

# CHAPTER 5

## INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 5

In this chapter the apostle exhorts to stand fast in Christian liberty, and warns against the abuse of it; and directs to shun various vices, and encourages, to the exercise of several graces, and the observance of several duties; and concludes with a caution against vain glory, provocation to wrath, and envy: and whereas, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had made it appear that the believers under the Gospel dispensation were free from the bondage of the law, he begins this with an exhortation to continue steadfastly in the liberty of the Gospel; and the rather, since it was what Christ obtained for them, and bestowed on them; and to take care, that they were not again brought under the bondage of the ceremonial law, particularly the yoke of Circumcision, ([Galatians 5:1](#)), and dissuades from submitting to it, by observing, that it tended to make Christ unprofitable to them, ([Galatians 5:2](#)), and that it laid them under an obligation to keep the whole law, ([Galatians 5:3](#)), and that it made Christ wholly useless to them; and that such who sought for justification by obedience to the ceremonial law were apostates from the Gospel of the grace of God, ([Galatians 5:4](#)), as also by showing, that it was contrary to the general faith and expectation of the saints, who were looking for and expecting eternal glory and happiness, not by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, ([Galatians 5:5](#)), nor were circumcision or uncircumcision of any avail, but the true faith in Christ, which shows itself by love to him and to his people, ([Galatians 5:6](#)), and likewise by reminding them how well they set out at their first conversion, and proceeded; nor had they any to hinder them from obeying the truth, and therefore it was shameful in them to go back to the beggarly elements they had first relinquished, ([Galatians 5:7](#)), nor was the present opinion they had imbibed, of God that called them, or what they received when first effectually called by grace, but what had been since taken up, ([Galatians 5:8](#)), and whereas it might be objected, that it was only in a single article concerning the ceremonial law, and which was, embraced only by a few persons, and therefore not to be regarded, the apostle puts them in mind of a proverb, that a little leaven leavens the

whole lump, and therefore not to be connived at, ([Galatians 5:9](#)), however, a little to mitigate the sharpness of his reproof, he expresses his good opinion and confidence of them, that upon a mature consideration of things, they would not be otherwise minded than they formerly had been, or he now was; and lays the blame of all upon the false teacher, or teachers, that troubled them, and who should bear their own judgment or condemnation, ([Galatians 5:10](#)), and whereas it was insinuated, that the apostle himself had preached up circumcision as necessary to salvation, he removes this calumny by observing, that were it true, he would not suffer persecution as he did, nor would the Jews be offended at his preaching as they were, ([Galatians 5:11](#)), and then out of zeal for the glory of God, and hearty affection to the Galatians, he wishes those false teachers that troubled them with their pernicious doctrines were cut off either by the Lord, or from the church, ([Galatians 5:12](#)), and next he directs to the right use of Christian liberty, to which they were called; and cautions against the abuse of it; that they should not use it as an occasion to the flesh, but, on the contrary, serve one another in love, ([Galatians 5:13](#)) giving this as a reason, because love is the fulfilling of the law, ([Galatians 5:14](#)), whereas a contrary spirit and conduct are attended with pernicious consequences, even the destruction of each other, ([Galatians 5:15](#)), and therefore advises them to walk in the Spirit, whose fruit is love, and then they would not fulfil the lust of the flesh, ([Galatians 5:16](#)), for these two, flesh and Spirit, are contrary the one to the other, and the Spirit hinders the performance of the lusts of the flesh, ([Galatians 5:17](#)), besides, such who give up themselves to the conduct of the Spirit, and are led thereby, are not under the law, the bondage of it, nor liable to its curse, ([Galatians 5:18](#)), and having made mention both of flesh and Spirit, he takes notice of the works and fruits of the one, and of the other, by which they are known; and as for the works of the flesh he observes, that they are manifest, and gives an enumeration of them in “seventeen” particulars; and to deter from them declares, that whoever lives in the commission of them, shall not inherit the kingdom of God, ([Galatians 5:19-21](#)), and as for the fruits of the Spirit, these are also well known by spiritual men, “nine” of which are particularly mentioned, and against which there is no law, ([Galatians 5:22,23](#)), and from the whole concludes, that such as are true believers in Christ, and are led by his Spirit, and have the fruits of it, have the flesh with its affections and lusts crucified, ([Galatians 5:24](#)), and ends the chapter with some exhortations

to walk in the Spirit, and not be ambitious of worldly honour, nor provoke one another to wrath, nor envy each other's happiness, (~~AKS~~ Galatians 5:25).

**Ver. 1.** *Stand fast therefore in the liberty*, etc..] There is the liberty of grace, and the liberty of glory; the former of these is here meant, and lies in a freedom from sin; not from the indwelling of it, but from the dominion, guilt, and damning power of it; from the captivity and tyranny of Satan, though not from his temptations and insults; from the law, the ceremonial law, as an handwriting of ordinances, a rigid severe schoolmaster, and a middle wall of partition, and from all its burdensome rites and institutions; from the moral law as a covenant of works, and as administered by Moses; and from the curse and condemnation of it, its bondage and rigorous exaction, and from all expectation of life and righteousness by the deeds of it; but not from obedience to it, as held forth by Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; and from the judicial law, or those laws which concerned the Jews as Jews: moreover, this liberty lies in the free use of things indifferent, as eating any sort of food without distinction, so that it be done in faith, with thankfulness to God, in moderation, and with temperance, and so as that the peace and edification of fellow Christians are not hurt; also in the free use of Gospel ordinances, which they that are fellow citizens with the saints have a right unto, but not to lay aside or neglect at pleasure; which is not to use, but to abuse their liberty: again, another branch of it is access to God, with freedom and boldness at the throne of grace, through the Mediator, under the influences of the divine Spirit; to which may be added, a deliverance from the fears of death corporeal, who is a king of terrors to Christless sinners, and which kept Old Testament saints, all their lifetime subject to bondage and eternal, or the second death, by which Christ's freemen are assured they shall not be hurt: now, in this liberty, the children of the free woman, believers under the Gospel dispensation, are very pertinently exhorted to stand fast, in consequence and consideration of their character; that is, they should highly prize and esteem it, as men do their civil liberty; and maintain it and defend it, at all hazards; abide by the doctrine of it without wavering, and with intrepidity; not giving up anyone part of it, however, and by whomsoever, it may be opposed, maligned, and reproached; and keep up the practice of it, by obeying from the heart the doctrine of it, by becoming the servants of righteousness, by frequent attendance at the throne of grace, and continual observance of the ordinances of Christ; and then should take heed of everything that tends to break in upon it, as any

doctrine or commandment of men; particularly the doctrine of justification by works, and all sorts of superstition and will worship: and the rather, because of the concern Christ has in this liberty, it is that

*wherewith Christ hath made us free*; we are not free born, but on the contrary homeborn slaves, as Ephraim was; nor could this liberty in any of its branches be obtained by us, by any merit, righteousness, act, or acts of ours, but is wholly of Christ's procuring for us, both by price and power; whereby he has ransomed and delivered us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the law, and death; and it is of his proclaiming in the Gospel, and of his applying by his Spirit, whom he sends down into our hearts as a free Spirit, to acquaint us with it, and lead us into it, who works faith in us to lay hold upon, and receive this blessing of grace as others:

