

JUSTIFICATION IN THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

A SEMI-CRITICAL STUDY OF

GALATIANS 2:15-4:31

By

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Like as the earth engendereth not rain, nor is
able by her own strength, labour, and travail, to pro-
cure the same, but receiveth it of the mere gift of God
from above; so this heavenly righteousness is given us
of God without our works or deservings.

--Martin Luther

PREFACE

In recent years the writer of this thesis has found the doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ alone a doctrine full of comfort. In the writer's early years under the tutorship of priests and nuns he never heard of salvation according to the simplicity which is in Christ. To his knowledge the term justification was not mentioned let alone explained. He never knew the assurance of sins forever forgiven and of a standing before God which is perfect, as a son and joint-heir with Christ eternally. He was saved in a church which taught Arminian doctrine, studied in that church's Bible school, and is ashamed to say that even in those days justification was understood and taught as a half-way house between free grace and the doing of law-works. It is small wonder that the preparation and writing of this thesis has brought fresh blessing and joy as the author has explored anew this wonderful doctrine of Justification in the Book of Galatians.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the faculty of Grace Theological Seminary which has provided me the needed tools for the exegetical and doctrinal study of this Epistle. The continuous emphasis upon God's Grace in this institution has helped to adorn the doctrine of

justification as nothing else could have done.

There is one author to whom, though he has long ago deceased, I owe a debt of gratitude for leaving behind him what I consider the most valuable commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. I allude to John Brown, D.D., who was for many years Professor of Theology for the United Presbyterian Church and senior Pastor of the United Presbyterian congregation in Broughton Place, Edinburgh, around the year 1853. He has done an exhaustive piece of work in a 450-page book entitled An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians. He had for years made a study of Galatians from the original language and had shared the exegesis and notes with members of his Greek class. Some thirty years later, at the request of his students, he compiled this masterful treatise on Galatians. His bibliography lists some one hundred and ten books consulted, most of them foreign works dealing with critical text problems and exegesis of an expository nature.

The writer has also gained valuable help from D. Witt Burton whose translation of the text is precise, clear and lucid. Indebtedness is acknowledged to the Drs. Lenski, Tenney, and Wuest for their insight into the relations of law to grace in the Epistle and to Lightfoot and Ramsay for technicalities of word usages in the text as new light has been gained in later years from archaeological and textual discoveries.

Particular acknowledgment is made to my thesis committee consisting of Dr. Herman Hoyt, Dr. James Boyer, and Professor Homer Kent, Jr. for their advice and words of encouragement.

A word of gratitude is not out of order to my good wife who with cheerfulness, patience and real interest plodded with me through matters of Greek grammar, proof-reading and typing.

Finally, I am deeply thankful to the Blessed Holy Spirit who inspired this Epistle so that I can rest assured its contents are truth, and Who instructed me in a new way to see the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	11
INTRODUCTION.	2
THE APOSTLE'S THESIS STATED	9
Introduction	
Exegesis and Doctrinal Commentary	
Gal. 2:15-21	
Summary	
THE APOSTLE'S THESIS PROVEN	33
Introduction	
Exegesis and Doctrinal Commentary	
First Argument: Gal. 3:1-5	
Second Argument: Gal. 3:6-14	
Third Argument: Gal. 3:15-20	
Summary	
THE APOSTLE'S THESIS APPLIED	91
Introduction	
The Appeal to Their Pride: Gal. 4:1-11	
The Appeal to Their Emotions: Gal. 4:12-20	
The Appeal to Their Intellect: Gal. 4:21-31	
APPENDIX.	118
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	122

INTRODUCTION

1. The Heart of Galatians Is Justification

The doctrine of Justification by Faith is the heart of the Epistle to the Galatians. It begins with Gal. 2:15 and ends with Gal. 4. This is the only doctrine that is fully unfolded in the Epistle. Any teaching on the subjects of grace, law, adoption, sanctification, serves like spokes to help unfold the whole wheel of God's method in declaring a person righteous and giving him a perfect standing before God. There is hardly a word in the Epistle about prayer, the resurrection of the body, the second coming of Christ, the millennial kingdom, or heaven. It is this central teaching concerning justification in the Epistle to the Galatians that this thesis will be solely occupied in unfolding.

2. A Comparison of the Doctrine of Justification in Galatians With That in Romans

Because the doctrine of Justification has been given such paramount importance in both the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Galatians, the two have been called companion epistles. A comparison of the two will show that the intent of writing and therefore the manner of presenting the doctrine were different in the two cases. In the Roman Epistle we find a positive, well-

rounded treatise on the whole plan of salvation, beginning with condemnation and ending with glorification. The Epistle to the Galatians, however, is a forceful polemic, delivered by the most forceful apostle of Christ against a great crisis which was developing in the early church. The intent of this polemical writing was to check the influence of Judaistic teaching prevalent in that day, causing many believers to mingle law, and in particular the law of Moses, with the free grace which is in Christ.

The apostle Paul is at his best in this letter, under God, at combating this heresy propagated by law teachers who sought to put the fetters of their perverted Judaism upon the Church which Christ had established. In this Epistle he argues, he appeals, he threatens, he convicts, he illustrates; in short, he leaves no stone unturned in his effort to wipe out this subtle error which had already taken hold of the Galatian churches. The soul of that man of God was stirred to its depths and met the impending crisis with all the force of his nature.

3. Definition of Justification and Use of the Term "Justification by Faith"

Justification doctrinally speaking can be defined as: an act of God's free grace, whereby He pardons all our sins, declares us righteous once and forever, and treats us as though we had never sinned. A sinner can

be declared righteous even though he is a transgressor of God's law, because, through the death of Christ he has been given a new standing in Christ who suffered in his place, satisfying the demands and penalty of the law and thereby releasing him from sin and guilt.

This key phrase "Justification by Faith," though not appearing exactly in this stated form in Galatians, has been coined by conservative theologians to best depict in short the manner in which God deals in justice with one who is in Christ and who is released from the bondage of the law as well as the guilt and penalty of sin.

4. The Cross Is Central to the Doctrine of Justification

One cannot discuss the doctrine concerning how God declares a man righteous without bringing in the cross of Jesus Christ as central to the doctrine. This is exactly what the apostle does. He presents the atoning work of Christ as the very hub of his discussion on justification, as well as of the whole Epistle to the Galatians. Every chapter has either a direct reference to the cross or a clear inference regarding it. An example of this is seen in alliterative form as follows:

The Purpose of the Cross--1:4--"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us. . ."

The Power of the Cross--2:20--"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. . ."

The Price of the Cross--3:13--"Christ hath re-

deemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: . . ."

The Privilege of the Cross--4:5--"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The Persecution of the Cross--5:11--". . . if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased."

The Preciousness of the Cross--6:14--"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Yes, the apostle was determined not to let the Galatian believers be bewitched into soon forgetting the truth of justification as he portrayed the cross before them "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. 3:1).

5. The Vital Need of Emphasizing Justification in Preaching Today

"The battle between the bondage of legalism and spiritual Christianity has never ceased. The peril is always real."¹ The church has from time to time been bewitched by Satan's false emissaries who ever seek to amalgamate the pure grace of God with law-works. Such persons as Arius, Pelagius, Arminius, Ellen White, Charles Russell, and others, repeat themselves in every age. They leave behind them a Galatianized form of Christianity. Satan uses various sorts of instruments in the hands of these false emissaries. Such are: an emphasis on man's

¹A. T. Robertson, The Glory of the Ministry (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1911), p. 78.

ability to secure his salvation; emphasis on keeping saved by doing; a wrong emphasis on the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, either giving them magical qualities or enlarging them, as did the Catholic Fathers, making seven holy sacraments that have the power to save one's soul; ritualism; keeping of special days and of the Sabbath day; a substitute of liturgy for preaching; many others. Even neo-orthodoxy, orthodox as it purports to be, carries neither a convicting message of God's plan in justification nor even a conviction of the historical reality of that contained in the Scriptures. It is in the final analysis an allegorical philosophy of self-salvation.

All of the above could be lumped together under the expression "law-works"--an inclusion of self-effort, be it small or great. Any attempt to supplement the doctrine of justification with law-keeping inevitably dishonors Christ's atoning work, disrupts God's grace, diminishes the work of the Holy Spirit, and destroys the full assurance of the believer.

There are always in every church some men who feel called to slip the noose of legalism on God's free-men, instead of telling others about the easy yoke of Christ which stragely enough brings liberty. This is why the vital message of justification needs to ring out clearly in our day. Thank God for raising up men in every age like Luther who shouted aloud "the just shall

live by faith," like Bunyan who preached of "grace abounding," like Spurgeon who ever taught that salvation is all of grace, like Ironside who could so quickly warm the heart with a Christ-centered message on grace, devoid of a single ounce of law-works.

In none of the Pauline epistles is the cardinal truth of justification by faith so cogently and concisely stated as it is in this epistle. These men like Luther quickly chose the Epistle to the Galatians as the most efficient engine in overthrowing encroaching legalism within the church. If Galatians and its doctrine of justification were rightly understood in Christendom, there would be no such thing as Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, and the like, cults that heap law-works upon their adherents as a necessary prerequisite to God's favor and eternal blessing. If Galatians were rightly understood in Christendom, and its teaching concerning justification, there would be no such thing as the Roman Catholic Church with its system of works and merits, coupled with superstition, fear and bondage. If Galatians were rightly understood in its doctrine of justification, there would be no Holiness groups and those seeking to add a "second blessing" to the one and eternal blessing of salvation by grace, never sure that they can keep the "first blessing." To give forth this doctrine in all its glory and truth is the challenge of the pulpit in these days of apostasy.

6. The Plan of This Thesis

This thesis is a semi-critical approach to the study of Gal. 2:15-4:31. An exegesis will be done only on the important words which help to establish and unfold the main study. Both exegesis and commentary on every verse of the section have as their objective to point to a doctrinal study and resumé of each section of the main outline of the subject of "Justification in the Book of Galatians."

Paul states from beginning to end of the epistle: a man is justified solely by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ apart from any law or law-works whatsoever. This statement we shall call "The Apostle's Thesis." APOSTLE'S THESIS STATED

A broad outline of this study is:

- I. The Apostle's Thesis Stated. 2:15-21.
- II. The Apostle's Thesis Proven. 3:1-29.
- III. The Apostle's Thesis Applied. 4:1-31.

THE APOSTLE'S THESIS STATED

Introduction

In Gal. 2:11-14 Paul narrates the incident of controversy which he had with Peter at Antioch. From this as a springboard and continuing with this incident in mind, he proceeds into the doctrinal portion of this Epistle, the teaching which from the beginning of his writing he has been suppressing until just the right moment. Feeling that he had properly prepared the minds of his readers, he sets out with all the force he can muster upon his thesis that justification is by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, minus any and all law-works. This occupies the remainder of Chapter 2.

In these last seven verses he recalls that both he and Peter, and other saved Jews had abandoned divine law as a body of statutes (legalistically interpreted) when they experienced justification and the new birth through Christ. An action such as Peter's (and by inference the Galatians') in returning back under law, only serves to make one a transgressor again. Not only so, but when one seeks to return under law to complete the work of grace in his life, he makes of no account the grace of Christ. Therefore the Apostle's thesis simply stated is that he no longer has any relation to

the Law of Moses as to any claim upon him, but there is resident in him a living Christ, who has imparted to him a power to live a spiritual life devoted to God which he never could do before by law-keeping. And this is all of pure grace.

Exegesis and Doctrinal Commentary

Gal. 2:15-21

Gal. 2:15, 16.--We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

"We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles."--By the word "we" is to be understood saved Jews for the pronoun is modified by the participial phrase "knowing that a man is not justified by works . . . but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Paul possibly has in mind, besides himself, Peter who was the subject of the preceding context and Barnabas whom he mentions in verse 13, who was on Paul's initial journey in evangelizing the Galatians. The phrase "Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles" is a flash-back in the memory of Paul to the time when he and the others were Jews prior to their experience of justification, thinking themselves a superior and privileged race because they strove after the righteousness of the Mosaic law, and endeavored to produce law-works to be "right" before God, unlike the "dogs" of the Gentiles, devoid of these laws.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law."--The participle "knowing," having the force of a present tense, relates to the tense of the main verb "we believed," *ἐπιστεύσαμεν*, which is aorist. Thus Paul was confessing for himself and the other saved Jews that

it was with the knowledge that the law had been unable to justify them that they turned to Jesus Christ and believed on Him. This purpose in turning to Jesus to be justified is further stated in the *ἵνα* clause which immediately follows the word *ἐπιστεύσαμεν*. The verse really reads: "Since we had come to understand that a man could not be justified out of law-works but rather through faith in Christ Jesus, even we put our trust once for all in Christ Jesus for the purpose of being justified out of faith in Christ and not out of law-works."

"By the works of the law."--This phrase, repeated three times over in verse 16, lacks the article both with the word "works" and the word "law." Paul is speaking to Jews, so certainly the whole law of Moses is intended. But since the phrase appears in a general sense, any works of any law are excluded as having power to make one righteous before God. As Lenski says:

For the third time 'law-works' are excluded; for the third time we have the verb 'to declare righteous,' all three passive, with God as the agent. The road to righteousness by way of works is triply barred. The future 'shall not be declared righteous' means that no case of this kind will ever occur, . . .²

All law-works have to do with physical, bodily matters. In Gal. 3:2, 3 the word "flesh," used ethically, and in Gal. 4:29 "after the flesh" are parallel express-

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1937), p. 108.

ions that refer to the same thing, namely, self effort to keep some kind of statutes of law. Examples will illustrate better than mere definition. Circumcision, kosher eating, strict Sabbath observance, refraining from meat on certain days, and all such, are endeavors to establish personal righteousness before God. Sometimes it is not the overt act of following written laws according to a certain sect, but subtle insistence upon establishing a new code of ethics that becomes law-works, especially when there is an endeavor to superimpose this code upon another. Such is the rule of wearing or not wearing certain types of apparel as manifesting holiness.

"Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ."--The verb "to justify," *δικαιόω*, means "to declare righteous, to acquit from guilt." The verb and its cognate, *δικαιοσύνη* which is the noun meaning "righteousness," are found twelve times in the epistle. They are as follows:

2:16--"a man is not justified by the works of the law"

2:16--"that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law"

2:16--"by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"

2:17--"while we seek to be justified by Christ"

2:21--"if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

3:6---"Abraham believed. . .accounted to him for righteousness."

3:8---"foreseeing that God would justify the

heathen through faith"

3:11--"that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God"

3:21--"if. . . a law given which could have given life, . . . righteousness should have been by the law."

3:24--"that we might be justified by faith."

5:4---"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law"

5:5---"we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

The above quotations show plainly that what Paul has to say about justification is that a man is not justified by law or effort of the flesh, but by faith.

