

**AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF****THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO****THE GALATIANS**

The churches in Galatia were formed partly of converted Jews, and partly of Gentile converts, as was generally the case. St. Paul asserts his apostolic character and the doctrines he taught, that he might confirm the Galatian churches in the faith of Christ, especially with respect to the important point of justification by faith alone. Thus the subject is mainly the same as that which is discussed in the epistle to the Romans, that is, justification by faith alone. In this epistle, however, attention is particularly directed to the point, that men are justified by faith without the works of the law of Moses. Of the importance of the doctrines prominently set forth in this epistle, Luther thus speaks: "We have to fear as the greatest and nearest danger, lest Satan take from us this doctrine of faith, and bring into the church again the doctrine of works and of men's traditions. Wherefore it is very necessary that this doctrine be kept in continual practice and public exercise, both of reading and hearing. If this doctrine be lost, then is also the doctrine of truth, life and salvation, lost and gone."

## CHAPTER 1

*The apostle Paul asserts his apostolic character against such as lessened it. (1-5) He reproves the Galatians for revolting from the gospel of Christ under the influence of evil teachers. (6-9) He proves the Divine authority of his doctrine and mission; and declares what he was before his conversion and calling. (10-14) And how he proceeded after it. (15-24)*

### ◀BIB Galatians 1:1

**Vs. 1-5:** St. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ; he was expressly appointed by him, consequently by God the Father, who is one with him in respect of his Divine nature, and who appointed Christ as Mediator. Grace, includes God's goodwill towards us, and his good work upon us; and peace, all that inward comfort, or outward prosperity, which is really needful for us. They come from God the Father, as the Fountain, through Jesus Christ. But observe, first grace, and then peace; there can be no true peace without grace. Christ gave himself for our sins, to make atonement for us: this the justice of God required, and to this he freely submitted. Here is to be observed the infinite greatness of the price bestowed, and then it will appear plainly, that the power of sin is so great, that it could by no means be put away except the Son of God be given for it. He that considers these things well, understands that sin is a thing the most horrible that can be expressed; which ought to move us, and make us afraid indeed. Especially mark well the words, "for our sins." For here our weak nature starts back, and would first be made worthy by her own works. It would bring him that is whole, and not him that has need of a physician. Not only to redeem us from the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; but also to recover us from wicked practices and customs, to which we are naturally enslaved. But it is in vain for those who are not delivered from this present evil world by the sanctification of the Spirit, to expect that they are freed from its condemnation by the blood of Jesus.

### ◀BIB Galatians 1:6

**Vs. 6-9:** Those who would establish any other way to heaven than what the gospel of Christ reveals, will find themselves wretchedly mistaken.

The apostle presses upon the Galatians a due sense of their guilt in forsaking the gospel way of justification; yet he reproveth with tenderness, and represents them as drawn into it by the arts of some that troubled them. In reproveth others, we should be faithful, and yet endeavor to restore them in the spirit of meekness. Some would set up the works of the law in the place of Christ's righteousness, and thus they corrupted Christianity. The apostle solemnly denounces, as accursed, every one who attempts to lay so false a foundation. All other gospels than that of the grace of Christ, whether more flattering to self-righteous pride, or more favorable to worldly lusts, are devices of Satan. And while we declare that to reject the moral law as a rule of life, tends to dishonor Christ, and destroy true religion, we must also declare, that all dependence for justification on good works, whether real or supposed, is as fatal to those who persist in it. While we are zealous for good works, let us be careful not to put them in the place of Christ's righteousness, and not to advance any thing which may betray others into so dreadful a delusion.

#### **Galatians 1:10**

**Vs. 10-14:** In preaching the gospel, the apostle sought to bring persons to the obedience, not of men, but of God. But Paul would not attempt to alter the doctrine of Christ, either to gain their favor, or to avoid their fury. In so important a matter we must not fear the frowns of men, nor seek their favor, by using words of men's wisdom. Concerning the manner wherein he received the gospel, he had it by revelation from Heaven. He was not led to Christianity, as many are, merely by education.

