

Galatians 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

Galatia (to the churches in which country this Epistle is directed) is by all agreed to be a part of Asia the Lesser, now under the power of the Turks, and by them called Chiangare. Geographers tell us, it is bounded on the west by Phrygia the Greater, (now called Germian), Bithynia, (now called Becksangel), and Asia Propria, a country of Anatolia; on the south, with Pisidia, (now called Versacgeli), and Licaonia (now called Cogni); on the east, with Cappadocia (now called Amasia); and on the north, with Paphlagonia (now called Bolli). The whole country was anciently called Gallo-Grecia, from some French, who, leaving their country and coming to inhabit there, gave it that name. It had in it several cities, amongst which geographers reckon Ancyra, Synopa, Pompeiopolis, Claudiopolis, Nicopolis, Laodicea, to which also some count Antioch. When or by whose ministry this people first received the gospel, we do not read. Paul travelled thither, Ac 16:6, but was at that time *forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach* there; but, Ac 18:23, it is said, that when *he had spent some time at Antioch, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples*. This was about two years after that he was forbidden to preach there, in which time the gospel was planted and disciples made in this country.

At what time Paul wrote this Epistle to them is very uncertain; some think that it was written much at the same time when the Epistle to the Romans was written (the argument being much the same with that of that Epistle). Others think it was written at Rome during his last imprisonment, because he saith, Ga 6:17, that he bare in his *body the marks of the Lord Jesus*. It is manifest that it was written at some distance of time after the first plantation of the gospel there, for the enemy had had time to sow tares.

The occasion of writing it, was partly to reprove the members of this church, for their apostacy from the doctrine of the gospel, as to justification; partly to set them right again in it, and to vindicate himself from the aspersions and imputations which their false teachers had cast upon him, in order to their better success with their new doctrine.

The new doctrine brought in by these false teachers, was the necessity of circumcision, and other works of the law, as well as faith in Christ, in order to the justification of the sinner before God; which they pressed rather upon a politic, than any religious consideration, as being the way to avoid that persecution which at that time attended all Christians; from which imputation, those who were circumcised, though they also professed faith in Christ, saved themselves. To buoy up themselves they vilified the apostle Paul to these churches, as being no apostle, one that had learned all which he knew from James, and Peter, and John; yet varied from them as to his doctrine and practice, yea, from himself also.

The two first chapters of this Epistle are mostly spent in the apostle's vindication of himself; proving himself to be a true apostle, and not to have learned what he taught from Peter, or James, or John, but that he had it by revelation from Jesus Christ. In the two following chapters he proves the doctrine of justification *by faith in Christ*, (in opposition to the justification taught by these false teachers, *by the works of the law*), by various arguments. In the two last chapters, he presseth their standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, together with several other things, which are the common duties of all Christians. Then closeth his Epistle, with praying grace, mercy, and peace, to be their, and all true Christians', portion.

Chapter Summary

Ga 1:1-5 After saluting the churches of Galatia,
Ga 1:6,7 Paul testifieth his surprise that they should so soon have forsaken the truth of the gospel which he had taught them,
Ga 1:8,9 and pronounceth those accursed who preach any other gospel.
Ga 1:10-12 He showeth that his doctrine was not concerted to please men, but came to him by immediate revelation from God,
Ga 1:13,14 to confirm which he relateth his conversation before his calling,

Ga 1:15-24 and what steps he had taken immediately thereupon.

Ver. 1. The term *apostle*, in its native signification, signifieth no more than one sent; in its ecclesiastical use, it signifies one extraordinarily sent to preach the gospel; of these some were sent either more immediately by Christ, (as the twelve were sent, Mt 10:1 Mr 3:14 Lk 9:1), or more mediately, as Matthias, who was sent by the suffrage of the other apostles to supply the place of Judas, Ac 1:25,26, and Barnabas, and Silas, and others were. Paul saith he was sent *not of men, neither by man*, that is, not merely; for he was also sent by men to his particular province. Ac 13:3; *but* he was immediately sent *by Jesus Christ*, (as we read, Ac 9:1-43 and Ac 26:14-17, of which also he gives us an account in this chapter, Ga 1:15-17), *and by God the Father* also, *who*, he saith, *raised Christ from the dead*. By this phrase the apostle doth not only assert Christ's resurrection, and the influence of the Father upon his resurrection, (though he rose by his own power, and took up his own life again, and was also quickened by the Spirit), but he also showeth a specialty in his call to the apostleship. As it differed from the call of ordinary ministers, who are called by men (though their ministry be not merely of men); so it differed from the call of the rest of the apostles, being made by Christ not in his state of humiliation, (as the twelve were called, Mt 10:1-42), but in his state of exaltation, after he was raised from the dead, and sat down on the right hand of God.

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Ver. 2. He writeth not only in his own name, but in the name of all those other Christians that were with him in the place where he now was (whether Rome or Corinth, or some other place, is uncertain); with whose consent and privity probably he wrote, possibly at their instigation, and whose common consent in that doctrine of faith which he handleth, (as well as in other things about which he writeth), he here declareth. Some think that the apostle forbears the term *saints*, or *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, &c., commonly used in his other Epistles, because of that apostacy for which he designed to reprove them; but it is implied in the term *churches*. Galatia was a large country, and had in it many famous cities; it was neither wholly Christian, nor yet such as to the major part; but there

were in it several particular congregations of Christians, which he calleth *churches*; every congregation of Christians using to meet together to worship God, being a church, a particular church, though all such congregations make up but one universal visible church. Nor, being guilty of no idolatry, though corrupted in some particular points of doctrine, and those of moment, doth the apostle deny them the name of churches, though he sharply rebuketh them for their errors.

Galatians 1:3

Ver. 3. A common, as well as religious and Christian, form of salutation; Paul's mark in every Epistle, and used by him without any variation, (except in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, where he only adds *mercy &c.*), the want of which, as also of his name, offers some grounds to doubt whether he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. Paul had used it in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, and both the Epistles to the Corinthians: see the notes on Ro 1:7 1Co 1:3 2Co 1:2. It teaches us, in our common discourses, whether epistolary or otherwise, to speak to our friends like Christians, who understand and believe that the *grace, mercy, and peace from God*, are the most desirable good things.

Galatians 1:4

Ver. 4. Which Christ, though he was put to death by Pilate and the Jews, yet he was not compelled to die; for he laid down his life, no man took it from him, Joh 10:17,18. Sometimes it is said, he died for our sins, as Ro 5:8; sometimes, that he *gave himself*, (meaning, to death), as in Eph 5:2,25 1Ti 2:6 Tit 2:14: he was given by his Father, and he gave himself by his own free and spontaneous act.

For our sins, must be interpreted by other scriptures: here is the defect of a word here, which the Socinians would have to be remission; others, expiation (of which remission is a consequent). Both, doubtless, are to be understood, and something more also, which is expressed in the following words of the verse. Remission of sins is granted to be the effect of the death of Christ, but not the primary and sole effect thereof; but consequential to the *propitiation*, mentioned Ro 3:25; the *redemption*,

Eph 1:7; the *sacrifice*, Heb 10:12: both which texts show the absurdity of the Socinians, in quoting those texts to favour their notion of Christ's dying for the remission of our sins, without giving the justice of God satisfaction. And though some other texts mention Christ's dying for our sins, without mention of such expiation, propitiation, redemption, or satisfaction; yet they must be interpreted by the latitude of the end of Christ's death (expressed in other scriptures) relating to sin. Which is not only expiation, and remission, but the delivery of us from the lusts and corruptions of *this present evil world*. The apostle here deciphereth this world, by calling it *present* and *evil*: by the first, he hinteth to us, that there is a world to come; by the latter, he showeth the sinful practices of the greatest part of men, (for by *world* he means the corruption of persons living in the world), they are evil; and this was one end of Christ's death, to deliver his saints from their evil practices and examples; thus, 1Pe 1:18, we are said to be by the blood of Christ *redeemed from a vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers*. This (he saith) was done *according to the will of God*; the Greek word is $\theta\epsilon\lambda\eta\mu\alpha$, not $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta\nu$: the will of God is his decree, purpose, or good pleasure, so as it signifieth both his eternal purpose, (according to Eph 1:4), and his present pleasure or consent. I see no ground for the Socinian criticism, who would have us understand by it, God's testament, or present will for things to be done after death; the word importeth no more than God's eternal purpose, as to the redemption of man by the blood of Christ, and his well pleasedness with his undertaking and performance of that work; this God he calleth *our Father*, not with respect to creation so much as adoption.

Galatians 1:5

Ver. 5. To which Father, (yet not excluding the Son), for do great benefits bestowed upon us, be honour, and praise, from age to age, and to all eternity. The term *Amen*, being always used in Scripture either as a term of assertion, to aver the truth of a thing, or as a term of wishing, may here be understood in either or both senses; the apostle using it either to assert the glorifying of God to be our duty, and a homage we owe to God; or to signify his hearty desire that this homage may from all hands be paid unto him.

Galatians 1:6

Ver. 6. The apostle here beginneth the matter and substance of his Epistle, with a reprehension of this church; which in, some things is much qualified, in other things much aggravated. His expressing his reproof by the word *marvel*, hath in it something of mitigation, and signifieth his better hopes concerning them. The term *removed*, also, mollifies the reproof, the apostle thereby rather charging their apostacy upon their seducers, than upon them who were seduced; though they were not to be excused for their so yielding to the temptation, and that in so short a time, either after their first conversion, or after the first attempts upon them to seduce them; and herein was the aggravation of their guilt, that they very little resisted the temptation, but were presently overthrown by it. But it was a greater aggravation of their guilt, that they suffered themselves to be removed *from him that called* them. Interpreters doubt whether this be to be understood of God, or of Paul; and if of God, whether of the First or of the Second Person. That which inclineth some to think that Paul meant himself, was his instrumentality in the conversion of these Galatians; and his complaints of them in this Epistle, for their deserting his doctrine, and alienation from him; but then the substantive to the participle must be understood, and the call must be understood of the external call only, by the ministry of the word. It therefore seemeth rather to be understood of God; the apostles generally ascribing calling to God, Ga 5:8 1Th 5:24 2Th 2:14 1Pe 1:2,15 2Pe 1:3. Nor doth it seem proper to refer the action to Christ, because the apostles ordinarily ascribe calling to the First Person in the Trinity, calling us *by Christ*, as Ro 8:30 2Th 2:13,14,16 2Ti 1:9 1Pe 5:10; besides, *the grace of Christ* is here made the term to which they are called. And though this would supply the participle with a substantive in the text, without understanding one, yet it seems both too remote, and also to alter the sense of the text; making it to run thus, from Christ that called you unto grace, instead of *him that called you into the grace of Christ*. By which grace the apostle doubtless means not the doctrine of the gospel only, (though that be sometimes called grace), but all the benefits of the gospel, justification, reconciliation, adoption; which are all properly called the grace of Christ, as being the purchase of his blood.

Unto another gospel; that is, to the embracing of other doctrine, differing from the doctrine of the gospel, though it be brought to you by seducers under that notion; showing you another pretended way of salvation than by

the merits of Jesus Christ, whereas God hath *given no other name under heaven, neither is there salvation in any other*, Ac 4:12.

Galatians 1:7

Ver. 7. *Which is not another;* another doctrine it is, but another doctrine or glad tidings of salvation, or another gospel of Christ, it is not; for there is no other. In and by the new notions they bring they do but *trouble you*, and *pervert the true doctrine of the gospel*; though they use the name of Christ, and of his gospel, they do it falsely; for by making the works of the law, and the observance of them, necessary to be by you observed in order to your salvation, they quite destroy and pervert the glad tidings of salvation; viz. that we are saved by Christ alone and faith in him, and by a righteousness without these works.

Galatians 1:8

Ver. 8,9. The apostle, by this vehement expression, doth no more suppose it possible that a heavenly angel should publish to them any other way of salvation than what he had published, than that he himself might so contradict his own doctrine. He only by it declares his certainty of the truth, which he had delivered to them; it was not to be contradicted either by man or angel; and further teacheth us, that additions to the doctrines of the gospel make another gospel; God neither allowing us to add to, nor to diminish from, Divine revelations; for of this nature were the corruptions crept into this church. These seducers owned Christ and the doctrine of the gospel: only teaching the Jewish circumcision, and other ceremonial rites, as necessary to be observed in order to people's salvation, they made the pretended gospel (which they taught) to be another gospel than that which Paul had preached, and which believers in this church had received. In saying *let him be accursed*, he also saith that he who doth this shall be accursed; for the apostle would neither himself curse, nor direct others to curse, whom he did not know the Lord would curse, and look upon as cursed. These two verses look dreadfully upon the papacy, where many doctrines are published, and necessary to be received, which Paul never preached, nor are to be found in any part of Divine writ.

Galatians 1:10

Ver. 10. *For do I now persuade men, or God?* There is an emphasis in the particule *now*, since I became a Christian, and was made an apostle; while I was a Pharisee I did otherwise, but since I became an apostle of Jesus Christ, do I persuade you to hear what men say, or what God saith? Or (as others) do I persuade the things of men, their notions and doctrines, or the things of God? Or do I in my preaching aim at the gratifying or the pleasing of men, or the pleasing of God? The last is plainly said in the next words, *do I seek to please men?* Which must not be understood in the full latitude of the term, but restrainedly, do I seek to please and humour men in things wherein they teach and act contrary to God? It is the duty of inferiors to please their superiors, and of all good ministers and Christians, to please their brethren, so far as may tend to the advantage of their souls; or in civil things, so as to maintain a friendly and peaceable society; but they ought not to do any thing in humour to them, by which God may be displeased. In which sense it is that the apostle adds:

For if I pleased men, that is, in saying as they say, and doing as they do, without regard to pleasing or displeasing of Christ, *I should not* show myself *the servant of Christ*; for his servants we are whom we obey, and our Lord hath taught us, that no man can serve two masters, that is, commanding contrary things.

Galatians 1:11

Ver. 11. He calls them *brethren*, though some of them were revolted, because they owned Christ, and makes known or declares to them, (so the word is translated, Lu 2:15 Joh 15:15 17:26), that the doctrine of the gospel, which he had preached unto them, was no human invention or fiction, nor rested upon human authority, but was from God, immediately revealed to him: and herein he reflecteth upon the false teachers that had seduced them, and, in order to that, vilified him, as being but a disciple to some other of the apostles, yet teaching otherwise than they taught. I would have you know (saith he) that it is otherwise; the gospel which I preached *is not after man*. He fully openeth his own meaning in this

phrase, in the next words.

Galatians 1:12

Ver. 12. Not of man, as my first and sole instructor, not only at second-hand, from Peter, James, or John, as the false teachers had suggested, nor was I taught it otherwise than by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ.

Revelation signifieth the discovery of something which is secret (as the gospel, and doctrine of it, is called a *mystery hid from ages*). It may be objected, that Paul was instructed by Ananias, Ac 9:17. But this prejudiceth nothing the truth of what the apostle saith in this place, neither do we read of much that Ananias said to him in a way of instruction; it is only said, that he laid *his hands on him*, and he was *filled with the Holy Ghost*. When, or where, he had these revelations, the apostle saith not; probably while he lay in a trance, blind, and neither eating nor drinking for three days, Ac 9:9. Others think it was when he was caught up into the third heaven, 2Co 12:2. Certain it is, that St. Paul had revelations from Christ, Ac 22:17,18 26:15-18. Revelation signifies an immediate conveying of the knowledge of Divine things to a person, without human means; and in that Paul ascribes the revelation of the gospel to Jesus Christ, he plainly asserts the Divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:13

Ver. 13. It will be no difficult thing for you to believe, that I had never preached the gospel without a Divine revelation of the truth of it, if you do but reflect upon my former conversation; for you cannot but have heard, that I was born a Jew, educated in the Jewish religion, and was a zealous defender of it, so as I persecuted the Christians beyond measure. This unmeasurable persecution is expressed by Luke more particularly, Ac 8:3: *He made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison; and Ac 9:1: *He breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, &c.* He wasted the church like an enemy that useth fire and sword, and all means to destroy. The word here used is $\epsilon\pi\omicron\rho\theta\omicron\upsilon\nu$, which signifies to make a devastation; the word used in Ac 8:3 is $\epsilon\lambda\upsilon\mu\alpha\iota\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$ both words signify the*

most ruining hostile actions. And this he saith was his conversation, or constant practice, so as they might reasonably think that something more than human had made a change in him, that he should now be a preacher of that doctrine, which he had before so abominated as that his whole business was to root out those that professed it.