In the Scriptures justification refers to a legal relation which the regenerate man bears to the moral law and to his standing in God's sight. The believer in Christ whose sins have been pardoned has been given the standing before God and the law, by God, of one who is declared righteous, and he is treated as though he had never sinned. Dr. Lenski in speaking of the word *δικαίω* and its cognates, says that they are always used in the forensic sense of declaring one righteous. The word itself assumes that a trial has taken place in which God as the judge has pronounced the sinner "righteous." He states that this is true even in secular usage as well as in the Hebrew, the Greek, the Apocrypha, and in the Old and New Testaments. The passive forms are to be taken as passive, "to be pronounced righteous," and never as middle, "to become righteous." Several of these appear

in the Galatians' passages and are clearly intended to be passive forms.³

That the word cannot be used in the sense of "making one righteous" or one "becoming righteous" can be seen from Luke 7:29 where it says: "all the people that heard him [Christ] justified God." Obviously the word "justified" can not be translated "make righteous," for it would lead to an absurdity. God's character is eternally righteous. This is an attribute rightfully ascribed to Him. What is meant by the Luke passage is that the people "declared God righteous."

Thus we are to understand the meaning of "justified" here in Gal. 2:16. The verdict of the eternal God upon one who has exercised faith in Jesus Christ is that he is "not guilty," he is "declared righteous." This is his standing or position in the sight of God.

Some further facts about "justification" should be noted:

1. Justification is an act that takes place in the mind of God and not in the constitution of the believer. This is implied in the use of *δικαίωσις*.

2. Justification has to do with the believer's legal standing before an eternal Judge, in contrast to regeneration which has to do with the imparting of a new nature. Gal. 2:19, 20.

3. Justification is an instantaneous and irrevocable act of God in once and for all declaring a sinner righteous. Gal. 2:16, 17.

4. Justification includes pardon for sin. But

³Ibid., p. 105.

pardon has reference to the past sins as forgiven, whereas justification is the act by which God determines to treat the believer hereafter as a righteous person. This is the ever present standing of the believer. Gal. 3:13.

5. When a man is justified, he never ceases to feel deserving personally of eternal punishment. "He that is justified by faith and goes to heaven will go there admitting he deserves eternal death, and that he is saved wholly by favor and not desert."⁴

6. Justification is used in one essentially different way in human law courts from the way it is used in the Divine court. It is impossible for an earthly judge to both pardon and justify a man. If a man in our courts of law is justified, it means that the judge has found no basis for the charge laid against him. He is declared innocent and there is nothing to be pardoned. However, in the sight of God and His Holiness, all men are guilty to start with and God not only pardons, but He justifies the saved man who is "in Christ."

"By the faith of Jesus Christ."--This does not have to do with the faith which Christ had on earth. The construction is an objective genitive, referring to the faith of the believer toward Christ, and in Him. There is only one condition for justification on man's part, namely faith. Even faith in itself cannot be considered a work, for in Rom. 4:5 we read: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." It is an act for which even the strength to act comes from God Himself (Eph. 2:8, 9). Christ is at once the object, the author, and the finisher of our faith.

Strictly speaking faith itself does not justify.

⁴John Brown, An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853), p. 92.

It is rather the grace of God and His promises which faith, as the hand of the heart, lays hold of. It is God alone who justifies.

"For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."--As we look back at the tabulations of the eight times justification is used in Galatians, it should be observed that four times out of the eight the statement is made that no flesh is justified by the works of the law. Every Jew and Gentile has broken any law under which he was placed. Therefore the law could only condemn men and never justify them. Once the condemnation is pronounced, there is no way to remove the guilt. Not even suffering the punishment will remove the guilt though it may satisfy the penalty.

Dr. Tenney indicates two reasons why one who offends the law of God cannot compensate for his violations by performing more good deeds. First, he indicates that a superabundance of obedience on one occasion does not offset an act of disobedience committed on a previous occasion. The law makes perfect obedience obligatory at all times. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). Secondly, sin, when committed, produces a sort of chain reaction which leads to other sins. Imperfect man soon accumulates a record

of sin and becomes involved in the habit of sin, becoming unable to trace his steps from disobedience to obedience. If God had to wait for a sinner to struggle out from beneath his sins by perfecting himself in self-effort, the sinner would never be saved.⁵

Justification by faith means that the saved sinner trusts Christ to do for him what he cannot do for himself. Christ's righteousness succeeded where human righteousness failed. There are still people today who react violently against the message of justification by grace through faith. They detest the thought that through the death and righteousness of another they should be saved. They do not want to be indebted to another for their salvation. They say in effect: "I won't come to God as a mendicant, for I believe that if one keeps the ten commandments and lives up to the sermon on the mount and does the best he can, God will require no more." Oh that such a one could understand that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Now to gather all the scattered phrases of verses 15 and 16 which we have commented on together into a paraphrase, we might render them this way:

We who were born Jews, that is, men of privilege as against the uncircumcised Gentiles, having fully

⁵Merrill C. Tenney, Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p. 118, 119.

recognized that law-works could not justify us, we turned to Christ and put all our trust in Him in order that He might do for us what the law could not do for us, namely, justify us, for the law could not justify anyone, Jew or Gentile.

Gal. 2:17, 18.--But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Undoubtedly verses 17 and 18 have reference to Peter's action of withdrawing from the table of Gentile fellowship and hurrying to the side of the legalistic Jews. Paul is still speaking of Peter and any saved Jew who finds himself in that position. That he has Jewish believers in mind seems clear from the phrase "if I build again the things which I destroyed." Though he also has the Galatians in mind by inference, because they too were seeking to be under the law, they were largely Gentiles (though not altogether, for there were Jews among them) who had never been under the law given by God to the Jews. Paul will deal with them in their position beginning with Chapter 3. But he wants first to drive home his thesis of justification by faith, using Peter's incident.

"While we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners."--This is Peter who while he sought to be justified by Christ (thus freely sitting in the company of Gentiles) was looked upon by the Judaizers as a *ἁμαρτωλός*, a sinner like the Gentiles (see

vs. 15). His action in such a situation was to turn away from fellowship with the Gentiles in the presence of the Judaizers, as though to agree with the Jews that keeping company with the Gentiles was to become a sinner like he used to think of a Gentile. It was as though Peter were saying that God was a promoter of sin in calling Jews and Gentiles equally to be justified in Christ. So he separated himself from the sinner Gentiles.

"Is Christ therefore the minister of sin?"--Can this be, Paul asks? Does God promote sin? God forbid. He does not!

"For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."--God is not the promoter of sin, but rather Peter, in putting himself back under the law, making himself a transgressor of the law. Peter, by his ill-favored example would feign have built again the middle wall of partition and have given the impression to the Gentiles that they really ought to be circumcised and become proselytes to Judaism in order to be right with God. Thus Peter made himself a transgressor, (though Paul courteously puts himself into this statement, using "I" when all the time he has Peter in mind.)

Peter had been taught by the Lord in a vision that in Christ the Gentile was no longer to be looked upon as "unclean." God was dealing with the Jew and the Gentile on the same basis. Peter thereafter, by

fellowshipping with the Gentiles and by a clear declaration at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:11), had witnessed to the fact that the partition between Jew and Gentile was destroyed. He had said in effect, that no longer must the Gentile be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they," were his own words. Yet now by his act of duplicity, Peter destroyed his well established principle and made himself a transgressor.

Gal. 2:19.--For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

The presence of the personal pronoun "I," ἐγώ , is significant here. Before, Paul used the first person somewhat as a courtesy to Peter, but now he is being emphatic in saying that no matter what others may do, as for Paul, "I am dead to the law."

The question arises as to how we are to understand the word "law" used twice in this verse. It is used both times without the article and the verse lends itself to two possible views:

First View.--Through one kind of law I am dead to another kind of law. In this interpretation Paul is saying that through the law of faith I am released from obligation to law-works. This view would find a close parallel in Rom. 8:2: "for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of

sin and death." sense is a believer dead to the law of

Second View.--Through the law of Moses, I am dead to the law of Moses. In this interpretation Paul is saying that by means of the Mosaic law convicting him as a sinner and condemning him, he was shown how utterly impossible it was to be justified by the law of Moses. In trying to attain to the righteousness of the law by law-keeping Paul had learned that its moral standards were too high to attain. Not only so, but he learned that the law actually offered no help to him as a sinner. So he ceased from all relation to the law of Moses.

It would seem that the second view is the more likely one to be correct because of the use of "law" as the Mosaic law throughout the Epistle. It also seems likely because of the immediate relation of verse 19 to verse 21 where the apostle goes on to expand upon the statement by showing that by co-crucifixion with Christ he is dead to the law. The only law which he knew in the past was the Mosaic law. One need not be too dogmatic on this however for the important part is not so much the first anarthrous use of "law" but the second. Both views make the second law to be the law of Moses. Almost to a man commentators agree that the last mentioned "law" in this verse refers to the Mosaic law.

"Dead to the law."--How is this metaphor to be

taken? In what sense is a believer dead to the law of Moses? Some, like Scofield, say that "dead" means the law slew him. "The believer's relation to the law is that of a dead man, the law killed him. The law which he violated as a sinner condemned and executed him, finding the sinner red-handed, . . . it slew him."⁶

Others, mostly covenant theologians, qualify the metaphor by saying "dead to the law" as a medium of justification, but not dead to it as a standard of conduct. So they have Paul half-dead to the law.

The writer feels that "dead to the law" means that Paul died to it in the sense that he no longer regarded the law as either a medium of justification or sanctification and that, when he was converted, its claims upon him ceased. The aorist tense of the verb suggests a crisis moment when Paul died with respect to the law. This agrees perfectly with Burton who says: "In the usage of Paul 'to die to' a thing is to cease to have any relation to it, so that it has no further claim or control over one. See Rom. 6:2, 10, 11; 7:6."⁷

Since a correct understanding of this verse is so vital to the whole approach to the Book of Galatians,

⁶G. I. Scofield, Galatians (Pub. by A. C. Gabelein: New York, 1903), p. 17.

⁷D. W. Burton, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, The International Critical Commentary, eds. C. A. Briggs, Samuel R. Driver and Alfred Plummer (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 132.

the writer is going to incorporate several arguments by Dr. Alva J. McClain which demonstrate clearly that the believer is "dead to the law" both as a medium of justification and as a rule of life (though actually the law never was a means of justification even in the Old Testament).

The Word of God condemns unsparingly all attempts to put the Christian believer 'under the law.' . . . Let the sincere seeker after truth read this epistle [referring to Galatians] over and over, noting carefully the precise error with which the writer deals. It is not a total rejection of the Gospel of God's grace and a turning back to a total legalism. It is rather the error of saying that the Christian life, having begun by simple faith in Christ, must thereafter continue under the law or some part of it.⁸

According to the New Testament, the Christian is 'delivered from the law.' This is the central argument of the seventh chapter of Romans, which failure to see and accept leads inevitably to that moral and spiritual defeat pictured so vividly later in the chapter. Such believers had not learned that 'ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ,' and that 'we are delivered from the law.' Both verbs are in the aorist tense pointing back to something done once for all. The same book sums up the argument in one irrefutable statement, 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth' (Rom. 10:4).

The conclusion must be that the law itself as law, for the Christian, has been 'abolished.' No one can read the third chapter of 2 Corinthians with an unprejudiced attitude and not see that the writer is discussing the very center of the law of God with its 'tables of stone' (3). All this, so far as the Christian believer is concerned, has been 'done away' (11); it has been 'abolished' (13).⁹

⁸Alva J. McClain, Law and the Christian Believer in Relation to the Doctrine of Grace (The Brethren Missionary Herald Company: Winona Lake, Ind., 1954), p. 37.

⁹Ibid., p. 34.

McClain further makes reference to two New Testament passages: Eph. 2:15: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;" and Col. 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, . . . nailing it to his cross." In so doing, the Lord spoiled the powers of darkness, for Satan who accused us through the guilt and penalty of the law which we rightfully deserved, can no longer do so. Every penalty of the law has been paid and its demands met through the perfect lamb of God.¹⁰

Lenski, in the forceful words of another Luther says: "

You are like a corpse, at which law can thunder with all its might, and get in response not even the stirring of a finger, or the flicker of an eyelash. Why? Because you have found the righteousness of faith.¹¹

"That I might live unto God."--Undoubtedly this verse applies to devoted living toward God. Paul never wanted to even intimate that the abrogation of law for the believer gave license to lawlessness. Thus this verse is a safeguard to admonish us, that, once we are justified, we no longer live a self-centered, carnal life, to the lust of the flesh and of men, but we live to do the will of God, to seek His honor and glory.

Gal. 2:20.--I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by

¹⁰Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 114.

the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

"I am crucified with Christ, . . . I live; yet not I."--This verse is an expansion on the doctrinal statement of the preceding verse and a clearer illumination of it. It is cast in the perfect tense and literally reads: "I have been crucified with Christ." This perfect tense usage means that the act of co-crucifixion was completed in a point of time in the past and its effect continues to the present.

But in what sense was the apostle crucified with Christ? Not in experience, for only the two thieves were literally crucified with Him. Christ was crucified for Paul and all believers in their room and stead as a representative head and in a judicial sense. Paul as well as the whole church of Christ entered into that crucifixion in a two-fold legal sense: 1) objectively, in a mystical and judicial way Paul died in relation to the law when Christ died on Calvary's cross and satisfied the law's demand, thus bringing an end to the reign of law for him (and thus all believers: Col. 2:14, Rom. 10:4); 2) subjectively, Paul died in relation to the sinful disposition of the "natural man" or "old man" as expressed by the phrase "It is no longer I that lives (ASV)." Here the emphatic $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ appears again, implying that under the law it was the self-centered "I," the Saul of Tarsus, that lived. It is the same $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ as expressed in Rom. 7: 14-20 where the self-centered "old man" with his inherent

sinful disposition was striving for righteousness by the doing of law-works. It was this powerful bent to evil that was broken by the death of Christ as is most clearly stated in Rom. 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Old Saul of Tarsus died mystically with Christ at Calvary. He who was seeking righteousness by the law was found guilty of blasphemy, of murder, of persecuting the Church of Jesus Christ. But when the divine alchemy of the cross changed the self-willed, law-transgressing Saul, he was no longer Saul, the son of Adam, but Paul, the son of God and devoted apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But Christ liveth in me."--Even as Paul was identified with Christ in death judicially, dying to law and self-effort, so he was identified with Christ's resurrection in regeneration. He received Christ as an indwelling reality even as believers today receive Him (Jno. 1:12). Christ actually made Paul, as He does all believers, a partaker of His own glorious eternal life. Christ's righteousness justified him, His Spirit regenerated him. Herein is a distinctive difference in the experience of the New Testament believer in this dispensation of grace, in contrast to the Old Testament believer. In the Old Testament the Lord is always pictured as outside the believer; in the New Testament the

indwelling presence of Christ is an eternal possession of the believer.

"And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."--Here Paul distinguishes the spiritual life which comes from the indwelling Christ from the natural life of the human body, flesh. No longer does the depraved sin nature dominate him but the indwelling Christ controls him. Consequently, the life which Paul now lives in his natural body, his opinions, his habits, his loyal devotions, are energized by Christ who loved him, died for him and now indwells him. This all came about by putting his trust in Christ, not by striving to attain to a standard of righteousness.

Gal. 2:21.--I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

"I do not frustrate the grace of God."--The word "frustrate," ἀθετέω, means to "nullify, set aside, to represent as useless." The grace of God is His sovereign favor in saving a sinner on the basis of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. To frustrate the grace of God is to act in such a way in relation to the law as to say that Christ's work in the believer's behalf was not sufficient to justify him. But since Paul knows "that a man is. . . justified by the faith of Jesus Christ," he in no way nullifies the grace of God. By no action of his will he be found guilty of this.