*and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*. The metaphor is taken from oxen put under a yoke, and implicated with it, from which they cannot disengage themselves: some of the members of this church had been Jews, who had formerly been under the yoke of the law, and seemed desirous to return to their former state of bondage, from which the apostle dissuades, and therefore uses the word again: or else he may refer to the bondage of corruption and idolatry, which they as Gentiles were in, before their conversion; and intimates, that to give into the observance of; Jewish rites and ceremonies would be involving themselves in a state of bondage again; for by “the yoke of bandage” he means the law, which the Jews frequently call *twxm l w* [“the yoke of the commandments”<sup>f107</sup>]; particularly the ceremonial law, as circumcision; which Peter, (<sup><4450></sup>Acts 15:10) represents as a yoke intolerable; the observation of days, months, times, and years; the multitude of sacrifices, and which could not take away sin; but proclaimed their guilt and obligation to punishment, and were an handwriting of ordinances against them, and thereby they were held and kept in bondage, and such a yoke is the moral law as delivered by Moses, requiring perfect obedience, but giving no strength to perform, nor pointing where any is to be had; showing a man his sin and misery, and so working wrath in his conscience, but giving not the least intimation of a Saviour, or of life and righteousness by another; accusing, pronouncing guilty, cursing, and condemning; hence such as seek for righteousness by it are in a miserable subjection to it, and are sadly implicated and entangled with the yoke of it: every doctrine and ordinance of men is a yoke of bondage which should not be submitted to; nay, any action whatever,

performed in a religious way and in order for a man's acceptance with God, and to obtain his favour, and according to his observance of which he judges of his state, and speaks peace and comfort to himself, or the reverse, is a yoke of bondage: as, for instance prayer at such and so many times a day, reading such a number of chapters in the Bible every day, fasting so many times in the week, and the like; so that what are branches of Christian liberty, such as frequent prayer to God, reading the sacred writings for instruction and comfort, and the free use of the creatures, are turned into a yoke of bondage, which should be guarded against.

**Ver. 2.** *Behold, I Paul say unto you*, etc..] The apostle proceeds to give some reasons and arguments to enforce the above exhortation and dissuasion: the first of which is introduced with a note of attention, “behold”; what he was about to say being matter of great moment and importance; and also mentions himself by name, as the assertor of it; and that, either because his name was well known to them, and the rather because of his apostolical authority; and to show his full assurance of this matter, and his intrepidity, and that he was no ways ashamed of it, they might, if they pleased, say it to whomsoever they would, that Paul the apostle affirmed,

*that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing*: he speaks of circumcision, not as when it was an ordinance of God, but as it was now abolished by Christ; and that got as singly performed on some certain accounts for he himself circumcised Timothy for the sake of the Jews; but as done in order to salvation, or as necessary unto it; which was the doctrine the false apostles taught and these Galatians were ready to give into: now circumcision submitted to on this consideration, and with this view rendered Christ unprofitable, made his death to be in vain, his sacrifice of no effect, and his righteousness useless: besides, Christ is a whole Saviour, or none at all; to join anything with him and his righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation, is interpreted by him as a contempt and neglect of him, as laying him aside, and to such persons he is of no profit; and if he is not, what they have, and whatsoever they do, will be of no advantage; wealth and riches, yea, the whole world could it be gained, their works and righteousness, whatever show they make before men, God has declared shall not profit them; and trusting to these renders Christ unprofitable to them. This is directly contrary to the notions of the Jews, who think they shall be saved for their circumcision, and that that will secure them from hell; they say <sup>f108</sup> no circumcised person

goes down to hell, and that whoever is circumcised shall inherit the land; but there is none shall inherit the land, save a righteous person; but everyone that is circumcised is called a righteous man <sup>f109</sup>; so that circumcision is their righteousness, on account of which they expect heaven and happiness.

**Ver. 3.** *For I testify again to every man*, etc..] This is the form of an oath, a calling God to witness, swearing by the living God, and declaring as in his presence to every man, whether Jew or Gentile, whoever he be:

*that is circumcised*; in order to obtain salvation, and as necessary to it:

*that he is a debtor to do the whole law*; and this it is that made circumcision an insupportable yoke, for that itself might be bore, and was bore by children of eight days old; but the fulfilling of the whole law cannot be done by any man; and yet everyone that is circumcised, in order to procure righteousness and life, is bound to keep the whole law; because the law is only his righteousness, when he observes all that is required in it, and as the Lord has commanded; if he does not, he is pronounced accursed: and this proves what was before said, that Christ is of no profit to such persons; because they reject him and his righteousness, and, as much as in them lie, make void his obedience, sufferings, and death: hence the same thing is repeated, though not in the same words, in the next verse.

**Ver. 4.** *Christ is become of no effect unto you*, etc..] Or “ye are abolished from Christ”; or as others by an “hypallage” read the words, “Christ is abolished unto you”; for by their seeking for justification by their own works, it was all one to them as if there was no Christ, and no righteousness in him, and no salvation by him; they had nothing to do with him, nor he with them:

*whosoever of you are justified by the law*; that is, who sought to be justified by their obedience to the law, or who thought they were, and trusted in themselves that they were righteous; for otherwise, by the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified:

*ye are fallen from grace*; that is, either from that grace which they professed to have; for there might be some in these churches, as in others, who were only nominal Christians, and formal professors; who had declared they saw themselves lost and undone sinners, destitute of a righteousness, and professed to believe in Christ alone for righteousness and strength, but now trusted in themselves, and in the works of the law:

or from the scheme of grace in the whole of man's salvation, which will admit of no mixture of works; either it is one or the other, it cannot be both; wherefore by their taking on the side of works, they showed that they had entirely dropped the scheme of grace: or else from the Gospel of the grace of God, from whence they were removed, through the influence of false teachers; particularly the doctrine of free justification by the grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ; which was entirely set aside by their seeking to be instilled by the works of the law; and from this they might be said to be fallen, who were on such a bottom.

**Ver. 5.** *For we through the Spirit wait*, etc..] Who have believed in Christ, Christians in general, and the apostle and the brethren with him in particular; who also were Jews born, and brought up as such; and yet they did not look for, and expect heaven and happiness through circumcision, or any of the works of the law, but through the righteousness of Christ received by faith, under the influence and testimony of the Spirit of God, and therefore much less should Gentiles:

