

Expository Messages
ON THE EPISTLE TO THE
GALATIANS

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PREFATORY NOTE

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The messages that follow were given in the Moody Church, Chicago, as a series, and are now published in the hope that they may prove helpful to some who have been confused regarding law and grace.

They are not intended for the learned, or for theologians, but for the common people, who value plain unfoldings of the Word of God.

H. A. IRONSIDE.

Chicago, October, 1940.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

(Gal. 1: 1-5)

“Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead;) and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

THE epistle to the Galatians links very intimately with that to the Romans. There seem to be good reasons for believing that both of these letters were written at about the same time, probably from Corinth while Paul was ministering in that great city. In Romans we have the fullest, the most complete opening up of the gospel of the grace of God that we get anywhere in the New Testament. In the letter to the Galatians we have that glorious gospel message defended against those who were seeking to substitute legality for grace. There are many expressions in the two letters that are very similar. Both, as also the epistle to the Hebrews, are based

upon one Old Testament text found in chapter 2 of the book of Habakkuk: "The just shall live by faith." May I repeat what I have mentioned in my Lectures on Romans and also my Notes on Hebrews? In the epistle to the Romans the emphasis is put upon the first two words. How shall men be just with God? The answer is, "*The just shall live by faith.*" But if one has been justified by faith how is he maintained in that place before God? The answer is given in the epistle to the Galatians, and here the emphasis is upon the next two words, "*The just shall live by faith.*" But what is that power by which men are made just and by which they live? The epistle to the Hebrews answers that by putting the emphasis upon the last two words of the same text, "*The just shall live by faith.*" So we may see that these three letters really constitute a very remarkable trio, and in spite of all that many scholars have written to the contrary, personally I am absolutely convinced that the three are from the same human hand, that of the apostle Paul. I have given my reasons for this view in my book on the Hebrews, so need not go into that here.

Now something of the reasons for the writing of this letter. Paul had labored in Galatia on two distinct occasions. A third time he was minded to go there, but the Spirit of God plainly indicated that it was not His will and led him elsewhere,

eventually over to Europe. In chapters 13 and 14 of Acts we read of Paul's ministry in Antioch of Pisidia, in Iconium, in Lystra, and Derbe. While Antioch is said to be in Pisidia and these other three cities are located in Lycaonia, according to the best records we have, both the provinces of Pisidia and Lycaonia were united to Galatia at this time, so that these were really the cities of Galatia where Paul labored and where God wrought so mightily. The inhabitants of Galatia are the same people racially as the ancient inhabitants of Ireland, Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland, also of France and northern Spain, the Gauls. Galatia is really the country of the Gauls, and those deep emotional feelings that characterize the races I have mentioned, the mystical Scots, the warm-hearted Welsh, the volatile French, and the brilliant, energetic Irish, were manifested in these Gauls of old. They spread from Galatia over into western Europe and settled France and northern Spain, and then came over to the British Isles. As many of us are somewhat linked with these different groups which we have mentioned, we should have a special interest in the epistle to the Galatians, which, by the way, is the death-blow to so-called British-Israelism. The Gauls were Gentiles, not Israelites.

When Paul first went in among them they were

all idolators, but through the ministry of the Word he was used to bring many of them to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they became deeply devoted to the man who had led them to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. It was a wonderful thing to them to be brought out of the darkness of heathenism into the glorious light and liberty of the gospel. But sometimes when people accept the gospel message with great delight and enthusiasm, they have to go through very severe testings afterward, and so it proved in the case of the Galatians. After Paul had left them there came down from Judea certain men claiming to be sent out by James and the apostolic band at Jerusalem, who told the Galatians that unless they kept the law of Moses, observed the covenant of circumcision, and the different holy days of the Jewish economy and the appointed seasons, they could not be saved. This so stirred the apostle Paul when he learned of it that he sought on a second visit to deliver these people from that legality. But some way or another there is something about error when once it grips the minds of people that makes it assume an importance in their minds that the truth itself never had. That is a singular thing. One may be going on with the truth of God in a calm, easy way, and then he gets hold of something erroneous, and he pushes that thing to the

very limit. We have often seen this demonstrated.

I refer here only to false teaching. I do not know the names of the men who came into Galatia to seek to turn the Galatians away from the truth of the gospel as set forth by the apostle Paul, but I do know what their teaching was. They were substituting law for grace, they were turning the hearts and minds of these earnest Christians away from their glorious liberty in Christ, and bringing them into bondage to legal rites and ceremonies. In order to do this it was necessary for them to try to shake the confidence of the people in their great teacher who had led them to Christ, the apostle Paul himself, and so they called in question his authority. Their attack was directed against his apostleship, nor did they hesitate to impugn his integrity.

They wormed their way into the confidence of the believers by undermining their faith in the man who had led them to Christ, hoping thereby that they would break down their reliance upon the gospel of the grace of God and substitute legal observances in its place.

When Paul heard this he was deeply grieved. With him, doctrine was not simply a matter of views. It was not a question of maintaining his own position at all costs. He realized that men are sanctified by the truth of God, and that on

the other hand they are demoralized by error, and so to him it was a matter of extreme importance that his converts should cling to that truth which edifies and leads on in the ways that be in Christ. When this news of their defection came to him he sat down and wrote this letter. He did not do what he generally did. We have no other instance in the New Testament, so far as I know, of Paul writing a letter with his own hand. Ordinarily he dictated his letters to a secretary who wrote for him. They had a form of shorthand in those days, and copies have come down to us, so that we may see how they worked. And then these letters were properly prepared and sent out by his different amanuenses. But on this occasion he was so stirred, so deeply moved, that apparently he could not wait for an amanuensis. Instead, he called for parchment, pen, and ink, and sat down and with nervous hand wrote this entire letter. He says at the close of it, "You see with what large characters I have written you with mine own hand." That is the correct translation of his words. Paul evidently had something the matter with his eyes, and so could not see very well, and like a partially blind person he took his pen and with large, nervous characters filled up the parchment, and it looked like a long letter. He then hurried it off to Galatia, hoping it would be used of God to recover these people

from the errors into which they had fallen. In some respects it is the most interesting of all his letters, for it is so self-revealing. It is as though he opens a window into his own heart, that we may look into the very soul of the man and see the motives that dominated and controlled him.

The letter itself is simple in structure. Instead of breaking it up into a great many small sections, I look at it as having three great divisions.

Chapters 1 and 2—Personal
" 3 and 4—Doctrinal
" 5 and 6—Practical

If we once have these firmly fixed in our minds we shall never forget them. The subject of the letter is "Law and Grace." The way the apostle unfolds it is this: Chapters 1 and 2 are personal. In these chapters he is largely dealing with his own personal experiences. He shows how he, at one time a rigid, legalistic Jew, had been brought into the knowledge of the grace of God, and how he had had to defend that position against legalists. Chapters 3 and 4 are doctrinal. In these chapters, the very heart of the letter, he opens up, as in the epistle to the Romans, the great truth of salvation by grace alone. Chapters 5 and 6 are practical. They show us the moral and ethical considerations that result from a knowledge of salvation by free grace. These divisions are very simple.

We turn now to consider the introduction to the letter in the personal portion. The first three verses constitute the apostolic salutation: "Paul, an apostle." Go over the other letters, and you will find that he never refers to himself as "apostle" unless writing to some people where his apostleship has been called in question, or where he has some great doctrine to unfold that people are not likely to accept unless they realize that he had a definite commission to make it known. He evidently prefers to speak of himself as "the servant of Jesus Christ," and that word "servant" means a bondman, one bought and paid for. Paul loved to think of that. He had been bought and paid for by the precious blood of Christ, and so he was Christ's bondman. But on this occasion he saw the necessity of emphasizing his apostleship because great truths were in question, and they were so intimately linked with his personal commission from God that it was necessary to stress the fact that he was a definitely appointed messenger. The word "apostle," after all, really means "messenger," or "minister," but is used in a professional sense in connection with the twelve who were the apostles particularly to the Jews, though also to the Gentiles, and then of Paul himself, who was pre-eminently the apostle to the Gentiles, and yet

always went first to the Jews in every place where he labored.

Paul was an apostle, "not of men, neither by man." I think he had special reason for writing like this. His detractors said, "Where did he get his apostleship? Where did he get his commission? Not from Peter, not from John. Where did he get his authority?" Oh, he says, I glory in the fact that I did not get anything from man. What I have received I received directly from heaven. I am not an apostle of men nor by means of man. It was not men originally having authority who conferred authority upon me, it was not a school, or a bishop, or a board of bishops, at Jerusalem, that conferred this authority on me. "Not of men, neither *by* man." Even though God appointed me my authority was not conferred of man. St. Jerome says, "Really there are four classes of ministry in the professing Christian Church. First, there are those sent neither from men, nor through men, but directly from God." And then he points out that this was true of the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation. They were not commissioned by men, neither authorized by men, but they were commissioned directly from God, and of course this is true of the apostle Paul. "Then secondly," Jerome says, "there are those who get their commissions from God and through man, as for instance a man feels distinct-

ly called of God to preach, and he is examined by his brethren and they are satisfied that he is called to preach, and so commend him to the work, perhaps by the laying on of hands. And so he is a servant of God, a minister of God, from God and through man. Then in the third class there are those who have their commissions from man, but not from God. These are the men who have chosen the Christian ministry as a profession; perhaps they never have been born again, but having chosen the ministry as a profession they apply to the bishop, or presbytery, or church, to ordain them." But as Spurgeon said, "Ordination can do nothing for a man who has not received his call from God. It is simply a matter of laying empty hands on an empty head." The man goes out heralded as a minister, but he is not God's minister. And then Jerome says, "There is a fourth class. There are men who pose as Christ's ministers, and have received their authority neither from God nor from man, but they are simply free-lances. You have to take their own word for it that they are definitely appointed. Nobody else has been able to recognize any evidence of it." Paul was in the first class. He had received his commission directly from God, and no man had anything to do with even confirming it. But what about the saints at Antioch laying hands on him when he and

Barnabas were to preach to the Gentiles? you may ask. That was not a human confirmation of his apostleship because he went there as an apostle of the Lord.

How did Paul get his commission? He tells us in chapter 26 of the book of Acts. When he fell stricken on the Damascus road the risen Christ appeared to him, and said to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me" (vers. 15-18). Paul says that is where he got his commission. "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (ver. 19), but in accord with his divinely-given instructions he went forth to teach at "Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (ver. 20). So Paul was an apostle

“not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.”

I think he had special reason for emphasizing the resurrection. There were those who said, “Paul cannot be an apostle, because he never saw the Lord Jesus. He was not one of the twelve, he was not instructed by Christ. How then can he rightly appropriate to himself the name of an apostle?” He says, “Have not I seen Jesus Christ? I saw Him as none of the rest did. I saw Him in the glory as the risen One, and heard His voice from heaven, and received my commission from His lips.” That is why in one place he calls his message the “glorious gospel of the blessed God.” That might be translated, “The gospel of the glory of the happy God.” God is so happy now that the sin question has been settled and He can send the message of His grace into all the world, and it is “the gospel of the glory of the happy God” because it is from the glory.

And then Paul links others with himself. He was not alone but was always glad to recognize his fellow-workers, and so says, “All the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Grace” was the Greek greeting; “Peace” was the Hebrew

greeting. Paul glories in the fact that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile has been broken down in the new creation, and so brings these two greetings together. How beautifully they fit with the Christian revelation. It is not the grace that saves, but the grace that keeps. It is not peace *with* God, which was made by the blood of His cross and which was *their's* already, but the peace *of* God which they were so liable to forfeit if they got out of communion with Him.

Then in verses 4 and 5 he goes on to emphasize the work of our Lord Jesus. Let us consider these words very thoughtfully, very tenderly, very meditatively. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins." Oh, that we might never forget what Christ has suffered for our sakes! "Who gave Himself." To whom does the pronoun refer? The One who was the Eternal Son of the Father, who was with the Father before all worlds, and yet who stooped in infinite grace to become Man. As Man He did not cease to be God; He was God and Man in one glorious Person, and therefore abounding in merit so that He could pay the mighty debt that we owed to God. He settled the sin question for us as no one else could. The little hymn says:

"No angel could our place have taken,
Highest of the high though he;
The loved One, on the cross forsaken,
Was one of the Godhead Three!"

Of all men it is written, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is too costly; let it alone for ever" (Ps. 49: 7, 8). But here is One who became Man to redeem our soul: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20: 28).

"Who gave Himself." Think of it! When we call to mind our own sinfulness, the corruption of our hearts, the wickedness of our lips, when we think of what our sins deserve and how utterly helpless we were to deliver ourselves from the justly deserved judgment, and then we think of Him, the Holy One, the Just One,

"The Sovereign of the skies,
Who stooped to man's estate and dust
That guilty worms might rise,"

how our hearts ought to go out to Him in love and worship. I think it was hard for Paul to keep the tears back when he wrote this, "Who gave Himself for our sins." We would like to forget those sins, and yet it is well sometimes that we should remember the hole of the pit from which we were digged, for our sins will be the black background that will display the glorious jewel of divine grace for all eternity. Not only that He might save us from eternal judgment, not only that we might never be lost in that dark,

dark pit of woe of which Scripture speaks so solemnly and seriously, but that even here we may be altogether for Himself, "that He might deliver us from this present evil world." Man has made it wicked by his sinfulness, his disloyalty to God, but we who are saved are to be delivered from it, that we might be set apart to God.

"According to the will of God and our Father." In these words he sums up the purpose of our Lord's coming into the world. He came to die for our sins that we might be delivered from the power of sin and be altogether for Himself. "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." This forms the salutation, and the introduction follows.

CHAPTER TWO

NO OTHER GOSPEL

(Gal. 1: 6-9)

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

THOSE are very strong words, and I can quite understand that some people may have difficulty in reconciling them with the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Twice the apostle pronounces a curse upon those who preach any other gospel than that which he himself had proclaimed to these Galatians when they were poor sinners, and which had been used of God to lead them to the Lord Jesus Christ. Some might ask, Is this the attitude of the Christian minister, to go about cursing people who do not agree with him? No, and it certainly was not Paul's attitude. Why, then, does he use such strong language? It is not that he himself is invoking a curse upon anyone, but he is declaring, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, that divine

judgment must fall upon any one who seeks to pervert the gospel of Christ or to turn people away from that gospel. In other words, the apostle Paul realizes the fact that the gospel is God's only message to lost man, and that to pervert that gospel, to offer people something else in place of it, for a man to attempt to foist upon them an imitation gospel is to put in jeopardy the souls of those who listen to him. Our Lord Jesus Christ emphasized this when He pointed out that those men who taught people to trust in their own efforts for salvation were blind leaders of the blind, and that eventually both leader and led would fall into the ditch. It is a very serious thing to mislead men along spiritual lines; it is a terrible thing to give wrong direction when souls are seeking the way to heaven.

I remember reading a story of a woman who with her little babe was on a train going up through one of the eastern states. It was a very wintry day. Outside a terrific storm was blowing, snow was falling, and sleet covered everything. The train made its way along slowly because of the ice on the tracks and the snow-plow went ahead to clear the way. The woman seemed very nervous. She was to get off at a small station where she would be met by some friends, and she said to the conductor, "You will be sure and let me know the right station; won't you?"

"Certainly," he said, "just remain here until I tell you the right station."

She sat rather nervously, and again spoke to the conductor, "You won't forget me?"

"No; just trust me. I will tell you when to get off."

A commercial man sat across the aisle, and he leaned over and said, "Pardon me, but I see you are rather nervous about getting off at your station. I know this road well. Your station is the first stop after such-and-such a city. These conductors are very forgetful, they have a great many things to attend to, and he may overlook your request, but I will see that you get off all right. I will help you with your baggage."

"Oh, thank you," she said. And she leaned back greatly relieved.

By-and-by the name of the city she mentioned was called, and he leaned over and said, "The next stop will be yours."

As they drew near to the station she looked around anxiously for the conductor, but he did not come. "You see," said the man, "he has forgotten you. I will get you off," and he helped her with her baggage, and as the conductor had not come to open the door, he opened it, and when the train stopped he stepped off, lifted her bag, helped her off, and in a moment the train moved on.

A few minutes later the conductor came and looking all about said, "Why, that is strange! There was a woman here who wanted to get off at this station. I wonder where she is."

The commercial man spoke up and said, "Yes, you forgot her, but I saw that she got off all right."

"Got off where?" the conductor asked.

"When the train stopped."

"But that was not a station! That was an emergency stop! I was looking after that woman. Why, man, you have put her off in a wild country district in the midst of all this storm where there will be nobody to meet her!"

There was only one thing to do, and although it was a rather dangerous thing, they had to reverse the engine and go back a number of miles, and then they went out to look for the woman. They searched and searched, and finally somebody stumbled upon her, and there she was frozen on the ground with her little dead babe in her arms. She was the victim of wrong information.

If it is such a serious thing to give people wrong information in regard to temporal things, what about the man who misleads men and women in regard to the great question of the salvation of their immortal souls? If men believe a false gospel, if they put their trust in something that is contrary to the Word of God, their loss will be not for time only but for eternity.

And that is why the apostle Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, uses such strong language in regard to the wickedness, the awfulness of misleading souls as to eternal things. These Galatians were living in their sins, they were living in idolatry, in the darkness of pagan superstition, when Paul came to them and preached the glorious gospel that tells how "Christ died for our sins . . . and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4). They were saved, for you know the gospel of the grace of God works. It is wonderful when you see a man who has been living in all kinds of sin, and God by the Holy Spirit brings him to repentance and leads him to believe the gospel; everything changes, old habits fall off like withered leaves, a new life is his. He has power to overcome sin, he has hope of heaven, and he has assurance of salvation. That is what God's gospel gives.

These Galatians, after Paul had been used to bring them into the liberty of grace, were being misled by false teachers, men who had come down from Judea, who professed to be Christians but had never been delivered from legality. They said to these young Christians, "You have only a smattering of the gospel; you need to add to this message that you have received, the teaching of

the law of Moses, 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved' " (Acts 15:1). Thus they threw them back on self-effort, turning their eyes away from Christ and fixing them upon themselves and their ability to keep the law. Paul says, "This thing will ruin men who depend upon their own self-efforts to get to heaven; they will miss the gates of pearl." No matter how earnest they are, if they depend upon their own works they will never be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. So far as these Galatians who were really born again were concerned, this false doctrine could not be the means of their eternal perdition, yet it would rob them of the joy and gladness that the Christian ought to have. How could any one have peace who believed that salvation depended on his own efforts? How could he be certain that he had paid enough attention to the demands of the law or ritual? It is the gospel of the grace of God which believed gives men full assurance. And so the apostle Paul was very indignant to find people bringing in something else instead of the gospel of the grace of God, and he is surprised that these Galatians who rejoiced in the liberty of Christ should be so ready to go back to the bondage of law.

"I marvel," he says, "that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace

of Christ unto another gospel.” He marvels that they should so soon be turned aside from the message of grace. What is grace? It is God’s free, unmerited favor to those who have merited the very opposite. These Galatians, like ourselves, had merited eternal judgment, they deserved to be shut away from the presence of God forever, as you and I deserve to be, but through the preaching of grace they had been brought to see that God has a righteousness which He offers freely to unrighteous sinners who put their faith in His blessed Son. But now, occupied with legal ceremonies, laws, rules, and regulations they had lost the joy of grace and had become taken up with self-effort. Paul says, “I cannot understand it,” and yet after all, it is very natural for these poor hearts of ours. How often you see people who seem to be wonderfully converted, and then they lose it all as they get occupied with all kinds of questions, rules, ceremonies and ritual. God would have each heart occupied with His blessed Son, “in whom dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” In our Authorized Version we read, “Another gospel,” and then verse 7 continues, “Which is not another.” That sounds like a contradiction, but there are two different Greek

words used here. The first is the word "*heteron*," something contrary to sound teaching, something different. The apostle says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ to a *different* gospel." This mixture of law and grace is not God's gospel, not something to be added to what you have already received, not something to complete the gospel message; it is opposed to that, it is a heterodox message, one opposed to sound teaching. There is only one gospel.

Go through the Book from Genesis to Revelation and there is only one gospel—that first preached in the Garden of Eden when the message went forth that the Seed of the woman should bruise Satan's head. That was the gospel, salvation through the coming Christ, the Son of God born of a woman. It is the same gospel preached to Abraham. We read in this Book that the gospel was before preached to Abraham. God took him out one night and said, "Look at the stars; count them."

And Abraham said, "I cannot count them."

He said, "Look at the dust of the earth, and count the dust."

Abraham said, "I cannot count it."

"Well, think of the sand at the seashore; count the grains of sand."

And Abraham said, "I cannot count them."

And God answered, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth" (Gen. 13:16). Abraham might have said, "Impossible! My seed! I have no child, and I am already a man advanced in years, and my wife is an elderly woman. Impossible!" But God had given the word, "In thy Seed (which is Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That was the gospel—all nations to be blessed through Christ, the Seed of Abraham. And "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). He was justified by faith because he believed the gospel. It is the same gospel that we find running through the book of Psalms. David, stained with sin, the twin sins of adultery and murder, cries, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:16, 17). "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7). And there is only one way a poor sinner can be purged, and that is by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. David looked on in faith to the Christ, the Son of God, and his hope was in this one gospel.

It is the gospel that Isaiah proclaimed when he

looked down through the ages and cried, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53: 5). It was the gospel that Jeremiah preached when he said, "This is His name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 23: 6). It was the gospel of Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zech. 13: 7).

This was the gospel that John the Baptist preached. He came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and as he pointed to Jesus he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). And this was the gospel that Jesus Himself proclaimed when He said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). This was Peter's gospel when he spoke of Jesus, saying, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10: 43). This was the gospel of the apostle John who said, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son

cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). This was the gospel of the apostle James who said, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). This is the gospel that they will celebrate through all the ages to come as millions and millions of redeemed sing their song of praise, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5). And this was Paul's gospel when he declared, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:38, 39). One gospel! And there is no other!

I have often felt sorry when I have heard some of my brethren whom I have learned to love in the truth, and with whom I hold a great deal in common, try to explain some apparent differences throughout the gospel centuries and talk as though there are a number of different gospels. Some say when Christ was on earth and in the early part of the book of Acts, they preached the gospel of the kingdom but did not know the grace of God. I wonder whether they remember the words of John 3:16 and John 1:29, and recollect that it was the Lord who said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). How

short our memories are sometimes, if we say that Jesus was not preaching grace when here on earth when Scripture says, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Can we say that Peter and his fellow-apostles in the early part of Acts were not preaching grace when it was Peter who declared, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). There is only one gospel!

They say there is one gospel of the kingdom, another gospel of the grace of God, then there is the gospel of the glory, and some day there will be the everlasting gospel, and that these are all different gospels. If such statements were true, these words of Paul would fall to the ground, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Someone wrote me that she was surprised that a man who ought to know better should talk about there being only one gospel. "Why," she said, "even Dr. C. I. Scofield would teach you better, because in his Bible he shows that there are four gospels." I want to read you what Dr. Scofield says, in his notes on Revelation 14:6:

"This great theme may be summarized as follows:

"1. In itself the word gospel means good news.