"For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ

is dead in vain."--Paul uses the substantive *δικαιοσύνη* for the first time in this epistle. It means "the state of being right with God." At this point the apostle reaches the climax to all that he has been saying. He faces Peter, and the Galatians, and all believers, with one great fact, that if righteousness, or the state of being right with God, could come by adherence to the works of law, then Christ died without a cause, needlessly.

The word is *δωρεάν*, "without just cause, unnecessarily." The same word is used in Jno. 15:25 where the Lord quotes from the Old Testament as He speaks of the hatred of the unbelieving world for Him and the Father: "They hated me without a cause." Here in Galatians Paul uses it as he says that either Christ's death is all that is needed by which to receive God's declaration of "righteous" upon the believer, or there was no need of his death at all. And if His death was unnecessary, grace is abolished. But the cross is the climax of God's free grace offered to men who can not possibly keep the law. Therefore Christ did not die needlessly, for nothing. He died because no law-keeping could gain acquittal from the penalty of sin, and God's grace was revealed in Christ's death. However, as Bishop remarks sagely: "Grace is frustrated if it be mixed with anything but grace."¹² Either God's grace is all or it is nothing.

¹²George Sayles Bishop, Grace in Galatians (Cleveland: Herald Publishing Co., 1913), p. 35.

Summary

Having examined this section of the Book of Galatians, 2:15-21, we see that Paul has stated his thesis concerning justification, having in mind Jewish believers in particular and Gentile believers by inference. He has cited the incident of his dealing with Peter and Barnabas and with this in mind, he speaks to any who have been persuaded by Judaistic teaching to put themselves back under law.

The thesis has been stated from several different points of view:

- 1) Negatively, justification is not attained out of law-works. This was stated three times in the one verse, 16.
- 2) Positively, justification is by faith alone in Jesus Christ. This also was stated three times in verse 16.
- 3) Becoming at one with Gentiles by faith in Christ is not to make one a sinner; rather, to go back under the law is to make oneself a transgressor.
- 4) The believer's position in being justified by faith is that he is completely dead as far as having any relation to the law, but he has a new life, a spiritual life, to live unto Christ in God by faith.
- 5) Any effort to fuse law with grace is to completely nullify grace.
- 6) The believers to whom he writes, who have

trusted in Christ for salvation and yet feel the need of returning to law-works, are faced with the fact that if righteousness comes by the law, Christ's death on the cross was unnecessary and pointless and they are totally without hope.

Paul's personal testimony clinches his thesis as he states in essence that the cross-centered doctrine of justification is all sufficient for him. He has demonstrated its sufficiency by his own experience. Having met Christ in salvation on the Damascus road, his life principle of righteousness was completely changed. No longer did he depend upon self-effort, let alone the law of Moses, for righteousness. He died to both when Christ regenerated him. From then on, the life he lived he lived by the power of the indwelling Christ, devoted to Him.

Introduction

Having stated cogently that a person is justified by faith, apart from any law-works, the Apostle proceeds to chapter three to prove his thesis. He does so in three ways: first, the salvation experience of the Galatian believers testifies to it; second, the experience of Abraham and his seed testifies to it; third, Paul demonstrates effectively that God's unconditional promise to Abraham was to justify the Gentiles by free grace and this was in no sense annulled by the temporary institution of the Mosaic law.

In this chapter the Apostle presents a bird's-eye-view of God's dispensational dealings through two periods, the first period stretching from Abraham to Christ and the second from Christ through the present day of grace. Between Abraham and Christ, the law was introduced. Only as the believer sees in clear perspective the antithetical relation of the Mosaic law to justification as resolved by the cross of Christ, can he fully understand justification by faith. Only the Holy Spirit could have inspired such a precious portion of God's Word.

Exegesis and Doctrinal Commentary

First Argument: Gal. 3:1-5

Gal. 3:1.--O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

"O foolish Galatians."--The word "foolish" used here, in origin, means "without a mind," or failure to use one's power of perception." It is equivalent to accusing the Galatians of having been carried away by their emotions and not using their heads. This expression does not refer to a national characteristic such as fickleness or instability, as some have ascribed to the Galatians, due to a Celtic background. If this were so, Paul would have used another word equal to "O fickle Galatians." Not only so, but an allusion to such a trait would have been an insult which the apostle was too much of a gentleman to have used.

"Who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth."--Here the word "bewitch", *βασκαίνω*, is "to influence with the evil eye," literally and ethically, "to dupe." This is suggestive of one of Satan's devices in using his ministers, the Judaizers, to take the attention of the Galatians from the truth of the cross and lead them into error. Paraphrased, the sentence would read: "Who put you under a sort of spell so that you lost your grip on the truth and have accepted error?"

"Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evi-

dently set forth, crucified among you."--"Evidently set forth" is a translation of the word *προγράφω* which means "to make known by posting a placard in public." Dr Hoyt in his notes on Galatians mentions a case in which the word appears in the papyri of a father who posted public notice to the effect that he would not be responsible for the debts of his son.¹³ The word also means "to proclaim publicly before the people or make a public announcement." Paul proclaimed publicly before the Galatians news of a better kind, namely that Christ was crucified to pay the debts of whosoever would believe on Him.

"Jesus Christ. . . crucified among you."--The words "among you" do not appear in the Greek. The verse really reads: "Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been proclaimed crucified." John Brown, in commenting on this phrase observes that such expressions as "Christ crucified," and "the cross of Christ," are phrases which in Paul's epistles are expressive of the whole doctrine of the gospel way of salvation through the sufferings and death of Christ. This is found in such passages as 1 Cor. 1:23: "We preach Christ crucified;" 1 Cor. 2:2: "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" Gal. 4:14: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus

¹³Herman A. Hoyt, unpublished "Notes on Galatians" (Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind.: n. d.), p. 35 (Mimeographed).

Christ." Thus when the apostle said "Christ. . . crucified" had been proclaimed to them, he meant that they had been taught so clearly by doctrine that the atonement of Christ at Calvary was the sole procuring cause of their salvation, that none of them could have missed the clear emphasis on salvation by grace alone and on the satisfaction which Christ has provided.¹⁴ This is the message which the apostle proclaimed in all places wherever he went.

Gal. 3:2.--This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Since the majority of the Galatians were Gentiles, they were really without law, a people who prior to the coming of the Judaizers had paid no attention to the works of the Old Testament law at all. This rhetorical question places "the works of the law" and "the hearing of faith" as direct opposites in relation to the receiving of the Spirit. So does the question also in verse 5 in relation to the working of miracles by the Spirit. When they received the Spirit, it was either out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith, but not both. Obviously it was not out of the works of the law for they never before paid any attention to the law as unbelievers. The answer to the question is left understood because it is so plain to the Galatians: they received the Spirit only by the hearing of

¹⁴John Brown, op. cit., p. 104.

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the message which proclaimed faith!

Gal. 3:3.--Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

This is an ironical question, reasoning from the greater to the lesser to point out the incongruity of the Galatians. The implication is that God's help was needed to introduce them to salvation, but now they are trying to complete the work of salvation by themselves. Since "are ye now made perfect" is in the middle voice, it should read: "are ye now perfecting yourselves or bringing yourselves to maturity?" In paraphrase the apostle questions: "Since the new birth was produced by the initial working of the Holy Spirit, do ye now think to bring yourselves to maturity by observing ordinances (flesh) which never could produce salvation initially?"

Gal. 3:4.--Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

It is difficult to determine whether the use of this word is to be translated suffer in the sense of "suffering ill" or "experience good." The word lends itself to either. The writer is inclined to the latter translation since it fits the context better and because there is no record of the Galatian churches being persecuted either in the Acts or in Galatians, unless this is the sole mention. If interpreted this way, the apostle asks: "Have you experienced all these spiritual things for nothing, if it really is for nothing?"

Gal. 3:5.--He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

This question parallels the one in verse two but adds that there was a working of miracles by the Spirit among the Galatians in connection with and shortly after their conversion. By this question Paul undoubtedly desired to contrast the present ministry of the false apostles with his own and that of Barnabas when they first came to Galatia. The Galatians heard Paul and Barnabas preach the gospel and saw miracles attend the preaching of grace. They never saw a single power-work attend the ministry of the false teachers.

An instance of this miraculous working of the Spirit in conjunction with the apostles' preaching can be seen in Acts 14:8, 9 where the crippled man at Lystra was healed. It is recorded that he was healed by simple faith in the message which was preached.

Some would object to this interpretation that the two participles, both in the present tense, "ministereth the Spirit" and "worketh miracles" have reference to the time when Paul was preaching among the Galatians and they first accepted Christ. Rather they feel that the participles relate to a work still in progress even though the Galatians had accepted the teaching of the Judaizers and were engaged in law-works. However, as Burton points out, both participles are limited by the one article and therefore evidently refer to the same

person, describing related activities affecting the same persons--that is, the Galatians in the time of their experience of salvation. Burton goes on to say that "the participles may be either general presents, in effect equivalent to nouns, 'the supplier', 'the worker,' or progressive presents, and in that case participles of identical action, since they refer to the same action as the unexpressed principal verb. The choice of the present tense rather than the aorist shows that the apostle has in mind an experience extended enough to be thought of as in progress, but not that it is in progress at the time of the writing."¹⁵ Paul must have meant it this way, else verse five would not be understandable and would remain a deep mystery.

Summary.--Religious experience is not the final criterion for truth, technically speaking, due to the variable subjective elements which enter into experience. The Bible revelation alone has that noble place. Nevertheless, God's salvation to the individual soul is based on Bible revelation. In one essential the experience of all truly born-again believers assumes a universal pattern, namely the personal witness of the believer as to sonship. It is this witness of the Galatians that the apostle turned to for proof of his thesis concerning justification by faith. He faced them with four questions which brought great heart-searching

¹⁵D. W. Burton, op. cit., p. 151f.

to bear on the Galatian believers. If they were honest with themselves, they had to answer each question with the obvious answer. Did they receive the indwelling Spirit as a result of law-works? No, but when they received the message of salvation by free grace. After the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit had brought new life to them, were they going to have to turn to fleshly efforts to grow in that life? No! Had they experienced these spiritual blessings in vain? They had if they continued their efforts in law works. Did He that both ministered the Spirit to them when they were saved and at the same time worked miracles among them, did He do them by law-works, or out of the message of faith? Out of the message of faith, of course! Then the Galatians' own honest answer to these questions bore proof that they were declared righteous out of faith in Christ and not out of law-works.

Second Argument: Gal. 3:6-14

Gal. 3:6.--Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Beginning with this verse and going through verse 14 Paul proves his thesis by showing that God has always been consistent in His way of justifying sinners. The way has always been the same--justification by faith--whether for Abraham who lived before the law, or for the Jew of the Old Testament age of law, or for the sinner of the New Testament age of grace. To prove this Paul uses an argument ad hominem. The key Old Testament figure used by the Judaizers for their proselyting purposes was Abraham. Therefore Paul turns the Judaizers' chief weapon against themselves by using Abraham as the great Old Testament example of one who was justified by faith.

The Judaizers constantly taught that no Gentile could participate in the blessings of God's covenant with Abraham and in Messianic salvation unless he became, so to speak, a son of Abraham by being circumcised, as Abraham's descendents were, and by keeping the law of Moses (Ac. 15:1, 5, 24). Abraham was venerated by the Jews as their great religious hero even as Martin Luther is today by the Lutherans. It was common practice for the Judaizers to determine their controversies by the precedents established by Abraham, even as Lutherans do today in quoting Luther.

Paul under the Spirit's guidance forcefully

scored a point in this instance by using this supreme Old Testament authority to support the doctrine of justification by faith. It would be similar to a pastor who, let us say, was called to preach in a Lutheran church, whose people had fallen from grace by cluttering their worship service with altars, idol and relic worship, observance of days, and liturgies. This pastor had a clear understanding of the message of grace and felt led to bring a rousing message in this Galatianized Lutheran church on salvation by grace alone. He could fortify himself well by constant allusion to Martin Luther and making sure that he emphasized that "the just shall live by faith alone" as Luther saw it and preaching on just what this meant to Brother Martin.

It was in Abraham, in a unique sense, that this attitude of trustfulness was most marked among all the Old Testament patriarchs. By faith he left home and kindred to settle in a strange country; by faith he received God's promise that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed; by faith he offered up Isaac; by faith he looked for a city without foundation, whose builder is God. As Lightfoot puts it, "This one word 'faith' sums up the lesson of his whole life."¹⁶

"Abraham believed God."--Brown points out that

¹⁶J. B. Lightfoot, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, 1865), p. 159.

this statement "is just equivalent to 'Abraham counted true what God said to him, because God said it.'"¹⁷ It was this subjective, mental assent on Abraham's part that was acceptable to God and the sole basis upon which God declared Abraham as righteous.

"And it was accounted to him for righteousness."—λογίζομαι means to "put to one's account." It was Abraham's act of faith that was put to his account for righteousness. This cuts out the ground from under the Judaistic teachers that the act of circumcision was vital to Galatian salvation in order to become proselyte sons of Abraham.

Gal. 3:7.--Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

The "children of Abraham" translated from the word υἱοί, sons, is used in Scripture in a figurative sense, to indicate one who is involved in the fate or conduct of another; in this case, the one who imitates Abraham's faith and shares in his blessedness. It is as though the apostle said: "They who believe like Abraham are like him, justified; such are the spiritual sons of Abraham."

Gal. 3:8.--And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

In the New Testament when the word "scripture" is used in the singular, it is used almost exclusively

¹⁷ John Brown, op. cit., p. 116.

in reference to the Old Testament. When it is used in the plural form, all Scripture is intended. This passage dealing with God's promise to Abraham in reference to Gentile salvation was taken from Genesis 12, 15, 17.

"And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen."--The translation of this verse is a bit awkward, the thought being that God was looking into a future dispensation in which He would justify Gentiles, and He was giving Abraham an intimation of His purpose in His promise when God said "In thee shall all nations be blessed."

"In thee shall all nations be blessed."--In what sense were all nations blessed in Abraham? Burton points out that justification by faith cannot be "based on a verbal exegesis of the sentence as it stands either in the Hebrew or in the Greek LXX."¹⁸ However verse 16 bears out the thought that ἐν σοί here should be taken in the sense of "in the sphere of" or "in connection with" Abraham's seed. From our vantage point we can see more clearly than Abraham^a how this worked out in connection with Abraham's seed. The Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, made salvation possible to all men without distinction when he uttered the far-reaching statement "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." In Christ the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gen-

¹⁸D. W. Burton, op. cit., p. 160.

tile was broken down so that salvation is available to all men, all classes, races and nations, without exception. Today in every nation where the gospel has been proclaimed and men have put their trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus who is the seed of Abraham, God says, "Write that believer down as another son of Abraham." This was the gospel given unto Abraham.

In a secondary sense, the natural descendents of Abraham, the Jews, were used by God as the channels through which the Bible was inspired and given. Thus again in Abraham's progeny all nations of the earth have benefited by having God's Word.