#### **Galatians 1:15**

**Vs. 15-24:** St. Paul was wonderfully brought to the knowledge and faith of Christ. All who are savingly converted, are called by the grace of God; their conversion is wrought by his power and grace working in them. It will but little avail us to have Christ revealed to us, if he is not also revealed in us. He instantly prepared to obey, without hesitating as to his worldly interest, credit, ease, or life itself. And what matter of thanksgiving and joy is it to the churches of Christ, when they hear of such instances to the praise of the glory of his grace, whether they have ever seen them or not! They glorify God for his power and mercy in

saving such persons, and for all the service to his people and cause that is done, and may be further expected from them.

## CHAPTER 2

*The apostle declares his being owned as an apostle of the Gentiles. (1-10) He had publicly opposed Peter for Judaizing. (11-14) And from thence he enters upon the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, without the works of the law. (15-21)*

### ◀<sup>REF</sup> Galatians 2:1

**Vs. 1-10:** Observe the apostle's faithfulness in giving a full account of the doctrine he had preached among the Gentiles, and was still resolved to preach, that of Christianity, free from all mixture of Judaism. This doctrine would be ungrateful to many, yet he was not afraid to own it. His care was, lest the success of his past labors should be lessened, or his future usefulness be hindered. While we simply depend upon God for success to our labors, we should use every proper caution to remove mistakes, and against opposers. There are things which may lawfully be complied with, yet, when they cannot be done without betraying the truth, they ought to be refused. We must not give place to any conduct, whereby the truth of the gospel would be reflected upon. Though Paul conversed with the other apostles, yet he did not receive any addition to his knowledge, or authority, from them. Perceiving the grace given to him, they gave unto him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, whereby they acknowledged that he was designed to the honor and office of an apostle as well as themselves. They agreed that these two should go to the heathen, while they continued to preach to the Jews; judging it agreeable to the mind of Christ, so to divide their work. Here we learn that the gospel is not ours, but God's; and that men are but the keepers of it; for this we are to praise God. The apostle showed his charitable disposition, and how ready he was to own the Jewish converts as brethren, though many would scarcely allow the like favor to the converted Gentiles; but mere difference of opinion was no reason to him why he should not help them. Herein is a pattern of Christian charity, which we should extend to all the disciples of Christ.

## ◀REB Galatians 2:11

**Vs. 11-14:** Notwithstanding Peter's character, yet, when Paul saw him acting so as to hurt the truth of the gospel and the peace of the church, he was not afraid to reprove him. When he saw that Peter and the others did not live up to that principle which the gospel taught, and which they professed, namely, That by the death of Christ the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was taken down, and the observance of the law of Moses was no longer in force; as Peter's offense was public, he publicly reproved him. There is a very great difference between the prudence of St. Paul, who bore with, and used for a time, the ceremonies of the law as not sinful, and the timid conduct of St. Peter, who, by withdrawing from the Gentiles, led others to think that these ceremonies were necessary.

## ◀REB Galatians 2:15

**Vs. 15-19:** Paul, having thus shown he was not inferior to any apostle, not to Peter himself, speaks of the great foundation doctrine of the gospel. For what did we believe in Christ? Was it not that we might be justified by the faith of Christ? If so, is it not foolish to go back to the law, and to expect to be justified by the merit of moral works, or sacrifices, or ceremonies? The occasion of this declaration doubtless arose from the ceremonial law; but the argument is quite as strong against all dependence upon the works of the moral law, as respects justification. To give the greater weight to this, it is added, But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ the minister of sin? This would be very dishonorable to Christ, and also very hurtful to them. By considering the law itself, he saw that justification was not to be expected by the works of it, and that there was now no further need of the sacrifices and cleansings of it, since they were done away in Christ, by his offering up himself a sacrifice for us. He did not hope or fear any thing from it; any more than a dead man from enemies. But the effect was not a careless, lawless life. It was necessary, that he might live to God, and be devoted to him through the motives and grace of the gospel. It is no new prejudice, though a most unjust one, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone, tends to encourage people in sin. Not so, for to take occasion from free grace, or the doctrine of it, to live in sin, is to try to make Christ the

minister of sin, at any thought of which all Christian hearts would shudder.