Galatians 1:14

Ver. 14. The word here used, and translated *profited*, may be interpreted either of his own personal proficiency, and going on in the Jewish religion, or of his propagating of it, and making that to go on, which seemeth to be the sense of the same word, 2Ti 2:16. And it is observed, that active verbs in the Greek in imitation of the Heb. con. Pihil., sometimes signify to do an action oneself, sometimes to make others do it; and Paul's wasting the Christian church had a rational tendency to uphold and propagate Judaism, the propagation of which was the end designed by it; this he saith he did above others of his countrymen, that were his equals in years. By this also he lets them know, that his persecuting the Christian church was not a passionate act, or for a gain to himself, but from an erroneous judgment, he verily thought that he ought to do what he against Jesus of Nazareth, and his disciples. He that he was *more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers*; by which he understands not only the rites of the ceremonial law, but the whole body of their constitutions, which the rulers of that church had made, under the notion of *sepimenta legis*, hedges or fences to the laws of God, to keep men at a distance from the violation of them; and other constitutions also, of which they had innumerable. Paul was a Pharisee, (*the son of a Pharisee*, Ac 23:6), bred up at the feet of Gamaliel (one of the doctors of their law); this was the strictest sect (for ceremonies) of their religion: and this his zeal for traditions, is that which he calleth a progress, or profiting in the Jewish religion, and was a cause of the propagation of that religion.

Galatians 1:15

Ver. 15. Here are two acts predicated of God, with relation to Paul: the first is a separating of him from the womb; the same was said of two of the great prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Isa 49:1 Jer 1:5. The apostle here is

not speaking of God's decree, predestinating him to eternal life, but of his determining him to the work of an apostle. God predetermineth men to the stations they shall take up in the world; especially such who are to take up stations wherein they are to be eminently useful and serviceable to him. The second act predicated of God is his calling of Paul: this is an act in time, and lieth much in the preparing of persons for the work allotted to them, and in inclining the heart to it. Thus God called Paul, fitting him for the work of the ministry, and inclining him to it; to which he added his immediate command from heaven, that he should go and preach the gospel. Both these acts of God are ascribed to his good pleasure and grace, nothing but his mere free love and favour moving him, either to separate, or to call Paul to this high and great employment.

Galatians 1:16

Ver. 16. When it pleased God to discover Christ his Son (by an eternal generation) to me, whom neither naturally, nor from any instruction in my education, was acquainted with any thing of Christ, but, according to the common prejudices of those of my own country, looked upon him as a mere man, and an impostor; and also revealed to me the end of that discovery, not only that I myself should receive and embrace him, but that I should publish him amongst the heathens (where he intimates the specialty of his separation and call); I, saith he, immediately advised with no mortal man living, (for that is signified by *flesh and blood*, Mt 16:17 1Co 15:50), but resolved with myself to address myself to that work and employment to which I had such a special call from God.

Galatians 1:17

Ver. 17. As Jerusalem was the place for the oracle of the law, under the Old Testament; so it also was for the gospel upon the first publication of it. There the disciples were; they returned thither after they had seen Christ ascend to heaven, Lu 24:52; from thence they were not to depart, but to *wait there for the promise of the Father*, Ac 1:4. There the Holy Ghost came down upon them, Ac 2:1-47 there they continued till the persecution scattered them; there was the college of the apostles. Paul saith, that, upon his conversion, he did not go up thither, nor till *three years after* (as he

tells us in the next verse); but he *went into Arabia*, amongst the heathens, and the most wild and barbarous heathens, for such were the Arabians. Luke, in the Acts, tells us nothing of this. From hence it was easy to conclude, that Paul had not his commission from the other apostles that were before him, for he saw none of them till he had been a preacher of the gospel to the wild Arabians three years. And then he *returned to Damascus*: the word is *υπεστρεψα*, which is by some observed to signify his being compelled to return, (as they judge), by some persecution raised amongst the heathens; but of this the Scripture saith nothing.

Galatians 1:18

Ver. 18. These *three years* were spent partly in Arabia, partly at Damascus, whither he returned; and he, being there, was not idle, but, as Luke informs us, *preached Christ in the synagogues, confounded the Jews, proving that this was the very Christ*, which made the Jews take counsel to kill him: here it was that he escaped them, by being *let down over the wall in a basket*, Ac 9:20,22-25. Then he *went to Jerusalem*, where his conversion, and call to preach the gospel, was not heard of, (possibly in regard of the remoteness of Arabia, where he had spent most of those three years; or in regard of the troubled state of the church at Jerusalem at this time), insomuch that the disciples were afraid to admit him to join with them, until Barnabas had given testimony concerning him, Ac 9:27. He tells us here that he stayed there but *fifteen days*; during which time Luke tells us, Ac 9:29, *he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians*.

Galatians 1:19

Ver. 19. The apostles were at this time scattered, either through the persecution, or for the fulfilling of the work of their apostleship; so as probably there were at this time no more of the apostles at Jerusalem, except Peter, and James the less, the son of Alphaeus, who is here called the brother of our Lord, as is generally thought, according to the Hebrew idiom, who were wont to call near kinsmen, brethren. Upon another journey which Paul made to Jerusalem, he saw others (as we shall hear in the next chapter); but that was several years after this his first journey

thither.

Galatians 1:20

Ver. 20. Whether those words, *before God*, make this sentence an oath, is not material to determine; they are either an oath, or a very serious asseveration. If the apostle designed to call God for a witness, to the correspondence of his words with the truth of the things he had spoken, they make up an assertory oath, which was lawful enough (though privately taken) in so serious a matter as this, where the apostle is vindicating his apostleship from some acts, of which probably he had no witnesses at hand to produce; but they may be understood (by the supplement of, I speak, or, I say this) only as a form of serious assertion, to confirm the truth of what he asserted. He minds them, that he was sensible of God's presence in all places, and particular taking notice of the things spoken; as being spoken before him, who knew that what he spake was truth.

Galatians 1:21

Ver. 21. After that I came from Jerusalem, I came into the country of Syria; probably not to Damascus, the chief city of Syria, (where he had so narrow an escape in a basket), but into the country parts of Syria; for Syria lay in the way between Judea and Cilicia. It appeareth by Ac 9:30, that Paul was designed for Tarsus, his native place; where we are also told, that the brethren conducted him to Caesarea, which stood upon the confines of Syria. It is probable that he stayed some time at Tarsus; for there Barnabas found him, Ac 11:25,26, and *brought him to Antioch*; so that Paul had but fifteen days at Jerusalem to converse with the apostles, and in that time he saw none of them, but Peter, and James the son of Alphaeus.

Galatians 1:22

Ver. 22. To be *in Christ*, signifieth:

1. Their being Christians indeed; they having received Christ by a true and

lively faith, and given themselves to the obedience of his precepts. In this sense the apostle saith: *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.*

2. Their being Christians in name, by baptism and outward profession. These churches are said to be in Christ in this latter sense.

We have a parallel text, 1Th 2:14. They do not judge improperly, who think that by Judea here is not meant the province, but the whole country of Judea; which comprehended not Judea only, but Samaria and Galilee. John Baptist and our Saviour (who both mostly preached in Galilee) had prepared their due matter for gospel churches. Peter, and John, and Philip, preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans, Ac 8:25,40. Of all these churches Paul speaks, telling us he was personally unknown unto them; so far he was from learning the Christian doctrine from the apostles or them.

Galatians 1:23

Ver. 23. Though those churches in the country of Judea had never seen Paul's person, yet they had heard of him:

1. That he had been a persecutor of those which professed the doctrine of the gospel, which he here calleth *the faith*, it being the object and the means of faith.
2. That there was such a change wrought in him, as that he was now become a preacher of that doctrine, for the profession of which he had formerly wasted and destroyed, the churches of Christ.

Galatians 1:24

Ver. 24. And they praised God on his behalf, for working so great a change in him.

Galatians 2:1

Chapter Summary

Ga 2:1,2 Paul showeth for what purpose after many years he went

to Jerusalem.

Ga 2:3-5 That Titus, who went with him, was not circumcised,

and that on purpose to assert the freedom of the

Gentile converts from the bondage of the law.

Ga 2:6-10 That no new knowledge was added to him in conference

with the three chief apostles, but that he received

from them a public acknowledgment of his Divine

mission to the Gentiles.

Ga 2:11-13 That he openly withstood Peter for dissimulation with

respect to Gentile communion.

Ga 2:14-20 Expostulating with him, why he, who believed that

justification came by the faith of Christ, acted as

though it came by the works of the law.

Ga 2:21 Which was, in effect, to frustrate the grace of God.

Ver. 1. *Fourteen years after;* either fourteen years after the three years before mentioned, and the fifteen days; or fourteen years after the conversion of Paul, or fourteen years after the death of Christ. This journey seeming to be that mentioned Ac 15:2, it seems rather to be understood of fourteen years after the death of Christ.

I went up again to Jerusalem: motions to Jerusalem are usually in Scripture called ascendings or goings up; either because of the mountains round about it, or in respect of the famousness of the place: see Ac 15:2 21:4. The occasion of this journey we have, Ac 15:1,2. It was to advise with the apostles and elders, about the necessity of circumcision; some that came from Judea having taught the disciples at Antioch, that except they

were circumcised they could not be saved.

With Barnabas, and took This with me also; Barnabas was chosen to go with Paul, Ac 15:2, and some others, whom Luke nameth not, but it is plain by this text Titus was one.

Galatians 2:2

Ver. 2. *And I went up by revelation;* *revelation* signifieth God's immediate declaration of his will to him, that he would have him take this journey; which is not at all contradicted by Luke, saying, Ac 15:2,3, that their journey was determined by the Christians at Antioch. God, to encourage Paul, had let him know it was his will he should go; and also put it into the Christians' hearts at Antioch, to choose him to the journey. His motions from one place to another were much by revelation, or immediate order and command from God, Ac 16:9 Ac 22:18 23:11.

And communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles; he saith, he communicated, or made a report or relation of, (in which sense the word is used, Ac 25:14), that doctrine of the gospel which he had preached amongst the Gentiles; he, doubtless, more particularly means, the abolition of circumcision, and no necessity of the observance of the law of Moses contained in ordinances.

But privately to them which were of reputation; but he saith that he did it *privately*, and to men of *reputation*; by which he meaneth the apostles, or some other Christians of greatest eminency.

Lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain; lest he should have prejudiced himself, as to the course of the gospel, which he metaphorically compareth to a race: see 1Co 9:26.

Objection. If any ask how this influenced Paul, so as to make him privately to communicate the doctrine which he had amongst the Gentiles preached publicly? It is easily answered:

1. That the consent of those who were apostles before him to the doctrine which he preached, was of great moment to persuade all Christians to

embrace it; and by this means he obviated the scandal of being singular in the doctrine which he preached.

2. Besides that Paul was now at Jerusalem, which was the chief place of the Jews' residence, to whom God indulged a greater liberty for the ceremonial usages, than to the churches of the Gentiles, who had not been educated in that religion. And had Paul openly there declared the liberty of Christians from circumcision, and the ceremonial usages, he had both enraged those who as yet continued in the Jewish religion, and possibly given no small offence to those who had been educated in that religion, though they were converted to the faith of the gospel, they not fully yet understanding the liberty of Christians from that yoke. By one or both of which ways, had Paul openly at Jerusalem published the doctrine which he had publicly preached in Damascus and Arabia, and other places of the Gentiles, his labours might have been rendered useless, and he might also have been less successful in his further course of preaching it.

Galatians 2:3

Ver. 3. The apostle brings this as an instance of the apostles at Jerusalem agreeing with him in his doctrine, as to the non-necessity of circumcision; for though Titus was with him, who was a native Gentile, being a Greek, and a minister of the gospel, (and possibly Paul carried him with him for an instance), yet the apostles at Jerusalem did not think fit to impose upon him circumcision; no, not upon a solemn debate of that question. If any shall object that Paul himself circumcised Timothy, who was a Greek, Ac 16:1,3; the answer is easy, the same text letting us know that his mother *was a Jewess*, and that he did it *because of the Jews in those quarters*. As to the Jews, it was matter of liberty at this time, they might or might not be circumcised. Now in matters of this nature, where men have a liberty, they ought to have regard to circumstances, and to do that which they, from a view of circumstances, judge will be most for the glory of God, the good of others, and give least offence, 1Co 10:28-31.

Galatians 2:4

Ver. 4. He gives the reason why circumcision was not urged upon Titus, viz. because there were some got into that meeting, where Paul debated these things with the apostles that were at Jerusalem, who, though they had embraced the Christian religion, (and upon that account were *brethren*), yet were soured with the Jewish leaven, and were very zealous for all Christians to observe the Jewish rites of circumcision, &c.; upon which account it is that he calleth them *false brethren*. These (he saith) *came in privily, to spy out that liberty* which all Christians had, and Paul had preached and used, as to these Jewish ceremonies; who, could they have obtained to have had Titus circumcised, they had had a great advantage to have defamed Paul, as teaching one thing to the Gentile churches, and practising the contrary when he came to Jerusalem to the apostles, and amongst the Jews. And this being a liberty which he and all Christians had, in and from Jesus Christ, he would not part with it, for they aimed at nothing but the bringing of Christians again under the *bondage* of the ceremonial law. Some may say: It being a thing wherein Christians had a liberty, why did not St. Paul yield to avoid their offence; becoming all things to all men to gain some?

Answer. In the use of our liberty, all circumstances are to be considered, as well as that of scandal and offence. The valuable opposite circumstance in this case, seems to be the validity and success of the apostle's ministry, the efficacy of which would have been much weakened, if his enemies had from hence gained an advantage to represent him, as doing one thing in one place and the quite contrary in another. Besides, though at this time the use or not use of the ceremonial rites, by the Jews, was a matter of liberty, by reason of God's indulgence to them for the prejudices of their education, yet whether they were at all so to the Gentile churches, may be doubted: see Ga 5:2,3. Further yet, these brethren urged the observation of these rites, as necessary to salvation, (as appears from Ac 15:1), for they were of the sect of the Pharisees, Ga 2:5. And to use them under that notion, was no matter of liberty.

Galatians 2:5

Ver. 5. To these Judaizing Christians the apostle did not think fit to yield one jot, not for the least time, nor in so much as one precedent; having a desire that these Gentile churches might not be perverted. Or, (as others

think), to which men *of reputation* we yielded not in the least. It is very probable, that Peter and James, upon their first arguing the case, to avoid the scandal and offence of the Jews, would have had Titus circumcised: St. Paul would not yield to it, that he might preserve the doctrine of the gospel, which he had planted amongst the Galatians, and other Gentiles, pure, and not encumber those churches with the Mosaical rites. But the most and best interpreters rather judge the persons here mentioned, to whom Paul would not yield, to be some Judaizing Christians, rather than the persons *of reputation*, mentioned Ga 2:2.

Galatians 2:6

Ver. 6. *But of those who seemed to be somewhat:* the word translated *seemed*, is the same with that in Ga 2:2, which we there translate *of reputation*. The apostle means the same persons that were of the greatest reputation, and so the following words, *to be somewhat*, do import, Ac 5:36 8:9. We must not understand the apostle, by this expression, to detract from the just reputation that the apostles, and these eminent Christians at Jerusalem, had; he only taketh notice here of them, as magnified by the false teachers of this church, to the lessening of himself; and as *those who seemed to be somewhat*, must be interpreted as relating to these men's estimation of them; that seemed to you to be somewhat, though I seem nothing to you.

Whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; whatsoever they were formerly, suppose (as probably some of these Galatians had said) that they saw Christ in the flesh, were immediately called by him, when I was a Pharisee, &c.

God accepteth to man's person; hath no regard to what a man hath been, but to what he is.

For they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me; when I came to confer and discourse with them, about the doctrine which I and they had taught, I learned no new doctrine from them, different from what I had before taught, neither did they reprove or correct me, for any thing which I had taught amiss; we were all of the same mind.

Galatians 2:7

Ver. 7. *But contrariwise, when they saw;* they were so far from contradicting any thing that I had preached, that when they understood from me, and Barnabas, (who Ac 15:12, declared in the council *what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them*), *that the gospel of the uncircumcision*, that the business of preaching the gospel to those who were no Jews, (for that is meant by *uncircumcision*; not simply those that were not circumcised, for some of the heathens were circumcised, yet all go in Scripture under the name of uncircumcised), *was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter*; as the preaching of the gospel to the Jews was committed to Peter, and not to him only, but to James and John. It must not be so understood, as if Paul might not preach to the Jews, or Peter might not preach to the Gentiles, (for the contrary is evident from Ac 9:15, as to Paul, and from Peter's preaching to Cornelius, Ac 10:1-48), but because God designed the Gentiles to be more especially the province for Paul to exercise his ministry in, Ac 26:17, (and accordingly he was specially sent out by the church, Ac 13:3), as Peter's chief work was among the Jews.