*for the hope of righteousness by faith*; by which is meant, not the believer's justifying righteousness, as if it was something future he is waiting for; for this is already wrought out, and brought in by Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith; is discovered and applied to the saints by the Spirit of God; is put upon them, and imputed to them by the Father; and is what they now have, not in hope, but in hand; their faith having received it, as their justifying righteousness; in which they will ever be found, living and dying: but eternal glory and felicity is here intended, called "hope"; because it is the object of hope, or is what is hoped for; it is unseen, as what is hoped for is: it is future, and what is to be enjoyed hereafter, and therefore hoped for; it is certain, possible to be enjoyed, though with difficulty; which gives room for hope, and exercises and tries that grace; the foundation and encouragement of hope in it are the person, blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, who is our hope: and hence it is styled "the hope of righteousness", because none but righteous persons shall enjoy it: and that by virtue, and in consequence of their being justified by the righteousness of Christ, which gives them their title to it; and hence they look for it, and shall enjoy it, on the foot of justice, as well as of grace and goodness: "waiting" for it supposes it to be certain, real, solid, substantial, valuable, and worth waiting for; which, when possessed, will be with the utmost pleasure, and be abundantly satisfying; and that the persons that wait for it have

knowledge, and at least hope of interest in it; and do highly value and esteem it, having their hearts set on it, and looking with contempt on the things of time and sense, in comparison of it: the manner in which they wait is, “through the Spirit”, and “by faith”; the Syriac version reads, “through the Spirit, which is of faith”; that is, by the Spirit received through faith; (see <sup>ⲀⲚⲔⲔ</sup>Galatians 3:14) but it is best to consider them apart; believers look and wait for heaven, under the influence and encouragement of the Spirit of God; who is the author of the faith by which they look for it, and of the hope which is concerned with it; and who is the revealer and applier of the righteousness of Christ, the foundation of it; and which gives some glimpses of the heavenly glory to the saints, shows them their interest in it, witnesses to their sonship, and so to their heirship; and is the pledge and earnest of their inheritance; all which gives great strength and encouragement to faith, by which they also expect it; believing not only the reality of it, but their own interest in it; and so walk by faith in the believing views thereof, until they receive the end of it.

**Ver. 6.** *For in Christ Jesus*, etc..] The Arabic version reads, “in the religion of Christ”; in the religion of Moses, or of the Jews under the former dispensation, the things after mentioned were of some moment and consideration; but are of no account in the Christian religion, and under the Gospel dispensation: circumcision and uncircumcision make no difference in the church of Christ, or are any bar to communion with it; nor do they make any alteration in the love and favour of Christ, who is all in all to his people, whether Jews or Gentiles; nor have they any influence at all on salvation, Christ being a common Saviour to the circumcised and uncircumcised; nor are they any evidence for or against a person's being in Christ, or having an interest in him:

*neither circumcision availeth anything*; not now as a command and ordinance of God, being abolished by Christ; nor as a type, having its accomplishment in him, and his people; nor as a privilege, giving any preference in any respect to the Jew above the Gentile; nor is it of any weight or consequence, or has any concern in the business of salvation:

*nor uncircumcision*; it is no hinderance to the enjoyment of the Gospel, to entrance into a Gospel church state, or to admission to the ordinances of it; nor to the participation of the blessings of grace, as justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life:



*but faith which works by love*; faith has a concern in justification and salvation, not by way of causal influence, but as it is that grace which receives the righteousness of Christ, through which we are saved, and kept by the power of God unto salvation; yet not any sort of faith, but that which is operative, is attended with good works; and which works itself by love to God, to Christ, to his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances. The Syriac version renders it, **zrmgtmd** “which is perfected by love”; that is, is showed to be right, true, and genuine thereby; (see ~~<B12>~~James 2:22).

**Ver. 7.** *Ye did run well*, etc..] In the Christian race; when they first set out in a profession of religion, they embraced and held fast, and were zealously attached to the truths of the Gospel; they were in the lively exercise of grace on its proper object, and very diligent in the discharge of duty; they made great proficiency in the knowledge of divine things, and ran with cheerfulness and without weariness in the ways of Christ, and in the paths of truth and holiness. The metaphor is taken from runners in a race; (see ~~<B12>~~1 Corinthians 9:24) so far this is said to their commendation, but this should have been persisted in:

*who did hinder you*; not the apostle, or any of his brethren; no, they encouraged them to go on, and gave them all the assistance they could, to help them forward; but it was the false apostles that hindered them, who did all they could to remove them to another Gospel, and turn them aside out of the right way:

*that ye should not obey the truth?* of the Gospel, particularly the truth of justification by the righteousness of Christ; which they did not so cheerfully embrace, and show such a respect unto, as they had formerly done; (see ~~<B12>~~Galatians 3:1), and which he says not by way of inquiry, but of complaint and concern; and with some indignation against the persons who had been the means of hindering their Christian progress, and with a view to reclaim the Galatians if possible.

**Ver. 8.** *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*] That is, the opinion they were persuaded to believe; and which the Syriac version renders, **ˆwksyp**, “your persuasion”; this is not of God, who had called them into the grace of Christ; nor of Christ, who had called them to the knowledge of himself, and communion with him; nor of the Spirit of Christ, who had called them with an holy calling, and who still continued to call

them to repentance; nor of any faithful minister of the Gospel, who had been concerned as an instrument in their effectual calling; meaning the notion they were persuaded to give into, that circumcision and the works of the law were necessary to salvation, and that these were to be joined with the righteousness of Christ for justification; such a conceit as this could never be of God, nor any evangelical minister, but must be of Satan or his emissaries, the false apostles.

**Ver. 9.** *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*] A proverbial expression pretty much in use with the Jews; (see <sup>4186</sup>1 Corinthians 5:6), respecting either persons or things; and is in answer to, or prevents an objection that might be made, or something that might be said, in favour of these churches; that their case was not so bad, or the danger they were in so great, as was represented by the apostle; since they were only a few persons that propagated this notion, and but few that received it, at least thoroughly gave into it; and that, if it was an error, it was but a small one, and only regarded a single ritual, or a few rituals of the law; to which the apostle replies, by supposing, but not granting this to be the case, since they were pretty generally declined, and the error was not a slight one, that as a little sour leaven influences and ferments a large mass, or lump of dough, and makes it of the same nature with it, so a small error in doctrine, as it may be thought to be, increases to more ungodliness, and eats as doth a canker; and though a few hands may be first concerned in propagating it, and but few be infected with it, yet these may soon spread the contagion through the whole society: wherefore errors and false teachers should be nipped in the bud, and stopped in their beginnings, how inconsiderable soever they and their tenets may be judged to be.

**Ver. 10.** *I have confidence in you through the Lord,* etc..] Though the apostle had said many things which carried in them the appearance of roughness and severity, yet he still entertained hopes of them that they were not so far gone, but that they might be brought back again; and he here expresses his confidence of it. This confidence in them is not of faith, for no trust is to be put in men; no, not in the best; but of charity, or love, which hopes all things, and believes all things; and which proceeded upon a thorough persuasion he had, that there was some good thing in them; and therefore was confident, that he that had begun the good work would perform it, and not suffer them to be carried away finally and totally with the error of the wicked: and this confidence he had “through the Lord”; either through the Spirit of the Lord, whose office it is to lead into all truth,

as it is in Jesus; and who had suggested this to the apostle, and possessed him of this confidence; so that it was not a conjecture and fancy of his, but an intimation from the Spirit of the Lord: or through the Lord Jesus Christ, or “in the Lord”, Christ, as the phrase may be rendered; that is, on account of their being in Christ, which the apostle hoped and believed; where they were safe and secure from a final and total seduction; he was confident, that whatever they might seem to be now, things would take a different turn in time:

*that you will be none otherwise minded;* than he was, and they formerly were, when the Gospel was first preached to them, and embraced by them; and particularly in the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ which was the doctrine then called in question, and in debate:

*but he that troubleth you;* he seems to have respect to some particular person, who was the principal of the false teachers, and most famous for his learning, knowledge, gifts, and abilities; and who had done, and was likely to do, the most mischief among them; and was a troubler of God's Israel, and of the pure waters of the sanctuary; he unsettled their minds, and caused them to halt between two, Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, and the doctrines of justification by works, and by the righteousness of Christ; the one being what gave true solid peace and comfort, the other introduced confusion, distress, and fears: the apostle threatens him, and declares that he

*shall bear his judgment;* or condemnation, or damnation, his punishment in this, or the other world; for the judgment, or condemnation, of such that bring in damnable harasses, and pernicious errors, lingereth not, will not be long delayed; and their damnation slumbereth not, but in a little time will seize upon them; when as they have rejected Christ as a sin bearing and atoning Saviour, and his righteousness as the justifying one, they will, agreeably to their own doctrine, be left to bear their punishment themselves, which will be intolerable, and to all eternity; nor shall any escape it,

*whosoever he be;* though ever so knowing and learned, and let his parts and abilities be what they will; or he be ever so famous among men, and cried up as a most excellent preacher.