### Galatians 2:20

**Vs. 20, 21:** Here, in his own person, the apostle describes the spiritual or hidden life of a believer. The old man is crucified, <sup>☞</sup>Romans 6:6, but the new man is living; sin is mortified, and grace is quickened. He has the comforts and the triumphs of grace; yet that grace is not from himself, but from another. Believers see themselves living in a state of dependence on Christ. Hence it is, that though he lives in the flesh, yet he does not live after the flesh. Those who have true faith, live by that faith; and faith fastens upon Christ's giving himself for us. He loved me, and gave himself for me. As if the apostle said, The Lord saw me fleeing from him more and more. Such wickedness, error, and ignorance were in my will and understanding, that it was not possible for me to be ransomed by any other means than by such a price. Consider well this price. Here notice the false faith of many. And their profession is accordingly; they have the form of godliness without the power of it. They think they believe the articles of faith aright, but they are deceived. For to believe in Christ crucified, is not only to believe that he was crucified, but also to believe that I am crucified with him. And this is to know Christ crucified. Hence we learn what is the nature of grace. God's grace cannot stand with man's merit. Grace is no grace unless it is freely given every way. The more simply the believer relies on Christ for every thing, the more devotedly does he walk before Him in all his ordinances and commandments. Christ lives and reigns in him, and he lives here on earth by faith in the Son of God, which works by love, causes obedience, and changes into his holy image. Thus he neither abuses the grace of God, nor makes it in vain.

## CHAPTER 3

*The Galatians reprov'd for departing from the great doctrine of justification alone, through faith in Christ. (1-5) This doctrine established from the example of Abraham. (6-9) From the tenor of the law and the severity of its curse. (10-14) From the covenant of promises, which the law could not disannul. (15-18) The law was a school master to lead them to Christ. (19-25) Under the gospel state true believers are all one in Christ. (26-29)*

### ◀RRR Galatians 3:1

**Vs. 1-5:** Several things made the folly of the Galatian Christians worse. They had the doctrine of the cross preached, and the Lord's supper administered among them, in both which Christ crucified, and the nature of his sufferings, had been fully and clearly set forth. Had they been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, by the ministration of the law, or on account of any works done by them in obedience thereto? Was it not by their hearing and embracing the doctrine of faith in Christ alone for justification? Which of these had God owned with tokens of his favor and acceptance? It was not by the first, but the last. And those must be very unwise, who suffer themselves to be turned away from the ministry and doctrine which have been blessed to their spiritual advantage. Alas, that men should turn from the all-important doctrine of Christ crucified, to listen to useless distinctions, mere moral preaching, or wild fancies! The God of this world, by various men and means, has blinded men's eyes, lest they should learn to trust in a crucified Savior. We may boldly demand where the fruits of the Holy Spirit are most evidently brought forth? whether among those who preach justification by the works of the law, or those who preach the doctrine of faith? Assuredly among the latter.