Galatians 2:8

Ver. 8. As Paul's call was equal to that of Peter both of them being Divine, so, saith the apostle, my ability and success was equal; as God *wrought effectually in* and by *Peter* in the discharge of his apostleship in the province intrusted to him, (which was preaching to the Jews), so he wrought effectually and mightily in me, or by me, in the province wherein I was employed, viz. carrying the gospel to the Gentiles. This efficacious working of God, both by Paul and Peter, was seen in the conversion of multitudes by their ministry, as well as in their miraculous operations, by which they confirmed the doctrine of the gospel which they preached.

Galatians 2:9

Ver. 9. James, (called, the less), the son of Alpheus, before called *the Lord's brother*, as is thought, because he was the son of the virgin Mary's sister; whose naming here in the first place spoileth the papists' argument

for Peter's primacy, because in some other places he is first named.

Cephas; that is, Peter, called here *Cephas* in the Syriac, possibly because he is named with others who had Syriac names; in most places he is by this apostle called Peter.

John, the apostle and evangelist, who is also known by the name of *the beloved disciple*.

Who seemed to be pillars; Paul, in saying they *seemed to be pillars*, doth not deny them to be so; being such as God made use of in the first founding and building of the gospel church; as also to bear it up, (in the same sense that the church is called *the pillar and ground of truth*), and as by them the gospel was carried out into the world; but he useth the word *seemed*, because the false teachers had magnified their ministry, but disparaged his. When these, he saith, *perceived the grace that was given to me*; by which, he either understands his office of apostleship or the crown and seal of his office in the blessing which God had given to his labours amongst the Gentiles.

They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; they looked upon him and Barnabas as much pillars as themselves; and in token of it gave them their right hands, (a token of admitting into fellowship, 2Ki 10:15 Jer 1:15), and agreed *that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision*; that it should be their special work to go and preach to the Gentiles, as they (viz. James, and John, and Peter) would make it their special work to preach the gospel to the Jews.

Galatians 2:10

Ver. 10. These pillars and apostles, which have among you the greatest reputation, added no new doctrine to us, gave us nothing new in charge; they only desired us that we would be careful, wheresoever we went, to make collection for the poor Christians in Judea, who either by selling all they had to maintain the gospel in its first plantation, or by the sharp persecution which had wasted them, or by reason of the famine, were very low; nor was this any new thing, I had before done it, and was very forward to do it again, had they said nothing to us about it.

Galatians 2:11

Ver. 11. Of this motion of Peter's to Antioch the Scripture saying nothing, hath left interpreters at liberty to guess variously as to the time; some judging it was before, some after, the council held at Jerusalem, of which we read, Ac 15:1-41. Those seem to judge best, who think it was after; for it was at Antioch, while Barnabas was with Paul; now Paul and Barnabas came from Jerusalem to Antioch, to bring thither the decrees of that council; and at Antioch Barnabas parted from Paul; after which we never read of them as being together. While Paul and Barnabas were together at Antioch, Peter came thither; where, Paul saith, he was so far from taking instructions from him, that he *withstood him to the face*. Not by any acts of violence, (though the word often expresseth such acts), but by words reproving and blaming him; for, (saith he) he deserved it, *he was to be blamed*. Though the word signifies, he was condemned, which makes some to interpret it, as if Peter had met with some reprehension for his fact before Paul blamed him, yet there is no ground for it; for though the Greek participle be in the preterperfect tense, yet it is a Hebraism, and put for a noun verbal, which in Latin is sometimes expressed by the future, according to which we translate it; see 1Co 1:18 2Co 2:15 2Pe 2:4 so our interpreters have truly translated it according to the sense of the text.

Galatians 2:12

Ver. 12. It should seem that Peter had been at Antioch some time; while he was there, there came down certain Jews from James, who was at Jerusalem: before they came Peter had communion with those Christians at Antioch, which were by birth Gentiles, and at meals eat as they eat, making no difference of meats, as the Jews did in obedience to the ceremonial law; but as soon as these zealots for the Jewish rites (though Christians) were come, Peter withdrew from the communion of the Gentile Christians, and was the head of a separate party; and all through fear of the Jews, lest they should, at their return to Jerusalem, make some report of him to his disadvantage, and expose him to the anger of the Jews.

Galatians 2:13

Ver. 13. The fact was the worse, because those Christians which were of the church of Antioch, having been native Jews, followed his example, and made a separate party with him. Nay, *Barnabas*, my fellow labourer, who was joined with me in bringing the decrees of the council in the case, *was carried away with their dissimulation*. So dangerous and exemplary are the warpings and miscarriages of those that are eminent teachers.

Galatians 2:14

Ver. 14. *Uprightly*, here, is opposed to halting. Peter halted between two opinions, (as Elijah sometime told the Israelites), when he was with the Gentiles alone, he did as they did, using the liberty of the gospel; but when the Jews came from Jerusalem, he left the Gentile church, and joined with the Jews; this was not according to that plainness and sincerity which the gospel required; he did not (according to the precept he held, Heb 12:13) *make straight paths to his feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way*. Paul not hearing this from the report of others, but being an eye-witness to it, doth not defer the reproof, lest the scandal should grow: nor doth he reprove him privately, because the offence was public, and such a plaster would not have fitted the sore; but he speaketh *unto Peter before them all*, rebuking him openly, because he sinned openly; and by this action had not offended a private person, but the church in the place where he was, who were all eyewitnesses of his halting and prevarication, 1Ti 5:20.

If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews; if thou, who art a Jew, not by religion only, but by birth and education, hast formerly lived, eat, and drank, and had communion with the Gentiles, in the omission of the observance of circumcision, and other Jewish rites, generally observed by those of their synagogues; (as Peter had done before the Jews came from from Jerusalem to Antioch); why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? Why dost thou, by thy example, compel the members of a Gentile church to observe the Jewish rites? For compelling here doth not signify any act of violence, (Peter used none such), but the example of leaders in the church, who are persons of reputation and authority, is a kind of compulsion to those that are inferiors,

and who have a great veneration for such leaders. So the word here used, αναγκαζεις, is used in 2Co 12:2, as also to express the force of exhortations and arguments. Of such a compulsion the word is used, Lu 14:23. Peter, by his example, and possibly by some words and arguments he used, potently moved those proselyted Jews, who were in communion with the churches of Galatia, to observe the Jewish rites: so that by this fact he did not only contradict himself, who by his former walking with the Gentile church had practically asserted the gospel liberty; but he also scandalized those Christians in these churches who stood fast in the liberty which Christ had purchased for them, and Paul had taught them; and also drew others away from the truth they had owned and practised. This was the cause of Paul's so open and public reproof of him.

Galatians 2:15

Ver. 15. *Jews by nature;* born Jews, not only proselyted to the Jewish religion, (and so under an obligation to the observation of the Jewish law), but of the seed of Abraham, and so under the covenant made with him and his seed, as he was the father of the Jewish nation.

Not sinners of the Gentiles: the Gentiles were ordinarily called by the Jews *sinners;* though it appeareth that there were divers of them worshippers of the true God, and came up to Jerusalem to worship; for whose sake there was a peculiar court allotted in the temple, called: *The court of the Gentiles.* Yet not being under the obligation of the Jewish law, they went under the denomination of sinners by the Jews; and the most of the Gentiles were really sinners, and that eminently, (for such the word here used ordinarily signifieth), as the apostle describeth their manners, Ro 1:29-31.

Galatians 2:16

Ver. 16. *Knowing that a man is not justified;* we knowing that a man is not absolved from the guilt of sin, and declared righteous in the sight of God; *by the works of the law;* by any kind of works done in obedience to the law of Moses, whether ceremonial or moral. For it is manifest that although this question about justification by works began about

circumcision and works done in obedience to the ceremonial law, yet the determination of it extended further. For the apostle, by *the law*, understands that law by which *is the knowledge of sin*, Ro 3:20. Now the knowledge of sin, is neither only nor chiefly by the ceremonial law; nor did ever any of those, against whom the apostle argueth, think, that men could be justified by obedience only to the law contained in ordinances; nor could boasting be excluded, (which the apostle showeth, Ro 3:27, was God's design in fixing the way of a sinner's justification), if men might be justified by works done in obedience to the moral law; nor was it the ceremonial law only, the violation of which *worketh wrath*, Ro 4:15, or disobedience to which brought men *under the curse*, Ga 3:10.

But by the faith of Jesus Christ; but we are justified by believing in Christ: not by faith as it is a work of ours, for that was denied before; nor by faith as a principal efficient cause, for in that sense it is God that justifieth; nor as a meritorious cause, for so we are justified by the blood of Christ; but by faith as an instrument apprehending and applying Christ and his righteousness.

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; we (saith the apostle) that are Jews, knowing this, have not only assented to the truth of the gospel proposition, but accepted of this way of salvation, and received the Lord Jesus; that we so doing, not trusting to the law, or any obedience of ours to it, might be absolved from the guilt of sin, and declared righteous before God.

For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified; for no mortal man shall ever be absolved or declared righteous upon his own personal obedience to the law of God; being in the best imperfect, and much short of what the law requireth.

Galatians 2:17

Ver. 17. Some interpreters think, that the apostle here begins his discourse to the Galatians upon the main argument of his Epistle, viz. justification by faith in Christ; though others think it began, Ga 2:15. *If, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners;* if (saith the apostle) you make us grievous offenders in our expectation of being justified by Christ, and not by the

works of the law, you make *Christ the minister of sin*, who hath taught us this. But others think that the apostle here obviateth a common objection which was then made, (as it is also in our age), against the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; viz. That it opens a door of liberty to the flesh, and so makes Christ a *minister of sin*, as if he relaxed men's obligation to the law of God; which is the same objection which the apostle answered in his Epistle to the Romans, Ro 6:1-23. If while, we plead for justification by Christ, we live in a course of notorious disobedience to the law of God, then Christ must be to us a minister of sin, and come into the world to purchase for us a possibility of salvation, though we live in never so much notorious disobedience to the law of God. As if there were no obligation upon men to keep the law, unless by their obedience to it they might obtain pardon of sin and justification. This calumny the apostle disavows, first, by a general aversation: *God forbid!*

Galatians 2:18

Ver. 18. By *the things which he destroyed*, some understand the state of sin; and from hence conclude the mutability of a state of justification: but there is no need of that, it may as well be understood of a constant course and voluntary acts of sin. If I teach a doctrine that shall encourage a sinful life, or if I should live in a course of sin, these are *the things which I*, as a minister of Christ, have in my preaching and doctrine *destroyed*, teaching you, that not only the guilt of your sins was removed upon your justification by Christ, but the dominion of sin also destroyed: and they are things which justification destroyeth; God never saying to any soul: *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, without adding, *sin no more*. So as, if a justified state would admit of a going on in a settled course of sin, it would build what it destroyed.

I make myself a transgressor; now should I, or any one, do any such thing, we should thereby make ourselves great transgressors. So as the apostle's argument here seemeth to be the same with that, Ro 6:2: *How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* He strives at the same thing here, viz. to prove that the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, could not give a liberty to any to sin, because it shows persons made partakers of that grace, that they are freed, not only from the guilt, but also from the power and dominion of sin, so as that none can from it receive any comfort as to the former, nor find the latter wrought in them.

Galatians 2:19

Ver. 19. *Through the law* of Christ, as some say; or rather, through the law of Moses, of which he had been before speaking: that is, say some, through the death of the law; the law itself being dead, as a covenant of works, Ro 7:6. Or rather, by means of the law, giving me a knowledge of sin, and condemning me for sin.

Am dead to the law, as to any expectation of being justified by obedience to it.

That I might live unto God; not that I might live in disobedience to it, as it is a rule of life, but that I might live more holily unto God: so as my being dead to the law, as a covenant of works, or as to any expectation of being justified from my obedience to it, gives me no liberty to sin at all; for this is the end why God hath freed me from the bondage and rigour of the law, that I might live unto him, and serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness.

Galatians 2:20

Ver. 20. This Epistle is much of the same nature with that to the Romans, and the substance of what the apostle saith in the latter part of this chapter, agreeth much with Ro 6:1-23; where we find an expression much like to this, Ga 2:6: *Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

I am (saith the apostle) *crucified with Christ;* not only by justification made partaker of the benefits coming by a Christ crucified, but also as having communion with the death of Christ, in the mortification of my lusts. A figure of which (as he informs us, Ro 6:4) we have in baptism, *buried with him by baptism into death.*

Nevertheless I live; yet (saith he) I live a holy, spiritual life; though dead to the law, and though crucified with Christ.

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; but I cannot say so properly that it is I, for my motions are not according to my natural propensions and

inclinations; *but Christ*, by his Spirit, *liveth in me*, having renewed and changed me, made me a new creature, and begot new motions and inclinations in me. And though I *live in the flesh*, yet *I live by the faith of the Son of God*; all my natural, moral, and civil actions, being principled in faith, and done according to the guidance of the rule of faith in Jesus Christ.

Who loved me, and gave himself for me; of whom I am persuaded that he loved me, and from that love gave himself to die upon the cross for me.

Galatians 2:21

Ver. 21. *I do not frustrate the grace of God*; I do not despise, reject, make void, (for by all these words the word here used is translated, Mr 7:9 Joh 12:48 Joh 3:15 Heb 10:28), the free love of God, in giving his Son to die for our sins: from whence is easily gathered, that those who live a loose life, and take a liberty to sin, from their justification, or from the free grace of God in Christ, they do contemn and despise the grace of God: or rather, (if we refer it to the following words), those who assert justification by the works of the law, they do reject and despise the free grace of God in the gospel, and (as much as in them lies) make it vain and frustrate.

For if righteousness come by the law; for if it be possible, that a man by works done in obedience to the law should arrive at a righteousness, in which he may stand before God, *then is Christ dead in vain*; then Christ died to no purpose, or without any just cause: the reason of this must be, because it was the main and principal end of Christ's death, to procure or purchase a righteousness wherein sinners might stand before God, *to bring in an everlasting righteousness*, Da 9:24. If the most proper effect of the death of Christ be taken away, then his death is made causeless, and to no purpose. Thus the apostle concludeth his thesis, laid down Ga 2:16: That none shall be *justified by the works of the law*, from two absurdities that would follow upon the contrary, viz. justification by the works of the law, the rejecting of the grace of God, and the frustration, or making void, of the death of Christ.

Galatians 3:1

Chapter Summary

Ga 3:1-5 Paul asketh what had moved the Galatians to depend on the law, having already received the Spirit through faith.

Ga 3:6-9 As Abraham was justified by faith, so they who are of

faith inherit his blessing.

Ga 3:10-12 The law brought men under a curse, and could not justify.

Ga 3:13,14 Christ hath freed us from the curse, and laid open the

blessing to all believers.

Ga 3:15-18 Supposing that the law justified, God's covenant with

Abraham would be void.

Ga 3:19-22 But the law was only a temporary provision against sin till

Christ's coming, and in no wise contrary to God's promises.

Ga 3:23,24 Serving as a schoolmaster to prepare men for Christ.

Ga 3:25-29 But faith being come the law is at an end, and all

believers are, without distinction, become children of

God, and heirs of the promise.

Ver. 1. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* The apostle beginneth the further pursuit of the argument he was upon, with a smart reprehension of them, as men of no understanding, and bewitched. The word translated *bewitched*, signifies vitiating the eyes, or spoiling the sight, so as that men cannot discern an obvious object in a due position. The meaning is: Who hath seduced you, who hath so corrupted your understanding that your actions are as unaccountable as the effects of witchcraft?

That ye should not obey the truth: the word translated obey, signifies also to believe: in general it signifies to be persuaded; which may refer either to

an assent to the truth, or obedience to the precepts of the gospel.

Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you; whenas Christ hath been plainly preached before you, and his death, with the blessed end and effects of it, hath been so made known amongst you, as if you had seen him crucified. Or else Christ may be said to be crucified amongst them, because it was in their time, so as they could not but hear of it, and there was no more reason for them to doubt of the truth of the thing, than if he had been crucified in their country.

Galatians 3:2

Ver. 2. *By the Spirit* here is understood the gifts of the Spirit, which were either such as were common to all believers, (such as faith, love, &c.), or else such as were peculiar to some, and those not all believers; such were those abilities for miraculous operations given to some. Some understand this text of the former, some of the latter: it is best to take in both; all the manifestations of the Spirit then given out, either for the sanctification and eternal salvation of those to whom they were given, or for the confirmation of the truth of the gospel. Did you receive the Spirit *by the works of the law*? That he knew they could not say they did; for they were heathens, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, so as they could pretend to no works of the law. Did you receive this Holy Spirit upon *hearing* the gospel (which is the doctrine *of faith*) preached to you? Men should take heed of vilifying that ministry, or that doctrine, which God hath blessed to the change of their own hearts, or the hearts of others. We also may observe from hence, that the hearing the gospel faithfully preached is a blessed means by which men's hearts are changed, and they receive the Holy Spirit; not enabling them (as it did some, and but some, in the beginning of the gospel) to work signs and wonders, but enabling them to the operations of a spiritual life. The strength of the apostle's argument is this: You have the greatest reason to own that doctrine as the truth, which God hath blessed to your souls to produce spiritual effects there.