"2. Four *forms* of the gospel are to be distinguished:

"(1) The gospel of the kingdom. This is the good news that God purposes to set up on the earth, in fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant, a kingdom, political, spiritual, Israelitish, universal, over which God's Son, David's heir, shall be King, and which shall be, for one thousand years, the manifestation of the righteousness of God in human affairs.

"Two *preachings* of this gospel are mentioned, one past, beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist, continued by our Lord and His disciples, and ending with the Jewish rejection of the King. The other is yet future, during the great tribulation, and immediately preceding the coming of the King in glory.

"(2) The gospel of the grace of God. This is the good news that Jesus Christ, the rejected King, has died on the cross for the sins of the world, that He was raised from the dead for our justification, and that by Him all that believe are justified from all things. This form of the gospel is described in many ways. It is the gospel 'of God' because it originates in His love; 'of Christ' because it flows from His sacrifice, and because He is the alone Object of gospel faith; of 'the grace of God' because it saves those whom the law curses; of 'the glory' because it concerns

Him who is in the glory, and who is bringing the many sons to glory; of 'our salvation' because it is the 'power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth'; of 'the uncircumcision' because it saves wholly apart from forms and ordinances; of 'peace' because through Christ it makes peace between the sinner and God, and imparts inward peace.

"(3) The everlasting gospel. This is to be preached to the earth-dwellers at the very end of the great tribulation and immediately preceding the judgment of the nations. It is neither the gospel of the kingdom, nor of grace. Though its burden is judgment, not salvation, it is good news to Israel and to those who, during the tribulation, have been saved.

"(4) That which Paul calls, 'my gospel.' This is the gospel of the grace of God in its fullest development, but includes the revelation of the result of that gospel in the outcalling of the Church, her relationships, position, privileges, and responsibility. It is the distinctive truth of Ephesians and Colossians, but interpenetrates all of Paul's writings."

These words are very clear. There is only one gospel, and that is God's good news concerning His Son; but it takes on different aspects at different times according to the circumstances and conditions in which men are found. In Old Tes-

tament times they looked on to the coming of the Saviour, but they proclaimed salvation through His atoning death. In the days of John the Baptist stress was laid upon the coming kingdom, and the King was to lay down His life. In the days of the Lord's ministry on earth He presented Himself as King, but was rejected and went to the cross, for He Himself declared that He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). During the early chapters of the book of Acts we find this gospel proclaimed to Jews and Gentiles alike, offering free salvation to all who turn to God in repentance, but when God raised up the apostle Paul, He gave him a clearer vision of the gospel than any one had yet had. He showed that not only are men forgiven through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, but that they are justified from all things, and stand in Christ before God as part of a new creation. This is a fuller revelation of the good tidings, but the same gospel.

By-and-by, during the days of the great tribulation, the everlasting gospel will be proclaimed, telling men that the once-rejected Christ shall come again to set up His glorious kingdom, but even in that day men will be taught that salvation is through His precious blood, for as the result of that preaching a great multitude will be brought out of all kindreds and tongues who have

“washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7: 14).

Yes, there is only one gospel and if any one comes preaching any other gospel, telling you there is any other way of salvation save through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, it is a heterodox gospel. Some such had come to Galatia and perverted the gospel of Christ, and it is this that led Paul in the intensity of his zeal for that gospel to exclaim, as guided by the Holy Spirit who inspired him, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be Anathema” (let him be devoted to judgment), if he is substituting anything for the precious gospel of the grace of God. Notice, if the angel who proclaims the everlasting gospel in the days of the great tribulation preaches any other gospel than that of salvation through faith in Christ alone, that angel comes under the curse, for Paul says, “Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

Out West I often met disciples of Joseph Smith, and when I got them in a corner with the Word of God and they could not wiggle out, they would say, “Well, we have what you do not have. An angel came to Joseph Smith and gave him the book of Mormon.” And so they reasoned that the

Bible is not enough, because an angel had revealed something different. I do not believe in the prophet Joseph Smith, and I do not believe that an angel ever appeared to him, unless it was in a nightmare. But if he did, then that angel was from the pit and he is under the curse, because, "Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." People may say, "But Paul, you are all worked up, you are losing your temper." You know, if you become very fervent for the truth, folks say you are losing your temper. If you say strong things in defense of the truth, they will declare you are unkind; but men will use very fervent language about politics and other things, and yet no one questions their loss of temper, but they think we should be very calm when people tear the Bible to pieces! If anything calls for fervent and intense feelings it is the defence of the gospel against false teaching.

Lest any one should say, "Well, Paul, you would not have written that if you had been calmer; you would not have used such strong language," Paul repeats himself in verse 9, and says, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be Anathema." That is cool enough. He is not speaking now as one wrought

up. He has had time to think it over, and has weighed his words carefully. Yes, on sober, second thought he again insists on what he declared before, that the divine judgment hangs over any man who seeks to mislead lost humanity by telling them of any other way of salvation save through the precious atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In closing I put the question to you: On what are *you* resting your hope for eternity? Are you resting on the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you trusting the gospel of the grace of God? "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

CHAPTER THREE

PAUL'S CONVERSION AND APOSTLESHIP

(Gal. 1: 10-24)

“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: but they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.”

THE apostle Paul in this section is obliged to defend his apostleship. There is something pitiable about that. He had come to these Galatians when they were heathen, when they were idolaters, and had been God's messenger to them. Through him they had been brought

to the Lord Jesus Christ. But they had fallen under the influence of false teachers, and now looked down upon the man who had led them to Christ; they despised his ministry and felt they were far better informed than he. This is not the only time in the history of the Church that such things have happened. Often we see young converts happy and radiant in the knowledge of sins forgiven, until under the influence of false teachers they look with contempt upon those who presented the gospel to them.

In the first place, Paul undertakes to show how he became the apostle to the Gentiles. In verse 10 he says, "For do I now persuade men, or God?" What does he mean by that? Do I seek the approval of men or of God? Manifestly, of God. The apostle Paul was not a time-server, he was not seeking simply to please men who in a little while would have to stand before God in judgment, if they died in their sins. His express purpose was to do the will of the One who had saved him and commissioned him to preach the gospel of His grace. So he says, "I am not attempting to seek the approval of men, but of God. I do not seek to please men," that is, I am not trying to get their approbation. It is true that in another scripture he says, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Rom. 15: 2), but there is no contradiction

there. It is right and proper to seek in every way I can to please and help my friend, my neighbor, my brother; but on the other hand, when I attempt to preach the Word of God, I am to do it "not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2: 4). The preacher who speaks with man's approval as his object is untrue to the commission given to him. "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." He would simply be making himself the servant of men.

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The gospel differs from every human religious system. In some of our universities they study what is called, "The Science of Comparative Religions." The study of comparative religions is both very interesting and informative, if you consider, for instance, the great religions of the pagan world such as Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism. They have much in common, and much in which they stand in contrast one to another. But when you take Christianity and put it in with these religions, you make a mistake; Christianity is not simply a religion, it is a divine revelation. Paul says, "I did not get my gospel from men. No man communicated it to me. I received it di-

rectly from heaven.” Of course we do not all get it in this way, as a direct revelation, as Paul did, and yet, in every instance, if a man is brought to understand the truth of the gospel, it is because the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, opens that man’s heart and mind and understanding to comprehend the truth. Otherwise he would not receive it. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2: 14), and of course the natural man is not pleased with this divine revelation. Men are pleased when the preacher glosses over their sins, when he makes excuses for their wrong-doings, when he panders to their weaknesses or flatters them as they attempt to work out a righteousness of their own. But when a man preaches the gospel of the grace of God and insists upon man’s utterly lost and ruined condition, declares that he is unable to do one thing to save himself, but must be saved through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is nothing about that to please the natural man. It is divine grace that opens the heart to receive that revelation. That was the revelation that came to Paul.

There was a time when the apostle hated Chris-

tianity, when he did all in his power to destroy the infant Church, and now he says to these Galatians, "Ye have heard of my conversation—that is, my behavior—in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it." Twice here (vers. 13, 14) he uses the expression, "The Jews' religion." The original word simply means Judaism, and is not to be confounded with the word used in the epistle of James, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). There "religion" is used in a proper sense, and we who are saved should be characterized by that; but as the apostle uses the word here it is something entirely different. The two English words, "Jews' religion," are translated from the one Greek word which means "Judaism." Paul hoped through that to save his soul and gain favor with God, until through a divine revelation he had an altogether different conception of things. As long as he believed in Judaism he "persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it." One of the pitiable things that have occurred since is that members of the professed Church of God have turned around to persecute the people of Judaism. Strange, this seems, when Jesus says, "Do good to them that hate you, and

pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5: 44).

Paul hated Christianity. He persecuted Christians and tried to root up Christianity from the earth, and says that he "profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." He could say, "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (Acts 26: 5). Judaism was dearer than life to him. He thought it was the only truth, that all men, if they would know God at all, must find Him through Judaism. He was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers, not only of what was written in the Bible, in the law of Moses, what the prophets had declared, but added to that the great body of such traditions as have come down to the Jews of the present day in the Talmud. He would have lived and died an advocate of Judaism if it had not been for the miracle of grace. How did it happen that this Jew who could see nothing good in Christianity turned about and became its greatest exponent? There is no way of accounting for it except through the matchless sovereign grace of God. Something took place in that man's heart and life that changed his entire view-point, that made him the protagonist who devoted over thirty years of his life to making Christ known to Jews and Gen-

tiles. He tells us what brought about the change: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (vers. 15, 16). When the appointed time came, when God in sovereign grace said, as it were, "Arrest that man," and stopped him on the Damascus turnpike, and when Christ in glory appeared to him, Saul of Tarsus was brought to see that he had been fighting against Israel's Messiah and God's blessed Son. Then Christ was not only revealed to him, but Christ was revealed *in* him.

We have both the objective and the subjective sides of truth. When I as a poor sinner saw the Lord Jesus suffering, bleeding, dying for me, when I saw that He was "wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities," when I realized that He had been "delivered up for my offences and raised again for my justification," when I put my heart's trust in Him, when I believed that objective truth, then something took place within subjectively. Christ came to dwell in my very heart. "Christ in you," says the apostle, "the hope of glory." It pleased God to reveal His Son not only to me but in me. I was brought to know Him in a richer, fuller way than I could know the dearest earthly friend. It

was no longer for Paul a matter of one religion against another. Now he had a divine commission to go forth and make known to other men the Christ who had become so real to him. So when this glorious event took place, when through God's sovereign grace he was brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ, he says, "I realized that this glorious understanding was not for me alone but that I might make Him known to others; it pleased God 'to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen.'" When the Lord saved Paul He told him He had that in view.

In Acts 9, in the story of the apostle's conversion, we read that God spoke to Ananias and sent him to see Paul in the street called Straight in Damascus. He did not want to go at first, he was afraid he would be taking his life in his hands; but the Lord said unto him, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9: 15, 16). So Ananias went in obedience to the vision and communicated the mind of God to him. The Lord had already said, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which

I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee" (Acts 26: 16, 17). Pre-eminently he was the apostle to the Gentiles, but he also had a wonderful ministry for his own people, and all through his life his motto was, "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Into city after city he went hunting out the synagogues or finding individual Jews or groups, telling them of the great change that had come to him and pleading with them to submit to the same wonderful Saviour. When they rejected his message, he turned to the Gentiles and preached the gospel to them.

Some of these Galatians questioned whether he really was an apostle, for he never saw the Lord when He was here on earth; he did not get his commission from the twelve. He says, "No, I did not, and I glory in that I am an apostle; not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ. I received my commission from heaven when I saw the risen Christ in glory and He came to make His abode in my heart. He commissioned me to go out and preach His message." "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." They thought he should have gone to Jerusalem to sit down and talk the matter over with the other apostles, and find out whether they indorsed him and were prepared to ordain him to the Christian

ministry, or something like that. But he says, "No, I did not seek anyone out, nor confer with any one. My commission was from heaven, to carry it out in dependence upon the living God." So he adds, "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus" (ver. 17). He did not go at the beginning to what they considered the headquarters of the Christian Church, Jerusalem, to get authorization. Instead of that he seems to have slipped away. In reading Acts we would not know this, but here he indicates that he went into Arabia Petra, and there in some quiet place, perhaps living in a cave, he spent some time waiting on God that he might have things cleared up in his own mind. He wanted time to think things out, time for God to speak to him, and in which he could speak to God. There the truth in all its fulness, its beauty, its glory, opened up to him. It was not there that he had the revelation of the Body of Christ. He received that on the Damascus turnpike when the Lord said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" What a revelation was that of the Body that all believers on earth constitute! They are so intimately linked with their glorious Head in heaven that one member cannot be touched without affecting their Head.

There was a great deal he needed to understand, and so into the wilderness he went.

Have you ever noticed how many of God's beloved servants had their finishing courses in the university of the wilderness? When God wanted to fit Moses to be the leader of His people He sent him to the wilderness. He had gone through all the Egyptian schools, and thought he was ready to be the deliverer of God's people. When he left the university of Egypt he may have said, "Now I am ready to undertake my great life-work." But, immediately, he started killing Egyptians and hiding them in the sand, and God says, "You are not ready yet, Moses; you want a post-graduate course." He was forty years learning the wisdom of Egypt, and forty years forgetting it and learning the wisdom of God, and finally, when he received his post-graduate degree he was sent of God to deliver His people.

Elijah had his time in the wilderness. David had his time there. Oh, those years in the wilderness when hunted by King Saul like a partridge on the mountainside. They were used to help fit him for his great work. And then think of our blessed Lord Himself! He was baptized in the Jordan, presenting Himself there in accordance with the Word of God as the One who was to go to the cross to fulfil all righteousness on behalf of needy sinners, and the Holy Spirit like a dove

descended upon Him. He then went into the wilderness for forty days, and prayed and fasted in view of the great ministry upon which He was to enter. Then He passed through that serious temptation of Satan, emerging triumphant, and went forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom. Now here is this man who hated His name, who detested Christianity, but after having had a sight of the risen Christ he goes off into the wilderness for a period of meditation, prayer, and instruction before he commences his great work. Then he says he "returned again unto Damascus," and he preached Christ in the synagogues "that He is the Son of God." If you read carefully in the book of Acts you will see that it was not until after the conversion of Paul that any one preached Christ as the Son of God. I know the expression, "Thy holy Child Jesus," is used, but the better rendering is "Servant." Peter preached Jesus as the Messiah, the Servant, but Paul began the testimony that Jesus was in very truth the Son of God. When the Lord Jesus interrogated Peter, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 15, 16). But it was not yet God's time to make that known, for the message was limited, in measure, to the people of Israel in the early part of Acts. But when Saul was converted, without fear of man he

preached in those very synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God and he himself now was persecuted bitterly by those who once admired him as the leader in their religious practices.

Three years went by before this man went to Jerusalem. He went from place to place and finally did go there, but not in order to be ordained or recognized as an apostle. In verse 18 he tells us why he went up, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." The word "see" in the original is very interesting. It is the Greek word from which we get our English word, "history," the telling of a story, talking things over, and so Paul says that after three years he went up to Jerusalem to relate his history to Peter, to talk things over with him, to tell him what the Lord had done. What a wonderful meeting that was! It would have been wonderful, unnoticed in a corner of the room, to have heard the conversation. Peter who had known the Lord, who had denied the Lord, who had been so wonderfully restored, who preached with such power on the day of Pentecost and was used so mightily to open the door to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, Peter told his story and Paul told his. And when they got through I imagine Peter would say, "Well, Paul; you have the same message I have, but I think the Lord has given you

more than He has given to me, and I want to give you the right hand of fellowship. I rejoice in your ministry, and we can go on together proclaiming this glad, glorious gospel." Fifteen days of wonderful fellowship!

As to the rest of the apostles Paul says, "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." We are not certain which James he means. He may be the man referred to as James the son of Alphæus, the cousin of the Lord, who would be spoken of as His brother. My personal opinion is that he is the James who occupies so large a place in the book of Acts—James who was the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ, who did not believe while the Saviour was here on earth, but was brought to believe in Him in resurrection, and who led the Church of God in Jerusalem. Paul saw him, but from none of them did he get any special indorsement or authorization. He met them on common ground. They were apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ; so was he, by divine appointment.

"Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." Strange that he should have to say this! Strange that these Galatians, his own converts, should think for a moment that he might be untruthful! But when one gets under the power of false teaching, as a rule he is ready to make all kinds of charges as

to the integrity, the honesty of other people. And so it is here, and the apostle has to say, "The things that I am telling you are true. I am not lying."

After returning from Jerusalem he launched out on his great missionary program. "Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ." He had been known among other assemblies in Judaism, Jewish assemblies knew him well, but Christians in Judea, believers who had separated from Judaism, had never seen him. "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." And what power there was in that! Here was the man who had gone to all lengths to turn a man away from Christ, even attempted to compel him to blaspheme, threatened him with death if he would not repudiate the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this great change has come, and word is going through the churches, "The great persecutor has become an evangelist; he is no longer our enemy, but is preaching to others the same faith that means so much to us." "And they glorified God in me." Truly, Paul's conversion was a divine, sovereign work of grace, and praise and glory redounded to the One who had chosen, commissioned, and sent him forth.

The abundant resultant fruit was to His glory. Nothing gives such power to the ministry of Christ as genuine conversion. I do not understand how any man can presume to be a minister who does not know the reality of a personal conversion and the truth of the gospel.

That gospel has lost none of its power. It can work just as wonderful miracles today for men who will put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you trusted Him? Have you believed in Him? Is He your Saviour? Do you know what it means to be converted? Can you say, "Thank God, my soul is saved; God has revealed His Son in me"?

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GOSPEL AS MINISTERED TO JEW AND GENTILE

(Gal. 2: 1-10)

“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: but contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (for He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;) and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.”

IN this second chapter Paul tells of another visit to Jerusalem, a very important one, referred to in Acts 15. “Fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.” This was after

certain persons came from James to Antioch, where the apostle was laboring, and insisted upon things that are mentioned in this letter—that the Gentile believers must be subjected to Jewish rites and ceremonies, that they must be circumcised, must keep the law of Moses, or they could not be saved. When Paul came in contact with them he waited until he had a definite revelation commanding him to go to Jerusalem. He says, "I went up by revelation." He did not go alone; he took Barnabas with him.

Barnabas had come from Jerusalem to find him in Tarsus, to persuade him to go to Antioch and assist in the ministry there. In the beginning it was Barnabas who was the leader, and Paul was the follower. But as time went on Barnabas took the lower place and Paul came to the front. With Barnabas it was a case of, "He must increase, but I must decrease." We read elsewhere of him, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Such a man can stand to see some one else honored and himself set to one side. So Barnabas stepped into the background and Paul came to the front. And then Paul says, "And took Titus with me also." Why did he mention that? Because this was a test case. These false brethren who had come down to Galatia had insisted that in Jerusalem and Judea no one would condone the idea that a

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Gentile could be saved if he did not accept the sign of the Abrahamic covenant and were not circumcised. But Paul says, "I took Titus with me also," and he was a Gentile. He had never submitted to this rite, and Paul had never suggested that he should, and so he took him to Jerusalem, as it were to the headquarters of the legalists.

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." He gave them an outline of the glad tidings that he preached among the Gentiles, but he did this privately "to them that were of reputation." When we go back to Acts 15 we find that Paul called together the apostles who happened to be in Jerusalem, James, Cephas, and John, together with the elders of the Church there, and to them he told the story of his ministry, his activities. He outlined for them the contents of the gospel message which he carried to the Gentiles. As they listened they accepted him as one with themselves in the proclamation of the same gospel that they preached, even though that gospel was fuller, was richer, than that to which they had attained, for there were certain things made known to Paul that had not been revealed to them.

A few years before, God had been obliged to

give Peter a special revelation in order that he might enter into that wondrous mystery, namely, that Jew and Gentile when saved were now to be recognized as one Body in Christ. Peter never uses the term "the Body," but he does convey the same thought. Blessing for Jew and Gentile was on the ground of grace, and the Lord revealed that to him on the housetop in Joppa when he had a vision of a sheet descending unto him, "wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." And a voice from heaven said, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat." But Peter, like a good Jew, said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." And the Lord said to him, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:12-15), thus indicating the sanctification of the Gentiles. That prepared Peter for the mission to the house of Cornelius, where he preached Christ and opened the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles, as some time before he had been used to open it to the Jews in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas talked with the brethren freely, declaring what God had done, and after much discussion, Peter related God's dealings in grace, and James appealed to Scripture to decide the matter as to the Gentiles. They were in happy agreement. Paul, as we have already noticed, had had a fuller,

clearer unfolding than was given to Peter, but it was the same gospel basically, and in order to show that there was no such thought in their minds as to subjecting Gentiles to legal ceremonies, he says, "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised." What a tremendous answer that was to these Judaisers who were perverting these Galatians and turning them away from the simplicity of the grace of God. They said, "A man uncircumcised cannot be recognized as in the family of God." Paul says, "I took Titus with me, and talked the matter over with the elders at Jerusalem, and they did not say one word about making Titus submit to circumcision. He was accepted as a fellow-Christian just as he was." What an answer to those who were criticizing him and misleading his converts!

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." To whom does he refer? To these Judaisers who had wormed their way privately into the assembly of the Christians in Galatia. Paul says, "Not even for peace sake did we submit to them, because we would have been robbing you of your blood-

bought heritage in Christ. And so because of our love for you and our realization of the value of the grace of God, we refused even on the ground of Christian love to submit to these men. We never subjected ourselves to them."

And then in the next few verses (6-10) he tells us an interesting little story about an arrangement made while in Jerusalem as to a division of spheres of labor, an arrangement made in perfect Christian fellowship and happy harmony. "But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." He could speak that way, you see, because he had received his revelation directly from heaven. It was the risen, glorified Christ who had appeared to him on the Damascus road, the same blessed Lord who had taught him during those months in Arabia, where he had retired that he might mull things over and get a clear understanding of the wonderful message he was to carry to the Gentile world. Therefore, even though he mingled with the apostles and elders who had been saved years before he knew Christ, he did not stand in awe of them. They might be recognized leaders, but God does not accept any man's person, and they were simply brothers in Christ. They had to be taught of God, and so did

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he. He does not ask them to confer any authority on him nor give him any special opening up of the truth that he was to proclaim to the Gentiles, though he was glad to sit down on common ground and talk things over in a brotherly way. And they said, "Why, certainly, we recognize the fact that God has raised you up for a special mission, and we have fellowship with you in that."

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;" notice the preposition rendered here "of." The Greek word may be rendered "for," and the point was this—they saw that God had given him a special revelation, a special understanding of the gospel for the Gentiles. God had fitted him by early training, and then by enlightenment after conversion, to do a work among the Gentiles which they did not feel they were fitted for. On the other hand, God had fitted Peter to do a special work among the Jews and had used him in a remarkable way on the day of Pentecost, and through the years since God had set His seal upon Peter's ministry to Israel. And so they talked things over, and they said, "It is very evident, Paul, that God has marked you out to carry the message to the Gentiles as Peter is carrying it to the Jews." He says, "For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the cir-

cumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."

