

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."

"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." – *Gal. 4:6,7.* –

IN writing this epistle the Apostle is endeavoring to defend the Church in Galatia against certain Judaizing teachers who were seeking not only to undermine his teaching and personal influence, but thereby to bring believers under bondage to the Jewish law; – giving the inference that faith in Christ was only efficacious for salvation when supplemented by the keeping of the law.

The Apostle (Chap. 1.) expresses his surprise that these Galatian Christians should so soon become entangled in this error, when the gospel of the Kingdom had been so clearly set before them. Then (Chap. 1:10-24; 2:1-10) he reproduces the evidence of his apostleship, and in a masterly way sets forth the strong foundation of the hope of the gospel, the entire freedom of both Jews and Gentiles from the bondage of the Law Covenant, and the glorious liberty and peculiar privileges of the sons of God.

These Gentile Christians had never been under the Jewish law. They were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise." But, through the preaching of the Apostle, they were brought nigh to God "by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:12,13); *i.e.*, through faith in his blood they had been freely justified. "This only would I learn of you," said he, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" – Gal. 3:2,3.

Then he proceeds to show further that while the Gentiles were not to be brought under bondage to the Jewish law, neither were the

Jews [R1658 : page 158] justified by it; for it proved to be unto condemnation to every one that ever was under it, save the one perfect man, Christ Jesus, who fulfilled all its conditions, and, being blameless, rendered himself an acceptable sacrifice to redeem those who were under the Jewish law (3:10,11,13), as well as all of the Gentile world who were under the curse of the Edenic law, which was the same law written originally in the heart of the first perfect man, Adam. Thus "by *one offering* he hath perfected forever [made complete in his righteousness] them that are sanctified [fully consecrated to God]," whether Jews or Gentiles. – Heb. 10:14.

In the words of our text, he then bids them mark the fact that the witness of the holy Spirit with their spirits is to the effect that they are the recognized sons of God, and that they came into this grace without the works of the law. He says, "Because ye are sons [*i.e.*, because you have believed on Christ alone for salvation and have consecrated yourselves to him and therefore been adopted into God's family], God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son [the seal of your adoption – Eph. 1:13] 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." Blessed privilege! why then go back to the beggarly elements whereby the Jews so long and so vainly sought to find salvation? (Gal. 4:9.) In Christ alone is full salvation for both Jew and Gentile; and in him there is no difference, for we are "all one in Christ Jesus."

Thus the way of salvation is set forth as the way of simple, confiding faith. Men in all ages have sought to complicate the way and to hedge it about with forms and ceremonies. They have added penances and prayers and fastings, and monastic rules and regulations and numerous and varied superstitions, but the simplicity of the true way they stumble over. To keep the perfect law of God was a thing impossible for imperfect men; but if it had been possible, verily, says the Apostle (3:21), that would have been the way of salvation. But God had mercy upon our weakness, and, through Christ, offers us salvation

upon the terms of simple faith and of loyalty and obedience to his will to the extent of our ability – the terms of the New Covenant.

To thus accept the favor of God through Christ – the evidences of sonship and the present **[R1658 : page 159]** and prophetic inheritance of sons – is to enter into the blessed rest of faith. This rest of faith is something which the world can neither give nor take away. It brings with it peace and happiness and joy in the midst of all the shifting circumstances of the present life. To those who have entered into this rest of faith penances are seen to be of no avail, and prayers are occasions of sweet communion with God; feasting from the Lord's bountiful table take the place of fastings, active zeal in the Master's service supplants the gloomy and useless life of the solitary and self-tortured recluse; and the glorious sunlight of truth chases away the shadows of human superstitions.

O how blessed is this rest of faith! Would that all who name the name of Christ might fully enter in! True, there are self-denials and sacrifices and disciplines and trials, and often persecutions in the way; but in the midst of them all there is rest and peace. Such, though in the world, are not of it. They are in the world as the Lord's representatives and ambassadors. They are here to tell "the good tidings of great joy" to all people who have ears to hear, and to make known among men the unsearchable riches of Christ. They are the light of the world, and if obedient to the Master's voice they will not hide their light by retiring from the world and shutting themselves up for religious meditation.

Some in times past have gained a reputation for great sanctity by secluding themselves from the world and devoting themselves to a monastic life; but how strangely their lives contrast with the active, zealous devotion of the Lord and the apostles and the early Church, before this superstition was promulgated. Let us mark the footprints of our Lord and those who followed him, and strive to walk in them. As sons and heirs of God let us rejoice in our inheritance with

thanksgiving, and let our zeal in service manifest our love and devotion to God.

Whom the Son makes free is free indeed; for he is made free by the Truth. – John 8:32,36.