Galatians 3:3

Ver. 3. The doctrine of their false teachers was, that to faith in Christ, an

obedience also to the law of Moses was necessary to justification; they did not deny Christ, or the doctrine of the gospel, only they pleaded for the works of the law as necessary to be superadded. The apostle calls this first owning of Christ, and embracing the doctrine of faith, a beginning *in the Spirit*; their adding the necessity of obedience to the law of Moses, a being *made perfect in the flesh*; and argueth the unreasonableness of it, that their justification should be begun by a more noble, and made perfect by a more ignoble cause. He calls the doctrine of the gospel, *Spirit*, because (as he said in the former verse) they had received the Holy Spirit *by the hearing of faith*; that is, by hearing and receiving the gospel. The works of the law he calls *flesh*, because the ordinances of the law were (as the apostle calls them, Heb 9:10) *carnal ordinances, imposed on the Jews till the time of reformation*. He elsewhere calls them *the rudiments of the world*, Col 2:8,20; and in this Epistle, Ga 4:9, he calls them *beggarly elements*. For though the ordinances of the law were in their season spiritual, they being commanded by God; yet they being but temporary constitutions, never intended by God to continue longer than the coming of Christ, and the law being but a schoolmaster to lead to Christ; Christ being now come, and having died, and rose again from the dead, they became useless. Besides that God never intended them as other than *rudiments* and first *elements*, the end of which was Christ; and the observance of which, without faith in Christ, was weak and impotent, as to the noble end of justification. It spake great weakness, therefore, in the Galatians, to begin with what was more perfect, (the embracing of the gospel, and Christ there exhibited for the justification of sinners), and to end in what was more imperfect, thinking by that to be made perfect; or else the apostle here chargeth them with a defection from Christ, as Ga 4:9-11, and Ga 5:4: and so calleth them foolish, for beginning in the Spirit, (the Holy Spirit inwardly working in them the change of their hearts, and regenerating them), and then apostatizing from their profession to a carnal life. But I had rather interpret *Spirit* in this text, of the doctrine of the gospel, dictated by the Spirit; and with the receiving of which the Holy Spirit was given. And so their folly is argued from their thinking to be made perfect by the beggarly elements and worldly rudiments of the law, whenas they had first begun their profession of Christianity with embracing the more perfect doctrine of the gospel.

Galatians 3:4

Ver. 4. There is no doubt but these churches in the regions of Galatia had their share in the sufferings of Christians by the Jews for their adherence to and profession of the doctrine of the gospel, which they might either wholly, or in a great measure, have avoided, would they have complied with the Jews in the observance of those legal rites. Therefore, (saith the apostle), to what purpose have you suffered so much for the owning of the Christian religion, if you now bring yourselves under the bondage of circumcision, and other legal observances?

If it be yet in vain; by which words he either correcteth himself, as if he had said: But I hope better things of you, that I shall find that you did not suffer them in vain; or else he hinteth that their suffering so much would not be in vain, because, by their apostacy from the true faith for which they suffered, they would in effect deny it, as if it had been false, and their former suffering would rise up in judgment against them.

Galatians 3:5

Ver. 5. He had asked them, Ga 3:2, whether they had received the Spirit by the works of the law, or by hearing the gospel? Some think what he saith here to be a continuation of the same argument, but it rather seems a new one: there he spake of their receiving the Spirit, here he speaks of the ministration of the Spirit. Some understand it of God, who gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, and who was the Author of those miraculous operations wrought by the Spirit. I should rather understand it of the ministers of the gospel, to whom God hath committed the ministration of the Spirit; and to some of whom God, in the primitive times, gave a power to work miracles.

Doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Doth God concur with our ministry upon our preaching the law, or upon our preaching the gospel? So that though there be a great cognation between the apostle's arguing, Ga 3:2, and his arguing in this verse, yet there is some difference; the apostle there arguing from the success of preaching the gospel, here from the ministration itself.

Galatians 3:6

Ver. 6. As Abraham was justified, so must all the children of Abraham; but *Abraham believed God*, (that is, agreed to the truth of all those promises which God gave him, and trusted in God for the fulfilling of them; for both those acts of the mind are included in believing God), and so was justified alone.

And it was accounted to him for righteousness: his faith itself was not imputed to him; those that put this sense upon the words, either forget that faith itself is a work, or that the apostle here is arguing for justification by faith in opposition to justification by works, and cannot be imagined to have gone about to prove that justification is not by works, by proving that it is by a work. The meaning is no more than that he was upon it accounted righteous; not that God so honoured the work of faith, but that he so rewarded it, as being the condition annexed to the promise of justification. His faith was not his righteousness, but God so rewarded his exercise of faith, as that open it he reckoned (or imputed) that to him which was his righteousness, viz. the righteousness of him in whom he believed as revealed unto him in the promise.

Galatians 3:7

Ver. 7. *They which are of faith;* those who are believers, and receive Jesus Christ, as exhibited and tendered to them in the gospel, trusting not to any righteousness of their own, arising from their obedience to the works of the law; *they are the children of Abraham*, considered as the father of the faithful, that is, they are justified as Abraham was justified; who was justified, not by his circumcision, but upon his believing in Christ exhibited to him in the promise; not by working, but by imputation. This argument came very close to the Jews, whose great glorying was in having Abraham to their father; for it is in effect a saying, that they were no true children of Abraham, none of that seed to whom the promise was made, if they expected justification from the works of the law, which Abraham never had nor expected.

Galatians 3:8

Ver. 8. The Holy Ghost in Scripture (by whose inspiration the Scripture was written) foreseeing, or knowing, the counsels and designs of God, that the heathen (when the fulness of times as to them should come) should be justified through faith in Christ, preached the same doctrine before unto Abraham; so as it is no new doctrine; the gospel which we now preach unto you, was long since revealed unto Abraham, who saw Christ's day, and rejoiced, Joh 8:56. To prove which, he quoteth the promise, Ge 12:3, where God tells Abraham, that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed; which quotation of it by the apostle in this place informeth us, that it is to be understood of those spiritual blessings which are in Christ Jesus. For all the nations of the earth were no otherwise blessed in Abraham, than as Christ (who is called *the desire of all nations*, and he in whom *the Gentiles* should *trust*, and *a light to enlighten the Gentiles*) descended from Abraham.

Galatians 3:9

Ver. 9. Those that believe in Jesus Christ with such a faith as the gospel doth require, they, and they alone, are blessed with spiritual blessings, justified from the guilt of sin, *with Abraham*; that is, in the same manner that Abraham, the father of the faithful, and who himself was a believer, was justified; which was not (as was before said) by his circumcision, or by any works that he did, but by imputation upon his believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, exhibited and held forth in the promise made to him.

Galatians 3:10

Ver. 10. The argument is this: Those that are under a curse cannot be under the blessing of justification: but those that are under the law are under the curse. This he proves out of the law, De 27:26, where those are pronounced *cursed, who continue not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*. To be under the law, is, under the covenant of works, or under the expectation of life and salvation only from obedience to the works of the law. These (he saith) *are under the curse*: the reason of which the apostle gives us, Ro 8:3, because it is made *weak through the flesh*.

Could man perfectly fulfil the law, he might expect life from it, and salvation from his obedience to it; but the law curseth him that continueth not in all that is written in it: *If a man keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, Jas 2:10, and as liable to the wrath of God as if he had broken it in many things. Hence it necessarily followeth, if no man can keep the law of God perfectly, that all under the law must be under the curse, and consequently cannot be blessed in faithful Abraham.

Galatians 3:11

Ver. 11. The apostle, by another argument, proveth that sinners are not justified by works. He grants, they may be justified by their good and blameless living before men, so as that they may have nothing to say against them, but he says they cannot, by such works, be *justified in the sight of God*. His argument is from the opposition that is between faith and works. He proveth, from Hab 2:4, that we are justified by faith; where the prophet saith, that *the just* (or righteous man) *shall live by faith*; fetch his life from faith, live his spiritual life by faith, and obtain eternal life by faith, the life of his righteousness shall be by faith.

Galatians 3:12

Ver. 12. The law saith nothing of faith in the Mediator; though faith in God be commanded in the first precept, yet faith in Christ is not commanded by the law as that by which the soul shall live. For that which the law saith is: *Do this and live: The man that doeth* the things contained in the law, *shall live in them*; life, in the law, is promised to those who do the things which it requireth; not to them who, have failed in their performances, yet accept of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer which God hath sent, and believe in him who justifieth the ungodly. For that by the life promised to the observation of the law, not a temporal life only is to be understood, but eternal life also, is plain from our Saviour's application of it to the young man, inquiring about the way to eternal life, Mt 19:16,17 Lu 10:28.

Galatians 3:13

Ver. 13. If the law curseth all those who continue not in all things contained in the law, (as the apostle had said, Ga 3:10, and proved from De 27:26), it might be objected: How will believers then escape more than others; for none of them continue in all that is written in the law? The apostle here obviateth this objection, by telling the Galatians, that, as to believers, Christ had *redeemed* them from this curse. The word generally signifies delivering; here it signifies a deliverance by a price paid. This was *by being himself made a curse for us*, not only execrable to men, but bearing the wrath and indignation of God due for sin: *for so it was written, De 21:23: He that is hanged is accursed of God;* that is, hath borne the wrath or curse of God due to him for his sin. The apostle applying this to Christ, teacheth us, that Christ also, hanging upon the cross, bare the curse of God due to the sins of believers; in whose stead, as well as for whose good and benefit, he died. And indeed he could no other way redeem believers from the curse of the law, but by being made himself a curse for them. Some think, that under the law he who was hanged was made a curse, not only politically, but typically, as signifying that curse which Christ should he made on the behalf of the elect.

Galatians 3:14

Ver. 14. The apostle, by *the blessing of Abraham*, here, understands those spiritual blessings of justification, reconciliation, and adoption, which came to Abraham upon his believing, and the imputation of righteousness thereupon unto him. *Christ* (he saith) *was made a curse for us*, that all those blessings through him *might come on the Gentiles;* and so all the nations of the earth might be blessed in him. Particularly, that the Gentiles *might receive the promise of the Spirit;* which promise is not to be interpreted so narrowly, as only to signify its miraculous gifts, but to be extended to all those gifts and habits of grace which are the effects of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, whether sanctifying or sealing them; which Holy Spirit is received upon persons' believing: see Ga 4:6 Ro 8:13.

Galatians 3:15

Ver. 15. *Though it be but a man's covenant:* the word here translated *covenant*, διαθηκη, is ordinarily translated *testament*; see Mt 26:28. It signifies in the general, an ordering or disposing of things; more specially, a testament; which is the disposition of the testator's goods after his death. Now, (saith the apostle), I here argue according to the ordinary methods and doings of men, who have such a respect for a man's testament, as that, *if it be once confirmed*, according to the methods of law and civil sanctions of men, or rather by the death of the testator (for a testament is of no force while the testator liveth, Heb 9:17); nor will men alter the will or last testament of a deceased person, though it be not as yet confirmed according to the methods of human laws.

No man disannulleth, or addeth thereto; no man, that is, no just man, will go about to disannul it, or add to it, nor will any just government endure any such violation of it. Hence the apostle argueth both the certainty and unalterableness for the covenant of grace with Abraham, and until the death of Christ it was but a covenant, or a testament not fully confirmed, but yet unalterable, because the covenant of that God who cannot lie, nor repent; but by the death of Christ it became a testament, and a testament ratified and confirmed by the death of the person that was the testator; therefore never to be disannulled, never capable of any additions. Those words, *or addeth thereto*, are fitly added, because these false teachers, though they might pretend not to disannul God's covenant, holding still justification by Christ; yet they added thereto, making circumcision, and other legal observances, necessary to justification; whereas by God's covenant, or testament, confirmed now by the death of Christ, faith in Christ only was necessary.

Galatians 3:16

Ver. 16. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made;* the promises, Ge 12:3 22:18; in the one of which places it is said: *In thee;* in the other: *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* He saith, *promises*, either because of the repetition of the same promises, or taking in also other promises.

He saith not: And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ: some may object against the apostle's conclusion, that the

promise respected only *one*, and that was Christ; because God said not *seeds, as of many, but seed*; whereas the term *seed* is a noun of multitude, and signifieth more than one; besides that the Hebrew word, which is used Ge 22:18, admitteth not the plural number. But it is answered, that though the word translated *seed* admitteth not the plural number, yet had God intended more than one, he could have expressed it by words signifying children, or generations, &c.

Secondly, that the term *seed*, though a noun of multitude, yet is often applied to a single person; as Ge 3:15, where it also signifieth Christ; *Seth* is called *another seed*, Ge 4:25; and so in many other places. Some think that by *seed* he meaneth believers, and so interpret it of Christ mystical; and that the scope of the apostle in this place is to prove, that both the Jews and Gentiles were to be justified the same way; because they were justified in force and by virtue of the promise, which was not made to many, but to one church, which was to consist both of Jews and Gentiles, for (according to the prophecy of Caiaphas, Joh 11:52) Christ died, that he might *gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad*. The promises made to Abraham, were but the exhibition of the eternal covenant of grace, made between the Father and his Son Christ Jesus (who was in it both the Mediator and Surety); which covenant was promulgated, as to Adam and Noah, so to Abraham, in these words: *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be called*, that is, in Christ. From whence the apostle proveth, that there is no justification by the works of the law, but in and by Christ, and the exercise of faith in him.

Galatians 3:17

Ver. 17. *The covenant, that was before confirmed of God in Christ:* the word translated *covenant*, is the same as before; ordinarily signifying one's disposal of things in his last will and testament. Which name is given to the covenant of grace, with respect to the death of Christ; for though Christ as yet had not died, yet he was, by virtue of the covenant of redemption, and in God's counsels: *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Re 13:8. This (he saith) was *in Christ*, (as Abraham's promised seed), *confirmed of God* to Abraham, by God's *oath*, Heb 6:17,18; by frequent repetitions of it; by such solemn rites as covenants use to be confirmed by, Ge 15:17,18; by the seals of circumcision, Ge

17:11 Ro 4:11; by a long prescription, &c.; though it received indeed its final and ultimate consummation by the death of Christ, yet it was before many ways confirmed.

*The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul: the law was given four hundred and thirty years after the giving this promise to Abraham: though, Ge 15:13, the round number of four hundred years only be mentioned, which are to be counted from the birth of Isaac; yet, Ex 12:40, they are reckoned (as here) four hundred and thirty years, from Abraham's going out of Canaan, Ge 12:4; from whence to the birth of Isaac were twenty-five years, Ge 21:5, compared with Ge 12:4; from the birth of Isaac till Jacob was born, sixty years, Ge 25:26; from thence till Jacob went down into Egypt, one hundred and thirty years, Ge 47:9, where they abode two hundred and fifteen years. Hence the apostle concludes, that it was impossible that the law, which was not given till four hundred and thirty years after the confirmation of the promise, *should make the promise confirmed of no effect.**

Galatians 3:18

Ver. 18. *If the inheritance of the heavenly Canaan, typified by the earthly Canaan, the promise of which was made to Abraham, be to be obtained by the fulfilling of the law, and yielding obedience to it, then it is no more of the promise.* It is much the same with what the apostle said before, Ro 4:14; and with what he had said, Ro 11:6: *If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.* He shows, that there is an opposition between *grace* and *work*, the *law* and the *promise*; that which is of grace, and of the promise, is of free love; that which is of works, and the law, is wages, and a reward of debt.

But (saith the apostle) *God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise; he of his free love engaging himself thereunto.*

Galatians 3:19

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then serveth the law?* Some might say: To what

purpose was the law given? As if there could be no use of it unless it were available to justification.

It was added because of transgressions; it was (saith the apostle) given after the promise, not to supply something wanting as to justification, to prescribe some works that must be added; but either to restrain sin, 1Ti 1:9, or to show and discover sin, to make men see that they stood in need of Christ: see Ro 7:13.

Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made: till Christ the promised Seed should come, who *is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Ro 10:4; upon whose coming the law contained in ordinances ceased. That Christ is here to be understood by *the seed*, is plain by the addition, *to whom the promise was made*. Some here understand by *the seed*, Christ and the church, (which both make up Christ mystical), and interpret this text by Eph 2:14, till the Jews and Gentiles should be both made one. This law (he saith) *was ordained by angels*. Luke, Ac 7:38, speaks of the law as published by one angel: the apostle, Heb 2:2, calls it, *the word spoken by angels*. We read of no angels, Ex 19:20, nor of any of the saints; yet, De 33:2: Moses saith God *came from Sinai, with ten thousand saints*. The law was given either by the ministry of an angel, or by God attended with angels.