**Ver. 11.** *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision,* etc..] The apostle was traduced by the false teachers, as a preacher of circumcision himself in

some places; and this they did partly to show him to be a variable and inconsistent man, who preached one doctrine in one place, and another in another place, and so not to be attended to; and partly with others, to draw them into their scheme upon his authority: what might give them the handle, or at least what they improved to this purpose, might be his circumcising of Timothy; but though he did this as a thing indifferent, and for the sake of the Jews, to make them easy; yet he never preached it after his conversion, and much less as necessary to justification and salvation, as these men did. This calumny he refutes by putting the following question or questions;

*why do I yet suffer persecution?* as is clear he did, for being against it, and preaching it down; great part of the persecutions the apostle endured was from the Jews, and that on account of his teaching them everywhere, that were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, and that they should not circumcise their children, and walk after the customs of their nation; a clear point this, that he did not preach it; had he, persecution from this quarter would not have followed him; and he could have done it with a good conscience, he must act a very weak part in suffering persecution on that account. The Arabic version gives the words a very different turn, and yet furnishes an answer to the calumny; “why do I persecute him that uses it?” that is, if I am a preacher of it, why am I so warm and violent an opposer of those that submit to it? these things are so opposite that there is no reconciling them; to the same purpose is the Ethiopic version: “then is the offence of the cross ceased”. The last mentioned version reads it, “the cross of Christ”; and so the Alexandrian copy; meaning not the cross of affliction, reproach, and persecution, which Christ has enjoined every follower of his to take up and bear for his sake, and is offensive to the carnal man; nor the cross on which he suffered, or the sufferings of the cross; but the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, which was an offence and a stumblingblock to the Jews; now if the apostle had preached circumcision as necessary to salvation, the other doctrine must have been dropped, and consequently the offence taken at it must have ceased, whereas it was not. The Syriac version reads by way of question, “is the offence of the cross ceased?” no it is not, a plain case then is, that the apostle did not preach circumcision, but only a crucified Christ, as necessary to salvation. Moreover, the Jews that believed would not have been so offended as they were at his preaching, had he preached the one as well the other; their offence was not that he preached Christ crucified, but

that he preached, that, by the cross of Christ, circumcision and the other rituals of the ceremonial law were now abolished.

**Ver. 12.** *I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*] These words are a solemn wish of the apostle's with respect to the false teachers, or an imprecation of the judgment of God upon them; that they might be cut off out of the land of the living by the immediate hand of God, that they might do no more mischief to the churches of Christ: this he said not out of hatred to their persons, but from a concern for the glory of God, and the good of his people. The word here used answers to the Hebrew word **j pq**, and which is often made use of by the Jews in solemn imprecations; we read <sup>f110</sup> of a righteous man, **wynb ta j pqm**, “that cut off his children”: the gloss upon it is,

“he used to say, when he made any imprecation, **ynb ta j pqa**, “may I cut off my children”;

that is, may they die, may they be cut off by the hand of God, and I bury them;

“says R. Tarphon <sup>f111</sup>, may my children be “cut off”, if these books of heretics come into my hands, that I will burn them;”

and says the same Rabbi <sup>f112</sup> may I “cut off” my children, or may my children be cut off, if this sentence or constitution is cut off, or should perish. There is another use of this word, which may have a place here, for it sometimes signifies to confute a person, or refute his notion <sup>f113</sup>.

“It is a tradition of the Rabbis, that after the departure of R. Meir, R. Judah said to his disciples, let not the disciples of R. Meir come in hither, for they are contentious; and not to learn the law do they come, but **twkl hb ynj pql**, “to cut me off”; (i.e. as the gloss says, to show how sharp they are that none can stand against them;) to confute and overcome me, by their sentences, or constitutions.”

So the apostle here might wish that the mouths of these false teachers were stopped, their notions refuted, that they might give them no more trouble; to which agrees the Arabic version; “they that trouble you I wish they were dumb”; or that their mouths were stopped, as such vain talkers should be; (see <sup>s010</sup> Titus 1:10,11) or the sense of the apostle is, that it was his will and

desire that these men should be cut off from the communion of the church; with which views he mentions the proverbial expression in (~~RRB~~ Galatians 5:9) with which compare (~~RRB~~ 1 Corinthians 5:6,7) or that they would cut themselves off, by withdrawing from them, going out from among them, and leaving them as these men sometimes did.

**Ver. 13.** *For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty*, etc..] He calls them “brethren”, to testify his affection to them, and to put them in mind of their relation to one another, which required mutual love, a thing he is about to press them to; he asserts that they were “called” not merely externally, but internally, by the effectual grace of God, out of bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, unto the liberty of the Gospel and of the grace of God; that liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, (~~RRB~~ Galatians 5:1) this he said in a judgment of charity, hoping well of them:

*only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh*; corrupt nature, which in unregenerate men takes encouragement from, and makes an ill use of the best of things, as the mercy and patience of God; and not only takes an occasion by the law, forbidding sin to work and stir up all manner of concupiscence; but also by the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, such as eternal election, free justification, etc.. which though the source and fountain, the barrier and security, of all true and real holiness, are improved and abused by wicked minds, under the influence and instigation of Satan, to vile purposes; and though regenerate persons are not in the flesh, and do not live after it, yet that is in them, and there is a proneness in them to sin; and Satan is watching all opportunities and advantages against them; so that there is need for such a caution as this, that they do not misuse their Christian liberty by indulging the flesh and the lusts of it, which is apt to take an occasion to cherish its lusts, and especially when given: Christ's free men should not do so, for that is to disgrace the doctrine of Christian liberty, to enthrall themselves in, bondage instead of using their liberty aright, and to give the enemy occasion to blaspheme: the doctrine of Christian liberty may be abused, or used as an occasion to the flesh, and to fulfil the lusts of it; when under a pretence thereof men think themselves exempt from obedience to the civil magistrate, which is using this liberty as a cloak of maliciousness; or that they are free from obedience to the law of God, as a rule of walk and conversation; or from subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel; or when they use the creatures God has given them the free use of without thankfulness, and in an immoderate manner; and when they make things indifferent which are not, or use indifferent

things to the prejudice of others; and their liberty becomes a stumblingblock to weak Christians, which the apostle seems greatly to regard here; since he adds,

*but by love serve one another*: the Vulgate Latin version reads, “by the love of the Spirit”: and so some copies; Gospel liberty and the service of the saints are not at all inconsistent; as it becomes them to love one another, as the new command of Christ, their profession of religion, and their relation to each other, require, so they should show their love by their service; as by praying one with and for another, by bearing each other's burdens, sympathizing with and communicating to each other in things temporal and spiritual; in forbearing with and forgiving one another; by admonishing each other when there is occasion for it, in a meek, tender, and brotherly way; by instructing and building up one another on their most holy faith, and by stirring up one another to all the duties of religion, private and public.