When did God preach the gospel of grace unto Abraham? One night Jehovah directed Abraham's steps out of his tent and as Ab^araham stood there on the plains of Mamre, viewing the open canopy of heaven, Jehovah said, "Abraham, look now toward heaven and count the stars" (Gen. 15:5). Abraham reflected a moment and probably answered Jehovah that it was a hopeless task. He could not possibly count the stars. Then Jehovah spoke a message of grace to Abraham. He said in essence to Abraham that as the stars are innumerable, so innumerable would be his spiritual progeny from all nations. This was almost unbelievable for Abraham. How could this be when he had not a child, unless it be the son of Hagar, for he and Sarah were old. But Abraham believed God just the same. And the Scriptures say:

"Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."

(Heb. 11:12) This, Paul would have the Galatians know, all came about by faith for as "Abraham believed God, it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Gal. 3:9.--So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Being "blessed with faithful Abraham" is equivalent to becoming a son of Abraham by faith. Again the apostle makes an application to the Galatians. Even as Abraham was the supreme Old Testament example of one who was justified "by grace, through faith, and that not of himself, it was the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8, 9), so must any today who would be a son of Abraham. For "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10) It is as though Paul would emphasize once more to those Galatians who were involved in law-works, that it was not Abraham's obedience to the commandments that justified him, for the law was not yet given; it wasn't submission to the rite of circumcision, for that too came later. It wasn't anything that Abraham accomplished by self-effort, for he couldn't even begin to count the stars. No, no! Oh, Galatians, it was none of those things that entered into Abraham's justification. It was faith in God's proclaimed word. And if you want

to follow Abraham's example in faithfulness, leave off all that excess baggage and walk in faith before Jehovah, and then you shall indeed be sons of Abraham in blessing.

Gal. 3:10.--For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

The particle "for" marks transition. It is equivalent to saying, "furthermore" or "moreover," so that the argument continues smoothly on. This is the second phase of Paul's argument ad hominem. Not only do we become sons of Abraham by faith, and not by law-works, contrary to what the Judaizers said, but cursing rather than blessing comes through the law, also contrary to what the Judaizers said. The Galatians needed to see that, using the basic premise of the Judaizers, the exact opposite was true from what the Judaizers taught.

Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things. . . of the law to do them. To be accursed means to be under divine wrath or condemnation, equivalent to awaiting final destruction. Though the argument is in elliptical form, it can be readily filled out as follows: Just as in the Old Testament (quoting from Deut. 27:26) there was a set of curses engraved on stones which were intended to fall on all those who transgressed the law, so today, where there are men who try to keep the law as a rule of life, they automatically subject themselves to the law's curses unless they can continually abide (present tense is doubly emphatic) by and completely

keep the law. (Who better than the Galatians knew they could not keep the law!) Any transgression at all, at any time, brings them into a state of condemnation.

This verse, like the sword of Damocles, hangs threateningly over the head of all law-workers. The law requires doing. It is not enough to know it, or hear it; it must be done. The Jews boasted of their knowledge and trusted much to the hearing of the law, being read every Sabbath day, but alas, they fell far short of doing it. Sadder still, it requires perfect obedience. So whether for justification or sanctification, it is madness to submit to a system of law-keeping that requires perfect obedience of a fallen man, with a curse upon the one who does not perfectly keep it.

"All things in the book of the law."--The "book of the law" as used here very apparently includes the whole written law of Moses as included in the entire Pentateuch. Dr. McClain in commenting on Gal. 3:10 says: "The writer identifies 'the law' with the entire 'book of the law'." Then he comments on this law a bit later, saying:

This law is one law. . . an indivisible unity. While it is unquestionably true that at least three elements appear within this law--moral, ceremonial, and civil--it is wrong to divide it into three laws, or as is popularly done, divide it into two laws, the one moral and the other ceremonial. . . . The same viewpoint is expressed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:3, 'For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the

whole law'. . . . In this view some of the ablest commentators concur. Thus H. A. W. Meyer. . . 'in nomos, however to think merely of the moral law is erroneous; and the distinction between the ritualistic, civil, and moral law is modern'. . . . (Com. on the N. T. Vol. I, p. 120). And A. S. Peake in the Expositor's Greek New Testament declares, 'This distinction between the moral and ceremonial law has no meaning in Paul.' (Vol. III, p. 525).¹⁹

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse."--That is to say, the law can not be divorced from the penalties which enforce its demand. Some today would teach that Christians should seek to obey the moral law of God as a standard of righteousness and hasten to add that though we obey the moral law as a standard of righteousness, we no longer are under the Old Testament penalties as a motivation for obeying the law but have a new motivating principle, even love. Yet this very verse indicates that the law of God can not be separated from its sanctions. The writer quotes again from Dr. McClain who has done so much ground work in this area. He says:

To emasculate the law of God of its divine penalties and then call it 'law' is a serious misnomer, Daniel Webster is reported to have once said, 'a law without a penalty is simply good advice' That law cannot be divorced from its proper penalties is also the view of the greatest human legal authorities. John Austin defined law as embodying three essential ideas--command, obligation and sanction (I.S.B.E., Art. Law, p. 1844). . . .²⁰

Gal. 3:11, 12.--But that no man is justified by

¹⁹Alva J. McClain, op. cit., p. 7ff.

²⁰Ibid., p. 9ff.

the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

For the fourth time the apostle states that there is no justification in connection with law, this time, as Lenski points out, with a regular negative syllogism.

The conclusion is put first: By the law no one is justified. The major premise is: The righteous one shall live by faith alone; the minor: the law does not belong to faith. Hence, beyond a doubt it is true, by the law no one will live, no one is justified.²¹

Perhaps the reason Paul restates the phrase here in dealing with the law is to anticipate anyone's objection who might say, "Well, true, Abraham was saved by faith alone but that was before the law was given. After the law was given, God used the law as a new medium in justifying men." So Paul reiterates the phrase, then quotes Habakkuk, a prophet of Israel who was contemporary with the law, who said, "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4). (Literally, this reads, "the just by faith shall live.") Thus he triumphantly demonstrates that whether before the law, or after the law was given, God had only one method of justifying the sinner--by grace through faith. The phrase "shall live" is not to be thought of as a future tense pointing to an eternal life in a future heaven. It is the use of the logical future here; the moment faith is exercised, life begins. Faith, life and righteousness are so tied together as to be

²¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 147.

simultaneous in their effect. When faith is exercised, new life comes in and righteousness is accounted to the one who exercises the faith.

"And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them." By this statement the apostle is showing that the faith life and law-works are diametrically exclusive as bases of justification. The law and faith are strangers to each other. "The man that doeth them" should be translated "after a man has completely done them," to bring out more correctly the force of the aorist participle. This is a quote from Lev. 18:5. It presents a total impossibility to fallen man. He can not keep completely the law and certainly can not keep on keeping the law completely. Yet, only after he has demonstrated that he has done this, shall he live, says the law. How different from the law of faith, which presents no impossibility to fallen man but rather offers eternal life and righteousness immediately. The only possible way justification could come is by faith.

But one might object and ask: "Did not the law provide for failure to keep it?" Dr. McClain answers the question clearly:

The answer is yes, in a certain sense, through the ritual of animal sacrifice. But . . . the smallest failure meant that the law was broken. . . the blood of animal sacrifice could never take away sins. The sacrifice prescribed by the law did indeed bear witness to a way of salvation, but that way was wholly outside and apart from all law. . .

actually then, the law could save no sinner.²²

Gal. 3:13, 14.--Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Having fully concluded that the law can neither justify a man nor bring him spiritual life, Paul now shows how God has set aside the law and opened the way of faith. Once before Paul mentioned the cross in Gal. 3:1 where he reminded the Galatians that he had set forth the doctrine of the cross before their very eyes when they were first converted. Now again he must allude to the cross, showing that it is at the very center of the doctrine of justification.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law."--ἐξαγοράζω used here, "to buy out, to free from" is not the usual word for redemption employed in the New Testament. The synonym more frequently used is ἀπολύτρωσις which emphasizes the deliverance aspect of redemption by the price paid. But both words emphasize the price involved, the price being Jesus' own blood, when His life was laid down in death. Note that the verse does not say that He redeemed us from the law only but from the curse of the law. Having all been under law, we were accursed and due to suffer the penalty. But Christ made it possible that we could not only get

²²McClain, op. cit., p. 14ff.

out from under the law but get out free! How?

"Being made a curse for us."--Here is the substitutionary work of our Lord, though the word "substitution" is not explicitly used. ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν means "in behalf of us" and can be interpreted "in our room and stead." The curse of the law which should have struck us, struck Christ instead. In so doing, He obtained absolute pardon for us. He who was sinless, having satisfied the righteous demands of the law, likewise suffered its penalty for us who were "dead in trespasses and sins." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. . ." (1 Pet. 2:24).

"For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."--Deut. 21:23 is the source of this quote. The Deuteronomy passage indicates the method of punishment ascribed to certain incorrigible sinners who sinned grievously against the law. They were first put to death, no doubt by stoning, and then their dead bodies were impaled on a gibbet for public demonstration to indicate that such persons had incurred the curse of the Mosaic law. Thus the Lord Jesus is portrayed, a figure not to be pressed too strongly in its details, but He died under the law, suspended on a cross, assuming the curse of the law due all sinners.

It is a sobering thought that the Holy Son of God, the delight of the Father's heart, who never vio-

lated the law but kept all its demands during His earthly life, deliberately and voluntarily gave Himself to the authorities to be crucified. At the same time that the officer of the law declared Christ innocent saying, "I find no fault in Him," according to the foreordained plan of God that He should die, they declared Him worthy of death saying, "Crucify Him." Why? That we might be set free from the law's bondage and curse.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."--These are two purpose clauses, "in order that," pointing to a two-fold purpose for Christ's death:

1) In order that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. From the context which immediately precedes this verse it can be readily seen that the blessing of Abraham is justification by faith. Until we were redeemed from the curse, the blessing of Abraham could not come upon us. But having been redeemed through the blood of His cross, justification has been extended to Gentiles as well as Jews.

2) In order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. The promised Holy Spirit was received on the day of Pentecost by the disciples in the upper room in regenerating experience. All who

believe unto justification today likewise receive the same regenerating experience of the Holy Spirit. The two operations, justification and regeneration, are simultaneous events. Only, the first is objective to our experience, that is, justification takes place in the mind of God, having to do with our standing before Him. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is subjective to the believer's experience.

One might by the construction of this verse readily see that, while Paul ascribes the extension of justification to Gentiles, he uses the first person pronoun "we," denoting the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit in both Jew and Gentile in this dispensation, for the Old Testament saint knew not regeneration.

Summary.--As the first argument contained in Gal. 3:1-5 emphasized "hearing of faith" in contrast to "works of law" when referring to the Galatians' experience of salvation, so now the second argument in Gal. 3:6-14 uses the words "blessing" and "faith" in contrast to "curse" and "law" when referring to the promise made to Abraham. Abraham who lived some 400 years before the giving of the law, was justified by believing what God promised, even in the face of seemingly physical impossibilities. The promise involved blessing to be extended through Abraham to his seed. But even as Abraham was justified by faith, just so it is the child of faith who is counted as Abraham's

seed. Such persons alone are true spiritual sons of Abraham. Abraham could not foresee all this but Jehovah, who made the promise, foresaw that the Gentiles would be among the children of Abraham by faith and so spoke he the gospel to Abraham. *visible to his spiritual seed.*

Thus we must conclude, says Paul, that the only way to be blessed with faithful Abraham is by simple faith. They which are of faith are blessed. . . .

But they which are of the works of the law are under the curse. Why? Because the law says that everyone who does not continually do the whole law, all of it, all his life, is accursed. Twice Paul says, "it is written, cursed . . ." in speaking of the law. "It is written" is in the perfect tense signifying that in the law it has been and still remains a final pronouncement of doom that all under the law are cursed. Who can keep the law? No one, least of all, the man under the law for the law provides no strength to a man already born a sinner to meet its demands.

The faith way has always been the only way to be justified, not just for Abraham, but also for the Jew under law. Even Habakkuk said: "The just shall live by faith." It has never been otherwise. And the law is not of faith, so it avails nothing when it comes to a man being justified in the sight of God. That is "evident."

What can man do, then, who finds himself under

law, Jew and Gentile (Rom. 1, 2, and 3), and therefore under the curse? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. . ."

Abraham was promised a physical seed through whom this blessing would be made possible to his spiritual seed. His physical seed was Christ and He has opened the way to be set free from the curse forever and to receive the blessing of Abraham. This way is for both Jew and Gentile. The way is a free gift, received by faith and provides not only blessing but the very presence of the Holy Spirit to help the redeemed one in his life of faith.

As Ramsay points out, the difficulty in determining which Paul meant when he used the word *διαθήκη* arises largely out of the fact that *διαθήκη* had a variety of meanings through the centuries prior to Paul and during his time, depending upon locality. Another difficulty arises out of the fact that no Greek word, not even *διαθήκη*, fully conveys all that is involved in the divine act. The Hebrew word for covenant, *ברית*, was translated by the LXX *διαθήκη*. *ברית* had "become almost a technical term to denote the promises made, and confirmed by repetition, by God to the ancestors of the Hebrew people, especially Abraham. . ."

Third Argument: Gal. 3:15-29

Gal. 3:15.--Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

The word for "covenant" here is *διαθήκη*, translated also in the New Testament, "testament." These two terms have long been matters of dispute as to which is correct in each context where it is translated and whether one term or the other is always the fixed meaning of the word. All agree that there is a clear distinction between a covenant and a testament in the English usage of the terms, the distinction being that a covenant is an agreement between two or more persons over a certain matter, whereas a testament is a will, one testator alone making arrangement for the disposition of his property.

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adds, quoting from A. B. Davidson, "it had become a religious term in the sense of a one-sided engagement on the part of God."²³ Since the whole idea of a divine act such as this was unique and peculiar to the Hebrew people, it is not surprising that there was no corresponding Greek term for it.

Thus it was in the Greek language when Paul used the word *διαθήκη*. He apparently chose it in preference to such kindred words as *συνθήκη* and *ἐπαγγελία* to best convey the thought he wished to carry across. While *συνθήκη* carried the idea of a covenant or agreement that had a binding force, the two persons concerned with the agreement stood more or less on equality, each having like power and authority in the agreement. This would not be suitable to convey the Biblical idea where the covenant which God made was one-sided. On the other hand *ἐπαγγελία* while emphasizing that the agreement issued solely out of free grace, in public usage it lacked the binding force of an oath. Neither word apparently was suitable to convey the idea Paul had in mind.

It is not the intent of this discussion to delve into what Paul meant in using *διαθήκη* beyond what can be obtained from this passage in Galatians. It is the writer's opinion, and Lenski and Ramsay concur on this

²³W. M. Ramsay, Historical Commentary on the Galatians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), p. 358f.

view, that here Paul comes closer to our English idea of a "testament" than that of a "covenant." Certain facts bear this out. First, there is the death of the testator, which is necessary before a testament can be in force. He must die before the testament could become effective. Christ was God and at His death the problem of sin was solved and the blessings of Abraham were for the first time made accessible to man. Even the Old Testament saints only looked forward to this death. Galatians in every chapter points to the cross and death of Christ as central to justification.