In the hand of a mediator; that is, (say some), under the power of Christ the Mediator; but by *the mediator* is rather to be understood Moses, which agreeth with De 5:5, where Moses telleth the Jews, that he *stood between the Lord and them at that time, to show them the word of the Lord*; nor is Christ any where called the Mediator of the old, but of the new testament, Heb 8:6 Heb 12:24.

Galatians 3:20

Ver. 20. This is a text acknowledged by all interpreters to be very obscure; not so much as considered in itself, (for all know, that a mediator speaks one that goes in the middle between two persons that are at odds, so cannot be of one), as in regard of the connection of it with what went before; where he had told us, that the law was given *in the hand of a mediator*. There are various senses given of this verse, and the variety much ariseth

from men's different understanding of the mediator in whose hand the law was given. To me the apostle seems to magnify the promise above the law, in that the promise was given to Abraham immediately by God, (who is one in essence), but the law was given not immediately by God, but by Moses as mediator, who in that action was a type of Christ. And God thereby showed, that the law would bring no man to life and salvation without the one and only Mediator Christ Jesus. Christ, indeed, is the Mediator of the new testament, he mediated for it, he mediateth in it; but it was men's transgression of the law that brought them in need of a Mediator, sin being the only thing that separateth between God and man.

God is one; and there had been no need of mediating between him and man, but for the law which man had transgressed. Those that by *the mediator*, Ga 3:19, understand Christ, make this the sense: That as a mediator supposeth two parties at odds, so Christ's being Mediator speaks him to have respect to Jews and Gentiles. But this interpretation seems to make Christ the Mediator between Jews and Gentiles, whom (the apostle saith) he *made both one*, breaking down the partition-wall, Eph 2:14; but we do not find the name of Mediator upon this account any where given unto Christ. Many other senses are given, but the first mentioned seemeth the most probable, viz. that God made use of no mediator in giving the promise, but only in giving the law, which evidenced that justification was not to be by it; nor had there been need of a true Mediator under the gospel, but for the law, men's transgression of which brought in a need of a Mediator; which proved that justification could not be by the law.

Galatians 3:21

Ver. 21. *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid:* though it be thus, yet there is no such opposition between the law and the promises, as that either of them make the other useless. Far be it from me (saith the apostle) to assert any such thing! They are not contrary to one another but subservient to one another.

For if there had been a law given which could have given life; for if there had been a law which could, by our perfect performance of it, have given us a righteousness, wherein we might have stood righteous before God, then righteousness should have been by the law; then men might have

hoped to have been justified and accepted of God by me for such obedience; then indeed the law had been against the promises, they holding forth another righteousness, viz. the righteousness of God from faith to faith.

Galatians 3:22

Ver. 22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin:* it pleased God to give a law, which, if Adam had continued in his estate of innocence, might have given life; but considering man in his lapsed state, that now is not possible: Ro 2:10: *There is none righteous, no not one:* and Eph 2:3: *We are all children of wrath.*

That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe; that the promises of life and salvation might be given to those who, according to the new covenant of the gospel, should receive and accept of the Mediator, and the terms of salvation which God offers to us in the gospel; where these promises are exhibited upon condition of believing. Though, upon our first reflection upon it, it may seem strange to us, that God, having in his eternal counsels fixed the salvation of man upon a covenant of grace, and his believing in Jesus Christ, should in time first propound a covenant of works: Do this, and live; yet, upon second thoughts, this will appear necessary; for till man was a transgressor by breaking the law, and violating the first covenant, there was no room for a Mediator, no cause for men's applying themselves to a Mediator. God therefore first gave out the covenant of works, and suffered man to break it; and then he revealed the Mediator to lapsed man; that so they who should believe in him might obtain the promise of life, to which by their fall they had forfeited their right.

Galatians 3:23

Ver. 23. *Before faith came;* before the covenant of grace, or the doctrine of the gospel, or Christ himself, was revealed.

We were kept under the law; the apostle either speaks of all mankind, of whom it is true, that until God's revelation of the covenant of grace, they

had no other way of salvation made known to them than by the law of works; or else of the Jews, to whom, though before Christ there was a revelation of the gospel, yet it was more dark and imperfect, so as they *were kept under the law*, but few apprehending any other way of justification than by the works of the law.

Shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed; but the apostle saith they were but *shut up* under it; God never intended it as that by the observance of which they should be saved; but as even then, to those whom he intended to save, he made a more secret revelation of his gospel, so he had now more fully and plainly revealed the way of salvation which he had from eternity established.

Galatians 3:24

Ver. 24. *The law*, both the law contained in ordinances and the moral law, *was our schoolmaster*; serving us in the same stead that a schoolmaster in a school doth, who only fitteth children for higher degrees of learning at universities.

To bring us unto Christ: the ceremonial law showed us Christ in all his types and sacrifices; the moral law showed us the absolute need of a Mediator, as it showed us sin, accused and condemned us for it; and it showed us no help either for the guilt of sin contracted, or against the power of it.

That we might be justified by faith; so that God's end in giving us the law was, that we might be fitted for Christ, and obtain justification by believing in him.

Galatians 3:25

Ver. 25. After that Christ, the object of saving faith, was in the fulness of time revealed, and the gospel, which is the doctrine of faith, was fully revealed and published, the time of our nonage was over.

Galatians 3:26

Ver. 26. All you that believe, whether native Jews or Gentiles, are the children of God by adoption, through faith in Jesus Christ, Joh 1:12: so that you need not run back to the law to look for help and salvation from that; but only look unto Christ, to whom the law was but a schoolmaster to lead you; who being fully and clearly revealed, you may have immediate recourse to, by faith; and need not to make use of the Jewish schoolmaster, as hoping for justification from the observances of the law.

Galatians 3:27

Ver. 27. *Baptized into Christ*, may either be understood of receiving the sacrament of baptism; which who receiveth, is not only baptized in the name of Christ, and into the profession of Christ; but is sacramentally, or in a sign, baptized into Christ; or else (which, considering what followeth, seemeth much more probably the sense) it may signify a being not only baptized with water, but with the Holy Ghost and fire. Of those thus baptized, he saith, that they *had put on Christ*; they had accepted of and received Christ for their justification, and for their sanctification. We have the like phrase, Ro 13:14.

Galatians 3:28

Ver. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek*; in the business or justification, the case of Jews and (Greeks is the same. This he saith, that the Galatians might not think themselves disadvantaged from their not being under the law, as the schoolmaster that should lead them unto Christ.

There is neither bond nor free; neither doth Christ consider the qualities and circumstances of persons, whether they be servants or free men; for though they be servants, Christ hath made them free, 1Co 7:22 Eph 6:8 Col 3:11.

There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus: neither hath Christ any respect to sexes: the male children under the law had many privileges; but it is all a case under the gospel, whether persons be males or females, Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, servants or masters, bond-men

or free-men.

Galatians 3:29

Ver. 29. Lest these Galatians should be discouraged, because the promise was made to Abraham and his seed, and they were not the seed of Abraham; he tells them, if they were Christ's, that is, if they truly believed in him, and were implanted into him, that then they were the seed of Abraham, that seed to which the promise was made; and though not heirs of Abraham according to the flesh, yet heirs according to the promise: see Ro 9:7,8.

Galatians 4:1

Chapter Summary

Ga 4:1-3 The Jews were for a while held under the law, as an heir under his guardian till he be of age.

Ga 4:4-7 But Christ came to redeem those that were under the law, and to give both to Jew and Gentile the adoption, and consequently the freedom, of sons.

Ga 4:8-10 Paul therefore reproveth the Galatians, who from serving idols had been received of God, for falling back to the bondage of legal observances.

Ga 4:11-20 He expresseth his fears and tender regard for them, and calleth to mind their former respect and good will to him, from which he admonisheth them not to be seduced in his absence.

Ga 4:21-31 He allegorically describeth the Jewish and Christian churches under the types of Agar and Sara, and

inferreth that we, being children of
the free-woman,
are free.

Ver. 1. The apostle had before determined, that the whole body of such as believed in Jesus Christ, were that seed of Abraham to which the promise was made, and so heirs of the promises made to him; yet so, that, as it is among men, though a child be a great heir, and lord of a great estate, yet while he is under age he is used like a servant; so the time of the law being as it were the time of believers' nonage, those who lived in that time were used like servants.

Galatians 4:2

Ver. 2. The heir, (mentioned in the former verse), though he be an heir of a great estate, yet is not presently possessed of it; but he is by his father kept under tutors and governors, until the time which he hath appointed when he will be pleased to release him from his pupillage, and settle some part of his inheritance upon him.

Galatians 4:3

Ver. 3. Such children were all believers, the seed of Abraham; from the first designed to a gospel liberty, but that was not to be fully enjoyed, until the fulness of time should come when God intended to send his Son into the world; and during the time of their nonage they were kept under the law, as a tutor and governor, leading them unto Christ. He chiefly intendeth the ceremonial law, which, Ac 15:10, Peter calleth *a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*. He calls these ordinances *the elements of the world*; so also Col 2:20: he means that discipline by which God instructed, and under which God by Moses at first tutored, the world, that is, the Jews, who were that part of the world to whom God pleased to make his oracles known. He calls those ritual observances, elements, or rudiments, because they were the first instructions God gave believers, leading them to Christ; like the first elements or rudiments in grammar learning.

Galatians 4:4

Ver. 4. *But when the fulness of the time was come; the time,* which answered the time appointed of the earthly father, mentioned Ga 4:2; when that time came in which God had designed to bring his people into the most perfect state of liberty, which in this life they are capable of.

God sent forth his Son, who was existent before, (being brought forth before the mountains or hills were settled, Pr 8:25), but not *sent forth* until this fulness of time came. And then *made of a woman,* conceived in the womb of the virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing her.

Made under the law; to which, as God, he was not subject, (being himself the lawmaker), but he subjected himself. He was born in a nation, and of a parent, under the law; he was circumcised, and submitted to the ceremonial law; he in all things conformed his life to the rule of the law, and subjected himself to the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us.* Nothing of this is questioned, except the last; which yet appears also to have been necessary by what followeth in the next verse, for how else could he have redeemed those who were under the law; and this agreeth with what we had, Ga 3:13.

Galatians 4:5

Ver. 5. This makes it appear, that Christ's being *under the law* must be understood as well of the moral as of the ceremonial law, that is, subject to the precepts of it, as well as to the curse of it; for if the end of this being born under the law, was to redeem those that were under it, that he had not reached by being merely under the ceremonial law; for the Gentiles were not under that law, but only under the moral law; and they also were to be redeemed, and to receive the great privilege of *adoption*, or rather, the rights of adopted children; which (some think) is to be understood here, rather than what is strictly to be understood by the term of adoption, viz. a right to be called and to be the sons of God. Others, by *adoption*, understand that full state of liberty of which the apostle had been before speaking, in opposition to that state of childhood and nonage in which believers were until the times of the gospel; for, Ga 5:1, we shall find that

that was a *liberty wherewith Christ made us free*: and indeed this last sense seemeth best to agree with what the apostle had before said, Ga 4:1-3, though the other senses are not to be excluded.

Galatians 4:6

Ver. 6. Lest the Jews should claim the adoption as peculiar to them, the apostle tells them that these Gentiles were also sons; and in confirmation of that, he saith, that God had sent *the Spirit of his Son* into their hearts: not that the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit of the Father, as well as of Christ; but he calleth him the Spirit of Christ, because he had made adoption the end and fruit of redemption; and redemption is every where made the work of the Son. The apostle saith, Ro 9:4, that the adoption belongeth to the Israelites: the Jews were the first people whom God dignified with the name of his *sons*, his *first-born*, Ex 4:22; and so many of them as believed also received the Spirit, Eze 36:27; but the full effusion of the Spirit was reserved to gospel times, and until the time that Christ ascended, Joh 7:39 16:7. After which the Spirit was poured out in the days of Pentecost, Ac 2:1-47, whose effects were evident, not only in power to work miracles, and speak with divers tongues, (which were not common to all believers), but also in a variety of spiritual gifts and habits, amongst which this was one, teaching them to cry, *Abba, Father*.

Crying, (it is expounded, Ro 8:15, *whereby we cry*, that is, through whose influence and working in us we cry), *Abba, Father*, that is, Father, Father: which not only signifieth the Spirit's influence upon believers' words in prayer, first conceived in the heart, then uttered by the lips; but chiefly those habits of grace, by which we pray acceptably; faith and holy boldness, by which we call God Father; zeal and fervency, by which we are importunate with God, and say, Father, Father. Which were now not the privileges of Jews only, but of these Galatians also, who were by nature Gentiles, and strangers to God; and a certain evidence of their concern in the redemption of Christ, and that they also might expect salvation from him.

Galatians 4:7

Ver. 7. *Thou* that art a believing Gentile, as well as the believing Israelites, *art no more a servant*, not in that state of servile subjection to the law; *but*

*a son; but in a more excellent state of liberty, like unto that of sons that have attained to a full and ripe age. Christ told his disciples, Joh 15:15, that he did not call them servants, for servants knew not what their lord did; but he had freely communicated to them what he had received from the Father. The apostle here saith, they were sons, sons by adoption; which is the highest notion of freedom and liberty. And this entitled them to an inheritance: *if a son, then an heir of God through Christ*: which agreeth with Ro 8:17. And as it is with sons and heirs, though the inheritance cometh not fully to them till the death of the parent, yet while they live they are in a far better condition than servants; so the believing Gentiles, being made sons and heirs of God through Christ, though they were to stay a while for the inheritance reserved for the sons of God in the heavens, yet their state was much better than that of servants; for though they were obliged to serve the Lord, yet they served him without servile fear, and were no otherwise servants than sons are also servants to their father.*

Galatians 4:8

Ver. 8. *When ye knew not God,* as he is, or as ye ought to have known him, or as, since, you have known him; for even the heathen have some knowledge of God, Ro 1:21.

Ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods; you paid religious homages unto idols; which are gods, not by nature and essence, but only in the opinion of idolaters. Which was a more miserable bondage and servitude than the Jews were under, who knew the true God; though in the time when the church was like the heir under age, it was subject to the law contained in ordinances, and under the yoke of the law.

Galatians 4:9

Ver. 9. *After that ye have known God;* after that you are come to a true and saving knowledge of God in Christ, and know God as he is.

Or rather are known of God; or rather after you are received of God, approved of him, made through Christ acceptable to him, which is much more than a true comprehension of God in your notion and understanding.

How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? How turn you back again to the legal services of the ceremonial law? Which he calleth elements, or rudiments, because they were God's first instructions given to his church for his worship, to which he intended afterward a more perfect way of worship. He calls them weak, because they brought nothing to perfection; and the observance of them was impotent as to the justification of a soul, as all the law is. He calls them beggarly, in comparison of the more rational, spiritual way of worship under the gospel. He saith that they desired to be in bondage unto these, because they would not see and make use of the liberty from them which Christ had purchased.

Objection. It may be objected, that the Galatians were not educated in Judaism; how then doth the apostle charge them with turning back to them?

Answer. This hath made some think, that, by *the weak and beggarly elements*, mentioned in this verse, the apostle meaneth their Gentile superstitions and idolatries; but this is not probable, the apostle, all along the Epistle, charging them with no such apostacy. Others think, that he in this verse chiefly reflecteth on the believing Jews, who afterwards returned again to the use of the law. But why may not we rather say, that he calleth their fact a turning back, not so much with reference to their personal practice, as to the state of the church; which was once under those elements, but by the coming of Christ was brought into a more perfect state. So that for them who were called into the church in the time of this its more perfect state, for them to return to the bondage of the law, that was truly to turn back; if not to any practice of their own, which they had cast off, yet to a state of the church which the church of God had now outgrown.

Galatians 4:10

Ver. 10. If we had any evidence that these Galatians were relapsed to their Gentile superstitions, these terms might be understood of such days, &c. as they kept in honour to their idols. But the apostle, throughout the whole Epistle, not reflecting upon them for any such gross apostacy (as returning to the vanities of the heathen in which they formerly lived); but only for Judaizing, and using the ceremonies of the Jewish law, as necessary to be observed, besides their believing in Christ, for

their justification; it is much more probable that he meaneth by *days* the Jewish festivals, such as their new moons, &c.; by *months*, the first and the seventh month, when they religiously fasted; by *times*, their more solemn times, such as were their feasts of first-fruits, tabernacles, &c.; and by *years*, their years of jubilee, the seventh and the fiftieth year. His meaning is, that they took themselves to be under a religious obligation to observe these times as still commanded by God.

