every possible kind of racial, economic and sex distinction finds its great equalizer “in Christ.” The bond of love and fellowship in the Lord is sufficiently strong to contain all outward differences among God’s children.

Verse 29

This is not merely a continuation of the argument Paul has been making, but it is continued in chapter 4. The true seed of Abraham are all those who, believing the gospel, have been baptized into Christ.

E. Huxtable, op. cit., p. 147, has this pertinent observation on this final verse of chapter 7, writing, “Those who believe in Christ and are baptized into Him are to be understood as here being affirmed to be “Abraham’s seed,” because being clothed with Christ, they share His position. “Heirs . . . “ They are heirs, not of Abraham, but of God; for the idea connects to that of “son-ship” to God, (verse 26), of believers in Christ.”

NOTE 1: ON COMMENTS REGARDING VERSE 27

Observations under verse 27 are not intended as a presumption that any mortal knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:16), or the ultimate judgment of the Almighty regarding any man’s destiny; for God is too wise to make a mistake and too good to do wrong. The whole province of judging is denied Christians (Matthew 7:1); on the other hand, the observations under verse 27, and throughout this series, are merely a conscientious effect to read what seems to be clear and unequivocal meaning of the sacred New Testament itself. It was Christ who said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:16), and the antithesis of that bold promise justifies the deductions offered under verse 27. The New Testament is all that men have as the basis of eternal hope; and it is in that frame of reference alone that men have any right to express opinions or form judgments of what is truth. The Lord has promised eternal life conditionally, and only God could change the conditions.

Upon behalf of many precious souls, apparently devoted, spiritual and praiseworthy in so many ways, who have decided to trust God for salvation regardless of their refusal to comply with the conditions, and in many cases, even to admit that there are any conditions, let it be said that only God knows if He will or will not find a way for them to whom He has made no promise in the New Testament.

NOTE 2: JUSTIFICATION NOT POSSIBLE BY LAW

The term “Law” was capitalized throughout this chapter to indicate that the Law of Moses was the opposite of Christianity which Paul was discussing. The deduction of theologians to the effect that grace abolishes “all law” is as sinful and presumptuous as any religious error advocated among men. Paul flatly declared, “Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.”

When the author of Hebrews spoke of the abolition of the Law of Moses, he did not say that all law had been abolished, but “there was of necessity a change of law also.” (Hebrews 7:12) It was that change which Paul discussed in the above chapter, the change from the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ. One other extremely important consideration is due in this context. If grace has abolished law, then there is no such thing as sin! “Sin is not imputed where there is no law.” (Romans 5:13) “When there is no law, neither is there violation.” (Romans 4:15) “Sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4)

NOTE 3: THE FAITH OF CHRIST

This chapter states no less than three times that it is the faith of Christ which saves and justifies, as utterly distinguished from the false notion that it is the sinner’s faith which does this.

CHAPTER 4

The argument of this chapter is a continuation of Paul’s teaching on the abolition of the Law of Moses and the replacement of the entire system by Christianity.

First, he compared the Law to the conditions governing a person not yet come of age, as something sure to be replaced by another arrangement later on. (verses 1-7)

Second, he pointed out the restrictive and onerous nature of the Law itself, comparing it to slavery or bondage. (verses 8-11)

Third, he reminded them of the circumstances of their conversion, their love for Him, and warned them against the evil men who were seducing them away from the faith. (verses 12-20)

Fourth, he appealed to an allegory based upon the life of Abraham, which was climaxed by, “Cast out the hand-maiden and her son,” meaning, in the analogy, Christianity and Judaism are not compatible, or reconcilable; and it is the Law of Moses that has to go. (verses 21-31)

Verses 1-2

Paul uses an illustration that would be appropriate in any society. No child of whatever culture is to be trusted with an inheritance until the age of responsibility. The word here rendered "child" really means "babe." The meaning here is that of "a minor."

J. W. McGarvey, *The Standard Bible Commentary*, Galatians, p. 271, wrote, "In this paragraph Paul resumes the metaphor of chapter 3:24ff, but from a slightly different point of view." There it is the pedagogue which is stressed; here it is the child himself.

Verse 3

"We . . ." The word here means all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, the world itself being in bondage to all kinds of rudimentary and imperfect religious conceptions until Christ came.

"Bondage . . ." Peter himself described the Law of Moses in this same terminology (*Acts 15:10*); and when one considers the incredible number of rules and regulations which were enforced by it, it becomes clear enough that it was indeed slavery.

Paul did not restrict the "bondage" to primitive religions making a distinction between the Mosaic Law and the pagan religions; while it is true enough that Judaism was magnificently superior to the pagan systems, there were many particulars in which it rose above them scarcely at all. It was purely legalistic; it subjected every violator to death without mercy.

James Macknight, *Apostolic Epistles and Commentary*, p. 169, wrote, "It prescribed no better sacrifices than the heathen religions . . . could not cleanse the conscience of the sinner from guilt of sin, afforded no assistance to enable men to obey it, and was utterly unable to procure pardon and eternal life for its adherents, being precisely the same (in all these categories) as the heathen religions."

"Under the elemental things of the world . . ." Raymond T. Stamm, *Interpreters Bible*, Vol. IX, p. 521, wrote the simple meaning of this place is, "The letters of the alphabet, that is, elementary education in any branch of

knowledge.” The meaning of “world” is that of the “world of men” not that of the “cosmos” or “universe.”

This perversion of the sacred text was done to accommodate some rather wild speculations regarding the religion of the Galatians prior to their acceptance of Christianity.

Verses 4-5

“When the fullness of the time came . . .” has the meaning of “at God’s appointed time.” All of the grand events of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind were scheduled in advance, and from the beginning of mankind, even the final judgment itself being a planned and scheduled event. (Acts 17:31)

“God sent forth His Son . . .” This is a statement of the Incarnation, being a clear reference to the preexistence of Christ with God before the world was. (John 1:1)

This clause teaches:

- (1) the deity of the Son of God,
- (2) H. N. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 155, said, “The going forth of the Son from a place where He was before, and
- (3) His being invested with Divine authority.”

“Born of a woman . . .” Since the father of Jesus Christ is clearly set forth as the heavenly Father, pray tell how the Lord could have been born, or entered our earth life, in any other way, except by a virgin birth?

If there was cohabitation, in the usual sense, involved in the birth mentioned it could not have produced one who had previously existed with God before the world was.