Second, the word "promise" is used in connection with it, ten times, emphasizing that it was a divine act initiating solely from God out of His free grace. Third, it is spoken of as being confirmed of God and can not be disannulled, a fact which is thought of in connection with a testament. Fourth, the words "inheritance" and "heir" run through the context, denying the possibility of this being an agreement between two persons. Fifth, the whole intent of Paul in this epistle is to destroy any thought of man having a participating part in the initiation or continuance of his salvation, all of which is involved in the promise. Man who is dead in his trespasses and sins could not enter into a mutual agreement with a holy God concerning the way of his eternal salvation. This must come as a free gift to him. Sixth, the thought of this being a testament

and not a covenant, is the only explanation for verses 19 and 20 appearing in the context. These will be discussed later.²⁴

"I speak after the manner of men."--The apostle uses this phrase here as he does in so many other places in the sense of reasoning on a principle frequently adopted among men. Thus in 1 Cor. 9:8 and Rom. 6:19. It is as though he said, "Brethren, let me draw an illustration from the common dealings of men. Even a human will when probated is inviolable. . . ." "Though it be but a man's covenant [will or testament]" suggests the every day occurrence of a testator making out his will and testament to the heir who will receive the inheritance.

"Yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto."--To confirm is to give legal sanction, to ratify, or as we would say, to probate. A testament once probated and in force for years, no matter how long, is inviolable. Its fixedness nobody can void, or annul, or add thereto, that is, to affix a codicil to it so as to alter the original provision. The analogy which this verse, speaking from a human point of view, has with the two succeeding verses, which speak from a divine point

²⁴Burton, who himself does not take the view that *διαθήκη* refers to a testament, in his Critical and Exegetical Commentary, p. 499, says: "In Josephus *διαθήκη* uniformly means 'a will,' 'testament,' or 'testamentary provision.'" This is significant in that Josephus lived in the age of Paul.

of view, certainly makes one feel that the word διαθήκη is to be taken as a "testament."

Gal. 3:16, 17.--Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Verse sixteen is very apparently a parenthetical insert between the imageries of the human testament and divine testament given in verse fifteen and continued in verse seventeen. The insert indicates that both Abraham and Christ are channels through which the benefits of the testament come. But the heirs of the testament are in reality Abraham's spiritual seed. We shall observe more of this in the summary dealing with this verse.

"Were the promises made."--"Promises" is in the plural because the Abrahamic covenant (we shall use the term covenant as the translators have it to avoid confusion, but have in mind all the while the testamentary idea) has several aspects. The writer is indebted to Charles Ryrie for bringing out the following facts. The covenant contains first: personal promises by God to Abraham; that He would give him a great name; that Abraham would be a channel of blessing to others; that God's treatment of other nations would depend upon their attitude toward and treatment of the Jews. This aspect of the promise has been fulfilled in part and is being fulfilled daily as believers are made sons of Abraham.

Second; God gave national promise to Abraham in the sense that his natural progeny, the Jews, would be a great nation which would forever occupy Canaan land, with designated boundaries, as an everlasting inheritance. (Gen. 15:18-21, 17:6-8) This national promise has never been fulfilled, either in the everlasting nature of the promise, or in the boundaries delineated in Gen. 17:6-8. It is yet to be fulfilled. Since the church does not fulfill in any sense the promise made for the Israelites, Paul does not deal with this phase of the Abrahamic covenant in the book of Galatians. He deals with the dispensational future fulfillment in his more full treatise in Romans 9-11 where he indicates that that aspect of the covenant is yet future. (Rom. 11:26, 27) Third: the universal promises given to Abraham are promises of blessing to come on the gentile nations in justifying faithful Gentiles as well as faithful Jews, through Christ.²⁵ It is this latter aspect of the Abrahamic covenant which is most emphasized in this verse.

"Now to Abraham and his seed. . . which seed is Christ."--Bearing in mind that the covenant dealt with in Galatians relates to the universal aspect of the promises made to Abraham, i.e., the justification of Gentiles as well as Jews through Christ, we should note that the translation of the text raises a bit of a pro-

²⁵Charles C. Ryrie, The Basis of the Premillennial Faith (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1953), p. 48f.

blem. It is stated that the promises were made "to" Abraham and his seed, yet they were not fulfilled in either. A better paraphrase to bring out the truth concerning the promises to the Gentiles, which verse fourteen shows this must have reference to, would be: "Now the promises were to Abraham, to be fulfilled through him and his seed, which is Christ, the blessings to come upon the Gentiles. . ." This would be analagous to a human situation in which the mother promises the father that she would give the child a certain present. The father then provides the means of buying the gift, thus being the means through whom the promise is fulfilled. Ultimately the promise is for the benefit of the child, not the father.

However, this promise to Abraham, was more than this, for Abraham is more than a mere name mentioned here. The blessings which were to come upon the Gentiles were the "blessings of Abraham." He was the first to be beneficiary of the promise in that he also was justified by faith. He became a representative heir and father of all the faithful sons of Abraham. But he was justified, so to speak on credit, Christ through His atoning work at Calvary being the seed through which this was ultimately accomplished and completed.

God chose a collective noun in employing the word "seed," singular in form, yet bearing a plural meaning. Thus it can have a vital reference to Christ be-

cause singular, yet it can include all believers, Jew or Gentile, saved by grace in this dispensation. (Gal. 3:29) When a man is born again and is found "in Christ," he becomes an heir along with all other believers, of the promise made to Abraham and made possible of fulfillment by Christ when He atoned for sin. This man becomes a joint-heir with Christ. (Rom. 8:17)

"The covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ."--The sixth chapter of Hebrews informs us how God confirmed or probated the testament in reference to Abraham, and to his seed. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself. . . . Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." In addition to probating the will by an oath, God also gave Abraham a visible sign in the rite of circumcision. (Gen. 17:9-14)

The phrase "in Christ" does not appear in the better texts and should be omitted. The relation which Christ had to the testament was not in the confirming of it but in making its benefits available to those who were to be heirs of the promise, by His death as the Son of God. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." However, when the testament was confirmed, God swore by Himself, thus confirming it by an oath.

"The law, which was four hundred and thirty years

after, cannot disannul. . . make. . . of none effect.

Belsham calculates the 430 years between Abraham and the giving of the Mosaic law in this fashion: "The first promise made to Abraham was made when he was seventy-five years old, Gen. 12:3, 4; from this date to that of Isaac's birth was twenty-five years, Gen. 21:5; Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born, Gen. 25:26; Jacob went down to Egypt at 130, Gen. 47:9; and the Israelites, according to the LXX, sojourned there 215 years, which completes the number. . ."²⁶

Once the promise was given to Abraham by God and probated by His oath, nothing, not even the law, could cancel it out or alter the original immutable promise of the will.

Gal. 3:18.--For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The word "inheritance," "an allotted portion, a share," seems to be used here as synonymous with "covenant" and with "promise" used elsewhere through this passage. Substantially they mean the same thing as they appear throughout the Galatian Epistle. They all refer to the blessing of God upon the spiritual descendents of Abraham who are in Christ, Jew and Gentile, Brown says: "It is termed 'the inheritance' because it is as the spiritual descendents of Abraham, the father of the faithful, that we come to enjoy it."

²⁶John Brown, op. cit., p. 146.

Although these terms refer substantially to the same thing, Brown goes on to say:

It would be absurd to say these three words have the same meaning. 'The covenant' refers to the Divine arrangement as to conferring on men the blessing of Divine favor, 'the promise' is the revelation of this in the form of a promise, and the 'inheritance' is this as enjoyed by men.²⁷

The word "inheritance" is used in connection with the various blessings which one shares with other believers the moment he is justified. It includes among other things:

- 1) The standing as of a son before the father. Gal. 4:7.
- 2) The indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 4:6 cf. 7.
- 3) An assurance borne of the Spirit of salvation eternally secured. Eph. 1:13, 14.
- 4) Membership in the spiritual kingdom of God today. Eph. 5:5, 1 Cor. 6:9, 10.
- 5) Prospective possessions of the believer in the millennial reign and in heaven. 1 Pet. 1:4 Col. 3:24, Jas. 2:5.

Ryrie quotes Bush as saying:

It is not wealth, fame, power, sensual pleasure or mental endowments, but the gift of his own son as a Saviour, the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, the pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and the high purifying hopes connected with eternal life. This is the inheritance that makes us truly rich, and utterly vain, foolish, and fatal is it to seek for real blessedness from any other source.²⁸

"If. . . of the law, . . . no more of promise."--

²⁷John Brown, op. cit., p. 147.

²⁸Charles Ryrie, op. cit., p. 52.

With one stroke Paul brushes aside any notion that the law could have had any effect upon the promise made to Abraham. Here is a condition such that, if the inheritance is gotten one way, it can not be gotten the other. It is one or the other. If the inheritance comes by the law, then it is earned by doing the works of the law and it is not gotten as a free gift given out of a sure promise. But this is a condition contrary to fact, the apostle says, for "God gave it to Abraham by promise." Therefore the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the gift which comes through the promise does not come out of law. Law has no part in it. There is a note of finality about this whole verse as if the apostle is saying, be it settled, once for all, that the free gift of God in justifying a sinner and saving him unto eternal life is not of law, it is not of works.

Gal. 3:19, 20.--Wherefore then serveth the law: It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Paul has anticipated that his readers would naturally wonder at the purpose of the law, after his statement of such finality that it had no part in justifying men or making them right with God. Why then the law? Why was there ever a law? The answer to this question runs through verse 19-25 and involves two thoughts. For one thing, it does state the purpose of the law, but at the same time it equally emphasizes that the law was a temporary measure; it was not the ultimate

purpose of God for man at all; it was by no means an end in itself. McClain brings this out very effectively:

The law was added because of transgressions (Gal. 3:19). The verb 'added' indicates that the law was not primary in God's dealings with sinners. The 'covenant' and promises of God were first. The law was added. And the divine reason here is found in man's 'transgressions.'

Thus the giving of the law was neither first nor is it final with God in the matter of saving sinners or dealing with the problem of sin. It was 'added' and 'until.' This indicates a dispensational aspect of the matter.²⁹

Thus we find that with every mention of the purpose and place of the law, there is also mention of its temporary nature. The purpose of the law is to be looked at in the face of its temporariness. That the law was only temporary and the promise was abiding is the dominant thought of these two verses in answer to the opening question.

"It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one but God is one."--The nature of the law presents the reason for mentioning the mediator. The law could not be looked upon as either replacing the promise, as Paul has already argued in verses 15-18, nor yet as a codicil, attached to the promise. The law had a mediator; it was Moses. The promise did not need a mediator. It was absolute, direct, unconditional, and sure of fulfillment. It was given directly to the man for whom

²⁹McClain, op. cit., p. 19.

and through whom the promise was intended. But the law was different. It was conditional and could be violated (and was). It was mediated by Moses and presented by him to a group of people, the Israelites, for their good and "for a time." It was in force the moment it was given.

"It was ordained by angels."-- *διαταγείς*, the word translated "ordained" also means "ordered or administered." There is no doubt that Jehovah Himself was the author of the law as can be readily seen by the repeated phrases found in the Pentateuch, "And the Lord spoke to Moses." So to translate this word "ordained" is a bit misleading. "Administered through the medium of angels" is a better translation and carries better the force of the preposition *διά*, through.

"In the hand of a mediator."--The expression "in the hand of" is a Hebraism for "through or by." The mediator here is undoubtedly Moses, as can be validated by the cross reference in John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses. . . ." This did not mean that Moses was the author of the law but rather that he was the one who represented the people before the Lord and when he had received it from Him, he gave it to the people. How different from the way the promise was given. This would have been a very ineffective way to have made a promise to Abraham. Yet it was the natural way to give the law which bore in it commands and penalties and statutes to

which the people answered: "All that it says, that will we do." The promise made no demands but was offered as a free gift, sure to be fulfilled.

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one but God is one."--This verse has received as many as 250 to 300 different interpretations, according to Brown. He has summarized most of them under two classifications:

Those who feel that the words 'now a mediator is not of one' are understood as a general proposition, true of all mediators, and applied by the apostle in the course of his reasoning to the subject before him.

Those who feel that the words 'now a mediator is not of one' are considered as a particular statement, referring exclusively and directly to the mediator spoken of in the close of verse 19, by whose hands the law was given.

In determining whether this is a general proposition or a particular statement, Brown points to the better translation of the Greek. It should read: "Now the mediator is not of one, (second mediator is omitted in the text) but God is one." Note the definite article used in connection with "mediator." This seems to make it conclusive that the second rather than the first interpretation should be taken. Brown further points out that the context seems to require two things:

That this mediator, being 'the' mediator, must refer to the mediator referred to in verse 19, that is, the mediator of the law. This seems to refer to the giving of the law and not the mediation of the law after it was given, which was by the priesthood. The giving of the law was by Moses (John 1:17).

The interpretation of verse 20 must be taken in light of verse 21, which is a continuation of the

thought of verse 20 when it asks the question, 'Is the law then against the promises of God?' And the Greek bears the answer 'No.'

The other main problem in connection with the interpretation of this verse is the meaning of "one." Brown does not take it as numerical but as moral, uniform, unchangeable, self-consistent. The point is that:

God, who appointed Moses mediator, is one and the same--unchanged, unchangeable. Can, then, the law be against the promises of God?

Moses was not the author of the law, he was but the mediator. The law was God's law, and Moses was God's mediator; the one was enjoined, the other appointed, by Him. The promise is His promise. He cannot by His law contradict His promise. He is one and the same; always like Himself. The two divine institutions, the law and the promise, cannot be inconsistent, coming, as they do, from the immutable God. The apostle had already shown in another way that the promise was not made void by the law; now he proves the same thing by the immutability of God, their common author.³⁰

The writer has included Brown's view here because it is based upon a careful observation of both the Greek and the context and his conclusion concerning the intent of Paul in verses 19-21 is true when he says:

. . . the law is subservient to the promise. . . its great use is not to take the place of the promise, but to evince the necessity of the promise.³¹

However, the writer is inclined to agree with Ironside who takes the view that the "one" is numerical, as do a number of other interpreters such as Moorehead, Lightfoot, etc. Ironside says:

³⁰Brown, op. cit., p. 155-160.

³¹Ibid., p. 161.

Two contracting parties suggests the thought of the need of a mediator, but when God gave His promise to Abraham there was only one. God gave the Word, and there was nothing to do on Abraham's part but to receive it. He did not covenant with God that he would do thus and so in order that God's promise might be fulfilled, but God spoke directly to him and committed Himself when he said, 'In thee shall all nations be blessed.'³²

Lightfoot concurs with this view and further adds: But the law was given to point it out to him.

The apostle is not here concerned with the unity of God; He is declaring that on God alone rested the whole responsibility for the discharge of the obligation of the covenant He made with Abraham.³³

"It was added because of transgressions."--In other words, the law was added, not to aid the promise or be an appendage to it, but "for the sake of transgressions." The target is transgressions. Rom. 4:15 says: "for where no law is, there is no transgression." Transgressions are, according to Thayer, "absolutely, the breach of a definite, promulgated, ratified law."³⁴ Rom. 7:7 also bears this out: "Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law. . ."

One might say then that the law was given to make men sinners. No, this is not true, for "in Adam all die." "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into

³²Harry A. Ironside, Epistle to the Galatians (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Publishers, 1945), p.121f.