Galatians 4:11

Ver. 11. Paul knew that, with reference to himself, he had not laboured in vain; he might say with Isaiah, Isa 49:5: *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorified.* He had told the Corinthians, that he knew he should be a sweet savour to God, as well in them that perished as in them that should be saved, 2Co 2:15. But he speaks with reference to them. A faithful minister accounteth his labour lost when he seeth no fruits of it upon the souls of his people. Nor was Paul afraid of this as to the sincerer part of this church, who truly believed, and were justified, but he speaketh this with reference to the whole body of this church. That which he feared, was their falling back from their profession of Christianity to Judaism; as judging the observation of the Jewish days necessary by Divine precept to Christians. Nor doth he speak of the observation of such days, as it was their duty in obedience to the moral law to observe, which commandeth the observation of a seventh day for the weekly sabbath, and gives a liberty for setting apart other days, and the commanding the observation of them, to take notice of and acknowledge God in emergent providences. But he only speaks of days imposed by the ceremonial law, and men's religious observation of them, as being tied to it by a Divine precept, by which they made them a part of worship. We have a liberty to set apart any day for God's worship, and magistrates have a liberty to set apart particular days for the acknowledgment of God in emergent providences whether of mercy or judgment; but none hath a power to make a day holy, so as that it shall be a sin against God for all to labour therein, much less hath any a liberty to keep Jewish holy-days.

Galatians 4:12

Ver. 12. *Be as I am; for I am as ye are;* be as friendly to me as I am to

you: see the like phrase, 1Ki 22:4. But how doth the apostle say they had not injured him at all, when it is manifest they had defamed him?

Answer. He had forgiven, or was ready to forgive, this to them; he had no desire or design to be revenged on them. Or in this particular thing of Judaizing, for which he had been reflecting upon them, they had done him no personal injury; it was only his care for and love to their souls, which had drawn out this discourse from him; not any particular prejudice to them, or any desire he had to take any revenge upon them, for any personal injury done to himself.

Galatians 4:13

Ver. 13. The Scripture having not given us a particular account of Paul's circumstances when he first preached the gospel to the Galatians, we are at a loss to determine what those infirmities were which Paul here speaketh of, more than that he calls them *infirmities of the flesh*: by which may be understood, either the baseness and contemptibleness of his presence, (which the false teachers at Corinth objected to him, 2Co 10:10), or some bodily sickness which Paul had at that time, (as some of the ancients guess), or his sufferings for the gospel, which were those infirmities wherein he chose to glory, 2Co 11:30.

Galatians 4:14

Ver. 14. *And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected;* the apostle saith they were so far from injuring him, (as he had said, Ga 4:12), that they had expressed great kindness to him: for though, when he first came amongst them to preach the gospel, he was a man of no great presence; but, in the judgment of some, vile and base; or was full of bodily weakness and disease, was persecuted by men; yet they did not reject nor despise him, for those temptations he had in the flesh: by which he means, the same things he before meant by infirmities, for both bodily weaknesses, and sufferings for the gospel, are temptations, or, as the word signifieth, trials.

But received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus; nay, (saith he),

you were so for from rejecting or despising me upon that account, that (on the contrary) you received me as if I had been an angel; yea, if Jesus Christ himself had come amongst you, you could not have been more kind to him than you were to me. This he tells them, partly, to let them know, that what he had spoken was not out of any ill will or prejudice to them; partly, to retain their good will, that they might not show themselves uncertain and inconstant in their judgments and affections; and partly, (as the following verse testifieth), to show the levity of some of them, who had too much forgotten their first judgment of him, and value for him.

Galatians 4:15

Ver. 15. Some understand the *blessedness* here spoken of in a passive sense; you were then a blessed and happy people, receiving the doctrine of the gospel in the truth and purity of it; what is now become of that blessedness? But both the preceding and the following words seem to rule the sense otherwise, viz. Where is that blessedness which you predicted of me? You called me then blessed, and showed me such a dear affection that you would, if it would have done me good, have parted with what was dearest to you.

Galatians 4:16

Ver. 16. What hath now altered your mind, or made you have a worse opinion of me? Wherein have I offended you or done you any harm? I have done nothing but revealed to you the truth of God; am I therefore become your enemy? Or do you account me your enemy on that account?

Galatians 4:17

Ver. 17. *They;* the false teachers, that have perverted you as to the faith of the gospel.

Zealously affect you; pretend a great warmth of affection for you.

But not well; but in this they do not well, nor for a good end.

They would exclude you from our good opinion and affection.

That ye might affect them; that they might have all your love and respect; and so, by the ruin of our reputation with you, they might build up their own reputation.

Galatians 4:18

Ver. 18. *It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing:* the apostle, in the former verses, had been speaking of a great zeal, or warmth of affection, (for that zeal signifieth), which these Galatians had for and declared towards him, when he first preached the gospel amongst them; and also of a great warmth and degree of affection which these false teachers had pretended to this church. These words are so delivered that they are applicable to either of these; but the latter words seem to make them most properly applicable to the former; so the term *always* is emphatical: There was a time, when you were very warm in your love to me; the cause being good, your warmth of affection ought not to have abated, but continued always, *and not only* while you saw me, and I was *present with you*.

Galatians 4:19

Ver. 19. By calling them *little children*, he both hints to them that he was their spiritual father, and had begotten them to Christ; and that they were as yet weak in the faith, not grown men, but as yet little children: and also hints to them, the tender affection he had towards them, which was the same as of a mother to her little children: though they did not own and honour him as their spiritual father, yet he loved them as his *little children*.

Of whom I travail in birth again; for whom I am in as great pain, through my earnest desire for the good of your souls, as the woman is that is in travail for the bringing forth of a child.

Until Christ be fully and perfectly formed in you; that is, till you be brought off from your Judaism, and opinion of the necessity of superadding the works of the law to the faith of Christ in order to your justification, and be rooted in the truth and established in the liberty of the gospel, with which Christ hath made you free.

Galatians 4:20

Ver. 20. *I desire to be present with you now;* I wish circumstances so concurred that I could be present with you.

And to change my voice; that I might use my tongue towards you as I saw occasion; either commending, or reproofing, or exhorting, as I saw cause.

For I stand in doubt of you; for I do not know what to think of you; I am afraid of your falling away from the profession of the gospel to Judaism.

Galatians 4:21

Ver. 21. *Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law;* you that cannot be content to receive Jesus Christ alone, for justification; but have a mind to maintain a necessity of obedience to the law of circumcision, and other Judaical rites; *do ye not hear the law,* that law which curseth every one who continueth not in all that is therein written to do it? Or rather, the story which follows; which is taken out of one of the books of the law, which the apostle makes a mystical revelation of the Divine will, that there should come a time when circumcision should be cast out.

Galatians 4:22

Ver. 22. The substance of this is written, Ge 16:1-16, where we read of Abraham's having Ishmael by Hagar his bondwoman; and Ge 21:2, where we read of the birth of Isaac, whom he had by Sarah, who was his wife.

Galatians 4:23

Ver. 23. They were both (in a sense) *born after the flesh*, viz. in a natural way and course of generation: but *after the flesh* is plainly, in this verse, opposed to *by promise*; and the meaning is, that Ishmael, the son of Hagar, was not that son of Abraham to whom the promise was made, that

in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed: see Ge 15:4 17:19. Isaac is said to have been born after the *promise*, either because God gave Isaac to Abraham, in completion or fulfilling of the promise made to him, that he should have an heir out of his own loins; or because the mighty and miraculous power of God was seen in his production, enabling Abraham at those years to beget, and Sarah to bear, a child, when both their bodies were as dead.

Galatians 4:24

Ver. 24. *Which things are an allegory:* that is called *an allegory*, when one thing is learned out of another, or something is mystically signified and to be understood further than is expressed. The Scripture hath a peculiar kind of allegories, wherein one thing is signified by and under another thing. The thing here signifying, was Abraham's wife and concubine, Sarah and Hagar.

For these are the two covenants; the apostle saith, these signified *the two covenants*, for that is the meaning of *are*: so as here we have one text more where the verb substantive is put for signifieth; and it will be hard to assign a reason why it should not be so interpreted in the institution of the Lord's supper, notwithstanding the papists' and Lutherans' so earnest contending to the contrary. The very word is here used, *διαθηκαι*, that is used in the institution of the Lord's supper. Here it is, *these are the two covenants* or testaments; there, *this is the new covenant*. The apostle calls them *two covenants*, (whereas they were but one), with reference to the time of their exhibition, and manner of their administration, in which they much differed. Nor must we understand the apostle as signifying to us by these words, that Moses wrote the history of Sarah and Hagar with such a design and intention; but only that that history is very applicable to the two covenants, and we shall find, Ga 4:27, the apostle justifying this application from the authority of the prophet Isaiah. And hereto he complied with the general sense of the Jews, who judged that there was not only a literal, but a mystical sense also, of those histories of the patriarchs.

The one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar: the one covenant was that of the law delivered from mount Sinai, this was like Hagar; for as Hagar was herself a bondwoman, and so her child did

partake of the condition of the mother, and Hagar bare a bondman or servant; so the law (which he calls a covenant, because of the stipulation of obedience from the people to the will of God revealed and declared) left those that were under it in a state of bondage or servitude.

Galatians 4:25

Ver. 25. *Agar*, the bondwoman, fitly represented *Mount Sinai*, the mountain in Arabia, from which the law was given: and *Jerusalem which now is* answereth to Mount Sinai; for as in Mount Sinai the law was given in a terrible manner, so now Jerusalem is the seat of the scribes and Pharisees, who are the doctors of that law, and rigidly press the observation of it, by which the Jews are kept *in bondage*. The apostle speaketh not here of the civil servitude that the Jews were in under the Romans, to whom they were now tributaries, but of that religious servitude in which the scribes and Pharisees kept them to their legal services.

Galatians 4:26

Ver. 26. The new covenant, or the dispensation of the gospel, or the Christian church, *which is above*, or from above, which answereth to Sarah, and is said to be *above*, because revealed from heaven by Christ, sent out of the bosom of the Father, not as the law was revealed upon earth, upon Mount Sinai. Hence apostates from the doctrine of the gospel, are said to turn from him who *speaketh from heaven*, Heb 12:25. Or else it is said to be *above*, because it is the *assembly of the firstborn written in heaven*, Ga 4:23: hence the gospel church is called *the heavenly Jerusalem*, Ga 4:22. Of this gospel church the apostle saith, that it is *free*; i.e. free from the yoke and bondage of the ceremonial law, or from the covenant and curse of the law. Which church, he saith, *is the mother of all* believers, they embracing the same faith, and walking in the same steps; from whence it was easy for the Galatians to conclude their freedom and liberty also from the law.

Galatians 4:27

Ver. 27. *It is written*, Isa 54:1. Some think that the apostle doth but allude to that of the prophet; and that the sense of the prophet was only to comfort the Jews, whose city, though it should be for a present time

barren, thin of inhabitants, during the time of the Babylonish captivity; yet it should be again replenished with people, and be more populous than other cities. But the apostle seemeth rather to interpret that prophecy, than merely to allude to it; so that verse is one of those prophetic passages about the calling of the Gentiles, of which are many in that prophet. In this sense, the Gentiles are to be understood under the notion of the woman that was *barren* and *desolate*. The church of the Jews is represented under the notion of a woman that had a husband and children. The prophet, by the Spirit of prophecy, calleth upon the Gentiles, that brought forth no children to God, and to whom God was not a husband, to rejoice, and to cry out for joy, for there should be more believers, more children brought forth to God, amongst them, than were amongst the Jews: so as the church of the Gentiles are compared to Sarah, who was a long time barren, but then brought forth the child of the promise, the seed in which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

Galatians 4:28

Ver. 28. Isaac was the promised seed, Ge 21:12 Ro 9:7: the apostle tells the Galatians that the believing Gentiles were (*as Isaac*) *the children of the promise*. Isaac being born, not by virtue of any procreative virtue in his parents, which was now dead in them, Ro 4:19, but by virtue of the promise, and by a power above nature, was a type of the believing Gentiles, who are a spiritual seed, and that seed to whom the promise was made, being the members of Christ by faith: so as the Jews had no reason so much to glory as they did, that Abraham was their father, for those amongst them that believed not were but his carnal seed, believers only were the spiritual seed, *the children of the promise*; to which the believing Gentiles had the same claim with the believing Jews, and a much better than those of them that believed not in Christ.

Galatians 4:29

Ver. 29. As it was in Abraham's time, Ishmael, who was born in a mere carnal and ordinary way of generation, persecuted Isaac, by mocking at him, Ge 21:9, who was born by virtue of the promise, and the mighty power of God, enabling Sarah at those years to conceive, and Abraham to beget a child; *even so it is now*, the carnal seed of Abraham, the Jews, persecute the Christians, which are his spiritual seed. From whence we

may observe, that the Holy Ghost accounteth mockings of good people for religion, persecution. So Heb 11:36: *Others had trial of cruel mockings*; and we know these were one kind of the sufferings of Christ. By this also the apostle doth both confirm what he had before said, in making Hagar a type of the Jews, and Sarah a type of the Gentiles, the Jews persecuting the seed of Christ, as Hagar's seed persecuted Isaac.

Galatians 4:30

Ver. 30. We read, Ge 21:10, that when Sarah saw Ishmael mocking at her son Isaac, she was not able to bear it, but speaketh to her husband Abraham, saying: *Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even Isaac.* The principal design of the apostle seems to be, by that type of the ejection of Ishmael out of Abraham's family, to let them know the mind and will of God:

1. Concerning the exclusion of the law from a partnership with Christ and the gospel, in the justification of sinners before God.
2. Concerning the rejection of the Jews, upon the calling of the Gentiles.
3. Concerning the total destruction of the Jewish church and nation, for their persecution of Christ and the Christian church.

Galatians 4:31

Ver. 31. The church of the Gentiles was not typified in Hagar, but in Sarah; from whence the scope of the apostle is to conclude, that we are not under the law, obliged to Judaical observances, but are freed from them, and are justified by faith in Christ alone, not by the works of the law. By this conclusion the apostle maketh way for the exhortation in the following chapter, pressing them to stand fast in their liberty.

Galatians 5:1

Chapter Summary

Ga 5:1 Paul exhorteth the Galatians to maintain their
Christian liberty,

Ga 5:2-6 and showeth that by being circumcised they
would

forfeit their hopes in Christ,

Ga 5:7-12 he disclaimeth the preaching of circumcision
himself,

and condemneth it in others.

Ga 5:13-15 He adviseth them not to abuse their liberty,
but to serve

one another in love, which
comprehendeth the whole law.

Ga 5:16-18 The opposition between the flesh and the
Spirit,

Ga 5:19-21 the works of the flesh,

Ga 5:22-24 the fruits of the Spirit.

Ga 5:25,26 Advice to walk in the Spirit, and not in
vain glorious

emulation.

Ver. 1. The *liberty* here spoken of, is a right which a person hath to action, that he may do or forbear the doing of things at his pleasure, as he apprehends them suitable or not, without the let or hinderance of another. This is either in things of a civil nature, or of a spiritual nature. The former is not understood here, for it is none of *the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, for subjects to be free from the lawful commands of princes, or children to be free from the laws of their parents, or servants to be free from the commands of masters. There is hardly any book in the New Testament wherein obedience of this nature, in things that are lawful, is not either exemplified as our duty in Christ and the apostles, or urged by very strong arguments. The *liberty* here, is that freedom from the law, of which the apostle hath been speaking all along this Epistle: from the curse of the moral law, and from the co-action of it; and principally from the ceremonial law contained in ordinances. This is the liberty which Christ hath purchased for us, and in which the apostle willeth all believers to *stand fast*; not being *again entangled with a yoke*, which God had taken off from their necks. The apostles, in their synod, Ac 15:10, had called it *a yoke*, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.