Paul did not here stress the virgin birth but there is no way that these words could have been spoken by the blessed apostle unless he truly believed it and so arranged his teaching here as to bear an eloquent witness of it.

E. Huxtable, Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 20, p. 183, believed a better translation is made to be of a woman, preferring it because: “such a translation would imply a previous state of existence (a thought most certainly in the context), whereas born does not.”

“Born under the Law . . .” “Made to be under the Law” is better in this place also, where the same word is used. Christ consented to “be made” under the Mosaic obligations for the purpose of fulfilling them, obligations that did not derive in any sense whatever from His birth, but from His joint-purpose with God even before the Incarnation was begun.

“The adoption of sons . . .” Adam was the “son of God” by creation (Luke 3:38), a status that does not pertain to any of Adam’s posterity due to the disastrous behavior of the great progenitor which involved the entire human race in ruin. God’s purpose of redemption is that of adopting all of us

“Adamites” into the status of son ship with the Father, the same having been in the purpose of the Incarnation, the virgin birth, the making of Christ to be under the law, and, in fact, the total family of events clustered around the sacred name of Jesus Christ.

Verses 6-7

The time of receiving the gift-ordinary of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to achieving the status of sonship and a consequence of it. This is without doubt the true meaning, for it coincides with the promise of the apostle Peter (Acts 2:38) that the reception of the Holy Spirit is to be expected after faith, repentance, and baptism into the name of Christ, and as a promise to be fulfilled subsequently to such faith and obedience. That is why Paul also referred to the same gift as “the Holy spirit of promise.” (Ephesians 1:13)

“Into our hearts crying, Abba, Father . . .” indicates that one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in Christian hearts is the sense of nearness to God, indicated by the prayers addressed to God in such terms of intimacy, “Abba” being the ordinary word used by Hebrew children in addressing their father.

“No longer a slave, but a son . . .” The world, at least that portion of it which accepts Christianity, has come of age in Christ. The idols, liturgical

externals, pageantry, regalia and all other visible external spectacularism of pagan worship are not merely unnecessary, but destructive of genuine worship and service of Christ

“If a son, then an heir through God . . .” A Christian is not an heir of Abraham, but an heir with him, by virtue of son-ship and union with Christ. The reason Paul stressed God’s Father-ship of the Lord Jesus in verse 4 was correctly discerned by Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings from Paul*, p. 93, who declared that “God must be the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be the God and Father of His people whom He chose in Christ.”

The Christian’s son-ship to God is derived from His unity with Christ, identity with Christ, as being “in Christ,” who is truly and actually the sinless and perfect Son of God.

Verse 8

This is a reference to the idolatry of the Galatians before they accepted Christ. “Bondage” is an apt term to describe the merciless, unfeeling subjection of the pre-Christian pagan world to the devices of idolatrous priests.

“No gods . . .” Paul wrote the Corinthians that “No such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.” (1 Corinthians 8:4)

Verse 9

“You have come to know God, or rather to be known by God . . .” Leon Morris, *Tyndale Commentary*, 1 Corinthians, p. 93, noted, “The really important thing is not that we know God, but that He knows us!” All true knowledge of God comes from God, and even that conveyed by the blessed Savior Himself came from the Father. (Matthew 16:17)

“Weak and worthless elemental things . . .” Paul declared that the Galatians were again coming into “bondage.” They were on the verge of becoming entangled again with observing the regulations, Sabbaths, etc. of the Jewish Law.

Why were these things called “weak and worthless”? They were also worthless in the sense of being “poor” in contrast to the unsearchable riches of Christ.

J. R. Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, p. 468, thought that such a defection by the Galatians into Judaism, “Was a return, not, indeed, into idolatry, but into an imperfect and rudimentary religion.”

Judaism’s superiority over paganism is true of it before the First Advent of the Son of God and the Jewish rejection of Him; but in this dispensation, that superiority, no longer pertains.

John William Russell, *Compact Commentary on the New Testament*, p. 468, wrote, “Jewish laws and ceremonies were but symbols of Christ, through which they were to know God as Father, and be known by Him as sons. Turning back to exalt mere forms was idolatry.”

Verses 10-11

Sabbatarians have done their best to eliminate the meaning of this passage, but E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 190, tells us the words used here, “Were used by Josephus for the keeping of Sabbath days,” and when read in conjunction with Colossians 2:16 there cannot be any doubt that the sin of the Galatians was simply that of keeping, after the Jewish manner, the Sabbaths, festivals, and social days of the Old Testament, which, if persisted in, would mean their total loss to Christianity. The whole thesis of this epistle is that “Judaism and Christianity do not mix.”

Paul had given up all of the ceremonies of Judaism, the few times he observed any of them after becoming a Christian always having some special purpose in mind, like that of avoiding unnecessary persecution or looking to the purpose of preventing disunity in the church. The statement here shows Paul’s utter repugnance for such things. It is in this that he writes the Galatians to become like himself.

“You have done me no wrong . . .” R. E. Howard, *beacon Bible Commentary*, Vol. IX, p. 74, said, “The Galatians would certainly have known

what Paul means by this, but it is not clear to modern readers.” Perhaps we should read it, “I have nothing against you personally.”

“Because of a bodily illness . . .” Endless speculations concerning the illness (that is the way it must be understood) that caused Paul to preach to the Galatians have found no general agreement among scholars; but the most reasonable explanation of it would seem to be that on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13ff), he did not preach at Perga, due to a sudden onset of malaria, taking refuge in the highlands of Pisidian Antioch (and later going to other cities on the first tour).

“I preached the gospel to you the first time . . .” The last two words of this clause are important with regard to the problem of dating Galatians, some scholars reading these words as a declaration that Paul had made “two missionary tours” to the Galatians before writing this epistle, which, if allowed, would make it considerably later than if only one tour as mentioned here.

Verse 14

There is always a temptation to belittle a sick man, especially one seeking to change one’s whole manner of life, but the Galatians did not yield to it.

“As an angel of God . . .” Some of the Galatians tried to worship Paul, before they understood his message. (Acts 14:11ff)

Verse 15

Here is the ground of the speculation that Paul’s infirmity was temporary blindness, which of course is a possibility; but such an expression as Paul used here is proverbial, and there can be no certainty that any such thing is meant. H. N. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 167, said, “Verse 15 has nothing to do with Paul’s infirmity.” Whatever lay behind such a statement, Paul here appealed to the love which the Galatians manifested toward him from the very first time he ever saw them.