### ◀RRR Galatians 3:6

**Vs. 6-14:** The apostle proves the doctrine he had blamed the Galatians for rejecting; namely, that of justification by faith without the works of the law. This he does from the example of Abraham, whose faith fastened upon the word and promise of God, and upon his believing he was owned and accepted of God as a righteous man. The Scripture is said to foresee,



because the Holy Spirit that dictated the Scripture did foresee. Through faith in the promise of God he was blessed; and it is only in the same way that others obtain this privilege. Let us then study the object, nature, and effects of Abraham's faith; for who can in any other way escape the curse of the holy law? The curse is against all sinners, therefore against all men; for all have sinned, and are become guilty before God: and if, as transgressors of the law, we are under its curse, it must be vain to look for justification by it. Those only are just or righteous who are freed from death and wrath, and restored into a state of life in the favor of God; and it is only through faith that persons become righteous. Thus we see that justification by faith is no new doctrine, but was taught in the church of God, long before the times of the gospel. It is, in truth, the only way wherein any sinners ever were, or can be justified. Though deliverance is not to be expected from the law, there is a way open to escape the curse, and regain the favor of God, namely, through faith in Christ. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law; being made sin, or a sin-offering, for us, he was made a curse for us; not separated from God, but laid for a time under the Divine punishment. The heavy sufferings of the Son of God, more loudly warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, than all the curses of the law; for how can God spare any man who remains under sin, seeing that he spared not his own Son, when our sins were charged upon him? Yet at the same time, Christ, as from the cross, freely invites sinners to take refuge in him.

### Galatians 3:15

**Vs. 15-18:** The covenant God made with Abraham, was not done away by the giving the law to Moses. The covenant was made with Abraham and his Seed. It is still in force; Christ abideth for ever in his person, and his spiritual seed, who are his by faith. By this we learn the difference between the promises of the law and those of the gospel. The promises of the law are made to the person of every man; the promises of the gospel are first made to Christ, then by him to those who are by faith ingrafted into Christ. Rightly to divide the word of truth, a great difference must be put between the promise and the law, as to the inward affections, and the whole practice of life. When the promise is mingled with the law, it is made nothing but the law. Let Christ be always before our eyes, as a sure

argument for the defense of faith, against dependence on human righteousness.

### Galatians 3:19

**Vs. 19-22:** If that promise was enough for salvation, wherefore then serveth the law? The Israelites, though chosen to be God's peculiar people, were sinners as well as others. The law was not intended to discover a way of justification, different from that made known by the promise, but to lead men to see their need of the promise, by showing the sinfulness of sin, and to point to Christ, through whom alone they could be pardoned and justified. The promise was given by God himself; the law was given by the ministry of angels, and the hand of a mediator, even Moses. Hence the law could not be designed to set aside the promise. A mediator, as the very term signifies, is a friend that comes between two parties, and is not to act merely with and for one of them. The great design of the law was, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to those that believe; that, being convinced of their guilt, and the insufficiency of the law to effect a righteousness for them, they might be persuaded to believe on Christ, and so obtain the benefit of the promise. And it is not possible that the holy, just, and good law of God, the standard of duty to all, should be contrary to the gospel of Christ. It tends every way to promote it.

### Galatians 3:23

**Vs. 23-25:** The law did not teach a living, saving knowledge; but, by its rites and ceremonies, especially by its sacrifices, it pointed to Christ, that they might be justified by faith. And thus it was, as the word properly signifies, a servant, to lead to Christ, as children are led to school by servants who have the care of them, that they might be more fully taught by Him the true way of justification and salvation, which is only by faith in Christ. And the vastly greater advantage of the gospel state is shown, under which we enjoy a clearer discovery of Divine grace and mercy than the Jews of old. Most men continue shut up as in a dark dungeon, in love with their sins, being blinded and lulled asleep by Satan, through worldly pleasures, interests, and pursuits. But the awakened sinner discovers his dreadful condition. Then he feels that the mercy and grace of God form his only hope. And the terrors of the law are often used by the convincing

Spirit, to show the sinner his need of Christ, to bring him to rely on his sufferings and merits, that he may be justified by faith. Then the law, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, becomes his loved rule of duty, and his standard for daily self-examination. In this use of it he learns to depend more simply on the Savior.