"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars (apparently they were the leaders), perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Is it not a remarkable thing that men have read into these words the amazing idea that what the apostle Paul is saying here is that as they talked together they found out that there were two gospels?—that Peter and the other apostles chosen by the Lord had one gospel, the gospel of the circumcision, and that Paul and Barnabas had another, the gospel of the Gentiles. And so they were to go on preaching one gospel to the Jews, and Paul and Barnabas were to preach a different gospel altogether to the Gentiles! What amazing ignorance of the divine plan that would lead any one to draw any such conclusion! The apostle has already told us, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (chap. 1: 8). Peter had been among the Galatians preaching to them the same gospel he preached everywhere else. Was he accursed? Angels will proclaim the everlasting gospel in the coming day. Will they be under the curse? Surely

not. There is only the one gospel, though it takes on different forms at different times. Peter's gospel was that of a full, free, and eternal salvation through the death, resurrection, and unchanging life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul's gospel was exactly the same. Let us go back and see something as to Peter's gospel and then compare it with Paul's.

On the day of Pentecost we listen to Peter preaching. He says, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, that David witnessed concerning Him, "He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 31-33, 36). Does this sound as if there was any difference from the gospel the apostle Paul preached? Surely not. It is the same message of the crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour.

What was the effect of this preaching? Remember, this was the gospel that Peter preached. The people cried out, "Men and brethren, what

shall we do?" They did not cry as the Philippian jailer, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), but, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It was as though they said, "Peter; we have been waiting for years for the coming of the Messiah; we have believed that He was the One who should put away our sins and bring us into everlasting blessing, and now we realize from what you say that He has come and has been crucified and has gone up to God's right hand. Whatever are we to do? Are we hopeless? Are we helpless? We have rejected our Messiah; what shall we do?" And Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38, 39). Peter is saying, "If you believe the message that I have preached to you that there is remission of sins, there is salvation for you; you do not need to go into judgment when the nation goes into judgment. But you must repent." And what is it to repent? It is a complete change of attitude. In other words, change your mind, change your attitude, and be baptized, acknowledging that you receive the Saviour that the nation has rejected, and when you do, you stand on new ground alto-

gether. What a fitting message for those Jewish believers! On that day three thousand of them took the step, and by their baptism cut themselves off from the nation that rejected Christ and went over to the side of Christ, and were known as among the children of God.

Let us listen to Peter again. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began . . . Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3: 19-21, 26). What is Peter preaching here? The same gospel that Paul preached afterwards. He is telling them that the Jewish nation has rejected Christ and is therefore under judgment. And how dire the judgment that has fallen upon that nation! But, he says, if you would be delivered from that, repent, change your attitude, turn again, accept the Christ that the nation is rejecting, and you will be ready to welcome Him when He comes back again. Peter is not yet giving them the revela-

tion of the Rapture, but he is telling them that when Christ appears they as individuals will be ready to welcome Him, even though the nation has to know the power of His judgment. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole (he had just healed a lame man). This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12). Is this different from Paul's gospel? It is exactly the same, but Peter is presenting it in a way that the Jewish people, who had all the centuries of instruction behind them, would thoroughly understand.

Now you hear the same man preaching in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). He tells the story of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the

third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (vers. 38-43). Is this a different gospel from that which we should preach today? Is this a different gospel from that proclaimed by the apostle Paul? Surely not. It is the same gospel, the gospel of the grace of God, salvation alone through the finished work of our Lord Jesus.

But now turn to the epistle of Peter which is addressed to Jewish converts, the gospel for the circumcision. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:18-20). This is the gospel that Peter preached to the circumcision. Compare it with that gospel preached by Paul to Jew and Gentile. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that

the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore He saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but He whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:32-39). Is there anything different here from that which Peter preached? Nothing different, but a fuller unfolding. Peter is never said to have preached justification, but forgiveness and remission. Paul added justification. When God forgives through the risen, glorified Jesus He not only forgives but He justifies. It is impossible for an earthly judge to both forgive and to justify a man. If a man is justified, he does not need to be forgiven. Imagine a man charged with a

crime going into court, and after the evidence is all in he is pronounced not guilty, and the judge sets him free. Someone says as he leaves the building, "I want to congratulate you; it was very nice of the judge to forgive you."

"Forgive nothing! He did not forgive me; I am justified. There is nothing to forgive."

You cannot justify a man if he does a wicked thing, but you can forgive. But God not only forgives but justifies the ungodly, because He links the believer with Christ, and we are made "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). We stand before God as clear of every charge as if we had never sinned. The two messages are one; but Paul's is a little fuller than that of Peter. One had the message peculiarly adapted to the Jews and the other to the Gentiles, and so they decided on distinct spheres of labor. We have something similar on the mission fields today. The heads of the boards get together, and one says, "Suppose that such-and-such a group of you work in this district, and another in this one." Do you say, "Oh dear, they have four or five different gospels?" Not at all; it is the same gospel. One goes to Nigeria, another to Uganda, another to Tanganyika, and others to other sections, but it is the same glorious message. And it is very simple, unless one is trying to read into it things of which the apostles never dreamed. Paul and

Peter never had the privilege of studying the modern systems of some of our ultra-dispensationalists, and so did not have the ideas that some people try to foist upon Christians today.

Verse 10 is interesting: "Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do." I wonder whether Paul did not smile as he heard that. They said, "You go to the Gentiles, Paul, but don't forget there are many poor saints here in Judea, and although you do not preach among us, send us a collection from time to time." He did, and thus showed that it was one Body and one Spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling.

CHAPTER FIVE

PETER'S DEFECTION AT ANTIOCH

(Gal. 2: 11-21)

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; inasmuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

THIS passage suggests a number of interesting considerations. First of all, we are rather astonished perhaps to find Paul and Peter, both inspired men, both commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to go out into the world pro-

claiming His gospel, both apostles, now sharply differing one from the other. It would suggest certainly that the apostle Peter who is the one at fault is not the rock upon which the Church is built. What a wobbly kind of a rock it would be if he were, for here is the very man to whom the Father gave that wonderful revelation that Christ was the Son of the living God, actually behaving in such a way at Antioch as to bring discredit upon the gospel of the grace of God. If Peter was the first Pope he was a very fallible one, not an infallible. But he himself knew nothing of any such position, for he tells us in the fifth chapter of his first epistle that he was a fellow-elder with the rest of the elders in the Church of God, not one set in a position of authority over the presbytery, the elders, in God's Church. Then too the reading of the Scripture suggests to us the tremendous importance of ever being on the alert lest in some way or another we compromise in regard to God's precious truth.

We have already seen what an important thing that truth was in the eyes of the apostle Paul when he could call down condign judgment on the man, or even the angel, who preaches any other gospel than that divine revelation communicated to him. We know it was not simply because of ill-temper that he wrote in this way but

because he realized how important it is to hold "the faith which was once (for all) delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). That explains his attitude here in regard to Peter, a brother apostle. It had been agreed, as we have seen, at the great council in Jerusalem that Peter was to go to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles, but as they compared their messages they found that one did not contradict the other, that both taught and believed salvation was through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that both recognized the futility of works of law as providing a righteousness for sinful men.

To Antioch, a Gentile city in which there was a large church composed mainly of Gentile believers, where Paul and Barnabas had been laboring for a long time, Peter came for a visit. I suppose he was welcomed with open arms. It must have been a very joyous thing for the apostle Paul to welcome Peter, and to be his fellow-laborer in ministering the Word of God to these people of Antioch. At first they had a wonderfully happy time. Together they went in and out of the homes of the believers and sat down at the same tables with Gentile Christians. Peter was once so rigid a Jew that he could not even think of going into the house of a Gentile to have any fellowship whatsoever. What a happy thing it was to see these different believers, some at one

time Jews, and others once Gentiles, now members of one Body, the Body of Christ, enjoying fellowship together, not only at the Lord's table, but also in their homes. For when Paul speaks of eating with Gentiles I take it that it was at their own tables where they could have the sweetest Christian fellowship talking together of the things of God while enjoying the good things that the Lord provides. But unhappily there came in something that hindered, that spoiled that hallowed communion.

Some brethren came from Jerusalem who were of the rigid Pharisaic type, and although they called themselves (and possibly were) Christians, they had never been delivered from legalism. Peter realized that his reputation was at stake. If they should find him eating with Gentile believers and go back to Jerusalem and report this, it might shut the door on him there, and so prudently, as he might have thought, he withdrew from them, he no longer ate with them. If he chose not to eat with the Gentiles, could any one find fault with him for that? If he regarded the prejudices of these brethren might he not be showing a certain amount of Christian courtesy? He felt free to do these things, but not if they distressed these others. But Paul saw deeper than that; he saw that our liberty in Christ actually hung upon the question of whether one would

sit down at the dinner-table or not with those who had come out from the Gentiles unto the name of our Lord Jesus, and so this controversy.

"When Peter was come to Antioch," Paul says, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." There is no subserviency on Paul's part here, no recognition of Peter as the head of the Church. Paul realized that a divine authority was vested in him, and that he was free to call in question the behavior of Peter himself though he was one of the original twelve. "For before that certain came from James"—James was the leader at Jerusalem—"he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." We read in the Old Testament, "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and here we are rather surprised to find the apostle Peter, some years after Pentecost, afraid of the face of man. It has often been said that Peter before Pentecost was a coward, but when he received the Pentecostal baptism everything was changed. He stood before the people in Jerusalem and drove the truth home to them, "Ye killed the Prince of Life," and he who had denied his Lord because of the fear of man now strikes home the fact that they "denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you" (Acts 3:14). The inference has been

drawn by some that if one receives the Pentecostal baptism he will never be a coward again, and also that all inbred sin has been then burned out by the refining fire of God. But we do not find anything like that in the Word of God. It is true that under the influence of that Pentecostal baptism Peter did not fear the face of man, but now he had begun to slip. The fact that one has received great spiritual blessing at any particular time gives no guarantee that he will never fear again.

We now find Peter troubled by that same old besetment that had brought him into difficulty before, afraid of what others will say of him, and when he saw these legalists he forgot all about Pentecost, all about the blessing that had come, all about the marvelous revelation that he had when the sheet was let down from heaven and the Lord said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10: 15). He forgot how he himself had stood in Cornelius' household and said, "It is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to . . . come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10: 28). He forgot that at the council in Jerusalem it was he who stood before them all and after relating the incidents in connection with his visit to Cornelius, exclaimed, "We (we who are Jews by nature) be-

lieve that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *we* shall be saved, even as they" (Acts 15: 11). That was a wonderful declaration. We might have expected him to say, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *they* shall be saved, even as we," that is, "these Gentiles may be saved by grace even as we Jews are saved by grace." But no; he had had a wonderful revelation of the real meaning of Pentecost and this glorious dispensation of the grace of God. What made him forget all this? The scowling looks of these men from Jerusalem. They had heard that he had been exercising a liberty in which they did not believe, and they had come to watch him. He thought, It will never do for me to go into the houses of the Gentiles to eat while these men are around. So without thinking how he would offend these simple Gentile Christians who had known the Lord only a short time, and in order to please these Jerusalem legalists, he withdrew from the Gentiles as far as intimate fellowship was concerned. He was not alone in this for he was a man of influence and others followed him. "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him." It looked as though there might be two churches in Antioch very soon, one for the Jews and another for the Gentiles, as though the middle wall of partition had not been broken down.

“The other Jews dissembled likewise with him.” And what must have cut Paul to the quick, his own intimate companion, his fellow-worker, the man who had understood so well from the beginning the work that he should do, “Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.” How much he puts into those words! Barnabas who knew so much better, Barnabas who had seen how mightily God had wrought among the Gentiles, and who knew that all this old legalistic system had fallen never to be raised again, even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation.

“Dissimulation” is rather a fine-sounding word. I wonder why the translators did not translate the Greek word the same as they generally did in other places in the Bible. It may have been that they did not like to use the other word in connection with a man like Barnabas. It is just the ordinary word for hypocrisy. “The other Jews became hypocrites likewise with him; inasmuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their hypocrisy.” Peter might have said, “We are doing this to glorify God,” but it was nothing of the kind; it was downright hypocrisy in the sight of God. Paul recognized it as what it was, and said, “But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all—.” This was

not a clandestine meeting, there was no backbiting. What he had to say he said openly, and he did not seem to spare Peter's feelings. We must ever remember the Word, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him" (Lev. 19: 17). Some years afterwards he wrote to Timothy, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Tim. 5: 20). There was too much at stake to pass over this lightly. It was too serious a matter to settle quietly with Peter in a corner, for it had been a public scandal, and it called in question the liberty of Gentiles in Christ and so must be settled in a public way. One can imagine the feelings of Peter, noble man of God that he was, and yet he had been carried away with this snare. At first he was startled as he looked at Paul, and then I fancy with bowed head, the blood mantling his face in shame, he realized how guilty he was of seeking to please these legalists who would rob the Church of the marvelous gospel of grace. "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" He has let the cat out of the bag. I think I see those Jewish men look up and say, "What is this? He has been living after the manner of Gentiles?" Yes, they should have known it, for he had a right to do it. God had given all men this liberty

and Peter had been exercising it, but now he was bringing himself into bondage. Peter had said, "We Jews know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but we have to be saved by grace even as the Gentiles, so why insist upon bringing these Gentiles under bondage to Jewish forms and ceremonies?"

Paul went on: "We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' We gave up all confidence in law-keeping as a means of salvation when we turned to Christ, and now, Peter, would you by your behavior say to the Gentile brethren, 'You should come under the bondage of law-keeping, from which we have been delivered in order to be truly justified?' " It was a solemn occasion, for there was an important question at stake, and Paul handled it like the courageous man that he was.

Are you, like so many others, trying to do the best you can in order to obtain God's salvation? Listen then to what He says, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone."

Some years ago, after listening to me preach on the street corner a man said to me, "I detest this idea that through the death and righteousness of Another I should be saved. I do not want to be indebted to anybody for my salvation. I am not coming to God as a mendicant, but I believe that if a man lives up to the Sermon on the Mount and keeps the Ten Commandments, God does not require any more of him."

I asked, "My friend, have you lived up to the Sermon on the Mount and have you kept the Ten Commandments?"

"Oh," he said, "perhaps not perfectly; but I am doing the best I can."

"But," I replied, "the Word of God says, 'Who-soever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all' (Jas. 2:10). And, 'It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them' (Gal. 3:10), and because you have not continued you are under the curse."

That is all the law can do for any poor sinner. It can only condemn, for it demands perfect righteousness from sinful men, a righteousness which no sinful man can ever give, and so when God has shown us in His Word that men are bereft of righteousness, He says, "I have a righteousness for guilty sinners, but they must receive it by faith," and He tells us the wondrous story

of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ—"He was delivered for our offences" (Rom. 4: 25). And having trusted Him shall we go back to works of the law?

"If," says Paul, "while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners"—if we who have trusted in Jesus are still sinners seeking a way of salvation—"is therefore Christ the minister of sin?" Moses was the mediator of the law, and it was to be used by God to make sin become exceeding sinful. Is that all Christ is for? Is it simply that His glorious example is to show me how deep is my sin, how lost my condition, and then am I to save myself by my own efforts? Surely not. That would be but to make Christ a minister of sin, but Christ is a minister of righteousness to all who believe. I think verse 17, and possibly verse 18, concludes what Paul says to Peter. "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." We do not have quotation marks in the ancient Greek text, so have no way of knowing exactly where Paul's words to Peter end, but probably he concluded his admonition to Peter with this word.

"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." What does he mean by that? He means that the law condemned me to death, but Christ took my place and became my Substitute. I died in Him. "I through the

law died to the law, that I might live unto God." Now I belong to a new creation altogether. And oh, the wonder of that new creation! The old creation fell in its head, Adam, and the new one stands eternally in its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not trying to work for our salvation, we are saved through the work that He Himself accomplished. We can look back to that cross upon which He hung, the bleeding Victim, in our stead, and we can say in faith, "I am crucified with Christ." It is as though my life had been taken, He took my place; "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live." As I was identified with Him in His death on the cross now I am linked with Him in resurrection life, for He has given me to be a partaker of His own glorious eternal life. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I." It is not the old I come back to life again, "but Christ liveth in me." He, the glorious One, is my real life, and that "life which I now live in the flesh," my experience down here as a Christian man in the body, "I live"—not by putting myself under rules and regulations and trying to keep the law of the Ten Commandments but—"by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." As I am occupied with Him, my life will be the kind of life which He approves.

"The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." I wish each of us might say those

words over in his heart. Can you say it in your heart? It is not, "The Son of God, who loved *the world*, and gave Himself for *the world*," but, "The Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." Only those who trust Him can speak like that. Can you say it from your heart? If you have never said it before you can look up into His face today, and say it for the first time. And so Paul concludes this section, "I do not set aside the grace of God" (or, I will not set it aside), "for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." But because righteousness could not be found through legality, through self-effort, Christ gave Himself in grace for needy sinners, and He is Himself the righteousness of all who put their trust in Him.

CHAPTER SIX

“WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU?”

(Gal. 3: 1-9)

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

WE now enter upon the strictly doctrinal part of this epistle. In verse 1 of this chapter the apostle Paul uses very unusual language. What he really means is this, “How is it that you seem to have come under a sort of spell, so that you have lost your grasp of the truth and your hearts and minds have become clouded by error?” Error affects people in that way. It is quite possible for one to have been truly converted and to have begun with a clear,

definite knowledge of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, and then because of failure to follow on to study the Word and to pray over it, to come under the influence of some false system, some unscriptural line of teaching. And so often when people do come under some such influence you find it almost impossible to deliver them. They seem to be under a spell.

Of course the apostle is not saying that one person has the power of bewitching another, but he is using that as an illustration. He says, "These men who have come down from Jerusalem, teaching that you cannot be saved unless you are circumcised and keep the law of Moses, have gotten such an influence over you that you are like people bewitched, and under a spell; you are not able to reason things out, or to detect what is true and what is false." It was not exactly that they had been "given up to strong delusion." When God offers men the truth and they deliberately turn away from it, they stand in danger of being delivered over judicially to that which is absolutely false, but here he has something else in mind. In all likelihood these people were real Christians, but real Christians acting like men under a spell.

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth,

crucified among you?" When once one has laid hold of the blessed truth that the Lord Jesus has been crucified on our behalf, that in itself ought to be the means of delivering us forever from such error as that into which these people had fallen. If Christ has actually given Himself for me it is because it was impossible for me to do one thing to save myself. Because I could not fit myself for the presence of God, because I could not cleanse my heart from sin, because no work of righteousness of mine could fit me for a place with the Lord, He had to come from heaven and give Himself for me on the cross. How then can I think of turning back to the ground of human merit as a means of securing salvation, or of maintaining me in a condition of salvation before God? I deserved to die, but Jesus Christ took my place, and He has settled for me. He has met all the claims of divine righteousness, and through Him I am eternally saved. Shall I go back to law to complete the work He has done? Surely not.

The apostle now refers to the beginning of their Christian lives and says, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" In the previous chapter he has shown how a man is justified before God by faith alone, and has declared that the law really is honored more in

the recognition of the fact that its penalty has been met in the cross of our Lord Jesus, than by any poor effort of man to keep it as a means of salvation. Now he adds to justification by faith the truth of the reception of the Holy Spirit. He says, as it were, "Go back in your own Christian experience. You received the Holy Spirit when you believed in the Lord Jesus, when you accepted the gospel message as I brought it to you (he is referring to his own ministry among them). God gave you the Holy Spirit, not on the ground of any merit of your own, not because of any good thing that you were able to do, certainly not because of law-keeping or ritualistic observances, for you were uncircumcised Gentiles. Yet when you believed in the Lord Jesus, God gave you the Holy Spirit." Now he says, "Think it out; did you receive the Spirit by works of the law? Surely not. How then? 'By the hearing of faith.' "

"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" In other words, if the Holy Spirit came to dwell in you in the condition you were when you came to Christ, do you think you need to complete the work by your own self-effort and by putting yourself under legal rules and regulations? You who know the love of the Lord Jesus Christ have received the Holy Spirit. Some of you may say, "I wish I were sure of that." But Scripture says

definitely, "Upon your believing, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13), you were born of the Spirit. You ask, "Do you mean that when I was born again that was the reception of the Holy Spirit?" Scripture distinguishes between new birth by the Spirit and the reception of the Holy Spirit, but there need not necessarily be any interval between our new birth and the reception of the Holy Spirit. New birth is the work of the Spirit. The Spirit Himself is the One who does the work; He comes to dwell in the man who is born again. New birth is new creation, and the Holy Spirit is the Creator. New birth is the work of God, but the Holy Spirit is God. There is a difference between being born of God and being indwelt by the Spirit of God. In past dispensations men were born of God and yet not indwelt by His Spirit, but with the coming in of the dispensation of the grace of God, when people are born again, the Holy Spirit Himself comes to dwell in them. In the case of these Galatians, if He did not approve of the work that Paul had done, if He did not approve of the stand they had taken in receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, He never would have come to dwell in them as they were. If it were necessary to be subject to the Mosaic ritual He would have made that clear and said, "I cannot come and dwell in you until these things are settled, until you sub-

mit yourselves to these regulations and rules," but He did nothing of the kind. They believed, they took their places before God as lost sinners, they turned to Him in repentance, they accepted Christ by faith as their Saviour, and the Holy Spirit says, as it were, "Now I can dwell in them, they are washed from their sins in the precious blood of Christ, and I will make their bodies My temples." Do you not see what a clear argument that was in meeting the teaching of these people?

"Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" He reminded them of what they went through in those early days. It meant much for people in their circumstances to step out from heathenism and take a stand against their friends and relatives, to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to declare that the idols they had once worshipped were dumb images and powerless to save. To step out from all that in which they had participated for so many years meant a great deal, and exposed them to suffering, bitter persecution, and grave misunderstanding on the part of their fellow-men. Yet for Jesus' sake they gladly took the step, for Jesus' sake they bore reproach, they suffered, many of them, even unto death, and those who were still living counted it all joy to have part with Christ in His rejection. But they were being brought under the power of an evil

system, teaching that they were not really saved until they submitted themselves to what these Jewish legalists had put before them.

"Have ye suffered so many things in vain?" All that they had gone through for Christ's sake—was it in vain? Was it simply a profession? If not, how is it that they seem to have lost their assurance? And then he adds, "If it be yet in vain." He cannot believe that it is in vain, for he looks back and remembers the exercises they went through, the joy that came to them when they professed to receive Christ, and the love that seemed to be welling up in their hearts one for another, and for him as a servant of God and for the Saviour Himself. He says, "I remember the afflictions you were ready to endure on behalf of the gospel; I cannot believe you were not converted, that it was not real. You have been misled, you have gotten into a fog, and if I can, I want by the grace of God to deliver you." He had no ill-will against them, and none against the men who came down from Jerusalem, but he detested the doctrine they brought. Some people find it difficult to distinguish between a hatred of false doctrine and a love for the people themselves who have come under the influence of it. When we stand up for the truth of God and warn people against false teaching, that does not imply for one moment that we have any unkind feeling

toward those taken up with that false teaching. We love such a person as one for whom Christ died, and pray that he may be delivered from his error and brought into the light of the truth.