Verse 16

In context, the thought is: “Surely one whom you have loved so much cannot become your enemy merely by telling you the truth about people who are now trying to exploit you.”

Verse 17

This was spoken with reference to the Judaizers, whose purpose was to control and exploit the Galatians by using them to support Jewish religious enterprises. “They wish to shut you out . . .” is a figure of speech, called *litotes*, which Merrill C. Tenney, Galatians the Charter of Christian Liberty, p. 148, said is, “The affirmation of a truth by denying its opposite,” the meaning being that the Judaizers were hypocritical, and their motives in cultivating the Galatians were impure.

Verse 18

By this, Paul meant that he was not merely jealous of the attention others were giving the Galatians, a thing he was diligent to give himself, when present with them, but that in the case of these particular ardent cultivators of their friendship, they were up to no good whatever.

Verse 19

“My children . . .” This claiming on Paul’s part of the Galatians as his spiritual children has also entered into scholarly efforts to determine the date of Galatians and also the identity of the churches to who it is addressed, the questions, of course, being related to each other.

It is said that, “The churches of south Galatia had two founders (Paul and Barnabas), and owed allegiance to Barnabas along with Paul.” This is true of course, but Paul had just written to them of Barnabas’ being “drawn away” into accepting the position of the Judaizers (2:13), and until that had been resolved, it would have been improper for Paul to have associated himself with Barnabas in this appeal.

Over and beyond that, it is not true that Barnabas was the co-founder of those churches, his status in all of Galatia being more that of Paul’s assistant than that of a co-leader. The dramatic change had come at Paphos. Furthermore, the pagans calling Barnabas Jupiter, the king of pagan deities, and Paul only Mercury, the chief speaker, was merely a pagan lack of discernment, being their judgment upon external appearance only. The Jews of south Galatia, who knew the real power of both Paul and Barnabas, as regards the founding of those churches, tried to kill Paul, not Barnabas. It was therefore altogether all right

and proper for Paul to have claimed spiritual fatherhood of those churches, even if the defection of Barnabas had been corrected.

“In labor . . .” Two things appear in this:

- (1) there had been an agony of labor (like that of a woman in childbirth) on Paul’s part at the founding of those churches, Act 13 and 14 giving many of the details of his sorrows and their sufferings, and
- (2) he was going through the same deep anxieties again upon their behalf.

“Until Christ is formed in you . . .” The drifting into Judaism had blurred and distorted the image of Christ in their hearts, and Paul wishes it to be perfectly formed.

Verse 20

This is an inverted manner of Paul’s saying that he regretted the necessity of reprimanding in order to correct those whom he loved so much.

ALLEGORY OF ISAAC AND ISHMAEL

Verse 1

“Who want to be under law . . .” There has always been a basic natural appeal in visible, ceremonial, liturgical, external and spectacular religion, as witnessed continually by the church of all ages in the persistent drifting into those very things. To the Galatians, so soon out of paganism, they were simply hypnotized and seduced into receiving the allegations of the Judaizers. Paul’s argument, however, here seems to say, “Do not merely look at it, listen to what it teaches!” There is a lot in religion today that needs to be analyzed in the same way.

Verse 22

Ishmael was the son of Hagar, Sarah’s maid, whom she gave to Abraham, in order to claim a son (by such a device), for herself. Abraham had many sons by concubines, but they were his property, not Sarah’s. Isaac was the actual son of Sarah, born as a result of the promise of God long after the time when neither

Abraham nor Sarah, might have expected to have children. Sarah of course was free, the lawful wife of the mighty patriarch.

Verse 23

Ishmael was born as a result of the selfishness of Sarah and the natural cohabitation of Abraham with her slave girl. God was simply not in the arrangement; but Isaac, the son of promise, was born though the enabling promise of God Himself, contrary to all natural expectations.

These two sons, as Paul would promptly point out, typified the two types of “sons of Abraham,” as represented after Ishmael in the persons of the unspiritual Sadducees and Pharisees.

The distinction is often made between the fleshly Israel and the spiritual Israel, which is the church.

Verses 24-25

“Hagar is mount Sinai . . .” E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 203, stated that, “Hagar is the word for Mount Sinai, in the language of that country.”

J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.*, p. 954, pointed out, “Sinai and Jerusalem mean the same thing, law and bondage; and Hagar typified both.”

“Bearing children who are to be slaves . . .” This was, first of all, true literally, as Jerusalem itself was subjected to Rome at the time of this writing; and it was also true spiritually. As J. W. McGarvey, *op. cit.*, p. 278, said, “The Jews themselves universally recognized the law as a practical bondage.” (Acts 15:10; Matthew 23:4)

Verse 26

As the sons of Sarah, Christians are upon a much higher level than the sons of the bondwoman.

“She is our mother . . .” There also seems to be more than a hint here that Paul was rejecting any notion whatever that the Jerusalem church was in any sense the “Mother Church” in the earthly sense of that word. The “Mother Church” virus has afflicted all generations of Christians, notwithstanding the

truth in evidence here that nothing on “earth” may in any sense be understood as the “Mother Church.”

Verse 27

This is quoted from Isaiah 54:1. The application being to Sarah and Hagar, as follows: Sarah at first had no child, but when the promise of Isaac was fulfilled, her posterity exceeded that of Hagar; but in the instance of the spiritual fulfillment of this, the numberless “sons of Sarah;” in the church of the living God even overwhelmingly outnumber those of Hagar.

Verses 28-29

Here the reference is to the events of Genesis 21:9ff. The enmity between these two branches of Abraham’s family has continued till the present day; and there has also been a corresponding hatred of the secular, carnal, fleshly and unspiritual against the holy teachings of Christ also. Paul intends for the Galatians to see that the Judaizers are actually their enemies, having no good thing for them, at all, in their purposes.

Verse 30

This is the dramatic and blunt conclusion Paul enforced by his appeal to his allegory. William Hendriksen, *op. cit.*, p. 189, wrote, “When the Judaizers pride themselves on the fact that they are “sons of Abraham,” let it be remembered that Abraham had two sons.”

In Paul’s times, and until now, there are still two classes of “sons of Abraham;” and the significant question is, “Who is a real son of Abraham?” Paul had already given the answer in chapter 3:26-29.

R. Alan Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 135, wrote, “The reason why all natural religious systems are bound to come in conflict with Christianity is that Christianity is supernatural, and the natural systems cannot coexist as parallel paths to the same goal.”