Galatians 5:2

Ver. 2. It is manifest that the apostle is speaking here concerning circumcision, looked upon as necessary to justification, now under the gospel state. For under the Old Testament undoubtedly Christ profited the fathers, though circumcised; yea, Christ undoubtedly profited Timothy, even under the gospel, though he was circumcised, Ac 16:3, that being done to prevent a scandal, and during a time whilst, for the gaining of the Jews to the Christian faith, the Jewish ceremonies, though dead, were (as it were) kept above ground, unburied for a time. But for men, after a sufficient time indulged them for their satisfaction concerning the abolition of the ceremonial law, still to adhere to it, and religiously to observe the rites of it, as in obedience to a Divine precept, and as necessary, over and above faith in Christ for justification, was indeed to deny Christ, and disclaim his sufficiency to save, who *is able to save to the utmost them that come to God by him*, Heb 7:25; and besides whom there is no name given under heaven, by which men can be saved, *neither is there salvation in any other*, Ac 4:10,12; and who *is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Ro 10:4. So that to join any thing with Christ, and faith in him, for the justification of the soul before God, is plainly to deny and disclaim him, and to make him insignificant to us. This Paul affirms with an apostolical authority and gravity: *I Paul say unto you.*

Galatians 5:3

Ver. 3. This must be understood either of the Gentiles only, who were never under any obligation to circumcision, or of such as were circumcised, with an opinion that it was necessary at this time to justification and salvation. Of these the apostle saith, that by this they made themselves *debtors to do the whole law*; they were obliged to one part of the law, they must also be obliged to all the other parts of it. Besides that circumcision was an owning and professing subjection to the whole law; as the receiving the sacrament of baptism is a professed subjecting ourselves to the whole gospel.

Objection. But (may some say) ought not then all Christians to observe the

law?

Answer.

1. Not the ceremonial and political law, which were peculiar to the Jewish church and state.
2. It is one thing to be under an obligation to our utmost to fulfil the law, another thing to acknowledge ourselves debtors to the law.

Objection. But did not the fathers, then, by being circumcised, acknowledge themselves debtors to the law?

Answer. Yes, they did acknowledge themselves bound to the observation of the law, and to endure (upon the breaking it) the curse of it: but they were discharged from this obligation by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was made a curse for them, that he might redeem them from the curse of the law. But if any disclaimed Christ, (which, whosoever added any thing to his righteousness and to faith in him, as to the justification of the soul, did, as the apostle had said in the former verse), they laid themselves under an obligation to fulfil the whole law of God, if they would be saved.

Galatians 5:4

Ver. 4. The word here translated *become of no effect*, is used Ro 3:3. By those who *are justified by the law*, are to be understood such as seek or desire to be justified by the law, for actually none is so justified. The sense is: Whoever seeketh to be justified by the works of the law, he disclaimeth the righteousness of Christ; to him Christ's death signifieth nothing, nor is of any virtue at all. For he had told us before, Ga 2:21: *If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain: and Ro 8:3,4: *What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, &c.* The very end of Christ's coming and dying was to supply us with a righteousness, which (apprehended by faith) should be reckoned to us as ours, wherein we might stand before God. Which end of Christ's death had been frustrated, if, through our flesh, there had not been such a weakness or impotency in the*

law as to justification. So as if any still looked for justification by performance of the law, as such made the death of Christ in vain, because if such a thing could have been done that way there had been no need of Christ's dying; so they also made it, which was not in vain in itself, yet in vain and of no effect to their souls, because Christ would not be a partial cause in the justification of a soul.

Ye are fallen from grace; and they, by this, renounced the grace of God exhibited in the gospel, and fell from the grace of it. For by *grace* here is not to be understood a state of grace, (from which none can fall totally and finally), but the grace of the gospel; by which is signified the free love of God in it exhibited, offering Christ to sinners for righteousness.

Galatians 5:5

Ver. 5. *For we;* we Christians, who have truly embraced Christ; or, (as others think), we that are turned from Judaism to Christianity, and so are more concerned in the law, which was not given to the Gentiles, but to us Jews: yet, *through the Spirit,* by the guidance and direction or the Spirit, or through the operation of the Spirit in us, *we wait for the hope of righteousness;* that is, we hope for righteousness; that righteousness whereby we shall be made righteous before God; or, (as some will have it), the crown of righteousness: I had rather understand it of righteousness itself, that having been all along the argument of the apostle's discourse here.

By faith; not by our observance of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:6

Ver. 6. Under the new testament established in Christ, and confirmed by the death of Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; there is but one way of justification, one of salvation, for them both; and that is, by believing in Christ Jesus; which faith is not an idle, inactive, inoperative faith, but such a *faith as worketh by love,* both towards God and towards men, in an obedience to all the commandments of God: yet is not the soul justified, nor shall it stand righteous before God, in and for this obedience,

which neither is faith, nor goeth before it, but followeth it, as the true, proper, and necessary effect of it.

Galatians 5:7

Ver. 7. This was once your faith, your profession, and according to this you directed the course of your life and actions; who hath hindered you in your course, or turned you out of your way, or given you a check in your race; and hath made you disobedient to, or to swerve from, the truth which you formerly owned and professed.

Galatians 5:8

Ver. 8. *This persuasion;* this new opinion into which seducers have misled you, which, by embracing it, you have made yours.

Cometh not of him that calleth you; is not from God, who hath called you out of darkness into marvellous light, unto fellowship with himself, into a state of grace and favour with him, and to the hopes of eternal life; and who yet calleth you by his gospel: it must therefore be from the devil and his instruments, who go about to seduce and pervert you.

Galatians 5:9

Ver. 9. This is a proverbial expression, which (as others of that nature) is applicable in more cases than one. The apostle made use of it, 1Co 5:6, to persuade that church to purge their communion, by casting out the incestuous person: he maketh use of it here to persuade them to take heed of admitting any principles of false doctrine, which he compareth to leaven, (as our Saviour does, Mt 16:6,12), and that very fitly, both in regard of the sour and of the diffusive nature of it; the latter of which is here chiefly intended; the truths of God having such dependence one upon another, that he who erreth in any one doctrine of faith, seldom continueth long sound as to other points.

Galatians 5:10

Ver. 10. *I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded:* the apostle (according to his usual method) sweeteneth his sharp reproof of this church for their deviations from the faith of the gospel, with a declaration of his good opinion of them; declaring that he had a confidence in them, that through the grace of God they would be reduced to the truth, or kept from wandering from it, and that in matters of faith they would be all of the same mind.

But he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be; and for those who endeavoured to seduce and pervert them, God should reward them according to their works. He seems to aim at some particular false teacher, (whose name he concealeth), who gave this church this trouble.

Galatians 5:11

Ver. 11. It should seem by what the apostle saith in this verse, that some of these false teachers had quoted the apostle for them, as if he himself had preached circumcision; possibly taking advantage from his circumcising Timothy, not distinguishing between what was done by Paul as of liberty, and to avoid the offence of the Jews, and what they pressed as necessary to be done (besides believing in Christ) for justification. Now, (saith the apostle), *if I yet preach up circumcision as necessary to be observed, why do I yet suffer persecution?* Why am I then persecuted by the Jews, as one apostatized from their religion?

Then is the offence of the cross ceased: by *the cross*, he either means the cross of Christ; then the sense is: It is my opposing the observance of their law, that more offendeth them than my preaching of Christ crucified. Or else he meaneth the afflictions which he suffered for the sake of Christ and the gospel; (in which sense the term is used, Mt 16:24 Lu 9:23 14:22); then the sense is, that all sufferings for the owning and preaching of Christ are at an end; let us but yield the Jews that point, (that Christians are obliged to the observance of the law of Moses), the great quarrel between them and us is at an end; but their daily persecuting of me is a sufficient demonstration that I do not preach up circumcision.

Galatians 5:12

Ver. 12. I wish that God would some way or other put an end to these that trouble you. This Paul speaketh not out of hatred to their persons, but out of a zeal to the glory of God, and a just indignation against these men, who had so much hindered the salvation of the members of this church. And it is not improbable that the apostle here spake by the Spirit of prophecy, as knowing God would cut them off; so that his and the like imprecations of holy men in Scripture are not to be drawn into precedents, or made matters for our imitation, unless we had the same discerning of spirits which they had, or the same Spirit of prophecy and revelations from God as to future things. But how far it is lawful or unlawful for ordinary persons, whether ministers or private Christians, to pray against God's or his church's enemies, is a question for the arguing which this place is too narrow.

Galatians 5:13

Ver. 13. *Ye have been called unto liberty;* a liberty from the covenant of the law, and the curse of the law, as Ga 3:13; from servile fear, as Lu 1:74; and from sin, Ro 6:7.

Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but you must take heed that you do not abuse this liberty by making it an occasion for sin, so as from thence to conclude, that you may give your flesh more liberty in obeying the lusts of it: you must not think, that the gospel hath set you at liberty from the obedience of the law; the gospel liberty to which you are called, doth not set you free from the duty of love, either to God or men. Therefore *by love serve one another.* Our Christian liberty neither freeth us from the serving of God, nor from our mutual serving each other by love, according to Ro 8:8: *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.*

Galatians 5:14

Ver. 14. The whole will of God, containing our duty towards men, is reducible to this one thing, *love*; for whatsoever God hath commanded us to do towards men, is but a branch from this root, and must flow from love

as its principle. Or, the whole will of God concerning man is fulfilled in this one thing of love; where love to God is not excluded, but supposed, as the root of our love to our neighbour; for our neighbour is to be loved for God. Thus Ro 8:8: *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law:* and 1Jo 4:20, the apostle proveth, that a man cannot love God unless he loveth his brother: and 1Ti 1:5: *The end of the commandment is charity.* Yet what the papists would conclude from hence, (viz. that it is possible for a man to fulfil the law because it is possible for him to love his neighbour), doth by no means follow; for the apostle (1Ti 1:5) telleth us, this love must proceed *out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* Mr. Calvin observeth well, that the apostle here mentioneth love to men as the fulfilling of the law, in opposition to the false teachers; who made the fulfilling of the law to lie in the observance of the ceremonies of the law, whereas the great thing which the law of God requireth is *love, out of a pure heart, good conscience, and faith unfeigned.* So that he who believeth with a faith unfeigned, and, out of that principle, with a pure heart and a good conscience, loveth his neighbour as himself, shall be by God accounted to have fulfilled the law; for love is the end of the law.

Galatians 5:15

Ver. 15. This lets us know, that there were great contentions and divisions amongst the members of this church, whether (which is probable) occasioned by their differences in and about the doctrine of justification, or upon other accounts, we are not told; but upon whatever account they were raised, they were contrary to that serving one another in love, to which the apostle had exhorted them. Nor did they terminate in a mere dislike of and displacency to each other, but broke out into overt acts, more becoming dogs than Christians, and therefore it is expressed under the notion of biting and devouring. The issue of which, the apostle prophesieth would be a consuming one another; they being actions that had a natural tendency to this end.

Galatians 5:16

Ver. 16. *Walk in the Spirit;* the apostle having, Ga 5:13, cautioned them

against turning the grace of God into wantonness, by using their liberty as an occasion to the flesh; here he directeth them to the best means for the avoiding thereof, viz. *walking in the Spirit*. Where by *Spirit* he doth not mean our own spirits, or the guide and conduct of our own reason; for the term *Spirit*, set (as here) in opposition to the *flesh*, is in no place of Scripture understood of any other than the Holy Spirit of God, which dwelleth in and influenceth believers, guiding them both by a rule from without, (which is the word of God, given by its inspiration), and by its inward motions and operations. Walking, signifieth the directing of their whole conversations. The phrases *in the Spirit*, and *after the Spirit*, Ro 8:1, seem to be of the same import, unless the alteration of the preposition signifieth, that Christians are not only to look to the word of God dictated by the Holy Spirit as their rule, and to listen to its dictates, but also to look up to the Holy Spirit for its strength and assistance; and implieth a promise of such assistance. The sense is: Let your whole conversation be according to the external rule of the gospel, and the more inward motions, directions, and inclinations of the Spirit of Christ, dwelling and working in you, and moving you to the obedience of that word.

And ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; this doing, though the flesh be yet in you, and you will find the lustings and warrings of it, yet you shall not fulfil the sinful desires and lustings of it; that is, sin, though it be in you, shall not be in dominion in you; it shall not reign in your mortal bodies: Ro 6:12: *Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

Galatians 5:17

Ver. 17. By *the flesh* and *the Spirit*, we cannot so much understand the sensitive and rational appetite; for these two appetites are not so contrary, but that in many things they agree well enough; and we are enemies not only in our sensitive part, to spiritual things, but *εν τη διανοια*, in our mind and rational part also, Col 1:21. And some of *the works of the flesh*, which are afterward mentioned, Ga 5:19-21, (such as *idolatry, heresies, &c.*), cannot be referred to the sensitive part. But by these terms are either to be understood the unregenerate part of man; or rather, that carnal concupiscence which we derived from Adam, and is seated in our rational as well as sensitive appetite; which opposeth itself to the Divine rule, and

to the dictates and motions of the Spirit of God.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit; this concupiscence moveth strongly against the directions of the Spirit.

And the Spirit against the flesh; and the Holy Spirit of God, dwelling in the saints, moveth us potently against the propensions and inclinations of the flesh.

And these are contrary the one to the other; for they are two contrary principles, and work contrarily in their motions and inclinations.

So that ye cannot do the things that ye would; so that even the best of God's people cannot at all times do either what they should do, (according to the precept of the word), or what they would do, according to the bent of their regenerate part.

Galatians 5:18

Ver. 18. To be *led of the Spirit*, and to *walk in the Spirit*, are the same thing; and differ only as the cause and the effect. To be *under the law*, is to be under the curse of it, or coercion of it, and an obligation to the performance of the ceremonial law. The reason is, because the Spirit is a Spirit of adoption and liberty; and where it is, it teacheth to serve the Lord without fear from a principle of freedom and ingenuity.

Galatians 5:19

Ver. 19. *The works of the flesh;* the products of the natural inclinations and propensions in the heart of man.

Are manifest, which are these; he saith, these are *manifest*, the filthiness of them appears by the light of nature, by the checks of conscience men meet with for them; or else, it is manifest that these actions are not from the Spirit of God, (because of their contrariety to the Divine rule), but are from the corrupt part of man. These (he saith) are *adultery*, or the defiling of our neighbour's bed; *fornication*, which is the uncleanness of single

persons each with other; and all other species of *uncleanness*, or unclean conjunctions: *lasciviousness*; whatsoever wanton carriage, gestures, or behaviour lead to these acts.

Galatians 5:20

Ver. 20. *Idolatry*; either the worshipping of the creature for God, or the worshipping of God in and by the creature, as by images, &c.

Witchcraft; the product of compacts with the devil; by virtue of which, the persons so contracting are assisted by the power of evil spirits to produce effects beside the ordinary course and order of nature, and for the most part mischievous to others. And not these gross crimes only are the fruits of the flesh, but also abiding *hatred* of our brethren in our hearts, enmities to others, as the word signifieth. The result of which are, *variance*; men's quarrellings and contendings one with another for little or no cause: *emulations*; people's endeavouring to hinder others of such good things as they see them desirous of: *wrath*; heats and immoderate passions of men one against another: *strife*; a continual readiness and proneness to quarrelling: *seditions*; dividing into parties, which in the state is called sedition, in the church, schism: *heresies*; that is, differing and false opinions in the grand doctrine of religion.

Galatians 5:21

Ver. 21. *Envyings*; repinings at that good which is enjoyed by our brethren: *murders*; unjust taking away the lives of others, with any actions tending or subservient thereunto: *drunkenness*; immoderate drinkings: *revellings, and such like*; immoderate eatings; all abuses of the creatures of God beyond necessity, or a moderate delight.

Of the which I tell you before; I tell you of it before the day of judgment comes, when you will find that which I tell you to be truth.

As I have also told you in time past; as you know I have in my preaching to you in times past told you.

That they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God; that they who ordinarily do these things, and do not only live in such practices, but die without repentance for them, shall never be saved: see 1Co 6:9,10 Re 21:7,8.

Galatians 5:22

Ver. 22. *The fruit of the Spirit;* those habits which the Holy Spirit of God produceth in those in whom it dwelleth and worketh, with those acts which flow from them, as naturally as the tree produceth its fruit, are, *love* to God, and to our neighbours: *joy*; the soul's satisfaction in its union with God, as the greatest and highest good; with an actual rejoicing in Christ, and in what is for his honour and glory, called a rejoicing in the truth, 1Co 13:6; and in the good of our brethren, Ro 12:15: *peace*; quietude of conscience, or peace with God, (of which peace of conscience is a copy), and a peaceable disposition towards men, opposed to strife, variance, emulations, &c.: *long-suffering*; opposed to a hastiness to revenge, and inclining us patiently to bear injuries: *gentleness*; sweetness and kindness of temper, by which we accommodate ourselves, and become mutually useful to each other: *goodness*; a disposition in us to hurt none, but to do all the good we can to all: *faith*; by *faith* seemeth here to be meant, truth in words, faithfulness in promises, and in dealings one with another.

Galatians 5:23

Ver. 23. *Meekness*; forbearance of passion, rash anger, and hastiness of spirit: *temperance*; a sober use of meats, drinks, apparel, or any thing wherein our senses are delighted. Many of these are moral virtues, and such as some have attained to by moral discipline, the cultivating of their natures by education, and moral philosophy: yet they are also the fruits of the Spirit of God; such as it doth always work in the souls wherein it dwelleth (though in different measures and degrees): only the moral man thus comporteth himself from principles of reason, showing him the beauty and comeliness of such a conversation, and aims no Ligher in it, than a happiness of converse in this life, his own honour and reputation. But the spiritual man, doing the same things, aimeth at a higher end (the glorifying of God, and saving his own soul); and doth these things from a

fear of God, out of love to him, and out of faith, as seeing in them the will of God.