Then the apostle reminds them that when he came among them to preach the gospel of the grace of God, there were marvellous signs and manifestations that followed. They themselves had seen him and Barnabas work wondrous miracles and some among the number had similar gifts granted to them. These miraculous evidences accompanied the testimony. "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" I think he intended them now to contrast the ministry of these false teachers who had come among them with that of his own and Barnabas when they came in the simplicity and fulness of the gospel of Christ. Are there any miraculous attestations of these false teachers? Is their testimony accredited by miraculous power? Not at all. But when Paul went preaching Christ and Him crucified, God Himself put His seal of approval upon that testimony by giving them the power to work miracles. People say, "Why not the same today?" Even today miraculous signs accompany the preaching of the truth which are not found when

error is presented. When the gospel of the grace of God is preached, men and women believing it are delivered from their sins, the Holy Spirit works, creating a new life, a new nature, and sets them free. The drunkard listens to the gospel and believes it, and finds the chains of appetite are broken. The licentious man who revelled in his uncleanness like a swine in the mud, gets a sight of the Lord Jesus; his heart is stirred as he contemplates the holiness and purity of the Saviour, and he bows in repentance before God, abhorring himself and his sin, and becomes pure and clean and good. The liar who has not been able to speak honest words for years hears the gospel of the grace of God and falls in love with Him who is the truth, and learns henceforth to speak right words, true words. That bad-tempered man who was a terror to his family, so that his wife shrank from him, and his children were afraid when he entered the house, is subdued by divine grace and the lion becomes a lamb. These are miracles which have been wrought down through the centuries where the gospel of the grace of God was preached. Error does not produce these things. It gives men certain intellectual conceptions in which they glory, but it does not make unclean lives clean, nor deliver from impurity and iniquity. But it is the glory of the gospel that when men truly believe they actually become new crea-

tures in Christ Jesus. There were no such signs and wonders accompanying this law-preaching.

And so he comes back to Abraham. These false teachers had said, "God called Abraham out from among the Gentiles and gave him the covenant of circumcision, and therefore unless these Gentiles do follow him in this they cannot be saved." Even as "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Abraham was a Gentile just as these Galatians were, and God revealed His truth to him. In verse 8 we read, "God . . . preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." And Abraham believed it, and God justified him by faith. When did God preach the gospel to him? He took him outside his tent one night and said, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars" (Gen. 15:5). And Abraham said, "I cannot count them, they are in number utterly beyond me." And then He told him to count the sand and the dust under his feet, and Abraham said, "I cannot do that." And God said, "So shall thy seed be. In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

God gave Abraham the promise of a collective seed, as numberless as the stars of the heaven, as the sand of the sea, as the dust of the ground, and also the individual Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of Abraham, for in Him

all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Abraham was a childless old man, but "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20, 21). And when God saw this faith in Abraham He justified him. The covenant of circumcision had not yet been given to him, but he was justified by faith. What is the inference? If God can justify one Gentile by faith, can He not justify ten million by faith? If Abraham is the father of all the faithful in a spiritual sense, then we Gentiles need not fear to follow in his steps.

And so the next verse goes on, "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." You see, Abraham has a spiritual seed as well as a natural seed. Those born of Abraham's lineage after the flesh are not really Abraham's sons unless born again; they must have the faith of Abraham to be his sons. But all over the world, wherever the message comes, wherever people, whether Jews or Gentiles, put their trust in that Seed of Abraham, our Lord Jesus Christ, and receive Him as Saviour and Lord, God says, "Write him down a son of Abraham." And so Abraham has a vast spiritual seed. Throughout all the centuries the millions and millions of people who have believed

God as he did, and trusted in the Saviour in whom he trusted will share his blessings, and will be with Abraham for all eternity.

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith (not through faith and works, not through faith and ordinances, not through faith and sacramental observances), preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” The gospel is God’s good news concerning His Son. Abraham received that good news and believed it, and if you and I have received and believed it we are linked with him, we are children of Abraham.

“So then they which be of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” On what are you resting for your salvation? I have received letters from people who are indignant because I have said that salvation is through faith alone. It makes one start sometimes to find that after all our gospel preaching so many people who make a Christian profession have never yet learned that salvation is absolutely of grace through faith. We almost forget that there are hundreds of people who do not believe these things. And yet how can anyone profess to believe this Book and yet insist upon salvation by human effort? In Romans we read, “If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be

of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6). Can you not see how the Holy Spirit of God shuts us up to this, that salvation is either altogether by grace or it is altogether by works? It cannot be by a combination of the two. Someone says, "But do you not remember the old story about the two preachers who were in the rowboat, who were debating as to whether salvation were by grace or by works, by faith or by works? The boatman listened to them, and when they were unable to come to a solution of the problem, one said to him, 'You have heard our conversation; what do you think of this?'

"'Well,' he said, 'I have been thinking it is like this—I have two oars. I will call this one Faith and this one Works. If I pull only on this oar the boat goes round and round and does not get anywhere. If I pull on that one it goes round and round and gets nowhere. But if I pull on both I get across the river.'"

And people say that is a beautiful illustration of the fact that salvation is by faith and works. It would be if we were going to heaven in a rowboat, but we are not. We are going through in the infinite grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and like that lost sheep that went astray and was found by the shepherd, we are being carried by the Saviour Home to Glory, and it is not a ques-

tion of working our way there. And so we come back to what Scripture says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2: 8, 9). If I had to do as much as lift my little finger to save my soul I could strut up the golden streets saying, "Glory be to the Lord and to me, for by our combined efforts I am saved." No; it is no works of mine, no effort of mine, and so Jesus shall get all the glory.

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow!"

Are you in perplexity and wanting the assurance of salvation? Possibly you have prayed and read your Bible, have gone to church, have been baptized and partaken of the sacrament, you have tried to do your religious duty; but you do not have peace and rest and you do not know whether your soul is saved. Turn from self and self-occupation, and fix your eyes upon the blessed Christ of God, put all your heart's trust in Him and be assured that, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

CHAPTER SEVEN

REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW

(Gal. 3: 10-18)

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

NATURALLY one might ask, “What do we mean when we speak of the curse of the law?” Is it a curse to have good laws? Was it a curse for God to give to the people of Israel the Ten Commandments, the highest moral and ethical standard that any people had ever

received and that ever had been given to mankind, until our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed the Sermon on the Mount? Is this a curse? Surely not. It was a great blessing to Israel to have such instruction, showing them how to live and how to behave themselves, and it kept them from a great many of the sins to which the Gentile nations round about them were given. Yet we have this expression in Scripture, "The curse of the law," and read, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

When God gave that law, He pronounced a blessing on all who kept it, and declared that they would receive life thereby. "The man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10: 5), but on the other hand, He said, as quoted here, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Every one who recognizes in that law the divine will as to the life of man here on earth and yet fails to measure up to it comes under its curse. And who is there today who has ever kept this law? I know people say, "If we do the best we can, will that not be enough?" Scripture negatives any such thought. In James we read, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law,

and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10). We know how true that is in regard to human law. Suppose that I as a citizen of the United States violated none of the laws of my country except one, by violating that one law I have become a law-breaker, and am therefore subjected to the penalty of the broken law. When we speak of people being under "the curse of the law" we mean that they are subject to the penalty of the broken law, and the penalty is death, spiritual and eternal. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18: 20). Therefore the law is well called "the ministration of death" and "the ministration of condemnation" (2 Cor. 3: 7, 9), for all who are under the law but have failed to keep it are under condemnation, they are condemned to death, and therefore under the curse. But our Lord Jesus Christ has died to deliver us from the curse of the law.

Can we not deliver ourselves? Though we have broken it in the past can we not make up our minds that from this moment on we will "turn over a new leaf," and be very careful to observe every precept of the moral law of God? In the first place, we could not do that. It is impossible for men with fallen natures to fully keep the holy law of God. Take that particular commandment, "Thou shalt not covet;" you cannot keep yourself from coveting though you know it is

wrong to do so. You look at something your neighbor has and involuntarily your heart says, "I wish that were mine." On second thought, you say, "That is very unworthy; I should really rejoice for my neighbor;" but still, have you not coveted? The apostle Paul says that as far as the other commandments were concerned his life was outwardly blameless. He was alive without the law until the commandment came, "Thou shalt not covet." "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (Rom. 7: 7, 8). And so he was slain by the law that he could not keep. But suppose you were able to keep it from this very day until the last day of your life, would not that undo and make up for all the wrong-doing of the past? Not at all. The past failure still stands on God's record. "God requireth that which is past" (Eccl. 3: 15).

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." Notice, no man is justified by the law of God, no man ever has been justified by the law of God, no man ever will be justified by the law of God. In Romans 3 we read, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of

the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:19, 20). In other words, God did not give the law to save man, He gave the law to test him, to make manifest man's true condition. And that explains a passage that puzzles some, "The law was added because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19). It was really given in order to give to sin the specific character of transgression.

I was strolling across the park the other day when I suddenly looked down and saw almost at my feet a sign, "Keep off the grass." I was on the grass, but the moment I saw the sign I hurried to get on to a path. If I had continued to walk on the grass after seeing the sign I would be a transgressor. I was not a transgressor before this, for I did not know I was doing wrong. I saw other people walking on the grass, and did not realize that there were certain sections where this was not allowed. I did not know that it was forbidden in that particular place. Until the law sin was in the world, and men were doing wrong in taking their own way, but "where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). God set up His law to say, as it were, "Keep off the grass." Now if they walk on the grass they are transgressors. If men disobey God they transgress. The sinfulness of man's heart is shown up by the fact that men do deliberately and wil-

fully disobey. It is impossible to be justified by the law, for to be justified is to be cleared from every charge of guilt. The law brings the charge home, the law convicts me of my guilt, and the law condemns me because of that guilt.

It was written in the prophets, "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2: 4), so it was made known even in Old Testament times that men were to be justified, not by human effort, but by faith. Three times those words are quoted for us in the New Testament. In the epistle to the Romans the apostle says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1: 16, 17). In the epistle to the Hebrews we have exactly the same words quoted, "The just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10: 38). And here we have them in the epistle to the Galatians. It has been very well said that these three epistles expound that text of six words, "The just shall live by faith."

How do men become just before God? As we have already remarked, Romans answers that question and expounds the first two words, "The just." It tells us who the just are, those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But if justified

by faith, how is one maintained before God in that position? Is it not now by works of their own? Galatians answers that and puts the emphasis on the next two words, "The just *shall live* by faith." And what is that power that sustains and strengthens and enables just men to walk with God through this world, living an unworldly life, even as "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5: 24)? Again the answer comes to us as in Hebrews the last two words are expounded, "The just shall live *by faith*." It takes three epistles in the New Testament to expound one Old Testament text of only six words, "The just shall live by faith." It gives us an idea of how rich and full the Word of God is.

But if "the just shall live by faith" then men never can be justified by efforts of their own, for verse 12 tells us, "And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them." The law did not say, "The man who *believes* shall live," but, "The man who *does* shall live." The latter might seem to us to be the right thing; if a man does right he ought to live. The trouble is, man does not do right. We read, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). If one commandment out of ten has been violated that man has forfeited all claim to life. Suppose a man falling over a precipice

reached out his hand as he went over, and caught hold of a chain fastened to some stump in the cliff, and there hung on to the chain. The chain has ten links. How many would have to break to drop the man into the abyss below? Only one. The law is like that chain; when you sinned the first time you broke the link and down you went, and you are in the place of condemnation if not saved. You never can fit yourself for the presence of God by any works of righteousness that you can do. The law says, "The man which doeth these things shall live in them," but men have failed to do, and therefore are condemned to die.

Now see the glorious message of reconciliation! "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law!" How did He do it? "Being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Here was One who had never violated God's law, here was the holy, eternal Son of God, the delight of the Father's heart from all eternity, who came into the world, who became Man, for the express purpose of redeeming those who were under the curse of the law. He Himself said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20: 28). But if He Himself has violated that law, He is subject to its penalty and never can redeem us; but how careful the Word of God has been to show

that He never came under that penalty. He was holy in nature from the moment He came into the world. The angel said to Mary, His mother, "That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1: 35). His life was absolutely pure as He went through this scene. He magnified the law and made it honorable by a life of devotion to the will of God. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4: 15). Sinless, though tempted; and at last God "made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5: 21). He against whom God had nothing, voluntarily took our place, went to the cross, and there paid the penalty that we should have paid. If I had to pay, eternity would be too short for it, but He, the Eternal One, hung on the cross, settled to the utmost farthing every claim that the offended law had against me, and now I receive Him, trust Him as my Saviour, and what is the result? I am delivered from the curse of the law.

"Free from the law, O happy condition!
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission,
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.

"Now we are free—there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
'Come unto Me,' oh, hear His sweet call!
Come, and He saves us once for all."

Has your soul entered into this?

I shall never forget, after struggling for so long to work out a righteousness of my own, the joy that came to me when I was led to look by faith at yonder cross, an empty cross now.

"I saw One hanging on the tree,
In visions of my soul,
Who turned His loving eyes on me.
As near His cross I stole."

I knew He was there on my behalf. He, the sinless One, was suffering there for me, the sinner, and I looked up to Him. In faith I could say, "Lord Jesus, I am Thy sin; I am Thine unrighteousness. Thou hast none of Thine own, but art bearing mine." And I looked again, and that cross was empty and my Lord's body had been laid in the tomb. "He was delivered for our offences," and buried out of sight as I deserved to be buried out of sight. But I looked again and that tomb too was empty, and He came forth in triumph, "He was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4: 25). I looked not to the cross now but to the throne of God, and by faith I saw Him seated there, a Man exalted at God's right hand, the same Man who stood dumb in Pilate's judgment-hall, and did not say a word to clear Himself because I could not be cleared unless He died for me.

Who would want to work out a righteousness of his own when he can have one so much better through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

And now because of that, the blessing of Abraham may come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus; we may receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." What is "the blessing of Abraham?" Long ago God had said, "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." But centuries rolled by and the nations of the Gentiles were left outside; they were outside the pale, strangers to the covenant of promise, they knew nothing of the blessing of Abraham, nor what God had promised through his seed. But now Christ has died, not for Jews only but for the Gentiles also, and because of His work the message goes out to the whole world that God can save every one who believes on the Lord Jesus, and all believers become in faith the children of Abraham and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God. The blessing of Abraham is justification by faith for every believer, even as "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto

him for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 3). The apostle draws attention to the fact that when God said to Abraham, "In thy Seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed," He was not referring merely to the nation that should spring from him but to one individual Person, for it had been settled in the purpose of God from eternity that the Christ was to be born of Abraham's lineage.

"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." When men make covenants we expect them to live up to them. God made a covenant of unconditional grace to Abraham long years before. Later the law came in, but did that invalidate the covenant of pure grace made to Abraham? "To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ." Through the Lord Jesus, then, the blessing of the covenant goes out to every poor sinner who will believe in Him. "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." God was not playing fast and loose with Abraham when He gave him this unconditional covenant of grace. He did not say, "If you do thus and so, and if you

do not do certain things, all the world will be blessed through your seed." But He said, unconditionally, "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." It is not a question at all of human effort; it is not a question of something we earn.

When the apostle discusses this same subject in Romans 4, he says, in the opening verses, "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (vers. 1-4). What does that mean? It means that if you had to do something to earn your salvation you would not be saved by grace. Suppose you work six days for an employer, and at the end of that time he comes in a supercilious kind of attitude, hands you an envelope, and says, "You have been working well the last six days, here is a little gift, I want to give you this as a token of my grace." You look at it and find it contains your wages, and you say, "Sir, I do not understand; this is not a gift. I earned this." But the man says, "I want you to feel that it is an expression of my appreciation." "No," you would say, "you owe me this;

you are in my debt, for I earned this money." If I could do anything to save my soul I would put God in debt to save me, but all God does for me He does in pure grace. And so we read, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). And though the law came four hundred and thirty years after this promise of grace for all nations through Abraham's seed, it did not alter God's purpose; it was given only in order to increase man's sense of his need, to make him realize his sinfulness and helplessness, and lead him to cast himself on the infinite grace of God.

"For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." If it comes through self-effort it is not a question of promise at all. But God gave it to Abraham by promise, and, "The promise," Peter says, "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). Perhaps, reader, you have been struggling for years to fit yourself for God's presence, you have been trying hard to work out a righteousness of your own, "trying to be a Christian." Let me beg of you, stop trying, give it up! You cannot become a Christian by trying any more than you could become the Prince of Wales by trying. You are

what you are by birth. You are what you are as a sinner by natural birth, and you become a child of God through second birth, through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessing of Abraham is yours when you receive it by faith.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LAW AS CHILD-LEADER UNTIL CHRIST

(Gal. 3: 19-29)

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

WE have been considering in our studies of the earlier part of this chapter the relationship that the law had, the law as given at Sinai, to the unconditional promise of grace which God gave to Abraham 430 years before, and we have seen that the law coming in afterwards could not add to nor take away from

the covenant already made. That naturally leads to the question of verse 19, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" If the law did not add anything to what God had given by promise to Abraham, and surely it could not take anything from it, what was its purpose? Why did God give it at all? The apostle answers, "It was added because of transgressions; till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." I think perhaps we may understand it better if we read it, "It was added with a view to transgressions," in order that it might make men see the specific character of transgression, and thus deepen in each soul a sense of his sinfulness and his need.

We are all so ready to excuse ourselves, to say if we had known better we would not have done the wrong thing. How often you hear people say, "I do the best I know, and endeavor to do the best I can." But where has a man or woman ever been found who could honestly utter those sentences? Have you always done the best you knew? Have you always done the best you could? If you are absolutely honest before God, you know that you have not. Again and again we have all sinned against light and knowledge, we have known far better than we have done. Thus we have failed to glorify God, and by going

contrary to His revealed will we have proven ourselves not only sinners but transgressors.

Both in the original language of the New Testament and that of the Old Testament, there is a word for "sin" which literally means to "miss the mark." I remember having this brought before me when working among the Laguna Indians of New Mexico. One day my interpreter, a bright Indian, said, "I am going to spend the day hunting; would you like to go with me?"

I am no hunter, but I went with him for the exercise. He had a fine new rifle which he was very eager to try out. He gave evidence of his prowess with that weapon. Standing on one side of a canyon he would say, "Do you see that creature moving yonder?"

At first I could not possibly see it, but as he pointed it out I would see something that was just a moving speck away over on the opposite wall.

He would say, "Wait a minute," and level his rifle, and the next moment I would see the creature that looked like a small speck leap into the air and then drop down dead. He was a wonderful shot with a rifle, but when we got home he said to me, "I want to show you what I can do with our old weapon, for I have kept up with the bow and arrow. That seems so typical of our people that I have wanted to keep it up."

So we went into the field, and the Indian hunter set up a very small twig of a willow-tree, and enacted a scene something like that described in Scott's "Ivanhoe." He fitted the arrow to the string and said, "Now I am going to split that twig in two." Letting fly the arrow he shot right by the twig but did not touch it. "Oh," he said, "I have sinned."

For the moment I did not ask him why he used that expression.

Then he said, "I didn't take the wind into account, as I should have done." He fitted another arrow to the string, and let it fly, and split that twig right in two. I could hardly believe that any one could do such a thing.

He said, "There! I did not sin that time."

I said to him, "Why did you use that term 'sin'? You were not doing anything wrong when you did not hit that wand. Why did you say, 'I sinned,' and when you did hit it, 'I didn't sin that time'?"

"Oh," he said, "I was thinking in Gowaik (that is the language of the Laguna Indians) and speaking in English. In our language 'to sin' means 'to miss the mark'."

"That is a very singular thing," I said, "for in the Greek and Hebrew 'to sin' is 'to miss the mark'."

That is what is involved in the expression,

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). But in the law we have something more than that. God has set up a standard of righteousness. The law with its ten definite ordinances, "Thou shalt and thou shalt not," makes known to man exactly what God demands of him. Now if man sins knowing the revealed will of God, if he fails to obey that law, it is evident that he is not only a sinner but a transgressor. He has definitely violated a specific command of God; he has crossed over the line, as it were, and, "Sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7: 13). That was one reason for which God gave the law—that men might have a deeper sense of the seriousness of self-will which is the very essence of sin, of rebellion against God. When God gave the law He gave it in the hands of a mediator, and Moses sprinkled the book of the covenant and also the people with the blood of the covenant, testifying to the fact that if man fails to keep his side of the covenant he must die, but also signifying that God would provide a Saviour, a Redeemer.

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." Two contracting parties suggests the thought of the need of a mediator, but when God gave His promise to Abraham there was only one. God gave the Word, and there was nothing to do on Abraham's part but to receive it. He

did not covenant with God that he would do thus and so in order that God's promise might be fulfilled, but God spoke directly to him and committed Himself when He said, "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). The question arises, Is the law against the promises of God by bringing in certain terms which were not in the original promise? Does the law set the promises to one side? God forbid. But a certain principle was laid down in the law which declared that "the man that doeth them shall live in them" (ver. 12), and if any man had been found to do these things perfectly he could have obtained life on the ground of the law. But the law said to man, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:14), and no man was ever found who could keep it. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

A gentleman said to me in California one night, "I do not like this idea of being saved by Another. All my life I have never wanted to feel indebted to other people for anything. I do not want anybody's charity, and when it comes to spiritual things I do not want to be saved through the merits of anybody else. According to what you said tonight, if I keep the law perfectly I will live and will owe nothing to any one. Is that right?"

I said, "Well, yes; it is."

He said, "I am going to start in on that."

I said, "How old are you?"

"Around forty."

"Suppose you came to years of accountability somewhere around twelve; you are nearly thirty years too late to begin, and Scripture says, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them' (ver. 10). Therefore, because the law cannot give life, you will never be able to earn anything on that ground." He went away very disgruntled.

"But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin." If God has concluded all under sin, must all men be lost? No; all have been concluded under sin "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." God would have all men recognize their sinfulness in order that all might realize their need and come to Him proving His grace. He puts all men on one common level. Romans says, "There is no difference: for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:22, 23). Men imagine that there are a great many differences. One man says, "Do you mean to tell me that there is no difference between a moral man and a poor reprobate in the gutter?" Of course there is a great deal of difference, not only as far as the standard of society is concerned, but

also as to their own happiness and the estimate of their neighbors; but when it comes to a question of righteousness, "There is no difference: for all have sinned." All may not have sinned in the same way, they may not have committed exactly the same transgressions, but "all have sinned," all have violated God's law.