The Law of Moses and the gospel of Christ cannot be blended, and as John Wesley, *One Volume New Testament Commentary*, *in loco*, said, “It is the Law which must go, and the gospel which must enjoy an unshared supremacy.”

James Macknight, op. cit., p. 186, was surely correct in the thought that, “In this allegory, Paul prophesied the rejection of secular Israel, the natural seed, as being, the church and people of God.”

This is true because when Paul wrote, it was to human eyes far from certain that the old Jewish system would be cast out of its inheritance, an event, however, that was dramatically and violently fulfilled in the total destruction of Jerusalem about twenty years after this letter was written.

Verse 31

This was Paul’s summary of the allegory just related.

CHAPTER 5

Paul in this summarized his teaching of the last three chapters preceding this (verses 1-5), and then distinguished between works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit, appealing to the Galatians to live by the Spirit (verses 6-26).

Verse 1

The second clause here makes the identity of the freedom in the first clause easy to ascertain. R. E. Howard, Beacon Bible Commentary, Galatians, Vol. IX, p. 82, wrote, “There can be no doubt that it refers to freedom from the slavery of the Law of Moses.” This also shows the meaning of “freedom from law” as taught in the previous chapters.

“Keep standing firm . . .” Paul, by this, admonished the Galatians to hold their ground, resist the Judaizers and reject the persuasions of those who would entangle them in such things as Sabbath days, feasts, holy days, circumcision and all other Jewish regulations.

Verse 2

“Behold, I Paul say to you . . .” Intensely personal and dramatic, this appeal was intended to affirm in the most dogmatic and positive way possible the truth which he was uttering.

“Circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you . . .” What is meant is “that circumcision with any view to its aiding of leading to one’s justification would be a denial of Christ, a repudiation of the Christian gospel and forsaking, Christianity.”

As James Macknight, *Apostolic Epistles and Commentary*, p. 190, said, “This general expression must be limited; because we cannot suppose that the circumcision of the Jewish believers incapacitated them from being profited by Christ.”

The purpose of the Judaizers among the Galatians had made this their purpose, to circumcise the Galatians, no doubt representing to them that it was no great thing and did not involve them in the more onerous and expensive obligations of Judaism. Paul would express the fraud in such a proposition in the very next verse.

Verse 3

So, it was no small thing at all the Judaizers had in mind. They would impose the corpus of Jewish law-keeping on the Christian converts of Galatia; and in the process, the gospel of Christ would be totally neglected and replaced.

Verse 4

R. E. Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 83, wrote, “This, in capsule form, is his contention throughout the entire argument. All the other points climax in this.” Of course, this is true; and that Paul was, in these chapters, displaying a brand-new conception of being saved “by faith only” is absolutely foreign to the entire Galatian letter, and the New Testament. Some of the Galatians had actually defected from Christianity in the manner indicated, with the result that they had “fallen from grace.”

Verse 5

“Through the Spirit . . .” The Holy Spirit is conferred upon all baptized believers, according to the promise of Acts 2:38.

“By faith . . .” has the meaning here of “by the Christian religion.” R. A. Cole, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Galatians*, p. 143, said, “The gift of faith is the first gift of the Spirit,” cannot be correct; because only those who

have already believed, repented, and are baptized into Christ are promised the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Verse 6

This means “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is relevant to Christianity.

Some have wondered why Paul included “uncircumcision” in this declaration; but as many of the Galatian converts had been won from the Jewish synagogues (where Paul always went first with the gospel), it was mandatory that none of them should be concerned with the fact that they had been circumcised long ago, nor concern themselves with trying to undo it. Some indeed had, through surgery, attempted to become “uncircumcised”

Although there is no evidence that any of the Galatians had done that, it may be inferred from 1 Corinthians 7:18-19 that some at Corinth had gone that far; and as James Macknight, *Apostolic Epistles and Commentary*, p. 108, said, “Apostate Jews fancied that by such actions they could free themselves of their obligations to keep the Law of Moses.”

James Macknight (*Galatians*), *op. cit.*, p. 192, said there was also another consideration, “From Paul’s speaking so much against circumcision, some might have believed that there was something meritorious in “uncircumcision.”

As R. E. Howard, *op. cit.*, p.83, correctly summarized it, “For salvation, circumcision had no value; and for salvation, uncircumcision had no value.”

”But faith working through love . . .” Contrasted with things of no value, here is the essence of justification; and sure enough, it is not “faith alone,” but “faith working through love,” thus presenting the emphatic apostolic denial of the favorite heresy of our age.

Men do not like his verse, rendering it “faith inspired by love,” or otherwise avoiding the word, “working” as they would strive to avoid the plague! It happens that Paul used the expression “circumcision nor uncircumcision, three different times thus: Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision . . . but faith working through love (Galatians 5:6); neither circumcision nor uncircumcision .

. . but a new creature (Galatians 6:15). Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision
. . but the keeping of the commandments of God. (1 Corinthians 7:19)

From the above comparison, it can be seen that “faith working by love” means the same thing as being baptized into Christ in order to become “a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17); nor is it limited to that, for it also means “keeping the commandments of God.” This threefold summary of what does avail, as contrasted with circumcision or uncircumcision which do not avail should be pondered by all who seek to be known of the Lord and to stand with Christ “in that day.”

Verse 7

In all of Paul’s writings, he sought to lead men into “the obedience of faith;” and his writings in Galatians do not deviate from that invariable purpose.

“Who hindered you . . .” William Sanday, Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, Galatians, p. 456, wrote, “The original meaning of the word translated hinder is to break up a road, as an army before the advance of hostile forces.”

“From obeying the truth . . .” Some of the Galatians had stopped obeying the truth, as taught by Paul and the other apostles, perhaps neglecting to observe the Lord’s Supper and failing to do other things which have been distinctive of the Christian life in all ages. The clause here shows that this disobedience was a prime concern of the Apostle’s. By their falling into Jewish observances, they were neglecting and had stopped obeying the teachings of Christ.

Verse 8

This simply has the meaning that their disobedience of Christ’s teachings, due to fooling around with Judaism, did not come from anything that Christ, who had called them through the gospel, had taught them.”

Verse 9

It is believed here that J. R. Dummelow, Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 956, read this correctly as meaning, “That only a few of the Galatian converts were affected by the false teachings.”

The danger of the situation, however, was not to be judged by the small size of the defecting group. As David Lipscomb, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Galatians*, p. 260, said, “Just as one plague-infected person may bring devastation to a city, so may one teacher of doctrine subversive of the gospel corrupt a whole community of believers.