³³Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 146.

³⁴Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), p. 478.

the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) We have been born sinners to start with because we are the children of Adam. Man has always been sinful by nature. His sin is referred to by the word *ἁμαρτία*, "a wrongdoing which even a man ignorant of the law may be guilty of."³⁵ But the law was given to point it out to man, "That it might appear sin, . . . that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." (Rom. 7:13) Thereafter the man who violates the law is a "transgressor" of the law. "The law is for sinners only; the sinless need no law. But the moment the law meets a sinner, he reacts by transgression, because of the sin in him."³⁶

"Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."--This means that the law served its purpose only as a temporary measure. It was no doubt the law of Moses to which Paul was referring here. The Judaizers were stirring up the Galatians about coming under the law of Moses and Paul was still attacking this. The purpose of the law was "until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Not only had the moral aspect of the law pointed the Jews to their transgressions but the ceremonial aspect had been "a shadow of things to come." This pointed to the sacrifice for sins. But the book of Hebrews adds that "the body is of Christ." When Christ, the substance came, the shadow was no longer

³⁵Ibid., p. 479.

³⁶Lenski, op. cit., p. 167.

seen. The trouble with the Judaizers was that they had missed the image and were still looking at the shadow.

What can we say then about sinners before Moses and since the coming of Christ? Paul deals with this in Rom. 2 where he says that even the Gentiles have God's law written in their hearts and their consciences condemn them. This law operates in sinners and the only escape from its condemnation is the same as that of the Jew under the law of Moses--that is, by turning to Christ, the justifier of all the ungodly. So Christ is still "the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

Gal. 3:21, 22.--Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Does the law work contrary to the promises of God? No, if the law could give life, if it could regenerate, righteousness would have come by the law. But the law could not give spiritual life to a dead sinner, nor could it justify. Only God could do this and He promised that He would, so that righteousness comes through the promise, not through the law. Nevertheless, the law had an important function. It was holy, just and good (Rom. 7:12) but it was added that "sin might appear sin." The law acted as a looking glass to reveal the sinfulness of man. It both restrains sins and

reveals to men that they are condemned sinners. As D. L. Moody used to say, "The law is like a good looking glass with which to show a child how dirty his face is, but who would think of washing the child's face with the looking glass?"

"But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin."--

As we have noted before "the Scripture" has reference to the Old Testament, being used in the singular. It speaks in particular of the killing letter of the Old Testament law. "Hath concluded" means "shut up together, shut up on all sides." It is a stronger word in the original than the English translation. It is used in the Setuagint to refer to a city whose gates are closed and walls are surrounded by a besieging army. (Josh. 6:1, Isa. 45:1) It is also used of a person bound in chains. (Job. 8:8) In the New Testament it is used of fish that are enclosed in a net, without possibility of escape. (Luke 5:6) Thus the idea pictured is that of imprisonment, of doom unto condemnation. All three verbs in verses 22 and 23 translated "concluded," "kept," and "shut up," convey the strong notion of restriction, as though imprisoned under a heavy military guard. Martin Luther describes it thus:

Furthermore, the law shutteth men under sin, not only civilly but also spiritually. For when it revealeth sin, threateneth death and the eternal wrath of God, a man cannot avoid it, nor find any comfort in it, for it is not in the power of man to shake off those horrible terrors, which the law stirreth up in the conscience. . . Again it showeth unto

us spiritually our sin, terrifieth and humbleth us, that, when we are so terrified and humbled, we may learn our own misery and condemnation. . . for this shutting and holding under the law must endure no longer, but until faith come, and when faith cometh then must this spiritual prison have its end.³⁷

"All under sin."--There are those who would apply this verse strictly to the Old Testament Jewish believers. But this is weakened by the fact that Paul is applying it to include Galatian Christians as well, among whom there were Gentiles as well as Jews. This verse seems rather to have in view all persons whom the law has shown to be under the curse and power of sin.

"That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."--The promise has the definite article here and must refer to the promise already mentioned, given by God to Abraham, of justifying Gentiles as well as Jews through Christ's atonement. The one condition upon which this promise can be received is upon the condition of faith "unto" Christ. This is the faith of the believer of which Christ is at once both the author and the object. When this faith is exercised, the believer is immediately released from the bondage and imprisonment of the law.

Gal. 3:23.--But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

The preposition ὕπο with the accusative means

³⁷Martin Luther, A Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, ed. by Edwinus London (London: Macintos, Printer, 1575), p. 303f.

to be under the power of a person or thing. The Roman centurion said, for instance, "I am a man under [ὑπὸ'] authority, having soldiers under me." (Matt. 8:9)

Though this expression is used primarily of the Jews here and elsewhere in the New Testament, it can be said that the Gentiles also were under a law, though in a different sense from the Jew. Romans 2:11-15 bears this out. The Jew had the law written on tables of stone, but the Gentiles had an inner law of the conscience which "reflected imperfectly the written law of God."³⁸ Even today men are under a law to which they become "dead" (Rom. 7:1-4) when they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But all this concerning being "under the law" applies to the unsaved man, whether Jew or Gentile.

The expression "the faith" in this verse is the gospel, the inheritance to be received by faith. Before the faith came, we were locked up under the law and locked up "unto" the faith. The law confines men that they might yearn for liberty, it slays them that true life may be had, it convicts men and makes them feel helpless at self-effort^h and self-righteousness. It blocks all avenues of escape, saving one, that is, the way of Christ.

In this verse again the temporary nature of the purpose of the law is expressed. It only serves for a

³⁸ McClain, op. cit., p. 30.

time. As Lenski puts it, "So the Mosaic law stood guard . . . like a sentry, until relieved of its duty by the arrival of Christ."³⁹

Gal. 3:24.--Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

This verse receives much attention by all commentators. Most of them agree that the English does not convey at all the idea of the original. The word "school-master" is a word that has to be understood in the light of the custom of Greek society and has very little parallel in our English society today. Lenski states that the term refers to the duty of the faithful slave-attendant provided by the wealthy Greek father for his son between the ages of seven and seventeen. His duty was to exercise general supervision over the child and he was responsible for his moral and physical well being. He chose the child's companionship and lead him to and from school. This boy's guide was not his teacher strictly speaking for educational purposes. Another had this task.⁴⁰

Thus we see that the *παιδαγωγός* served to restrain, discipline and guide a child until he became mature and in that sense a son. His duties were temporary, only while the child was a child, and no longer were functional when the child matured. Paul uses this figure of the *παιδαγωγός* to illustrate the temporary

³⁹Lenski, op. cit., p. 179.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 181.

purpose of the Mosaic law. As Wuest puts it:

By describing the law as a paidagogos, Paul emphasizes both the inferiority of the law to grace, and its temporary character. The law was therefore the guardian of Israel, keeping watch over those committed to its care, accompanying them with its commands and prohibitions, keeping them in a condition of dependence and restraint, and continually revealing to them sin as a positive transgression.⁴¹

An interesting dialogue recorded in classical literature from Plato's "Lysis" shows clearly how the heir in the Greek family was under the restraints and disciplines of a slave who was his governor and tutor. The following dialogue has been briefed by Hogg and Vine.

'Do your parents allow you to do as you please?' I asked. 'Why, how could they permit that?' he replied. 'Well, who has charge of you?' 'My paedagogue here,' said he. 'What! though he's a slave? It's shameful that a freeman should be governed by a slave. . . And what does this paedagogue do in governing you?' 'Oh, he takes me to school.' 'And your teachers, do they govern you?' 'Yes, certainly.' 'A fine lot of masters and governors your father sets over you.'⁴²

In verse 24 the words "to bring us" are not in the Greek. It is simply *εἰς Χριστόν*. The law could not bring Israel to Christ but, with His coming in view, it could serve to prepare Israel for His coming and make her feel her need of the Saviour and recognize Him as the one in Whom she could be justified. The law could not justify but pointed to, *εἰς*, the one who could

⁴¹Kenneth S. Wuest, Galatians in the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 110.

⁴²Cited by Hogg and Vine, Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians (1922), p. 164. (Title page missing in the book.)

justify. Thayer has well expressed the meaning here:

. . . and is called *παιδαγωγὸς εἰς Χριστόν* i.e. preparing the soul for Christ, because those who have learned by experience with the law that they are not and cannot be commended to God by their works, welcome the more eagerly the hope of salvation offered them through the death and resurrection of Christ, the Son of God.⁴³

Once a child sees the way of freedom is in Christ and receives Him by faith, that minute the duties of the *παιδαγωγός* cease. The child is justified by faith and becomes a "son." This was possible for Israel with the coming of Christ, her deliverer from bondage and is still the only way of freedom for all who are under the bondage of sin.

Gal. 3:25.--But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Praise the Lord for this fact! It means that "the seed which should come," the "faith which should afterwards be revealed" has appeared in history; Christ has come and set free those under the bondage of the law. Again Paul strikes a note of finality, not in argumentation, but in the statement of a glorious fact. Christ has come; the law has no more place for the believer; he is set free!

Gal. 3:26.--For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul now turns his attention to the Galatians directly. "For ye are all the sons of God." No longer are you children still under the rigorous supervision

⁴³Thayer, op. cit., p. 472.

of a tutor. Your position before God is as sons with all the privileges and liberties a son can have. You came into this position the moment you exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "For as many as received him, to them gave he the authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (Jno. 1:12)

Gal. 3:27.--For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

We will reserve the discussion as to baptism for some other paper. It is not the intent of this thesis to go too far afield from the subject at hand. The writer simply affirms that he believes this refers to spirit baptism, to that spiritual union through the Holy Spirit which makes us members of the body of Christ. Paul says that as many of the Galatians as have united with Christ, these have put on Christ. He makes a point of this because he wants them to see that they stand justified in Christ. "To put on" is used in the Old Testament of the act of clothing oneself with righteousness and salvation. To put on Christ is to receive justification, whereby a believer is saved, declared righteous. "For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. . ." (Isa. 61:10)

Gal. 3:28.--There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Let the Galatians learn that they do not need

to seek to be as the Jew. There is no superior race or a superior code which men are following, but a superior position, in Christ, where both Jews and Gentiles are one. Together they share in the inheritance which was given to Abraham by promise.

Gal. 3:29.--And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

This recalls verse 16 where Christ is said to be the Seed of Abraham. We who are in Christ are counted as Abraham's seed also and as such are heirs according to the promise. Thus the third argument started with a unilateral promise by God to Abraham and his seed, verse 15, and ends by a clear statement that all that are in Christ are heirs together of that promise.

the promises made." A parallel verse, 29, defines more clearly the heirs: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

2) A testament must describe the inheritance. Paul makes this description in verse 14: "That the blessing of Abraham [justification] might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

3) A testament must be probated. It was "confirmed before of God in Christ. . ." (vs. 17)

4) The testator must die. Christ who was the Son of God, the testator, died, thus making justification available to the heirs of faith. This death is

CHURCH AND STATE

Summary

Throughout chapter three of his epistle Paul has brought a series of contrasts in order to prove his thesis. The first was the contrast between the "hearing of faith" and the "works of the law." The second contrast had to do with "blessing" and "faith" versus "curse" and "law." Now in this third argument the contrast has been between the "promise" as involving a testament and the "law." Certain things which are essential to a testament, being valid even today, are brought out through this section.

1) A testament must name the heirs. Our text says in verse 16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made." A parallel vers, 29, defines more clearly the heirs: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

2) A testament must describe the inheritance. Paul makes this description in verse 14: "That the blessing of Abraham [justification] might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

3) A testament must be probated. It was "confirmed before of God in Christ. . ." (vs. 17)

4) The testator must die. Christ who was the Son of God, the testator, died, thus making justification available to the heirs of faith. This death is

implied in verse 13 where it speaks of His being made a curse for us, and is prominent in every chapter of Galatians as central to the teaching concerning justification.

5) A testament must have an executor, one who carries out the provisions of the inheritance. Not only did Christ die as the testator of the will but He arose again from the dead and became the executor of the will. In the seed, Christ is the power of fulfilment of the will. (verse 16)

Having made these various descriptions of the testament, Paul contrasts it with the law and brings out some pertinent facts relating to his thesis regarding the relation of the promise and the law. He builds his whole argument around the inviolability and permanence of the promise, the temporary and conditional purpose of the law. (verses 15, 16)

1) The testament, in force for 430 years, could not be altered by the law of God, though the latter had its necessary purpose. (verse 17)

2) To make the law a substitute for the promise is to contradict the promise. (verse 18)

3) The law was a temporary body of statutes and as such was subordinate to the promise. It was added for two reasons:

a) To reveal sin as transgression of God's law. (19b)

b) To conclude all men under sin, thus pre-

paring them for the Deliverer. (verse 22)

4) The law was given to the people through the hands of a mediator (Moses), administered to him by angels. It was subject to human limitations and frailties and contingent upon the obedience of Israel. But the promise was uni-lateral, given by the sole decree of God to Abraham. It was absolute and unconditional and dependent upon God alone for its administration and fulfillment. (verses 19c, 20)

5) The Old Testament law was not given to work contrary to the promise, for if life could have come through the law, righteousness would have been by the law. (verse 21) Rather, the law served to show men their sin so that they might receive the promise by faith. (verse 22)

6) The Old Testament law locked all men up under sin that there might not be any possible escape by works. Wherever there were works of law, immediately the fence enclosing the law-worker read "transgressions." They were shut up, not to be kept shut up and forever imprisoned, but with the end in view that "the faith," the gospel, was about to be revealed. (verse 23)

7) The law acted as a guiding, disciplining and restraining influence over those under it with the aim of pointing them to the only way to freedom, even Christ, in order that they might be justified by faith. (verse 24)

8) After faith comes, the law has no more purpose to serve. (verse 25)

The third argument ends with what is not really an argument at all for the contrasting pictures of promise and law are dropped with the statement of verse 25, "we are no longer under a schoolmaster." This is no longer the position of the Galatian believers. Now that faith has come, they are "sons of God," and Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Now they stand, having been clothed in the righteousness of Christ so that God sees them as though they had never sinned. Whether Jew or Gentile, they are one in Christ and have been placed in the most privileged position possible before God, that of being declared righteous. They are seen as having entered upon their inheritance. This is why the contrasting words between law and grace are dropped and instead "Christ" stands as the predominant word through this remaining portion. It appears five times in these last four verses. It is all of grace now and Christ has done it all. To Him be the glory and praise forever!

Dr. Ironside tells of a true incident that aptly illustrates the distinction between the out-working of law and that of grace. This is given as a quotation from his book.

"Some years ago I took with me to Oakland, California a Navajo Indian. One Sunday evening we went to

the young people's meeting. They were talking about the epistle to the Galatians, about law and grace, but they were not very clear about it, and finally one turned to the Indian and said, 'I wonder whether our Indian friend has anything to say about this.'

He arose to his feet and said, 'Well, my friends, I have been listening very carefully, because I am here to learn all I can in order to take it back to my people. I do not understand what you are talking about, and I do not think you do yourselves. But concerning this law and grace, let me see if I can make it clear. It is like this. When Mr. Ironside brought me from my home we took the longest railroad journey I ever took. We got out at Barstow, and there I saw the most beautiful railroad station with a hotel above it. I saw at one end a sign, 'Do not spit here.' I looked at that sign and then looked down at the ground and saw that many spitted there, and before I can think what I am doing, I have spitted myself. Isn't that strange when the sign says, 'Do not spit here?'