A gentleman once said to a cousin of his, "I do not like that idea about there being no difference, it is repugnant to me. Do you mean to tell me that having tried all my life to live a decent and respectable life, God does not see any difference between me and people living lives of sin and iniquity?"

She said to him, "Suppose that you and I were walking down the street together, and we passed some place of interest, perhaps a museum, that we were eager to see. We went to the window and inquired about the admission fee, and were told it was \$1.00. I looked into my purse and said, 'Oh, I have left my money at home: I have only 25c.' You looked at your money and found you had only 70c. Which one of us would go in first?"

"Well," he said, "under such circumstances neither of us would get in."

"There would be no difference, and yet you would have a great deal more money than I; but

as far as having what was necessary to pay our way in, there is no difference."

God demands absolute righteousness of sinners before they enter heaven. "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth" (Rev. 21: 27). You may have your 95c. worth of righteousness while I do not have a nickel's worth of it, but neither of us can get in unless we have our hundred cents, and there is no difference. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3: 10). Remember that God has said that, not some zealous, earnest preacher or evangelist, but God Himself by the Holy Spirit. And the law was given to demonstrate that fact. But if men take the place of unrighteousness before God, if they take the place of being lost sinners, and own their sin and guilt, what then? "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." In other words, when men come to the place where they realize the fact that they cannot earn eternal life by any effort of their own, and are ready to receive it as a free gift, that moment it is their's. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3: 36). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed out of death into life" (John 5: 24).

But now the apostle shows another use for the law. Paul says, in ver. 23, "But before faith came," that is, "before *the* faith," because it was made known clearly and definitely that God was justifying men by faith alone in His blessed Son, "we were kept under the law"—he speaks now as a Jew—"we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." The Gentiles at that time did not have the law, but the Jews did. God gave the Jew that law, and he was looked upon as a minor child under rules and regulations. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." That word rendered "schoolmaster" is exactly the word that we have Anglicized by the term "pedagogue," a school-teacher. But the original word was not exactly a school-teacher, it really means a child-leader, a child-director, and was the name applied in ancient Greek households to a slave who had the care of the minor children. He was to watch over the morals of the child, protect him from association with others who were not fit for his companionship, and take him day by day from the house to the schoolroom. He there turned him over to the schoolmaster, but at the end of the day he would get him and bring him back home again. The apostle says here, and very beautifully, I think, "The law was our child-lead-

er, our child-director, until Christ." That is, God did not leave His people without a code of morals until Jesus came to set before us the most wonderful moral code the world has ever known, and the law served in a very real way to protect and keep them from much of the immorality, iniquity, vileness, and corruption found in the heathen life round about them. As long as the people lived in obedience, in any measure, to that law, they were saved from a great deal of wickedness and evil.

"The law was our child-leader," perhaps not exactly to *bring* us to Christ, but, "The law was our child-leader *until* Christ." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Now Christ has come we have come to the door of the schoolroom of grace, and we have learned the blessed truth of justification by faith alone in Him whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for our sins. We are no longer under a child-director.

We are here told that we are not only freed from the law as a means of attempting to secure justification, but are also freed from that law as a means of sanctification, for we have so much higher a standard in Christ risen from the dead, and are to be occupied with Him. As we are taken up with Him the grace of God teaches us that, "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 1: 12). For instance, suppose I as a Christian by some strange mishap had never even heard of the Ten Commandments, suppose it were possible that I had never known of them; but on the other hand I had been taught the wonderful story of the gospel, and had been entrusted with some of the books of the New Testament showing how a Christian ought to live. If I walk in obedience to this revelation, I live on a higher, on a holier, plane than he who only had the Ten Commandments. Anyone having the wonderful teaching that came from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the marvelous unfolding of the epistles showing what a Christian ought to be, has this new standard of holiness, which is not the law given at Sinai, but the risen Christ at God's right hand, and as I am walking in obedience to Him my life will be a righteous life, and so, "After that faith is come we are no longer under the pedagogue."

Then he adds, "Ye are all the children (sons) of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" from Him we receive life. To whom does God communicate eternal life? To all who put their trust in His blessed Son. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5: 12). And so we can see why our Lord Jesus stresses, "Except a man be born again, he

cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). There must be the impartation of the divine life. This makes us members of God's family—a new and wonderful relationship.

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." He probably has two thoughts in mind here. Outwardly we put on Christ in our baptism. That ordinance indicates that we professedly have received the Lord Jesus Christ, but I think also he has in view the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and by that we are actually made members of Christ and, in the fullest, deepest sense, we put on Christ. And now as members of that new creation, "there is neither Jew nor Greek," national distinctions no longer come in. In this connection there is "neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." He does not ignore natural distinctions. Of course we still retain our natural place in society, we remain servants or masters, we remain male or female, but as to our place in the new creation, God takes none of these distinctions into account. All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are made one in Him, "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30). How we need to remember this!

"Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs

according to the promise." To be "in Christ" and to be "Christ's," comes to exactly the same thing, "all one in Christ Jesus." "And if ye be Christ's (if you belong to Him), then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Because you too have believed God as Abraham did (Abraham "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness"—Rom. 4: 3), it is counted to you for righteousness. And so every believer forms part of Abraham's spiritual seed. There is both the spiritual and the natural seed of Abraham. "They which be of faith are blessed with believing Abraham" (Gal. 3: 9). I hope we are clear as to this distinction between law and grace.

Some years ago I took with me to Oakland, California, a Navaho Indian. One Sunday evening he went to our young people's meeting. They were talking about this epistle to the Galatians, about law and grace, but they were not very clear about it, and finally one turned to the Indian and said, "I wonder whether our Indian friend has anything to say about this."

He rose to his feet and said, "Well, my friends, I have been listening very carefully, because I am here to learn all I can in order to take it back to my people. I do not understand what you are talking about, and I do not think you do yourselves. But concerning this law and grace, let me

see if I can make it clear. I think it is like this. When Mr. Ironside brought me from my home we took the longest railroad journey I ever took. We got out at Barstow, and there I saw the most beautiful railroad station with a hotel above it, I have ever seen. I walked all around and saw at one end a sign, 'Do not spit here.' I looked at that sign and then looked down at the ground and saw many had spitted there, and before I think what I am doing I have spitted myself. Isn't that strange when the sign say, 'Do not spit here'? I come to Oakland and go to the home of the lady who invited me to dinner today and I am in the nicest home I have ever been in in my life. Such beautiful furniture and carpets I hate to step on them. I sank into a comfortable chair, and the lady said, 'Now, John, you sit there while I go out and see whether the maid has dinner ready.' I look around at the beautiful pictures, at the grand piano, and I walk all around those rooms. I am looking for a sign; the sign I am looking for is, 'Do not spit here,' but I look around those two beautiful drawing-rooms, and cannot find a sign like this. I think, What a pity when this is such a beautiful home to have people spitting all over it—too bad they don't put up a sign! So I look all over that carpet but cannot find that anybody have spitted there. What a queer thing! Where the sign says, 'Do not spit,' a lot of people spit-

ted; here where there is no sign, nobody spitted. Now I understand! That sign is law, but inside the home it is grace. They love their beautiful home and want to keep it clean. I think that explains this law and grace business," and he sat down.

CHAPTER NINE

THE ADOPTION OF SONS

(Gal. 4: 1-7)

“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

IN this section of the epistle the apostle makes a very interesting distinction, which, if thoroughly understood, will help greatly in enabling us to see the relative place of Old Testament believers and that of those in the present glorious dispensation of the grace of God. We need to remember that in all dispensations it was necessary that men be born again in order to become the children of God, and new birth has always been, on the part of adults at least, by faith in the divine revelation. We are told in James 1: 18, “Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” What is true of us in this age has been true of believers in all ages. Each one was begotten by the Word of truth. Of

course, in the case of infants not yet come to years of accountability, God acts in sovereignty, regenerating them by His divine power apart from personal faith in the Word when they are too young to know it. Jesus has said, "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish," but it is just as necessary that children be born again as in the case of adults, for, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." There must be new birth on the part of every person who would enter the kingdom of God. But there are great dispensational distinctions marked out in Holy Scripture. In Old Testament times believers were all God's children, but they were not definitely recognized as His sons. In this age it is different. All of God's children are also His sons. Do you ask what is the difference? Well, the distinction is one that we today perhaps would not think of making, but when Paul wrote the epistle to the Galatians all his readers would understand it very clearly. In that day, minor children were not recognized as their father's heirs until, when they came of age, he took them down to the forum, answering to our court-house, and there officially adopted them as his sons. From that time on they were no longer considered as minor children, but recognized as heirs. Old Testament saints, the apostle

shows us, were in the position of children. New Testament saints, since the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, are acknowledged by God as His sons by adoption. The Holy Spirit Himself is the Spirit of adoption. When He is received in faith, at the very moment of our conversion we are marked out as God's sons and heirs. This is confirmed in Rom. 8: 14-17: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

The divinely-directed reasoning of the apostle in these first seven verses in Galatians 4 is very striking and beautiful in its orderly presentation of the theme. He tells us, "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant," that is, a bondman, "though he be lord of all." Take a young child in the home before he has attained his majority. He may be heir actually to vast wealth, but he is not permitted to have his own way, nor enter into the possession of his patrimony. He is to be kept in the place of subjection for discipline and train-

ing. His place in the home is practically no different than that of a servant. In fact, he himself has to be subject to the servant, as ver. 2 tells us; he is under guardians and stewards, or tutors, until the time appointed of the father. This is all perfectly plain and does not take an erudite mind to understand it. Then note the application. The apostle shows that the people of Israel, God's earthly people, were in this state of nonage. The apostle Paul identifies himself with these as a Jew and says, "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements (or principles) of the world." That is, they were under the law, and the law speaks to man in the flesh. It was given by God in order to impress upon him his duties and responsibilities. It had no power in itself to produce the new life, though it could guide the children of God and show them the path they should take through the world. It was really, however, an almost intolerable bondage to those who did not enter into the spiritual side of it. But now since the new age has come in, the age of grace, a wonderful change has been brought about. We read: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "The fulness of the time" was, of course, the comple-

tion of the prophetic periods as given in the Old Testament. One would think particularly of the great prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel. When at last the time had arrived that Messiah was destined to appear, God fulfilled His Word by sending His Son into this scene to be born of a woman, and that woman an Israelite under law.

Now observe one thing here. We meet certain professed Christians today who deny what is called the Eternal Sonship of Christ. They tell us He was not Son from eternity. They admit He was the Word, as set forth in John 1: 1, but they say He became the Son when He was born on earth. Verse 4 definitely denies any such teaching. "God sent forth His Son to be born of a woman." He was the Son before He ever stooped from the heights of glory to the virgin's womb. It was the Son who came in grace to become Man in order that we might be saved. This same truth is set forth in 1 John 4: 9, 10: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Nothing could be clearer than the two definite statements in these verses. God sent His Son, sent Him into the world, sent Him from heaven, even as John 3: 16 declares: "God so

loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." We dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ if we deny His Eternal Sonship. If He be not the Eternal Son, then God is not the Eternal Father. Someone has well asked, "Had the Father no bosom till Jesus was born in Bethlehem?" He came from the bosom of the Father, to be born into this world, in order that He might be our Kinsman-Redeemer.

He was born under the law. He took His place before God here on earth as an Israelite, subject to the law of God. He kept that law perfectly; sinless Himself, He never could come under its curse because of His own failure. Therefore, He was able to go to the cross and give Himself up to death to bear the curse of the broken law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, "that we," says the apostle, "might receive the adoption of sons." He met all that was against His people and brought them out into a place of full liberty where God could publicly own them as His sons, no longer children in the servant's place but heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The testimony to this was the giving of the Holy Spirit. So in ver. 6 we read, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." This is true of all believers, for we need to remember that since the bringing in of the

new dispensation in all its fulness, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and thus sealed and anointed. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," we are told, "he is none of His." So there is no such person in the world today as a true Christian who is not indwelt by the Spirit of God. We have the Spirit of the Son, and because He dwells in our hearts we now look up with adoring love into the face of God and cry "Abba, Father." "Abba" is the Hebrew word for "Father." Our English word is the translation of the Greek '*pateer*,' and so we have Jew and Gentile united through grace, addressing God as members of one family, as His children by birth and His sons by adoption, and crying "Abba, Father."

The apostle's conclusion follows very naturally: "Wherefore, thou art no more a servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." The old condition, which prevailed throughout the centuries before Jesus came into the world and died for all our sins upon the cross, rose again for our justification, ascended to heaven, and in unity with the Father sent the Holy Spirit, that has come to an end. Believers are no longer in the servant's place, but by the reception of the Spirit are God's recognized sons, and so heirs of all His possessions through Christ Jesus our Lord.

In this connection it is interesting to notice that after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, He said to Mary, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God" (John 20:17). In this He fulfilled the prophecy written so long before, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren" (Ps. 22:22). Though the Holy Spirit had not yet come, the Lord anticipates the full glory of the new dispensation by recognizing all the redeemed as His brethren, and thus He speaks of "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." Notice, He does not say, *our* Father and *our* God. There was good reason for this. God was His Father in a unique sense; He was His Father from eternity. This is not true of us. He is our Father when we receive Christ in faith as our Saviour. And so in regard to the other expression, "My God." It is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Therefore God was His God in a different sense to that in which He is our God. He is our God because He is our Creator. We are merely creatures, while He Himself created all things. And so while there cannot be exactly the same relationship, yet the same Person who is His Father and His God is now our Father and our God, because we are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Oh, may our hearts enter more into the preciousness of this, and as we realize something of the dignity of this wonderful place that God has given us, may we seek grace to so live in this scene as to bring glory to His name.

Remember, there is a certain sense in which He has entrusted the honor of His name to us. He said to Israel of old, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This did not refer to what we call swearing or profanity, but they were called by the name of the Lord and were responsible to magnify His name. Instead of that, the apostle Paul says of them, "Through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles." That is, the Gentiles saw so much that was wicked and corrupt in the behavior of God's earthly people that they said, "If these people are like their God, then He must be a very unholy Being indeed." Oh, my brethren, are we so behaving ourselves that men, "seeing our good works, glorify our Father which is in heaven?" Do they say, as they behold the grace of God in our lives, "How marvellous must be the love and the holiness of the God to whom these people belong, and whose sons they profess to be!" It is as we walk in obedience to His Word that we magnify the grace which has saved us and put us into this blessed place of sons and heirs.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD

(Gal. 4: 8-20)

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.”

“**H**OWBEIT then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.” We have seen in this epistle that the Galatians, who had been brought out of heathen darkness into the light and liberty of the gospel through the ministry of the apostle

Paul, had fallen under the charm—shall I say?—of certain judaizing teachers who were carrying them into subjection to the law of Moses, telling them that unless they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses they could not be saved, that while they began in faith, they had to complete their salvation through works of their own, acquiring merit by obedience to the commands of the law. The apostle has been showing them that the law could only condemn, could only kill, could not justify, could not give life, neither could it sanctify, and that our sanctification is as truly by faith as is our justification.

Now he reasons with them, trying to show the folly of their course in giving up Christianity with all its liberty and light for the twilight and bondage of Judaism. "Why," he says, "you were heathen when I came to you. You were enslaved to heathen customs, you served those that you esteemed to be gods who really are not gods, you were worshippers of idols, and you know that in those days you were misled by pagan priestcraft. There were certain things you could not eat, places you could not go, things you could not touch. There were different kinds of offerings that you had to bring, there were charms against evil spirits, and amulets, and talismans. You were slaves to worldly customs in those days of your heathenism. The thing that amazes me is

that you should be willing to go into another bondage after having known something of the liberty of grace."

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage?" Notice that expression, "After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God." There are the two sides to it. We often say to people, "Do you know Jesus?" But it means more to realize that Jesus knows you, to be able to say, "Thank God, He knows me, and He knew about me in my sin, and He loved me and gave Himself for me." We sometimes say, "Have you found Jesus?" Of course the Word of God says, "Seek, and ye shall find," and the Lord bids us to "call upon Him while He is near," but it is a more wonderful truth that He seeks us. We have heard of the little boy who was approached by a Christian worker who said to him, "My boy, have you found Jesus?" And the little fellow looked up with a perturbed expression and said, "Why, please, sir, I didn't know He was lost; but I was, and He found me." That is it.

"I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray;
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way."

God knew me long before I knew Him. He knows me now, since I have trusted Christ, as His child, and Paul says, "Isn't it a shame that after you have known God, or rather have been known of God, after you have come into this blessed relationship with Him as your Father, if you really know what it is to be born again, isn't it strange that you would turn now to as legal a system as that from which you were delivered when first brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?" "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" Someone might say, "But what do you mean? They were turning to law, to observing Jewish feasts and Jewish sabbaths, Jewish ceremonies. But they never knew those things in their heathen days. Why does he say, 'How turn ye *again*'?" The principle was exactly the same. Why do the heathen go through their forms and ceremonies? Because they hope to gain merit and save their souls. Why did the Jews go through all their rites and ceremonies? That they might please God in that way, and so gain merit and eventually save their souls. The principle is just the same, whether you try to save yourself by offering your own child or the dearest thing you have on a heathen altar, whether you keep the seventh-day Sabbath, as some people do today, and thereby hope to save

themselves, or whether you observe the heathen feast-days and hope to please the heathen gods thereby. The Jewish festivals have been fulfilled in Christ, and we are not going back to them, hoping to please God by their observance. They had their place once, and men of faith could observe them in obedience to the Word of God, but that place is not theirs now, because "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). All these ceremonies were merely shadows of things to come. Now that the reality is come, why go back to the shadow? We are not going to be occupied with the type since we have the Antitype; we are not going to be occupied with pictures when we have the Reality. The worldly principle, of course, is to try to merit salvation by works of your own.

There are only two religions in the world, the true and the false. All forms of false religion are alike, they all say, "Something in my hand I bring," the only difference being in what that something is. But the true religion, the revelation from heaven, leads a man to sing, "Nothing in my hand I bring." Christianity says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). We see Christians today who turn to symbols and pictures as a means of

helping them spiritually, but they are just going back to the elements of the world. If you were to ask a heathen, "Is this idol your god?" some would say, "Yes," but an intelligent heathen would reply, "No; it is not exactly that I consider that idol as my god, but it represents my god; it helps me to enter into communion with my god." You see just the same thing in Christendom where some churches are filled with images. They are not images of Mars, Jupiter, Venus, or Isis, or Osiris, but images just the same—images of Saint Joseph, Saint Barnabas, Saint Paul, the twelve apostles, the blessed Virgin Mary, and even of Christ. Candles are burning in front of them and people bow before them. We ask, "Why do you not worship God? Why worship these images?" And they answer, "We do not worship them; we reverence them, and they are simply aids to worship. These images help to stir up our spirits and help us to worship."

I heard a Protestant minister speaking to a group of ministers and he said, "I find that it is very helpful to have before me a very beautiful picture of the thorn-crowned Christ." He mentioned a painting by a certain artist, and said, "I have that framed; and when I want to come to the Lord I like to drop everything else and sit and contemplate that picture for a while, and I begin to realize more and more what He has done

for me. That draws out my heart in worship and adoration." "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" There is no painter on earth who can paint my Christ. You need to go to the Bible to get that picture. If you want to be stirred up and put in a worshipful spirit, sit down over your Bible and read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, or the account in the Gospels of what Christ accomplished, and as you are occupied with the truth of God your heart will be drawn out in worship. You do not need pictures to help you to worship. These are just the "weak and beggarly elements" of the world. In the dispensation of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we are to worship in "spirit and in truth."

So the apostle says, "I am sorry to see you go back to these things"—"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." That is, they were going back to the Jewish Sabbaths and other holy days and festivals, the Jewish Sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee. But, you see, these things are not binding on us today. Why? Because the Sabbath day of the Jews has found its fulfilment in Him who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). "There remaineth therefore a rest (a true Sabbath-keeping) for the people of God." We have found our Sabbath in

Christ, and so we observe the first day of the week, the day of His resurrection, not in order to gain merit but because we are glad to have the privilege of coming together as a company of worshipping believers and to take advantage of the opportunity to preach the gospel of the grace of God. That seventh-day Sabbath was the memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. That does not apply to us, but we have found its fulfilment in Christ. Some may ask, "Are you quite certain that the Sabbath of the law is included among the shadows?" Yes, turn to Colossians 2: 16, 17: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Do you not see?—it was the Sabbath of old, one day's rest in seven. Now I have Jesus, and I have seven days' rest in seven. I have rest in Him continually, and am delivered from the Sabbath of the law.

Then there were sacred months. There was the month in which they had the passover and the feast of the firstfruits. Then the seventh month, in which was the great day of atonement and the feast of tabernacles. But all of which those months and feasts speak has been fulfilled in Christ. He is the true passover: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the

feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8). The feast of the firstfruits had its fulfilment in the resurrection of Christ, and it was He who said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Christ fell into the ground in death, and now has become the firstfruits of them that slept, and we worship with adoring gratitude for all that this means to us. The great day of atonement has had its fulfilment in the cross. The Lord Jesus Christ was the sacrificed Victim whose precious blood makes atonement for the soul. We read, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17: 11). That is all fulfilled in Jesus. And He is the true fulfilment of the feast of tabernacles, the feast which carries us on to His coming back again when He will bring in everlasting righteousness. They were all given to point forward to the coming of the blessed Son of God, and His wondrous work.

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Many in Israel had fallen into the evil habit of consulting astrologers and others, and so were known as observers of times, but that was

distinctly contrary to God's mind, and He links it up with demons. Christians have nothing to do with anything like that. Then they observed sacred years. There was the Sabbatical year, every seventh year had to be set apart as a Sabbath to the Lord. You cannot pick out certain parts of the law and keep them only; if you are bound to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, you are bound to keep the seventh-year Sabbath also. But Paul says that as Christians we are delivered from all this. It was only bondage and we are free from it.

"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." He really stood in doubt as to whether they were truly converted. He remembered how they had confessed their sins, and the joy they had, and now he says, "Was that not genuine?" One may often feel like that about people. Some make a good start and apparently seem to be real Christians, but the next thing you know they are taken up with some most unscriptural thing, and you wonder whether it was all a mistake. If people are saved, they are sealed by the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Truth and He comes to guide them into all truth. Thank God, sometimes they are recovered, and then you know they were real; but if never recovered, we read, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no

doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19).

Now he turns directly to these converts of his, and in the most tender way he says, "Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all." What does he mean? He is practically saying, "There was a time in my life when I observed all these things that you are going into now; when all my hope of heaven was based upon working out a righteousness of my own; and I was very punctilious about all these things that you now are taking up. I observed the Passover, I kept the feast of firstfruits, the ordinances of the great day of the atonement, and kept the feast of tabernacles. I did all these things that you are undertaking to do. I was careful about meats and drink, I looked upon certain foods as unclean and would have nothing to do with them, but I came to you as one of you. You did not know anything about the law, and I came to you as a man utterly delivered from the law of Moses, completely freed from it. I wish you would come over to where I am. Take your place now with me; I am not under law but under grace, and I want you to be under grace rather than under law." Before God, they were actually so, of course, if truly saved, but he would have them so in spirit.