Verse 10

“I have confidence . . .” Paul did not believe that the Judaizers would succeed in Galatia, and they did not succeed. All efforts to meld Judaism with Christianity were thwarted and checkmated by this very epistle and other New Testament writings.

“Shall bear His judgment . . .” The Judaizer (whether one or more) would bear the judgment Paul had written a moment earlier, that of being “severed from Christ,” “fallen from grace.”

Verse 11

“If I still preach circumcision . . .” This evidently refers to the allegations of the false teachers to the effect that Paul himself taught circumcision, an argument they reinforced, no doubt, by appealing to the known instance of Paul’s circumcising Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess. (Acts 16:3)

Paul’s reason for doing that, however, had nothing whatever to do with Timothy’s salvation, but was for the purpose of avoiding and frustrating Jewish persecution. “The stumbling block of the cross . . .” The cross of Christ was preeminently above everything else the center and citadel of Christian hope; and if Paul trusted circumcision for anything, reliance upon the Great Atonement would have been forfeited. But it is not forfeited. The cross remains!

Verse 12

J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.*, p. 956, wrote, “The priests of Cybele, whom the Galatians had formerly worshiped,” made themselves eunuchs.

Paul was so disgusted with all the argument demanding circumcision that he uttered this outburst, which may be paraphrased, “It would be good if you fellows, always wanting to circumcise somebody, would just circumcise yourselves like those priests of Cybele!”

Salvation is always a matter of one's being "in Christ" who alone is righteous, and whose perfect faith and perfect obedience are the only true ground of redemption for any man. When one is "baptized into Christ" he becomes Christ, in the sense of being part of His spiritual body, being saved, not in his own identity, but "as Christ."

Verse 13

Freedom from Jewish observances did not mean freedom to indulge in things forbidden, which Paul would promptly enumerate. No relaxation of the commandments of Christ was for one moment intended by anything Paul had written about being "under grace" and not "under law." Here he cited the great motivator of Christian morality, namely, love of the brethren.

Verse 14

The "Law" in view here is the law of Christ. Christ Himself had made the "first and great commandment" to be the "love of God, and love one's neighbor" (Mark 12:29-31), nor has there ever been, from the morning of creation, the slightest relaxation of this primary obligation of all who were ever born on earth.

In Romans 13:8-10, Paul outlined this principle more fully. He indicated that love of the brethren is the heart condition that makes the honoring of such commandments possible for the Christian.

Verse 15

Christian faith and behavior are never more frustrated and disgraced than by spiteful criticisms, derogatory remarks, snide observations and poison-tongue fulminations of Christians against each other.

Verses 16-17

In this passage is the key to righteous living. Everyone is familiar with the seductive force of carnal or fleshly desire, a force that operates subjectively within the minds of men, aided, of course, by all kinds of external suggestions and allurements. This "lusting against the Spirit" by that force has its stronghold in the mind, in the imagination particularly.

The total corruption of the antediluvian world has been achieved by the evil one, and only evil, without intermission. (Genesis 6:5) This was the essence

of pre-Christian debauchery of the Gentiles (Romans 1:21); and it was “imagination” which Paul identified as being “exalted against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:5), the Christian warfare being simply that of “casting down,” that is, eliminating, reducing and controlling the imaginations of the heart.

Now the contrary force to evil imaginations is exerted in the mind, the same being the battlefield where the warfare is decided. The pursuit of sacred studies, the thinking of loving and generous thoughts and the soul’s welcome of the thoughts and attitudes of the Savior—all of these things coming from the indwelling Spirit but remaining only if they are desired and welcomed—all of these things “lust against the flesh.” This means that such spirit-induced thoughts, if permitted to dwell within, will actively dissipate and destroy their opposites, namely, the fleshly lusts.

These two verses are the summary of the thoughts in mind in the following verses, where Paul described the two kinds of life, that of the flesh and that of the Spirit.

Verse 18

Judaism was almost totally concerned with external, liturgical, spectacular, physical, material, and physical things: and the filling of men’s minds with those type of observances would add nothing at all, and even detract from the energies needed in the true spiritual warfare.

Paul did not hate Judaism, as such; but it simply could not do any good in the kind of warfare that must be won by the soul if men are to please God.

Verses 19-21

This is another of Paul’s lists of evil works. There are fifteen evils listed here by Paul, and William M. Ramsey, *A Historical Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 447, identified them all as characteristic of, “The kinds of influence likely to affect South Galatians recently converted from paganism.”

“Sorceries . . .” have been cited by some as proof that Paul believed in the reality of witchcraft; and, in the sense of believing that it was a gross work of the devil being practiced in the culture of those times, of course he did believe.

But from this, it is not to be inferred that Paul believed that so-called witches or sorcerers could actually do the things they claimed and pretended to do.

Verses 22-23

“Faithfulness . . .” includes not merely the inward quality of “keeping on believing in Christ,” but it also means remaining loyal and faithful to the church. Goodness and kindness are likewise determined by actions involving others outside the person of the believer.

Significant especially in this list are the things left out of it. The apostle Paul did not list tongue-speaking, charismatic experiences, visions, premonitions and things like that as being connected in any manner with the “fruit of the Spirit.”

There is more misunderstanding in recent times over the meaning of the Spirit’s indwelling of Christian hearts than any other doctrine of the New Testament. There are no less than eight designations in the New Testament of a single condition. Note these verses: (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:16, Philippians 2:13, 1 John 4:11-16, and the entire Thessalonian church, 1:1).

From the above citations, there can be no way to avoid the truth that Christians are in God, and God is in them.

Note also the following verses: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 8:10, Revelation 1:10, Galatians 2:20, and Ephesians 3:17. There can be no way to avoid the truth that Christians are in Christ, and Christ is in Christians.

Note likewise these verses: 1 Corinthians 3:16, Romans 8:11, Galatians 4:6. Revelation 1:10, Galatians 5:16, 25. The obvious and undeniable teaching of the New Testament is that the Spirit is in Christians and that Christians are in the Spirit.

Thus, the mind of Christ dwells in Christians, and the word of Christ dwells in Christians.

“Joy . . .” This may be taken typically of all the various “fruits” here mentioned. To be filled with the word of God is to have this same joy. To have the mind of Christ is to have it. To have Christ in us is to have it, etc.