I come to Oakland and go to the home of the lady who invited me to dinner today and I am in the nicest home I have ever been in in my life. Such beautiful furniture and carpets. I hate to step on them. I sank in a comfortable chair, and the lady said, 'Now, John, you sit there while I go out and see whether the maid has dinner ready.' I look around at the beautiful

pictures, at the grand piano, and I walk all around these rooms. I am looking for a sign; the sign I am looking for is, 'Do not spit here,' but I look around--and cannot find a sign like this. I think what a pity when this is such a beautiful home to have people spitting all over it--too bad they don't put up a sign. So I look all over that carpet but cannot find that anybody has spitted there. What a queer thing! Where the sign says, 'do not spit,' a lot of people spitted; here where there is no sign, nobody spitted. Now I understand. That sign is law, but inside the home it is grace. They love their beautiful home and want to keep it clean. I think that explains this law and grace business,' and he sat down."⁴⁴

⁴⁴H. A. Ironside, op. cit., p.130-132.

Introduction

Chapter four of the Galatian Epistle bears only indirectly on the doctrinal aspect of Justification in the Book of Galatians. It is cast mostly in the nature of exhortations to the Galatians, with an end in view of recovering them from their state of legalism to that of pure grace.

In Chapter three, under the title "The Thesis Proven," we have observed a three-fold argument of the apostle for justification by grace through faith. Now under the title "The Thesis Applied" we will observe a three-fold appeal by the apostle to the Galatians in an endeavor to see them walk in the liberty of mature sons in Christ. The first appeal is to their pride, verses 1-11; the second, to their emotions, verses 12-20; the third, is to their intelligence, verses 21-31.

However, as one proceeds carefully through this first portion, he receives an increasing awareness that the apostle is really speaking the Galatians by setting

The Appeal to Their Pride

In the first appeal Paul shows effectively that for the Galatians to lapse into the perverted form of Judaism, with its demands, its ritual and its ceremonial observances, is to lapse into a position of minors and of servitude worse than what the Jews were under when under the law before Christ came, instead of enjoying the freedom of full-grown sons under grace.

In the closing portion of Chapter three the apostle employed the figure of the *παιδαγωγός* from Greek custom to describe the temporary and preparatory nature of the Mosaic law. That law was used of God to prepare Israel and in a sense all unsaved persons for the promised grace through Christ. Chapter four opens with a similar figure taken from the Greek household, and is but an expansion of the first figure of the *παιδαγωγός*. It is as though the apostle says in these opening verses, "I have already described the temporary purpose of the law in preparing men to become sons and heirs of the promise. Now let me explain more fully how the minor that comes of age, knows a release from all restraints and restrictions into the full privilege of a son and an heir."

However, as one proceeds carefully through this first portion, he receives an increasing awareness that the apostle is really shaming the Galatians by setting

forth the exalted standing they ought to know as sons by adoption, when in reality, by their lapse into Jewish ceremonies and rites, and endeavoring thereby to be accepted before God, they did not manifest the maturity of sons which belongs to true followers of Christ. Thus he appeals to their pride of station. It would be shameful and wholly unnatural to expect a group of children in a ^afamily, who had reached maturity, to be subjected anew to the restraints of a nursery. So it is for the believer, having entered into the glorious liberty of a son of God, to voluntarily subject himself anew to the institution of law, to the elemental or beggarly elements of religion.

Gal. 4:1-3.--Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Whether the apostle has in mind the case where the father is deceased and has left his will and heritage, or whether the father is still alive, is not important. The important part which Paul stresses is that, though the child is potentially entitled to all the father's estate including the servants who tend him, as long as he is in a state of non-age, he is under the restraints and disciplines of guardians.

"But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father."—Ramsay shows that Paul must be

following Greek usage in his figure, because it was the Greeks in their system of civil law that fixed the time when the heir should come of age. The Greek usage would be known in Syria and in Southern Galatia. So this term "appointed of the father" answers to the Greek and not Roman practice.⁴⁵

"But is under tutors and governors."--The reference to "tutors" is also Greek usage. The tutor was the guardian of the child. This is the legal term used in Greek papyri to describe the personal guardian over the minor until he became of age. The steward was the household guardian, who exercised care over all the child's possessions which should go to the heir when he came of age.

"The elements of the world."--Or rudiments, στοιχεῖα, "things standing in a row." At first the word had to do with the first principles of any subject, the A.B.C.'s of anythings, the elemental part. Then in usage as applied to religious matters, it came to refer to the crude notions of a religious system. Here it refers to the forms and ceremonies of the Old Testament instead of the mature spiritual reality of the New. So, in the state of minority, the Jews were occupied with rituals and ceremonies of Mosaic law, while the Galatians, in lapsing into Judaistic legalism with its form and law-works, were subjecting themselves to the crude notions of the religion of non-age.

Gal. 4:4-7.--But when the fulness of the time

⁴⁵Ramsay, op. cit., p. 370.

was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

These verses set forth the spiritual provision which Christ made for all true believers. This was the standing which all born-again Galatian believers had before God.

"But when the fulness of the time was come:"--

This phrase suggests the very preciseness with which God predetermined His purpose should come to pass in history. Church historians point out a number of factors in providential out-working of history which made the coming of Christ to be at the right time.

1) It was the 69th week of Daniel when God by inspiration had said the Messiah would come. More exactly, it was 483 years after the edict to rebuild Jerusalem was given.

2) It was a time when the Greek philosophers had emptied the Olympic heaven of its gods for the thinking men, and through endless speculation had sharpened the Greek language to a scientific exactness, by which God's purposes of redemption could be given a medium of expression.

3) It was a time when the Romans prepared the world for Christ's coming by giving to the world, for

the first time in centuries, an era of world peace, which provided a suitable time for the spread of the gospel. Also it should be mentioned that through Roman influence, highways and transportation methods were so developed that the extension of the gospel was made possible.

4) It was a time when Israel had prepared the world for Christ's coming by proving that religions by law-keeping could not save.

5) The translation of the Old Testament into the Greek language had been given by the LXX.

Though all these factors be perfectly true, Paul probably had in mind the preparation that the Mosaic law and the moral law written in the moral conscience of men had accomplished in creating a sense of universal need, of helplessness and condemnation.

"God sent forth His son."-- ἐξαποστέλλω is quite a picturesque verb. It means "to send out on a commission" and comes from ἀποστέλλω, to commission, plus ἐκ, out. Thus is depicted the thought of God sending forth His pre-existent Son from heaven to earth on a special mission. In John's Gospel Christ's deity is emphasized in relation to His coming by the appearance over twenty-five times of the expression "the sent one." One wonders if Paul did not also have in mind the promise which God made to Abraham of the Seed that should come, when at the set time, God sent forth the Seed.

Certainly this was the mission on which He was sent, to fulfill the promise, and God knew at the time when He gave it to Abraham, when in the point of time Christ would come.

"Born of a woman."--This is the incarnation of Christ, His becoming of the seed of Abraham. The verb is not γεννάω, to be born, but γίνομαι, to be made, to become. The eternal Word was made flesh, partaking of human nature, born of a virgin. This phrase "born of a woman" follows immediately upon the phrase "God sent forth his son," suggesting that this was Christ's mission "to become born out of a woman," and "become under law." The use of γεγόμενον here suggests that before He was on earth, He was not this but when He came to earth He became this. It is stronger because of the stem used and position of the participle than the simple sentence "man born of a woman" as in Job 14:1. It is the idea of God's eternal Son leaving His Father's throne and finding the door of entrance into the world by the virgin birth in order to take upon Himself a human body. Here indeed is the promised seed of the woman who came to bruise the serpent's head. (Gen. 3:15) Surely such a verse as this knocks out the theory of a mere phantom appearance of Christ such as the ancient form of Doketism taught, as well as any cultist ideas that deny Christ His human nature, as the present day Christian Science advocates teach.

"Made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law."--When Jesus came forth from a woman at Bethlehem, the purpose of His incarnation was to accomplish redemption at Calvary so that we might receive the adoption of sons. To rightly accomplish this He was made "under the law." That is to say, He was of Jewish lineage so that He was truly put under the law, and He was born in the Old Testament economy that He might deliver those who were under the bondage of the law. And between Bethlehem and Calvary He demonstrated that He was God manifested in the flesh by perfectly keeping the law. There was no sin in Him, but He was the perfect Saviour. Then, wonder of wonders, He gave Himself up to death to bear the curse of the broken law in order to bring us into a place of full liberty.

"That we might receive the adoption of sons."--The "adoption of sons" is from the verb "to place as sons." In its doctrinal usage in the New Testament, adoption always carries the thought of one's position before God and not the new nature which one receives when born again. The apostle alludes more to this legal idea of the positional placing as a son of a saved person so that he may be heir of the kingdom of God the moment he is saved. This is characteristic of Paul whereas John, the beloved, more readily uses the family term "children," showing the intimate family relation through the new birth. As used in this context the

expression "placing as a son" has reference to a Roman custom when the son at the age of fourteen was formally and publicly promoted by his own father from the position of a child to that of an heir, a son.

The next two verses, six and seven, set forth three wonderful privileges that come to all believers the instant they are adopted into God's family. First, they have a heavenly Father. "Abba, Father." The Aramaic, Abba, is identical to the Greek word translated "father" and perhaps Paul in applying this double usage is taking it from Mark 14:36, where Jesus' own words were "Abba Father" when He prayed in Gethsemane. Thus Paul indicates that every son by adoption has the same intimate approach to the Father that Jesus, the Son of God by nature, had.

Second, we are sons in a heavenly family, for we are no longer a servant under law but we have been adopted by Christ into the heavenly family. Third, we have a heavenly inheritance, for "if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." It is the Holy Spirit who makes real in the believer's inner consciousness this threefold relationship that believers bear one to another and to Christ.

This doctrine is not irrelevant to the doctrine of justification, for, while regeneration deals with our change in nature, both adoption and justification have to do with the believer's standing before God.

Gal. 4:8-11.--Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

In this section the ritualistic element of legalism is dealt with. This ritualistic element so to speak is the meeting point of both Judaism and heathenism, as Lightfoot says:

They have at least so much in common that a lapse into Judaism can be regarded as a relapse to the position of unconverted heathenism. Judaism was a system of bondage like heathenism. Heathenism had been a disciplinary training like Judaism. . . . Both alike are *στοιχεῖα*, 'elementary' systems of training. They had at least this in common, that as ritual systems they were made up of precepts and ordinances, and thus were representatives of 'law' as opposed to 'grace', 'promise,' that is, as opposed to the gospel.⁴⁶

"Ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods."--As the apostle had spoken of the heathen gods to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 8:4-6), the gods of the heathen are non-existent. Thus they were to the heathen Galatians before they were saved. Satan only uses such dumb idols as one of his many devices to keep sinners in a state of spiritual blindness.

"But now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God."--God knew the Galatians in the sense that they had become the objects of His favorable interest, when they lived in utter pagan darkness and spiritual

⁴⁶Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 173.

blindness. His knowing them first was the reason they ever knew Him second.

"How turn ye again."-- $\alpha \nu \omega \theta \epsilon \nu$ is strong and emphatic. It suggests a return to the very beginning principles of religion, the reviving of a worship that had been ended with the cross, practically a return to heathen idolatry. It is a return to the annoying discipline of childhood from which they had been emancipated.

In what way is returning to the ritual of law-keeping "weak and beggarly?" The answer is that it is weak because it has no power to liberate one from his sins and beggarly because too poor to provide for man's greatest need. For a present day application, here is a direct rebuke to the Seventh Day Adventists, who in essence are the Judaizers of this day. So are the Mormons and many others. They are spreading Galatianism, adding Old Testament law observance to faith in Christ and turning men to weak and beggarly elements.

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."--Such an indictment means that the Galatians have already become engrossed in Judaistic legalism. The expressions "days, months, times, years" speak of the rudimentary elements of worship, of the Old Testament shadow in place of the New Testament reality.

"Days" undoubtedly had reference to the keeping of Jewish sabbaths, "months" to the Old Testament festivals of the New Moons; "times" to the annual feasts,

such as the passover, pentecost, tabernacles, etc.; and "years" to the sabbatical years and years of jubilee. Is this far different from many Christians today who make much of "the Church year," the season of Advent, Christmas, Easter, Lent, etc.? This is not following the pattern of true New Testament believers in this dispensation of grace who only spoke of one day in a special way, and that was the Lord's day, the day which was the first day of the week, commemorating the glorious and triumphant resurrection of our Lord when He led us out free from the bondage of such legalism.

"I am afraid of you. . . I have bestowed labour in vain."--Laboured is a strong verb for it indicates that Paul laboured to the point of exhaustion in behalf of the Galatians and yet he fears lest it was all in vain.

Gal. 4:13-16.--Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you. . . And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not. . . Where is then the blessedness ye spoke of. . . ye

⁴⁷Martin Luther, cited by Clarence Keen, *Spirit of Galatians* (Hayward, California: The Regular Baptist Press, 1953), p. 27.

⁴⁸John A. Allan, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians* (Northumbria, Great Britain: Northumbria Press, 1961), p. 73.

The Appeal to Their Emotions

The appeal of Paul to the Galatians in verses 12-20 reveals the warm personal relationship which existed between Paul and the Galatians at the initial conversion experience of those believers. He asks them to consider seriously his sincere motives in endeavoring to reach them for Christ in spite of great physical handicaps as against the base, selfish motives of the legalizers. It was Luther who said of this section:

"These words of Paul breathe tears."⁴⁷

Gal. 4:12.--Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

Here the apostle urges them to follow his example. Allan explains the verse so aptly in paraphrase that we quote him here: "Make yourselves free in relation to the law even as I am, because, you remember, I laid aside my privileged position that the law was supposed to have given me, and became a 'gentile sinner' like you, in order to wean you."⁴⁸

Gal. 4:13-16.--Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you. . . And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not. . . Where is then the blessedness ye spake of. . . ye

⁴⁷Martin Luther, cited by Clarence Keen, Gold From Galatians (Hayward, California: The Regular Baptist Press, 1953), p. 27.

⁴⁸John A. Allan, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians (Northumberland, Great Britain: Northumberland Press, 1951), p. 73.

would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Thus Paul continues to reveal the warm personal relationship which must have been felt between him and the Galatians when he evangelized them. With Tenney, Ironside, Burton, Wuest and many others, the writer feels that very probably the eye disease known as opthalmia is the infirmity mentioned here. This is a common affliction in the Orient and causes the vision to become greatly impaired, causing an inflammation of the eye and accompanied by a great deal of smarting and at times a flow of tears. Cross references which support this view are: (1) the reference in verse 15 to their willingness to pluck out their "own eyes" for him; (2) the reference in Gal. 6:11 where Paul points out to them "with what large letters" he has written this epistle. This suggests that without the aid of an amanuensis he wrote with great difficulty and a large awkward hand; (3) Most commentators identify this affliction, whatever it may have been, with the thorn in the flesh of 2 Cor. 12:7.