**Ver. 14.** *For all the law is fulfilled in one word*, etc..] Not the ceremonial law, to which acts of mercy, kindness, and love are opposed, and from which they are distinguished; but the law of the decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and by him to the people of the Jews; and intends either only the second table of it, since only love to the neighbour is mentioned; or else the whole of it, both tables, since it is said, “all the law”; which by Christ is reduced to two heads, love to God, and love to the neighbour; and though the former is not here expressed, it is implied as a cause in the effect, for the love of God is the cause, and so the evidence of love to the neighbour; nor can there be the one without the other. The two tables of the law consist of **µyrbdh trç**], “ten words”; as the <sup>f114</sup> Jews commonly call them, and we the decalogue, and yet they are fulfilled in one; that is, they are to be brought into such a compendium, reduced to such an head; or as the apostle in a parallel place says, they may briefly be comprehended in this saying, (<sup><533></sup>Romans 13:9). The Jews make the commandments of the law to be a very large number indeed, but at last reduce them to one, as the apostle here does,

“six hundred and thirteen commandments (they say <sup>f115</sup>) were given to Moses — David came and reduced them to eleven, Psalm xv, Isaiah came and reduced them to six, (<sup><335></sup>Isaiah 33:15) Micah came and reduced them to three, (<sup><308></sup>Micah 6:8) Isaiah came and reduced them to two, (<sup><250></sup>Isaiah 56:1), Amos came and reduced them to

one, (<sup><3106></sup>Amos 5:4) but this being objected to, it is observed that Habakkuk came, **tj a l [ ^dym[j w**, “and reduced them to one”, (<sup><3106></sup>Habakkuk 2:4) that is faith, as here the apostle reduces them to love:”

*even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:* these words are taken out of (<sup><0903></sup>Leviticus 19:18) and which R. Akiba says <sup>f116</sup>, agreeably with the apostle, whose contemporary he was, is **hrwtb l wdg l l k**, “the grand general rule in the law”; or the grand comprehensive of the law: the object of love, the “neighbour”, signifies not only, as there the Jews explain it, those of their own people, or proselytes to their religion; but all sorts of men, whether in a natural, civil, or spiritual relation; and whether those that do us good or do us ill, friends or enemies: the measure or rule of love is, “as thyself”; and designs not an equality of affection, but a likeness of effects; that is, to do the same kind acts of love to others, one would choose to have done to ourselves: and this is the fulfilling of the law; that is, so far as a man loves aright, so far he fulfils the law; not that he does it perfectly, for man in his fallen state is unable to do that, for the law is exceeding broad, and reaches to thoughts, desires, and inclinations, as well as to words and deeds; and besides, love said to be the fulfilling of it, is imperfect; hence then there can be no justification by works of charity, nor by any services of men, which at best are imperfect; nor are they done in their own strength, and without the grace of God; nor is there any that can be said to have fulfilled the law perfectly but Christ, and to him must we look for a justifying righteousness. These words contain a reason engaging to love one another, and to do all kind of offices of love to each other; since it is a main and principal thing contained in the law, and to which that may be reduced.

**Ver. 15.** *But if ye bite and devour one another,* etc..] Another reason inducing to love is taken from the pernicious consequences of a contrary spirit and conduct. The allusion is to beasts of prey falling upon and devouring one another: for wolves or dogs to worry sheep is not strange; but for sheep to distress one another is unnatural. The apostle does not say, if grievous wolves should enter in among you and not spare the flock; but suggests if they themselves should act the part of wolves to one another; having reference to their controversies about the law and circumcision, and the necessity thereof to justification and salvation; which were managed with great heat and bitterness, occasioned great contentions, and



threatened them with divisions, parties, and factions; and were attended with envy and malice, with reproachful words, biting sarcasms, scandalous invectives, and injurious actions, which must be of bad consequence: hence he adds,

*take heed that ye be not consumed one of another*; that is, either beware lest each other's particular peace and comfort be destroyed, which is oftentimes done this way, though a person's state and condition God-ward may be safe; or lest their church state should be destroyed and come to nothing, since love is the cement of it, which being loosened, threatens a dissolution; for as no civil community, either public or private, divided against itself, can stand long, so no religious one; and for want of love the Lord threatens to remove, and sometimes does remove, the candlestick out of its place.

**Ver. 16.** *This I say then, walk in the Spirit*, etc..] The advice the apostle thinks fit to give, and which he would have observed, is, to “walk in the Spirit”, that is, either after the Spirit of God; making the word inspired by him the rule of behaviour, which as it is the standard of faith, so of practice, and is the lamp unto our feet, and the light unto our path; taking him himself for a guide, who not only guides into all truth, but in the way of holiness and righteousness unto the land of uprightness; and depending upon his grace and strength for assistance throughout the whole of our walk and conversation: or in the exercise of the graces of the Spirit of God; as in the exercise of faith upon the person and grace of Christ, of which the Spirit is the author; and in love to God, Christ, and one another, which is a fruit of the Spirit; and in humility, lowliness of mind, meekness and condescension; all which is to walk in the Spirit, or spiritually, and strengthens the argument for love the apostle is upon: and this he encourages to by observing,

*and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*; he does not say there shall be no flesh, nor any lust of the flesh in them if they walk spiritually; or that the flesh should not act and operate in them; or that they should do no sinful action; all which is only true of Christ; and the contrary is to be found and observed in all true Christians, though ever so spiritual; but that they should not fulfil or perfect the lust of the flesh; should not give up themselves entirely to the power and dictates of the flesh, so as to be under it and at its command, and be obedient servants and slaves unto it; for, in

this sense only, such that are spiritual do not, commit sin, they do not make a trade of it, it is not their constant employ or course of conversation.