Verse 24

Continuing to walk in the Spirit, centering and continuing the thoughts and meditations of the heart upon the teachings of the Lord, actively seeking to maintain identity with the mind of Christ, consciousness of the indwelling Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—these things will indeed “crucify” the lusts and evil imaginations which feed them. This is possible only in the spiritual religion of Christ Jesus, free from the externals and attractive allurements of spectacular Judaism, the same being the blessed “freedom in Christ.”

Verse 25

“In the Spirit . . .” instead of “by the Spirit” is far better. The current conception is so obsessed with the “Spirit in us” that they are reluctant to admit that it is also true the other way around, “in the Spirit.”

Verse 26

Vainglory and jealousy are two of the fundamental fleshly lusts, especially degrading and unbecoming in the church of Jesus Christ. John William Russell, Compact Commentary on the New Testament, p. 471, said, “Even Jesus said, ‘The Son can do nothing of Himself.’” (John 5:19). All of the miracles of our Lord were done as a result of prayer to the Father.

CHAPTER 6

In this final chapter of the epistle, Paul reached the glorious climax of the letter dealing with the contrast between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ.

“SO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST,” stands as the essence of the total admonition.

Verse 1

“Caught in any trespass . . .” The situation here envisioned is not that of some Christian overtaking a trespass, but that of the trespass overtaking him.

Sin committed impetuously through the sudden and unexpected onset of temptation, actual sin, not a mere “fault” is to be understood here.

Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, p. 212, wrote, “The term “trespass” does not entail any “absolution of responsibility.”

E. Huxtable, *Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 20, p. 294, wrote, “Of the guilt, there is no palliation (excuse) of responsibility indicated by the word fault or trespass.”

Charles L. Childers, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Vol. Romans, p. 508, wrote, “We who believe that Christians do not commit sins and remain Christians sometimes avoid this form of the prayer.”

A comparison of the two New Testament accounts of the Lord’s Prayer, however, show that Christ used “sin” and “trespass” interchangeably. Thus the simple meaning here is, “If a Christian brother unexpectedly commits sin, etc.”

“You who are spiritual . . .” is not restricted to ministers, elders, or other special workers in the church but is applicable to all who love the body of the Lord and are zealous for building it up.

“Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness . . .” Amazingly the commentators have almost invariably described this verse as “a command to love your neighbor as yourself;” and of course the Christian love of the brethren is an implied necessity, but it is not here mentioned.

This is a flat, unequivocal commandment to go out and restore the sinful, the same being one part, and only one part of the Law of Christ, mentioned a moment later in connection with another part of that same Law of Christ.

“Looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted . . .” The thought here echoes that of 5:26, showing the coherence and unity of Paul’s continuing message. The deceitful and seductive nature of sin being what it is, the child of the Lord should tread fearfully in the presence of any who have broken the

sacred Law, being constantly aware that the same lure of the forbidden which has already trapped a brother might also entangle himself in disobedience.

Verse 2

In this verse before us, two essential elements of that Law have already been mentioned in this chapter, and others will be enumerated in a moment. Number 1 is “Restore the Backsliders.” (verse 1) Number 2 is “Bear One Another’s Burdens.” (verse 2)

Of course, in verse 5, Paul said, “Each man shall bear his own burden;” but it is still surprising that even a Christian scholar should read this as a “contradiction,” even H. N. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 215, said, “It is not necessary to eliminate contradiction.”

The Greek word from which the translation comes are diverse; one is *baros*, denotes a weight, and is applicable to a spiritual burden; whereas the other is *phortion*, which means load, being used in Acts 27:20 of the cargo of a ship.

In verse 2, Paul speaks of Christians bearing each other’s sorrows due to sins or misfortunes; and in verse 5 he speaks of every man bearing his own responsibility, fulfilling the purpose of his own life. (See article, “What To Do with Burdens,” under verse 5.)

“And thus fulfill the Law of Christ . . .” It is almost unbelievable that Christian scholarship has so nearly unanimously ignored or misinterpreted LAW OF CHRIST. That Paul meant the Christian duty of helping fellow Christians is to be understood as the totality of the Law of Christ is a preposterous error.

Note what is alleged: William Sanday, Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, p. 460, wrote, “The meaning is that by showing sympathy to others...the Christian will best fulfill that “new commandment”...“the law of love.” (John 13:34; 1 John 3:23)

H. N. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 213, wrote, “In such a statement Christ is not being set up over against Moses as a new lawgiver.”

J. R. Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, p. 957, wrote, “There is a law to which they owe obedience and devotion—the new commandment of Christ . . . the royal law of love.”

John Wesley, *One Volume New Testament Commentary*, in loco, wrote, “The law of Christ,” an uncommon expression, is the law of love.”

E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 296, wrote, “It seems better to take it of the whole moral institution of Christ.” (This restriction eliminates the ordinances Christ commanded.)

James Macknight, *Apostolic Epistles with Commentary and Notes*, *op. cit.*, p. 201, wrote, “(It is) Christ’s law of love.”

David Lipscomb, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Galatians*, p., 277 wrote, “The law of Christ (little “I”) is not a law in the sense of the word.”

J. W. McGarvey, *The Standard Bible Commentary, Galatians*, p. 285, wrote, “To fulfill the law of Christ is to love thy neighbor as thyself.”

William Hendriksen, *op. cit.*, p. 235, wrote, “The law of Christ which bids us to love one another.”

All of The above authors seem to utterly fail to get the point which is that Christians are to obey the Law of Christ (all of it) as distinguished from the Law of Moses. As for the allegations that the “Law of Christ is not a law in the legal sense,” there is no way to read “Law of Christ” except in the sense of “God’s Law” and how could Divine law be defined as not being in a legal sense? The very term legal means “pertinent to or conformity to law.” So the proposition means “Christ’s law is not pertinent to law!” Such a notion must be rejected. Moses was the type of Christ, and Christ surpassed Moses, being the Lawgiver for all mankind.

Thus Paul’s true meaning in this place must be, “fulfill the Law of Christ,” in this particular also, that of bearing each other’s burdens! All of the interpretations cited above of “love your neighbor;” but the interpretation here makes

Law of Christ to mean just what it says: the totality of our blessed Savior's teachings.

The total disbelief of many scholars that there is really anything as "the Law of Christ: is as incredible as it is unreasonable.

Verse 3

This appears to be addressed to any of the "spiritual" in verse 1 who might consider themselves above "sinners" and thus under no obligation to restore them.