 **Galatians 3:26**

**Vs. 26-29:** Real Christians enjoy great privileges under the gospel; and are no longer accounted servants, but sons; not now kept at such a distance, and under such restraints as the Jews were. Having accepted Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and relying on him alone for justification and salvation, they become the sons of God. But no outward forms or profession can secure these blessings; for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. In baptism we put on Christ; therein we profess to be his disciples. Being baptized into Christ, we are baptized into his death, that as he died and rose again, so we should die unto sin, and walk in newness and holiness of life. The putting on of Christ according to the gospel, consists not in outward imitation, but in a new birth, an entire change. He who makes believers to be heirs, will provide for them. Therefore our care must be to do the duties that belong to us, and all other cares we must cast upon God. And our special care must be for heaven; the things of this life are but trifles. The city of God in heaven, is the portion or child's part. Seek to be sure of that above all things.

## CHAPTER 4

*The folly of returning to legal observances for justification. (1-7)  
The happy change made in the Gentile believers. (8-11) The apostle  
reasons against following false teachers. (12-18) He expresses his  
earnest concern for them. (19, 20) And then explains the difference  
between what is to be expected from the law, and from the gospel.  
(21-31)*

### ◀BOD Galatians 4:1

**Vs. 1-7:** The apostle deals plainly with those who urged the law of Moses together with the gospel of Christ, and endeavored to bring believers under its bondage. They could not fully understand the meaning of the law as given by Moses. And as that was a dispensation of darkness, so of bondage; they were tied to many burdensome rites and observances, by which they were taught and kept subject like a child under tutors and governors. We learn the happier state of Christians under the gospel dispensation. From these verses see the wonders of Divine love and mercy; particularly of God the Father, in sending his Son into the world to redeem and save us; of the Son of God, in submitting so low, and suffering so much for us; and of the Holy Spirit, in condescending to dwell in the hearts of believers, for such gracious purposes. Also, the advantages Christians enjoy under the gospel. Although by nature children of wrath and disobedience, they become by grace children of love, and partake of the nature of the children of God; for he will have all his children resemble him. Among men the eldest son is heir; but all God's children shall have the inheritance of eldest sons. May the temper and conduct of sons ever show our adoption; and may the Holy Spirit witness with our spirits that we are children and heirs of God.

### ◀BOD Galatians 4:8

**Vs. 8-11:** The happy change whereby the Galatians were turned from idols to the living God, and through Christ had received the adoption of sons, was the effect of his free and rich grace; they were laid under the greater obligation to keep to the liberty wherewith he had made them free. All our knowledge of God begins on his part; we know him because we are

known of him. Though our religion forbids idolatry, yet many practice spiritual idolatry in their hearts. For what a man loves most, and cares most for, that is his God: some have their riches for their God, some their pleasures, and some their lusts. And many ignorantly worship a God of their own making; a God made all of mercy and no justice. For they persuade themselves that there is mercy for them with God, though they repent not, but go on in their sins. It is possible for those who have made great professions of religion, to be afterwards drawn aside from purity and simplicity. And the more mercy God has shown, in bringing any to know the gospel, and the liberties and privileges of it, the greater their sin and folly in suffering themselves to be deprived of them. Hence all who are members of the outward church should learn to fear and to suspect themselves. We must not be content because we have some good things in ourselves. Paul fears lest his labor is in vain, yet he still labors; and thus to do, whatever follows, is true wisdom and the fear of God. This every man must remember in his place and calling.

### Galatians 4:12

**Vs. 12-18:** The apostle desires that they would be of one mind with him respecting the law of Moses, as well as united with him in love. In reproving others, we should take care to convince them that our reproofs are from sincere regard to the honor of God and religion and their welfare. The apostle reminds the Galatians of the difficulty under which he labored when he first came among them. But he notices, that he was a welcome messenger to them. Yet how very uncertain are the favor and respect of men! Let us labor to be accepted of God. You once thought yourselves happy in receiving the gospel; have you now reason to think otherwise? Christians must not forbear speaking the truth, for fear of offending others. The false teachers who drew the Galatians from the truth of the gospel were designing men. They pretended affection, but they were not sincere and upright. An excellent rule is given. It is good to be zealous always in a good thing; not for a time only, or now and then, but always. Happy would it be for the church of Christ, if this zeal was better maintained.