Against such (saith the apostle) there is no law; no law to accuse or to condemn them; for these are things which the law commandeth to be done, and are acts of obedience to the law. So as those who do these things are led by the Spirit, and are not under the condemning power or curse of the law.

Galatians 5:24

Ver. 24. *They that are Christ's;* those who are ingrafted into Christ by faith, united to him, and so his members; *have crucified the flesh;* by virtue of a power derived from the cross of Christ, have got their unregenerate part in a great measure mortified; *with the affections and lusts;* with the inordinate desires, affections, and passions of it: not that they have wholly put off these, (they are men still), but the inordinateness of them is corrected, mortified, and subdued.

Galatians 5:25

Ver. 25. *If we live in the Spirit;* if (as we profess) there is a union between the Holy Spirit of God and us, so as that Holy Spirit is to its the principle of our life, and we live more from him than from any principle in ourselves; *let us also walk in the Spirit;* let us manage all our conversation according to the guidance and direction of the same Spirit. Operations naturally follow the principle of life from which they proceed, so that as those who only live in the flesh, walk in and after the flesh, and its inclination; so those who live in the Spirit ought to produce, and will produce, effects suitable to the cause of them, and the principle from which they flow.

Galatians 5:26

Ver. 26. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory:* ambition or vain-glory is a natural corruption, disposing us to boast and commend ourselves, and to

seek the honour and applause of men.

Provoking one another; this is an effect of the former, disposing us, out of hope of victory, to challenge others to a contest with us. Or it may be understood of provoking others by injuries and wrongs done them; which is contrary to the duty of love.

Envyng one another; not repining at the good of others; either desiring their portion, or being troubled that they fare so well. Possibly this verse might more properly have been made the first of the next chapter, (as Luther maketh it), where the apostle goeth on, pressing further spiritual duties common to all Christians.

Galatians 6:1

Chapter Summary

Ga 6:1 Paul adviseth them to reform the faulty with gentleness,

Ga 6:2 and to bear one another's burdens.

Ga 6:3-5 A caution against vanity.

Ga 6:6-8 He exhorteth to be liberal toward spiritual instructors,

Ga 6:9-11 and not to be weary in doing good,

Ga 6:12,13 He showeth the carnal views of those who preached

circumcision,

Ga 6:14-17 and his own professed dependence on Christ only,

regardless of the world.

Ga 6:18 He concludeth with a prayer.

Ver. 1. In the term *brethren*, there is a secret argument persuading the duty which he is pressing, because Christians, particularly members of the same church, are all brethren. By persons *overtaken in a fault*, he means such as do not make a trade of open and scandalous sinning, (for such must be rebuked sharply), but such as may be sometimes through infirmity overborne, and run down with a temptation to sin. By those *that are spiritual*, he means not only the pastors and governors of the church,

(though this care and duty is much incumbent upon them), but such as have received the Spirit of Christ; more especially such as were more knowing in the ways of God, and had spiritual habits more confirmed in them; in which sense *spiritual* is used in 1Co 3:1.

Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: the word translated *restore*, signifies to put again into joint, or into right order and place. Sin is an inordinate action, and putteth the soul that committeth it out of its due order and place. He willeth the brethren that are spiritual to use all due means to put such a member in joint again, but not to do this roughly, and with passion, and severe correction, but meekly, so as may be most probable to win the sinner's soul.

Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted; having an eye and respect to themselves, as neither being free from sin, nor from temptations to sin, dealing with others as they would have others deal by them.

Galatians 6:2

Ver. 2. *Bear ye one another's burdens*; it is a general precept, and may be either understood with reference to what he had said in the former verse, so it hints our duty: though we discern our brethren to have fallen into some sin or error, yet if we discern that they are sensible of their lapse, and their sin is not a pleasure, but a burden to them, though we ought not to bear with them or connive at them in their sins, yet we ought to sympathize with them when we see their sin is become their load and burden, under which they groan and are dejected. Or else more generally, as a new precept commanding us to sympathize with our brethren under any lead of trials and affliction which God shall lay upon them. And so it agreeth with that precept, Ro 12:15. By *the law of Christ*, he means the will of Christ revealed in the gospel; particularly the law of love, so much enjoined by Christ, Joh 13:15, 33-35 15:12. Which is not called the law of Christ because first given by him, (for himself maketh it the sum of the ten commandments), but because he received it and vindicated it from the corruption of the Pharisees' interpretation, Mt 5:43,44; because he so often urged it, and so seriously commanded and commended it to his disciples; and set us the highest precedent and example of it, and hath by his Spirit written it in the hearts of his people.

Galatians 6:3

Ver. 3. It is a general maxim, and the truth of it is obvious to every one that readeth it, for supposing a man to be *nothing* of what he thinks himself to be, he must needs *deceive himself* in nourishing and entertaining such an opinion of himself. For the dependence of it upon what the apostle had said before, it is obvious. Pride, and men's high opinions of themselves above what they ought, are the cause of their censoriousness and morosity in dealing with other offenders; which modesty would not suffer in them, if they apprehended themselves to be as weak, and as much exposed to temptations, as others are. It is pride and overweening opinions of ourselves, that make us despise or neglect others under their burdens, and so forget the law of Christ; the apostle therefore properly addeth this precept for humility and modesty to those former precepts.

Galatians 6:4

Ver. 4. *Let every man prove his own work:* the apostle, by a man's *own work* here, understands his own actions and manners, which he would have every man to busy himself to search, try, and examine by the Divine rule, whether they be conformable to the will of God, yea or no; *and then*, he saith, *shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another;* a man shall (if he findeth his work such as is agreeable to the will of God) have a cause to rejoice in himself; not in the merit or perfection of his works, but in his own works; not in others; that is, he shall rejoice in something which God hath wrought in and by him, and not in others. This the apostle wisely propounds, as a means to bring a man to know his own measures; it being a great error for men to measure themselves by the measures of other men, their perfections by others' imperfections.

Galatians 6:5

Ver. 5. That is, God will judge every man in the last day, according not to what others have done, but to what he himself hath done, 1Co 3:8. Therefore every one is concerned to *prove his own work;* for at last his

eternal joy and rejoicing, or sorrow and mourning, shall be according to what he himself hath wrought, not according to what others have wrought. If ever they enter into the joy of heaven, they shall rejoice in their own work. And if eternal sorrow be their portion, they shall groan under their own burdens; they will not be the sins of others, but their own sins, which will sink them into eternal misery. For though superiors shall answer to God for the sins of their inferiors, yet it shall not properly be for their inferiors' sins, but for their own sins, in neglecting to warn and to reprove them, and to do what in them lay to have hindered them in their sinful courses.

Galatians 6:6

Ver. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word:* the word here translated *taught*, signifieth catechised; and is the same word from which that word is derived; but it here signifieth *taught*, catechising being but a mode or species of teaching.

Communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things; the precept is concerning the maintenance of ministers, which is fitly expressed by the term *communicate*, because as the people distribute to their ministers things temporal, so the ministers distribute things spiritual. The *good things* here mentioned are temporal good things, such as may be useful to the teacher for him to uphold himself and family. The text teacheth us, that it is the will of God that ministers should be maintained at the charge of the church to which they minister, and it is but an act of justice, for they do but communicate temporal things to those who communicate to them much more valuable things.

Galatians 6:7

Ver. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked:* this to terrify those who find out vain and false excuses to save their purses; he adviseth them not to cheat themselves, for though they might deceive men, yet they could not deceive the all-seeing and heart-searching God.

For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; further to

encourage them to this communicating, he mindeth them, that what they distributed in this nature, was no more lost than the seed is which the husbandman casteth into the ground; which in its season springs up, and returneth into the husbandman's hand with increase. This metaphor of sowing is made use of also, Pr 11:18 2Co 9:6, to express men's actions; and lets us know, that our actions, when done, are not done with; but as our bodies shall rise again, so what we have done in the flesh shall be revived and judged; whatsoever, either for quantity or for quality, men sow, the same shall they reap: as to quantity, he had said in 2Co 9:6, that he who *soweth sparingly* should *reap sparingly*, and he who *soweth bountifully* should *reap bountifully*: as to quality, he here further addeth: (see Ga 6:8).

Galatians 6:8

Ver. 8. *For he that soweth to his flesh;* he that layeth out his estate, or spendeth his time and talents, for the gratifying of the flesh; *shall of the flesh reap corruption;* shall or may reap some carnal satisfaction, of a corruptible, dying, perishing nature.

But he that soweth to the Spirit; but he who layeth out his estate, or spendeth his time, strength, talents, whatsoever God hath given him, for the glory of God, in obedience to the commands, motions, and dictates of the Spirit, or the revelations of the Divine will; *shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting;* he shall not of merit, but of grace from the Spirit, reap everlasting life, reward, and satisfaction. So that as in the world, that man doth not suffer loss that layeth out his money, time, or strength about good things of a valuable and enduring nature; but he only who layeth them out about things perishing, and transitory, and of a corruptible nature: so that man shall not lose his estate that layeth it out for the maintenance of the gospel, and upholding the ministry of it; for he *soweth to the Spirit*, and shall thereof reap eternal life and salvation: he only loseth his estate, &c., who spendeth it to gratify his lusts, and please his flesh, for all the return which he shall have, will be in poor, sensible, perishing good things, which perish with the using, and will be of no significancy to him beyond this life.

Galatians 6:9

Ver. 9. *Let us not be weary in well doing:* we have the same precept, 2Th 3:13. As the not executing of judgment speedily imboldens sinners, and encourageth them to go on in courses of sin, so God's delaying the rewards of the righteous, often proveth a temptation to good men to be weary of well doing. Against this the apostle cautioneth us here, by minding us, that there is a *due season* for all things (which is best known to the wise God); and assuring us, that though, as we see not the husbandman presently reaping as soon as he hath sown, but waiting patiently in hope that in a due season he shall reap; so we, though we be not presently rewarded, yet in God's season shall as certainly reap as he doth. But he also mindeth us, that if we will reap we must not *faint*, but go on and persevere in our course of well doing; otherwise we can no more expect to reap, than the husbandman can that hath sown well, but out of impatience, before the time cometh for him to reap, shall go and plough up again all that he hath sown: see Eze 33:13.

Galatians 6:10

Ver. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity;* as we have objects before us, or as God gives us time and ability.

Let us do good unto all men; let it be our business to harm none, but to supply the necessities of all men; either with our spiritual advice and counsels, with all the assistance we can give them that may any way be of spiritual profit or advantage to them; or with our worldly goods, ministering to their necessities.

Especially unto them who are of the household of faith; but all in an order, preferring Christians before others; those that belong to the church, (which is called *the house of God*, 1Ti 3:15 1Pe 4:17, and *the household of God*, Eph 2:19), before such as have no such relation to the church.

Galatians 6:11

Ver. 11. Paul made use of the hands of others in the writing some others of

the Epistles, as appears from Ro 16:22, and sometimes he himself only wrote the salutation, 1Co 16:21: but he tells them he wrote this Epistle to them wholly with his own hand, that he might thereby more commend his love to them and care over them.

Galatians 6:12

Ver. 12. The apostle here reflecteth upon those false teachers who had perverted this church, and discovereth their hypocrisy under all their pretences of good will to them. These are those who (he saith) desired *to make a fair show in the flesh*; that is, to make a fair show to the world, as men very devout, which formalists and persons over zealous for rituals ordinarily do. These would *constrain*, were very urgent to persuade, these believers *to be circumcised*; not out of any love they had to the law of God, or to the souls of these Galatians, but *only* to avoid *persecution*; for as the Jews were more favourable to such Christians, who, together with the doctrine of Christ, observed also their rites and legal ceremonies; so we are told by so of the ancients, that some of the Roman emperors, by their edicts, gave liberty to the Jews, in the provinces subject to them, to use their own religious rites: now all who were circumcised went under that notion, so had more liberty than those who were not circumcised, who were persecuted both by the Jewish and the heathen magistrates. The apostle saith, that these false teachers, who so zealously urged circumcision upon this Gentile church, did it for the avoiding the danger of persecution; which they saw would follow their standing fast in their gospel liberty, and not bringing themselves under the law: which persecution, he tacitly hinteth, ought not to be so industriously shunned and avoided, because it was for Christ's sake, who had endured the cross for them.

Galatians 6:13

Ver. 13. In this the hypocrisy of your false teachers discovereth itself, that whereas, by their being circumcised, they had declared themselves debtors to the whole law, and under an obligation entirely to keep it if they would be saved, yet they themselves did not keep it; only they were very zealous for this one thing, not out of any love they had to the law, but that they

might glory of you, as their converts, being by them persuaded to be circumcised.

Galatians 6:14

Ver. 14. For my part I have no such ends, I have no ambition to glory in you as my converts; all that I desire to glory in, is in the doctrine of the gospel, and my sufferings for the propagation of it, and my conformity to Christ in suffering for preaching the gospel. By the cross of Christ *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*; I care no more for the world than it careth for me; the world despiseth and contemneth me, and the doctrine of the cross which I preach and publish in it, and I contemn it, with all its vain pomp and splendour. And this I do through the *cross of Christ*, remembering how the world dealt with Christ, and how little he regarded the world: or, through the grace of Christ, who hath enabled me to it, for the particle translated *by whom*, may be indifferently translated by whom or by which.

Galatians 6:15

Ver. 15. Under the gospel state as settled by Christ, with reference to salvation, it is of no moment whether a man be a Jew or a Gentile; but whether a man be regenerated or not, and be renewed by the Holy Ghost, so as old things with him be passed away, and all things be become new. He had said the same, Ga 3:28 5:6. See also 2Co 5:17. Under the law, indeed, there was something in circumcision, as it was God's covenant in the flesh to that people to whom he gave it, and the uncircumcised were strangers to the covenants of promise, and aliens to the church of God; but under the gospel, circumcision and uncircumcision are of no significancy; God neither regardeth any for the former, nor rejecteth any for the latter, he only looketh at the heart and inward man, whether that be renewed and sanctified, yea or no.

Galatians 6:16

Ver. 16. *And as many as walk according to this rule;* he either meaneth

the rule of Scripture, the whole word of God; or the doctrine which he had taught them throughout this Epistle, or what he had said in the words immediately going before, where the apostle had given them this rule, not to regard either circumcision or uncircumcision, or any thing in the flesh, but only the change of their hearts. To these he either prophesieth *peace and mercy*, or he prayeth *peace and mercy* for them; under which large terms he comprehendeth all good things, whether internal or external.

Upon the Israel of God; upon the true Israelites, whom he calleth *the Israel of God;* hereby intimating and confirming the truth of what he had said, Ro 2:28,29, and what our Saviour had said of Nathanael, Joh 1:47, calling him *an Israelite indeed*, because in him was *no guile*; and establishing a distinction between such as were so really, and those who were only Israelites in name, because descended from Jacob, to whom God gave the name of Israel. Hereby also checking the vanity of the Jews, who gloried in the name of Israelites, and thought there could no water come out of the fountains of Israel which God would cast away. The apostle doth not promise, or prophesy, mercy and peace to all Israelites, but only to the Israel of God; that is, to believers, that received and embraced Jesus Christ offered in the gospel.

Galatians 6:17

Ver. 17. *Let no man trouble me*, either with questions about circumcision, or with imputations as if I were a friend to their opinion, of the necessity of adding to the doctrine of faith, circumcision and other observances of the law.

For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus; I sufficiently declare my judgment to the world, suffering for my profession, and preaching the gospel. These sufferings he calls *the marks of the Lord Jesus*, because he endured them in testimony to the gospel, as well against the Jews its against the Gentiles.

Galatians 6:18

Ver. 18. The apostle closeth this Epistle with this prayer, as he generally

concludeth all his Epistles, with wishing them grace, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*; under which he comprehendeth all the effects of the free love of God upon believers' souls, for the sake, and in and through the merits, of the Lord Jesus Christ: this he prayeth that they might feel in their hearts, and that it might be in their spirits, to quicken, strengthen, comfort, and establish them, according to the different manifestations of the Spirit of grace. Ver. 19. It hath been said before, that we are not to look upon these dates of apostolical Epistles as part of holy writ, for in some of them there are manifest mistakes; but most think that this Epistle was written from Rome, while Paul was a prisoner there, who are in part guided to it from Ga 6:17, thinking that it was written at a time when Paul was there suffering imprisonment. But of this there is no certainty.