**Ver. 17.** *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, etc..] By “flesh” is meant, not the carnal or literal sense of the Scripture, which is Origen's gloss, as militating against the spiritual sense of it; nor the sensual part of man rebelling against his rational powers; but the corruption of nature, which still is in regenerate persons: and is so called because it is propagated by carnal generation; has for its object carnal things; its lusts and works are fleshly; and though it has its seat in the heart, it shows itself in the flesh or members of the body, which are yielded as instruments of unrighteousness; and it makes and denominates men carnal, even believers themselves so far as it prevails: by “the Spirit” is meant the internal principle of grace in a regenerate man, and is so called from the author of it, the Spirit of God, whose name it bears, because it is his workmanship; and from the seat and subject of it, the soul or spirit of man; and from the nature of it, it is spiritual, a new heart and a new Spirit; its objects are spiritual, and it minds, savours, and delights in spiritual things: and the meaning of the lusting of the one against the other, for it is reciprocal, hence it follows,

*and the Spirit against the flesh*, is that the one wills, chooses, desires, and affects what is contrary to the other; so the flesh, or the old man, the carnal I, in regenerate persons, wills, chooses, desires, and loves carnal things, which are contrary to the Spirit or principle of grace in the soul; and on the other hand, the Spirit or the new man, the spiritual I, wills, chooses, desire, approves, and loves spiritual things, such as are contrary to corrupt nature; and this sense is strengthened by the Oriental versions. The Syriac version reads, “for the flesh desires that” *aknd*, “which hurts”, or is contrary to “the Spirit”; and “the Spirit desires that which hurts”, or is contrary to the “flesh”; and much in the same way the Arabic version renders it, “for the flesh desires that which militates against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires that which militates against the flesh”; to which the Ethiopic version agrees, reading it thus, “for the flesh desires what the Spirit would not, and the Spirit desires what the flesh would not”; the reason whereof is suggested in the next clause:

*and these are contrary the one to the other*; as light and darkness, fire and water, or any two opposites can be thought to be; they are contrary in their nature, actings, and effects; there is not only a repugnancy to each other, but a continued war, conflict, and combat, is maintained between them; the

flesh is the law in the members or force of sin, which wars against the spirit, the law in the mind, or the force and power of the principle of grace; these are the company of two armies, to be seen in the Shulamite, fighting one against the other. So the Jews say<sup>f117</sup> of the good imagination, and of the evil one, by which they mean the same as here, that they are like Abraham and Lot; and that

“though they are brethren, joined in one body, *hzi hz mybywa ph*, “they are enemies to one another”;

hence it follows,

*so that ye cannot do the good that ye would* which may be understood both of evil things and of good things. The former seems to be chiefly the apostle's sense; since the whole of this text is a reason given why those who walk spiritually shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, because they have a powerful governing principle in them, the Spirit, or grace; which though the flesh lusts against, and opposes itself unto, yet that also rises up against the flesh, and often hinders it from doing the works and lusts of it. There is in regenerate men a propensity and inclination to sin, a carnal I, that wills and desires sin, and wishes for an opportunity to do it, which when it offers, the flesh strongly solicits to it; but the Spirit, or the internal principle of grace, opposes the motion; and like another Joseph says, how can I commit this great wickedness and sin against a God of so much love and grace? it is a voice behind and even in a believer, which, when he is tempted to turn to the right hand or the left, says, this is the way, walk in it, and will not suffer him to go into crooked paths with the workers of iniquity; and so sin cannot have the dominion over him, because he is under grace as a reigning principle; and the old man cannot do the evil things he would, being under the restraints of mighty grace. This is the apostle's principal sense, and best suits with his reasoning in the context; but inasmuch as the lusting and opposition of these two principles are mutual and reciprocal, the other sense may also be taken in; as that oftentimes, by reason of the prevalence of corrupt nature, and power of indwelling sin, a regenerate man does the evil he would not, and cannot do the good he would; for he would always do good and nothing else, and even as the angels do it in heaven; but he cannot, because of this opposite principle, the flesh.

**Ver. 18.** *But if ye be led by the Spirit,* etc..] That is, of God, who is the guide and leader of his people. It is a metaphor taken from the leading of persons that are blind; as such are before conversion, and whom the Spirit of God leads in ways they knew not, and in paths they had not known: or from the leading of children, and teaching them to go; so the Spirit leads regenerate persons, and teaches them to walk by faith in Christ. This act of leading supposes life in the persons led, for dead men cannot be led; the Spirit is first a Spirit of life from Christ before he is a leader; and also it supposes some strength, though a good deal of weakness; were there no spiritual strength derived from Christ, they could not be led; and if there was no weakness, there would be no need of leading; it is an instance of powerful and efficacious grace upon them, yet not contrary to their wills, though they are led, they are not forced; they go freely, being led, as there is good reason for it; for the Spirit of God always leads for their profit and advantage, and for the spiritual delight, pleasure, and comfort of their souls; he leads out of the ways of sin, and so of ruin and destruction, and from Mount Sinai, and all dependence on a legal and moral righteousness; he leads to Christ, to his person, for shelter, safety, and salvation, to his blood, for pardon and cleansing, to his righteousness, for justification, and to his fulness, for every supply of grace; he leads into the presence of God, and to his house and ordinances; he leads into the covenant of grace, to the blessings, promises, and Mediator of it; he leads into all truth as it is in Jesus, in the ways of faith and truth, and in the paths of righteousness and holiness, and always in a right way, though sometimes in a rough one, to the city of their habitation; he leads from one degree of grace to another, and at last to glory: all which he does gradually; he leads by little and little into a man's sinfulness, and to see his interest in Christ, and by degrees into the doctrines of the Gospel, and the everlasting love of the three Persons; and proportionally to the strength he gives, and as they are able to bear: now such persons as these have nothing to fear from the law of God:

*ye are not under the law;* such are not only delivered from the law in fact, but in their own apprehensions; they have the comfortable knowledge and experience of it; the law is no terrifying law to them; it works no wrath in them; they are delivered from the spirit of bondage to fear, by the Spirit of God, by whom they are led; nor are they under it, nor do they need it as a pressing forcing law to duty; they delight in it, and cheerfully serve it, being constrained by love, and not awed by fear; nor are its accusations and charges regarded, or to be regarded, by such who are led by the Spirit to

Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; and they are entirely freed from its curse and condemnation, though they are under it, and desire to be under it, as held forth by Christ the King of saints; and, under the Spirit's influence and guidance, yield a cheerful and evangelical obedience to it.

**Ver. 19.** *Now the works of the flesh are manifest*, etc..] By “flesh” is meant corrupt nature, as before, and by the works of it, not only external acts of sin, but inward lusts; for such are here mentioned among its works, as “hatred”, “wrath”, “envyings”, etc.. and both external and internal acts are so called, because they spring from the flesh, or corrupt nature, and are what that urges and solicits to, and are wrought thereby, and are what denominate and show men to be carnal: these are said to be “manifest”; not that they are all, and always publicly done, and are open to the sight of men; for they are works of darkness, and often done in secret, though they are always manifest to God the searcher of hearts, and will be brought to light in the day of judgment; but they are known to be sins in some measure by the light of nature, and especially by the law of God; and a clear case it is, that they are contrary to the Spirit, both to the Spirit of God, and to the principle of grace he forms in the heart; and that such who live in the commission of them are not led by him, nor are under the influence of his grace:

*which are these*; though all are not mentioned, only some of the chief, by which judgment may be made of the rest:

*adultery*; this is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy; it is a defilement of the marriage bed, and is the sin of uncleanness committed by two persons, one of which at least is in a married state, is condemned by the law of God and light of nature:

*fornication*; which though by many of the Gentiles was reckoned no sin, or a very small one, stands here among the works of the flesh, that are manifest and to be avoided; it is the sin of uncleanness committed by persons in a single state;

*uncleanness*, it is a general name for all unchastity, in thought, word, or action; and may here design more especially all unnatural lusts, as

*sodomy*, self-pollution, etc..