### ◀RHB Galatians 4:19

**Vs. 19, 20:** The Galatians were ready to account the apostle their enemy, but he assures them he was their friend; he had the feelings of a parent toward them. He was in doubt as to their state, and was anxious to know the result of their present delusions. Nothing is so sure a proof that a sinner has passed into a state of justification, as Christ being formed in him by the renewal of the Holy Spirit; but this cannot be hoped for, while men depend on the law for acceptance with God.

### ◀RHB Galatians 4:21

**Vs. 21-27:** The difference between believers who rested in Christ only, and those who trusted in the law, is explained by the histories of Isaac and Ishmael. These things are an allegory, wherein, beside the literal and historical sense of the words, the Spirit of God points out something further. Hagar and Sarah were apt emblems of the two different dispensations of the covenant. The heavenly Jerusalem, the true church from above, represented by Sarah, is in a state of freedom, and is the mother of all believers, who are born of the Holy Spirit. They were by regeneration and true faith, made a part of the true seed of Abraham, according to the promise made to him.

### ◀RHB Galatians 4:28

**Vs. 28-31:** The history thus explained is applied. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free. If the privileges of all believers were so great, according to the new covenant, how absurd for the Gentile converts to be under that law, which could not deliver the unbelieving Jews from bondage or condemnation! We should not have found out this allegory in the history of Sarah and Hagar, if it had not been shown to us, yet we cannot doubt it was intended by the Holy Spirit. It is an explanation of the subject, not an argument in proof of it. The two covenants of works and grace, and legal and evangelical professors, are shadowed forth. Works and fruits brought forth in a man's own strength, are legal. But if arising from faith in Christ, they are evangelical. The first covenant spirit is of bondage unto sin and death. The second covenant spirit is of liberty and freedom; not liberty to sin, but in and unto duty. The first is a spirit of persecution; the second is a spirit of love. Let those

professors look to it, who have a violent, harsh, imposing spirit, towards the people of God. Yet as Abraham turned aside to Hagar, so it is possible a believer may turn aside in some things to the covenant of works, when through unbelief and neglect of the promise he acts according to the law, in his own strength; or in a way of violence, not of love, towards the brethren. Yet it is not his way, not his spirit to do so; hence he is never at rest, till he returns to his dependence on Christ again. Let us rest our souls on the Scriptures, and by a gospel hope and cheerful obedience, show that our conversation and treasure are indeed in heaven.

## CHAPTER 5

*An earnest exhortation to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel. (1-12) To take heed of indulging a sinful temper. (13-15) And to walk in the Spirit, and not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh: the works of both are described. (16-26)*

### ◀REF Galatians 5:1

**Vs. 1-6:** Christ will not be the Savior of any who will not own and rely upon him as their only Savior. Let us take heed to the warnings and persuasions of the apostle to steadfastness in the doctrine and liberty of the gospel. All true Christians, being taught by the Holy Spirit, wait for eternal life, the reward of righteousness, and the object of their hope, as the gift of God by faith in Christ; and not for the sake of their own works. The Jewish convert might observe the ceremonies or assert his liberty, the Gentile might disregard them or might attend to them, provided he did not depend upon them. No outward privileges or profession will avail to acceptance with God, without sincere faith in our Lord Jesus. True faith is a working grace; it works by love to God, and to our brethren. May we be of the number of those who, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. The danger of old was not in things of no consequence in themselves, as many forms and observances now are. But without faith working by love, all else is worthless, and compared with it other things are of small value.