He tells us elsewhere how he stood, "I am become all things to all men, if by any means I may save some. To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law" (1 Cor. 9:20, 21).

Let me illustrate Paul's position. Let this desk indicate it. He stands in the center between the two extremes. Over to the right are those under the law, the Jews; to the left are those without the law, the Gentiles who do not know anything about the law of Moses. Now he says, "I do not belong in either company since I am saved by grace, but stand here between the two, and being regenerated I am subject to Christ. In order that I may reach the Jew I go over there where he is, and am willing to sit down with him and partake of the kind of food he eats, and to go with him to his synagogue, in order that I may have an opportunity to preach to him. And I will use the law of Moses to show him his sin, and the prophets to show him the Saviour. Then I go to the Gentiles, but I do not preach the law of Moses to them." He could say, "When I came among you I took my place as a man not under law but

in the liberty of grace, and preached Christ to you as the Saviour of all who believe. I wish you would appreciate that enough to stand with me. You leave me and go to the place God took me out of before He saved me. Do you not see the mistake you are making? You are giving up grace for law.”

“Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” He sought to touch their hearts by reminding them of those early days when he came to Antioch in Pisidia, and to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, and preached the Word among them. All of these were Galatian cities. Did he come with pomp and ceremony, marvelous costumes, and candles and images? No; nothing like that. He came not as a great and mighty ecclesiastic, as one professing to have authority over them, but as a lowly man preaching Christ and Him crucified. “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.”

Paul was used of God to heal many sick people, but he never healed himself, and did not ask anybody to heal him except God. He prayed for deliverance three times, but God said, “I am not going to deliver you but—My grace is sufficient

for thee," and Paul answered, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12: 9). He was a sick man for years as he preached the gospel. He would come in among people, weak and tired and worn, and if there was not money enough to support him he would go to work and make tents to earn money for bread, and then at night would go and look for people to whom to preach Christ. He commended the gospel to these Galatians by his self-denying service and his readiness to suffer. As they (in those days, poor heathen) looked upon him they wondered that he should so love them, and they marvelled at his message, and believed it, and were saved. Now he says, "You have lost all that; you do not care anything about me any more; you have gone off after these false teachers, and you have lost your joy." "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." I take it that the suffering he endured had to do with his eyes. He probably had some affliction of the eyes that made it difficult for him to read and to see an audience, and it made his appearance mean when he stood upon the platform. Possibly they said, "Poor Paul! If we could give him our eyes we would gladly do so!" That is the way

they once felt. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" It was these evil teachers that had upset them.

"They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them." In other words, they have come to make a prey of you with their false teaching, trying to affect you adversely in order that you might rally around them, for they want to get up a little party of their own. They are not seeking your good, but trying to extend their own influence. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you." That is, It is good for a man to be zealous in what is right, it is good to go after people with the truth and bring them into the light, and they who had started in the truth should have continued in it.

And now in his deep affliction he exclaims, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." In other words, I remember when you were saved, I went through the very pangs of birth in my soul, and now I am going through it all again because I am in such anxiety about you. "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." In other words, "I am writing some strong things to you, but I would like to talk tenderly, lovingly, to you if I were only there.

I am not sure about you.” False religion never can give certainty, but the blessed, glorious gospel of the grace of God does. It fully assures us of complete and final salvation if we believe God. Who then would turn away deliberately from the liberty that we have in Christ to the bondage of some false system?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A DIVINE ALLEGORY

(Gal. 4: 21-31)

“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”

“TELL me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” We have already noticed that while the Galatians were a Gentile people who had been saved by grace, they had fallen under the influence of certain Judaizing teachers who were trying to put them under the law. They said, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot

be saved" (Acts 15: 1), and so in this letter the apostle Paul has taken up the great question of Law and Grace and has been expounding it, clarifying it, making clear that salvation is not by works of the law but entirely by the hearing of faith.

Undoubtedly these Jewish teachers who had gotten into the Christian company were referring the believers back to the Old Testament, and they could give them scripture after scripture in which it seemed evident that the law was the supreme test, and that God had said, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10: 5), and, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10). And so they sought to impress upon these believers the importance of endeavoring to propitiate God, of gaining divine favor by human effort.

Now he says, "You desire to be under the law; do you? Do you want to put yourself under the law of Moses? Why do you not hear the law? Why do you not carefully read the books of the law and see just what God has said?" He uses the term "law" here in two different ways. In the first instance as referring to Moses' law, the law given at Sinai with the accompanying rules and regulations, statutes and judgments, that were linked with it, but in the second, as refer-

ring to the books of the Law. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law (the legal covenant), do ye not hear the law (the books of the law in which God tells us of the covenants)?"

Then he turns them back to Genesis and says, "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free-woman." We know that story. Abraham's wife was Sarah, and God had promised that Abraham and Sarah should be the parents of a son who was to be the precursor of the coming Seed in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed, but the years passed by and it seemed as though there was to be no fulfilment of that promise. Finally, losing hope, Sarah herself suggested that they should descend to the lower custom of the people of the nations around them, and that Abraham should take another woman, not exactly to occupy the full status of a wife, but one to be brought into the home as a concubine. Abraham foolishly acceded to that and took Hagar. As a result of that union a son was born who was called Ishmael, and Abraham fondly hoped that he would prove to be the promised one through whom the Messiah should come into the world. But God said, "No; this is not the one. I told you you should have a child of Sarah, and this one is not the promised seed." Abraham pleaded, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee!" (Gen.

17: 18). But God said, as it were, "He can have a certain inheritance, but he cannot be the child of promise. In due time Sarah herself shall have a child, and in that child My covenant will stand fast."

The apostle now shows us that these events had a symbolic meaning. He does not mean to imply that they did not actually take place as written. They did. Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 10: 11, speaking of Old Testament records, "Now all these things happened unto them for types: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Notice, "All these things happened." Some people say they did not happen, that they were just myths, or folk-lore, or something like that, but the Holy Ghost says, "All these things happened." And so what you read in the Word concerning different Old Testament characters, the nations, cities, and so on, all these are to be received as historic facts. During the last hundred years when the voice of archeology has been crying out so clearly and loudly, not one thing has been discovered to refute anything written in Scripture, while thousands of discoveries have helped to bear witness to and authenticate the Bible record. It does not need to be authenticated, of course, as far as faith is concerned, for we believe what God has said. However, these important

discoveries have helped in a large measure to shut the mouths of skeptics who would not believe the statements of Scripture to be true. Abraham lived, Sarah lived, Hagar was a real personage, the two sons were real personages. From Ishmael came the Arabs, from Isaac, the Hebrews. From the beginning the two boys did not get on together, and these nations were not friendly. That explains the trouble in Palestine today. They could not get on in the beginning, and cannot today. But the apostle undertakes to show that these mothers and their sons had symbolic significance.

“But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh (and so he speaks of all who are only born after the flesh); but he of the free-woman was by promise” (Isaac was the child of grace). It would have been absolutely impossible from a natural standpoint for Abraham and Sarah to become parents at the time Isaac was born. It was a divine manifestation, a miracle. Isaac was a child of promise, and hence the child of grace. The apostle tells us that these things are an allegory. All through the Word God has used allegories in order that we might receive great moral, spiritual, and typical lessons from these incidents, and here the Spirit of God Himself unfolds one of them for us.

“Which things are an allegory: for these are

the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." These two women represent the two covenants, Sarah, the Abrahamic covenant, and Hagar, the Mosaic covenant. What was the difference between these two? The Abrahamic covenant was the covenant of sovereign grace. When God said to Abraham, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed," He did not put in any conditions whatsoever. It was a divine promise. God said, "I am going to do it; I do not ask anything of you, Abraham, I simply tell you what I will do." That is grace. Grace does not make terms with people; grace does not ask that we do anything in order to procure merit. Many people talk about salvation by grace who do not seem to have the least conception of what grace is. They think that God gives them the grace to do the things that make them deserving of salvation. That is not it at all. We read, "Being justified freely by His grace" (Rom. 3: 24), and that word "freely" literally means "gratuitously." The same word is translated "without a cause" in another portion of Scripture. It is said of the Lord Jesus Christ that the Scripture was fulfilled

which was written concerning Him, "They hated Me without a cause" (John 15:25). Jesus never did anything to deserve the bad treatment that men gave Him, and you and I cannot do one thing to deserve the good treatment that God gives us. Jesus was treated badly by men freely; we who are saved are treated well by God freely. I hope that you understand this wonderful fact, and that your soul is thrilling with the joy of it! What a marvelous thing to be saved by grace! One reason that God saves people by grace is that, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and He must have the more blessed part.

Years ago a wealthy lady in New York built a beautiful church. On the day of dedication her agent came up from the audience to the platform and handed the deed of the property to the Episcopal Bishop of New York. The bishop gave the agent \$1.00 for the deed, and by virtue of the \$1.00, which was acknowledged, the property was turned over to the Episcopal Church. You say, "What a wonderful gift!" Yes; in a certain sense it was, for the passing over of \$1.00 was simply a legal observance. But after all, in the full Bible sense it was not a gift, for it cost \$1.00; and so the deed was made out not as a deed of gift but as a deed of sale. It was sold to the Episcopal Church for \$1.00. If you had to do one thing in order to be saved, if you had even to raise your

hand, to stand to your feet, had but to say one word, it would not be a gift. You could say, "I did thus and so, and in that way earned my salvation," but this priceless blessing is absolutely free. "If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6). That is what the Spirit of God tells us in the Word.

And so we see the covenant of grace illustrated in Sarah. God had said to Sarah, "You shall have a child, and that child will be the means of blessing to the whole world." It seemed impossible that that could ever be, but in God's good time His Word was fulfilled, at last through Isaac came our Lord Jesus Christ who brought blessing to all mankind. Hagar, on the other hand, was a bondwoman, and she speaks of the covenant of law, of the Mosaic covenant, made at mount Sinai, for there God said, "The man that doeth those things shall live in them," but no man was ever found who could keep that perfectly, and therefore on the ground of law no one ever obtained life. Sarah, who typifies grace, became the mother of the child of promise; Hagar typifies law, and became the mother of the child of the flesh. The law speaks only to the flesh, while the believer is the child of promise and has been born of divine power. "Except a man be born

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Why is it that people generally are so ready to take up with legality and so afraid of grace? It is because legality appeals to the natural mind.

I remember going through Max Muller's set of translations of Oriental Sacred Literature, in thirty-eight large volumes. I read them through in order to get an understanding of the different religious systems in oriental lands, and found that though they differed in ten thousand things, they all agreed on one thing, and that is that salvation was to be won by self-effort, the only difference being as to what the effort was. All taught salvation by works, and every religion except that which is revealed from heaven sets people doing something or paying something in order to win divine favor. This appeals to the natural man. He feels intuitively that God helps those that help themselves, and that if he does his best, surely then God will be interested enough to do something for him. But our best amounts to absolutely nothing. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6), and the sooner we learn that we have no goodness of our own, that we have nothing to present to God with which to earn our salvation, the better for us. When we learn that, we are ready to be saved by grace alone. We come to God as poor, needy, helpless

sinner, and through the work that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for our salvation we who believe in Him become the children of promise.

Hagar typified Jerusalem which is here on earth because Jerusalem at that time was the center of the legal religion. But Sarah typifies Jerusalem above "which is the mother of us all," or literally, "our mother." The law is the earthly system, it speaks to an earthly people, to men after the flesh, whereas grace is a heavenly system which avails to children of promise. Jerusalem above is "our mother." Why? Because Christ is above. Christ has gone up yonder, and having by Himself made purification for sins He has taken His seat on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens and there He sits exalted, a Prince and Saviour, and from that throne grace is flowing down to sinful men.

"Grace is flowing like a river,
Millions there have been supplied;
Still it flows as fresh as ever,
From the Saviour's wounded side;
None need perish,
All may live since Christ has died."

Have you trusted this Saviour? Have you received that grace? Can you say, "Yes, I am a citizen of heaven; Jerusalem above is my mother"? Even Abraham looked for that heavenly city. God promised him an inheritance on earth, and some day his children will have that

They are trying to get it now after the flesh, and are having a very hard time. Some day in accordance with the promise, they shall have it, and then it will be all blessing for them. That will be after their eyes are opened to see the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah. A great many people are troubled about Palestine. I am deeply interested in what is going on over there, and recognize in it a partial fulfilment of the Word, but the reason why the Jews were driven out of Palestine 1900 years ago was because they "knew not the time of their visitation," and when their own Saviour came they rejected Him. They said, "We have no king but Cæsar." And when Pilate asked, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" they cried, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" (John 19:15), "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). How terribly that malediction has been answered through the centuries. That does not excuse the wickedness of the persecution of the Jews, but it is an evidence of divine judgment. They would not have the Saviour, and they have been under Cæsar's iron heel ever since. But now they are going back to Palestine. Have they changed in their attitude, in their thoughts? Have they turned to God and confessed the sin of crucifying the Lord of glory? No. Then how can they expect blessing as they go back to the land? No

wonder there is trouble, trouble which will continue and increase until the dark and dreadful days of the Great Tribulation. They are but the children of Hagar, but some day when the Church has been caught up to be with the Lord, and God turns back to Israel, a remnant from them will be saved. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. 12:10), and when they own as Saviour and Lord, Him whom once they rejected, He will cleanse them from their sins; He will take them back to the land; He will bring them into blessing; He will destroy all their foes; and they themselves will become a means of blessing to the whole earth. That is the divine program as laid down in the Word of God.

I should like to urge any Jewish friends to search their own Scriptures. Will you not turn to your own Bible and read chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah, Psalm 22, Psalm 69, the last three chapters of the book of Zechariah, and then if you have a New Testament, read the epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Matthew, and see if the Spirit of God will not show you what is the whole trouble with Israel to-day? All their troubles have come upon them because they sought the blessing not after the Spirit but after the flesh, and so refused the promised Seed when

He came. And you Gentiles, if you are seeking salvation by church-membership, by observing ordinances, by charity, by your own good works, prayers, and penances, can you not see that you too are seeking the blessing after the flesh when God would give it to you on the ground of pure grace? Oh, that you might become children of Sarah, of the covenant of grace, who can say, "Thank God, Jerusalem above is our mother." "Our citizenship," says the apostle, "is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). And Abraham, we are told, "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Abraham is in heaven, and all his spiritual children who have died in the past are with him there. The Lord Jesus tells of the poor beggar, the child of Abraham, who died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. All the redeemed who have passed off the scene are in this same glorious paradise where Abraham is, and by-and-by, when Jesus comes, we all shall join that glad throng.

And then, not only now but through the millennial age, how many will be the children of God! So the apostle quotes from Isaiah 54:1: "Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an hus-

band." What a strange scripture! First notice its character. The chapter that precedes it is Isaiah 53. There we have the fullest, the most complete prophecy of the coming into the world of the Lord Jesus, His suffering and death and resurrection, that is to be found anywhere in the Bible. Isaiah seems to see Him suffering, bleeding, and dying on the cross, and he says: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53: 5,6), and the prophet closes that chapter with the wonderful words, "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (ver. 12). And then the very next word, when you come to chapter 54, is "*Sing!*" There is enough there to make you sing: "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. *Sing!*" Of what shall we sing? Of the matchless grace that God has manifested in Christ. Paul translated that word, "*Sing,*" "*Rejoice.*" Why? Because Jesus has died, the sin question is settled, and now God can let free grace flow to poor sinners. Grace in the past had been like a woman who was forsaken and alone, and longed to be the mother of children, but wept and

mourned alone. And on the other hand here is legality typified by another woman, and she has thousands of children, people who profess to be saved by human effort, saved by their own merits. Yes; legality is a wonderful mother, she has a vast family, and poor grace does not seem to have any children at all. But now the gospel goes forth, and what happens? Grace, the one forsaken, neglected, becomes the mother of more children than legality. "For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." And so grace now has untold millions of children, and there will be millions more in the glorious age to come.

"Millions have reached that blissful shore,
Their trials and their labors o'er,
And still there's room for millions more.
Will you go?"

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Are you sure that is true of you? Have you believed God's promise? He has promised a full, free, and eternal salvation to every one who trusts His Son. We who have believed are children of promise. But the children of legality cannot understand this. No one hates grace as much as the man who is trying to save himself by his own efforts.

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.” During the dark ages, for over 1,000 years, the doctrines of grace were practically lost to the Church, and many were trying to save themselves by penances, by long weary journeys, by thousands and thousands of prayers repeated over and over, by giving of their wealth to endow churches and build monasteries. The children of legality were a great host, and God opened the eyes of Martin Luther, John Knox, John Calvin, William Farel, and a host of others, and they found out that while men had been trying to save themselves by human effort it was the will of God to save poor sinners by grace. Luther took hold of the text, “The just shall live by faith,” and the truth began to ring out all over Germany and Europe and then spread to Britain, and soon bitter persecution broke out and people cried, “Put them to death, these people who believe in salvation by grace, who do not believe that they can be saved by penances and human merit; burn them, starve them, shoot them, behead them, do everything possible to rid the world of them!” They do not get rid of them in those ways today, but the world still hates and detests the people who are saved by grace. If you come into a community where people are going on in a smug self-righteousness, imagining

they are going to heaven by church-attendance, because they were baptized as babies, were confirmed at twelve years of age, have given of their money, and have attended to their religious duties, and you ask, "Are you saved?" their answer will be, "Nobody can ever know until they get to the judgment-seat, but I am trying to be." "Well," you say, "you can be sure;" and you tell them of salvation by grace, and they exclaim, "What is this? What detestable fanaticism!" and at once they will begin to persecute you. The children of the flesh cannot stand the children of the Spirit.

"Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." God says, "My children are the children of promise; My children are those who are saved by grace." Do you know the blessedness of the reality of it in your own soul?

"So then, brethren," the apostle concludes, "we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." In other words, we have nothing to do with the legal covenant but we are the children of the covenant of grace.

"Grace is the sweetest sound
That ever reached our ears,
When conscience charged and justice frowned,
'Twas grace removed our fears."

CHAPTER TWELVE

FALLING FROM GRACE

(Gal. 5: 1-6)

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

IN chapters 5 and 6 we have the third division, the practical part, of this letter. He shows us what the result should be in our daily lives if we have laid hold of the blessed truth that salvation is altogether by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, and so begins like this, “Stand fast therefore.” Wherefore? Because of the finished work of Christ through which all who believe have been not only delivered from the judgment due to their sins, not only delivered from the penalty of the broken law, but delivered from the law itself and en-lawed to Christ. The believer now walks in a place that was never known before. He is down here in this world, it is true, but he is neither without law, nor yet under law, but is subject to the Lord Jesus Christ, and so is

brought into a glorious liberty—liberty, of course, not to do the will of the natural man, not to obey the dictates of the flesh, but liberty to glorify God, to adorn the doctrines of Christ by a holy, triumphant life as he passes through this scene. This is the liberty into which Christ has brought us, and now to go back to some legalistic system such as that of Judaism or those prevailing in Christendom today, is to become “entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Through the centuries that the Jews were under the law, not one of them found salvation through practising the ceremonial law or obeying the law given at Mt. Sinai, because every man failed, and it put them all under condemnation. But Christ has brought us into liberty. How foolish then to go back under law which only engenders bondage. Paul could say, I was in that bondage once, but I was delivered from it. You heathen people never knew that bondage, but you do know something of the liberty of Christ. Are you going now into the bondage out of which God delivers every Jew He saves? It is folly to take a step like that. But if you mean to do it, you had better go the whole length, for you cannot take certain commands and say, “I will obey those things,” for God says, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are writ-

ten in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10).

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." That is, if they depended upon the rite of circumcision for the salvation of their souls they were ignoring Christ. He is not saying that if somebody had been misled for the moment and had accepted the teaching of these Judaizers, he lost Christ; but if their dependence was upon these things, they have set Christ at naught. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." If you take the first step, go the whole length, for the law is one. You cannot take from it what you please and reject the rest. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Of course the real meaning is, that if one is seeking justification by law, he is seeking to be right with God on the basis of his own human efforts. You say, "Well, God commanded His people to do them." Yes, in the Old Testament; but we read that "the law was our schoolmaster (our child-leader) until Christ," but now that Christ has come we are no longer under the child-leader. If you go back to law, you set Christ to one side; you cannot link the two principles of law and grace.

In Romans we are told that if salvation is "by

grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6). It must be one or the other. Either you earn your salvation by efforts of your own, or you accept it as the free gift of God. If you have trusted Christ as your Saviour you have received it as a gift. If you did anything to deserve it, if you worked for it, if you purchased it, it would not be a gift. So we read, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4, 5). Therefore, if you turn back to law after you have known Christ, you are deliberately setting your Saviour to one side. "Ye are fallen from grace."

That is an expression that a great many people are interested in. A man came to a friend of mine, a Methodist minister, and said, "I understand that you Methodists believe in falling from grace; is that so?"

He said, "I understand that you Presbyterians believe in horse-stealing."

"No, we do not."

"Well, don't you believe that it is possible for a man to steal horses?"

"Yes, but we wouldn't do it."

“Well, we believe it is possible for men to fall from grace, but we do not believe in doing it.”

But what do we mean by falling from grace? Here we have the expression in Scripture, “Ye are fallen from grace.” Really, a better translation is, “Ye are fallen away from grace”—you have turned away from grace. Does this mean that if a man is once a Christian but falls into some kind of sin, he loses his salvation and is no longer a Christian? If it meant that, every believer ceases to be a Christian every day, because there is not a person anywhere that does not fall into some kind of sin every day—sins of thought, of word, or of deed. But falling from grace is not sinking into sin, into immorality or other evil-doing, but it is turning from the full, clear, high Christian standard of salvation by grace alone to the low level of attempting to keep one’s salvation by human effort. Therefore, a man who says, “I am saved by grace, but now my continuance depends on my own effort,” has fallen from grace. That is what it is to “fall from grace.”

I do not care what it is you imagine you have to do in order to keep saved; whatever it is, you put yourself on legal ground if after believing on the Lord Jesus Christ you think that your salvation is made more secure by baptism, by taking the Lord’s Supper, by giving money, by joining the church. If you do these things in order to

help save your soul, you have fallen from grace—you fail to realize that salvation is by grace alone, God's free unmerited favor. Someone asks, "Don't you believe in doing those things?" Indeed, I do; not in order to save my soul, but out of love for Christ.

"I would not work my soul to save,
That work my Lord has done;
But I would work like any slave
From love to God's dear Son."

Christian obedience is not on the principle of law but of love to Christ.

It is the grace of God working in the soul that makes the believer delight in holiness, in righteousness, in obedience to the will of God, for real joy is found in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. I remember a man who had lived a life of gross sin. After his conversion one of his old friends said to him, "Bill, I pity you—a man that has been such a high-flier as you. And now you have settled down, you go to church, or stay at home and read the Bible and pray; you never have good times any more."