*lasciviousness*; or wantonness, all lustful dalliance, everything that leads on to acts of uncleanness, or attends them, as impure words, filthy gestures, and the like.

**Ver. 20.** *Idolatry*, etc..] Which some understand of covetousness, which is so called; but rather it means the worshipping of other gods, or of graven images:

*witchcraft*; any real or pretended league and association with the devil, seeking to converse with familiar spirits, to gain unlawful knowledge, or to do hurt to fellow creatures; which, as it is doing honour to Satan, detracts from the glory of God, and rightly follows idolatry; conjuration, soothsaying, necromancy, and all kind of magic are included and condemned hereby:

*hatred*: internal hatred of any man's person, even of our very enemies, is forbidden; in the original text it is "enmities": as the carnal mind is nothing else but enmity against God and Christ, against law and Gospel, and all good men, and everything that is good:

*variance*, or "contentions"; fighting and quarrelling, by words scandalous and reproachful, what we commonly call scolding:

*emulations* or "zeals"; not good, but bad: a boiling and rising up of the spirits and passions, at the honour and happiness of another:

*wrath* or "wraths" violent emotions of the mind, moving to revenge, and seeking the hurt and mischief of others:

*strife* or "strifes"; perpetual contradictions and cavilings, either expressed by words, or working in the mind; for this strife may be in a man's heart, according to (<sup><sup>3084</sup></sup>James 3:14,16)

*seditions* or "divisions": schisms and factions, dissensions in things domestic, civil, and religious:

*heresies*; bad principles and tenets, relating to doctrine, which are subversive of the fundamentals of the Gospel and the Christian religion; and are the produce of a man's own invention, and the matter of his choice, without any foundation in the word of God; and these are works of the flesh, for they spring from a corrupt and carnal mind, and are propagated with carnal views, as popular applause, worldly advantage, and indulging the lusts of the flesh.

**Ver. 21.** *Envyings.* etc..] Uneasy distressing tortures of the mind, grieving at the good of others, that any should be in an equal, or in a better condition than themselves:

*murders*, destroying of men's lives, which is often the consequence of the above evils:

*drunkenness*; excess in drinking of wine or strong drink, whereby the stomach is overcharged, the mind is intoxicated, and the body enfeebled and unable to perform its office; this is often the source of many, or all of the works of the flesh before mentioned:

*revellings*; excess in feed, nocturnal riotings in eating, drinking, dancing, singing, chambering and wantonness. The Syriac version renders it, *armz*, “lascivious singing”; and the Arabic version, “songs” which are a part of the nightly revels: and such like which are of the same nature and kind; so the apostle shuts up the account, it being too tedious to give an enumeration of all the works of the flesh; nor was it necessary, judgment may be made of the rest by these; nor might it be so proper, since the carnal heart is but the more pleased with, and irritated by, the mention of evil things:

*of the which I tell you before*: before the judge comes and the awful judgment proceeds, when these will all be made manifest, and every man will be judged according to his works: this the apostle did, as putting them in mind of the evil nature of these things, and assuring them of the bad consequences that would follow, if grace prevented not:

*as I have also told you in time past*; when he first preached among them, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come; he then laid before them the evil nature of these things, the dreadful effects of them, and showed that there was no salvation from them, but by Christ:

*and that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God*; by which is meant the heavenly glory, called a “kingdom”, because of the grandeur and magnificence of that state; and “of God”, because it is of his preparing and giving, what he calls his own to by his grace, and puts them into the possession of and where he reigns and will reign for ever, and show forth the glory of his majesty: this is possessed in way of inheritance, which shows it to be a bequest of our heavenly Father's, a free grace gift of his, and not to be obtained by the works of the law, or merits of men; but

what belongs, and is peculiar to the children of God, who are so by adopting grace: now they that do such works of the flesh as before enumerated; that is, that live in the commission of these things, whose whole lives are employed in such work, living and dying in such a state, without repentance towards God and faith in Christ, shall never enjoy eternal life and happiness; though such who have done these things, being brought to a sense of them, and to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon and justification, for life and salvation; such, notwithstanding the works of the flesh done by them, shall, through the free grace of God, and the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, inherit the kingdom and glory of God.

**Ver. 22.** *But the fruit of the Spirit*, etc..] Not of nature or man's free will, as corrupted by sin, for no good fruit springs from thence; but either of the internal principle of grace, called the Spirit, (~~817~~ Galatians 5:17) or rather of the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads it; the graces of which are called "fruit", and not "works", as the actions of the flesh are; because they are owing to divine influence efficacy, and bounty, as the fruits of the earth are, to which the allusion is; and not to a man's self, to the power and principles of nature; and because they arise from a seed, either the incorruptible seed of internal grace, which seminally contains all graces in it, or the blessed Spirit, who is the seed that remains in believers; and because they are in the exercise of them acceptable unto God through Christ, and are grateful and delightful to Christ himself, being "his pleasant fruits"; which as they come from him, as the author of them, they are exercised on him as the object of them, under the influence of the Spirit; and because they are profitable to them that are possessed of them, seeing the promise of this life and that which is to come is annexed to them; and the good works which are done in consequence of them are profitable to men: once more, as the works of the flesh are the unfruitful works of darkness, and make men so, and therefore cannot be called fruit properly; these, as they are fruits, and are rightly and properly so called, so they make men fruitful, and to abound in divine things, and are as follow:

*Love.* This the apostle begins with, it being the fulfilling of the law, the bond of perfectness, and without which a profession of religion is insignificant; it may be understood of love to God, of which every man's heart is destitute, being enmity against God, until regenerated by the Spirit of God; when he sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, and which is the ground and reason of any man's truly loving God: and also of love to



Christ, which the natural man feels nothing of till the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, opens his eyes to see the loveliness of his person, the suitableness of his grace, righteousness, and fulness, and the necessity of looking to him for life and salvation; and likewise of love to the saints, which a carnal man is a stranger to, until he is renewed by the Holy Ghost, who in regenerating him teaches him to love the brethren; and which is the evidence of his having passed from death to life, through the mighty power of his grace. Moreover, love to the house and worship of God, to the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, all which men have naturally an aversion to, may be included in this first fruit of the Spirit: the next follows, which is

*joy*, even that which is in the Holy Ghost, and has him for its author. The object of it is God, not as an absolute God, but as a covenant God and Father in Christ; as the God of salvation, as clothing with the robe of his Son's righteousness, and as pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, full atonement being made by the sacrifice of Christ; who also is the object of this joy in his person, fulness, righteousness, offices, relations, and when beheld, embraced, and enjoyed in a way of communion. This joy, likewise, which is the produce of the Spirit, lies in spiritual things, and arises from an apprehension or good hope of interest in them, as justification, pardon, peace, adoption, and eternal glory; and is peculiar to such who have the Spirit, for a stranger intermeddles not with this joy, nor can he form any judgment of it, and is even unspeakable by the believer himself. Moreover, joy in the good of others, of fellow creatures and fellow Christians, in their outward and inward prosperity, in their temporal, spiritual, and eternal good, which, as it is a grace of the Spirit, may well enough be thought to be at least part of the sense of the word here; since it follows upon, and is joined with love, and stands between that and