### ◀REF Galatians 5:7

**Vs. 7-12:** The life of a Christian is a race, wherein he must run, and hold on, if he would obtain the prize. It is not enough that we profess Christianity, but we must run well, by living up to that profession. Many who set out fairly in religion, are hindered in their progress, or turn out of the way. It concerns those who begin to turn out of the way, or to tire in it, seriously to inquire what hinders them. The opinion or persuasion, vs. 8, was, no doubt, that of mixing the works of the law with faith in Christ in justification. The apostle leaves them to judge whence it must arise, but sufficiently shows that it could be owing to none but Satan. It is dangerous for Christian churches to encourage those who follow, but especially who



spread, destructive errors. And in reproving sin and error, we should always distinguish between the leaders and the led. The Jews were offended, because Christ was preached as the only salvation for sinners. If Paul and others would have admitted that the observance of the law of Moses was to be joined with faith in Christ, as necessary to salvation, then believers might have avoided many of the sufferings they underwent. The first beginnings of such leaven should be opposed. And assuredly those who persist in disturbing the church of Christ must bear their judgment.

### Galatians 5:13

**Vs. 13-15:** The gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, <sup>506B</sup>1 Timothy 6:3, and is so far from giving the least countenance to sin, that it lays us under the strongest obligation to avoid and subdue it. The apostle urges that all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. If Christians, who should help one another, and rejoice one another, quarrel, what can be expected but that the God of love should deny his grace, that the Spirit of love should depart, and the evil spirit, who seeks their destruction, should prevail? Happy would it be, if Christians, instead of biting and devouring one another on account of different opinions, would set themselves against sin in themselves, and in the places where they live.

### Galatians 5:16

**Vs. 16-26:** If it be our care to act under the guidance and power of the blessed Spirit, though we may not be freed from the stirrings and oppositions of the corrupt nature which remains in us, it shall not have dominion over us. Believers are engaged in a conflict, in which they earnestly desire that grace may obtain full and speedy victory. And those who desire thus to give themselves up to be led by the Holy Spirit, are not under the law as a covenant of works, nor exposed to its awful curse. Their hatred of sin, and desires after holiness, show that they have a part in the salvation of the gospel. The works of the flesh are many and manifest. And these sins will shut men out of heaven. Yet what numbers, calling themselves Christians, live in these, and say they hope for heaven! The fruits of the Spirit, or of the renewed nature, which we are to do, are named. And as the apostle had chiefly named works of the flesh, not only

hurtful to men themselves, but tending to make them so to one another, so here he chiefly notices the fruits of the Spirit, which tend to make Christians agreeable one to another, as well as to make them happy. The fruits of the Spirit plainly show, that such are led by the Spirit. By describing the works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit, we are told what to avoid and oppose, and what we are to cherish and cultivate; and this is the sincere care and endeavor of all real Christians. Sin does not now reign in their mortal bodies, so that they obey it, <sup><R12></sup>Romans 6:12, for they seek to destroy it. Christ never will own those who yield themselves up to be the servants of sin. And it is not enough that we cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well. Our conversation will always be answerable to the principle which guides and governs us, <sup><R15></sup>Romans 8:5. We must set ourselves in earnest to mortify the deeds of the body, and to walk in newness of life. Not being desirous of vain-glory, or unduly wishing for the esteem and applause of men, not provoking or envying one another, but seeking to bring forth more abundantly those good fruits, which are, through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

## CHAPTER 6

*Exhortations to meekness, gentleness, and humility. (1-5) To kindness towards all men, especially believers. (6-11) The Galatians guarded against the Judaizing teachers. (12-15) A solemn blessing. (16-18)*