"But, Bob," said the man, "you don't understand. I get drunk every time I want to. I go to the theater every time I want to. I go to the dance when I want to. I play cards and gamble whenever I want to."

"I say, Bill," said his friend, "I didn't under-

stand it that way. I thought you had to give up these things to be a Christian."

"No, Bob," said Bill, "the Lord took the 'want to' out when He saved my soul, and He made me a new creature in Christ Jesus."

We do not make terms with the Lord and say, "If You will save me, I won't do this, and I will do that," but we come throwing up our hands and saying, "Lord, I cannot do a thing to save myself; Thou must do it in Thine own free grace or I am eternally lost." Now if as Christians we stoop down from that high level and still try to make ourselves acceptable to God by some human effort, we have fallen from grace. Yes, we do believe it is possible to fall from grace, and we also believe that about three-fourths of Christendom have fallen from grace. I do not mean that they won't get to heaven, but I do mean that many real Christians have come down to a very low level. They are so occupied with their own efforts instead of with the glorious finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"For we through the Spirit." Everything for the believer is through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us, and God works His works in us by the Spirit. And so instead of human efforts, instead of trying to do something in order to earn divine favor, we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit of God that He may work in

and through us to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." What is the hope of righteousness? It is the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him. We are now made the righteousness of God in Christ, and yet every day we mourn over our failures; we do not rise to the heights we desire. Every night we have to kneel before God and confess our sins. But we are looking on in glad hope to the time when Jesus will come back again and transform these bodies of our humiliation, and then we shall be fully like Him.

"Soon I'll pass this desert dreary,
Soon will bid farewell to pain,
Nevermore be sad or weary,
Never, never sin again."

"When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Whether a man is a Jew or a Gentile it does not make any difference, whether he has been a rigid law-keeper or an idolator, there is no difference, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). When people put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in them, and they are said to be "in Christ," and,

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8: 1), for we are forever linked up with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our human works and religious ceremonies count for nothing as far as justifying the soul. What does count? “Faith which worketh by love.” And as we walk in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, as our hearts are taken up with Him, as faith makes Christ real (“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” Heb. 11:1), we shall find that it is the substantiating of the things for which we hope, the assured conviction of the reality of things that our eyes have never seen. Faith tells us Jesus lives, faith tells us that the sin question is settled, that we are in Christ. As we go on in faith looking to Him, drawing from Him new supplies of grace day by day, faith worketh by love, and love is the fulfilling of the law, and therefore we do not need to be under the law in order to live aright. It is the only natural thing now for Christians to seek to live for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A physician came into a room where I was visiting a family where a dear child was very ill. She was the apple of the mother’s eye. The doctor said, “Now, Mrs. So-and-So, there is one thing I would suggest. Because of the condition the little one is in, I would not let anyone else take

care of her but yourself. It is going to mean a great deal to the child to have you care for her. She is in a very nervous condition." Do you think that mother found that a hard law to obey? Her mother-heart led her to respond at once, "Yes, Docor, I will see that no one else looks after the baby. I will do all I can for her." Was that legality? No, it was "faith working by love." So with the Christian. All our obedience springs from heart-devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. We delight to do good, we delight to help others, we delight to preach His Word, to minister to those in need and distress, we delight in what Jesus Himself calls "good works," because we love Christ and we want to do those things of which He approves. Anything else than this is to "fall from grace."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FAITH WORKING BY LOVE

(Gal. 5: 7-15)

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”

PAUL now goes on to show that Christian liberty is not license to live after the flesh, but it is liberty to glorify God. Notice how he pours out his heart to them as he thinks of their defection. He says, “Ye did run well.” That is, he looks back over their earlier years and reminds himself of their first devotion and joy, how consistent they were, how they sought to glorify the Lord. But their testimony has been marred, their earlier love has been lost, they no longer are such devoted, active servants of the Lord Jesus Christ

as once they were. They have been turned aside by false teaching.

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” What was it that turned them aside? It was their acceptance of the idea that although they were justified by faith they could be sanctified only by the law, and that is a very common error today. A great many people think that while the law cannot justify, yet after all, when one is justified, it is obedience to the law that sanctifies. But the law is as powerless to sanctify as it was to justify. It is of no use to try to put the old nature under law. You have two natures, the old, the carnal, and the new, the spiritual. That old nature is just as black as it can be, and the new is as white as it can be. The old is just as evil as it can be, and the new is as good as it can be. It is of no use to say to the old nature, “You must obey the law,” because the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God. On the other hand, you do not need to say that to the new nature, because it delights in the law of God. So our sanctification is not of the law. These Galatians had lost sight of this.

And so in verse 8 the apostle says, “This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you.” The word translated “persuasion” might be better rendered “persuasibleness.” This persuasibleness, ~~the~~ readiness on your part to be persuaded by

these false teachers, "cometh not of Him that calleth you." People are as easily changed in their religious views as they are in their political views. They are one thing one day, and another thing the next. They start out all right, and then the first false teacher that comes along gets their attention, and if he quotes a few scripture verses they say, "It sounds all right; he has the Bible for it," and so they go from one thing to another and never get settled anywhere. The apostle says that this readiness to be persuaded by human teachers is not of God. If you were walking with God you would be listening to His voice and hearing His Word, and would be kept from over-persuasibleness.

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," we are told in verse 9. This same sentence is found in 1 Corinthians 5:6, where Paul warns the saints against the toleration of immorality in their midst. An evil man was among them. He was living in sin and they seemed powerless to deal with it, like some churches today who have never had a case of discipline for years, tolerating all kinds of wickedness. They do not dare to come out and deal with it. These Corinthians were glorying in the fact that they were broad-minded enough to overlook this man's adultery and incest, and Paul says to them, "If you are going to do this, you must face the fact that 'a

little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' Others looking on will say, 'If the Church of God does not take a stand against these things, why should we be so careful?'

Here in Galatians, the apostle is not speaking of wickedness in the life but of false doctrine, and says that if they do not deal with it in the light of God's Word they will find that it too is like leaven, and "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and the time will come when they will have lost altogether the sense of the grace of God. It is interesting to notice that in the Word of God leaven is always a picture of evil. A great many people do not see that. They talk about "the leaven of the gospel." In Matthew where the Lord Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33), their idea is that the three measures of meal represents the world, and the woman is the Church putting the leaven, the gospel, into the world, and by-and-by the whole world will be converted. We have been at it now for nearly 2,000 years, and instead of the world getting converted, the professing Church is getting unconverted.

Think of issuing a decree to blot out the name of Jehovah from all texts written on the walls of any church in Germany—Germany, the land of

the Reformation; Germany, where Luther led the people away from the darkness of corruption—and think of that country attempting to blot out the name of Jehovah today! We are not converting the world very fast. Think of Russia where the Gospel was introduced over 1500 years ago, and today every effort is being made to destroy the testimony that remains in that land. It will take millennium after millennium if ever the world is to be saved by our testimony. But that is not our program. We read, “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18: 8). “As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man” (Luke 17: 26). Corruption and vileness filled the world in the days of Noah, and so today corruption and vileness fill the world. “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17: 27). We see the same things happening now, and some day the Lord’s people are going, not into the ark, but they are going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and then the awful flood of judgment will be poured out on this poor world. The parable does not mean that the gospel will go on until the whole world is converted; it means the very opposite. The three measures of meal represented the meal-offering, and the meal-

offering was the food of the people of God and typified Christ, our blessed, holy Saviour. There was to be no leaven in the meal-offering, for that was a type of evil. The leaven is the evil teaching corrupting the truth. Jesus indicated three kinds of leaven. He said, "Beware of the leaven of Herod, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, beware of the leaven of the Sadducees." The leaven of Herod was political corruption and wickedness, that of the Pharisees was self-righteousness and hypocrisy, and that of the Sadducees was materialism. Of any of these it may be said, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The thing that stops its working is to expose it to the action of fire, and when we judge these things in the light of the gospel of Christ they can work no longer.

But though Paul warns these Galatians he does not give them up. He feels sure that they will come out all right, for he knows how real they were in the beginning. "I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." What a solemn word that is! God has said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7). And we are told, "There is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2: 11). How that ought to keep our hearts

as we see men in high places today guilty of heinous crimes against civilization. We shudder as we see how hopeless it is for the nations to contend with these men and their evil principles. How the tyrants of earth still defy God! But, depend upon it, He is going to take things in His own hands one of these days, and judgment is coming as surely as there is a God in heaven. For God has said, regarding Abraham's seed, "Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee" (Gen. 27: 29), and the man who is dealing cruelly with Abraham's seed is already under the curse of God. That judgment some day will fall. We can be sure of that. There is no way out, because God has decreed it. Men may trifle with God for the moment, they may question because He seems to wait a long time, but the Greeks used to say, "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." In every aspect of life the truth remains that God is a God of judgment, and, "By Him actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2: 3).

Paul then says, "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision"—suppose I preached all these legalistic things, would I be persecuted as I am now? Surely not. But if I did that, I would not be true to my great commission. "Why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence (the scandal) of the cross ceased." What does he

mean by "the scandal of the cross"? It was a scandalous end to a human life to have to die on a cross. The cross was like the gallows today. Cicero said, "The cross, it is so shameful it never ought to be mentioned in polite society." Just as a person having a relative who had committed murder and was hung for it, would not want to speak about it, so people felt about the cross in those days. Yet the Son of God died on a cross. Oh, the shame of it! The Holy One, the Eternal Creator, the One who brought all things into existence, went to that cross and died for our sins. Paul practically says, You are setting that cross at naught if you introduce any other apparent means of salvation in place of the death Jesus died to put away sins. And then he cries, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." Or literally, "I would they would cut themselves off that trouble you," these men who would pervert the gospel of Christ.

In verse 13 he comes back to the theme of liberty, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty"—you have been set free, you are no longer slaves, you are free men—"only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." Do not say, "Well, now, I am saved by grace and therefore I am free to do as I like." No; but, I am saved by grace and so I am free to glorify the God of all grace! I have liberty to live for God, I have lib-

erty to magnify the Christ who died for me, and I have liberty to walk in love toward all my brethren. It is a glorious liberty this, the liberty of holiness, of righteousness. "But by love serve one another." Having been called into this liberty be willing to be a servant. Our blessed Lord set us the example; He took that place on earth: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13: 14). Through love we delight to serve. Look at that mother caring for her little babe. She has to do many things her heart does not naturally delight in. Is her service a slavery as she waits upon her babe? Oh, no; she delights to do that which love dictates, and so in our relation to one another, how glad we ought to be to have the opportunity of serving fellow-saints. "By love serve one another."

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word." It is as though he says, You talk about the law, you insist that believers should come under the law; why don't you stop to consider what the law really teaches? "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love." The man who loves will not break any of the commandments. If I love God as I should, I will not sin against Him. Look at Joseph, exposed to severe temptation, greater perhaps than many another has gone through, and yet his answer to the

temptress was, "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He loved God and that kept him in the hour of temptation. And when it comes to dealing with our fellows, if we love our neighbor as ourselves we won't violate the commandments. We won't lie one to another, we won't bear false witness, no one will commit adultery, there will be no violation of God's law, we will not murder. No wrong will be done to another if we are walking in love. "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The Holy Spirit who dwells in every believer is the Spirit of love, and the new nature is a nature which God Himself has implanted, God is love and therefore it is natural for the new nature to love. When you find a believer acting in an unloving way, doing an unkind thing, you may be sure that it is the old nature, not the new, that is dominating him at that moment. Oh, to walk in love that Christ may be glorified in all our ways! It was said of early Christians, even by the heathen about them, "Behold how they love one another!" Can that always be said of us? Or must it be said, "Behold how they quarrel; behold how they criticize; behold how they backbite one another; behold how they scandalize one another." What a shame if such things could be said of us! "All the law

is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love."

Now on the other hand, if one fails in this, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." If you would tear one another's reputations to pieces, find fault with one another, quarrel with one another, be careful, for the natural result will be that you will be "consumed one of another." Do you know why many a testimony that was once bright for God today is in ruins? It is because of a spirit of quarrelsomeness, fault-finding, and murmuring, comes in among the people of God, and God cannot bless that. If you and I are guilty of that, we ought to get into God's presence and examine our ways before Him; yea, plead with Him to search our hearts, and confess and judge every such thing as sin in His sight in order that we may be helpers and not hinderers in His service.

"If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." "Well," someone says, "I always hate myself if I say anything unkind, and I make up my mind never to do it again." The trouble is that you have not yielded that tongue of yours to the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember the word, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto

God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12: 1). A number of people have presented almost every part of their bodies except their tongues. They have kept the tongues for themselves, and they allow them to wag on and on until gradually they bring in a lot of sorrow and grief among the people of God. Won't you say, "Lord, this tongue of mine was given me to glorify Thee; I have used it so often to find fault with others, to injure the reputation of a brother or a sister, to speak unkindly or discourteously about other people. Lord Jesus, I give it to Thee, this tongue that Thou hast bought with Thy blood. Help me to use it from this time on solely to glorify Thee. And in using it to glorify Thee, I shall be using it to bless and help others, instead of to distress and hinder them."

You may never yet have come to Jesus, and possibly you are saying, "Is there a power such as you speak of that can lift a person above a life of sin, enabling him to so live?" Yes, there is; come to the Lord Jesus Christ, put your trust in Him, receive Him as your Saviour, enthrone Him as Lord of your life, and you will find that everything will be different, everything will be new. You will have a joy, a gladness, that you have never been able to find in all the devious ways of this poor world. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear

My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3: 20). Fling wide the door of your heart today, and say:

 "Come in, my Lord, come in,
 And make my heart Thy home.
 Come in, and cleanse my soul from sin,
 And dwell with me alone."

He will be so glad to come in and take control, and everything will be made new in the light of His presence.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LIBERTY NOT LICENSE

(Gal. 5: 16-26)

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot (or, may not) do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

THE present section of this epistle brings before us the truth, in a very marked way, of the two natures in the believer. It is important to remember that when God saves us He does not destroy the carnal nature which we received at our natural birth. The new birth does not imply the elimination of that old carnal nature, neither does it imply a change in it, but rather the impartation of an absolutely new nature born of the Holy Spirit of God, and these

two natures abide side by side in the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This explains the conflict that many of us have known since we have been converted. In fact, I need not have said, "many of us," for all converted people know at one time or another something of that conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"—that is, the old nature—"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"—that is the new nature, and these two natures abide side by side until we receive the redemption of the body which will be at the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He will transform this body of our humiliation and make it like unto the body of His glory. Then we will be delivered forever from all inward tendency to sin. Until then we have to learn, and sometimes by very painful experiences, that the carnal nature, that old nature, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

That old nature is so corrupt, so vile, that it can never be sanctified, and the new nature is so pure, so holy, that it does not need to be sanctified. So there is no mention in Scripture of the sanctification of the old nature. What is it then that needs to be sanctified? It is the man himself, and he is sanctified as he learns to walk in accordance with the dictates of the new nature. He is directed by the Holy Spirit of God, for the

believer is not only born of the Spirit but indwelt by the Spirit.

We are not to confound new birth by the Spirit with the reception of the Spirit. New birth is the operation of the Spirit of God. He it is who produces the new birth through the Word. We receive the Word in faith, we believe the Word, and the Spirit of God through the Word brings about new birth. The apostle James says, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (James 1:18). The apostle Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. . . . And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23, 25). And when I believe that Word I am born again; that is an inward change. It is the impartation of a new life; it is eternal life. But there is something more than that. It was always true in all dispensations, from Adam down to the day of Pentecost, that wherever people believed God's Word they were born again, but the Holy Spirit Himself as a divine Person had not then come to dwell within them. Now since Pentecost, upon believing, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of God. He creates the new nature, and then comes to indwell the one who is thus born again, and as the believer learns to recognize the fact that the Spirit of God dwells within him, and as

he turns everything over to His control, he finds deliverance from the power of inbred sin.

Notice how the apostle puts it here: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust (or, the desire) of the flesh." It is so easy to fulfil the desire of the flesh. We must not link with that word "lust" the idea that it always means things base and unclean. The word itself simply means "desire," and whatever the desire of the flesh is it is always hateful to God. Here may be one who desires all kinds of carnal indulgences, and we have no difficulty in realizing the vileness of that, but here is another who desires worldly fame, the praise and adulation of his fellows, and that is also the lust of the flesh, or mind, and is as obnoxious to God as the other. Any kind of a carnal or fleshly desire is a lust, and if we would be delivered from walking according to these selfish lusts we must walk in the Spirit.

It is one thing to have the Spirit indwelling us, and quite another to walk in the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit implies that the Holy Spirit is controlling us, and we can walk in the Spirit only as our lives are truly surrendered to Christ. Somebody says, "Well, then, I understand you mean to tell us that all believers possess the Holy Spirit, but that many of us have never received the second blessing, and are not filled with the

Spirit." I do not find the term, "second blessing," in Scripture, though I admit that in the lives of many Christians there is an experience that answers to what people call "the second blessing." Many Christians have lived for years on a rather low, somewhat carnal, worldly plane. They love the Lord, they love His Word, they love to attend the ordinances of His house, they enjoy Christian fellowship, and seek to walk as upright men and women through this world, but they have never truly yielded themselves and all their ransomed powers wholly to the Lord. There is something they are keeping back, some controversy with God, and as long as this continues there will always be conflict and defeat, but when one comes to the place where he heeds the Word, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present (that you surrender, hand over) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1)—when one makes that surrender there is indeed in the life what answers to a kind of second blessing; that is, the Spirit of God is now free to take possession of that believer, and operate through him and use him for the glory of God in a way He could not do as long as that man or woman was not wholly surrendered to the Lord.

We speak a great deal about "full surrender,"

and yet, I am afraid, some of us use the term in a very careless way. It is of no use to speak of being fully surrendered to God if I am still seeking my own interest. If I am self-centered, if I am hurt because people do not praise me, or if I am lifted up because they do, then the Spirit of God does not have His way with me. If Christ Himself is not the one object before my soul, if I cannot say, "For me to live is Christ," if my great concern is not that Christ should be magnified in me whether by life or by death, then I am not yet wholly surrendered to Him. If I cannot say from the heart, "Not my will, but Thine," there is no use in talking about being surrendered to Christ. The surrendered believer is no longer seeking his own but the things which belong to Christ Jesus. That is the man who "walks in the Spirit." "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

The conflict is shown in verse 17: "For the flesh lusteth (or desireth) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against (or contrary to) the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." It is not exactly, "So that ye *cannot* do the things that ye would," for God has made provision that we might do the things that we would, but it should be rendered, "So that ye *may not* do the things that ye would." Here is conflict in the believer's breast. The flesh desires one thing, the Spirit

another, and as long as there is not a full surrender to the will of God these two are in constant warfare, and therefore the believer may not do the things that he would. I rise in the morning and say, "Today I will not allow that tongue of mine to say one unkind thing, one un-Christlike word." But some unexpected circumstances arise, and almost before I know it I have said something for which I could bite my tongue. The thing I never meant to do I did. And, on the other hand, things I meant to do I did not do. What does that tell me? There is conflict. The Spirit of God has not His complete right of way in my heart and life, and because of this conflict I may not do the things that I would. I am hindered, and my life is not a life of full surrender as God intended it to be. How many of us know this experimentally. Oh, the defeated lives, the disappointed lives, even of people who are real Christians, who know the blessedness of being saved by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and who long to glorify God, and yet are constantly defeated. Why? Because the Spirit of God does not have His supreme place in their lives.

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." We are not to think that the way of deliverance is by law-keeping. I may say, "From now on I mean to be very careful, I will obey

God's law in everything. That surely will result in my practical sanctification." But no; I am disappointed again. I will find that the will to do good is present with me, but how to perform it is another thing, and so I have to learn that my sanctification is no more through the law than my justification. What then? He tells us, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." If you yield to the Spirit of God, if He has the control of your life, if you are led by Him, then the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. And in order that we may not misunderstand, he brings before us the lusts of the flesh, that we may be able to drag these things out into the light, that we may see them in all their ugliness, so that if any of them have any place in our hearts and lives we may judge them in the presence of God. We often run across people to-day who say that they do not believe in the depravity of human life, but these are the things that come from the natural man; and even the believer, if he is not careful, if he is not walking with God as led by the Spirit, may fall into some of them.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest (they are evident), which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness." Maybe some of you think or say, "I wish he would not use those words; I do not like them; they are

nasty words." My dear friends, let me remind you, there is nothing the matter with the words; it is the sins that are expressed in these words that are so nasty. Many people who do not like the words are living in the sins, and God drags things out into the light and calls sin by name. There are people living in the sin of adultery who do not like to hear their wickedness called by name. Take the words of the Lord Jesus, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32). There are those who are committing adultery according to that passage, and others who are contemplating it. If you have allowed yourself any unholy love, permitting yourself any unholy familiarity with one with whom you have no right to seek to enter the married relationship, you yourself are guilty in God's sight of the sin that is mentioned here. "Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness," that is, vile, filthy thoughts indulged in. You cannot hinder evil thoughts coming into your mind, but you can help indulging in them. Lasciviousness is indulging in thoughts that are unclean and vile and unholy. People sometimes come to me in great distress and say, "Evil thoughts come to me, even when I am praying, and I wonder sometimes whether I am really

converted or not." That is the flesh manifesting itself. These things may come to you, but do you indulge in them? A Welshman said, "I cannot help it if a bird alights on top of my head, but I can help it if he builds his nest in my hair," and so you may not be able to help it if evil thoughts come surging into your mind, but you can help indulging in those thoughts.

"Idolatry," putting anything in the place of the true and living God. "Witchcraft." "Oh," you say, "that is out-moded. They used to burn witches." But what is witchcraft? It is a word that implies "having to do with the dead," and I think that Chicago has a good many witches in it. Often while passing along the street I see such signs as "Spiritualist medium," or something like that, people pretending to have traffic with the dead. That is witchcraft, and it is an abomination in the sight of God. "Hatred." This is a sin which we all have to guard against. Scripture says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3:15). Hatred comes from the old nature. "Variance"—quarrelsomeness. There are many of us who would shrink from those first sins, but we are not very easy to get along with, we are dreadfully touchy, and this is as truly an evidence of the old nature, as those other "works of the flesh." "Emulations," a constant desire to excel other people, to get the

admiration of others. Here is a preacher who has some little gift, and he is upset because some other preacher has greater recognition. Here is one who sings a little, and someone else who also sings excites more admiration, and there is trouble about it. Here is a Sunday School teacher, and some other teacher seems to be preferred before her, and she is in a frenzy and almost ready to quit her work. Trace these things back to their source and you will find they all come from the flesh, and therefore they should be judged in the sight of God. And then, "wrath." That is anger. There is an anger that is holy, but that wrath to which you and I usually give way is very unholy. The only holy anger is anger with sin. "Be ye angry, and sin not" (Eph. 4: 26). The old Puritan said, "I am determined so to be angry as not to sin, therefore to be angry at nothing but sin." And then "strife," resulting in "seditions." The two words are intimately linked together. All these things are sinful. "Heresies," a school of opinion set up opposed to the truth of God. "Envyings." Scripture says, "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13:5). Someone has a better house than I have, someone else has a better car than mine, and I envy him. The Arab said, "Once I felt bad and I complained because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet." There is not one of us

but has far more than he deserves. Why should we envy anyone else? Suppose some people have magnificent mansions and I have only a hut.