*peace*, which is another fruit of the Spirit: and designs peace with God in a man's own conscience, produced there by the Spirit of God, in consequence of peace being made by the blood of Christ; and that through the application of the blood of Christ for pardon, and of his righteousness for justification to the soul of a sensible sinner by the blessed Spirit, the effect of which is peace, quietness, and tranquillity of mind; also peace with men, with the saints, and with all others; for such who are under a work of the Spirit of God, and are influenced and led by him, seek after the things which make for peace and edification among the brethren, and are desirous

if possible to live peaceably with all men: hence appears another grace in them,

*longsuffering*; which intends not so much a patient waiting for good things to come, for more grace, and for glory, through the Spirit; but a patient bearing and enduring of present evils with joyfulness, being strengthened by the Spirit with all might, according to his glorious power; being slow to anger, ready to forgive injuries, put up with affronts, and bear with, and forbear one another: and which is usually accompanied with gentleness, humanity, affability, courteousness, shown both in words, gestures, and actions; in imitation of the gentleness of Christ, and agreeably to that wisdom, that heavenly doctrine of the Gospel, which, among other things, is said to be gentle, and easy to be entreated. To which is added

*goodness*; and what else can come from the good Spirit of God, the author of the good work of grace upon the soul? and which disposes it to acts of goodness unto men, in a natural, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelic way, for the benefit both of soul and body; and which must here be understood, and which is well pleasing to God when done in the exercise of the following grace,

*faith*; for though fidelity, both in words and actions, which is very ornamental to the Gospel, and a profession of religion may be meant; yet faith in Christ is not to be excluded, as it is generally by interpreters; for this is not of a man's self, nor have all men it: it is a gift of God, the operation of his power, and the work of his Spirit, whence he is styled the spirit of faith; and which therefore must have a place among his fruits; and which lies and shows itself in believing in Christ for salvation, in embracing the doctrines of the Gospel, and making a profession of them, which is called the profession of faith; all which, when right, comes from the Spirit of God.

**Ver. 23.** *Meekness*, etc..] Humility and lowliness of mind, of which Christ is an eminent example and pattern; and which the Holy Spirit from him transcribes into the heart of a regenerate person; and lies in having mean thoughts of himself, in walking humbly with God, acknowledging every favour, being thankful for every blessing, and depending on his grace, and in behaving with modesty and humility among men. The last of the fruits of the Spirit mentioned is

*temperance*, or “contenance”; and designs both chastity and sobriety, and particularly moderation in eating and drinking. It may be observed, that these fruits of the Spirit are opposed to the works of the flesh. So love is opposed to hatred; joy to emulations and envying; peace to variance, strife, and seditions; longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness, to wrath and murders; faith to idolatry, witchcraft, and heresies; and temperance to adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, and revellings.

*Against such there is no law*; meaning, against such fruits, graces, and good things; these being perfectly agreeable to the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, and spiritual; and are so far from being forbidden by it, that they are highly esteemed and approved of by it: or against persons that are possessed of such fruits; for these appear to be in the spirit, and to be led by the Spirit; and therefore are not under the law, and have nothing to fear from it, as a terrifying, accusing, cursing, and condemning law. The works of the flesh, and they that are of the flesh, are such that come under the notice and lash of the law; and not the fruits of the Spirit, and they that are after the Spirit, as such are who partake of his fruit.

**Ver. 24.** *And they that are Christ's*, etc..] Not all as yet that are secretly so, who are chosen in him, and by him, are given by the Father to him in covenant, and whom he has purchased by his blood, and considers as his people, his sheep, and his children, though as yet they are not called by his grace; of these, as yet, what follows cannot be said, and therefore must mean such as are openly Christ's, whom he has laid hold on as his own in the effectual calling, who have his Spirit as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, who have truly believed in Christ, and have given up themselves unto him.

*Have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*: by the flesh is meant, not the natural body to be macerated and afflicted with fastings, watchings, etc.. but the corruption of nature, the old man and carnal heart. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “their own flesh”; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; their concern lying with their own, and not with the corruptions, affections, and lusts of others. By “the affections and lusts” are intended, not the natural affections and passions of the soul, and the desires of it; but its vile and inordinate affections, its corrupt inclinations, evil desires, and deceitful lusts; all which are “crucified” first “with Christ”, as the Arabic version reads; (see <sup><516></sup>Romans 6:6) and which are so

abolished, done away, and destroyed, by the sacrifice of Christ, that the damning power of them over his people is entirely gone. And in consequence of this crucifixion of the body of sin, with Christ upon the cross, when he finished and made an end of it, sin, with its passions and lusts, is crucified by the Spirit of God in regeneration and sanctification; so that it loses its governing power, and has not the dominion it had before: not but that the flesh, or corrupt nature, with its evil affections, and carnal lusts, are still in being, and are alive; as a person fastened to a cross may be alive, though he cannot act and move as before, being under restraints, so the old man, though crucified, and under the restraints of mighty grace, and cannot reign and govern as before, yet is alive, and acts, and operates, and oftentimes has great sway and influence; but whereas he is deprived of his reigning power, he is said to be crucified: and though this act is ascribed to them that are Christ's, yet not as done by them in their own strength, who are not able to grapple with one corruption, but as under the influence of the grace of Christ, and through the power of his Spirit; (see ~~REB~~Romans 8:13).

**Ver. 25.** *If we live in the Spirit*, etc..] Or “by the Spirit”, as all do that are spiritually alive. Sin has not only brought on men a corporeal death, and made them liable to an eternal one, but has also induced upon them a spiritual or moral death; they are dead in trespasses and sin, nor can they quicken themselves, nor can any creature give them life; not the ministers of the word, nor the angels in heaven, only the blessed Spirit is the spirit of life from Christ; who entering into them, frees them from the law of sin and death, and implants a principle of spiritual life in them, whereby they live a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, and communion with him: and this the apostle makes use of, as an argument with believers to walk after the Spirit,

*let us also walk in the Spirit*: or “by the Spirit”; by his help and assistance, according to the rule of his word, and under his influence and direction as a guide, to which he had before advised in (~~REB~~Galatians 5:18).

**Ver. 26.** *Let us not be desirous of vain glory*, etc..] Ambitious of being thought wiser, and richer, and more valuable than others; of having the preeminence in the management of all affairs, and of having honour, esteem, and popular applause from men: this may well be called vain glory, since it is only in outward things, as wisdom, riches, strength, and honour, and not in God the giver of them, and who can easily take them away; and

therefore is but for a time, and is quickly gone, and lies only in the opinion and breath of men.

*Provoking one another*; not to good works, which would be right, but to anger and wrath, which is contrary to Christian charity, or true love; which, as it is not easily provoked, so neither will it provoke others to evil things. The Syriac version renders it by  $\hat{y}l\ qm$ , “slighting”, or “despising one another”; and the Arabic version, “insulting one another”; vices to which men, and even Christian brethren in the same communion, are too prone.

*Envyng one another*; their gifts and abilities, natural and spiritual; their rank and station in the world, or in the church. These were sins the Galatians very probably were subject to; and where they prevail, there is confusion, and every evil work, and are therefore to be watched and guarded against.