### ◀REF Galatians 6:1

**Vs. 1-5:** We are to bear one another's burdens. So we shall fulfill the law of Christ. This obliges to mutual forbearance and compassion towards each other, agreeably to his example. It becomes us to bear one another's burdens, as fellow-travellers. It is very common for a man to look upon himself as wiser and better than other men, and as fit to dictate to them. Such a one deceives himself; by pretending to what he has not, he puts a cheat upon himself, and sooner or later will find the sad effects. This will never gain esteem, either with God or men. Every one is advised to prove his own work. The better we know our own hearts and ways, the less shall we despise others, and the more be disposed to help them under infirmities and afflictions. How light soever men's sins seem to them when committed, yet they will be found a heavy burden, when they come to reckon with God about them. No man can pay a ransom for his brother; and sin is a burden to the soul. It is a spiritual burden; and the less a man feels it to be such, the more cause has he to suspect himself. Most men are dead in their sins, and therefore have no sight or sense of the spiritual burden of sin. Feeling the weight and burden of our sins, we must seek to be eased thereof by the Savior, and be warned against every sin.

### ◀REF Galatians 6:6

**Vs. 6-11:** Many excuse themselves from the work of religion, though they may make a show, and profess it. They may impose upon others, yet they deceive themselves if they think to impose upon God, who knows their hearts as well as actions; and as he cannot be deceived, so he will not be mocked. Our present time is seed time; in the other world we shall reap as we sow now. As there are two sorts of sowing, one to the flesh, and the other to the Spirit, so will the reckoning be hereafter. Those who live a carnal, sensual life, must expect no other fruit from such a course than

misery and ruin. But those who, under the guidance and influences of the Holy Spirit, live a life of faith in Christ, and abound in Christian graces, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. We are all very apt to tire in duty, particularly in doing good. This we should carefully watch and guard against. Only to perseverance in well-doing is the reward promised. Here is an exhortation to all to do good in their places. We should take care to do good in our life-time, and make this the business of our lives. Especially when fresh occasions offer, and as far as our power reaches.

**Galatians 6:12**

**Vs. 12-15:** Proud, vain, and carnal hearts, are content with just so much religion as will help to keep up a fair show. But the apostle professes his own faith, hope, and joy; and that his principal glory was in the cross of Christ. By which is here meant, his sufferings and death on the cross, the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. By Christ, or by the cross of Christ, the world is crucified to the believer, and he to the world. The more we consider the sufferings of the Redeemer from the world, the less likely shall we be to love the world. The apostle was as little affected by its charms, as a beholder would be by any thing which had been graceful in the face of a crucified person, when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death. He was no more affected by the objects around him, than one who is expiring would be struck with any of the prospects his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he hung. And as to those who have truly believed in Christ Jesus, all things are counted as utterly worthless compared with him. There is a new creation; old things are passed away, and new views and dispositions are brought in under the regenerating influences of God the Holy Spirit. Believers are brought into a new world, and being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, are formed to a life of holiness. It is a change of mind and heart, whereby we are enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus, and to live to God; and where this inward, practical religion is wanting, outward professions, or names, will never stand in any stead.

**Galatians 6:16**

**Vs. 16-18:** A new creation to the image of Christ, as showing faith in him, is the greatest distinction between one man and another, and a blessing is declared on all who walk according to this rule. The blessings are, peace

and mercy. Peace with God and our conscience, and all the comforts of this life, as far as they are needful. And mercy, an interest in the free love and favor of God in Christ, the spring and fountain of all other blessings. The written word of God is the rule we are to go by, both in its doctrines and precepts. May his grace ever be with our spirit, to sanctify, quicken, and cheer us, and may we always be ready to maintain the honor of that which is indeed our life. The apostle had in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, the scars of wounds from persecuting enemies, for his cleaving to Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel. The apostle calls the Galatians his brethren, therein he shows his humility and his tender affection for them; and he takes his leave with a very serious prayer, that they might enjoy the favor of Christ Jesus, both in its effects and in its evidences. We need desire no more to make us happy than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle does not pray that the law of Moses, or the righteousness of works, but that the grace of Christ, might be with them; that it might be in their hearts and with their spirits, quickening, comforting, and strengthening them: to all which he sets his Amen; signifying his desire that so it might be, and his faith that so it would be.