“A tent or a cottage, why should I care?
They’re building a palace for me over there!”

“Be content,” says the Spirit of God, “with such things as ye have.” When you reach that place life will be very much happier for you.

“Murders.” Think of putting murder with such sins as emulations and envyings! Many a murder has resulted from these very sins, and, you know, murder does not consist in sticking a knife into a man or blowing his brains out with a revolver. You can murder a man by your unkindness. I have known many a person who died of a broken heart because of the unkindness of those from whom they had a right to expect something different. God give us to manifest so much of the love of Christ that we will be a blessing to people instead of a curse to them. Then “drunkenness.” Surely I do not need to speak of this to Christians. This too is a work of the flesh. Then “revellings.” The world calls it “having a good time” in a carnal way. “And such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Here he uses the present continuous tense: “That they

that are in the habit of doing such things, they whose lives are characterized by such things." If people are characterized by these things they prove that they are not Christians at all. Real Christians may fall into them, but they are miserable and wretched until they confess them, but unsaved men revel in them and go on without judging them. These things come from the flesh.

Now we have the opposite—the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." You notice the word here is "fruit," for we do not read in the Bible of the "fruits" of the Spirit, but of the "fruit." This ninefold fruit springs from the new nature as one is actuated by the Holy Spirit of God. "Love," the very essence of the divine nature. "Joy,"—Scripture says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). "Peace," that is more than happiness, that is a deep-toned gladness that is unruffled and untroubled by all the trials of earth. "Longsuffering," this leads you to endure uncomplainingly. "Gentleness," some of us are so gruff and so rough, but the Christian should cultivate the meekness, the gentleness of Christ. "Faith," in the sense of confidence in God. "Meekness." We are not meek by nature; the natural man is always pushing himself forward. The spiritual

man says, "Never mind me; recognize others; I am willing to remain in the background." Whenever you find this pushing spirit you may know that one is still walking in the flesh. When you find the desire to give godly recognition to others you will find one walking in the Spirit. And then, "temperance" is just self-control, the whole body held under in subjection to the Spirit of God. "Against such there is no law." You do not need law to control a man thus walking in the Spirit.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." It does not say, "They that are Christ's *should* crucify the flesh." They have done so when they put their trust in the Lord Jesus. They trusted in the One crucified in their behalf, and therefore can say, "I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live" (Gal. 2: 20). It is a settled thing. If you have crucified the flesh, if you have recognized the fact that Christ's crucifixion is yours, then do not live in that to which you have died. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." If we have this new life, if linked up now with our risen Christ, then let Him control our ways, let us be yielded to Him, let us walk in the Spirit, let us not be desirous of fame or glory, let us not seek anything that would lead to empty boasting, provoking one another, saying and doing things

that may pain others needlessly, or envying one another.

Some of you may say, "That is a tremendously high standard, and I am afraid I can never attain to it." No; and I can never attain to it in my own strength, but if you and I are yielded to the Holy Spirit of God and allow Him to make these things real in our lives, then we will indeed attain to the ideal set before us here, but it will not be ourselves, it will be Christ living in us manifesting His life, His holy life, in and through the members of our body. God give us to know the reality of it!

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GRACE IN ACTION

(Gal. 6: 1-10)

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

WE are now to consider a number of special admonitions having to do with the manifestation of grace, in our attitude toward our brethren generally and toward the world outside, for where grace is active in the soul there will always be kindly consideration of others. Where a spirit of censoriousness prevails, or where malice and bitterness fill the heart, one may be certain that, for the time being at least, the one who manifests such a disposition

has lost the sense of his debtorship to the grace of God.

In the first instance, we have the case of a brother who has failed, though not wilfully. The Spirit of God says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault." He did not set out with intention to sin. He was not endeavoring to stifle his conscience, but sudden temptation proved too much for him, as for instance, in the case of the apostle Peter, who really loved the Lord, but when challenged as to being one of His disciples was so filled with fear that he denied the One he had declared he would never forsake. It is important to distinguish between wilful, deliberate sin, when one has put away a good conscience and definitely embarked upon a course of evil, and sudden and unexpected failure because of overwhelming temptation taking one off his guard. How many fall under such circumstances! Perhaps it is the power of appetite or of fleshly passion. It may be a question of a quick temper or unjudged pride and vanity. One goes on unconscious of danger, finds himself in circumstances for which he was not prepared, and before he realizes what is transpiring, he has sinned against the One who loves him most. It is easy for others who do not understand the hidden springs of action to blame such a one very severely, particularly if his fault is of such a

character as to reflect discredit upon the testimony of the Lord. The easiest way in such a case is to insist on immediate excision, excommunicating the wrong-doer from all Church privileges. But here a better way is unfolded to us. Paul writes, "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It is no evidence of spirituality to give way to harsh judgment, but rather to manifest compassion for the one who has failed and to seek to bring him back to fellowship with God. It is only in the spirit of meekness that this can be done. A hard, critical spirit will drive the failing one deeper into sin and make it more difficult to recover him at last. But a loving, tender word, accompanied by gracious effort to recover, will often result in saving him from further declension.

If we remember what we ourselves are and how easily we too may fall, we will not be over-stern in dealing with others. It is not that we are called upon to excuse sin. That must be dealt with faithfully, for we are told in the law, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." But we are to point out the way of deliverance; considering our own need of divine help continually in order that we may be kept from sin, we will know better how

to deal with those who in the hour of temptation have missed their path.

Then we have a precious word as to that mutual concern for others which should ever characterize believers: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The law of Christ is the law of love, and love seeks to help others in their distress and share the load with them. If anyone thinks himself superior to such service and stands upon his dignity, he is but manifesting his own littleness, for "if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

Each one should recognize his own individual responsibility to God, and therefore he is to be careful that his own work is in accordance with God's revealed mind, as indicated in His Word. As he thus walks obediently he will know that joy which comes from fellowship with God and will not depend on others for his happiness. It is a recognized principle of Scripture that each man must bear his own responsibility, and this is the meaning of verse 5, where the word "burden" suggests something quite different to its use in verse 2.

Verse 6 lays down a principle of wide application: "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." If God has used another to instruct and

help me in the way of life, I, on my part, should be glad to do what I can to be of help and assistance to him. It is not simply that preachers entirely given to the work of the Lord should be sustained by the gracious gifts of those to whom they minister, though that is involved in it, but it is a constant giving and receiving in all walks of life. He who seeks only to be benefited by others and is not concerned about sharing with them, will have a Dead Sea kind of a life. It is said that nothing can live in that body of water because it has no outlet, and though millions of tons of fresh water pour into it every week, evaporation and mineral deposits make it so bitter and acrid that it cannot sustain life. He who is more concerned about giving to others than about receiving for himself will be constantly fresh and happy in his own experience and will enjoy all the more the good things ministered to him.

It is a remarkable fact that it is in this connection, what we might call the principle of "giving and receiving," that the Holy Spirit directs our attention most solemnly to the kindred law of "sowing and reaping." It never pays to be forgetful of the future. He who acts for the present moment only is like one who is indifferent to the coming harvest, and so either thinks to save by sparse sowing, or else recklessly strews obnoxious seeds in his field, sowing wild oats, as

people say, and yet hopes to reap a far different kind of harvest. We reap as we sow. This is insisted on again and again in Scripture. Here we are told, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Elsewhere our Lord has laid down the same principle. He asks, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" And He declares that "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matt. 7:16, 17). Israel sowed the wind, the prophet exclaimed, and he predicted they would reap the whirlwind (Hos. 8:7). Men who sow wickedness reap the same, asserted Eliphaz (Job 4:8). This is so self-evident that it needs no emphasis. Yet how easily we forget it, and how readily we hope that in some strange, unnatural transformation our sinful folly will be so overruled as to produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness. But whether it be in the case of the unsaved worldling, or the failing Christian, the inexorable law will be fulfilled—we reap what we sow. How important then that we walk carefully before God, not permitting ourselves any license which is unbecoming in one who professes to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (ver. 8). It is

not that we *earn* everlasting life by our behavior; we receive it as a gift when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:36). But we now have eternal life in dying bodies, and in a scene of contrariety, where everything about us is opposed to that new and divinely-implanted nature which we were given in regeneration. Soon, at our Lord's return, we shall enter into life in all its fulness, and then, at the judgment-seat of Christ, we shall reap according to our sowing. They who live for God now will receive rich reward in that day. And they who yield now to the impulses of the flesh and are occupied with things that do not glorify God will suffer loss.

How timely then the admonition: "Let us not be weary in well doing," coupled with the sure promise, "For in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (ver. 9). We are so apt, having begun in the Spirit, to seek to finish in the flesh, as in the case of these Galatians. But only that which is of the Spirit will be rewarded in the day of manifestation. That which is of the flesh—even though seemingly religious—will only produce corruption and bring disappointment at last.

In closing this section the apostle reverts to the general principle of verse 6, now extending it to include all men everywhere. The spiritual man is one who sees things from God's standpoint, therefore he cannot be insular, self-centered, or

indifferent to the needy souls all about him. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (ver. 10). Thus we will imitate Him whose life was laid out in doing good, both to the unthankful and the godless, and to the little flock who waited for the consolation of Israel. As we seek, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, to maintain the same attitude toward our fellow-men, whether sinners or saints, we fulfil the righteousness of that law which says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We do not need to put ourselves under the law to do this. We only need to recognize our relationship to the glorified Christ, who is the Head of that new creation to which, by grace, we belong.

Are we ever on the watch for such opportunities to manifest the goodness of God to those with whom we come in contact, and thus magnify the Lord, whose we are and whom we serve? Having been so wondrously dealt with ourselves, how can we do other than seek to exemplify in our dealings with others the mercy and loving-kindness which has been shown toward us?

This is indeed to live on a higher plane than law. It is the liberty of grace, which the Holy Spirit gives to all who recognize the Lordship of Christ.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

GLORYING IN THE CROSS

(Gal. 6: 11-18)

"Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

THERE is something about verse 11 that I think lets us right into the heart of the apostle Paul. He was some distance away from Galatia when word came to him that Judaizing teachers had come in among the different assemblies, and were teaching the believers that unless they were circumcised and kept the law they could not be saved. He saw that this meant to step down from the truth of grace altogether. The believer does not obey in order to be saved, but because he is saved. He delights to glorify

the One who has redeemed him; and his obedience springs from a heart filled with gratitude to that One who gave His life for him. He does not try to make himself fit or to keep himself fit for heaven. The apostle was so much disturbed by what he heard that he sat right down and penned this letter. It glows with the white heat of his burning zeal for the gospel of God. As we have already remarked, it was not a usual thing for men to write their own letters in those days. Letter-writing was a distinct occupation, as it is still in the different cities of the East; and if a man had a good deal to do he would engage one of these professional letter-writers just as here and now a man who has much correspondence engages a stenographer. He would not attempt to handle it all himself. And so ordinarily the apostle dictated his letters to various persons. They wrote them out, and he signed them and sent them on. But in this case apparently he had no amanuensis close at hand, and he was so stirred in his spirit, that he felt he could not lose a moment in getting a letter off, and so sat right down and wrote it himself. He refers to this in verse 11, "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." It is not really a large letter. Compared with the Epistle to the Romans this is a very short one. It is not more than one-third the length of First

Corinthians, and only about one-half the length of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Compared with other writings in the New Testament it is brief indeed; but we get help here if we consult a more critical translation. It should read, "You see with what large characters I have written unto you with mine own hand." And that indicates not only that he was not used to letter-writing, but we gather besides that he had some kind of affliction with his eyes, and was not able to see well. You remember the time he was on trial in Jerusalem, and the high priest commanded him to be smitten on the mouth, and indignantly he shouted out, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall" (Acts 23:3), and somebody said, "Do you speak evil of God's high priest?" At once he apologized and said, "I did not know that he was the high priest." He ought to have known, for there Ananias stood, doubtless in his priestly robes, but if Paul were at the other end of the room with poor eyesight he might not have recognized the man. And then there are other scriptures that give similar suggestions. He had already said in this letter, "I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (Gal. 4:15). They would not have wanted to do that unless his sight were poor. So I take it that possibly this was the affliction which he

had to endure for many years, and therefore when he sat down to write he was like a half-blind person writing in big sprawling letters. And realizing that he was not sending a neat manuscript such as an amanuensis would have prepared, he apologized for it by saying, "You see with what large characters I have written unto you with mine own hand." I think that manuscript with its large letters ought to have touched the hearts of those Galatians, and should have made them realize how truly he loved them, how concerned he was about them, that he could not wait to write them in the ordinary way, but must send off this epistle as quickly as it could be produced.

Then he concludes with these words, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised." If it could have been possible to keep the Christians within the fold of Judaism and make of them one more Jewish sect, they would have been saved from a great deal of persecution they had to suffer. And so the apostle says, these emissaries from Jerusalem going about among you have not your good at heart, but they want to make a fair show in the flesh; they want to show a great many adherents to what they teach, but do not take the place of separation to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I could go with them and make a fair

show in the flesh too, and would not have to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. That cross was not only the place where the Lord Jesus suffered for our sins but is the symbol of separation. It told out the world's hatred of the Son of God, and Paul had identified himself with the One whom the world spurned, and therefore he gloried in that cross.

When people take legal ground and tell you that salvation is by human effort, they themselves never live up to their own profession. You may have heard some say, "I do not think people have to be saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; I think if everybody does the best he can, that is all that can be expected." Did you ever see a man who did the best he could do? Have you always done the best you knew? You know you have failed over and over again, even in those things that you knew to be right, things you did not do that you should have done, and things you did that you knew you should not have done. Therefore, to talk about being saved by doing the best you can is absurd. No man has ever done his best, except, of course, our holy, spotless Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Somebody says, "It is gospel enough for me to follow the Sermon on the Mount." That is saying a good deal. Did you ever see a man who did that, or have you done it? Rest yourself by it.

Read Matthew 5, 6, and 7, and just test yourself honestly; check yourself, and see how far you fall short of the precious precepts of this wonderful address given by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no question but that you and I ought to live up to it. It indicates the type of life that should characterize every believer. But if you have not lived up to the Sermon on the Mount, either as a matter of attaining or maintaining salvation, at once you put yourself out of court. You have not lived it out, and I am afraid you never will, and therefore you can be very thankful indeed that God is saving poor sinners by grace. Someone else says, "I believe if we keep the law God gave at Sinai (it is holy, just, and good, the apostle himself tells us), it is all that God or man could require of us." So far as actual living is concerned, I suppose it is; but again I put the question, Have you kept it? Do you know of any one who has ever kept it? Let us keep in mind the words, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). So on this ground there is no hope for any of us. "If we fail," some say, "God has provided the sacraments." But those who talk in that way are never certain that they are keeping the sacraments correctly. How do you know that you are keeping them perfectly? You may fail in purity of purpose as you take the

Lord's Supper, or in baptism. Even they who count on being saved through self-effort do not keep the law perfectly. We all fail, and therefore we need to recognize the fact that salvation is only through the free, matchless grace of God.

They would like to have you follow on in their ways in order that they might glory in your flesh, says the apostle. Men like to get a following, they like to have people join with them in any particular stand they take. It ministers to the pride of the natural heart to be able to head up a large group.

In opposition to all this human effort Paul sets the cross of our blessed Saviour: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." When he said these words he was not thinking just of the wooden instrument on which Jesus died, and he certainly was not thinking of a cross on a steeple of a church, or on an altar of a church, nor yet of a cross dangling from a chain at the waist or throat, or worn as an ornament. When he wrote of "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," he was thinking of all that is involved in the crucifixion of the blessed Saviour on that tree. The cross of Christ is the measure of man's hatred to God. Think of it! God sent His Son into the world! Millions of people talk about it at the

Christmas season, and the merchants today are encouraging people to observe His birth so that they may sell more goods. You will find that even a Jewish merchant will wish you a merry Christmas if you purchase something from him. But remember this, the world has already told us what it thinks of Christ. It may celebrate His birth by gifts one to another, they may put on glorious concerts and have great festivals in the name of the Christ born in Bethlehem, but this world has shown what it thinks of Jesus by hurrying Him to a Roman cross. When Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" they cried out with one accord, "Let Him be crucified" (Matt. 27:22), and that is the Christ they profess to worship today, the Christ they have crucified. They will even celebrate Christmas in the taverns of our cities, celebrate the birth of Christ by drinking and carousing on Christmas-eve and Christmas-day, and they will call that keeping the birth of Jesus. But the Christ of Bethlehem is the Christ of the cross, and the world has given its sentence concerning Him. They said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." "Well," the apostle says, "I glory in siding with the Man whom the world rejected." When he says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," it is just another way of saying, "My

boast, my joy, my delight is in the One whom the world has crucified.”*

Then the cross of Christ was the place where God has told out His love in utmost fulness. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). When man did his worst, God did His best. When man said, “Away with Him! Crucify Him!” God accepted Him as the substitute for sinners, and the judgment that our sins deserved fell on Him. God made His soul an offering for our sin. And so when Paul says, “I glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus,” he means, I glory in the love that gave Jesus to die for me, a sinner.

But he has shown that Christ’s death is my death and I am to take my place with Him, recognizing His death as mine. In chap. 2:20 we read, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” When Paul says, “I glory in the cross of Christ,” he means this then:—I accept the cross of Christ as my cross; I accept His death as my death; I take my place with Him as one who has died to the world, to sin, and to self,

*This address was given at the Christmas season.

and henceforth I am not under law but under grace. Law crucified my Saviour. He met its claims upon that cross, and now, having satisfied all its demands, I am delivered from its authority and am free to walk before God in grace, seeking to glorify Him in a life of happy obedience because I love the One who died there to put away my sin. All this, and much more, is involved in the expression, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom," he says, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Christian, have you taken that stand? Do you realize that Christ's cross means absolute separation from the world that rejected Him? That is what we confess in our baptism; that is what Christian baptism means. I have heard of many a believer who pondered a long time before taking the step of being buried in baptism because afraid he would not be able to live out what was set forth in this beautiful ordinance, and, of course, apart from Christ we could not. But what is involved? A recognition that I have died with Him, that I have been buried with Him, and that this is an end of me as a man after the flesh. Therefore, I have been raised with Christ to walk in newness of life.

I remember some brethren who were talking about a Christian's relationship to oath-bound

secret societies. (This Book tells me concerning the Lord Jesus that He said, "In secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20), therefore I know that He never was inside of an oath-bound secret order, and He has called upon me to be a follower of Him.) One of these brethren said to the other, "You belong to such-and-such an order."

"Oh, no," he said; "I do not."

"Why, you do; I was there the night you were initiated, and once a member of that you are a member until death."

"Exactly; I quite admit what you say, but I buried the lodge member in Lake Ontario."

He meant that in his baptism the old order came to an end.

I have heard of a dear young woman once a thorough worldling, but at last she was brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Her friends came on her birthday one evening to give her a surprise party, and wanted to take her with them to a place of ungodly worldly amusement. She said, "It is good of you to think of me, but I could not go with you; I never go to those places."

"Nonsense," they said; "you have often gone with us."

"But," she said, "I have buried the girl that used to go to those places."

"Not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Christian baptism should speak of separation from the world that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Israel. They had been slaves to Pharaoh, and there is old Pharaoh on the other side of the sea, shouting, "You come back here and serve me; put your necks under the yoke of bondage again." And I think I hear them say, "Good-bye, Pharaoh; the Red Sea rolls between us; we have been crucified to Egypt and Egypt to us." That is it, "I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And so the world is crucified to me and I to the world. Let me say a word of warning here. Many a Christian has judged the vile, filthy, corrupt, polluted things of the world who has never judged the brilliant, cultured, esthetic world. But the brilliant, cultured world is just as vile in the sight of God as the corrupt, disgusting, filthy world that many walked with, in days before they were converted. You can get out of fellowship with God by association with the cultured world, as truly as by going down into the world's base and ungodly places of vulgar amusement.

Oh, Christian, keep close to the footsteps of the flock of Christ, and do not let them meet you in any other field. Here is real circumcision. Circumcision was an ordinance that signified the death of the flesh. "For in Christ Jesus neither

circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," or, literally, "a new creation." And that is the whole thing. You and I through the cross have passed out of the old creation, if saved, and are now in the new creation of which Christ is the glorified Head. See to it that in your associations, in your pleasure, in your amusement, in your religious life, you keep in that sphere where Christ is owned as Head and Lord.

And then he adds, "And as many as walk according to this rule"—what rule? He has not laid down any rule. Yes, he has said we are a new creation. That is the way to test everything that may be put before me. Is it of the new creation or is it of the old? If it is of the old, it has nothing for me. I belong to the new and am to walk according to this rule. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy," for they will always need mercy. They will never attain perfection in this life, but God never forgets His own. Sometimes we may drift so far that we forget Him, we may even feel as though our hearts are utterly dead toward Him, as though He has forsaken us, but remember what He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13: 5). There is a double negative in the original, it is, "I will never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee." It is unthinkable

that the blessed Lord should ever give up one who has put his trust in Jesus, and so He always deals with us in mercy, restoring our souls when we fail.

Then the apostle uses a very peculiar expression, "And upon the Israel of God." Whom does he mean by "the Israel of God"? I do not think he is referring to the Church as such, for he has just referred to that when speaking of the new creation. I think he recognizes as the true Israel those of God's earthly people who really accept the testimony of God and who own their sin and trust the Saviour whom God has provided. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9: 6). That a man happens to be born of the seed of Abraham does not make him a son of Abraham. Because a man happens to be born of Israel this does not make him an Israelite. He must have the faith of Abraham to be blessed with faithful Abraham, and he must receive the Saviour who came through Israel if he is going to be a true Israelite.

Now that these Judaizers have made so much of a distinguishing mark upon the body through an ordinance and have said that a man that did not bear that mark was unclean and unfit for Christian fellowship, Paul says, I have a better mark than anything you may talk about. "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in

my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." What did he mean by that? His very body had been wounded many times for Jesus' sake, when those cruel stones fell on him at Lystra, when beaten with stripes his body was branded; but he glories in these things and says, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Someone has said, "When we get home to heaven God is not going to look us over for medals but for scars." I wonder whether we have received any scars for Jesus' sake. Many of them are not physical scars, they are scars of the heart, but it is a great thing to have the brand-marks of the Lord Jesus.

And now Paul closes this epistle without any salutations. Most of his letters contain a great many salutations to various people, but here he does not send any special message to any of them because, you see, they were playing fast and loose with the things of God, and there would be no use, after giving them this stern message, to placate them by sending cordial salutations to the brethren in Christ as though nothing had happened to hinder fellowship. So he merely says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." God grant that every one of us may enjoy that grace!