Verses 4-5

"Work . . ." E. Huxtable, op. cit., p. 296, said, "Work" here means "practical behavior contrasted with profession." Such work is here set forth as the basis of one's "glorying," a Pauline expression meaning "rejoicing in the hope of salvation." This is a companion statement to "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)

William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary on Galatians*, p. 234, revealed a shade of meaning accurately in his rendition saying, "Let each one test his work; then his reason to boast will be in himself alone, and not in (comparing himself) with someone else."

WHAT TO DO WITH BURDENS

Every man, rich or poor, old or young, wise or foolish, weak or strong, has some burden to bear. One's neighbors may not always see, for some burdens are hidden and there must be many like the ancient Jewish king who wore sackcloth beneath his royal robes. Some smiling faces mask a burdened heart.

The word of God reveals that burdens may be handled in three ways. Some may be shared with others; other burdens must be borne by every man himself (see verse 1); and of a third class, the Scriptures command, "Cast your burden upon the Lord." (Psalm 55:22)

1. Burdens that may be shared with others. There is many a load of life that grows infinitely lighter under the touch of a friendly hand or the sound of an encouraging word. When the storms of life's deepest

emotions have been unloosed by overwhelming experiences, it is the glory of Christians to “rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” Love and toleration for the weak, and loving compassion for the needy, as well as love and appreciation for every soul’s unique and eternal value “in Christ” can ease the burdens of the weary and bless the giver and the receiver alike.

2. The burdens one must bear himself. No one may share another’s responsibility. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” “Every one of us must give an account of himself to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12) Every man must bear the burden of ordering his life after “the sayings of Jesus Christ.” (Matthew 7:24-27), upon pain of being either a wise or a foolish builder; and no commentator or preacher ever had the right to bear that burden for him.
3. The burdens which are too heavy to be borne. Of a third class of burdens, it is said, “Cast your burdens upon the Lord.” Our sins are such a burden. Our sins we cannot ignore, deny or make restitution for them; only “in Christ” may they be forgiven. Our anxieties are too frustrating and depressing to be borne by mortals. All of them should be cast upon the Lord. (Philippians 4:6) Great natural calamities, wars, pestilence, revolutions and countless other things are burdens no mortal can bear. Cast them upon the Lord.

Verse 6

E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 297, noted that this exhortation to “liberality towards our teachers is perfectly germane to the preceding topics of sharing one another’s loads, and so carrying our own pack.”

Paul here was enumerating a number of things included in the Law of Christ, not a total summary of course, but a list of particulars in which he felt the Galatians might need special exhortation. This is Number 3 of a group of things Paul stressed. It means financially support your teachers. Conybeare and Howson, *The life and Epistles of Saint Paul*, p. 492, made the meaning clearer by capitalizing Word,” showing that not all teachers are indicated but the teachers of the Word of God are meant.

R. E. Howard, Beacon Bible Commentary, Galatians, Vol. IX, p. 116, observed that the word here rendered “communicate” is, *koinoneo*, meaning to share, or participate, even as a partner.”

Verses 7-8

“Sows to his own flesh . . .” is a reference to living after the lusts of the flesh as Paul had just outlined in 5:18-21; and sowing to the Spirit is the equivalent of living the kind of life that exhibits the fruit of the Spirit. (5:22-24)

SOWING AND REAPING

1. The principle of sowing and reaping is handed down from the throne of God Himself. None can deny it; no skeptic can scoff at it; it was true in the garden of Eden that Adam reaped what he sowed, and it has been true ever since. It is true of every individual, of every saint and sinner, or every hypocrite who thinks he is a saint; it is true of every race, society and nation.

In the New Testament, Paul used this principle to teach Christian giving. (2 Corinthians 8, 9) No planting, no harvest is the law of life. The mandate to the church is “preach the gospel.” It is the executive order of God for every individual. There are no small and big opportunities; all opportunities are BIG with eternal potential.

2. Extensions of this principle. The reaping is always more than the sowing. No man ever sowed to the flesh and reaped eternal life, or the other way around. It is inevitable. There is no art or device of man that can countermand, avoid or checkmate this eternal law of God.

The sons of Jacob sold their brother; and all of them became slaves in the same land. America sowed the wind (of slavery) and reaped the whirlwind of civil war. Wherever men or nations today obey their own foolish philosophies instead of the word of God they are sowing to the wind; and already the whirlwind gathers dark and threatening upon the horizons of all the troubled earth.

3. There is a good side to this also. Sowing to the Spirit promises certain, inevitable, increased reward in kind. They who have loved and sought the fellowship of Christ in God shall at last enter the eternal fellowship above, where all the problems of earth are solved in the light and bliss of heaven.

Verse 9

“Not lose heart in doing good . . .” This is Number 4, being an undeniable component of the Law of Christ who went about doing good. (Matthew 22:15) How could any man imitate Paul as he imitated Christ without doing good?

“In due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary . . .” Many things can cause Christians to grow weary, among them being the evil doctrines which undermine and destroy their faith.

Verse 10

The badge of Christian behavior is that of positive good toward all on earth. “Let us do good . . .” Strange that Paul should have mention this, especially if he had been advocating for five whole chapters that “works” do not have anything to do with salvation! The meaning in those previous chapters refers to the works of the Law of Moses and not to that class of works which Christians must do.

The Christian must do good and not evil to all men, there is a special and prior obligation to Christian brothers, as elaborated by Jesus in the passage cited. “Let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith . . .” was the test of receiving or losing eternal life.

Verse 11

“I am writing to you . . .” is also better rendered as “have written.” Thus having as J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.*, p. 957, thought, “A reference to the foregoing letter of Galatians.” William Hendriksen, *op. cit.*, p. 241, wrote, “If, of all Paul’s letters that have been preserved, Galatians was the very first one that he wrote, as we have assumed, he could perhaps have written, “See what a big letter I wrote you.”

Verse 12

“Simply that they not be persecuted for the cross of Christ . . .” This is Paul’s charge that the Judaizers were insincere hypocrites who cared nothing at all for the Law of Moses, but that they were merely striving to accommodate to Jewish opinion for the sake of self-promotion. This was a devastating charge. Even the errors of sincere men may be tolerated and understood, but the pretensions of self-seeking hypocrites can receive nothing except utter contempt.

Verse 13

Something of the strategy of the Jerusalem hierarchy is detected in these two verses. They evidently had persuaded certain Christians who had become Judaizers to procure, by any practical means, the circumcision of as many of the Gentile converts as possible, leaving out of sight the ultimate amalgamation of all of them as proselytes to Judaism, which they doubtless envisioned as coming at a later phase of the effort. This accounts for the fact that the Judaizers neither kept the Law themselves nor sought to bind any of its more objectionable features upon their followers. The hypocrisy of such a device Paul exposed in this verse.