Thus through much bodily weakness the apostle preached to them. His motives were clearly to seek their salvation and not for personal gain. He reminds them of their initial response to him. Though, as a Jew with a loathsome disease, they received him as an "angel of God," as the very Christ Jesus of the gospel which

he preached. Yet before that time, they knew nothing of the true God, nor of Christ, nor of angels. If we accept the southern Galatian theory, we can see a close parallel between this and the worship of Paul and Barnabas by these persons as though creatures from heaven, when the lame man of Lystra was healed (Acts 14:8-18).

What a convicting question the apostle asks when tenderly but firmly he plies, "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" Because he is now brutally frank with them, would their initial love turn to disrespect or even hatred?

Gal. 4:17, 18.--They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

"They zealously affect you."--To make clearer sense, *ζηλοῦσιν* may be translated "they pay court to you," "they make much of you." Here the apostle leaves off a review of his own sincere motives and proceeds adroitly to expose the selfish motives of the Judaizers. He says in effect, "True, these false teachers pay court to you, but their interest in you is not out of a sincere motive. Their objective is to shut you out from Christ in order that you may pay court to them."⁴⁹ Now it is good, Paul says, to be zealously affected, to respond as your teachers want you to respond, if it is in a good thing, if it is on the basis of a good principle, even

⁴⁹Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 176.

as you responded when I was with you. But if your response when I was with you was on the basis of principle and sound doctrine and honest motives, then it should have lasted and not been forsaken while I am absent from you, above all, in the face of those who are not sincere in their motives.

Gal. 4:19, 20.--My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

Here is a most tender appeal from the heart of the apostle as he uses the diminutive form of the word ^τΕΚΝΟY. Though John uses "my little children" often in his epistles, this is the only instance where Paul uses the expression. In the form of a metaphor, the strong efforts of the apostle (as seen in this epistle in an endeavor to restore the Galatians) is likened to a mother who suffers unnaturally all the birth pangs a second time, contrary to nature. His original travail for them was for their regeneration, for their deliverance from idol worship and superstition and sin. He prayed, suffered and laboured in their behalf until they were born again, like a mother bringing children into the world. Now the travail of the apostle's maternal heart is to the end that there be moral conformity of the believers to Christ ("until Christ be formed in you"). It is not that they need a second regeneration, but they need to conform to the image of Christ, the gospel simplicity which comes

by being in Christ.

"I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."--This denotes inward concern and perplexity. Paul is so concerned and perplexed over the about-face of the Galatians almost over night, that he could almost wish he could come and discuss the matter personally in place of just writing.

Gal. 4:21.--Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

This is preparatory and introductory to the allegory which is to follow. It is tantamount to saying: "You, my brethren, who would be submissive to the law, listen while I relate a moral lesson from one of the books of the law."

(verse 23); "Jerusalem which is above is free" (verse 26); "We are not children of the bondwoman but of the free" (verse 31); "For freedom did Christ set us free" (verse 5:1, A. F. of 1901). Along with this emphasis on the word "free" is the contrasting word "bondage," so that the central teaching of the allegory in a nutshell is Christian freedom in contrast to the yoke of bondage, the Jewish law.

It should be observed that the allegory as used here is not what we Americans consider an allegory, technically speaking. Dr. S. Johnson, for instance, defines an allegory as a "figurative discourse in which

The Appeal to Their Intellect

One of the most controversial passages in the whole book of Galatians is the allegory which we are about to consider. In itself the allegory contains no argument but a convincing illustration. The intent of the apostle is to bring to a grand climax his whole argument for justification by faith alone, and his appeal to the Galatians to abandon all legalism. This capstone figure of speech illustrates and illuminates the subject so ably set forth up to this point.

It is an aid to grasping the central teaching of the allegory if we observe the recurring key word "free." For example: "the other by a free-woman" (verse 22); "he of the free-woman was by promise" (verse 23); "Jerusalem which is above is free" (verse 26); "we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free" (verse 31); "for freedom did Christ set us free" (verse 5:1, R.V. of 1901). Along with this emphasis on the word "free" is the contrasting word "bondage," so that the central teaching of the allegory in a nutshell is Christian freedom in contrast to the yoke of bondage, the Mosaic law.

It should be observed that the allegory as used here is not what we Americans consider an allegory, technically speaking. Dr. S. Johnson, for instance, defines an allegory as a "figurative discourse in which

something other is intended than is contained in the words literally taken."⁵⁰ This definition would fit perfectly Psalm 23, the discourse of our Lord on the vine and the branches in John 15, as well as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. But it does not suit the allegory of Galatians because here the apostle takes a historical discourse and casts it in a figure to bring out a moral lesson. The writer is inclined to believe that the apostle does something here which he has not done elsewhere in the Scriptures. He being well versed in the rabbinical method of interpretation, had often heard the rabbis draw fancied implications from Old Testament historical truth and use them for argument's sake, as did Philo, Origen, Rabbi Akiba, and many others of later times. So here, the apostle seized on this opportunity to use a device very similar to that of the Rabbi Judaizers, to cast in their teeth so to speak, and more so, to illustrate to the Galatians the great spiritual truth. However, it must be borne in mind that, unlike the Rabbinical method of allegorizing, Paul did not force the historical narrative to bring out any fanciful implications, at the expense of submerging the literal, historical meaning. Rather he used a historical incident to bring out clearly a spiritual lesson.

⁵⁰ Samuel Johnson, cited by H. E. Perowne, "The Epistle to the Galatians," The Cambridge Bible For Schools and Colleges, ed. by J. J. S. Perowne (Cambridge: The University Press, 1892), p. 55.

With these preliminary observations in mind, let us observe how the apostle develops his capstone illustration of grace versus law.

Gal. 4:22-24a.--For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory:

This refers to a literal, historical incident which took place in the life of Abraham as recorded in Genesis 16, 21. The occasion is found in the birth of Ishmael and Isaac. The one was born out of self-effort of the flesh, the other out of the promise of God. "Which things are an allegory," means, as the R.V. of 1901 puts it "which things contain an allegory; literally, the word means "to say something different." By this statement the apostle intends to show how a particular principle worked in a particular history. He is not drawing a fanciful implication from the facts related but is first relating the historical facts and upon these facts he builds a sort of parable with a spiritual lesson.

It is at this point that some have come with either a predisposition to covenant eschatology, or neo-orthodoxy, and use the allegory as an opportunity to give their predetermined philosophy certain theological overtones. What a neo-orthodox theologian does with a passage like this would require another thesis. But the writer would like to point to one example of interpretation by a man persuaded in covenant theology. We

refer to Prof. John Brown who has done an otherwise excellent exposition on Galatians and whom the writer praised so highly in the Preface of this thesis.

Brown has an amillennial bias. Thus he finds an allusion to the passage in Isaiah 54, feeling that the apostle has found there the allegory in germ form, already allegorized by Isaiah. This is because he translates the phrase "which things are an allegory" to read "which things are allegorized," as though the allegory must have already been done in the Old Testament, and since Paul makes reference once in the allegory to the Isaiah passage (Isa. 54:1), that must be the location of the allegory in the Old Testament. From the prophecy of Isaiah Brown sees a clear prediction of a time coming when the spiritual descendents of Abraham will be far more numerous than the Israelitish people, the natural descendents of Abraham. He makes the Jerusalem which is above correspond to the true worshippers in the Old Testament economy, as well as the New, beginning with the covenant made by God to Adam, more fully to Abraham, and later revealed even more fully to Isaiah. "They of the law" are shown to be outward Jews who submitted to the forms of the Mosaic economy, which were cast out as natural branches, at the destruction of Jerusalem. "They of the promise" are they who like Isaac truly believe; they are Israelites indeed, inward Jews. Their relation to God is spiritual, supernaturally

formed.⁵¹

The writer finds two major faults with this interpretation. For one thing, if the apostle had meant that the allegory had already been made in the Old Testament, then the aorist participle and not the present participle would have been used, for the expression "which things are an allegory." Second, he makes the central teaching of the parable other than that the apostle makes it.

Gal. 4:24-26.--Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

The phrase "answereth to" means "belongs to the same row or column with." In military language the word denoted a rank or file of soldiers. Here it means that Mount Sinai, which represented the Mosaic law in the past, is to be put in the same rank with Jerusalem of the present. By extension the writer will put in double file the rest of the parts of the allegory which answer to one another, which is very obvious in the reading. This will show at a glance the allegory and conserve space and needless comment.

The Historical Account in File

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The slave woman and her son. | 1. The free woman and her son. |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|

⁵¹Brown, op. cit., p. 230-255.

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|---|---|
| 2. Ishmael, born after the flesh. | 2. Isaac, born through promise. |
| 3. Ishmael, born a slave. | 3. Isaac, born free. |
| 4. (by inference) Hagar and her son driven out. | 4. (by inference) Sarah and her son abiding in the house. |

The Allegorical Interpretation in File

Law

Grace

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. The old covenant given at Sinai. | 1. The new covenant of grace. |
| 2. The earthly Jerusalem. | 2. The heavenly Jerusalem. |
| 3. The mother of bondage. | 3. The mother of free children. |

The Allegorical Application in File

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Those of the flesh are persecutors. | 1. Those of the Spirit are persecuted. |
| 2. The bondwoman and her son (i.e., the Mosaic law and legalists) are to be cast out. | 2. The heirs of the promise in the new covenant of grace are to abide in "the house." |

Gal. 4:27.--For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

This is the Old Testament quote from Isaiah 54:1, to fill in one of the minor details of the allegory. Isaiah himself had the historical background of Sarah and Hagar in mind when he wrote. Sarah was the barren, who because she could not travail and give birth, was left desolate while her husband turned to Hagar and begat Ishmael. But in time the situation was reversed

for God had made a promise to Sarah which He fulfilled. Sarah rejoiced, and Hagar was cast out. Isaiah 54, however, has primarily in view the millennial restoration of Israel after a prolonged period of trial and dispersion. She will once more rejoice when restored to national favour. Ironside has well expressed it

As used in the allegory, the removal of barrenness from Sarah and her restoration to multiplied fruitfulness seems to apply to the enlargement of the borders of God's dealings with all nations under grace in contrast to His restricted dealings with Israel in the Old Testament dispensation. The grieved Sarah would well rejoice could she see the many sons of promise being born into God's spiritual kingdom. These have far outnumbered over the years the hide-bound legalists of the Jerusalem stripe.

Gal. 4:29.--But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Truly this has borne out through history to be true. Paul was not only stating a historical fact and a present reality in his own life, but he was foretelling what would continue to be until Christ comes to set His chosen people, the Jews, free. Just as Ishmael's dislike for Isaac (though not recorded in the Old Testament) was a cause of bitter feeling and persecution to Israel; and just as the descendents of Ishmael, the Arabs, have been a perpetual grief to Israel; just so

the Judaizers from Jerusalem were a constant grief to Paul, the apostle. It has always been and will continue till Christ comes that the man who is trying to save himself by self-effort, by doing, will hate the message of grace and the messengers and will be antagonistic to the gospel of grace. Ironside has well expressed it when he said:

During the dark ages for over 1,000 years the doctrine of grace was practically lost to the church. Many were trying to save themselves by penances, by long journeys, by prayers repeated over and over . . . the children of legality were a large host, and God opened the eyes of Martin Luther, John Knox, John Calvin, William Farrel, and a host of others . . . they found out that . . . it was the will of God to save poor sinners by grace. Luther took hold of the text "the just shall live by faith," and the truth began to ring out all over Germany and Europe and then to Britain, and soon persecution broke out and people cried, 'put them to death, those people who believe in salvation by grace, who do not believe they can be saved by penances and human merit; burn them, starve them, shoot them, behead them. Do everything possible to rid the world of them.'⁵²

It remains to emphasize once more the central teaching of the allegory. Since the bondwoman and her son clearly represent the whole Mosaic covenant given at Mount Sinai--moral, ceremonial and judicial--and since they also represent all self-effort at keeping the law, all of these are seen to be repudiated, to be abolished as means of justification or sanctification. Likewise are any who would propagate law teaching. What else could be the force of the command "cast out

⁵²Ironside, op. cit., p. 173.

the bondwoman and her son?" The allegory illustrates that law and grace are diverse and opposing principles and are as unmixable as oil and water. The believer must part with all semblance of law-keeping.

Gal. 4:31.--So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

This verse concludes the climaxing illustration.

All believers, Jews and Gentiles, are not a community in bondage, but are related to God as spiritual sons of Abraham, in a community of sonship. We have not the Spirit of bondage, but of the sons of God. Every true believer, as was Isaac, is a son of promise, one selected by sovereign grace, supernaturally given resurrection life by a new birth. We are sons of God, heirs of His promised inheritance, children of the covenant of grace. Hallelujah! "He is the free man whom the truth makes free and all are slaves beside." (Cowper)

Brown cites a parable from Andrew Fuller's Miscellaneous Works in which Fuller presents a simple but plain illustration of the contrast between trying to obtain righteousness by law and submitting to the favour of God which is by grace. We will give a paraphrase of the parable.

A ship's crew mutinied against its captain, who was the king's son. They not only refused to obey him, but threw him overboard with the intention of depriving him of life. Upon reflecting on what they did, they saw that they had placed themselves in a position of lawless persons and commenced to be pirates. They spread terror and misery over the oceans and every evil work prevailed among themselves.

The prince, contrary to all expectation, reached the shore safely. Upon arriving at his father's palace, instead of urging punishment on his would-be murderers, he used all his influence to persuade his offended father to lay aside thoughts of vengeance. In this he was successful. Then the king dispatched messengers to the rebellious crew offering them mercy and pardon if they would but acknowledge the prince as their saviour and ruler and agree to submit to his guidance in the future.

If the members of the crew failed to accept the king's overtures, they were to be warned that they would be dealt with according to the rigour of the law.

So the messengers of mercy went out to the ocean and sought for the rebellious crew and upon finding them, offered them the good news. The reaction of the rebels was varied when the messengers found the ship. Some of them were for treating the messengers of mercy as they had done their commander. Some mocked at the offer, others said it was a ruse to get them in the king's power; even the most sober-minded of the crew, though tired of their work of plundering and disorderly living, said they couldn't give the king credit for such kindness, nor could they make up their minds to submit to the prince, but they would bend every effort to behave better, and to establish better order on the ship, and to restrain their other companions from their cruelty and rapine.

After many efforts to persuade the rebellious crew, their vessel was boarded by the king's servants in irresistible force and the whole crew were safely landed in prison. In time they were brought before the king for judgment. With fixed determination the king pronounced the sentence. Said he, "you, in intention, murdered my son; you transgressed the law; upon the intercession of my son, I offered you forgiveness. You not only spurned my generosity but persisted in repud-

iating my authority and will. Even some of you, who did not run to the same excess of cruelty and arrogance, disregarded my laws and formed laws for yourselves to observe. You have trampled on my grace as well as my authority. You have had the arrogance to dictate to me in what way I should bestow my favour. You have had your choice, now you must abide by it. Because these men would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth and slay them before me.⁵³

Let the self-righteous man see in a figure the doom that awaits him if he still tries to follow the laws of human device instead of the free offer of divine favour.

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⁵³B. Andrew Fuller, Miscellaneous Works, cited by John Brown, op. cit., p. 168f.

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