E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 308, discerned, those Judaizers were courting favor with the Jewish hierarchy. He said, “Paul meant, it is from no zeal for the Law that they do what they do, for they are at no pains to keep the Law; but only with the object of currying favor with the Jews.”

Verse 14

“Should boast, except in the cross . . .” The cross of the Son of God, by the love for men exhibited upon it by the Savior, by the atonement for sins provided upon its rude beams, by all the hope of the gospel which it symbolizes, is indeed the only grounds of rejoicing and glorying on the part of Christians.

“Through which . . .” This should not be “through whom” for Christ does not crucify Christians, nor the world; it is the cross which does so.

“And I to the world . . .” James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 210, wrote, “The cross of Christ crucifies Christians to the world, by inspiring them with such principles and leading them to a course of life which renders them in the eyes of

the world, as contemptible, and as unfit for their purposes as if they were crucified and dead.”

Verse 15

For full discussion of this thought, see chapter 5:5. The significance of its recurrence here is that of focusing upon Paul’s main theme continuing right through this chapter and to the very end of it, namely, that of the Law of Moses versus the Law of Christ, forcing the conclusion that “Law of Christ” in verse 2 is not a mere afterthought with regard to the general rule of “love your neighbor,” but an emphasis upon that glorious entity, the Law of Jesus Christ, which is antithetical to the Law of Moses, abrogating and replacing it altogether.

Verse 16

“Those who will walk by this rule . . .” that is, the Law of Christ, not regarding merely the portions of it stressed in this final chapter, but all of it.

“Peace and mercy. . .” The apostolic blessing is invoked upon those who will walk under the Law of Christ, as distinguished from them that desire to cling to the Law of Moses.

“And upon the Israel of God . . .” “Israel of God,” in the true sense, with Paul, was never racial Israel, but the spiritual Israel.

This meaning of “spiritual Israel,” of course, included all of every race including Jews, who accepted Christ. “Israel of God,” according to John Wesley, *op. cit.*, in loco, who wrote, “This means “the church of God, which consists of all those, and only those, of very nation and kindred, who walk by this rule.”

Verse 17

This is doubtless a reference to the scars of such suffering as Paul’s stoning at Lystra, among these very Galatians, on the first tour; and he considered such “marks” as positive and undeniable evidence of the genuineness of his apostleship. Any interpretation of this passage as a statement that nail prints had appeared in Paul’s hand and feet in some supernatural manifestations of the Stigmata belongs to the Dark Ages. Nothing like that is in the passage.

E. Huxtable, *op. cit.*, p. 314, wrote, “The mark of the pagan god Dionysus was that of an ivy leaf burned into the flesh with a branding iron.”

Wm. M. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 472, wrote, “The marks that branded Paul as a slave of Jesus were the deep cuts of the lictor’s rods of Pisidian Antioch and the stones at Lystra.

Verse 18

The tone of the whole letter is one of hurt surprise, sorrow and indignation; but in this final word “brethren,” one finds the loving heart of Paul yearning for his beloved converts in Galatia. It is the final word of love and hope for all of them. He had not given them up; they were still brethren.

This epistle, along with the Corinthians and Romans staggered Judaism and restrained it till, smitten by the hand of the Almighty at the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, it ceased to trouble the church any more until the times of the apostasy, when its forms and systems were revived, and in modern times when sabbatarians still attempt to bind such things as the sabbath day.

THE LAW OF CHRIST

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Matthew 7:31-46 | 6. Matthew 5:19 |
| 2. Mark 16:15-16 | 7. John 15:4-6 |
| 3. John 3:5 | 8. Matthew 5:48 |
| 4. 1 Corinthians 11:24ff John 6:54ff | 9. Acts 9:4ff |
| 5. Matthew 18:18-20 | 10. Revelation 2:10 |

These verses are only a few suggestions; but they do not represent human opinion at all, but what Christ said. The notion that the apostle set aside all of the words of Christ and substituted a “faith only” way of attaining salvation fails to take account of the fact that Christ is the head of His church, not Paul. Those who believe that Paul would have said of done anything to pervert or change the teachings of Christ understand neither: Paul nor Christ.

A popular superstition is that “The law of Christ is a positive law, not a negative law.” In the sense of stressing many positive values, of course, it is; but the Law of Christ has many negatives also. Notice just a few of them from the

SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1. 5:34 | 6. 6:7 |
| 2. 7:1 | 7. 6:5 |
| 3 7:24 | 8. 6:19 |
| 4. 7:31 | 9. 6:17 |
| 5. 7:6 | 10. 7:26 |

But, is not the Law of Christ a “law of liberty” in comparison with the Law of Moses? To be sure it is. All of the vast ceremonial, with its physical sacrifices, presentations upon certain days, and intricate, elaborate procedures for every conceivable kind of violation—all that is gone.

The subjection to priest craft, which was an inevitable accompaniment of the Old, has been taken away. There is forgiveness of violations under the New, but there was none under the Old. The indwelling of the Spirit of God aids the Christian, but did not aid the worshiper under Judaism.

Not any of the morality, integrity, truthfulness, sobriety, chastity, etc., that were required under Moses had been abrogated or relaxed under Christ. The notion that Christianity has a looser moral code than Judaism is ridiculous; and yet that is precisely the understanding some have regarding the wonderful “freedom in Christ.” Such is a fatal delusion.

The morality of Christ is a higher, stricter, and tighter code than Judaism ever was, as specifically elaborated in the Sermon on the Mount. This undeniable truth sends shudders of apprehension through those who see it and draw back and cry: “Impossible!” Who can be perfect? Where is any possible ground of confidence?

THE CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST

Despite the higher level of morality required of Christians, and despite the specific commandments of both a positive and negative nature which abound in Christian doctrine, and despite the fact that no salvation of any kind is promised to them who “obey not the gospel,” there is, nevertheless, the solid ground of absolute trust and confidence “in Christ.” The forgiveness provided in the love of Christ in the New dispensation is operative on a constant and continual basis, “cleansing us of all unrighteousness;” and two questions only, if they may be honestly answered affirmatively by the human conscience, bestow full and mighty confidence in the Christian. “Am I in Christ?” and “Shall I be found in Him?” All of our confidence is not in our own success as to meeting God’s standards, but it is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.